

MAJOR GENERAL JOHN D. THOMAS

US Army, Retired



MG John D. Thomas, Jr. was born in Plymouth, Pennsylvania. He enlisted as a Private in 1968 and was commissioned following his graduation as Distinguished Graduate from the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School. Initial assignments included command and staff positions in the 7th and 2nd Infantry Divisions. He then commanded an Advanced Individual Training Company at Fort Bliss, Texas. Following completion of the Army Basic Cryptologic and Electronic Warfare Officers Course and the Military Intelligence (MI) Officer Advance Course, he was assigned to Field Station Augsburg, Germany. Upon his return from Germany and service as Executive Officer, 1st Army Security Aviation Company, Fort Bliss, Texas, he commanded C Company (Guardrail), 15th MI Battalion (Aerial Exploitation), 504th MI Brigade. Following attendance at the Armed Forces Staff College, he served in

intelligence and electronic warfare staff positions at the Combined Forces Command/US Forces Korea and on the Department of the Army Staff.

MG Thomas was then selected to command the 3rd MI Battalion (Aerial Exploitation), 501st MI Brigade, at Camp Humphreys, Korea. Following graduation from the National War College he was assigned as Deputy Chief for Intelligence, Special Technical Operations Division, J3, The Joint Staff, Washington, DC.

MG Thomas then assumed command of the 111th MI Brigade at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. While in command, he spearheaded the development of the Joint Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (JUAV) testing company, championed the Pioneer UAV as the Army's near-term answer to over-the-hill reconnaissance, and pressed for full integration of the lessons learned from Operations DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM into the US Army Intelligence Center's curriculum. He led the organization and training of the brigade's UAV Company that deployed to Operation DESERT STORM and provided aerial reconnaissance support to the VII US Corps.

Following brigade command, he was selected for Brigadier General and served as Deputy Commanding General and Assistant Commandant of the US Army Intelligence Center and Fort Huachuca. While serving in this position he organized an operational

test for the All Source Analysis System that resulted in the system being fielded Army-wide.

He was then assigned to the Associated Deputy Director for Operations (Military Support) at the National Security Agency (NSA) and as Deputy Chief, Central Security Service. From these positions he was able to directly influence the tasking of national intelligence collection to ensure that combatant commanders around the world received timely and accurate intelligence support. His efforts paid off during successful operations in Somalia, Iraq, Bosnia and Haiti. In August 1996 he assumed command of the United States Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) where he developed new concepts for intelligence support to operational commanders and significantly enhanced the capability of the US Army Land Information Warfare Activity. In June 1998, he returned to the United States Army Intelligence Center and Fort Huachuca as the Commanding General.

During his career, MG John Thomas remained an inspiration to the entire MI Corps. He successfully positioned Army intelligence for the 21st century. He provided personal mentoring and oversaw the training of literally thousands of Army intelligence soldiers. He championed the change in intelligence collection strategies that eliminated historical single-discipline stovepipes. He spearheaded the conceptual development of the Distributed Common Ground Station-Army, reshaped the future of tactical ground Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) collection with his vision for the Prophet system, and led the development of the Shadow UAV as the Army's organic brigade-level UAV. He developed Army intelligence's transformation strategy for unifying intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance activities on the battlefield and provided the framework for processor integration. His efforts led to information being identified as an element of combat power and facilitated the Army's transformation to the Objective Force.

MG Thomas retired on 11 September 2001, the same day he handed over command of the US Army Intelligence Center. His awards include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (1 Oak Leaf Cluster), the Meritorious Service Medal (1 Oak Leaf Cluster), the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Army Commendation Medal and the Good Conduct Medal. He is also authorized to wear the Joint Chiefs of Staff Identification Badge and the Army Staff Identification Badge. MG Thomas is a Master Army Aviator rated in both fixed wing and rotary aircraft and served as a fixed-wing instructor pilot.

MG Thomas was inducted into the MI Hall of Fame in 2003.