

LIEUTENANT GENERAL IRA C. OWENS US Army, Retired



LTG Owens received his commission through Officer Candidate School. He was assigned to the Army Security Agency (ASA) Headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, where he held a variety of security and electronic warfare (EW) staff officer positions. From this assignment he moved to the Home of the Infantry and successfully completed Airborne and Ranger training.

LTG Owens' first Special Operations assignment was as the Operations Officer and subsequently the Commander of the 402nd Security Operations Detachment, 10th Special Forces Group, Bad Toelz Germany. From there he went to US Strike Command (STRICOM) and was a key EW planner for quick reaction strike forces. Immediately after his STRICOM tour, he returned to Special Forces, this time as the Commander of the 403rd Special Operations Detachment, 5th Special

Forces Group, in the Republic of Vietnam. Returning from Vietnam, he was selected to be the Executive Officer of the 301st Battalion (Abn) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Recognized as an outstanding officer with unique skills, LTG Owens was one of only a select few to attend the US Marines Corps Command and Staff Course.

In 1973, LTG Owens returned to the Pacific Theater, this time personally selected to be the Commander of the US Army Special Security Group, Cambodia. During this period of political turmoil in Asia, Ambassador John G. Dean singled him out for making "an indispensable contribution to the implementation of our policy toward Cambodia". Returning to Fort Bragg, he was selected to command the 313th ASA Battalion (Airborne), XVIII Airborne Corps. After a superb command tour, he became first the operations officer, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff G2, XVIII Airborne Corps and subsequently the Assistant Chief of Staff G2, 82nd Airborne Division. Armed with extensive field experience, LTG Owens moved to the Pentagon to become a Force Integration Staff Officer with the Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Electronic Warfare Directorate, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans.

After promotion to the rank of Colonel, LTG Owens again found himself Pacific-bound, this time as the Commander, Field Station Okinawa—the largest intelligence command

in the Pacific. The Okinawa tour was followed by a return to Fort Bragg where he distinguished himself as the J2, Joint Special Operations Command. Returning to the Pentagon, LTG Owens was selected to become the Executive to the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army and later the Chief of Staff, US Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM). After his promotion to Brigadier General, he became the Deputy Commanding General, INSCOM, followed by an appointment as the Assistant Deputy Director for Operations, National Security Agency (NSA). He left NSA to become the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence (ADCSINT) and in November 1991 became the Army's 37th DCSINT.

At home in the strategic intelligence environment, LTG Owens was instrumental in coordinating national agency support to the operating forces from the rescue operation in Grenada, to Operations JUST CAUSE and DESERT STORM. As the Assistant Deputy Director of Operations for NSA, he garnered support for a variety of sensitive programs that included bringing the Regional Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) Operating Centers on-line, establishing direct support operational teams for military operations, and employing highly specialized Army intelligence assets to satisfy critical intelligence requirements in support of national security objectives established by the Executive Branch.

LTG Owens retired from active service in 1995. He has been awarded the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (3 Oak Leaf Clusters), the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (3 Oak Leaf Clusters), the Air Medal, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Master Parachutist Badge, the Ranger Tab and Special Forces Tab, and the Army Staff Identification Badge.

LTG Owens was inducted into the MI Hall of Fame in 2002.