



Colonel Elizabeth Ann Ray

Colonel Elizabeth Ann Ray was born on May 31, 1913 in Winnsboro, Texas. She graduated from high school in Mangum, Oklahoma and attended Oklahoma College for Women for a year. In 1934 she earned a journalism degree from the University of Oklahoma. After graduation, Ray worked for a newspaper in Anadarko, Oklahoma. The War Department later recruited her, where she served in the Public Relations Bureau.

In 1942, Ray joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) and attended the WAAC Officer Candidate School at Fort Des Moines, Iowa. She was commissioned on October 3, 1942 as a graduate of Class #4.

She had brief assignments at the training center at Daytona Beach and at the WAAC Headquarters in the Pentagon before being transferred overseas in June 1943. Ray was stationed at the headquarters of Dwight D. Eisenhower in Algeria and served as commanding officer of a Women's Army Corps platoon attached to the 15th Air Force in Italy and North Africa.

In January 1944, she was appointed commander of a WAC intelligence squadron at 15th Air Force Headquarters in Bari, Italy. She returned to the U.S. in late 1945 and was assigned to the inactive reserve.

On May 10, 1949, Ray was reactivated in the Women in the Air Force (WAF) and sent to Mitchel Field, New York, where she commanded female troops then worked in personnel and served as assistant public information officer for the Continental Air Command.

In 1950, she attended Armed Forces Informational School at Carlisle Barracks and served as Deputy Director of WAF (Women in the Air Force) from 1953 to 1955.

From 1955 to 1958, she was Executive Secretary of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) a Department of Defense federal advisory committee established in 1951 by then -Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall.

Colonel Ray was assigned to the Strategic Air Command at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska in 1958, where she served as chief of the SAC promotion and records branch.

In September 1961, President John F. Kennedy appointed her Director of WAF and she served in this capacity until her retirement in 1965.

After retiring from the WAF, she returned to her journalistic roots in her adopted home state of Oklahoma, becoming public relations director at Oklahoma College of Liberal Arts (now University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma) in Chickasha, Oklahoma. In 1966 she became grants coordinator with the University of Oklahoma Medical Center, and from 1968 until her retirement in 1975 she served as assistant dean for academic affairs at the University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, Texas.

Colonel Ray's military awards include the Bronze Star, The Women's Army Corps Service Medal, American Campaign Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, World War II Victory medal and National Defense Service Medal.

She died on December 7, 2011 and is Buried at Arlington National Cemetery.