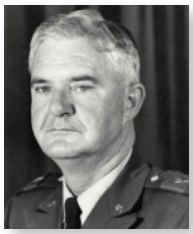
James Alva Munson

Clan Waitstill

Munson Historian



by Lori Hahn

Frank Reuben Munson and Lois Marie White had an ultimately unhappy marriage, thanks to something outside of the control of both of them. That is a story for another day.

James Alva Munson was the second child of the pair. The first was his brother Ray. James was born 11 Dec 1922 in Long Pine, Brown County, Nebraska. His family later moved to South Dakota where James attended two years at University of South Dakota. He then finished his degree at the United States Military Academy (USMA). Attending USMA was formative, and his highlight was being a scrub on the undefeated 1945 football team. He was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in field artillery in 1945. He later received an master's degree in International Affairs from Columbia University and also graduated from the Army Staff College and the Army War College.

His first tour was with the Army of the Occupation in Germany. That was followed by Korea during the truce period, as company executive officer in Japan, and then a year in Vietnam. He specialized in diplomacy and foreign affairs and additionally served embassy duty—first in Argentina as military attache and then in defense attache in Mexico. Three tours at the Pentagon followed, including one tour as assistant to the Secretary of the Army. His final tour was as commander of the 1st Armored Division in Germany.

He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the Army's highest non-combat decoration for his work with the Mexican Army in controlling drug trafficking and crop eradication. Among his other medals were three Legions of Merit, two Bronze Stars, and five Air Medals (one for valor in combat). The Republic of Viet Nam honored him for his courage in rescuing civilians caught in an ambush, as did Mexico for his work with its drug control program.

The next 44 years of retirement were filled with many jobs, exciting interests, community service, church leadership, and hobbies.

James married the former Nancy Brewer in 1951. The couple had six sons and a daughter. The couple made their post-retirement home in Falmouth, Massachusetts, and summered in Menauhant. He was known for his rollicking laughter and love of spending time with his family.

General Munson also worked on his family history and genealogy. He was a major contributor to the Munson Record published in 1993 and was a founding member of the Thomas Munson Foundation. He served as president of TMF for four years and was a leader in establishing the Scholarship Fund.

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