

## **Mr. William B. French (Class 43-42)**

William B. French was born May 15, 1919 in Daytona Beach, FL. Serving in the U.S. Army from 1942 to 1946, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant at Artillery Officers Candidate School at Ft. Sill, OK in December 1942.

In England in January, 1944, he completed paratrooper training with the 101st Airborne Division, and on June 6th parachuted on D-Day in early morning invasion of Normandy, France. During the next months he served as a forward observer with various units in France. In December, 1944 he was transferred to the 11th Airborne Division in the Pacific Theater as a forward observer for naval gunfire against the Japanese on the Batangas peninsula, south of Manila.

In the European and Pacific Theaters, he received three battle stars and a Presidential Unit Citation. He was discharged as a captain on February 9, 1946 following occupation duty in Japan. After the war, the French government awarded him the Medal of the Jubilee of Liberty for the Normandy D-Day invasion. He was also honored to receive the French Legion d'Honneur Medal (rank of Chevalier) from the French government in 2011.

In 1951 he completed an engineering degree from Georgia Institute of Technology using the Veterans GI bill. He then joined General Motors in Milwaukee, WI in their defense products division. After being transferred from Milwaukee to Arizona, Louisiana, and back to Milwaukee, he and his wife determined they wanted to settle and raise their two daughters in Milwaukee. In 1963 he was attracted to a position in commercial lending at the Marshall & Ilsley Bank, a major commercial bank in Milwaukee from which he retired as a Senior VP in 1986.

In 1976 he was appointed Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army, which he conducted along with his responsibilities at the Bank. The Civilian Aide, without compensation, represents the Secretary and the Army in community affairs, and they visit troops and Army installations within and outside the United States. They are afforded 3-Star protocol status. In 1987 he was made Civilian Aide Emeritus. Over the years he served seven Secretaries of the Army from the President Gerald Ford Administration through the George W. Bush Administrations.

In 1982 he served six months in Washington, DC on President Reagan's Grace Commission for Cost Control in the Federal Government.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS 84TH DIVISION (TRAINING)  
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL  
4828 WEST SILVER SPRING DRIVE  
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN 53218

AFKB-GC-CC-CS

19 April 1977

SUBJECT: Nomination to Artillery OCS Hall of Fame

LTC Paul G. Neal  
Chief, P & O Division  
Directorate of Plans & Training  
Headquarters USAFACFS  
Fort Sill, OK 73503

1. Mr. WILLIAM B. FRENCH, Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army for the State of Wisconsin, is an outstanding individual and has served us well in this position. He continually "sells" the United States Army and Army Reserve to the civilian community. Mr. French has demonstrated a very active interest in the military and is responsive to all levels of Army command.

2. Mr. French has attained a very respected position as Senior Vice President of the second largest banking institution in the State of Wisconsin. He is considered to be an outstanding administrator in the financial community. His wife is also very involved and interested in his services as a civilian aide.

3. The Artillery OCS can be very proud of Captain William B. French and his accomplishments. It is indeed a privilege and an honor to nominate him to the Fort Sill Artillery OCS Hall of Fame. He will be a very distinguished addition to the Hall of Fame.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Donald J. Brown", is positioned above the typed name.

DONALD J. BROWN

Major General, USAR

Commanding General, 84th Division (TNG)

2 Incl

1. Two photographs
2. Two applications