



Colonel Howard Merritt Steele, Jr.

Howard Merritt Steele Jr., known lovingly as "The Colonel" died Wednesday, December 28th at Fairfax Inova Hospital after complications from a fall. Colonel Steele was a soldier at heart. He loved his family, his country, his God, the Army and West Point.

Howard Steele was born in Hartford, Connecticut, on October 17th, 1927, the son of Howard and Bernice (Hall) Steele. He earned his high school diploma from the prestigious Peekskill Military Academy, Peekskill, NY. In 1945, "Howie" was accepted to Yale University. However, "Howie" had always wanted to attend West Point and make the army his career. In 1947, his dream came true. He received a Congressional appointment to the United States Military Academy and in 1951, graduated with a commission as a second lieutenant in the Infantry.

His first posting was Fort Benning, Georgia where he married Dorothy King of Washington, DC- his steady girlfriend all through West Point and his true love for the next 65 years. He fought in Korea where he was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action as a rifle platoon leader. He also received the Bronze Star for his service as a rifle company commander.

After the Korean War, Howard Steele served as Aide-de-Camp for the Commander-in-Chief, Far East Command. In 1954, he and "Dotsy" returned to the U.S. to begin their family and life as a career military couple. They moved more than 21 times, which Howie

relished and Dotsy endured! Among the highlights was his service as company commander in the 3rd Infantry, The Old Guard, at Fort Meyer, VA; aide to the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Lyman Lemnitzer; Divisions Operations Officer in the 2nd Infantry during the Cuban Missile Crises following which he volunteered for Vietnam. There, he served as the Senior Infantry Training Advisor at the Vietnamese Infantry School in the early days of the advisory effort in 1963-64.

After Vietnam, he returned home to command the 54th Infantry Battalion (Mechanized), attend the Army War College, and in his free time, obtain a Master's Degree from Shippensburg State University in Political Science and International Relations.

Duty, honor, and country called again as he volunteered for a second tour in Vietnam where he served as Senior Advisor to the 18th ARVN Infantry Division. One of his favorite tours was as Commander of the 2nd Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized) in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

He completed that tour and returned to Washington, D.C. as Executive Officer to the Assistant Secretary of the Army. He wrapped up his distinguished career as Director of the Combined Arms Department of the Engineer School at Fort Belvoir. After retiring in 1981, he became active in investment management, various hereditary societies including the Sons of the American Revolution, The Society of the Descendants of the Founders of Hartford and a number of others. Colonel Steele was a Master Mason, Scottish Rite and a Shriner. His real focus however, was his wife "Dotsy," his children, and his grandchildren who all loved him beyond measure.

Colonel Steele's awards also include three Bronze Stars, Meritorious Service Medals, three Legions of Merit, three Air Medals, Army Commendations Medal, the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm and a number of other service and foreign medals.

He is survived by his beloved Dorothy, his son Howard Merritt Steele, IV, his two daughters Cynthia Steele Vance, Susan Steele and six adoring grandchildren.