



Colonel, US Army

Michael R. Devine

WKU Class of 1960

Michael R. Devine was born on 28 February 1942 in Owensboro, Kentucky. He lived his formative years in Owensboro with his parents and a sister. After graduating from Owensboro Senior High School, he came to Bowling Green to attend Western Kentucky University in September 1960. Mick joined the ROTC as a freshman, not knowing that the military would, in turn, become his lifetime career. In June 1965, he was commissioned in the Regular Army as a Second Lieutenant. He was branched in the Quartermaster Corps but detailed to the Infantry for two years.

After his initial training, Mick was assigned to the 3d Brigade Task Force of the 25th Infantry Division (Tropical Lighting) as a Platoon Leader in A Company 2/35 Infantry. His platoon fought in the deadly Ia Drang River Valley, the Chu Pong Mountains and along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Later he returned for a second tour in Vietnam, this time as a Quartermaster Officer on a supply and maintenance team with the 4th Logistics Command in the area of Can Tho. During his Vietnam service, Mick earned two Bronze Star Medals, a Purple Heart, and the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

Mick epitomized the Army's core values, principles and priorities. Leader development, operational competence, maturity in thought, instinct for the right course and the ability and willingness to take on hard problems and solve them for the greater good are chief among these. COL (Ret) Devine more than measures up in all these areas.

An Army leader has rank and position authority to help get the job done, but the best leaders do not lean on those. Mick is one of those leaders who people just like to be around and like to work for. That is a rare quality, and one that was noticed and appreciated in Mick fifty years ago as a youngster at Western.

Mick made his Army-wide mark as a senior logistics officer but he demonstrated courage, operational competencies, and a warfighting instinct very early in his career. He stayed in the Army afterwards and helped rebuild the Army and transition it to an all-volunteer force. Those were difficult years and the junior officers, without the help of the NCO corps we have now, were key to that work throughout the 1970's.

Mick was heavily involved as a force developer and practitioner in the logistics, maintenance and sustainment doctrine of the heavy force. His refuel-on-the-move concept was a significant problem solver. He took the burden of managing re-fueling assets from the maneuver battalions and put the responsibility on his forward support battalion, using their assets. When you have a very mobile defense plan in a brigade with 300 combat vehicles, this is a direct contribution to success. It was not very long before it was adopted Army-wide, taught in the schools, and practiced in all theaters of operation.

In addition to his combat awards, he also earned the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with 1 OLC, the Meritorious Service Medal with 3 OLC, the Army Commendation Medal with 2 OLC, and the Army Achievement Medal.

People like Mick Devine--and Mick Devine specifically-- built the foundations of today's Army and made the Army of his time the best in the world. There is no numeric that proves that, but his worth and value to Western, the Army, his family and his community are incalculable. Those are powerful qualifications.

