

## **Brigadier General Thomas J. Kennedy (Class 1-41)**

Brigadier General Thomas J. Kennedy began his military career with enlistment on 26 September 1939, in Company B, 137th Infantry of the 35th Division at Emporia, Kansas. This decision would temporarily interrupt his college career since his unit was mobilized with the 35th Division on 23 December 1940. He left the Division and received a commission as Second Lieutenant, Field Artillery in 1941. By May 1943, he had been promoted to Captain and was reassigned to the newly activated 63rd Infantry Division as Commander, Headquarters Battery and Battalion Communications Officer of the 718th Field Artillery Battalion.

In 1944, Kennedy and the 63rd Division were deployed to the European Theatre of Operations. They were in contact with the enemy for 125 continuous days during 1944-1945 in France and Germany, where the Division not only penetrated the Siegfried Line, but was involved in crossing the Rhine and the Danube Rivers. For his service during World War II, General Kennedy was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, European, African and Middle East Campaign Medal with two Battle Stars and the National Defense Service Medal, to mention a few.

Following the war, General Kennedy returned to the Kansas National Guard and the 35th Division with successive appointments as Assistant G-3, Division Chemical Officer, Inspector General and Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2. With the 35th Division's deactivation in 1963, he became the Executive Officer of the newly formed 69th Infantry Brigade and later, with his promotion to Colonel, became Deputy Brigade Commander. He held that post when the Brigade was ordered to active Duty in May 1968. In September 1968 he became the Brigade's Commanding Officer when it was assigned to the 5th Infantry Division (M) at Fort Carson, CO. and held that position until December 1969 when the Brigade was released from Active Duty. For this period of service, Kennedy was awarded the Legion of Merit and two Army Commendation Medals.

In 1970, he was named Commanding General of the Brigade, a position he held for the next six years. On his retirement, Kennedy was awarded a second Legion of Merit for Distinguished Service. Following his retirement, he was appointed Director of Alcoholic Beverage Control for the State of Kansas, a position he held for seven years.

Kennedy has been active in many organizations including serving as President of the Topeka Chapter of the AUSA, President of the NGAKS, President of the Topeka Chapter of the MOWW and State Commander of MOWW, Commander of Capitol Post #1 of the American Legion, Chairman, Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs, and Chairman, Military Academy Nomination Committee for Senator Sam Brownback. He also handled disasters and disorders at the scene, i.e., the flood of 1951, the Tornado at Meriden and the Riots of 1968 in Kansas City.