



## **MAJOR GENERAL RUSSELL L. WALDRON**

**Retired June 1, 1962. Died May 11, 2004.**

Russell L. Waldron was born in Wellston, Ohio, in 1910. He attended Rio Grande College and Ohio State University. He taught school for two years prior to joining the Army Air corps as a private in June 1930.

He was appointed a flying cadet in February 1931 and completed his flying training in 1932, receiving a commission as a second lieutenant in the Air Reserve. Lieutenant Waldron's first assignment following graduation was with the 49th Bomb Squadron at Langley Field, Va.

He was released from active duty in February 1933 and reentered Ohio State University. In August 1934 he again enlisted as a private (enlisted pilot) and on June 11, 1935 received a regular commission as a second lieutenant. In April 1936, Lieutenant Waldron was assigned to the 59th Service Squadron at Langley Field, Va., where he later joined the 96th Bomb Squadron of the same field.

General Waldron was commander of the 31st Bombardment Squadron at Hickam Field, Hawaii, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. In January 1942, he was named director of training of the Seventh Bomber Command at Hickam and later became assistant chief of staff of intelligence of the Seventh Air Force. He was commander of the 11th Bomb Group at Kwajalein and Guam during the period of July 1944 to April 1945. During his tour in the Central Pacific, he flew 400 hours of search and combat.

In 1945, then a colonel, he was assigned to Army Air Force headquarters at the Pentagon and was responsible for the initial planning and implementation of the Officer Personnel Act of 1947. In 1951 General Waldron returned to the training field, when he assumed command of Vance Air Force Base, an advanced flying training base, in Oklahoma.

In September 1952 he received his first star as a brigadier general and was reassigned to Waco, Texas, where he became deputy commander of the Flying Training Air Force. In this position he assisted in the training of officers and aviation cadets, both pilots and navigators, for the Air Force and many countries under the Mutual Defense Assistance Pact.

He was assigned to the Far East as commander of the 315th Air Division (Combat Cargo) in 1954, and was promoted to major general in October 1956. In 1957, the general was assigned as commander, Continental Division, Military Air Transport Service, Kelly Air Force Base, Texas, and in 1958 he became commander, Western Transport Air Force, Military Air Transport Service, Travis Air Force Base, Calif. From 1961 to 1962, General Waldron was assistant deputy chief of staff, Personnel, Headquarters U.S. Air Force.

General Waldron is rated a command pilot with more than 5,800 hours, has a master's degree in business administration from Harvard University, and is a graduate of the National War College.

His military decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross with oak leaf cluster, Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster, American Defense Service Medal, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal and National Defense Service Medal. The following foreign awards were conferred on General Waldron: Third Class of the Order of the Rising Sun (Japan), Order of Cloud and Banner (Government of the Republic of China) and the Order of the White Elephant (Thailand).

**UNUSUAL EXPERIENCES:** When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, General Waldron was commander of the 31st Bomb Squadron at Hickam Field and was designated as Task Force Commander of B-18s. At 11:00 a.m. on December 7th, he led two B-18s on a search and attack mission against the Japanese carriers.

General Waldron landed the last American aircraft on Wake Island before the war, a four-engine Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress, late in November 1941 on a mission to deliver an Army Signal Corps Detachment. He was also the pilot of the first plane to bomb Wake Island after the war began. This was in a Consolidated LB-30 Bomber immediately after the battle of Midway in early June 1942.