



SCHOLARSHIP IN HONOR OF

GENERAL
MERRILL A. McPEAK

U.S. AIR FORCE

General Merrill A. McPeak

Merrill McPeak put himself through San Diego State College, joining ROTC because it paid cadets a dollar a day. He had no intention of making the service a career. Flying school changed his mind.

Following training in F-100s, he was assigned to fighter squadrons in the US and overseas. While serving in Europe, he got jump wings by completing Army parachute training. He came back to Luke AFB as an F-104G gunnery instructor, helping to rebuild the Luftwaffe. Selected for the Thunderbirds, he flew 199 official air shows as a Solo Pilot. In 1967, his aircraft came apart on him during a show at Laughlin AFB, Texas. F-100s were grounded worldwide, then cleared for flight with a restricted g-load until undergoing depot repair of the wing centerline box. His accident likely saved a few pilot lives.

He reported to Phu Cat, Vietnam, in December of 1968. After only a few sorties in-country, then-Colonel Bill Creech chose him to lead the Misty high speed forward air controllers, whose mission, highly classified at the time, was to stop traffic down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. He flew 98 Misty sorties, and 269 combat missions overall.

After the Armed Forces Staff College, he did a 3-year Air Staff tour, followed by the National War College. He was a colonel for more than six years, which included 8 PCS moves. For some reason, he kept being sent where something needed to be fixed. Finally, he got his dream job as commander of the 20th Fighter Wing. In 14 years as a general officer, he commanded Twelfth Air Force, Pacific Air Forces, and became the Air Force's 14th Chief of Staff. He even did a short stint as Secretary of the Air Force, the first serving Air Force officer to function as his own boss. As Chief, he

conceived and executed the most important reorganization of the Air Force since its 1947 founding, creating Air Combat Command, along with other major changes designed to reconfigure the service for effectiveness in the Post-Cold War era.

His retirement was anything but uneventful. He was a very successful investor and a director of more than 20 public companies. He founded and was for many years chairman of the most successful business startup in recent Oregon history. His 3-volume memoir is treasured by fans of aviation and military history. He appeared in several episodes of the Ken Burns documentary, *The Vietnam War*, and spent five years as a technical advisor for this extraordinary film.

He was a National Co-Chairman of Barack Obama's first run for the Presidency. The president subsequently appointed him Chairman of the American Battle Monuments Commission, overseeing the care and maintenance of overseas cemeteries that contain the remains of 125,000 US combat dead. In the long line of distinguished chairmen, he was the first airman to hold this position. He led the effort to restore the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial and got both it and the military cemetery at the former Clark Air Base, The Philippines, accepted as ABMC properties. For this he was awarded the Secretary of the Air Force Distinguished Service Award, and France made him an officer in the Légion d'Honneur. General McPeak and Ellie, his wife of more than 60 years, live in Portland, Oregon.

“I think it is important to give back, and I want to honor the dedication and sacrifices the men and women in the Air Force make daily,” says Warren G. Lichtenstein, Founder and President of the Steel Partners Foundation. “General McPeak has been a special source of inspiration for me personally both as a mentor and fellow director, and I look forward to honoring him with the Falcon Scholarship.”

Warren Lichtenstein

Warren G. Lichtenstein



The Falcon Foundation is a 501(c)(3), non-profit foundation. Its purpose is to provide scholarships to College or Preparatory Schools for motivated young people seeking admission to USAFA and a career in the Air Force.

Although it is a separate organization, the Falcon Foundation works closely with USAFA.