

*Col Richard V (Dick) Wheeler*

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**RICHARD V. (DICK) WHEELER**, Col., was born at Camp Devens, Mass., on March 29, 1921. Married Alice Leatherman at Wright Field, Ohio, June, 1951. Has two sons, two daughters and five grandchildren.

Joined the Massachusetts National Guard March 28, 1939, admitted to the US Military Academy, West Point, N.Y., July, 1940. Completed flight training as a cadet, received pilot's wings from Gen. H.H. Arnold, commissioned 2nd Lt. Army Air Corps June 1, 1943. After B-25 training at Mather Field, Calif., was assigned to fly A-20's in the 671st Bomb Sqdn, 416th Bomb Grp. Lake Charles, La.

Sailed for the ETO January 1944, and assigned to the 9th AF at Wethersfield, England. Flew 69 combat missions in A-20's and A-26's to include 33rd mission on D-Day. Awarded Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with twelve Oak Leaf Clusters, French Croix de Guerre with Palm, and Distinguished Unit Citation.

Participated in high altitude bail-out program at White Sands, N. Mex., in 1950, breaking world record in experimental ejection seat at 42,499 feet. Was Test Director for world's first successful underground silo launch of an ICBM, Vandenberg AFB, May 1963. Command Pilot, Senior Parachutist, Senior Missileman. Retired as Colonel, April 1, 1968.



*AFTER EIGHT-MILE PARACHUTE DROP:* Capt. Richard V. Wheeler is shown at a field near Holloman Air Base at Almodo, N. Mex. Captain Wheeler made the jump to test a device which opens a parachute automatically after a man has fallen out of rarefied air which supplies insufficient oxygen to maintain human life. In announcing the recent jump, the Air Force said the 42-449-foot drop exceeded the previous Air Force parachute record and topped all known world marks.