

GENERAL ORDER

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HEADQUARTERS
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GENERAL JAMES HILLIARD POLK

The death of General James Hilliard Polk, former Commander in Chief, United States Army Europe, on 18 February 1992 in El Paso, Texas, is announced with deep regret.

General Polk was an officer of the highest ideals. His courage, sound judgement, and superb leadership produced brilliant military achievements of the greatest value to his country. With his passing the nation has lost a faithful, valiant servant and the United States Army, a commander of great stature.

General James Hilliard Polk was born in Batangas, Philippine Islands on December 13, 1911, of Army parents. He graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1933 and commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant of Cavalry. Prior to World War II, he served as a unit officer in two cavalry regiments, and attended the regular and advanced courses at the Cavalry School. General Polk is considered among the last Senior Army Commanders to have served in the Horse Cavalry.

At the outbreak of World War II, General Polk was a Company Tactical Officer with the Corps of Cadets at West Point. In 1943, General Polk attended the short general staff course at Fort Leavenworth and then joined the 106th Mechanized Cavalry Group at Fort Hood, Texas, serving as Squadron Commander and later as Regimental Executive Officer. The 106th Cavalry Group joined the Normandy beachhead forces and participated in the hedgerow fighting, the St. Lo breakout, and Third Army's drive across France.

In early September 1944, General Polk assumed command of the 3rd Cavalry Group, then in combat near Metz, France, and continued to command this mechanized reconnaissance regiment for the balance of the war. The 3rd Cavalry remained assigned continuously to General Walton H. Walker's Twentieth Corps of Third Army and frequently spearheaded its advances into central Europe. In these campaigns, the regiment, known as "Task Force Polk", was frequently cited for bold and aggressive action. General Polk was decorated three times for gallantry, once by General

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Patton personally. The regiment was authorized its own patch by General Patton.

After brief occupation duty in Germany at the end of World War II, General Polk returned to the United States and became Chief of Tactics at the Ground General School, Fort Riley, Kansas, and later attended the Armed Forces Staff College. In 1948, he was ordered to Tokyo, Japan, and served in the G2 Section of the U.S. Far East Command for the next three years.

Early in the Korean War, General Polk became Assistant Chief of Staff, G2 of the Tenth Corps and participated in three campaigns. In August 1951, he returned to attend the National War College and was later assigned as an instructor at the Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. He was then made Chief of Staff of the 3rd Armored Division at Fort Knox, Kentucky and participated in the deployment of the division to, then, West Germany. In July 1956, he was promoted to Brigadier General and served as Assistant Division Commander for one year.

Following an assignment as Assistant Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations, Land Forces Central Europe, at NATO Headquarters at Fontainebleau, France, under General Dr. Hans Speidel, General Polk returned to the U.S. and became the Director of the Policy Planning Staff in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, establishing himself as a true soldier-diplomat of the highest order.

General Polk was promoted to Major General and ordered back to Western Germany to take command of the 4th Armored Division. He was subsequently assigned as U.S. Commander, Berlin, on 2 January 1963.

General Polk became Commanding General of V Corps on 1 September 1964 and was promoted to Lieutenant General on 4 September 1964. He returned to the United States in March 1966 to serve as the Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, at Department of the Army Headquarters. He spent the remainder of his Army career in Europe, serving from December 1966 to May 1967 as the Deputy Commander in Chief, U.S. Army Europe and Seventh Army; and finally as Commander in Chief U.S. Army Europe and Seventh Army from June 1967 to March 1971. He retired from active duty on 1 April 1971, but remained active in national and local military and civic organizations. His many contributions include association with the Army Emergency Relief Agency, the West Point Association of

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Graduates, the U.S. Strategic Studies Institute, the National Security Council, the World War II Commemorative Committee, and the Horse Cavalry Association. He was also active in civic groups and foundations in and around El Paso, Texas.

For his exceptionally meritorious and distinguished service, General Polk's awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster); the Legion of Merit (with two Oak Leaf Clusters); the Silver Star Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster); the Bronze Star Medal; the Croix de Guerre (with Palm Decoration); the Legion of Honor; the American Campaign Medal; the Europe, Africa, Middle East Campaign Medal; the American Defense Service Medal; the World War II Victory Medal; the Army of Occupation Medal (with Clasp for Germany and Japan); the Korean Service Medal; the Air Medal; the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation; the United Nations Service Medal; and the American Forces Expeditionary Medal.

General Polk's life was characterized by courage, dedication, vision, and patriotism. These qualities earned him the respect of all who knew him. The grief caused by the death of General Polk is deeply shared by all members of the United States Army.

General Polk is survived by his wife, Mrs. Josephine Leavell Polk; his daughter, Josephine Polk Schwartz; his son, James Hilliard Polk, III; by two brothers, Colonel John T. Polk, USA Retired, and Captain Thomas H. Polk, USN, Retired; and by five grandchildren.

M.P.W. Stone
Secretary of the Army

M. P. W. Stone

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