

## In Memoriam 2018: Military Figures We Lost

### Farewell: Remembering Those Who Died in 2018

At the close of 2018, it's time to remember some of the notable service members we lost through the year. Military Times remembers some of those who served and made their mark on the military and their country. In Memoriam 2018: Military figures we lost

#### JANUARY



Thomas Ellis, left, joins his fellow Tuskegee Airmen as they answer questions from the audience during an event at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, Feb. 8, 2010.

**Former Sgt. Maj. Thomas Ellis, 97:** He was [one of six Tuskegee Airmen](#) living in the San Antonio area when he died. He was drafted in 1942 and later spoke with pride in his unit — the first all-black Army Air Forces unit. “They had the cream of the crop in our outfit because we had to do everything better than the other outfits,” he said during a 2010 event honoring the Tuskegee Airmen. “No one will ever beat our record.” Jan. 2.



In this April 1972 photo made available by NASA, John Young salutes the U.S. flag at the Descartes landing site on the moon during the first Apollo 16 extravehicular activity. NASA says the astronaut, who walked on the moon and later commanded the first space shuttle flight, died on Friday, Jan. 5, 2018. He was 87.

**John Young, 87:** After an early career as a [Navy officer](#) who flew the F-4 Phantom II, Young became one of NASA’s pioneers and one of a select few to walk on the moon. He later commanded the first space shuttle mission, aboard the shuttle Columbia in 1981. His 42-year career with NASA was longer than any other astronaut’s, encompassing the Gemini, Apollo and space shuttle programs. Jan. 5.



**Brig. Gen. Anna Mae Hays** became the first woman and the first nurse in American military history to attain the rank of general officer. (Pfc. Lyndsey Prax/Army)

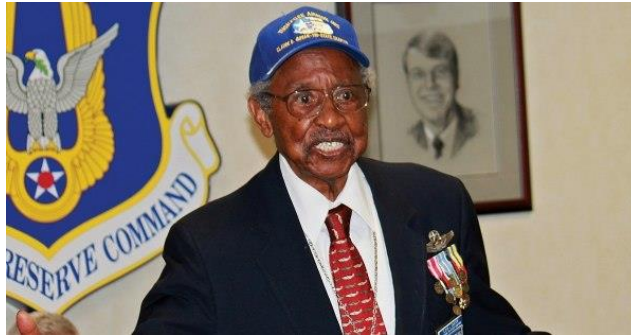
**Retired Brig. Gen. Anna Mae Hays, 97:** The Army officer was the [first female general](#) in U.S. history, and the first nurse in the U.S. military to reach that rank. She led the Army Nurse Corps and worked toward changes to open opportunities for women to serve in uniform. Hays served in Burma, China and India during World War II and helped set up the first military hospital during the Korean War. Jan. 7.



**Mort Walker**, the artist and author of the Beetle Bailey comic strip, stands in his studio in Stamford, Conn., in this Aug. 16, 2010, photo. Walker died Jan. 27, 2018. He was 94.

**Mort Walker, 94:** The [World War II veteran](#) created the “Beetle Bailey” comic strip portraying some of the world’s best-known fictional Army characters. For decades, readers have followed the antics of Beetle, Sarge, Zero and others, and they can still find Beetle on the print pages of Army Times. Jan. 27.

## MARCH



Retired Lt. Col. Floyd J. Carter is shown on a visit to the 732nd Airlift Squadron, which he commanded from 1971 to 1974.

**Retired Lt. Col. Floyd Carter Sr., 95:** One of the last surviving [Tuskegee Airmen](#), Carter served in three wars. He joined the Army Air Corps in 1944 and [became a Tuskegee Airman](#) — the first all-black unit of what was to become the U.S. Air Force — and served as a bombardier and navigator in World War II. He joined the Air Force Reserve in 1947, and the next year he took part in the Berlin Airlift. He served during the Korean and Vietnam wars, and flew U.S. troops and supplies into South Vietnam during the Tet Offensive in 1968. March 8.

**Charles P. Lazarus, 94:** Lazarus was a [cryptographer in the U.S. Army](#) during World War II. It was after his military service that he gained fame as the founder of Toys R Us stores, which became iconic across America. He died a day before the store chain went into liquidation. March 22.

## APRIL



In this Dec. 12, 2012, file photo, Sen. Daniel Akaka, D-Hawaii, the first Native Hawaiian to serve in the Senate, leaves the Senate chamber on Capitol Hill in Washington after delivering his farewell speech. Akaka, known as a humble and gracious statesman who served in Washington with aloha for three and a half decades, died Thursday, April 5, 2018, at the age of 93.

**Sen. Daniel Kahikina Akaka, 93:** The World War II veteran was the [first Native Hawaiian in Congress](#), and he served there for more than three decades, first in the House and later in the Senate. He was in the Army Corps of Engineers during WWII and later became an advocate for veterans, introducing measures to improve services to vets and speaking out about their need for attention to all their wounds, both seen and unseen. Akaka, a Democrat, sponsored federal legislation that led to Medals of Honor for 22 Asian-American soldiers who fought during WWII, including the late Sen. Daniel Inouye. In 2012, Akaka chose not to run for re-election and he left the Senate the next year. April 6.



R. Lee Ermey appeared on the cover of Marine Corps Times in 2013 and he was featured in an exclusive interview for the cover story.

**R. Lee Ermey, 74:** The [legendary Marine](#) gained fame as an actor playing Gunnery Sgt. Hartman in the Stanley Kubrick film “Full Metal Jacket” and other tough military-guy roles. Known as “The Gunny,” the former drill instructor left the Marine Corps as a staff sergeant and later starred in movies and TV shows including “Gunny Time with R. Lee Ermey.” April 15.

**MAY**



In this Dec. 4, 1969, file photo, Army Capt. Ernest Medina, a key figure in the 1968 My Lai massacre during the Vietnam War, speaks at a news conference at the Pentagon. Medina died on May 8, 2018, according to an obituary written by his family. He was 81.

**Ernest Medina, 81.** The former Army captain was a [key figure in the My Lai massacre](#) during the Vietnam War. On March 16, 1968, he was a captain in command of U.S. soldiers who killed hundreds of Vietnamese civilians in the village of My Lai, many of them women, children and elderly men who were reportedly unarmed. He was charged with responsibility for the massacre. At his court-martial, he said he didn’t know about the massacre until later and that he wasn’t with the troops who did the killing. He was acquitted. May 8.





**Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Bannister**, then the commander of the 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum, New York, listens to a question during a media event on post. Bannister died May 27, 2018, just days before he was set to retire.

**Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Bannister, 57:** A [former commander of the 10th Mountain Division](#), Bannister was days from retiring and on transition leave when he died. He was running at the time and died of natural causes, medical examiners said. His last assignment was with U.S. Army Central at Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina. He commanded 10th Mountain Division for more than two years, leaving command in April 2017. He had multiple deployments to Afghanistan and also served at the Pentagon as director of strategy, plans and policy for the Army G-3/5/7. May 27.

## **JUNE**



In this July 13, 1988, file photo, U.S. Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci testifies at the Senate Armed Services Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington. Carlucci, a Navy veteran and former diplomat who served as secretary of defense during the final 14 months of President Ronald Reagan's second term, died in June 2018 at age 87.

**Frank C. Carlucci III, 87:** He served as [secretary of defense](#) under President Ronald Reagan, capping a career that began in diplomacy. He was a “transformative leader” who managed critical defense issues and rebalanced priorities during challenging times, said Defense Secretary Jim Mattis. At the Pentagon, Carlucci faced crises in the Persian Gulf such as the USS Vincennes shooting down a civilian Iranian airliner, killing 290 people, in 1988. After leaving the Pentagon, he held executive positions at an investment group. June 3.

**JULY**



Retired 1st Sgt. Harold Eatman was one of the original members of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment. He is seen here in Naples in October 1943. Eatman died July 6, 2018. He was 102.

**Retired 1st Sgt. Harold Eatman, 102:** He was one of the [original members of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment](#). He was also one of the All American paratroopers who made all four combat jumps with the 82nd Airborne Division during World War II. Eatman signed up for the Army in 1942 and served with the 505th until September 1945. In 2015, he received France's highest award, the Legion of Honor. July 6.



Adrian Cronauer, left, was a disc jockey at the Saigon-based Dawnbuster radio show from 1965-1966. He is shown in 1987. His experiences in the Vietnam War were portrayed in the movie, "Good Morning, Vietnam," with actor Robin Williams as Cronauer.

**Adrian Cronauer, 79:** The Air Force sergeant and disc jockey with the Armed Forces Radio Service became legendary during the Vietnam War and [inspired the 1987 Robin Williams movie](#) "Good Morning, Vietnam." He would begin his early morning radio show "Dawnbuster" saying "Gooooood morning, Vietnam!" He defied traditional broadcasts and gave the fighting troops humor and current music to keep them entertained. He later served as an adviser to the deputy assistant secretary of defense from 2001 to 2009, according to his [obituary](#). July 18.



Official portrait of Rear Adm. Alene B. Duerk. The first woman to attain the rank of admiral passed away in July at the age of 98.

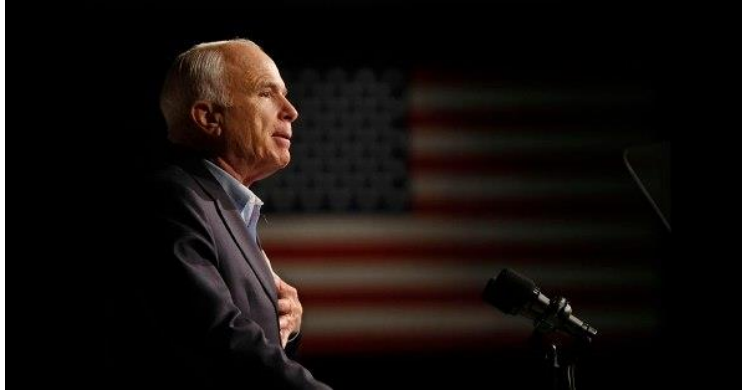
**Retired Rear Adm. Alene Duerk, 98:** She was a trailblazer as the [Navy's first female admiral](#). Duerk trained as a nurse and in her early tours she served as a ward nurse at Naval Hospital Portsmouth, Virginia. She served at sea on the USS Benevolence and in 1945 she tended to wounded troops returning from fighting in World War II. In 1970, Duerk was named director of the Navy Nurse Corps, and she worked to expand Navy medical capabilities in a number of specialties. Duerk retired in 1975 but stayed involved in Navy medicine for many years afterward. July 21.

## **AUGUST**



Retired Gen. John Abrams, a former commander of Training and Doctrine Command, died Aug. 20, 2018. He was 71.

**Retired Gen. John Abrams, 71:** A [former commander of Army Training and Doctrine Command](#), Abrams retired in 2002 after 36 years in the Army. He came from a family of four-stars: His father was retired Gen. Creighton Abrams Jr., a former Army chief of staff, and his brothers are Gen. Robert Abrams, commander of U.S. Forces Korea, and retired Brig. Gen. Creighton Abrams III. Like his father, John Abrams had commanded V Corps. The younger Abrams also was commander of the 2nd Infantry Division, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment and Joint Task Force Kuwait. Aug. 20.



In this Oct. 11, 2008, file photo, Republican presidential candidate Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., speaks at a rally in Davenport, Iowa.

**Sen. John McCain, 81:** As a Navy pilot during the Vietnam War, he was shot down and spent five years as a prisoner of war, becoming one of the [best known veterans in America](#). In his more than 30 years in the Senate, he was a leading voice on defense-related issues and a persistent and influential advocate for the military. He ran for president twice unsuccessfully, against Gov. George W. Bush in 2000 and then-Sen. Barack Obama in 2008. He remained one of the leading voices in the Republican Party. Before he died, he asked his former opponents Bush and Obama to speak at his funeral. Both former presidents paid him tribute during the service at the National Cathedral. Aug. 25.

**Former Staff Sgt. Russell Brown, 96:** He was one of the paratroopers who made all four combat jumps during [World War II](#). Only about a dozen of the legendary paratroopers are still alive. [Brown's service](#) was featured in "Four Stars of Valor: The Combat History of the 505th Parachute Infantry" and "All American, All the Way: The Combat History of the 82nd Airborne Division," by Phil Nordyke. Brown had been an F Company mortar squad leader. Aug. 31.

## OCTOBER



Lt. Gen. Thomas Vandal, commander of Eighth Army, speaks at the holiday concert in Seoul, Korea, Dec. 17, 2017.

**Retired Lt. Gen. Thomas Vandal, 58:** The [former commander of Eighth Army and 2nd Infantry Division](#) died of cancer weeks after retiring from service. The veteran of the Iraq war officially retired Sept. 1. He was commander of Eighth Army and chief of staff of Combined Forces Command, South Korea, from February 2016 to January 2018. His assignments also included serving as commandant of the Army Field Artillery School and Army Fires Center of Excellence. A message from Eighth Army-Korea remembered him as "the epitome of the Eighth Army Motto: "Fight Tonight!" Oct. 7.



## NOVEMBER



President George H.W. Bush and former first lady Barbara Bush join Adm. Vern Clark, chief of naval operations, on Aug. 26, 2003, as they watch the Navy's parachute team The Leapfrogs perform during a keel laying ceremony for the aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush.

**President George H.W. Bush, 94:** As a young Navy pilot, he flew 58 missions and in World War II he was shot down over the Pacific. He later served as a congressman, director of the CIA, and spent eight years as vice president under President Ronald Reagan. He was elected [president](#) in 1988 and was defeated four years later in his bid for re-election. In later years he worked toward humanitarian causes, raising funds for disaster relief and forming a partnership with the man who defeated him in his final bid for president, Bill Clinton. He died months after his wife of more than 70 years, former **first lady Barbara Bush**, who died in April 17 at age 92. Nov. 30.

## DECEMBER



Richard Overton, shown in March 2017, leaves the court after a special presentation honoring him as the oldest living American war veteran, during a timeout in an NBA basketball game between the Memphis Grizzlies and the San Antonio Spurs. The Army veteran died Dec. 27, 2018, at a rehab facility in Austin.

**Richard Overton, 112:** He was the [nation's oldest World War II veteran](#) and he was also believed to be oldest man in the United States. Overton volunteered for the Army in 1942, when he was in his 30s, and he was at Pearl Harbor shortly after the Japanese attack. He was a member of the Army's 188th Aviation Engineer Battalion, an all-black unit that served on islands in the Pacific, according to an Army report. At a Veterans Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery in 2013, he was honored by former President Barack Obama. Overton once said the secret to his long life was smoking cigars and drinking whiskey, which he often did on the porch of his home in Texas.

[Source: Military Times | Kathleen Curthoys | December 28, 2018 ++]