

Colonel Kenneth T. McFall – Class 32-42

Colonel McFall was born on July 23, 1922 in Adamson, Oklahoma. He lived through the Great Depression, and moved from one place to another, in Texas and Oklahoma, with his mother and brothers. Ken's life growing up was hard, but it gave him the skills he needed to have an outstanding career as a military officer.

Ken joined the National Guard when he was 15, and that was common for teenage boys in those days. He learned the basics of being a soldier, always continued his schooling and grew to a whopping 6 feet 5 inches. His National Guard unit was called up when he was 17, and he went with them.

His initial assignments showed he had an aptitude for leadership. He qualified for Officer Candidate School just as WWII began and became a Second Lieutenant at the age of 19. He married his late wife, Mary Ellen Meyer, in December of 1942 and then shipped out to the European theater. He distinguished himself repeatedly with his actions in Sicily, Italy, and later with one of the first units to enter Germany from the south. He and his battery liberated Buchenwald.

After returning to the States, he mustered out of service to continue his education, attending the University of Kansas and later the University of Nebraska, earning a degree in Political Science. He determined his heart still lay with the Army, however, and he rejoined in 1948. He and his family moved all over the world for 30 plus years, living in Germany, Puerto Rico, Okinawa, Panama, Morocco, Iran and many places in the US. His rank and responsibilities continued to grow and his most significant commands included the 3rd Battalion 30th Artillery, 72nd Field Artillery Group, Deputy Chief of Staff, HQ US Army Europe, Deputy Chief of Staff HQ VII Corp, Western Hemisphere Operations Commander during the Bay of Pigs. Through the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam War (multiple tours) and peace-keeping duties with the UN, his distinguished service never flagged. He never would shy away from the really hard tasks/commands and he was repeatedly recognized for his leadership skills as a commander.

He received the Bronze star with "V" for valor, the Joint Services Commendation Medal, the Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters, the Air Medal with oak leaf cluster, the Joint Services Commendation Medal, the Medal of Honor for Vietnam Merit (RVN), the Purple Heart and many other commendations. His greatest professional pride was that he led American combat troops in all three major wars. He retired after 38 years (plus 2 years that did not count toward his service because he was underage).