



BIOGRAPHY

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

MAJOR GENERAL JOSEPH A. CUNNINGHAM

Retired Aug. 1, 1972. Died Nov. 23, 1991.

Major General Joseph Austin Cunningham is commander of the Alaskan Air Command with Headquarters at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska.

General Cunningham was born in Weston, W.Va., in 1915. He graduated from Washington Irving High School at Clarksburg, W.Va., in 1933, and from West Virginia University, Morgantown, W.Va., in 1938. He then completed the Army Air Corps Flying Schools at Randolph and Kelly fields, Texas, and received his pilot wings and a commission as second lieutenant in May 1939.

After serving in various flying duties with the 34th Bombardment Squadron, Pendleton, Ore., he became operations officer and deputy flight commander. In March 1942 he assumed command of the squadron.

In June 1942 General Cunningham was assigned to the 319th Bombardment Group at Barksdale Field, La., as operations officer. He later went to the European Theater of Operations with the group where he flew combat in B-26 aircraft and became group commander. Late in 1943 he was assigned to the XII Fighter Command in North Africa as the deputy chief of staff, A-3 (Operations). He returned to the United States in September 1944, and became deputy base commander, Greenville, S.C.

From March 1945 to August 1946 he commanded various units at Morris Field, N.C.; Greenville, S.C.; and Moody Field, Ga. After attending the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan., in 1946-1947, General Cunningham was assigned to Headquarters Eleventh Air Force, Harrisburg, Pa., as assistant deputy chief of staff, A-3 (Operations). From July 1948 to July 1950 he served as a staff officer with the Eastern Air Defense Force at Mitchel Air Force Base, N.Y.

General Cunningham graduated from Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Va., in February 1951, and was assigned to the War Plans Division, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C.

From August 1954 to September 1956 General Cunningham served in Germany where he commanded the 317th Troop Carrier Wing and 7101st Support Group. He returned to the U.S. to attend the National War College in 1957-1958. He then became vice commander of the Air Rescue Service (now Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service) at Orlando, Fla., and in July 1959 he assumed command. He commanded the Air Rescue Service for four years.

In July 1963 he became deputy chief of staff for operations at Headquarters Military Air Transport Service (now Military Airlift Command), Scott Air Force Base, Ill. He commanded the Twenty-second Air Force, Military Airlift Command, Travis Air Force Base, Calif., from August 1966 to July 1968. He then returned to Washington, D.C., where he served as deputy director for civil disturbance planning and operations, Office of the Chief of Staff, Department of the Army.



He assumed command of the Alaskan Air Command with headquarters at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, in August 1969.

He is a command pilot. His military decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal (Air Force Design), Distinguished Service Medal (Army Design), Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Air Medal with oak leaf cluster, and Army Commendation Medal.

(Current as of Oct. 1, 1969)