

# In Memoriam: Retired GEN Charles C. “Hondo” Campbell

GEN Charles C. “Hondo” Campbell has dismounted his iron steed after 40 years of service to our nation. After a lengthy illness, he joined his fellow warriors Feb. 8, 2016, in that good old-time canteen and eternal resting place known as Fiddler’s Green. Upon his retirement in June 2010, he was the last continuously serving general officer who saw action in Vietnam to leave active duty.

After graduating from Louisiana State University, Campbell served in Vietnam as a Special Forces adviser, A-Detachment executive officer and commander. He commanded with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Divisions, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions and 8<sup>th</sup> Army. He was the 17<sup>th</sup> commanding general of U.S. Army Forces Command. Campbell also served in several key staff assignments in Germany and at Fort Hood, including chief of staff for U.S. Army Europe and U.S. Central Command.

Those who served with Hondo flooded social-media outlets with their tributes and condolences. The common denominator of the social-media tributes was Campbell’s ability to empower and create a command climate that leveraged everyone’s strengths and improved the performance of each Soldier. His confidence and pride were contagious as he brought out everyone’s best.

“GEN Campbell was the proverbial ‘anchor in a storm,’” said LTG Mike Tucker, commanding general of First Army. “He was tough on standards but fair on people. He possessed a quiet demeanor, which had a calming effect during chaos. His professional attitude and sage advice were a mainstay in our officer corps. He will be sorely missed and even harder to replace.”

“In my 36 years of service, I have never witnessed anyone who championed and cheered for Soldiers and their families more enthusiastically than GEN Campbell,” said the 12<sup>th</sup> Sergeant Major of the Army, Jack Tilley.

MG Thomas James, commanding general of 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, made the following statement from the division Campbell had once commanded: “The 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry (Bayonet) Division extends our heartfelt condolences on the passing of GEN Campbell, former commander of our great division. He was a true Army professional who inspired all of us with his character, competence and commitment to the profession of arms. His legacy will continue in all of us for years to come. God bless his family during this difficult period.”

Campbell’s military awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (with three oak-leaf clusters), Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (with five oak-leaf clusters), Special Forces tab and the Parachutist Badge.

See the [sidebar](#) for more biographical information on GEN Campbell.



Figure 1. GEN Charles C. “Hondo” Campbell as commanding general of U.S. Army Forces Command.



Figure 2. Then-MAJ Charles C. Campbell takes his place for a change of command in front of 2-67 Armor, the armor battalion he commanded in 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division, U.S. Army Europe, 1981.