

AVIATION WALL OF HONOR



Lieutenant Colonel Loren S. Eastman Pilot USAA WWII, Korea, Viet Nam

Loren Eastman was born in Spokane, Washington, on February 18, 1925. After graduation from high school in Wenatchee, Washington in 1942, he entered the local junior college where he was accepted in the Aviation Cadet Program. He was called to active duty on April 15, 1943 and reported to Santa Ana Army Base, California, where he received basic training, classification and preflight training for a pilot. Primary flight school was in Tucson, Arizona, followed by basic flying school in Bakersfield, California, and advanced training at Douglas Army Air Base in Arizona where he received his pilot wings on February 8, 1944.

In the next seven months, he instructed flying and it was during this period while his students were practicing stalls that the plane went into an uncontrollable spin requiring bail out at a low altitude. All three parachuted out and survived with only minor bumps and bruises, qualifying them for membership in the Caterpillar Club, a club whose member's lives have been spared by the use of a parachute.

In September of 1944, he was transferred to Roswell Army Air Base, New Mexico, where he was trained to fly the B-17 bomber, better known as the "Flying Fortress". At Lincoln

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Army Air Base, he was assigned nine crew members, and after practice in day and night flight, formation flying, gunnery, bombing, and navigation, they were sent to Foggia, Italy, joining the 463rd Bomb Group of the 15th Air Force. Shortly later the war in Europe ended, and the B-17s were converted to carry Army personnel to Nuremberg, Germany, Naples, Italy, and Marrakech, Morocco, on their first leg of the 5th Army's return to the United States. In 1946, Loren was discharged and placed in the Army Reserves as a 2nd Lieutenant. During WWII, he received the European-African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, WWII Victory Medal, and the Army Occupation Medal.

In September, 1948, he was recalled to active duty and, with the outbreak of the Korean War, he was sent to Ashiya Air Base, Japan, where he flew C-47s and C-119s to Korea. The missions were primarily re-supply, courier, and air evacuation flights.

On the "Air Evac" flights, they carried two nurses, two medical technicians, and as many as twenty wounded to the hospital in Seoul, Korea. The airfields used during these missions were primarily very short, dirt runways without lights. Loren completed this tour in the 21st Troop Carrier Squadron in June, 1952, having flown approximately 100 missions. He was then assigned to Operations and remained there for two years and was promoted to Captain. In the period, he earned the Air Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Korean Service Medal with Silver Star, and the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation.

After returning to the United States, he had a three year tour at Headquarters USAF, Washington, D.C. before transferring to Strategic Air Command at Mountain Home AFB, ID and assigned to the 1st Bomb Squadron of the 9th Bomb Wing. He was trained to fly the B-47, a six engine jet bomber and predecessor to the B-52 bomber used at K.I. Sawyer. During the Cold

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War, crews were on duty 24 hours a day, three to four days at a time. In 1962, he was promoted to Major and transferred to England for three years. On return to the United States in 1966, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and assigned to Headquarters Tactical Air Command at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia.

On July 2, 1969, he was assigned to Headquarters, 7th Air Force in Saigon, Vietnam, in the Directorate of Automated Systems with visits to most Air Force bases in Vietnam and Thailand. On departure, he received the Bronze Star, Vietnam Service Medal, and the Vietnam Campaign Medal.

He returned to the United States in July of 1970 reporting to the 410 Bomb Wing at K.I. Sawyer, Michigan where he served as Alert Force Commander, Squadron Commander, and finally Deputy to the Commander for Resources. He lived on base with his family until 1975 at which time he moved to Marquette where he has lived for 35 years. On retirement in 1976, he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal in recognition of over 33 years of service and 5,500 hours flying time.

TJ Mudge, May 2005