



GENERAL WILLIAM L. KIRK

Retired April 30, 1989.

General William L. Kirk is commander in chief, U.S. Air Forces in Europe, and commander, Allied Air Forces Central Europe, with headquarters at Ramstein Air Base, West Germany.

General Kirk was born in 1932, in Rayville, La. He graduated from Rayville High School in 1950 and attended Northeast Louisiana State College. The general completed Squadron Officer School in 1962 and the Air War College in 1971.

He enlisted in the Air Force in 1951 and became an aviation cadet in February 1953. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant and awarded his pilot's wings in April 1954.

After completing pilot training at Kinston Air Base, N.C., as well as Bryan and Perrin Air Force bases, Texas, General Kirk attended tactical reconnaissance phase training at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C. In October 1954 the general was assigned as a pilot with the 17th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron at Shaw. From March 1955 to June 1957 he served as a pilot with the 15th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron at Komaki and Yokota air bases in Japan. He became a flight commander with the 6021st Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Johnson Air Base, Japan, in June 1957.

General Kirk returned to the United States in November 1957 and again was assigned to the 17th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron. From September 1960 to June 1964 he served, first, as pilot, then as assistant flight commander, and finally as flight commander with the 92nd Tactical Fighter Squadron, Royal Air Force Station Bentwaters, England. The general then transferred to the 4453rd Combat Crew Training Wing at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., where he served successively as air operations officer, command post controller, instructor pilot, and chief of standardization and evaluation for Tactical Air Command's first F-4 replacement training unit.

In June 1966 he completed the F-4 fighter weapons instructor course at Nellis Air Force Base,

Nev., and was assigned to the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing Wolf Pack at Ubon Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, in March 1967. He destroyed two North Vietnamese MiGs during his 130 F-4 Phantom II missions with the Wolf Pack. Upon his return to the United States in January 1968, he was assigned as a squadron operations officer at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. He assumed command of the 4538th Fighter Weapons Squadron at Nellis Air Force Base in January 1969.

After completing the Air War College in June 1971, General Kirk was assigned as chief of the Tactics Branch and, later, as deputy chief of the Tactical Division, Directorate of Operations, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Plans and Operations, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C. Although assigned at the Pentagon, he spent much of this tour of duty in Thailand. In July 1973 he became deputy commander for operations, 4th Tactical Fighter Wing, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C. From January 1974 to January 1976 General Kirk was assigned to Holloman Air Force Base, N.M., first as vice commander, and later as commander, of the 49th Tactical Fighter Wing.

He then served as deputy chief of staff for operations, Headquarters 9th Air Force, at Shaw Air Force Base. From November 1977 to June 1979 he was assigned as assistant deputy chief of staff, operations and readiness, Headquarters Pacific Air Forces, Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. He then became the command's inspector general. In July 1980 General Kirk returned to Air Force headquarters as director of electronic combat, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Plans and Operations. He was assigned as deputy chief of staff for operations at Headquarters U.S. Air Forces in Europe, Ramstein Air Base, in July 1982. He became commander of 9th Air Force in July 1985. He assumed his present position in April 1987.

General Kirk is a command pilot with more than 6,000 flying hours in jet fighter aircraft. 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 four oak leaf clusters, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Air Medal with 11 oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with three oak leaf clusters, Air Force Organizational Excellence Award, Combat Readiness Medal, Air Force Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with two service stars, Air Force Overseas Ribbon-Short, Air Force Overseas Ribbon-Long with three oak leaf clusters, Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon with six oak leaf clusters, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon, Air Force Training Ribbon and Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

He was promoted to general May 1, 1987, with same date of rank