

# IN MEMORIAM LTG (R) JOHN HOLLOWAY CUSHMAN

21 OCT 1921 – 8 November 2017.

The 24th Screaming Eagle Commander, LTG (R) John H. Cushman passed away at the Knollwood Military Retirement Community in Washington D.C. on the eighth of November. Although he did not command the Division in combat, his fingerprints and personal efforts can still be seen on the modern Division. He commanded at a time of great challenges following the Vietnam War and managed the fundamental transition with tremendous foresight. He left behind a long and distinguished career of high achievement and service to the Army and particularly to our own 101st Airborne. He was not only a brave and committed leader, but also outspoken and sometimes controversial as he developed unique and somewhat cerebral approach to leadership.

He was raised in an Army family, born in China while his father BG (R) Horace O. Cushman was assigned there. It was almost a sign of things to come as "Jack," as he was known to friends and family, would serve in the Far East several times throughout his career.

He attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point where he was First Captain of the Corps of Cadets and commissioned as a 2LT in the Corps of Engineers. He served in the Pacific and Japan in the years immediately after WWII before being transferred to the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project, a little known organization which pioneered atomic weapon development at the, then Top Secret, Scandia Base in New Mexico. CPT Cushman worked as a technician there and would eventually become a Company Commander and Operations Officer at the Top Secret Location. He After receiving his Master's in Civil Engineering in 1950 from MIT, he would complete the Engineer Officer Advance Course before transferring to the Infantry Branch. He would then be assigned to the 4th Infantry Division in Europe where he would serve as an Operations Officer and Commander in the 22nd Infantry Regiment and then as a liaison officer in Belgium before returning to the United States and completing CGSC. MAJ Cushman would then serve as faculty at the course, unaware of how this assignment would shape his future and the Army's at the time.

His next two assignments were with the Offices of the Secretary of the Army and the General Counsel, Department of Defense. He would then be assigned as military assistant to the Secretary of the Army until April 1963, when he reported to Vietnam for his first of three tours. He would serve as the Senior Advisor of the 21st Infantry Division, Army of the Republic of Vietnam in the Mekong Delta. His work with the 21st ARVN and their U.S. Advisors would change the way the Vietnamese War and later conflicts approached counter insurgency as he oversaw the development of "Oil Spot" counter insurgency in Vietnam, a technique first used by the French in Algeria. The Army would use this similar approach and tactic in their new counter insurgency approach in both Iraq and Afghanistan in the Global War on Terror.

After completion of the National War College, he would be assigned to the 101st Airborne Division, first as the Director of Supply and then as Chief of Staff. He would use these assignments to learn the intricacies of logistics and personnel. His next position, self admittedly as the best assignment he ever had was as the 2nd Brigade Commander of the 101st Airborne Division. It would take him to his second tour in Vietnam as he led the 2nd Brigade in the I Corps area including the fierce fighting of Tet. He and the 2nd Brigade were noted for encirclement and

near total destruction of the irregular and NVA regiments that the 2nd Brigade faced. For their successes in combat, his Brigade would receive the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm and a Presidential Unit Citation for its actions in near Quang Tri and Hue. COL Cushman was known to regularly place himself at pivotal areas as he commanded his Brigade's units from above in a helicopter and often landing to personally direct the battle. From here he coordinated the echelons of support to make the encirclement complete and nearly unbreakable. He was also known on many occasions for using his own aircraft to bring in replacements and supplies or carry out wounded or dead Soldiers under heavy fire. He was known for his demanding and results oriented leadership of 2nd Brigade, but the unit was also recognized as being highly successful in its operations under his leadership.

Col Cushman returned from Vietnam after handing over the 2nd Brigade to COL Jack Hoeffling. He soon found that he was on the promotion list for Brigadier General and would assume command of Fort Devens, Massachusetts. During his time as the Commander at Fort Devens, he would continue to develop his management and leadership styles, leaning heavily on lessons learned as the Director of Supply and Chief of Staff at the 101st as well as his hands on leadership style from his combat with 2nd Brigade. Under his tenure, he established programs to better interact and represent the U.S. Army to the surrounding communities; interact with junior soldiers and solicit bottom up feedback. His "Rap Sessions" would later be known as "Sensing Sessions" and be incorporated Army wide and used to solicit bottom up feedback provide for increased productivity and morale. as well as leverage management systems to increase administrative efficiency.

BG Cushman returned to Vietnam a third time in the spring of 1970 and served as the Deputy Commanding General, and later after promotion to Major General to Commanding General and Senior Advisor for IV Corps and Military Region 4, Republic of Vietnam. He was responsible for advising and assisting the Commander for three ARVN Divisions in the area of the Mekong Delta. He would put the same personal attention to the fine details and interpersonal skills into the very difficult issues facing the U.S. Army in Vietnam in the early 70's as the "Vietnamization" of the war saw the removal of U.S combat units and the Vietnamese assuming more. He also strove to make improvements to issues plaguing the war weary Army such as drug use, racial tension.

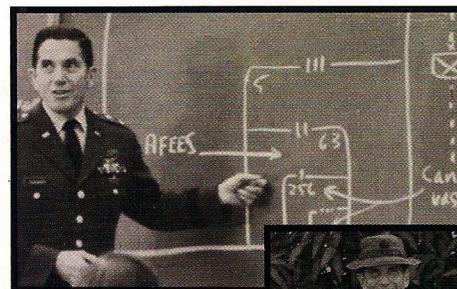
In the early part of 1972, MG Cushman and his family returned from Vietnam and headed once again to Fort Campbell, Kentucky where he had been slated to command the Screaming Eagles as the new "All Volunteer" Army (VOLAR) was just beginning. This was a major policy change as the draft was ending and it was up to Commanders to market their organizations and compete for quality recruits. The "Unit of Choice" program became the Army's way to recruit and retain volunteer Soldiers. It required a different way of approaching how soldiers were recruited, trained and retained. Quality of life was a priority to make the option of Army service attractive. MG Cushman's leadership established individual training to MOS qualify Infantry and Artillery soldiers recruited for the Division and programs to develop leadership at the NCO level to lead Fire Teams and Squads were implemented. His previous personal involvement

in establishing procedures and SOPs would show results. The Division, nearly rebuilt nearly from scratch, would be rated near full readiness by August 1973. Many initiatives that started under MG Cushman can be recognized in today's Division. The Division would host its first "Week of the Eagles" under the leadership of MG Cushman as well as establish continuing education program through "Eagle University" with Austin Peay State University.

MG Cushman's next assignment would prove to be perhaps his most controversial and perhaps productive. His assignment as the Commander of the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) and Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth allowed him to implement his focus on the education of officers that he believed to be most important to a changing Army. His focus on problem solving and issues of ethics and officer responsibility were somewhat ahead of their time and conflicted with the very straight forward standards based methods of development being implemented by TRADOC. This differing view put him at odds with his supervisor the TRADOC Commander, LTG William DePuy.

In 1976, MG (P) Cushman would leave his family at Fort Leavenworth and head to the Republic of Korea where he would serve as the Commander of I Corps (ROK/US) Group in Korea. He would be responsible for all U.S. 2nd Infantry Division and ten ROK Army Divisions and a ROK Marine Brigade. He would be in command of I Corps Group until he departed the Korean Peninsula in February 1978.

LTG John H. "Jack Cushman retired from the Army on March 1, 1978 although he stayed active in the roles of consultant and writer discussing command and control, organization of theater forces as well as Air/Land Battle Doctrine. His cerebral approaches to leadership that he championed at Leavenworth and throughout his years in command would become more important to the Army in the post Cold War world, when enemies became less defined and the mission of our Army far less conventional.



LTG Cushman teaching at Fort Leavenworth (U.S. Army)

MG John H. Cushman as the Commanding General, Delta Region Advisory Command. Circa 1971

(Photo USMA Oral History <http://www.west-point.org/publications/cushman/4-VolumeFour.pdf>)

