

Major General Robert E. Harris is inducted into the Pennsylvania Air National Guard Hall of Fame in recognition for his extraordinary contribution to the status, operations, prestige and mission of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard. A superb leader and a communicator without equal, General Harris exemplified the professionalism and dedication that form the bedrock of the Air Guard's heritage.

After completing active duty in the Air Force and earning promotion to captain in the Air Force Reserve, General Harris joined the Pennsylvania Air National Guard in October 1962. He served as a line pilot and aircraft commander on numerous worldwide missions. During his PaANG flying career, General Harris piloted the first EC-121/Coronet Solo aircraft into Korat Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand as part of Operation Commando Buzz during the Vietnam War. He was credited with 93 combat flying hours, earning the Air Medal.

As deputy commander for operations and, later, commander of the 193d Special Operations Group, General Harris demonstrated the leadership and superior management resulting in vast improvements in mission equipment, especially during the Group's difficult transition from the EC-121 to EC-130E aircraft. This successful conversion and dramatic upgrading of ANG facilities at the Harrisburg International Airport provided the highest level of operational readiness. Under his leadership, the 193d continued to provide national military authorities with vital, responsive forces for the execution of the unique Coronet Solo II and Comfy Levi missions in numerous exercises and real world missions. Under his keen leadership, the 193d established an enviable national reputation for readiness and mission accomplishment.

General Harris not only preached readiness, he lived it. He led the 193d in its deployment in support of Operation Urgent Fury, and he personally commanded ANG aircraft in the Grenada operations. Later, when the 193d was called upon to perform its unique electronic warfare mission in Operation Just Cause in Panama, General Harris personally flew missions in support of this operation.

After serving nearly five years as Commander of the 193d Special Operations Group, General Harris was assigned as Commander of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard in September 1984. General Harris brought the same outstanding skills and dedication to his statewide command as he showed with the 193d. He demonstrated outstanding leadership when the Pennsylvania Air National Guard responded to Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Elements of the 171st Air Refueling Wing, 112th Tactical Fighter Group, 193d Special Operations Group, 211th EI Squadron and the 271st Combat Communications Squadron efficiently mobilized and smoothly deployed. Throughout these deployments General Harris provided superb coordination, leadership and oversight to ensure the best possible assistance and guidance to these units. General Harris conceived of, and implemented, the Pennsylvania Air National Guard Hall of Fame as a way of recognizing the Guard's heritage and the accomplishments of its members.

A legendary figure in the annals of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, General Harris earned the respect and admiration of all who were fortunate to serve with him. He epitomized the true Air National Guard leader, leaving a legacy and style for those who have followed him. The singularly distinctive accomplishments of Major General Robert E. Harris in an outstanding career of service to state and nation reflect great credit upon himself and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and truly warrant his induction into the Pennsylvania Air National Guard Hall of Fame.