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## *House of Representatives*

COLONEL GEORGE MCDOWELL

HON TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, April 11, 2014*

To live to be 100 years old is in and of itself a remarkable accomplishment. But, to do what Colonel George McDowell has done in his life is truly impressive. His patriotic legacy of military service is one of the best examples of a founding member of the Greatest Generation.

Born in Detroit, Texas on August 27, 1913, McDowell grew up like most rural Texas children. At the age of 17, he enrolled in North Texas Agricultural College (now the University of Texas at Arlington). In the 1930s, this college served primarily as a military academy. In less than two years, McDowell graduated and decided to attend a third year to command D Company. This decision proved to be life-changing: in 1933, he earned a competitive appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point where he eventually served as president of his class. He graduated four years later, in 1937, as a Second Lieutenant in the Field Artillery.

McDowell started his military career at Fort Sill, Oklahoma in the 18<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, a horse-drawn artillery unit. There, he trained with new long range guns, participated in the development of bomb handling equipment and worked with specialized vehicles that would be used during World War II. He learned the fundamentals of how to support the U.S. Infantry with close fire support.

In Oklahoma, McDowell's friend from West Point, Lt. William Westmoreland (Class of 1936), later the Vietnam Commander, set him up on a blind date with Rae Woods. Rae, an Army "brat" of an Artillery Officer also stationed at Fort Sill, would soon become Mrs. McDowell.

Two years later, with the mechanization of the Army, McDowell was transferred to the Ordnance Department for duty with the Air Corps. He attended the Aviation Ordnance School at Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland and at Langley Field in Virginia. There, he served as an instructor and participated in developing bomb-handling equipment and specialized vehicles that were used in World War II.

With the Germans invading across Europe and the Japanese seeking to gain ground in Asia, the U.S. Army and Air Corps were expanding quickly. Under this expansion, McDowell was assigned positions at Ordnance Officer at Bowman Field, Kentucky, Ireland Task Force, New Orleans Air Base and at Birmingham Air Base in Alabama as Ordnance Officer, Third Support Command.

By the summer of 1942, McDowell was ordered to Washington D.C. to serve in the re-designated 12<sup>th</sup> Air Support Command of the Western Task Force to prepare for the North African campaign under the command of General Patton. McDowell was in charge of logistical planning, including movement of units and equipment, in the invasion of French Morocco called Operation Torch.

General Patton and his troops, along with McDowell, arrived in Morocco at the port of Casablanca aboard the *USS Augusta* in the fall of 1942. Within three days, Casablanca fell, providing the U.S. a strong military port. This Campaign built up the power of the U.S. Armed Forces leading into World War II by eventually pushing the German forces out of North Africa.

McDowell then spent two years overseas in North Africa and Italy. There he was responsible for the logistics for arms and equipment necessary for both the Royal Air Force and the U.S. Tactical Air Support for the Fifth and Eighth Army Operations. In 1944, two years after deploying, McDowell was assigned to the War Department general staff where he was responsible for standardizing and approving procurement of newly developed small arms, ammunition, and specialized vehicles for the Army and Air Corps units.

Upon returning home from World War II, part of America's Greatest Generation, McDowell wanted to do more with his life. He took his experience and knowledge from West Point and his military service and enrolled at Harvard Business School where he earned an MBA degree in 1948. After Harvard, McDowell was then transferred from the Army to the Air Force, and he served at the Air Force's Headquarters at the Pentagon and at Wright Patterson Air Force Base from 1948 -- 1955. He signed the procurement order and oversaw the installment of the first four UNIVAC computers for the Air Force, the Navy, the Bureau of Census, and Wright Patterson Air Force Base.

McDowell then studied for one year at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and reassigned from 1958 -- 1960 to the Air Force's ballistic missile program, first in California and then as a project officer and commander of the Thor Missile Force in England. In England, McDowell contributed to training the Royal Air Force crews, who manned the Thor Missile Force of 60 missiles with atomic warheads -- a mission that helped counter the Soviet Union's missile threats. He was later assigned to the Pentagon in the Office of Secretary of Defense's Weapons System Evaluation Group.

In 1961, Colonel McDowell retired from the Air Force and a 24 year career as a commissioned officer in both the Army and Air Force. For his distinguished service, Colonel McDowell received the Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Army Commendation Medal, and the Air Force Commendation Medal.

After retirement, McDowell moved home to Houston, Texas with his wife, Rae. There, he became a successful real estate entrepreneur and formed Clark McDowell & Kic, Inc., which has grown to become one of the leading residential property management firms in the Houston area. He and his wife, Rae, raised two children in Houston--Larry and Linda. Regrettably, in 2006, his wife, Rae, passed away at the age of 90. They were married for 70 years.

After an admirable career in the military and a successful business, Colonel McDowell still wanted to give back: he served as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Houston Continuing Education School for nine years, as the first president of the Houston Chapter of the Military Officers Association of North America and as president of the West Point Society of Greater Houston. True patriot and citizen, Colonel McDowell has also served on three grand juries. Colonel McDowell is currently the fifth oldest, living graduate of West Point.

Our nation is indebted to Colonel McDowell for his service, and our local community is privileged and grateful to call him a fellow Houstonian and hero. At 100 years old, he continues the good fight. It is with great pleasure that I recognize and honor Colonel George McDowell, for his service to our country and for continuing to give back to our community through a lifetime of service. Without his service, we would not be the greatest country the world has ever known.

And that's just the way it is.