

COLONEL WILLIAM F. VERNAU
US Army, Retired (Deceased)



COL Vernau had a 30-year career with the Army Security Agency culminating as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations. He distinguished himself in several cryptologically-oriented projects of major importance to the Army and the national defense effort and was involved in the One Army Concept and the formation of the Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM).

COL Vernau enlisted in the Field Artillery at Fort Bragg in 1946. After a short break in service, he reenlisted for duty in the US Army Security Agency (USASA) and subsequently served as a Morse and Non-Morse Interceptor at Vint Hill Farms and the 2nd Signal Service Battalion, Two Rock Ranch Station, at Petaluma, California. After attending the Infantry Officer Candidate School, he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in 1953.

COL Vernau attended the USASA Company Officer Course at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, and was transferred to USASA, Pacific, for duty in Korea and then Okinawa. Returning to the United States in 1957, he was assigned to the National Security Agency, Fort Meade, Maryland. He attended the USASA Advanced Officers Course at Fort Devens, and was integrated into the Regular Army as a Signal Corps Officer in October 1959. The early 1960s found COL Vernau in a variety of overseas assignments at Headquarters, USASA, Pacific; 9th USASA Field Station, Luzon, Republic of Philippines; 51st USASA Special Operations Command, Sobe, Okinawa; and USASA, Pacific in Vietnam. He was integrated into the Military Intelligence Branch in 1962 and attended Air Command and Staff College in 1965. He then was a Staff Officer with the Combat Developments Command, Fort Belvoir; commander of the 311th USASA Battalion at Fort Wolters, Texas; commander of USASA Field Station, Two Rock Ranch; Chief, Order of Battle Branch for J2, Military Assistance Command Vietnam; and the Executive Officer of Headquarters, USASA Europe.

After attending the Army War College in 1971, COL Vernau served as Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations Headquarters, USASA. In 1973, he took command of USASA Field Station, Sobe, Okinawa, and then returned to his Deputy Chief of Staff position at Headquarters USASA.

COL Vernau retired from active duty in 1976 with awards and decorations that included the Legion of Merit (5 Oak Leaf Clusters), Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal (2 Oak Leaf Clusters), and the Good Conduct Medal.

COL Vernau was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1988. He passed away on 24 January 2008 in Newark, Ohio.