



## In Memoriam – First Sergeant Major of the Army William O. Wooldridge

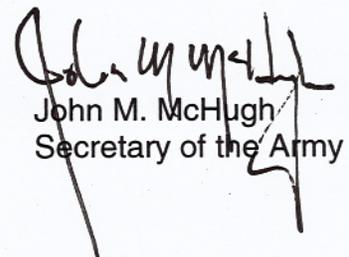
The Army has lost one of our own this week with the passing of the first Sergeant Major of the Army, William O. Wooldridge. He was 89. He served 32 years of service on active duty from 1940 to 1972. His military career spanned three wars and 14 campaigns.

Sergeant Major of the Army Wooldridge enlisted in the Army in 1940. He served with the 1st Infantry Division in World War II. He was awarded two Silver Stars for valor under fire at the Battle for Aachen, Germany and during the Battle of the Bulge. His distinguished career in various assignments culminated with his selection as the 1st Infantry Division Sergeant Major, leading them in Vietnam in 1965. Most notably, it was one year later that the 24th Chief of Staff, General Harold Johnson hand-picked Sergeant Major Wooldridge to be the very first Sergeant Major of the Army (SMA). Serving as the top enlisted advisor to the Army Chief of Staff, he created and developed that position over two years which has held strong for the 13 SMAs who have followed in his footsteps. Upon completion of his time as the SMA, Wooldridge returned to Vietnam as the Sergeant Major of the Military Assistance Command - Vietnam, being the only Sergeant Major of the Army to return to field duty after serving in this top enlisted position. His lasting impression lives on in the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy, the centralized Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) promotion system, and our professional NCO Corps. He was a true innovator, an inspiration to all Soldiers past and present, and the epitome of a professional Warrior.

During this time of remembrance, please keep Sergeant Major of the Army Wooldridge and his Family in your thoughts and prayers. His lasting contributions, especially in the professional advancements of our Noncommissioned Officer Corps, will be his remembered legacy in our Army, and we will never forget. Army Strong!

  
Raymond F. Chandler III  
Sergeant Major of the Army

  
Raymond T. Odierno  
General, United States Army  
Chief of Staff

  
John M. McHugh  
Secretary of the Army