

The first Distinguished Alumni Awardee is Frank H. Smoker, Jr., Major General, USAF (retired), born in Columbia, Pennsylvania in June 1925. He married Kathleen Farrow, Wellingborough, England, in December, 1945. They have two children, Barbara and David.

General Smoker enlisted in the Army Air Corps in February 1943 while still a senior in Columbia High School, then entered Aviation Cadet training in July 1943. After Preflight at Maxwell AFB, LA, he completed Navigation School (Class 44-12), Selman Field, LA, in October 1944. Commissioned a Second Lieutenant, he joined his crew as a B17G navigator and flew a new B17G to England in January 1945.

Lieutenant Smoker was assigned to the 325th Bomb Squadron, 92nd Bomb Group, Podington Air Base, England, and flew 26 combat missions over Germany, totaling 222 combat hours. Shortly after VE Day, his group was transferred to Istres Field, France, where the group participated in the Green Project, ferrying troops from Marseilles to Casablanca, Africa. He was released from active duty July 1946 as a Captain in the Air Force Reserve.

While attending Franklin and Marshall College, he joined the Pennsylvania Air National Guard in October 1946 and upon completing of college, commenced full-time service with the Air Guard in July 1949. In order to qualify for pilot training, Captain Smoker requested and received a demotion to First Lieutenant, entered USAF pilot training and graduated as a pilot (Class 52-B) in March 1952. He returned to his Air Guard unit in Harrisburg, PA, which was then assigned F-51 aircraft, and was re-promoted to Captain. He continued to serve full-time with the Air Guard. By 1955, then Major Smoker, transferred to Headquarters, Pennsylvania Air National Guard at Fort Indiantown Gap, and was assigned as Executive Officer. In 1960, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. He was promoted to Colonel in 1964, and in 1972, following his year-long tour attending the senior Air Force school, the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, AL, he returned to Fort Indiantown Gap and was assigned as the Deputy Commander. During the last seven years of his 42 year military career, General Smoker served as Commander, Pennsylvania Air National Guard. He retired as a Major General in June 1985.

During the 1960's, General Smoker flew numerous worldwide C-121 transport missions, including combat missions into Vietnam. He holds three aeronautical ratings: Command Pilot, Navigator and Observer, with over 5000 hours flying time.

General Smoker has received dozens of decorations and service awards, including the Distinguished Service Medal from the Air Force, which is the highest honor bestowed on a person during peacetime; he has many civilian and community affiliations, and received dozens of community service awards.

He now resides in Lebanon, PA and serves as a military consultant throughout the country.