

Colonel Francis J. Bush - Class 31-42

In 1937 Colonel Bush enlisted in the New Jersey National Guard as a private in the horse-drawn field artillery. During the Second World War he attended Field Artillery Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma graduating with Class 31-42 on September 22, 1942. He rose to the rank of first lieutenant, serving in the European Theater with the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team. He jumped into southern France with the 460th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion on August 15, 1944 and fought in five major campaigns. In the immediate post war years, he took part in the occupation of both Germany and Japan.

Progressively more challenging assignments took him, and often his family, to postings in the USA, Europe, Asia and South America. In 1965, as the commander of the 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 19th Field Artillery, 1st Air Cavalry Division (Airmobile), then Lt. Col. Bush deployed his unit by ship to the Republic of Vietnam where it successfully pioneered radically new helicopter assault techniques. In his final decade of service, Col. Bush's fluent Spanish prompted the Department of the Army to request he specialize in military foreign affairs. He served in the highest-level U.S. Army Military Assistance Group command positions in Panama, Venezuela and Spain.

In 1977 he retired after 40 years of honorable service. Among his decorations are the Legion of Merit (four awards), Air Medal (four awards), Purple Heart (two awards), Glider Badge, the Master Parachutist Badge with combat jump star, and the Belgian and French Croix de Guerre.