



BIOGRAPHY

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT B. PATTERSON

Retired Oct. 1, 1989.

Major General Robert B. Patterson is commander of Military Airlift Command's 23rd Air Force, Hurlburt Field, Fla., and commander of Air Force Special Operations Command.

General Patterson was born in Mebane, N.C. He attended public schools in Chapel Hill, N.C., and graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1956. The general received a master's degree in business administration from Webster College and is a graduate of Columbia University's executive program in business administration. He completed Armed Forces Staff College in 1971 and Air War College in 1976.

He entered the Air Force in August 1956 and received his pilot wings at Vance Air Force Base, Okla., in October 1957. His first operational assignment was to the 31st Air Rescue Squadron at Clark Air Base, Philippines. In 1960 he transferred to Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, as aide-de-camp to the Military Training Center commander. From 1963 to 1966 he served as special assistant to the air deputy of Allied Forces Northern Europe in Oslo, Norway.

Returning to the United States, General Patterson joined the 39th Tactical Airlift Squadron of the 317th Tactical Airlift Wing, Lockbourne (now Rickenbacker) Air Force Base, Ohio. He departed Lockbourne in March 1970 to serve at **Ubon Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, as an AC-130 gunship pilot in the 16th Special Operations Squadron of the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing.**

The general then attended Armed Forces Staff College. From September 1971 to October 1973 he was assigned as an air operations staff officer in the Directorate of Plans, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C. He left the Pentagon to command the 50th Tactical Airlift Squadron, 314th Tactical Airlift Wing, at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark. While there he also served as the wing's assistant deputy commander for operations.

Upon graduation from the Air War College in June 1976, he was assigned to Pope Air Force Base, N.C., as the 317th Tactical Airlift Wing's assistant deputy commander for operations. He was appointed deputy commander for operations in June 1977 and became wing vice commander in June 1978.

From March 1979 to March 1980 General Patterson served as commander of the 463rd Tactical Airlift Wing, Dyess Air Force Base, Texas. He then was named commander of the U.S. Air Force Airlift Center and the 317th Tactical Airlift Wing at Pope. In March 1981 he became assistant chief of staff for plans at Headquarters Military Airlift Command, Scott Air Force Base, Ill. In March 1982 he became vice commander of Military Airlift Command's 21st Air Force at McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., and in July 1984 was named commander. From October 1984 to September 1985 he served at Ramstein Air Base, West Germany, as commander, 322nd Airlift Division, Military Airlift Command, and deputy chief of staff, airlift forces, U.S. Air Forces in Europe. He assumed his present command in September 1985.

In April 1987 the general also assumed command of the newly established Air Force Special Operations Command, the Air Force component command of the U.S. Special Operations Command at MacDill Air Force Base. For the first time, continental United States-based special operations forces of the Army, Navy and Air Force are united under one joint commander.

A command pilot with more than 9,000 flying hours, General Patterson has flown 293 combat hours. His military decorations and awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal and Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm. The Military Airlift Command security police presented General Patterson the Order of the Bayonet in January 1988 for his significant contributions to security and the ground defense of air bases.

He was promoted to major general Sept. 1, 1984, with date of rank March 1, 1981. (Current as of December 1988)