

Governors and Adjutants General of Arkansas

GOVERNORS AND ADJUTANTS GENERAL FOR ARKANSAS TERRITORY 1819 - 1836

<u>ARKANSAS GOVERNORS</u>	<u>DATES</u>	<u>ARKANSAS ADJUTANTS GENERAL</u>	<u>DATES</u>
James Miller	1819-1825	A. P. Spencer	1819-1823
George Izard	1825-1829	Terrence Farrelly	1823-1825
John Pope	1829-1835	Benjamin Desha	1826-1828
William Fulton	1835-1836	Wharton Rector, Jr.	1828-1832
		Archibald Yell	1832-1833
		William Field	1833-1835
		Wharton Rector, Jr.	1835-1836
		Daniel T. Witter	1836-1836

GOVERNORS AND ADJUTANTS GENERAL FOR THE STATE OF ARKANSAS 1836-1993

James S. Conway	1836-1840	John N. Boyle	1836-1843
Archibald Yell	1840-1844	S. H. Hempstead	1843-1845
Thomas S. Drew	1844-1849	Albert Pike	1845-1846
		Solon Borland	1846-1848
John S. Roane	1849-1852	John S. Roane	1848-1849
Elias N. Conway	1852-1860	Allan Wood	1849-1851
Henry M Rector	1860-1862	John Hutt	1853-1860
Harris Flanagin	1862-1864		
Isaac Murphy	1864-1868	C.A. Henry	1864-1864
Powell Clayton	1868-1871	F. M. Sams	1864-1864
Elisha Baxter	1873-1874	Albert W. Bishop	1864-1868
Augustus H. Garland	1874-1877	Keys Danforth	1868-1873
William R. Miller	1877-1881	Frank Strong	1873-1874
Thomas J. Churchill	1881-1883	M. McCananny	1874-1874
		Charles H. Woods	1874-1877
James H. Berry	1883-1885	James Pomeroy	1877-1881
Simon P. Hughes	1885-1889	Sam J. Churchill	1881-1882
James P. Eagle	1889-1893	James F. Read	1883-1883
		L. H. McGill	1883-1884
William M. Fishback	1893-1895	W. H. Langford	1884-1885
James P. Clarke	1895-1897	W. B. Hughes	1885-1889
Daniel W. Jones	1897-1901	John C. England	1889-1891
Jeff Davis	1901-1907	A. W. Giles	1891-1891
John S. Little	1907-1909	Kie Oldham	1891-1897
		Arthur Neill	1897-1900
		Charles Jacobson	1901-1907
		Paul Little	1907-1909

GOVERNORS AND ADJUTANTS GENERAL OF ARKANSAS

GOVERNORS AND ADJUTANTS GENERAL FOR THE STATE OF ARKANSAS 1836-1993 (continued)

<u>ARKANSAS GOVERNORS</u>	<u>DATES</u>	<u>ARKANSAS ADJUTANTS GENERAL</u>	<u>DATES</u>
George W. Donaghey	1909-1913	BG Benjamin W. Green	1909-1913
Joe T. Robinson	1913-1913	BG Lloyd England	1913-1919
George W. Hays	1913-1917	BG Joe S. Harris	1919-1921
Charles H. Brough	1917-1921	BG Virgil A. Beeson	1921-1922
Thomas C. McRae	1921-1925	BG Heber L. McAlister	1922-1925
Tom J. Terral	1925-1927	BG James R. Wayne	1925-1927
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Harvey Parnell	1928-1933	BG E. L. Compere	1929-1937
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		MG Melvin C. Thrash	1993-

Compiled by MAJ Larry W. Curtis
Historian, Arkansas National Guard
as of 26 October 1993

CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF THE ADJUTANTS GENERAL FOR ARKANSAS

- 1804 Arkansas was part of Louisiana District of Indiana Territory
1805 Arkansas became District of New Madrid of Louisiana Territory
1806 Arkansas became District of Arkansas of Louisiana Territory
Major David DeLauny was Inspector and Adjutant General of the
Arkansas District of Louisiana Territory; lived at Arkansas Post
1812 Louisiana Territory renamed Missouri Territory
1813 Arkansas District made a County of Missouri Territory
1819 Arkansas became a Territory but Governor arrived in 1820; many
local Militia Companies formed for Indian Control
1825 Arkansas Militia reorganized & the Legislature published Laws.
1836 Arkansas became State of United States of America
1843 1st Volunteer Co., Capitol Guards, formed by CPT Albert Pike
1846 1st Ark Cavalry Regiment, 10 Companies, formed for Mexican War

ADJUTANTS GENERAL FOR ARKANSAS TERRITORY

- 1819 William O Allen Appt'd 28Sep1819, died Mar1820: Oden duel
1820-1823 Abner P Spencer
1823-1825 Terrence Farrelly Appt'd 25May1823, resigned 18Jun 1825
1825-1826 William Bradford Appt'd by Pres & Gov; died early 1826
1826-1828 Benjamin Desha
1828-1832 Wharton Rector Jr
1832 Chester Ashley Jan to Mar '32; removed by public outcry
1832 Archibald Yell Wm Field appointed Oct 31 1832, vice Yell
1832-1835 William Field Bio obtained, more rsrch needed; rsgd 1-9
1835-1836 Wharton Rector Jr Apptd Jan 9 1835; Field resigned (Gaz)
1836 Daniel I Whittier

ADJUTANTS GENERAL FOR STATE OF ARKANSAS

- 1836-1837 John N Boyle Apptd Oct 25 1836 (Gaz); Bio in rsrch
Governor Conway named Col John N Boyle
1840-1844 Samuel H Hempstead History of Ark, Hempstead, 1890; Deeter
1844-18?? John S Roane Apptd 8 Jul 44 to ?? (Gaz); Deeter
1845-18?? Albert Pike (??-Lyons). Thomas S Drew was Governor
1846-18?? Soland Borland (??-Lyons-Biog in research) See Ark Gaz
1848-1849 John S Roane (??-Lyons) Roane was Governor this period
1849 Albert Rust Union Co; 20 Feb-22 Apr 49; Deeter (Gaz)
1849-1851 Allan Wood Biography in research
1851-18?? Colbert Caldwell St Francis Co; 28Nov-??; Deeter (Gaz)
1853-? John Hutt Biography in research; 11Feb53-?

1864

F H Sams

1864-1868 Albert W Bishop Biography in research; see O.A. (1864-1868)
When Powell Clayton became Governor 1868; Arkansas had no real militia; it had "Home Guard Colonies"; Congress outlawed Southern Militia's 1867 but then recreated Militia's 1868.

1868-1873 Keys Danforth Biography in research; Private Sec to Gov
Danforth was native of Illinois & served under Gen. Steele (US).

1873-1874 Period known as Brooks-Baxter War. Involved dispute of who was Governor of Arkansas - both sides had military establishment: BG Robert F Catterson was AG on Brooks side (biog. in research). BG Frank Strong was AG on Baxter side. President Grant recognized Baxter as Governor; Brooks faction dissolved to end Reconstruction Period of Arkansas - Gen Catterson was declared ineffective. The Adjutant General Strong & Governor Baxter were restored to office.

1874 M McCananny Biography in research

1874-1877 Charles H Woods Biography in research

1877-1881 James Pomeroy Biography in research
After Scott Co. war 1878, the 1879 State Legislature abolished Office of the Adjutant General after / companies were mobilized. The Governor's private secretary performed duties of the AG.

1881-1882 Sam J Churchill Biography in research

1883 James F Read

1883-1884 L H McGill

1884-1885 W H Langford

1885-?? W B Hughes Biography in research

1889-1891 John C England

1891 A W Giles Biography in research

1893-1896 Kie Oldham dates in question (Deeter)
In 1893, a young officer with US Army was assigned to the Military Department. Lieutenant William B Sample was in charge of Adjutant Generals Office - he wasn't the Adjutant General - duty still part of Governor's private secretary but he was allowed to run Ark OTAG
Acting Adj Gen; sent official status rpt

1896 M L Davis

1897 R G Shaver, MG Acting Adj Gen; listed in official rpt

1897-1900 Arthur Neill sent in 1898 official rpt to US OTAG

1901-1907 Charles Jacobsen

1907-1909 Paul Little

CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF THE ADJUTANTS GENERAL FOR ARKANSAS

1909 Bruce T Bullion
 On 31May1909, the State Legislature approved separation of Adjutant General duties from Private Secretary of Governor and re-established the position of Adjutant General and control of the National Guard.
History of the Adjutants General's office under present organization:
 1909-1913 B W Green See special/general orders; discharged many Guard units & soldiers; resigned under pressure/frustration.
 1913-1919 Lloyd England Reorganized the Arkansas military units, saw them mobilized for Mexican War & got them ready for World War
 1919-1921 Joe S Harris

 1921-1922 Virgil A Beeson

 1922-1925 Heber L McAlister 1st appointment

 1925-1927 James R Wayne

 1927-1929 Joe S Harris

 1929-1937 E L Compere 1st appointment

 1937-1941 D B Byrd

 1941-1945 E L Compere 2nd appointment

 1945-1949 Heber L McAlister 2nd appointment

 1949-1950 Earl T Ricks

 1950-1953 John B Morris

 1953-1955 Lucien Abraham

 1955-1966 Sherman T Clinger

 1967-1970 Charles H Wilson

 1971-1973 Thomas M Phillips

 1973-1975 Joseph R Chappell Jr

 1975-1979 Thomas C Armstrong

 1979-1981 James H Jones 1st appointment

 1981-1983 Harold L Gwatney

 1983-1984 James H Jones 2nd appointment

 1984-1986 Fred M Carter

 1986- James A Ryan

Note: Biographies obtained except as mentioned

Sources: Arkansas Gazette Centennial 1836-1936 (Deeter)

Organized Militia of the US; Pentagon Library; sev. rpts
 Existing histories by OTAG; several at Ft McAlister

Research Note: History of Arkansas, Fay Hempstead, 1890, pg 781: COL Hempstead "AG", State Militia; Gov. Yell; 1840-44; Deeter 88

Note:

NGB Historian MAJ Ott pointed out lack of US funding had much to do with organization, training & having an Adjutants General late 1800's; transfer of AG's office from Governor's coincided with fund restoration. As example, 1893 encampment expense was US-funded but not again for over 15 years. US Adjutants General office was re-established March 1907.

Compiler: CPT DEETER 1988, 1989, OTAG-AR 1990; Updated: 9 Apr 1990

Adjutants Generals

1909 - 1913	BG B.W. Green
1913 - 1919	BG Lloyd England
1919 - 1921	BG J. S. Harris
1921 - 1922	BG V. A. Beeson
1922 - 1925	BG H. L. McAlister
1925 - 1927	BG J. R. Wayne
1927 - 1929	BG J. S. Harris
1929 - 1937	BG E. L. Compere
1937 - 1941	BG D. B. Bryd
1941 - 1945	BG E. L. Compere
1945 - 1949	BG H. L. McAlister
1949 - 1950	BG E. T. Ricks
1950 - 1951	BG H. L. McAlister
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1984 - 1986	MG Fred M. Carter
1986 - 1993	MG James A. Ryan
1993 - 1996	MG Melvin C. Thrash
1996 - Present	MG Don C. Morrow

Governors and Adjutants General of Arkansas

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GOVERNORS AND ADJUTANTS GENERAL OF ARKANSAS

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Compiled by MAJ Larry W. Curtis
Historian, Arkansas National Guard
as of 26 October 1993

ADJUTANTS GENERAL

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1993-Pres MG Melvin C. Thrash

Mrs. Thrash
758-8775

going on Sheep Book

1996 - Pres. MG DON C. MORROW

TAG-AZ-HSC (870)

27 October 1993

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ADJUTANT GENERAL, ATTN: COLONEL LANGSTON
CHIEF OF STAFF, ARKANSAS ARMY NATIONAL
GUARD, CAMP ROBINSON, N. LITTLE ROCK, AR
72118-2200

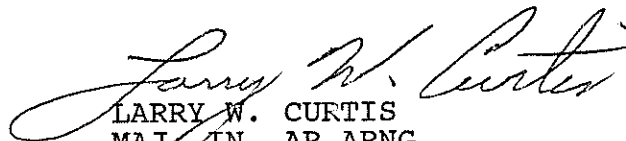
SUBJECT: Listing of Arkansas Governors and Adjutants
General

1. Attached as enclosure 1 is a listing of Arkansas
Governors and Adjutants Generals for Arkansas Territory
1819-1836 and the State of Arkansas 1836-1993 as requested.

2. The listing was compiled from secondary sources.
Therefore the accuracy of the data is dependent on the
thoroughness of the original researchers. At enclosure 2, I
have attached copies of the secondary source documents I
used to compile this list.

3. POC is the undersigned, extension 4676 or 4700.

FOR THE ADJUTANT GENERAL:


LARRY W. CURTIS
MAJ, IN, AR ARNG
HISTORIAN

**GOVERNORS AND ADJUTANTS GENERAL
FOR ARKANSAS TERRITORY
1819 - 1836**

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**GOVERNORS AND ADJUTANTS GENERAL
FOR THE STATE OF ARKANSAS
1836-1993**

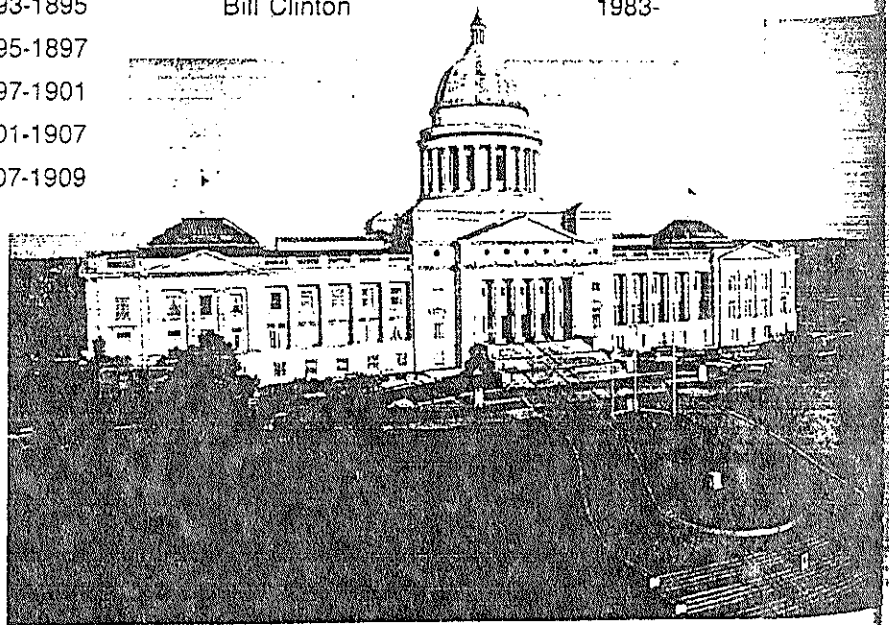
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The Arkansas State Capitol building in Little Rock was completed in 1915. The building is about one quarter the size of the Capitol in Washington, D.C. It is made from Arkansas marble which was brought from the area around Batesville.

ROSTER
THE ADJUTANTS GENERAL
1909 - 1962

The Adjutants General who have served the Arkansas National Guard from 14 July 1909 through 31 December 1962 are listed below.

It will be noted that some have served one or more terms as The Adjutant General.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
Benjamin W. Green	Brig Gen	14 Jul 1909	5 Nov 1913
Lloyd England	Brig Gen	6 Nov 1913	4 Dec 1919
Joe Harris	Brig Gen	5 Dec 1919	1 Feb 1921
Virgil A. Beeson	Brig Gen	2 Feb 1921	1 Dec 1922
Heber L. McAlister	Brig Gen	2 Dec 1922	30 Jun 1925
James R. Wayne	Brig Gen	1 Jul 1925	30 Jun 1927
Joe S. Harris	Brig Gen	1 Jul 1927	22 Apr 1929
E. L. Compere	Brig Gen	29 Apr 1929	18 Jan 1937
Daniel B. Byrd	Brig Gen	19 Jan 1937	14 Jan 1941
E. L. Compere	Brig Gen	15 Jan 1941	9 Jan 1945
Heber L. McAlister	Brig Gen	10 Jan 1945	11 Jan 1949
Earl T. Ricks	Brig Gen	12 Jan 1949	30 Sep 1950
Heber L. McAlister	Brig Gen	1 Oct 1950	15 Jan 1951
John B. Morris, Jr.	Brig Gen	16 Jan 1951	12 Jan 1953
Lucien Abraham	Maj Gen	13 Jan 1953	11 Jan 1955
Sherman T. Clinger	Maj Gen	12 Jan 1955	
<i>Charles H. Wilson</i>	<i>Maj Gen</i>	<i>20 Feb 1977</i>	<i>15 Feb 1971</i>
Thomas M Phillips		16 Feb 1971	73

The Adjutant General's Office, commonly referred to as the State Military Department, is the administrative office for the Army and Air National Guard of Arkansas.

The Governor, as Commander-in-Chief, appoints the Adjutant General, who under the law appoints and employs such assistants to aid him in carrying out the responsibilities of his office.

Joseph H. Churchill
Thomas C. Armstrong
James H. Jones

73 - 75
75 - 79
19 -

CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF ADJUTANTS GENERAL FOR ARKANSAS

1804 - ARKANSAS WAS A PART OF THE LOUISIANA DISTRICT OF THE INDIANA TERRITORY.

1804 - THE ARKANSAS MILITIA WAS ESTABLISHED WITH 40 WHITES AND 3 NEGROS AVAILABLE FOR MILITIA DUTY.

1805 - ARKANSAS BECAME THE DISTRICT OF NEW MADRID OF THE LOUISIANA TERRITORY.

1806 - ARKANSAS BECAME THE DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS OF THE LOUISIANA TERRITORY.

1806 - MAJOR DAVID DELAUNY WAS THE INSPECTOR AND ADJUTANT GENERAL OF THE ARKANSAS DISTRICT OF THE LOUISIANA TERRITORY.

1812 - LOUISIANA TERRITORY WAS RENAMED THE MISSOURI TERRITORY.

1813 - THE ARKANSAS DISTRICT WAS MADE A COUNTY OF THE MISSOURI TERRITORY.

1819 - ARKANSAS BECAME A TERRITORY.

ADJUTANTS GENERAL FOR ARKANSAS TERRITORY

1819-1823 A.P. SPENCER BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED

1823-1825 TERRENCE FARRELLY BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED

1826-1828 BENJAMIN DESHA BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED

1828-1832 WHARTON RECTOR JR. BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED

1832-1833 ARCHIBALD YELL BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED

1833-1835 WILLIAM FIELD BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED

1835-1836 WHARTON RECTOR JR. BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED

1836-1836 DANIEL T. WITTER BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED

ADJUTANTS GENERAL FOR THE STATE OF ARKANSAS

1836- JOHN N. BOYLE BIOGRAPHY STILL BEING RESEARCHED

1843- S. H. HEMPSTEAD BIOGRAPHY STILL BEING RESEARCHED

1845- ALBERT PIKE BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED

1846- SOLON BORLAND BIOGRAPHY STILL BEING RESEARCHED

1848-1849 JOHN S. ROANE BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED

1849-1851 ALLAN WOOD BIOGRAPHY STILL BEING RESEARCHED

1853-1860 JOHN HUTT BIOGRAPHY STILL BEING RESEARCHED

1864-1864 G.A. HENRY PROVISIONAL ADJUTANT GENERAL BIOGRAPHY STILL BEING RESEARCHED

1864-1864 F. M. SAMS BIOGRAPHY STILL BEING RESEARCHED

1864-1868 ALBERT W. BISHOP BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED

1868-1873 KEYS DANFORTH -PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNOR AND ADJUTANT GENERAL BIOGRAPHY STILL BEING RESEARCHED

1873-1974 THIS PERIOD OF TIME WAS KNOWN AS THE BROOKS-BAXTER WAS. IT INVOLVED A DISPUTE OVER THE REAL GOVERNOR OF ARKANSAS. BOTH SIDES HAD A MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT.

GENERAL ROBERT F. CATTERSON WAS ADJUTANT GENERAL FOR THE BROOKS SIDE. BIOGRAPHY STILL BEING RESEARCHED.

GENERAL FRANK STRONG 1873-1874 WAS THE ADJUTANT GENERAL FOR THE BAXTER SIDE. BIOGRAPHY STILL BEING RESEARCHED.

FINALLY PRESIDENT GRANT RECOGNIZED BAXTER AS THE GOVERNOR AND THE BROOKS FACTION WAS DISSOLVED.

1874-1874 M. MCCANANNY BIOGRAPHY STILL BEING RESEARCHED

1874-1877 CHARLES H. WOODS BIOGRAPHY STILL BEING RESEARCHED

1877-1881 JAMES POMEROY BIOGRAPHY STILL BEING RESEARCHED

1879- IN 1879 THE STATE LEGISLATURE ABOLISHED THE OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL. THE GOVERNOR'S PRIVATE SECRETARY PERFORMED THE DUTIES OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL.

1881-1882 SAM J. CHURCHILL BIOGRAPHY STILL BEING RESEARCHED

1883-1883 JAMES F. READ BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED

1883-1884 L.N. MCGILL BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1884-1885 W.H. LANGFORD BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1885- W.B. HUGHES BIOGRAPHY STILL BEING RESEARCHED
1889-1891 JOHN C. ENGLAND BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1891-1891 A. W. GILES BIOGRAPHY STILL BEING RESEARCHED
1891-1893 KIE OLDHAM BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED

1893 - IN 1893 A YOUNG OFFICER WITH THE U.S. ARMY WAS ASSIGNED TO THE MILITARY DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS. LIEUTENANT WILLIAM B. SAMPLES WAS IN CHARGE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE. HOWEVER HE WAS NOT THE ADJUTANT GENERAL, THIS DUTY STILL WAS PART OF THE JOB OF THE PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNOR. LT. SAMPLES ABILITY TO HANDLE THINGS ALLOWED THE SECRETARIES TO TOTALLY LEAVE THE RUNNING OF THE STATE MILITIA TO HIM.

1894-1897 KIE OLDHAM BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1897-1900 ARTHUR NEILL BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED.
1901-1907 CHARLES JACOBSON BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1907-1909 PAUL LITTLE BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1909-1909 BRUCE T. BULLION BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED

MAY 31, 1909 - THE STATE LEGISLATURE APPROVED THE SEPARATION OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL DUTIES FROM THE PRIVATE SECRETARY OF THE GOVERNOR AND RE-ESTABLISHED THE POSITION OF ADJUTANT GENERAL.

1909-1913 B.W. GREEN BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1913-1919 LLOYD ENGLAND BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED.
1919-1921 J.S. HARRIS BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1921-1922 V.A. BEESON BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED.
1922-1925 H.L. MCALISTER BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED.
1925-1927 J.R. WAYNE BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1927-1929 J.S. HARRIS BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1929-1937 E.L. COMPERE BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1937-1941 D.B. BYRD BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1941-1945 E.L. COMPERE BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1945-1949 H.L. MCALISTER BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED

1949-1951 E.T. RICKS BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1950-1951 H.L. MCALISTER BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1951-1953 J.B. MORRIS BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1953-1955 L. ABRAHAM BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1955-1966 SHERMAN T. CLINGER BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1967-1970 CHARLES H. WILSON BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1971-1973 THOMAS M. PHILLIPS BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1973-1975 JOSEPH R. CHAPPELL, JR. BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1975-1979 THOMAS C. ARMSTRONG BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1979-1981 JAMES H. JONES BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1981-1983 HAROLD L. GWATNEY BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1983-1984 JAMES H. JONES BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1984-1986 FRÉD M. CARTER BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED
1986- JAMES A. RYAN BIOGRAPHY OBTAINED



BG Joe S. Harris, 1927
-1929

BG Ebenezer L.
Compere, 1929-1937

BG Daniel B. Byrd,
1937-1941

BG Ebenezer L.
Compere, 1941-1945



BG Heber L. McAlister,
1945-1949

BG Earl T. Ricks, 1949
-1950

BG Heber L. McAlister,
1950-1951

BG John B. Morris, Jr.,
1951-1953

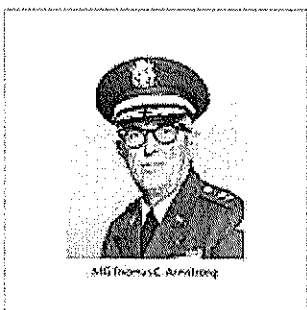
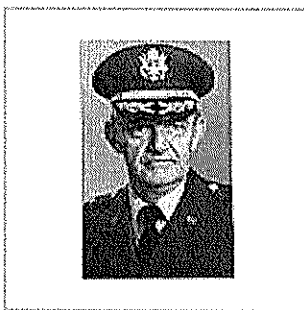


MG Lucien Abram,
1953-1955

MG Sherman T.
Clinger, 1955-1966

MG Charles H. Wilson,
1967-1970

MG Thomas M.
Phillips, 1971-1973

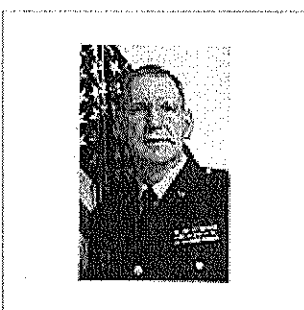
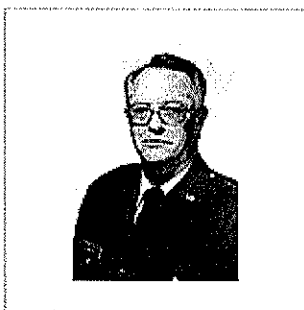


MG Joseph R. Chappell, Jr., 1973–1975

MG Thomas C. Armstrong, 1975–1979

MG James H. Jones, 1979–1981

MG Harold L. Gwatney, 1981–1983

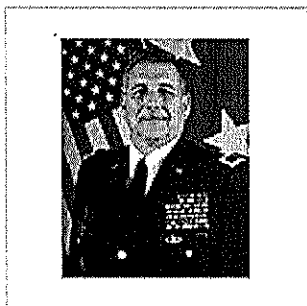
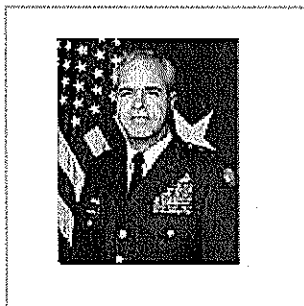


MG Fred M. Carter, 1984–1986

MG James A. Ryan, 1986–1993

MG Melvin C. Thrash, 1993–1996

MG Don C. Morrow, 1996–2006



MG Ronald S. Chastain, 2006–2007

MG William D. Wofford, 2007–present

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From: gc-gateway@rootsweb.com, obituaries@rootsweb.com
Subject: [OBITS] Major General Earl Thornton Ricks (1908-1954)
Date: Sat, 15 Mar 2014 23:55:19 -0000

This is a Message Board Post that is gatewayed to this mailing list.

Author: TheaGoodman
Surnames: Jordan, Ricks, Brown, Hoes
Classification: obituary

Message Board URL:

<http://boards.rootsweb.com/topics.obits2/78141/mb.ashx>

Message Board Post:

Earl Thornton Ricks (1908-1954)

Major General Earl Thornton Ricks served as chief of the Air Force Division, National Guard Bureau, in Washington DC and as mayor of Hot Springs (Garland County), helping end Leo McLaughlin's political domination there. The Ricks National Guard Armory in Little Rock (Pulaski County) was named for him to commemorate his career, which spanned the most significant years of early aviation history.

Earl Ricks was born on July 9, 1908, in West Point, Mississippi, the only child of Nancy Jordan and Earl Paul Ricks, an ice plant owner/manager. The family moved to Stamps (Lafayette County) in about 1916. After high school graduation at Stamps, Ricks followed his lifelong interest in flying at Parks Air College in St. Louis, Missouri. After he earned his wings in 1929, his father bought him an airplane—a \$375, two-passenger biplane—and he took passengers up, barnstorming style.

In 1930, he married Hazel Brown, daughter of June Hoes and Thomas Addis Brown, a partner in Bodcaw Lumber Company, then the world's largest lumber company. Ricks and his wife had four children. In 1935, the family moved to Hot Springs, and he partnered with Raymond Clinton in the Ricks-Clinton Buick Company. Two years later, Ricks bought the former home of spa and railroad entrepreneur Samuel Fordyce—a fourteen-room log structure on 478 acres. Still privately owned, it was designated the Fordyce-Ricks Historic District by the National Register of Historic Places in 2003.

In March 1940, Ricks joined the Arkansas National Guard, 154th Observation Squadron. By September, he had entered active army service, transferring later to the Seventeenth Bomb Group. Ricks was quickly recognized as a leader, in 1941 becoming commanding officer of the Thirty-sixth Strategic Air Base in Miami, Florida. The

base was the debarkation point for World War II troops to North Africa. Ricks later joined them as commanding officer of Payne Field in Cairo, Egypt.

Ricks was promoted to colonel on April 26, 1944. He became deputy commander, Southwest Pacific Wing, Air Transport Command, based in Australia, New Guinea, and the Philippines. At the end of the Pacific campaign, Ricks piloted the Japanese delegation from Ie Shima to Manila, Philippines, to receive surrender terms from General Douglas MacArthur. Later, Ricks commanded 200 air transports, landing two airborne occupational divisions at Atsugi airdrome, Yokahama, Japan.

Ricks's keen humor entertained groups, turning even small experiences into adventures. His 6' 2", 230-pound frame made it difficult for him to board an airplane, and once he said he never wore a parachute, even in combat, because there would be no way he could exit if the plane were shot down. He personally logged more than 13,000 air miles.

After the war, Ricks returned to Hot Springs, rejoined his automobile agency, and started a charter flying service. Ricks joined a veterans group, led by Sidney McMath, campaigning against a twenty-year-old political machine led by Mayor Leo McLaughlin. This veterans group, known as the "GIs," outwitted the incumbents and made a clean sweep of the 1946 city elections. Ricks replaced McLaughlin as mayor but eventually chose to serve only one term (1947-1949). While the reform resulted in the loss of three million dollars in general city tax revenue, Ricks declared that Hot Springs was more valuable as a spa city than as a gambling city. Without raising taxes, he was able to improve city infrastructure by reorganizing water, health, and sanitation departments, and developing playgrounds.

In 1948, McMath was elected governor of Arkansas, and Ricks accepted McMath's appointment as commander of the Arkansas National Guard. On April 21, 1949, he was named brigadier general; by August 1950, he was one of the first state adjutants general.

Major General Ricks received his final promotion on February 27, 1951, becoming chief of the Air Force Division and deputy chief of the National Guard Bureau in Washington DC. His wife moved with him, but his children stayed in Hot Springs. He preferred they be raised and educated in Arkansas.

After a short illness following the removal of a cancerous growth on his leg, Ricks died on January 4, 1954, at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington. An unprecedented number of military figures attended his Hot Springs funeral: ten generals and seventy-five to 100 members of the 154th Squadron. Five flights of RF51 fighter jets and B26 bombers paid tribute, and city hall closed. A huge funeral cortege traveled 100 miles to Stamps for his burial. McMath served as a pallbearer.

Ricks received many awards in his lifetime, including the Legion of Merit, the Air Medal, and the Commendation Ribbon. He was inducted posthumously into the Arkansas Aviation Hall of Fame in 1983. The 188th Fighter Wing at Fort Smith (Sebastian County) was dubbed "Ricks Rippers" to honor him, and the Air National Guard Outstanding Airmanship Award is named for him.

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