

BRIGADIER GENERAL GEORGE W. GODDARD US Air Force, Retired (Deceased)



A pioneer and inventor of aerial and space photography systems, George Goddard served in uniform from 1917 to 1953. He rose from Private to Brigadier General and led the United States' photo reconnaissance effort into the modern era.

George Goddard was a native of Turnbridge Wells, England, who moved to the United States at the age of 14. He was living in Chicago as a commercial artist in 1917 when he decided to join the Army. As a result of listing photography as a hobby on his forms, he was told he would be a photographer rather than a pilot, and given a mission to build a school for aerial photographers. His first students actually built the photo labs and dark rooms and French and British instructors taught the students photo interpretation using actual photos taken along the front

in France. Goddard first studied and then taught photo interpretation.

Commissioned on 8 August 1918, 2LT Goddard took a month-long course in aerial cameras and field laboratories before going to Fort Worth, Texas, to organize and equip three photographic sections for deployment to France. He learned to fly from two pilots assigned to him. Goddard designed specialized mounts for aerial cameras, viewfinders for pilots to use from the cockpit, found ways to make overlap and stereo photos possible, and experimented with night photography. He designed the first continuous film strip camera and led the development of large, long-focal-length cameras.

Goddard's work resulted in the Army Air Corps being able to field an armada of photo reconnaissance planes in tactical reconnaissance squadrons that flew over 400 missions a month. He continued his pioneering work through the Korean War and, even after retirement, he worked as a consultant for a contractor that specialized in aerial photography. Goddard, using his film strip camera, was actively involved in the detection of the Soviet missile sites in Cuba in 1962. His developments form the basis for all modern aerial and space photography. BG Goddard wrote and published his autobiography in 1969 entitled *Overview: A Lifelong Adventure in Aerial Photography*.

George Goddard was selected as a Distinguished Member of the MI Corps in 1987. He passed away shortly thereafter. In 1991, Goddard Hall, part of the MI academic complex on Fort Huachuca, was named in his honor.



Dr. S.M. Burke (left) and 1LT Goddard (right) are shown preparing for a photographic flight in 1925.