

Bruce C. Babbitt
Brigadier General, USA
(1920-1999)

Brig. Gen. Bruce Babbitt was a unique judge advocate and soldier:

- decorated for gallantry while an infantry officer in World War II;
- commanded a battalion while a judge advocate during the Korean War;
- graduated first in his class in the inaugural advanced class in 1953;
- served as the top lawyer in Vietnam from 1969 to 1970.

Born in Livingston, Mont. on April 14, 1920, Bruce Campbell Babbitt graduated from Park County High School in 1937. He then attended the Univ. of Montana and received his B.A. in Business Administration in 1941.

Having been a student in the Reserve Officer Training Corps, Babbitt was commissioned a 2d Lieutenant, Infantry, on June 9, 1941. The next day, he was ordered to extended active duty.

Babbitt spent the entire war in the Pacific Theater. He served in the 32d Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division as a platoon leader, battalion motor officer, company executive officer, and battalion commander. He served on Attu (where his company received the Presidential Unit Citation), Kwajalein, Leyte, Okinawa and in the initial occupation of Korea.

He was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action (General Orders 32, 7th Infantry Division, 1944), and the Bronze Star with "V" device (General Orders 8, 7th Infantry Division, 1944).

His Silver Star citation reads:

For gallantry in action on 3 February 1944 in the Kwajalein Campaign. When on the night of 3 February 1944 the main line of resistance was in danger of collapse from severe enemy pressure on his right flank, Capt. Babbitt, disregarding constant enemy fire, leaped forward into the open and, by his courageous personal conduct inspired his men on the left flank to remain on duty against the main enemy attack. He then moved through open terrain, collected additional troops that had taken cover, and personally led them in a daring and vicious attack against

the enemy force on the right flank in the face of devastating enemy fire, and re-established his defensive line. Capt. Babbitt's intrepid conduct throughout the battle was in keeping with the highest tradition of military service.

In March 1946, Babbitt returned to civilian life and completed his law degree at the Univ. of Montana in 1947. He accepted a commission as a judge advocate in 1949.

Babbitt first served in the Military Affairs Branch before being assigned as an Assistant Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) at 2d Infantry Division, Ft Lewis, Wash., in 1950. When that division deployed to Korea, Babbitt went with it.

While in Korea, Babbitt commanded for almost a month a provisional rifle battalion deployed in defensive positions along the division's main supply route.

In September 1952, Babbitt attended the first Advanced Class of The Judge Advocate General's School (TJAGSA) and in May 1953 was honor graduate of that class. Babbitt remained on TJAGSA's Faculty and Staff after graduation. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel in 1954 and remained until leaving for Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, Kans. in 1956.

From 1957 to 1958, Babbitt served as a judge advocate at 3d Infantry Division, Ft Benning. He went with the division when it left American soil for Wurzburg, Germany in 1958 and was then reassigned as SJA, Bad Kreuznach, Germany. He served two years as the division's top lawyer before returning to the U.S. to attend the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Va.

From 1962 to 1964, Babbitt was the Chief, Government Appellate Division. He attended the Army War College from 1964 to 1965 and subsequently served as Executive Officer to The Judge Advocate General from 1966 to 1968.

In May 1969, then Col. Babbitt deployed to Vietnam as SJA, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. Selected for brigadier general in 1970, he subsequently served three years as Assistant Judge Advocate General for Civil Law.

Babbitt's decorations, medals, badges and citations include: Distinguished Service Medal (with oak leaf cluster); Silver Star; Bronze Star Medal (with oak leaf cluster); Joint Service Commendation Medal; Army Commendation Medal; Combat Infantry Badge; Presidential Unit Citation (with oak leaf cluster); Philippine Presidential Unit Citation; and Korea Presidential Unit Citation.

Babbitt retired in 1973 and lived in Ft Walton Beach, Fla. at the time of his death in 1999.