

# AVIATION WALL OF HONOR



## **Colonel William W. Gray**

William W. Gray was born on August 3, 1925 in Ishpeming, Michigan to William and Mary Gray. After graduating from Ishpeming High School, he entered the United States Military Academy at West Point. Upon graduation in June 1947, he was commissioned in the U.S. Army Air Forces. Primary and Basic Flight Training was at Randolph AFB, Texas followed by Advanced

Training at Williams AFB, Arizona.

Following graduation in 1948, he was assigned to the 363<sup>rd</sup> TAC RECON WING at Langley AFB, Virginia flying the RF-80A, before transferring to Shaw AFB, South Carolina.

Years 1950 through 1952 were spent with the 57<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska. This was followed with assignments at Truax Field, Madison, Wisconsin, Sioux City Air Base, Iowa, Moody AFB, Georgia, and Perrin AFB, Texas. The years 1954 through May 1959 were spent at Ent AFB, Colorado, Headquarters Air Defense Command, Flying Safety Office.

In 1959, he returned to Elmendorf, Alaska and was there until January 1964. While on duty, he flew the T-33 exclusively, but in his spare time he roamed about in a Piper PA-16 with wheels, skis, and floats he had purchased himself. He had great fun being a bush pilot.

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Back in the U.S. and four different bases over a two and one-half year span was followed by assignment to the 13<sup>th</sup> Air Force at Clark Air Base, Republic of the Philippines. His two years there also included safety training at our units in Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam.

In September 1968 to March 1969, he was attached to the 355<sup>th</sup> TAC FTR WING at the Takhli Royal Thai Air Force Base in Thailand and, following his promotion to Colonel, was transferred to Tan Son Nhut Air Base at Saigon, Republic of Vietnam.

March to June 1972, he took Turkish language training at the Defense Language School in Monterey, California in preparation to being assigned as Base Commander, Ankara AFS, Ankara, Turkey.

His final assignment, June 1974 to July 1977, was Base Commander, Newark AFS, Heath, Ohio. He retired on August 1, 1977 after 30 years, one month, 28 days of active duty in U.S. Army Air Forces and United States Air Force.

His Decorations and Awards include:

- Bronze Star, 1 Oak Leaf Cluster
- Air Medal 1 Oak Leaf Cluster
- Meritorious Service Medal
- Air Force Commendation Medal 1 Oak, Leaf, Cluster
- Presidential Unit Citation
- Air Force Outstanding Unit Award
- National Defense Service Medal
- World War II Victory Medal
- American Campaign Medal
- Vietnam Service Medal 7 Oak Leaf Clusters
- Republic Vietnam Campaign Medal
- Air Force Longevity Service Ribbon 6 Oak Leaf Clusters
- Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon

His Missions include 21 Combat, 85.9 Flying Hours, ? Combat Support, 56.4 Flying Hours

T J Mudge Feb. 2004