



BRIGADIER GENERAL CHARLES E. "CHUCK" YEAGER

Retired March 1, 1975.

Brigadier General Charles E. (Chuck) Yeager is the director of Aerospace Safety for the Air Force Inspection and Safety Center, a separate operating agency located at Norton Air Force Base, San Bernardino, Calif. The center is a function of the Air Force inspector general's office in Headquarters U.S. Air Force. As director he has worldwide supervisory responsibility for the development and implementation of policies, standards and procedures for Air Force flight, ground, missile, space, explosives and system safety engineering programs. The mission of the directorate is to help conserve the nation's aerospace resources by preventing and reducing accidents through global programs of safety education, accident investigation and analysis, human factors research, and safety inspections.

General Yeager was born in 1923, in Myra, W.Va., and is a graduate of Hamlin, W.Va., High School. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in September 1941, was accepted for pilot training under the flying sergeant program in July 1942, and received his pilot wings and appointment as a flight officer in March 1943 at Luke Field, Ariz.

During World War II, General Yeager distinguished himself in aerial combat over France and Germany during the years 1943-1945 by shooting down 13 enemy aircraft, five on one mission, including one of Germany's first jet fighters. On March 5, 1944, he was shot down over German-occupied France but escaped capture when elements of the French Maquis helped him to reach the safety of the Spanish border.

He returned to the United States in February 1945 to attend the instructor pilot course after which he served as an instructor pilot. In July 1945 he went to Wright Field, Ohio, where he received his first experimental flight test work. His assignment there led to his selection as pilot of the nation's first research rocket aircraft, the Bell X-1, at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., where he served from December 1949 to September 1954.

General Yeager made world history on Oct. 14, 1947, when he became the first man to fly faster than the speed of sound, During his nine-year assignment as the nation's leading test pilot. He also became the first man to fly more than twice the speed of sound, flying the Bell X-1A on Dec. 12, 1953. During 1952 he attended the Air Command and Staff College.

He returned to Europe in October 1954 and became commander of the 417th Fighter Squadron at Hahn Air Base, Germany, in May 1955. He remained in that position when his squadron was reassigned to Toul-Rosieres Air Base, France, in April 1956.

Upon his return to the United States in September 1957, he was assigned to the 413th Fighter Wing at George Air Force Base, Calif., and in April 1958 became commander of the 1st Fighter Squadron. In April 1958 he went with the 1st Tactical Fighter Squadron to Moron Air Base, Spain, where he remained until November 1958. He returned to George Air Force Base with the same unit which was later redesignated the 306th Tactical Fighter Squadron.

General Yeager graduated from the Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., in June 1961 and became commandant of the Aerospace Research Pilot School, where all military astronauts are trained, in July 1962.

In July 1966 he assumed command of the 405th Fighter Wing at Clark Air Base, Republic of the Philippines. While commander of the 405th Fighter Wing he flew 127 missions in South Vietnam.

General Yeager assumed command of the 4th Tactical Fighter Wing at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C., in February 1968 and went with the wing to Korea during the Pueblo crisis. In July 1969 he became vice commander, Seventeenth Air Force, with headquarters at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. In January 1971 General Yeager assumed duties as United States defense representative to Pakistan. He reported to the Air Force Inspection and Safety Center at Norton Air Force Base, Calif., in March 1973 and became director of the center in June 1973.

His military decorations and awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star with oak leaf cluster, Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross with two oak leaf clusters, Bronze Star Medal with "V" device, Air Medal with 10 oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal, Purple Heart, Distinguished Unit Citation Emblem with oak leaf cluster and the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award Ribbon, He is a command pilot and has flown more than 10,000 hours in 155 different types of military aircraft.

He was awarded the MacKay Trophy in 1948, the Collier Trophy in 1948, and the Harmon International Trophy in 1954.

General Yeager was awarded an honorary doctor of science degree from West Virginia University, in 1948, and an honorary doctor of science degree from Marshall University of Huntington, W.Va., in 1969.

General Yeager's hometown is Hamlin, W.Va.

He was promoted to the grade of brigadier general effective Aug. 1, 1969, with date of rank June 22, 1969.