

# **Charles Nathan Beecham**

## **Lt.Col. USAF, Retired**



**Born:** 7 January 1922 at Minco, Oklahoma

### **Military Service Career:**

#### **1939 – 1941 OK National Guard**

Enlisted at age 17 in the Oklahoma National Guard's 158<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Brigade, Band Section of the Service Battery as a trombone player. He also attended Cameron Junior College in Lawton, Oklahoma.

#### **1942 – 1945 Active Army**

Enlisted in the Army, began the Aviation Cadet Program. Completed Flight Training and then completed B-17 training. Aircraft commander, B-17. Flew 50 combat missions over Northern Europe during WWII.

#### **1945 – 1948 Air Force Reserve**

Field Representative, American Legion of Oklahoma. Organized Legion Posts.

#### **1948 – 1949 Active Air Force (1948 - 1969)**

Aircraft Commander, C-54 aircraft Berlin Airlift. Flew 212 roundtrips to Berlin during the USSR blockade.

#### **1950 – 1951**

Flight and Academic instructor – USAF Basic Flight Training School, Connally AFB, TX.

#### **1951 – 1954**

Academic Instructor and Instrument Flight Examiner, B-47 Combat Crew Training School, McConnell AFB, KS.

#### **1954 – 1955**

Aircraft Commander, RB-47, Squadron performance engineer, Forbes AFB, KS.

#### **1955 – 1959**

Education specialist, B-52 Combat Crew Training School. Supervised 26 academic instructors, developed curriculum and supervised 12 man Commercial/Graphic arts studio preparing briefing and training material for all Strategic Air Command (SAC) bases.

#### **1959 – 1962**

Chief of General Education programs, SAC Headquarters. Developed academic and synthetic training curriculums for six Combat Crew training schools, Offutt AFB, NE.

#### **1962 – 1966**

Operations Representative, SAC Systems Office, ASD Headquarters. Designed, tested, and implemented B-52 aircraft camouflage pattern called *Operation Potato Bug*, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH.

## **1966 – 1969**

Senior Representative and Test Director, SACPO Test Facility, Eglin AFB. Responsible for all air to ground missiles, electronic warfare, and conventional munitions tests.

**Lieutenant Colonel, US Air Force:** Retired 1 August 1969 with 28 years service.

**Military Awards (from DD214):** Distinguished Flying Cross; Air Medal with 5 Oak Leaf Clusters; Air Force Commendation Medal; WWII Victory Medal; European, Africa, & Middle Eastern Campaign Medal (P); AOC: National Defense Service Medal; Air Force Longevity Service Award with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters; Air Force Outstanding Unit Award; Meritorious Service Medal. Other: Commemorative Medal *50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Victory in the Great Baltic War* by Boris Yeltsin, President, Russia.

### **Civilian Education:**

1969 – 1973 Bachelor of Arts in Art Education; Master of Arts in Fine Arts at University of Northern Colorado.

### **Civilian Awards and Recognition:**

- Citizen of the Year, El Reno Chamber of Commerce, 1980
- Citizen of the Year, El Reno Chamber of Commerce, 2000
- Best Actor Award Jewel Box Theatre, OKC, for *On Golden Pond* and *Foxfire*
- Canadian County Commissioner Award, *For Noteworthy Contributions to Canadian County*, 2003
- El Reno Junior College Distinguished Service Award (now Redlands Community College, El Reno, OK), 1981
- Selected to represent the United States by the Eisenhower Center Staff and Austrian Professor Karner for an exhibition at the Institute on Study of the Consequences of War at the University of Graz in Austria, 1995
- Selected for the cover of MidFirst Bank's 1995 Annual Report for *Achievement*
- Cameron College Distinguished Alumni Award (now Cameron University, Lawton, OK), 2001

**Charles Beecham is an accomplished – artist, sculptor, illustrator, author, docent, historian, raconteur, teacher - as well as a leader, skilled fundraiser and community volunteer.**

### **Artist, Sculptor, Illustrator and Volunteer:**

#### **Military Art:**

- Painting of his B-17 *Snafuperman* (cover art for 4 WWII memoirs)
- Designed lapel wings and logo for the Daedalian Fraternity of Military Pilots (1985)
- Designed and sculpted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group/Wing Memorial at the USAF Museum Memorial Garden at Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio (1991)
- Designed and sculpted the 3520<sup>th</sup> B-47 Combat Crew Training Wing Monument McConnell AFB, KS (1993)

- Initiated, designed and fundraised for El Reno's *Heroes Plaza*—a monument honoring those who died in the four major conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (dedicated 2004; the only one of its kind in the state of Oklahoma)
- Designed and sculpted *Spirits of Canadian County*—a bas relief bronze depicting the men and women who served from Canadian County at El Reno's *Heroes Plaza*
- Designed and sculpted *Major General Jesse Lee Reno* sculpture in *Youngheim's Centennial Plaza*, El Reno (El Reno's namesake 2004)

#### **Community/Historical Art:**

- Designed and painted historical building mural (108 ft by 18 ft and 15 ft off the ground) in downtown El Reno, OK (1980)
- Designed the artwork for the Sports Memorial in Legion Park, El Reno
- Designed the 2000 Christmas Card for Governor and Mrs. Keating
- Designed carpet Tryptych of *Resurrection Morning* for United Methodist Church in El Reno
- Designed and sculpted four *Heritage Days* Belt Buckles
- Donated 800 prints of his 4 historic railroad paintings and area maps (historical) to the Canadian County Historical Museum giftshop
- Created the fountain sculpture *Morning Flight* at One Benham Place in Oklahoma City

#### **Community Leader and Worker:**

- President of the Beaux Arts Council in Ft. Walton Beach, Florida (2 years)
- President of the Associated Arts Council in El Reno chairing the campaign that raised the funds and built the 200 seat Cultural & Performing Arts Center at Redlands Community College (2 years)
- Delivered Mobile Meals with Norma, his wife of 55 years (6 Years)
- Board Member Oklahoma State Dental Health Board (1 year)
- El Reno Chamber of Commerce (When funds were cut for the El Reno Chamber of Commerce, he and a small volunteer crew kept it running for two years)
- Carnegie Library Board Member, El Reno (9 years)
- Co-founder Historic Fort Reno Visitor's Center and manned it for 4 years
- Master of Ceremonies for El Reno Onion Fried Burger Day (5 years)
- Emceed El Reno Community Chorus performances

#### **Historian, Author, and Volunteer:**

- Historical interpreter for Fort Reno and author of *The Historical Buildings of Fort Reno*
- Wrote historical guide to Fort Reno for the Visitor's Center—*The Buildings of Historic Fort Reno*
- Wrote the history of the Beecham Cemetery, North of El Reno
- Prepared and gave educational programs on local historical figures as well as the Land Run and settling of townships in Oklahoma to school children.

## **Raconteur (Storyteller) & Volunteer:**

- *Tombstone Tales* Actor at Ft Reno – A living history event (5 years)
- Docent for the *National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum* (13 years)
- Actor and narrator for historical video titled *The Spirit of the 45<sup>th</sup>* for the Nigh Institute of State Government at the University of Central Oklahoma and 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Museum (1994)
- Step on Tour Guide for City of El Reno (2 years)
- Tour Guide for El Reno's *Heritage Express Trolley* (2 years)
- Initiated tours to Jesse Chisholm's grave for El Reno Heritage Days (2years)

**Actor:** Two-time winner of Best Actor Award at OKC's Jewel Box Theatre for *On Golden Pond* and *Foxfire*. Also *Big Sky Christmas Broadcast* at Bigfork, Montana. Appeared in film and television including *D.O.A.* with Meg Ryan and Dennis Quaid, *Dark Before Dawn*, *Force of Pride*, *Dallas* as the preacher who married J.R. Ewing, and *Walker, Texas Ranger* with Chuck Norris. Spokesperson for *Elks National Home* video. Commercials included: OG&E, Beaumont Eye Associates, Chuck E. Cheese, Show Biz Pizza, and Globe Life Insurance.

**Teacher:** Art teacher in Greeley, Colorado; Denver, Colorado; El Reno, Oklahoma; Farmington, New Mexico; adjunct professor at Redlands Community College in El Reno.

**Organizations:** Order of Daedalians (past Flight Captain of Wiley Post Flight 46 Chapter), Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Kiwanis Club (Denver, CO; El Reno, OK; Ashland, OR), Screen Actor's Guild, Wesley United Methodist Church Choir for 30 years and songleader of his Sunday School class for 30 years. Canadian County Historical Museum, and Oregon Historical Society.

## **Attachments:**

Album by Mrs. Jahnna Beecham

Letters of Recommendation from:

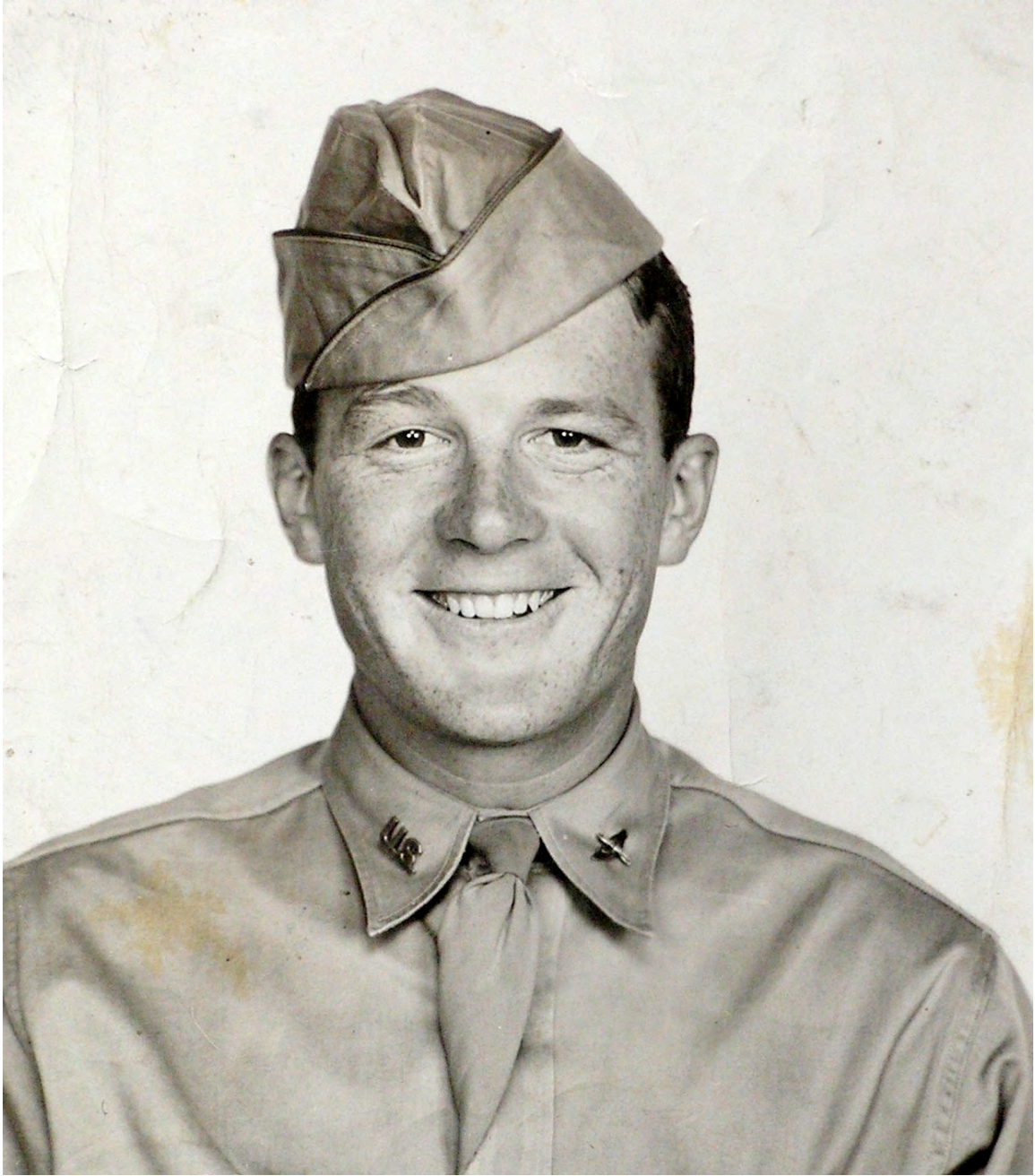
- Col. Kelly Z. Lynch, USAR
- Lt.Col. Nedwin Hockman, USAF, Retired
- Mrs. Theleda Fuller, El Reno Chamber of Commerce
- Dr. Bill Cole, President East Central State University
- Dr. Burrel McNaught, Methodist Church Pastor
- Maj.Gen. John W. Collens, USAF, Retired
- Brig.Gen. Revere A. Young, USAF, Retired
- Mr. Chris Stanley
- Mr. Aaron Martin, National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum





Charles N. Beecham, Aviation Cadet  
Kelly AFB, San Antonio, Texas, 1942





Charles N. Beecham  
US Air Force, 1948 - 1949



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LtCol, US Air Force, Retired  
From Cover of 1995 MidFirst Bank Annual Report