

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**SERGEANT MAJOR
OF THE ARMY
GEORGE W. DUNAWAY**

Inducted 6 November 2008



George W. Dunaway, born in Richmond, Virginia, on July 24, 1922, entered into the U.S. Army in the spring of 1943. After attending the Glider course and the Airborne Course in August 1943, Sergeant Major Dunaway remained at Fort Benning, Georgia as an Airborne School Instructor until January 1945 when he joined the 517th Combat Team in France as a Platoon Sergeant, fighting in Germany and Belgium where he participated in the Battle of the Bulge, during the first of his three combat tours.

He returned to Fort Benning in December 1945 with assignment to the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment where he served as First Sergeant of Company "A". In March 1948, Sergeant Major Dunaway was reassigned to the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. There he became a member of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment as Operations Sergeant. In September 1950, he and select members of his battalion were sent to Nevada to participate in nuclear testing as part of exercise "Tower Blast." He would ascend to the Regimental Sergeant Major position in 1952.

In early 1954 he transferred to the 187th Regimental Combat Team as the Combat Team Sergeant Major. He continued in that position for seven years during which he saw the Airborne Regimental Combat Team renamed as the 187th Infantry, when the 101st Airborne Division was reactivated on 21 September 1956, at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Departing Fort Campbell in 1961, he took the reins of the 1st Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces in United States Army Pacific and later moved to the 5th Special Forces Group in Vietnam, where he remained until June 1967.

Returning to the United States, he re-joined the 101st Airborne Division as it prepared to move to Vietnam in the largest unit deployment by air in the history of the Vietnam War. Sergeant Major Dunaway arrived in Vietnam with the Commanding General's Command Group on 13 December 1967. In February 1968, he moved to Camp Eagle in the I Corps Tactical Zone with the Division where he remained until July 1968 when he was selected as the 2nd Sergeant Major of the Army.

SMA Dunaway worked to institutionalize the office of SMA and focused on the concerns of enlisted soldiers. Soon after taking office, he requested that the Army staff inform him of all proposed policies that affected enlisted personnel. Once the Chief of Staff approved the request, Army staff officers became accustomed to seeking his advice and including him in the decision-making process on issues affecting Soldiers. During SMA Dunaway's tenure, the Chief of Staff approved the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES), a three-tiered system that trained NCOs in basic, advanced, and senior courses. The capstone was the Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, which trained master sergeants for duty as sergeants major at battalion level and above.

Sergeant Major Dunaway's awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star, Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal (with "V" Device), Purple Heart, Air Medal (with "V" Device), Army Commendation Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), Good Conduct Medal, European-African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnamese Armed Forces Honor Medal, Second Class, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry (with Silver Star), Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, and the Combat Infantryman Badge with Star.

SMA Dunaway passed away 6 February 2008, survived by his wife, of 65 years, Mary (Peck); his two sons, Michael and George; two daughters, Martha Barnett and Suzanne Hunt; 10 grandchildren; and his five great-grandchildren.