

2012 Ammunition Hall of Fame Inductee
CLIFTON W. GRAY



Mr. Clifton W. Gray entered federal service as an Explosives Operator in the Ammunition Production Facility at Savanna Ordnance Depot, Savanna, IL, in May 1941. After working for two plus years as an Explosives Operator, Mr. Gray attended the Ammunition Inspector School (AIS) at Delaware Ordnance Depot, Pedricktown, NJ. Following completion of Ammunition Inspector training he entered the Ammunition Inspector Career Program. As an Ammunition Inspector, Mr. Gray was part of a mandatory mobility career program that provides civilian ammunition expertise to worldwide locations. Following completion of classroom and on-the-job training, he was assigned to Savanna Ordnance Depot as an Ammunition Inspector.

Mr. Gray was first assigned overseas in 1946 when he was transferred to Okinawa, Japan. During this tour, Mr. Gray was among the first Department of Army civilians on Okinawa and the Philippines after the end of World War II. Mr. Gray made significant contributions to the wide-spread clean-up of ammunition and explosives after World War II.

During the next 33 years, Mr. Gray held progressively more responsible positions at duty locations in the United States, France, Germany, Japan, Korea and Vietnam. During this time, Mr. Gray served as an Ammunition Inspector and later a Quality Assurance Specialist (Ammunition Surveillance) (QASAS). For the last 28 years of his career, Mr. Gray served as the Deputy Chief or Chief, Ammunition Surveillance or Quality Assurance organization.

Mr. Gray was reassigned to Savanna Ordnance Depot (SOD) and served there until 1949. The primary mission at SOD was the storage, production, renovation and demilitarization of conventional ammunition. Mr. Gray played a key role in ensuring that all operations were conducted to standard and that all operations were conducted safely. Mr. Gray had primary responsibility for monitoring both explosives and industrial safety for all explosives operations. Mr. Gray also played a key role in determining the serviceability of the conventional ammunition stockpile. In 1949, Mr. Gray was assigned to Seneca Ordnance Depot, Romulus, NY as an Ammunition Surveillance Branch Chief.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Mr. Gray continued to perform in an outstanding manner. During this time period, he led the Ammunition Surveillance efforts at numerous organizations worldwide. His diverse assignments included Black Hills Ordnance Depot, Igloo, SD; Captieux Ordnance Depot, Captieux, France; Blue Grass Ordnance Depot, Richmond, KY; Ikego Ordnance Depot, Japan; Letterkenny Ordnance Depot, Chambersburg, PA; Black Hills Army Depot (second tour), Igloo, SD; Camp Howard, Korea; HQ, Eighth US Army, Seoul, Korea; and Pueblo Army Depot, Pueblo, CO. Outstanding performance is evidenced by the absence of any significant explosives safety related accident at any of these locations during his tenure.

Mr. Gray's assignment to the 1st Logistics Command, Long Binh, Vietnam was a direct reward for his earlier contributions. In this assignment, he established command policy and directed all QASAS/ammunition surveillance activities in Vietnam. Always a "hands-on" leader, Mr Gray travelled extensively throughout Vietnam; conducting numerous ammunition malfunction investigations, conducting first hand inspections of the ammunition stockpile and providing career counseling to the

widely dispersed QASAS workforce. Following his return from Vietnam, Mr. Gray was assigned as Director, Quality Assurance, Umatilla Ordnance Depot, Hermiston, Oregon. Over the course of the next two years, Mr. Gray was responsible for the Ammunition Surveillance Program for a stockpile that included conventional ammunition, toxic chemical munitions and guided missiles.

In the summer of 1972, Mr. Gray was transferred to Miesau Army Depot, Miesau, Germany where he was the Director, Ammunition Surveillance until 1977. At the time, Miesau Army Depot was the free world's largest ammunition storage depot outside the continental United States. Mr. Gray planned and directed all ammunition surveillance activities for more than 200,000 tons of conventional ammunition stored at Miesau Army Depot. He also directed surveillance activities relating to receipt and issue of more than 60,000 tons per year and the turn-in of thousands of lots of conventional ammunition in varying states of serviceability as tactical units throughout U.S. Army Europe downloaded basic loads.

Cliff was a pioneer in the use of automated data systems. He developed numerous program applications involving inspections, tests, suspensions and overall management of ammunition to improve the assessment of the quality and serviceability of ammunition throughout USAREUR. Of specific merit was his ability to design specialized queries that presented information in the most meaningful manner.

From August 1977 until his retirement in January 1980, Mr. Gray was the Chief, Ammunition Surveillance, Pueblo Depot Activity (PUDA), Pueblo, CO. Although performing under adverse conditions due to severe shortage of QASAS, his responsiveness benefited the Army ammunition logistics and materiel readiness programs. A unique relationship existed between the supply and surveillance organizations. Personnel turbulence resulting from "CONCISE" actions, coupled with a less experienced ammunition workforce, caused Mr. Gray to direct that the "traditional" boundaries of surveillance responsibilities be expanded to include areas not generally considered within the scope of the surveillance program.

Surveillance inspection backlog in 1977 consisted of 1,367 lots of conventional ammunition and 1,900 serially numbered guided missiles. This backlog was reduced by 954 lots of conventional ammunition and 1,525 guided missiles by January 1988 by record review and purification. The inspection backlog was subsequently eliminated during Mr. Gray's tenure. Under his leadership, a HQDA directed review of ammunition operations conducted by a team from Defense Ammunition Center and School determined that previously noted materiel management and quality assurance problem areas had been addressed and appropriate corrective measures had been identified and provided to operating officials by the Surveillance Division.

Mr. Gray's duty performance was characterized by high standards of professionalism. He demonstrated exceptional managerial and technical proficiency. He constantly strived to improve the ammunition surveillance and quality assurance programs for Class V materials and maintained the highest standards not only for himself but also for his subordinates. Mr. Gray completed more than 30 consecutive years of service without taking a single hour of sick leave. Throughout his career, Mr. Gray mentored countless ammunition officers and non-commissioned officers. Mr. Gray passed away in 2008.