



### **Major General Mary E. Clarke**

Major General Mary Elizabeth Clarke was born on December 3, 1924 in Rochester, New York. After graduating from Rochester West High School, she became a secretary and then a defense worker before enlisting in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) in August 1945.

After completing basic training and later serving as a supply sergeant at Camp Stoneman, California in 1947, Clarke was sent to Germany, in 1948, serving with the Berlin Brigade during the Berlin Airlift crisis.

She was commissioned upon graduation from the Women's Army Corps (WAC) Officer Candidate School Class #2, Camp Lee, Virginia on 29 September 1949.

Clarke's next assignments were command of WAC detachments at the United States Army Chemical Center and Valley Forge General Hospital. Clarke then did recruitment duty in Baltimore for a year. She then traveled to Tokyo and became a commanding officer of a WAC unit. Upon returning to the U.S., she served from 1958 to 1971 in various staff positions in several states, as well as Washington, D.C., where she worked with the Office of Equal Opportunity and at the Pentagon.

In 1972, now a colonel, Clarke was assigned as the commander of the U.S. WAC Center and School in Fort McClellan, Alabama. She was then appointed as the department director of the WAC Advisory Office before being promoted to brigadier general and becoming the last Director of the WAC on August 1, 1975. The WAC was dissolved on April 28, 1978.

Clarke was promoted to major general in November 1978, becoming the first woman to attain this rank. She oversaw the movement of the U.S Army Chemical School to Fort McClellan, Alabama, where she was appointed as the commander of the U.S Army Military Police and Chemical Schools. This made her the first woman to ever command a major military installation. She retired in 1981 after 36 years of serving the country—the longest of any woman in U.S Army history at the time.

Her military awards include: the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Women's Army Corps Service Medal, American Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Army of Occupation Medal WW II, Medal for Humane Action and the National Defense Service Medal w/ Oak Leaf Cluster.