

MAJOR GENERAL WILLIAM E. MASTERSON

Retired Feb. 1, 1985. Died March 2, 1985.

Major General William E. Masterson is deputy commander in chief, U.S. Southern Command, Quarry Heights, and commander, U.S. Air Force Southern Air Division, Howard Air Force Base, Republic of Panama. As deputy commander in chief of the U.S. Southern Command, General Masterson is responsible to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for all joint military matters in Latin America. As commander of the U.S. Air Force Southern Air Division, a unit of Tactical Air Command, he is responsible for all Air Force matters in support of the U.S. Southern Command and Latin America.

General Masterson was born in 1929, in Detroit. He received his high school education in Wayne, Mich., and attended the University of Michigan and Michigan State University, graduating in 1951. In 1965 he entered the Naval War College (School of Naval Command and Staff), Newport, R.I., graduating in 1966. He entered the Air War College in 1972 at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., and was designated a distinguished graduate upon completion in 1973.

He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in December 1951 and entered aviation cadet training. He completed navigation training at Mather Air Force Base, Calif., and was commissioned a second lieutenant upon graduation in April 1953. Following a tour of duty as a navigator instructor at Mather, he entered pilot training and received his wings in December 1956. The general then began a series of flying assignments with the Strategic Air Command: in B-47s with the 22nd Bombardment Wing, March Air Force Base, Calif., from 1957 to 1963; and in B-52s with the 379th Bombardment Wing, Wurtsmith Air Force Base, Mich., from 1963 to 1965.

In October 1966 General Masterson was assigned duty as a forward air controller in the Republic of Vietnam where he flew more than 500 combat missions in support of United States and Republic of Vietnam ground forces. He completed his combat tour in September 1967 and was assigned to the Directorate of Plans, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C., for duty with the Strategic Division, Office of the Deputy Director for Force Development.

He moved to Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash., in August 1971 for duty as assistant deputy commander for maintenance, 92nd Bombardment Wing. This was followed by attendance at the Air War College, with a subsequent assignment as vice commander, 19th Bombardment Wing at Robins Air Force Base, Ga.

General Masterson returned to Air Force headquarters in July 1974 as deputy assistant director of plans for joint matters. He then transferred to the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as special assistant for joint matters.

From June 1975 to August 1977, he was assigned as commander of SAC's 40th Air Division at Wurtsmith Air Force Base. In March 1979 he was assigned to Headquarters U.S. Air Force as deputy director for plans and policy and was the U.S. Air Force representative on the Joint Mexican-U.S. Defense Commission and the Inter-American Defense Board.

The general became deputy director for operations and readiness in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, Plans and Readiness, Headquarters U.S. Air Force in March 1980. He assumed his present duties in February 1981.

General Masterson is a command pilot and navigator with approximately 7,000 flying hours. His military decorations and awards include the Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross with oak leaf cluster, Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, Air Medal with 16 oak leaf clusters, Joint Service Commendation Medal and Air Force Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster. The general also wears the Republic of Vietnam Honor Medal 1st Class and Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with palm.

He was promoted to major general Feb. 1, 1981, with date of rank Aug. 1, 1977.

General Masterson's hometown is Wayne, Mich.