

**General John D. Lavelle, USAF
1916 – 1979**

**Official United States Air Force Biography of
General John Daniel Lavelle**



BIOGRAPHY

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

GENERAL JOHN D. LAVELLE

Retired April 7, 1972. Died July 10, 1979.

General John Daniel Lavelle is commander of Seventh Air Force, with headquarters at Tan Son Nhut Airfield, Republic of Vietnam. He is also deputy commander for air operations, U.S. Military Assistance Command in Vietnam. As Seventh Air Force commander, he is responsible for all Air Force combat air strike, air support and air defense operations in mainland Southeast Asia. In his MACV capacity, he advises on all matters pertaining to effective use of tactical air support and coordinated Vietnamese Air Force and U.S. air operations of all units in the MACV area of responsibility.

General Lavelle was born in 1916, in Cleveland, Ohio, where he attended Cathedral Latin High School, and graduated from John Carroll University in 1938 with a bachelor of science degree. In 1939 he enlisted as an aviation cadet in the Army Air Corps and received pilot training at Randolph and Kelly fields, Texas. He received his pilot wings and a commission as a second lieutenant in June 1940.



He returned to Randolph Field as a flying instructor and in 1942 was assigned as part of a cadre to open Waco Army Air Field, where he served as squadron commander and director of flying. During World War II he saw combat in the European Theater of Operations, where he served with the 412th Fighter Squadron.

In January 1946 he was assigned to Headquarters Air Materiel Command at Wright Field, Ohio, as Deputy Chief of Statistical Services. When the U.S. Air Force was established as a separate Service in 1947, he was one of the two Air Force officers who negotiated with all seven Army Technical Services and wrote the agreements for the division of assets and the operating procedures to be effected during the buildup of the Air Force.

He was assigned in October 1949 as the Director of Management Analysis And later as the comptroller of the Far East Materiel Command at Tachikawa Air Base, Japan. During the Korean War, he was made commander of the Supply Depot at Tachikawa. In this assignment, he was awarded the Legion of Merit for the reorganization of the theater supply system and the establishment of a procedure for control of the transshipment of supplies direct from the United States to Korea.

In November 1952 he was assigned as commander of McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., and the 568th Air Defense Group. During his tenure there, the Military Air Transport Service facilities and air terminal were constructed and McGuire Air Force Base became an East Coast aerial port. When the base was transferred to MATS, he became the MATS Transport Wing commander. While at McGuire Air Force Base, he established a community relations program which did much to ease the problems that normally befall an area

where a military installation grows from approximately 1,500 to 10,000 personnel. General Lavelle is still considered an honorary citizen of many of the small communities around McGuire and an honorary member of the local Lions International and Kiwanis Club.

He attended the Air War College in 1956-1957 and then spent the next five years at Headquarters U.S. Air Force as deputy director of requirements; secretary of the Weapons Board; and deputy director of programs. While in the Pentagon, he was principally responsible for the reorganization of the Air Force Board system and the establishment of program control through the Program Review Committee and the Weapons Board. He was awarded an oak leaf cluster to his Legion of Merit at the end of this tour of duty.

General Lavelle went to Europe in July 1962 as deputy chief of staff for operations, Headquarters Fourth Allied Tactical Air Force, NATO, which was comprised of numbered Air Force-size elements of the German, French and Canadian Air Force and the U.S. Air Forces in Europe. For his accomplishments while in this headquarters, he was awarded a second oak leaf cluster to his Legion of Merit and the "Medaille de Merite Militaire" by France.

In September 1964 General Lavelle was assigned to Headquarters U.S. Air Force as the director of aerospace programs, Deputy Chief of Staff for Programs and Resources. As director, he was principal backup witness in presenting and defending Air Force programs to the congress after such programs had been approved by the secretary of the Air Force and the secretary of defense. In addition, he served as chairman, Air Staff Board, and as chief, Southeast Asia Programs Team.

Command of the Seventeenth Air Force, headquartered at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, was General Lavelle's next assignment in July 1966. Seventeenth's operations spanned Germany, Italy and Libya. In this position, General Lavelle commanded a versatile, combat-ready force equipped with supersonic jet fighters and tactical missiles with nuclear, conventional and air-to-air capabilities. Seventeenth Air Force is a NATO-committed major subcommand of USAFE, one of America's strongest overseas air arms and a primary instrument of Western defense.

In December 1967 General Lavelle was assigned to the Defense Communications Planning Group located at the Naval Observatory, Washington, D.C., where he served as the Deputy Director for Forces. In February 1968 he assumed duties as the director of the Defense Communications Planning Group.

General Lavelle was assigned as vice commander in chief, Pacific Air Forces, with headquarters at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii in September 1970. He served in that capacity until assuming command of Seventh Air Force July 29, 1971.

He is a command pilot. His military decorations and awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit with three oak leaf clusters, Air Medal with oak leaf cluster and Air Force Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster.

(Current as of Nov. 1, 1971)