

BRIGADIER GENERAL

PAUL E. GARDNER, USAF

Inducted 2012

Born 1925 Died Feb. 14, 2005.



Brigadier General Paul E. Gardner commander, Civil Air Patrol-United States Air Force, with headquarters at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala. As commander of Headquarters CAP-USAF, General Gardner directed and coordinated Air Patrol activities throughout the 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Additionally, he served as the executive director and managed the day-to-day activities of the federally chartered, benevolent, non-profit, volunteer, civilian auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force. Civil Air Patrol is made up of aviation-minded citizens committed to providing emergency services, helping to meet local and national emergencies, encouraging the public to learn more about air and space, and motivating men and women to take leadership service roles in their community.

General Gardner was born in 1925, in Sioux Falls, S.D., where he attended elementary and secondary schools. He received a bachelor's degree in military science from the University of Maryland in 1964, and attended the Air Command and Staff College in 1961-62 and the Air War College in 1970.

He entered the Army Air Force as an aviation cadet in June 1943 and completed pilot training in November 1944. General Gardner served in the Night Fighter Pilot program during World War II and was released from active duty in 1945 following V-J Day.

In 1948 he was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Air Force Reserve and was a C-46 troop carrier pilot until his recall to active duty in March 1951 to serve with the 5th Radar Calibration Flight at Pope Air Force Base, N.C. During this assignment, he attended Squadron Officer School at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

After completing combat crew training in June 1953, General Gardner served a tour in Korea as a B-26 pilot. He next became flight transition training officer with the 1100th Operations Group, Headquarters Command U.S. Air Force, Bolling Air Force Base, Washington, D.C., and in 1957 was integrated into the Regular Air Force.

In July 1957 General Gardner was transferred to Headquarters U.S. Air Force at the Pentagon, where he served as secretary of the Military Construction Board. After graduation from the Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base in June 1962, he served as air adviser to the commander, Allied Land Forces Southeastern Europe, NATO, in Izmir, Turkey.

In September 1964 General Gardner moved to Travis Air Force Base, Calif., as an initial cadre C-141 pilot, later commanding the Flight Simulators Section of the 60th Military Airlift Wing. In March 1968 he became director of Airlift Training, Headquarters Twenty-second Air Force at Travis.

In January 1971 General Gardner assumed command of the 608th Military Airlift Squadron at Cam Ranh Bay, Republic of Vietnam. Early in 1972, he was assigned as deputy director of training at Headquarters Military Airlift Command, Scott Air Force Base, Ill., and through May 1974 served progressively as deputy director of combat operations and director of inspection for the command. He next became commander of the 61st Military Airlift Support Wing at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. He also served as the Military Airlift Command liaison to the commanders in chief of the Pacific Air Forces and of the Pacific Command, providing and coordinating strategic airlift support for their Pacific and Far East operations.

In June 1976, General Gardner was named commander of the 89th Military Airlift Wing at Andrews Air Force Base, Md. As commander of the 89th, he was responsible for providing worldwide airlift for the president, vice president, cabinet members, members of Congress and other high-ranking United States and visiting foreign officials.

General Gardner assumed his CAP duties in November 1977.

He was a command pilot with 13,000 hours in a variety of aircraft, including the Stearman Biplane, the B-25, the C-46, the C-54, the C-141 Starlifter, and the VC-9.

Among his decorations are the Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, and Army Commendation Medal.

He was promoted to the grade of brigadier general July 1, 1977, with date of rank June 28, 1977.