

SMSgt Ralph W. Rissmiller is inducted into the Pennsylvania Air National Guard Hall of Fame in recognition of this lifetime service to the Pennsylvania Air National Guard.

After service in the U.S. Navy Reserve, SMSgt Rissmiller joined the Pennsylvania Air National Guard as an aircraft mechanic in March 1950. He played an important role as a crew chief and flight engineer as the unit's assigned aircraft changed over a period of years from P51s to F84Cs to F94s to C46s to C119s Flying Boxcars. In June 1962, SMSgt Rissmiller was chosen to be a part of the initial cadre to be trained in the C121 Constellation, and he provided leadership as the unit's mission changed from a stateside transport mission to a worldwide electronic warfare mission.

In 1970, the 193rd Tactical Electronic Warfare Group was tasked to mobilize and deploy on short notice to Southeast Asia to perform psychological operations in Operation Commando Buzz. For six months, the unit flew daily missions, and the support and leadership of SMSgt Rissmiller was critical in the unit's success. After returning from Southeast Asia, the 193rd earned three Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards and recognition for its response to desperate situations during and following Hurricane Agnes.

In June 1977, SMSgt Rissmiller was again chosen to be in the initial cadre for training in the C130 Hercules mission aircraft. Unit missions required close coordination between the unit aircrew members and the mission aircrew members to establish an alliance to get the job done, and SMSgt Rissmiller played a critical role in forging this alliance.

In March 1983, SMSgt Rissmiller was awarded the Accident Free Flying Milestone Award for attaining 15,000 hours of accident-free flying. He was recognized as a role model for young officers and airmen. He again answered the call as part of Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada, and his leadership was an important factor in the unit gaining the first outstanding rating in an Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI).

Throughout a military career that spanned more than forty years, SMSgt Rissmiller was one of the quiet heroes who was an active aircrew member and a genuine leader admired for his fairness to all. He amassed over 17,000 flying hours and provided key instruction for younger crew members. He served as flight engineer superintendent in Vietnam, Thailand, Grenada and Panama; and he met all these challenges without one aircraft accident.

The outstanding dedication, diligence and tireless performance of duty of SMSgt Ralph W. Rissmiller in a lifetime of service reflect the highest traditions of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard. The singularly distinctive accomplishments of SMSgt Rissmiller reflect great credit upon himself, the Pennsylvania Air National Guard and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and truly warrant his induction onto the Pennsylvania Air National Guard Hall of Fame.