

## **Colonel George H. Wenzel (Class 30-42)**

### **Colonel Spends 16 of 27 Army Years at Sill**

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"You might say" says Col. George H. Wenzel with a grin, "that Fort Sill is the story of my Career."

The 55-year-old-officer, who will retire as head of FAMSEG (Field Artillery Missile Systems Evaluation Group) at the end of February, has spent 16 of his 27 Army years at the Artillery installation.

"I took Basic and Advanced Individual Training here in 1941," he recalls, "graduated from Artillery OCS the following year, and instructed for 11 years in various departments throughout the school. (U. S. Army Artillery and Missile School)." He also headed FAMSEG in 1960-61 and again starting in 1964.

If Fort Sill is the story of Col. Wenzel's career, then a Corporal missile course he attended in 1955 is the key to the plot. The course not only kindled his interest in missiles but also served as a catalyst for weighty later assignments. Corporal battalion commander (1956-57), Chief of Redstone Division, Guided Missile Department USAAMS (1958-60), commanding officer of FAMSEG twice, Fort Sill's Missile Operations Officer (beginning in 1966).

Having been with the Army missile program almost since its inception, Col. Wenzel is in a good position to comment on missile evolution.

"One major change," he observes, "has been the decrease in equipment required with a corresponding increase in reliability. Corporal, the Army's first generation missile used a Command Guidance System requiring radar, computer, and Doppler components on the ground to guide the missile in flight. The second generation Pershing and Sergeants use an Inertial Guidance System contained within the missile itself.

"a second basic change," he adds, "is the fuel. The first generation missiles used liquid propellants, the second uses solids which eliminate the hazardous operation of handling toxic liquids."

Several deserving footnotes punctuate the Col. Wenzel story.

Between FAMSEG assignments, he spent three years in Naples, Italy, with the Special Weapons Branch of the Plans and Operations Division, Allied Forces, Southern Europe. The native Minnesotan jestingly calls this his "only hardship tour" because it was the one overseas assignment where he was allowed to bring along his family.

Other assignments abroad were less pleasant. During the Second World War he took part in four Central-European Campaigns, earning two Bronze Stars and an Air Medal. Again, after six campaigns in Korea in 1950 and '51, he was awarded two additional Bronze Stars.

"Those Korean winters were so severe," he recalls, "that I promised myself I'd retire to a warm climate.

True to his word, Col Wenzel and his wife, Eva, will be moving to the area of Fort Myers, Florida shortly. One of their daughters, Claudia, is a junior at nearby Florida State University. Another Mrs. Ronnie Durham lives in Lawton.

Having logged so many years at Fort Sill, it comes as no surprise that Col. and Mrs. Wenzel plan to return frequently. "Not only to renew old acquaintances," he says, "but to visit our two grandchildren."

**Note: Colonel Wenzel passed away on November 27, 1968 and was buried in the Fort Sill Post Cemetery.**