

Colonel Richard M. Jennings (Army Officer Candidate Course # 2-47, Fort Benning, Georgia)

Colonel Jennings was born November 7, 1927 in Washington, D.C., the son of a US Army officer. Until age 14, he lived at various Army postings with his parents. He witnessed the battle of Pearl Harbor in 1941 as a 14-year-old "Army brat" at Hickam Field, the bomber base next to Pearl. After the attack, he was evacuated to California with his mother and sister on the first naval convoy. They settled in Palo Alto to await the return of his father from the Pacific war. At age 16, he attended Stanford University but, in the middle of his sophomore year, in June 1945, he enlisted in the Army Specialized Training Program, remaining as a cadet at Stanford for two more quarters.

In January 1946, he went on to various postings with the Army at Fort Lewis, WA and Fort Benning, GA. He was slated to be an infantry combat platoon leader but noted that field artillery lieutenants, rather than walking, rode in jeeps and had a good song, and he was able to become a second lieutenant in the Field Artillery upon graduation from the Army Officer Candidate Course Class # 2 at Fort Benning on April 23, 1947, followed by the Field Artillery Basic Officer Course at Fort Sill that he completed in August.

Colonel Jennings volunteered for overseas duty, and in late 1947, he sailed to Europe and joined the First Infantry Division in the army of occupation of Germany. He served in an artillery unit for the next two and a half years as a platoon leader, often on maneuvers near the German/Czech border during the crises in Berlin. After various postings in Europe, he joined the Korean War. He was twice awarded the Bronze Star Medal. In the final months of the war, he was chosen as American Aide to the Chief of Staff, Republic of Korea Army General Paik and traveled with him throughout South Korea.

After the war ended in 1953, he returned to Phoenix where he completed a BA Degree in Political Science at Arizona State University and then left again for Germany in 1956. In this second tour in Germany, he served in Augsburg, Wurzburg, and Stuttgart where he made up the nuclear fire plan for the VII Corps sector in Southern Germany. Afterwards, he was sent to Fort Sill, Oklahoma as an instructor of nuclear weapons' employment and artillery tactics. Then, he was sent to the German Army General Staff College in Hamburg for its two-year General Staff course, one of only two Americans to be selected.

Colonel Jennings commanded the 9th Artillery in Kitzingen, Germany with a bunker full of live nuclear weapons. After this, he moved the family to Arlington, VA and served in the Pentagon on the US Army General Staff in Europe, Middle East, and Africa operations. He simultaneously completed an MA in Government at Georgetown, University. Volunteering for Vietnam in 1968, he led a battalion and was awarded two more Bronze Stars, eight Air Medals, and the Legion of Merit. On a second tour in Vietnam, he led a brigade of 2,700 artillerymen, including a battalion floating on rafts in the Mekong River. After his five campaigns in Vietnam and a short Hawaii experience, he was named Assistant for NATO/Warsaw Pact Affairs to the US Secretary of Defense.

He was sent to the Army War College in Carlisle, PA. After finishing this course and a Doctorate in Government at Georgetown, he became Professor of International Relations at the National War College (NWC). At the NWC from 1972-75, he was the most published author of the faculty and was awarded his second Legion of Merit. He retired on September 1, 1975.