

Maj. Gen. Frank H. Smoker, Jr.,  
USAF, Ret.  
Inducted 1998

Major General Frank H. Smoker, Jr., served as Commander of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard 1978 to 1985, retiring after 42 years of service to his state and nation. He was responsible for advising and assisting the Adjutant General of Pennsylvania in the administration of Air National Guard forces (47 units) within the state and for providing the command, control and supervision of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard required to accomplish the federal and state missions.

Smoker began his military career in February 1943 by enlisting in the Army Air Corps. He was commissioned as second lieutenant and received his navigator wings in October 1944.

He served with the Eighth Air Force in the European Theater of Operations from January 1945 to June 1946. While serving in England with the 92nd Bombardment Group, he flew 26 missions over Europe totaling 222 combat hours as a B-17 aircraft navigator. Shortly after VE Day (8 May 1945), his group was transferred to Istres Field, France, where the group participated in the Green Project, ferrying troops from Marseille to Casablanca, Africa. He was released from active duty in July 1946 as a Captain in the Reserves.

In October 1946, General Smoker joined the Pennsylvania Air National Guard and on 17 January 1947, he became a member of the Headquarters, 53rd Wing upon its initial federal recognition. This headquarters was the first Pennsylvania Air National Guard unit to be federally recognized following World War II. While attending college, he served in various Air National Guard capacities in the 53rd Fighter Wing including that of controller, personnel equipment officer, and squadron commander.

In July 1949, Captain Smoker was assigned to full-time duty with the HQ 53rd Wing. In order to qualify for pilot training, Captain Smoker requested and received a demotion to first lieutenant, and entered USAF pilot training under the Air National Guard quota in March 1951. He attended basic pilot training at Perrin AFB, Texas, and Advanced Pilot Training at Craig AFB, Alabama. He graduated as a pilot on 22 March 1952 and returned to his Pennsylvania Air National Guard unit at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, which was then assigned F-51 aircraft. He resumed his full-time duty and served as a tactical inspector and operations staff officer in HQ 112th Fighter Wing until December 1955 when he was assigned as Executive Officer in the Headquarters, Pennsylvania Air National Guard. General Smoker served as Executive Officer of the State Headquarters from December 1955 until October 1972. During that time, he was attached for flying to the Pennsylvania Air National Guard unit now designated as the 193rd Special Operations Wing where he flew various transport aircraft, including the C-121 aircraft. Between 1965-1967, General Smoker flew many overseas flights and also participated on five airlift missions to Vietnam, being credited with twenty combat flying hours as a result of these missions.

(continued)

Maj. Gen. Frank H. Smoker, Jr. (continued)

In June 1971, then Colonel Smoker was selected to attend the resident course of the Air War College, commencing in August 1971. After graduation from the Air War College, he became the full-time Deputy Commander, Headquarters, Pennsylvania Air National Guard, in October 1972. General Smoker was assigned as Commander, Headquarters, Pennsylvania Air National Guard on 1 September 1978 and served full-time in that capacity until his retirement on 6 June 1985.

General Smoker's military decorations and awards include the Air Force Distinguished Service Medal (the United States Air Force's highest peacetime award), Air Medal with Three Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Force Organizational Excellence Award, Combat Readiness Medal with Two Oak Leaf Clusters, Pennsylvania Distinguished Service Medal with One Silver Star (Second Award), Pennsylvania Meritorious Service Medal, Air War College National Geographic Society Award, National Guard Association of the United States Meritorious Service Award, National Guard Association of Pennsylvania Distinguished Service Award, Air Force Association Outstanding Pennsylvanian Award, the Chapel of Four Chaplains Bronze Medallion, and the U. S. Army Chief of Chaplains Aaron and Hur Award. He holds three aeronautical ratings as command pilot, navigator, and aircraft observer and has over 5,000 hours flying time.

When not serving on frequent periods of active duty with the Air Force, General Smoker served as a full-time technician from July 1949 to August 1978 in the positions of Air Administrative Assistant, Executive Officer, and Deputy Commander, Headquarters, Pennsylvania Air National Guard, performing his duties in the Department of Military Affairs for the Adjutant General of Pennsylvania. In addition to being appointed to the position as Commander, PaANG, General Smoker was appointed as the dual full-time position as Deputy Adjutant General for Air on 1 September 1978, and served in that full-time position until his retirement on 6 June 1985 at which time General Smoker was placed on the United States Air Force Retired List. He also received an honorary promotion under State law to the grade of lieutenant general on the Retired List of the Pennsylvania National Guard.

General Smoker was married to the former Kathleen M. Farrow of Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, England. They resided in Lebanon, Pennsylvania. They have two children: Barbara and David. David is a Colonel, Commander of the 193rd Mission Support Group of the 193rd Special Operations Wing.

General Smoker served as president of the Pennsylvania National Guard Military Museum from 1985 to January 12, 2010. General Smoker passed away on July 16, 2010.