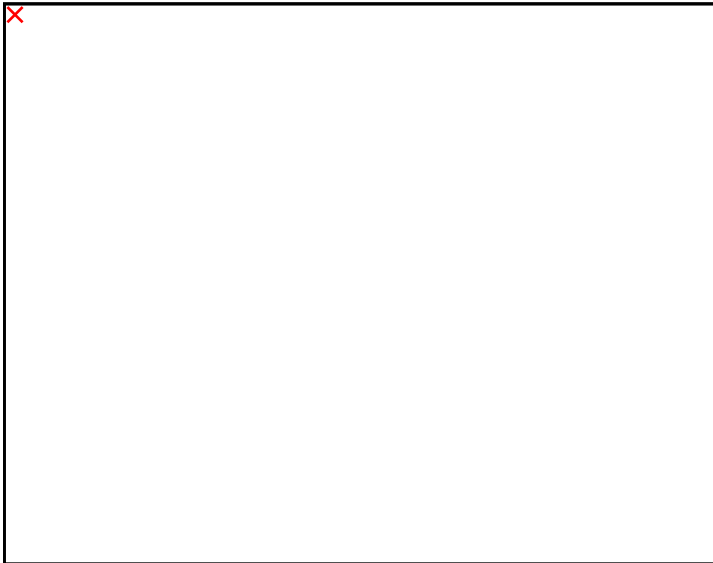


# In memoriam: George S. Pappas, 1919-2010

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*Retired Col. George Pappas, , the founder of what is now known as the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, passed away on Jan. 5 at his home in Belvedere, Calif. Here is is seen in front of Upton Hall, the former home of the Military History Institute at the opening for the Gen. Omar Bradley Museum. file photo.*

Jan. 8, 2010 -- Retired Col. George S. Pappas, the founder of the U.S. Army Military History Research Collection, now known as the U.S.

Army Heritage and Education Center, passed away on Jan. 5 at his home in Belvedere, Calif. He had just celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, December 26.

A professional Soldier, he entered service in June, 1939, as an enlisted man in the 6<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery Regiment in Calif. His potentiality for leadership earned him admission to the U.S. Military Academy two years later. After graduating in June 1944 and being commissioned into the Anti-Aircraft/Air Defense Artillery branch, he began a 30-year career, rising to the grade of colonel.

Throughout his service, he demonstrated great interest in the history of the profession of arms: reading about it, writing about it, preserving and making available source material on it.

His great opportunity to apply that interest came here at Carlisle Barracks in the mid-1960s. After graduating from the Army War College in 1966, he remained on the faculty as Assistant Chief of the Research and Publications Branch. His special responsibility was writing the history of the college. The resulting book, *Prudens Futuri: the U.S. Army War College, 1901-1967*, published in 1967, was the first modern history of the Army's senior service college.

Completing that book did not complete his service at Carlisle Barracks. In the middle of

Academic Year 1967, the War College moved into its current building, Root Hall. Its former location in the handsome, elegant, stately stone structure, now known as Upton Hall, was much too valuable to remain vacant. Many post activities claimed portions of it. Pappas persuaded the Commandant, Maj. Gen. Eugene Salet, to give him two rooms in it, the rooms along the north side of the east wing on the first floor, presently occupied by the Post Judge Advocate.

From that modest beginning, Pappas built the U.S. Army Military History Research Collection (MHRC). In 1970, MHRC became the official central historical repository for the entire United States Army. In 1977, MHRC was redesignated the U.S. Army Military History Institute (MHI). The institute, in turn, became the core component upon which was built the U.S. Army Heritage and Education (AHEC), founded in 2002.

This growth in titles reflected the institution's growth in space, size, and stature. From those first two rooms, MHRC expanded to fill all of Upton Hall by 1972 (air-conditioned by 1973). In 1979, it added two more floors in the back half of the auditorium. Fourteen years later it took over Building 317 and most of Building 315. Then in 2004, AHEC moved to its current 56-acre campus on the eastern part of Carlisle Barracks -- where it continues growing.

Such additional space was needed to accommodate the expanding holdings, which Pappas's legendary leadership in acquisitions brought in from individual donors and from libraries and museums throughout the Army. From the original nucleus of several thousand rare books, published from the 1400s to the early 1800s, the holdings have expanded to some 400,000 books (many of them from the old War Department Library), a million military manuals, 3,700 different military periodicals, 50,000 artifacts, 19,000 audio-visual items, 1,700,000 photos, and 12,000,000 manuscripts. These current AHEC holdings of more than 15,000,000 items have grown from the research collection Pappas established.

As impressive as these numbers are, the true significance of this collection is not its size or its scope but its use. It is available to students and faculty of the Army War College, the future strategic leaders of our Armed Forces. It is available to the serving Army in the field to provide historical perspective on current challenges. And as the Army's public library for military history, AHEC makes its holdings available to authors, scholars, professors, students, buffs, veterans, and the general public. People visit or contact AHEC from all over the United States and all over the world to use these holdings, just as Pappas had intended.

The availability of such a magnificent resource is Pappas's great contribution. He envisioned such an institution of public service. Through his initiative, energy, drive, and self-sacrifice, he brought his vision to life. He guarded it during its early years; he infused it with his indomitable passion for

military history; and he set it on the track to what AHEC has become today.

Many enduring hallmarks of AHEC began under his direction: the Veterans Survey program (1968), the "Perspectives in Military History" public lecture series (1968), the Senior Officer Oral History Program (1970), the Omar Bradley Museum (1970), the Special Bibliography book series (1970), the offering of a military history elective course in the Army War College (1971), and the General Harold Keith Johnson Visiting Professorship of Military History (1972).

In 1974, Pappas retired from military service and moved to Calif. He did not, however, retire from the military history profession. He helped found Presidio Press, a military history publishing house, and served as its first president. He also wrote *To the Point: the United States Military Academy, 1802-1902*, published in 1993. In 1999, the Army War College recognized his many contributions by inducting him as a Distinguished Fellow.

He often came back to MHRC/MHI/AHEC, most recently for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007. He marveled at its continuing growth. All who knew him, in turn, marveled at his ability to make his dream a reality. His enduring legacy is AHEC: the great institution, with the world's greatest collection on American military history, that serves the War College, the Army, the history profession, and the American people.

His wife, Patricia, had passed away in 2007. He is survived by their two daughters Ms. Reid Pappas of Phoenix, Arizona, and Ms. Margaret Pappas of Belvedere, California; and by son-in-law Michael H. Koskie; grandchildren Bradley Koskie (wife Angela), Korinne Koskie, and Reesa Wasser; and great-grandchildren Lee and Gilian Wasser and Jack Koskie.

-- Richard J. Sommers, Ph.D.

Senior Historian, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center

*[the last charter member hired by Col. Pappas (1970) still working at AHEC]*