

# DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE CIVIL AFFAIRS REGIMENT



**BRIGADIER GENERAL  
CORNELIUS W. WICKERSHAM**  
*U.S. Army, Retired*

Inducted 2021



Brigadier General Cornelius Wendell Wickersham was born in Greenwich, Conn., on June 25, 1884. The Harvard-educated lawyer enlisted in the New York National Guard (NYNG) on July 1, 1915 and was commissioned as an Infantry Second Lieutenant on Sept. 13, 1916. After being federalized for duty and serving on the Mexican border in 1916, he deployed to France in Feb. 1918. There, he attended the Army General Staff College before assignments in the 27th Infantry Division and as a Corps Operations and Training Officer.

During the interwar years Wickersham served in the Organized Reserves, including commanding the 153rd Infantry Brigade, 77th Infantry Division. On Jan. 20th, 1942, then-Col. Wickersham was promoted to Brigadier General (Brig. Gen), U.S. Army. In March 1942, he became the first Commandant of the School of Military Government at the University of Virginia.

While Commandant, Wickersham pioneered the U.S. Army's first professional Civil Affairs (CA) education. In so doing, he established a legacy of CA instruction continued today by the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. Brig. Gen. Wickersham had other accomplishments while Commandant. In order to help meet the need for additional CA-trained officers, he helped establish a CA training program in civilian universities throughout the U.S. He also was an early voice for the need to direct commission art experts, which after CA training, would be posted to Theater Commanders' staff. This role, was later refined in the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Subcommission, popularized as the 'Monuments Men.'

Because a senior CA officer was needed in the European Theater, in January 1944, Brig. Gen. Wickersham deployed to England. He held high level CA positions for the remainder of the war. He served as the U.S. military representative to the European Advisory Commission, which planned for the post-war occupation of Germany. Brig. Gen. Wickersham had a role in formulating the policy of dividing Germany into three zones of occupation and devising the formal unconditional surrender terms for Nazi Germany. He concurrently served as the Chief, European Allied Contact Section, in the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) under General (GEN) Dwight D. Eisenhower.

In August 1944, General Eisenhower named Brig. Gen. Wickersham as Deputy Commander, U.S. Group Control Council (Germany). This entity later became the Office of Military Government (U.S.) or OMGUS. Wickersham in effect was the Commander of this element until April 1945, when command was given to Major General Lucius D. Clay. When Lt. Gen. Clay was also named the Deputy Military Governor (for Germany), Brig. Gen. Wickersham became the Assistant Deputy Military Governor. He served in this position until May 26, 1945, when he asked to be relieved for health reasons.

Brig. Gen. Wickersham, also a Lieutenant General in the NYNG, retired from the U.S. Army on June 29, 1948. He returned to his law practice in New York City, N.Y. He died on January 31, 1968.