

## **BRIGADIER GENERAL HASKELL E. NEAL**

**Retired June 1, 1964. Died July 15, 1981.**

Haskell E. Neal was born in Louisville, Ill., in 1904, and moved to Hoopston, Ill., in 1921. He displayed an early interest in radio communications, completing his first homemade receiver when he was only 12 years old. His inclinations led him to enlist in the Army Air Corps at Scott Field, Ill., March 13, 1928. Almost from the moment of his enlistment he became involved in the development of military communications.

As an enlisted man, he attended service schools in both the Air Corps and the Signal Corps, and also the RCA Resident School in New York in 1932.

His extensive 14 year background of military experience, specializing in the growing field of communications, qualified the then Master Sergeant Neal for elevation to second lieutenant May 5, 1942. As a commissioned officer he was first assigned to the 13th Communications Squadron, a task organization formed at Morrison Field, Fla., to provide communications support for planned invasion and military operations in North Africa.

He served as commanding officer of the 13th Communications Squadron, Africa, and as regional control officer of the 13th Airways Communications Region from May 4, 1942 until Aug. 31, 1943. Accepting new communications responsibilities at a pace commensurate with the speed of the whirlwind African campaign, he was named area control officer for all of Africa and the Middle East Sept. 1, 1943. He held this position until Dec. 13, 1944.

His promotions during wartime paralleled the growth of his responsibilities. He was promoted to first lieutenant May 11, 1942, six days after he was commissioned. He skipped the grade of captain completely, was promoted to major June 6, 1942, to lieutenant colonel Feb. 25, 1943, and to colonel Aug. 28, 1944.

After the communications build-up necessary to the North African campaign was completed, Colonel Neal became commander of the 3rd AACS Wing at Elmendorf Field, Alaska, Dec. 14, 1944. He received the additional duty of air communications officer for Alaska Feb. 4, 1945. In this capacity, he reported directly to the chief of staff, U.S. Air Force, who was, at that time, General H.H. ("Hap") Arnold.

After serving in Headquarters AACS as assistant chief of staff; operations, training and requirements from May 1945 until August 1947, Colonel Neal was selected to attend the Air Command and Staff School at Maxwell Field, Ala. Upon graduation from the Air Command and Staff School, he was assigned as director of communications and electronics for the Caribbean Air Command.

Returning to the United States in January 1950, Colonel Neal entered the Armed Forces Staff College at Norfolk, Va., from which he graduated in July 1950.

He was named assistant director of communications and electronics, Continental Air Command in August 1950; and, when Air Defense Command and Tactical Air Command were reborn out of the reorganization of CONAC, he was named director of communications and electronics for the Air Defense Command.

In this capacity, he was associated with the build-up of Air Defense Command from an organization embracing only two fighter wings and less than a score of active AC&W sites to the modern fighting force charged with responsibility for the air defense of the North American Continent. As director of communications and electronics, he was the whip behind the development of a modern surveillance and detection system that grew from a jury rigged "lash-up" expedient to an integrated AC&W system composed of hundreds of permanent radar

stations, including the Pine Tree Line, the seaward extension of radar by picket ships, Texas Towers, airborne "early warning" aircraft, and the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line.

On July 11, 1955, Colonel Neal was promoted to brigadier general. Later, in recognition of his outstanding service to the nation through his assignment with Air Defense Command, General Neal was awarded the oak leaf cluster to the Legion of Merit for duty performed between 1951 and 1957. In addition to his two Legions of Merit, General Neal has also been awarded the Commendation Ribbon.

From July 8, 1957 to March 9, 1959 General Neal was assigned as commander, 1807th AACS Wing, Bitburg, Germany. Soon after his arrival, the 1807th was redesignated as the European-African Middle Eastern AACS area with its headquarters transferred to Weisbaden, Germany.

On March 10, 1959 General Neal was designated commander of the newly formed Ground Electronics Engineering-Installation Agency with Headquarters at Griffiss Air Force Base, N.Y. Under his direction, GEEIA has grown from a widely separated heterogeneous group of individuals to a modern, unified agency charged with the engineering and installation of the Air Forces entire ground communication systems and facilities. Under his leadership GEEIA achieved the maturity of a "can do" organization. This includes an active role in all phases of ground electronics from the massive, integrated installation of communications at each Atlas, Titan and Minuteman missile site, to the down range tracking facilities of the Atlantic Missile Test Range, the base wire and telephone development schedules at each Air Force installation and integral participation on each of the "L" systems such as Sage and Aircom