



HISTORY AT ROBINS AFB



AUGUSTINE WARNER ROBINS

Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, is named for Brigadier General Augustine Warner Robins, one of the Army Air Corps' first General Staff Officers, and Commander of the Air Corps' Materiel Division at Wright Field, Ohio, from 1935 to 1939. In his early days in Washington, he became identified with the Supply and Maintenance Division of the Air Corps, now Air Forces, since it was his responsibility to organize civilian training activities for the task of training pilots. He is generally recognized as the Father of Modern Air Force Logistics.

Augustine Warner Robins was born in Gloucester County, Virginia, on Sept 29, 1882. His father was William Todd Robins, a Confederate cavalry colonel; his mother was Sally Nelson Robins, author and genealogist. Both were descendants of early settlers in the Virginia colony. From these ancestors, Warner Robins inherited membership in the Order of Cincinnati begun by General George Washington.

When he was six years old, the family moved from their homestead on the York River to Richmond. He entered the United States Military Academy in 1903, graduating in June 1907.

His early assignments included Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, as well as the intrigue of mapping China for the Military Information Division. He received assignments to Fort Robinson, Nebraska; as a mathematics instructor at the Military Academy at West Point; to Fort Meade, South Dakota, where he served strike duty in the Colorado coal mines. He reported to mounted service school at Fort Riley, Kansas, but was unable to complete the

course. He was sent to Hachita, New Mexico, to participate in the pursuit of Pancho Villa along the Mexican border in General "Black Jack" Pershing's Punitive Expedition.

Next, he received a transfer to the "Aviation Section, Signal Corps," the forefather of the Air Corps. He remained with that branch of the army for the rest of his service.

During the First World War, he briefly served as executive or commanding officer at various posts where he received the flying training that earned him his wings in August 1918.

He then became district supervisor of the Northern Air Service with headquarters at Indianapolis, Indiana. At his next assignment in Washington, D.C., he served in the Supply Division of the Air Corps.

On Jan 2, 1921, he received serious injuries in an airplane accident, including a broken jaw, which left his face so badly shattered that he was in Walter Reed Hospital for six months. Late in 1921, after hospitalization he was assigned as commander to the Air Corps Supply Depot at Fairfield, Ohio, where he remained until July 1928.

He attended a three-month observer's course at Kelly Field, Texas, and a one-year Air Corps Tactical School at Langley Field, Virginia, after which he was assigned to San Antonio Air Depot at Duncan Field, Texas.

On 4 November 1931, he became executive to the chief of the Materiel Division at Wright Field. After attending the Army Industrial College and the Army War College, in January 1935, he became chief of the Materiel Division (the direct ancestor of AFMC) with the rank of Brigadier General. During his four years as chief of the Materiel Division, he performed the important work of directing the supply, the repair, the experimental work, and the purchase of equipment for the Army Air Corps.

Upon completion of his four years at the Materiel Division, he moved on to Randolph Field as Commandant of the Air Corps Training Center on 24 February 1939. It was to be his last assignment.

General Robins died suddenly of a heart attack on 16 June 1940. His last contribution to the Army Air Forces had been his assistance in the preparation of the expansion plans for the Army Air Forces.

General Marshall, Chief of Staff, in his letter of condolence wrote that "Robins' Army career was outstanding for the highly efficient and loyal manner in which he performed every duty. Possessing a broad knowledge of his profession, sound judgment and a fine spirit of cooperation, he rendered many years of valuable service and won the commendation and esteem of those with whom he served."

The composite picture of General Robins that emerges from the testimony of those who knew him, is that of an able, self-confident and congenial man who loved to entertain his

friends with tales of his adventures. A charming and elegant man, he was known as "Robbie" to his many friends and as "Warner" to his devoted family.

His classmate and very good friend, Henry H. Arnold, Chief of the Air Corps, wrote: "On behalf of myself and his brother officers in the Air Corps...not only do we feel a deep sense of personal loss at the passing of such a fine officer and friend, whose warm enthusiastic personality had endeared him to us all, but to the Corps his death constitutes a distinct and untimely loss. We realize fully his ability and we were counting on this experience and advice, both of which were especially needed at this time in connection with our expansion program. As one of his classmates at West Point, I can well sound the sentiment of those who knew him intimately for so many years. He was every inch a soldier."

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