



GENERAL WILBUR L. "BILL" CREECH

Retired. Dec. 31, 1984. Died Aug. 26, 2003.

General W.L. Creech is the commander of Tactical Air Command with headquarters at Langley Air Force Base, Va. The command directs the activities of two numbered air forces, three centers and seven air divisions. More than 111,300 military and civilian personnel are assigned to 32 Tactical Air Command bases in the United States, Panama, Okinawa and Iceland. Tactical Air Command is the gaining organization for 58,300 Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve personnel in 149 major units throughout the United States.

General Creech was born in Argyle, Mo., in 1927. He has a bachelor of science degree from the University of Maryland, a master's degree in international relations from The George Washington University, and graduated from the National War College in 1966. He received his wings and commission in September 1949 as a distinguished graduate of flying training school.

His first operational assignment was with the 51st Fighter Wing at Naha, Okinawa. During the Korean War he flew with the 51st Wing from Kimpo Air Base and completed 103 combat missions over North Korea. He also served a combat tour of duty as a forward air controller with the U.S. Army's 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division.

In July 1951 General Creech was assigned as a flight commander at Luke Air Force Base near Phoenix, Ariz., where, for the next two and one-half years, he taught advanced gunnery to students from 14 nations. In November 1953 he joined the U.S. Air Force Aerial Demonstration Team, the Thunderbirds, and flew 125 official aerial demonstrations over the United States and Central America.

In January 1956 he became commander and leader of the U.S. Air Forces in Europe Aerial Demonstration Team, the Skyblazers, based at Bitburg, Germany. By December 1959 he had flown 399 official aerial demonstrations with this team throughout Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.

In June 1960 General Creech was named director of operations, U.S. Air Force Fighter Weapons School at Nellis Air Force Base, Las Vegas, Nev., where he served until February 1962. He then was assigned as a special adviser to the commander of the Argentine air force in Buenos Aires.

From August 1962 to August 1965, he was executive and aide to the commander of Tactical Air Command, Langley Air Force Base. In August 1965 he entered the National War College at Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C. Upon graduation in June 1966, he was selected to be a staff assistant in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

General Creech transferred to the Republic of Vietnam in November 1968 as deputy commander for operations of the 37th Tactical Fighter Wing, Phu Cat Air Base. After six months with the wing, during which he flew 177 combat missions, he became assistant deputy chief of staff for operations, Headquarters Seventh Air Force in Saigon.

In November 1969 General Creech was assigned to U.S. Air Forces in Europe and successively commanded two tactical fighter wings. After one year as commander of the 86th Tactical Fighter Wing at Zweibrucken, Germany, he became the commander of the 401st Tactical Fighter Wing at Madrid, Spain. From August 1971 until August 1974, General Creech served as deputy chief of staff for operations and intelligence, Headquarters U.S. Air Forces in Europe at Wiesbaden and Ramstein, Germany.

General Creech was assigned to Air Force Systems Command in September 1974 as vice commander of Aeronautical Systems Division at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio, and in October 1974 was appointed commander of the Electronic Systems Division, Boston, Mass. The Electronic Systems Division manages the complex development and acquisition of command, control and communications equipment to meet the worldwide needs of the Air Force and other Department of Defense agencies.

After two and one-half years as commander of Electronic Systems Division, General Creech was transferred to Washington, D.C., where he served concurrently as the assistant vice chief of staff, assistant to the Chief of Staff for Readiness and North Atlantic Treaty Organization matters and senior U.S. Air Force member, Military Staff Committee, United Nations. He assumed his present position on May 1, 1978.

He is a command pilot, experienced in 40 different military fighter, cargo and reconnaissance aircraft. His military decorations and awards include the Distinguished Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, Silver Star, Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters, Distinguished Flying Cross with three oak leaf clusters, Air Medal with 14 oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal, Republic of Vietnam Air Service Medal (Honor Class), Spanish Grand Cross of Aeronautical Merit with white ribbon and Republic of Korea Order of National Security Merit Tong Il Medal.

He was promoted to general May 1, 1978, with same date of rank