



Commanding General:
MAJOR-GENERAL LEWIS H. BRERETON

Biographical Sketches

Major-General Lewis Hyde Brereton

General Brereton, at the time of his selection to head the new Air Force, had behind him the weight of valuable experience as a tactical leader in air warfare. He brought with him dearly bought lessons from the Philippines and from India. Not the least of these was aircraft dispersal on the ground and protection by revetment.

Subordinate units were thoroughly indoctrinated in this lesson. As a consequence, the toll the Jap had taken of his aircraft on the ground in the Philippines, was not repeated by the Germans in Africa.

In those early days of American participation in the war General Brereton had seen his dwindling forces make courageous stands on Luzon, then Mindanao, then Australia and Java. Nowhere were there aerodromes adequate in revetments and size to protect aircraft on the ground, and time after time the Jap was able to dart in, bomb, strafe and destroy grounded aircraft.

Retreat continued, until finally the decision was reached for General Brereton to leave part of his Air Force for the defense of Australia and to go himself with the other part to organize a force in India where more effective sorties could be made against the Jap. He sent his strength against Rangoon and led it against shipping in the Andaman Islands. He organized the Tenth Air Force and put it on a striking basis.

Then came the call to Egypt as the Middle East situation became critical. General Brereton brought with him Colonel Victor H. Strahm to become his chief of Staff; Brigadier-General E. E. Adler to head the Service Command; Lt.-Col. E. N. Backus, Major Cornelius V. Whitney, Major Louis Hobbs, Major R. K. Pierce, Major Gwen G. Atkinson, Lieut. Joseph T. Johnson and Lieut. John E. Felton.

General Brereton graduated from the United States Naval Academy in the class of 1911, but soon chose the army in preference to the navy. His principal army schools include: Command and General Staff at Fort Leavenworth, 1928; Field Artillery School at Fort Sill; Air Corps Technical School at Maxwell Field, Ala. General Brereton was an instructor at the Command and General Staff School from 1934 to 1939.

