

# *Lords of Darkness*

A HISTORY OF THE 45<sup>TH</sup> AVN  
BN (SP OPS) AND OKARNG  
AVIATION

**COL BILLY R. WOOD, U.S. ARMY (RETIRED)**

**ABSTRACT: Lords of Darkness: A History of the 45th Avn Bn (Sp Ops) and OKARNG Aviation**, by Col Billy R. Wood US Army (Retired)

LTC Loren Lorenza Glenn served in the USARV Flight Detachment in 1966 as Officer in Charge of the Fixed Wing Area under LTC Thomas N. Hurst, Artillery, Commanding, per Unit Order Number 6, dated 26 July 1966, USARV Flight Detachment, APO US Forces 96307: <http://www.longtrip.org/USARV-Det-July1966.pdf>

Major Loren L. "Pappy" Glenn<sup>2</sup>, and his wife Helen, came to Norman, Max Westheimer Field ca 1962. Glenn was most likely the second active duty Army Aviation Advisor for OKARNG Aviation, Ned Baker being the first. Major Glenn served in this Advisor position for three years.

His wife Helen shared, "We became great friends and travel companions with Gus and Dora Guilds." Lieutenant Colonel August Lee "Gus" Guild was the first State Avn Officer for OKARNG.

MAJ Glenn had four brothers and one sister: Lawrence was the eldest, then Loren. Another brother died at childbirth and then John, who served in the Navy. Loren's youngest brother, Fred, later served with his brother Loren in the 45<sup>th</sup> Inf Div in Korea. Lieutenant Colonel Guild finagled and

*COL Billy R. Wood, U.S. Army (retired)*

got Corporal Fred Glenn assigned to the same airfield where he (Fred) became the cook for the Oklahoma Army Guard pilots!

Loren L. Glenn and his four siblings grew up just a couple of miles south of the Lake Wister Dam, in Wister, OK. They attended Glendale School. Loren's sister, Ruth (Glenn) Wilson, is still alive and resides in Poteau, Oklahoma. Lawrence, John, and Loren are now deceased.

Loren L. Glenn was born and raised in Oklahoma. He was born on 10 April 1919 in Glendale, OK, in LeFlore Co. in eastern Oklahoma. Loren was the second son of Wilbur and Ida (Balentine) Glenn. He married Helen Louise (Dobbins) in Denton, TX in February 1943.

Loren and Helen Glenn had six children; the eldest, Fred, was born in Dallas, TX, and became an Army aviator; later he retired from Northwest Airlines as a 747 captain with 30 years in the cockpit. Milton, the next to the eldest, was an air traffic controller in the U.S. Army/ARNG for several years and later became a private pilot. Milton also worked with his father's general aviation business as a general manager.

"Loren's son, Fred came into the OKARNG as an enlisted soldier in 1960. I knew him then. He and I attended Federal OCS together at Fort Benning, GA in 1964," recalled Lieutenant Colonel Donald E. Derrick.<sup>3</sup>

Glenn served in WWII, Korea (45<sup>th</sup> Inf Div) and in Vietnam. His initial civilian pilot training<sup>4</sup> took place about 1941 at Durant, OK. According to Milton Glenn<sup>5</sup>, "Dad entered the military at Hartlee Field, Denton, TX [about 1942]. He was a civilian flight instructor one day and a second lieutenant the next. Dad was drafted into the Army at Hartlee Field, and he never went to basic training—just flew airplanes," recalled Milton.

The author was able to review the military records of Lieutenant Colonel Loren L. Glenn during a personal interview with son Milton Glenn at Bonham, TX on 6 November 2008 and found several very interesting original onion-skin copies of military orders from 1944. One of particular interest was dated 20 September 1944 and showed aviation cadet Glenn's Army Air Force service number as T-193484. The extract read "The following flight officers, AC, Class 44-ATC-6, having completed the required course of instruction at the AAFPS (Adv 2-Engine)<sup>6</sup> Ellington Field, Texas, are under the provisions of AR 95-60, 20 August 1942, and AAF Reg 50-7, 1 June 1944, rated Service Pilot, effective 16 Oct 44." A similar order showed that Glenn and others were TD (temporary duty) to Ellington Field, TX (Houston) from Love Field, Dallas, TX, further

assigned to the 2517<sup>th</sup> AAFBU (Army Air Force Basic Unit), which was at Ellington Field.

"Dad taught me to fly in a J-5 Cub and I spent a lot of back seat hours in an L-19 [Bird Dog] and also left seat time in a [U-6] Beaver. Dad insisted that I learn in a tail dragger so that I learned to fly right."

Milton Glenn, the second son of Loren and Helen Glenn, was born in 1947 at Denton, TX. He enlisted in the Army, trained as an air traffic controller and served in the 45<sup>th</sup> Aviation at Norman (OKARNG) for several years. He works with computers as his profession and now has a satellite business in Bonham, TX. His mother Helen moved to a retirement center nearby in Denton, TX in October 2008. Milton's eldest sister, Sandra Glenn, was born in 1948 in Denton, TX.

The April 1944 U.S. Army/Navy Directory of Airfields described Hartlee Field as having a 1,500' unpaved runway, and indicated that Army flight operations were conducted from the field. The Army aviation cadet pilots in training took their ground lessons in classrooms on the North Texas campus, received their flight training at Hartlee Field and lived in Chilton Hall. Hartlee Field is about three miles west of Denton Airport, northeast of the City of Denton.

"From [training glider pilots at] Hartlee Field, Dad then went to Red Bird Field, in Dallas [ca 1942] where he was a line pilot in the Fourth Ferry Command. He ferried everything from P-38s to B-17s across the U.S.

After a period of time in the 2517<sup>th</sup> AAFBU (Army Air Force Basic Unit) at Ellington Field, TX, I suspect Glenn was assigned to the China-Burma-India theater in late 1944. Milton quite recalled that his father, Loren L. Glenn, "was assigned to India [ca November 1944 – April 1945] during WWII and flew the Hump. The best I can tell he was flying the C-109, a cargo version of the B-24 Liberator and transporting aviation fuel and supplies into China. He had at least two mishaps over there. One was running off the end of a runway in China and taking out some shacks on the end of the runway; the other was crash-landing an aircraft [a C-109] in a lake because he was loaded with aircraft fuel and the plane had caught fire."

Lieutenant Glenn would have been part of the CBI's (China-Burma-India) ATC (Air Transport Command.) His flight records indicate that he was also qualified in the C-47, which was used quite extensively in the air lift over the Hump.

283

*COL Billy R. Wood, U.S. Army (retired)*

While designed as a heavy bomber, the B-24 Liberator experienced many modifications and conversions for such assignments as photography, mine laying, and cargo hauling, including a C-109 fuel tanker version that flew the Hump to refuel B-29s operating out of forward bases in China. The U.S. military built more than 18,000 B-24s during WWII, more than any other American aircraft.

The Hump was the name given by Allied pilots in World War II to the eastern end of the Himalayan Mountains over which they flew from India to China to resupply the Flying Tigers and the Chinese government of Chiang Kai-shek. C-109s were dedicated fuel transport aircraft converted from existing B-24 bombers. All armament and bombardment equipment was removed, and eight fuel tanks were installed inside the fuselage so they could carry 2,900 U.S. gallons of high-octane aviation gasoline. The C-109 fuel transports were not popular with their crews, since they were very difficult to land when fully loaded at airfields above 6,000 feet elevation, and often demonstrated unstable flight characteristics with full tanks. A crash landing of a loaded C-109 inevitably resulted in a fireball and crew fatalities.

Bob Pitzer who flew the Hump stated, "Our training for hump flying was at Reno Nevada AAF Base<sup>7</sup>. Twelve of us flew over together after picking up our plane at Berry Field, Nashville, TN. We were issued parachutes and Colt .45 pistols. The trip over was via South America and Africa – destination Karachi, India. There, they gave us many, many shots and to our surprise, took away our parachutes! All of our trips after that were without parachutes."

At Kunming, China "there were two landing strips, both 10,000-feet long, built of crushed stone by Chinese 'Coolie' labor. The jagged gravel was very rough on our tires, often causing blowouts. On the good side, Kunming was the only place we could get fresh eggs. As soon as the engines were shut down, we headed to the line shack where the Chinese cook knew one English sentence, 'how do you want 'em Joe?' No matter what the answer, the eggs came out scrambled."

"Officers were awarded the Air Medal for participating in more than 200 hours of operational flight in transport aircraft over the dangerous and difficult India-China air routes. At that time, 500 hours qualified for the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Milton Glenn recalled that, "After WWII, Dad was discharged from the Army Air Forces and became a civilian again. He worked for a

while on B-36s at Consolidated, in Fort Worth.” All B-36 aircraft were manufactured in Fort Worth at Air Force Plant #4 and two B-36 wings of the United States Air Force were stationed at Carswell Air Force Base in Fort Worth.

Glenn was activated back into the Armed Forces in 1950 as an Oklahoma Army Guardsman, part of the 45<sup>th</sup> Inf Div during the Korean police action, and he flew L-19 (45<sup>th</sup> Division) spotter planes for the most part. Second Lieutenant Loren L. Glenn was reappointed as an Army aviator, through the ARNG on 15 December 1950. “It was in Korea that Dad met and worked for Lieutenant Colonel Gus Guild. Dad and Lee were the only two that flew the Navion<sup>®</sup>. Dad always had the 45<sup>th</sup> Thunderbird emblem on his uniform.”

“Upon his return from Korea, he was a flight instructor at Fort Sill, OK [ca 1952 – 1956] until he and five other pilots went to Fort Rucker and [helped] established the [Army] flight school there. They took the Navy flight manuals and adapted them for the flight school at Rucker,” stated Milton.

One of Milton’s younger brothers, Dennis, was born in 1953, at Lawton, OK. Dennis is a representative for a hazardous waste company (BS in Biology). Another Glenn brother, Kenneth, was born in 1956, also at Lawton, OK. Kenneth operates a 115-foot commercial offshore [fishing] boat in the gulf.

During the Korean conflict, the Dept of Air Training at Fort Sill expanded, and in early 1953, it became the Army Aviation School<sup>9</sup>. As a result of the expansion of both aviation and artillery training, Fort Sill became overcrowded, and the Army decided to move the Army Aviation School to a different post. When no satisfactory permanent Army post was found, a temporary post, Camp Rucker, AL, was chosen.

Prior to the mid-1950s, the Army Air Forces/U.S. Air Force had provided primary training for Army Aviation pilots and mechanics. In 1956, DoD gave the Army control over all of its own training. Gary AFB, San Marcos, TX and Wolters AFB, Mineral Wells, TX, where the Air Force was conducting training, were both transferred to the Army. Lacking

*COL Billy R. Wood, U.S. Army (retired)*

adequate facilities at Fort Rucker, Army Aviation continued primary fixed-wing training at Camp Gary until 1959 and primary rotary-wing training at Fort Wolters until 1973.

"After a year at Rucker, Captain Glenn was transferred to Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, AL during the summer of 1956 [and served there until ca 1959], where he flew Wernher Von Braun, General Maderis, General Barclay, and the famous Mr. Able and Mr. Baker (space chimpanzees)," added Milton. Major General John Bruce Maderis, an Army aviator, commanded the Army Ballistic Missile Agency from 1955 to 1958<sup>10</sup>. About mid-1958, Major General John A. Jack Barclay replaced Maderis as commander of the Army Ballistic Missile Agency at Huntsville, AL. CPT Loren L. Glenn was designated a Senior Army Aviator 4 October 1956 at Huntsville.

On 21 October 1959, the White House announced that the heart of the U.S. Army's space capability, Dr. Wernher Von Braun's Development Operations Division of the Army Ballistic Missile Agency (ABMA), would be transferred to the year-old, civilian National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). With this act, President Dwight D. Eisenhower ended the first U.S. Army space program, which had begun two years before in reaction to the stunning Soviet Sputnik space launch.

Milton explained, "Dad received special orders while at Huntsville during his first tour there (1957-59) and he taught MG Jack Barclay to fly. An L-19 was transferred from Rucker for that specific task. General Barclay not only received his single engine rating, but also his multi-engine and instrument ratings at Huntsville. Later during his second tour there, Dad flew the first King Air, which the Army had, civilian tail number, N901R, leased from Beechcraft. This 1966 Model 65-A90 Beechcraft became Army (tail number) 15361, and was designated a VC-6A (VIP transport)<sup>11</sup>.

Milton added, "My brother, Fred, who was in the ARNG at that time, requested orders to [Active Duty for Training] at no pay while we were in Huntsville, and was sometimes Dad's copilot. That's how he built his flight time that led to his working for Air America, and then Northwest Airlines."

"From Redstone, Dad [CPT Glenn] went to Fort Wolters in Mineral Wells, Texas." He attended the USAPHS (U.S. Army Primary Helicopter School) in 1959 and became a rotary-wing aviator. While there, he was awarded the Army Commendation Medal [for service at Redstone

Arsenal] by Colonel C.H. Meek on 9 June 1959. After rotary-wing school at Wolters, he went to Safety & Accident Investigation School at the University of Southern California before being transferred to Orleans, France ca 1959/60.

One of several emails received from Milton Glenn stated, "After a year in Orleans, he was transferred to Heidelberg, Germany [ca 1960]. After the Berlin Wall went up, Dad had the distinction of flying the first military aircraft up the Berlin Corridor to Berlin to determine East Germany's intentions." Milton's younger sister, Karen, was born at Heidelberg, Germany in 1961. She is a professor of Chemistry and Lab Researcher in Oklahoma (DNA specialization).

From Heidelberg, "MAJ Glenn [and his Enlisted Advisor, Master Sergeant Simpson<sup>12</sup>,] were assigned to and worked at Westheimer in Norman as Army Aviation Advisors to OKARNG Aviation from [about] 1962 to 1965," according to Mrs. Helen Glenn.

Milton explained, "When Dad left Germany . . . the Army reassigned him to Norman, OK as the [Army Aviation] advisor to the 45<sup>th</sup> National Guard Aviation Detachment [OKARNG Aviation]. It was about this time that aviation folks started calling him Pappy."

Numerous former aviators and aviation personnel at the September 2008 OKARNG Mini-Reunion recall the name MAJ Glenn. C.L. Strance, Dana D. Batey, Charlie Evans, and Jerry Bourassa remembered MAJ Glenn flying with them and as the advisor at Norman. MAJ Loren L. Glenn received the designation of Master Army Aviator on 27 February 1963 at Norman, OK.

Another story from Milton Glenn, "After serving three years in Norman, Dad was about to be sent to Johnson County, Texas, to set up an aviation detachment for President Lyndon B. Johnson. Dad knew of LBJ's hot, volatile temper. Not wanting to place his aviation career in jeopardy, Dad looked at his options. The only assignment with a higher priority was Vietnam, so Dad requested to be sent to Vietnam."

"When Dad arrived in Vietnam in June 1966, he was sent to Vung Tau. About five months into his tour of duty, he was transferred to Saigon and became a VIP pilot. One month before his tour ended, Mom fell ill, and the Army had him return early in August 1967," said Milton Glenn. Orders indicated that Glenn was an IFE and Standardization Pilot in the UH-1 during his tour in Vietnam.

*COL Billy R. Wood, U.S. Army (retired)*

“My husband turned fifty-two years old while he was a ‘Dustoff’ pilot in Vietnam “He lost 42 lbs. in the severe tropical heat,” said Mrs. Glenn, “but he was promoted to lieutenant colonel while serving in Vietnam.”

Returning from Vietnam in 1967, LTC Loren L. “Pappy” Glenn was once again assigned to Redstone Army Arsenal. He retired from the U.S. Army at Huntsville, AL in 1969 with 30 years of military service. As an Army aviator, he had accumulated, according to his son Milton, more than 12,000 flight hours. Among the awards and decorations received during his career, LTC Glenn held the Bronze Star, Air Medal w/7<sup>th</sup> OLC, Army Commendation Medal, Korean Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, and many other awards, including the Master Army Aviator badge.

Milton proudly remembered that, “After retiring in Huntsville, Dad started a flying service with one J-5 cub and I managed the aviation business for Dad. When he decided to move back to Texas, he sold all of the planes except his Mooney Super 21.

A few years after retiring, Loren L. Glenn and his wife Helen moved back to Denton, TX. He died there on 26 April 2006 after a long battle with Alzheimer’s disease. He was 87 years old at the time of his death.