

# Edward C. Betts

(Note: No military personnel file at St. Louis; destroyed in 1973 fire; this information obtained from magazine articles and the Army Register.)

Born in Alabama, "Ed" Betts received his LL.B. from the University of Alabama in 1911. He subsequently served in the Army as an infantryman in World War I (Capt., Inf., Officer Reserve Corps, Aug. 15, 1917; Capt., Inf., National Army, Aug. 15, 1917; discharged Jun. 19, 1919).

In September 1920, Betts received a commission as a Regular Army captain, and later graduated from the Infantry School, Ft. Benning, Ga.

On Oct. 19, 1929, then Capt. Betts transferred to the Judge Advocate General's Department. He subsequently served in Washington D.C. and at Ft. Benning (where he was the post judge advocate).

Betts was promoted to major on Aug. 1, 1935 and to lieutenant colonel on Aug. 18, 1940. He received a temporary promotion to colonel on Dec. 31, 1941. From April 1942 to May 1943, Col. Betts was the Chief of the Contracts Division in Washington, D.C. After being awarded the Legion of Merit for his exceptionally meritorious service in that job, Betts deployed to England to take up duties as the Theater Judge Advocate for the European Theater of Operations.

After the Allied invasion of Normandy, Betts moved with Gen. Eisenhower's headquarters to France and, at the end of the war, Betts remained in Germany with the Army of Occupation. At the time of his death in May 1946, he was a brigadier general and the [Theater] Judge Advocate, European Theater of Operations and advised the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force.

During the post-war period, Betts was chiefly concerned with legal issues arising out of the administration of military government in occupied Germany. While he was heavily involved in the planning for the Nuremberg trials (he met with war crimes experts and toured concentration camps), Betts and his legal staff also spent much of their time overseeing the newly-established Military Government Courts. As he explained in an article published in *The Judge Advocate Journal* in 1945, these tribunals were exercising criminal jurisdiction over *all* civilians in U.S.-occupied Germany. Betts also said that he and his staff were planning to convene a variety of military commissions to try German civilians and military personnel for war crimes and, in fact, these tribunals were hearing cases before Betts died on May 6, 1946.