

MAJOR GENERAL HENRY G. THORNE JR

Retired Aug. 1, 1969.

Major General Henry Garfield Thorne Jr. is commander of 19th Air Force, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C.

Born in Waco, Texas, in 1913, he graduated from high school in Atlanta, Ga., in 1931. He began his military career in 1932 when he enlisted in the U.S. Army as a private. In 1937 he graduated from aviation cadet training and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army Air Corps.

At the outbreak of World War II he was serving as a pilot with the 3d Pursuit Squadron in the Philippine Islands and was evacuated to Australia soon after the fall of Bataan.

Upon his return to the United States in 1942 General Thorne attended the Army Command and General Staff School. He then successively served as operations officer and executive officer of the Los Angeles Air Defense Wing; chief of staff of the Fourth Fighter Command, Oakland, Calif.; and assistant chief of staff of the Fourth Air Force in San Francisco, Calif.

From May to October 1944 he commanded the 430th Army Air Force Base Unit, Ephrata Air Base, Wash., a replacement training unit for twin-engine fighter pilots. During the next year he commanded first the 508th Fighter Group, then the 414th Fighter Group, newly activated units which were trained in the United States. He went to Iwo Jima as commander of the 414th, then served as assistant chief of staff of the Seventh Fighter Command there and on Guam.

In July 1946 he became deputy chief of staff, operations, Fifth Air Force, Nagoya, Japan. In March 1947 General Thorne became commander of both the 8th Fighter Group and Ashiya Army Air Base, Japan.

Returning to the United States in 1948 he attended the Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., graduating the following summer. He was then assigned to the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel at U.S. Air Force Headquarters in Washington, D.C., first serving as deputy chief, Personnel Procurement Division, and then deputy, plans and programs, in the Directorate of Training.

In August 1952 General Thorne enrolled in the National War College, Washington, D.C., and graduated the following June. During the next three years he commanded the 1707th Air Transport Wing, Palm Beach International Airport, Fla.

General Thorne became deputy chief of staff for personnel, Headquarters Military Air Transport Service, Washington, D.C., in July 1956. One year later he assumed command of the Iceland Defense Force, Keflavik International Airport, Iceland. In August 1959 he became commander of the U.S. Air Force Recruiting Service with headquarters at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

In September 1961 he was assigned to Air Force Headquarters and served as director of personnel planning until he became deputy chief of staff for operations, Headquarters U.S. Air Forces in Europe, Lindsey Air Station, Germany. In April 1965 he became commander of Seventeenth Air Force, USAFE, with headquarters at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

General Thorne assumed command of Twelfth Air Force, Tactical Air Command, with headquarters in Waco, Texas, in July 1966 and became vice commander of the Continental Air Command at Robins Air Force Base, Ga., in July 1967.

His decorations include the Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross with oak leaf cluster, Soldier's Medal and the Air Medal.