

**BIOGRAPHY**  
of  
**BRIGADIER GENERAL (RET) IRWIN K. COCKETT JR.**



Brigadier General Irwin K. Cockett Jr. is a native son of Hawaii, having been born on the island of Kauai on August 24, 1930. He is an alumnus of Roosevelt and Kamehameha High Schools.

He enlisted in the U.S. Army in November, 1949 and began 36 years of service to his country and state. He served as an infantryman with the distinguished 5<sup>th</sup> Regimental Combat Team during the Korean War from 1950 – 1951.

Upon graduation from Officers' Candidate School in August 1952, he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant and assigned to the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division. Subsequent assignments included tours with the original "Green Beret" unit: the 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and Bad Tolz, Germany. Other key command and staff assignments include duty with the 25<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Divisions; U.S. Army Ryukyus Command; Department of the Army Regional Representative to the Federal Aviation Agency – Western Region; United States Army Pacific; Commander I Corp Aviation Company and the Operations Officer of the 17<sup>th</sup> Aviation Group.

General Cockett served three combat tours in the Republic of Vietnam (June 1962 – January 1968) where he distinguished himself as a helicopter gunship pilot and leader of the "FANGS." His decorations include the Silver Star awarded to him by the U.S. Marine Corps, one award of the Legion of Merit, two awards of the Distinguished Flying Cross, three awards of the Bronze Stars, four awards of the Purple Heart, two awards of the Meritorious Service Medal, twenty-two awards of the Air medal, two awards of the Army Commendation medal, two awards of the Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Gold Star, and numerous service and campaign medals. General Cockett wears the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Master Aviators Wings, Senior Parachutists Wings and Special Forces Tab.

In December 1970, General Cockett became the Army Advisor to the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, Hawaii Army National Guard. He retired from the Army with 22 years of active duty service in December 1971. He then joined the Hawaii Army National Guard in April 1972 as an instructor pilot and aviation safety officer. In September, 1977, he became the Staff Aviation officer and Commander of the Guards' Aviation Support Facility at Wheeler Air Force Base. General Cockett served as such until December, 1982, when he was appointed as Chief of Staff, Hawaii Army National Guard. He was promoted to Brigadier General and appointed Commander, Hawaii National Guard and Assistant Adjutant General, Army, State of Hawaii, in May 1983. He retired from the Guard in August 1986.

His military education includes Airborne Qualification Course, Fixed-Wing and Helicopter Qualification Courses, Infantry Advance Course, Command and General Staff College, National Defense University and the U.S. Army War College (SRCOC). His civilian education includes courses attended at the University of Maryland, Los Angeles Harbor College, Arizona State University and the University of Southern California.

His current and past affiliations include: 5<sup>th</sup> Regimental Combat Team-Korean War Veterans-Hawaii (President); Old Soldier Reunion Association (Chairman); Special Forces Association (member); Employer Support to the Guard and Reserves (past Executive Director); Civilian Advisory Group (member); Mamaka' AiAlo (member, past president); Waipuna Board of Directors (vice-chairman); Pacific American Foundation (Director); Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation (member); State Dedication committee for Korean and Vietnam Memorials (Chairman); Innovative Technical Solutions (Director); Cockett Ohana (Past President); 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean War commemoration Commission (Co-Chairman); Advisory Committee to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on Minority Veterans (member).

General Cockett is married to the former Elizabeth Huddy of Honolulu. He has three daughters: Mylabeth, Yokette, and Punahele.



# Irwin K. Cockett

Irwin Cockett is one of the very few (only three identified to date) members of the U.S. Army in history, to be awarded the Silver Star by the U.S. Navy.

## AWARDS BY DATE OF ACTION:

1 of 2

## Silver Star

AWARDED FOR ACTIONS  
DURING Vietnam War

Service: Army

Rank: Major

Battalion: 14th Aviation Battalion

## GENERAL ORDERS:

## CITATION:

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star (Navy Award) to Major (Infantry) Irwin K. Cockett (ASN: 0-1930924), United States Army, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as an Aircraft Commander with I Corps Aviation Company (Provisional), 14th Aviation Battalion, in the Republic of Vietnam on 14 May 1965. When a Marine Reconnaissance Patrol was under heavy fire by a numerically superior Viet Cong force, Major Cockett landed his UH-1B helicopter under intense fire and evacuated five Marines, two of which were wounded, to the Marine Collecting and Clearing Company at the DaNang airfield. Major Cockett then returned to the area and again under heavy fire landed, placed his crew chief and gunner in firing positions on the ground, and on foot located other Marines and helped to load one Marine killed in action on the aircraft and successfully returned the Marines to the DaNang airfield. By his daring actions and loyal devotion to duty in the face of personal risk, Major Cockett upheld the highest traditions of the Armed Forces of the United States.





# Distinguished Flying Cross

AWARDED FOR ACTIONS  
DURING Vietnam War

Service: Army

Rank: Major

Battalion: 14th Aviation Battalion

## GENERAL ORDERS:

Headquarters, U.S. Army Vietnam, General Orders No. 33 (January 3, 1966)

## CITATION:

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 2, 1926, takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Flying Cross to Major (Infantry) Irwin K. Cockett (ASN: 0-1930924), United States Army, for heroism while participating in aerial flight. Major Cockett distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous action on 5 July 1965, while serving as Pilot of an unarmed UH-1B helicopter near Ba Gia, Republic of Vietnam. While his aircraft was escorting Marine helicopters on a rescue mission to evacuate eight Americans from an outpost surrounded by an estimated three Viet Cong battalions, Major Cockett monitored a radio call from another fire team that was receiving heavy automatic weapons fire about one mile west of Ba Gia. He immediately proceeded to the Viet Cong position, which was marked by red smoke, and directed his crew to place suppressive fire on the target. As his aircraft completed its first firing pass and turned left to make another pass on the target, it was hit by .50 caliber machine gun fire wounding the co-pilot. Although all instruments indicated the craft was incapable of further flight, and knowing that it might explode any minute, Major Cockett decided to maneuver the ship into the confines of Ba Gia outpost. The left rear of the fuselage began to burn and control of the aircraft became extremely difficult. At approximately 100 feet altitude and one-fourth mile short of the landing zone control of the tail rotor was lost. At approximately 50 feet altitude the tail boom began to separate causing complete loss of directional control. The aircraft crashed and was engulfed in flames. Major Cockett immediately directed his crew to set up a perimeter of defense against a mortar and small arms attack. Later a Marine helicopter evacuated the crew and other Americans from the outpost. Through his sound judgment and professional skill in landing the disabled aircraft in a safe place, the lives of three crew members were saved. The heroic actions of Major Cockett were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.



# **IRWIN K. COCKETT, JR.**

## **PROFESSIONAL PROFILE**

**OFFERING THE CREDENTIALS OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT COUPLED WITH THE DISCIPLINE AND ACCOMPLISHMENT OF A DISTINGUISHED MILITARY CAREER**

### **Qualifications**

**Brigadier General (retired) – 36 years United States Army/Hawaii Army National Guard.**

**Extensive volunteer/pro bono leadership and organization of numerous Asian/Pacific Veterans groups and activities, within a setting best characterized as *semi-retirement* (15 years).**

**Profound abilities to communicate with peers at all levels – from the front office to the foxhole – and build effective rapport in a diverse, multi-cultural environment.**

**Proven high level of technical competence, as well as top notch abilities to manage multi-million dollar budgets, extensive resources, and thousands of personnel.**

**Areas of professional expertise include: High Tech Business start-up and New Business Development; Aviation Facilities Management; Personnel Safety Programs; OSHA Regulations; Air Freight Operations; Domestic and International Contracts; Financing; Budgeting; Maintenance; Public Relations; Insurance; Sales & Marketing; Market Research; Labor Relations; and Security.**

**Master aviator/test pilot/flight instructor, qualified for at least nine aircraft.**

**Combat tours of Korea, Vietnam, as well as with the original “Green Beret” unit.**

**Decorations include the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross (2), Bronze Star (3), Purple Heart (4), Meritorious Service Medal (2), Air Medal (22), Army Commendation Medal (2), Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Gold Star (2).**

**Native son of Hawaii, born on Kauai, alumni of Kamehameha Schools.**

### **Volunteer and Pro Bono Affiliations**

**Veterans Outreach Committee (Chairman); Advisory Committee to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on Minority Veterans (Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders Representative); 5<sup>th</sup> Regimental Combat Team-Korean War Veterans-Hawaii (President, Founder); Old Soldier Reunion Association (Chairman); Special Forces Association (member); Employer Support to the Guard and Reserves (past Executive Director); Civilian Advisory Group (member); Mamaka‘AiAlo (member, past president); Waipuna Board of Directors (vice-chairman); Pacific American Foundation (Director); Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation (member); State Dedication committee for Korean and Vietnam Memorials (Chairman); 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean War commemoration Commission (Co-Chairman); Advisory Committee to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on Minority Veterans (member).**



## Professional Highlights

### Director, Pacific American Foundation, Honolulu, Hawaii – Presently

*Dedicated to the improvement of the lives of Pacific Islanders in seven areas including healthcare and quality of life; education, business opportunities; leadership skills; cultural/language preservation; community and legislative service; and charitable assistance.*

### Director, Innovative Technical Solutions, Honolulu, Hawaii – Presently

*Fast growing high tech company, developing advanced optical instruments and systems, real-time software and processors, and data analysis, for use in military reconnaissance, biologic sensing, environmental and agricultural monitoring, mineral exploration, and industrial applications.*

### Senior VP/Operation, Pacific International Aviation Corporation, Honolulu, Hawaii

*1986-1987. Intensive start-up of air freight service between west coast, Hawaii and Asia. In addition to serving as acting CEO, also responsible for structure of new company, market research, recommendation of air routes, needs for aircraft, facilities and financing. Cultivation of global contacts. Negotiation of contract to provide service to the federal government.*

### Commanding General, Hawaii Army National Guard

*1983-1986. 484 federal and state employees on five islands, in support of 4,000 guardsmen. \$36-million annual budget. Responsible for \$112-million in property, \$45-million in aircraft, and \$121-million in facilities. Reversed negative recruiting trend, initiated new training programs, streamlined administrative procedures.*

### State Aviation Officer, Hawaii Army National Guard

*1977-1983. Principal advisor to Commanding General. Supervisory aircraft pilot, in charge of two aviation support facilities on two islands – 350 aviation personnel. Built modern air fleet; built pilot force from 12 to 84; oversaw \$5.5-million facilities expansion; provided support to state and counties during natural disasters and emergencies.*

### Aviation Safety Officer/Instructor Pilot, Hawaii Army National Guard

*1972-1977. Pilot training for fixed and rotary wing craft. Personally tested aircraft to ensure air worthiness. More than 6,000 flight hours. Director of nationally-recognized safety program. Set record for accident-free flying hours.*

### Lt. Colonel, United States Army

*1949-1971. Advanced from enlisted recruit to Lt. Colonel. Various duty stations, including combat tours of duty in Korea and Vietnam. Highlights: personal pilot for 4-star general, Vietnam; Department of Army Regional Representative to FAA, Western Region; designated Master Army Aviator, Senior Parachutist, Green Beret.*

## Biographical Sketch

BRIGADIER GENERAL IRWIN K. COCKETT, JR.  
COMMANDER/ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL

HAWAII ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Born: Kilauea, Kauai, Hawaii; 24 August 1930

Schools: Roosevelt High School  
Aviation Safety Officers Course, University of Southern  
California--1974  
Crash Survival Investigators Course, Arizona State  
University--1976

Military Schools: Armored Officers Candidate School--1952  
Basic Airborne School--1952  
Language School (Czechoslovakian)--1955  
Army Primary Flight Training--1957  
Advanced Infantry Officers Course--1958  
Twin Engine Transport Training--1959  
Instrument Flight Training, 3rd USA Instrument Flight  
School--1959  
Helicopter Qualification Course--1964  
Command and General Staff College--1964  
Army Aviation Staff Officers Course--1967  
U-H1 Helicopter Instructor Pilot Qualification  
Course--1967  
OH-58 Instructor Pilot Course--1972  
AH-1G Qualification Course--1974  
Rotary Wing Instrument Qualification course--1974  
Reserve Component National Security Course--1982  
Senior RC Officers Course--1985

Brigadier General Irwin K. Cockett, Jr., serves as Hawaii's Assistant Adjutant General, Army, and as Commander, Hawaii Army National Guard. He was appointed to his position on 15 April 1983 by Hawaii's Adjutant General, Major General Alexis T. Lum, with the concurrence of Governor George R. Ariyoshi.

General Cockett enlisted in the U.S. Army in November 1949 at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, and served as an infantryman with the 5th Regimental Combat Team during the Korean War from 1950 to 1951. He was commissioned a second lieutenant, Armor, in August 1952 after attending Officer Candidate School and was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division.

From February 1953 to November 1957, General Cockett served in Germany as FA Team Leader with the U.S. Army 10th Special Forces.

In November 1957, he attended fixed wing pilot training at Camp Gary Air Force Base, Texas and then went on to advanced flight training at Fort Rucker, Alabama.

From May 1959 to January 1961, General Cockett served as an Aviation Platoon Commander with the 25th Aviation Company, 25th Infantry Division, Hawaii.

From January 1961 to June 1962, he served in Okinawa with the United States Army, Ryukyu Islands, as an Assistant Aviation Officer and later as Executive Officer of the Command's Flight Detachment. From June 1962 to January 1963, he served in Vietnam as personal pilot for the Commander, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam.

General Cockett returned to the United States and served as a Company Commander with the 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas. From May 1963 to January 1964, he served in Germany as Battle Group S-4 for the 26th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division.

After attending Command and General Staff College in 1964, General Cockett attended helicopter pilot training at Fort Wolters, Texas.

After a brief tour at Fort Riley, Kansas, General Cockett returned to Vietnam from September 1964 to November 1965 as Executive Officer and then Commander of I Corps Aviation Company.

Back to the United States in November 1965, he attended various flight and aviation officer schools until March 1967 when he returned to Vietnam for his third tour. He served in Vietnam as an Assistant S-3, 17th Aviation Group and Executive Officer, 269th Combat Aviation Battalion. He was wounded in January 1968 and sent to Letterman Army Hospital in California where he convalesced until April 1968.

He served as the Department of Army Regional Representative to the Federal Aviation Administration for the Western Region with Headquarters in California from April 1968 to July 1969. He then returned to Hawaii as Chief, Logistics Information Branch, DCSLOG, U.S. Army Pacific.

General Cockett became Army Advisor to the Hawaii Army National Guard's 29th Infantry Brigade in December 1970 serving until December 1971 when he retired from the active Army.

He joined the Hawaii Army National Guard in April 1972 as Aviation Safety Officer and Flight Instructor.

In September 1977, he was named Commander of the Hawaii Army National Guard Aviation Support Facility at Wheeler Air Force Base.

In December 1982, he was appointed as Chief of Staff, Hawaii Army National Guard, by then HARNG Commander, Brigadier General Alexis T. Lum.

Decorations and Awards: Silver Star  
Legion of Merit  
Distinguished Flying Cross w/Oak Leaf Cluster  
Meritorious Service Medal w/Oak Leaf Cluster  
Bronze Star Medal w/2 Oak Leaf Clusters  
Air Medal w/21 Oak Leaf Clusters  
Army Commendation Medal w/Oak Leaf Cluster and  
Valor Device  
Purple Heart Medal w/3 Oak Leaf Clusters  
Numerous other U.S. and Foreign Service Medals and  
Crosses of Gallantry  
Combat Infantry Badge  
Senior Parachutist Badge  
Master Aviator Badge

Civic Affiliations: Hawaii National Guard Association (President 1977-78)  
Army Aviation Association of America (Past President  
of Aloha Chapter)  
National Guard Association of the U.S.  
The Retired Officers Association  
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.  
Mamaka Aialo

General Cockett and his wife Elizabeth live in Waikiki. He has three daughters--Mylabeth, Yokette, and Punahele.