



## Major General Arthur Riehl Wilson Class of 2019

Major General Arthur Riehl Wilson, United States Army, deceased, graduated from Oroville High School (OHS) in 1913 and gave the salutatory address at his commencement. Immediately upon graduation, he began working as a reporter for the Oroville Register.

He then enrolled at The University of California at Berkeley (Cal), and in 2016, left school and enlisted in the United States Army and managed to earn his BA degree from Cal in 1919.

Between 1916 and returning to Cal, Arthur progressed through the military ranks as an enlisted man in the National Guard on the Mexican Border under General John A. Pershing. In 1917, he entered World War I (WWI) as a second lieutenant and was commissioned in the regular army as a first lieutenant of field artillery effective in 1920. During WWI he served with the 346<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery at the Presidio in San Francisco and Camp Lewis in Washington. In 1918 he joined the American Expeditionary Force Regiment and served at Camp DeSouge, France. Following the Armistice, he served with the American Army of Occupation in Germany.

Following WWI, 1935-37, Lieutenant Wilson did duty with the 76<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery (FA) at the SF Presidio and with the 13<sup>th</sup> FA in Hawaii. In 1937, he was commissioned a Full Colonel and assigned to the general staff of the War Department.

During World War II (WWII) the year 1942 saw Colonel Wilson awarded the rank of Brigadier General and recognized as an expert in logistics and supply. His initial assignment was to lead the first American troops in the Southwest Pacific Theatre of War. As quartermaster general of the US forces in that theatre, he assisted in working out a vital lend-lease agreement with the top officials in the Australian Government.

During 1942, he was also in England with General Dwight Eisenhower and was one of the youngest Generals in the army. Soon he was sent to Africa where he set up the system that supplied the troops the arms which the Allies used to drive the Germans and Italian forces from North Africa. He was based in Naples, Italy in 1944 commanding the Coastal Base Section and promoted to Major General (two stars). Later he was appointed Chief of Staff 7<sup>th</sup> Army in France. Major General Wilson retired from the army in 1946.

Wilson was highly decorated during his military career earning the Army Distinguished Service Medal for exceptionally meritorious and distinguished services to the Government of the United States a duty of great responsibility during WWII. He was also awarded the Legion of Merit Award and the Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster.

In 1945, he was awarded the highest distinction that the country of Italy can confer on a citizen of another country and was the commanding general of the advanced section of the Southern Line of Communications in France. By direction of Crown Prince Umberto, Lieutenant General of the realm, General Wilson was named a Knight of the Grand Cross of the Order of the Crown of Italy. He was also conferred honorary citizenship by the City of Naples and the honorary degree of doctor of laws by the University of Naples. He was elected a Cavalier Magistrate, Order of the Knights of Malta, in connection with his significant part in helping to restore the life and culture of Free Italy.

Immediately following his retirement, Arthur became Vice -President of Trans World Airways (TWA) and then Vice-President of the Industrial Products Trading Company in Zurich, Switzerland. He was a member of the Oroville Masonic Lodge No. 103, Knights Templar.

Born in Cherokee, CA in 1894, and attending grammar school there, General Wilson passed away on August 11, 1956 at Letterman's Hospital in San Francisco. He is buried in Cherokee Cemetery in Butte County. His brother, Bill Wilson was inducted into the OUHSD Hall of Fame in 2012 and his nephew Dan Wilson was on the original OUHSD Hall of Fame committee in 2008.

The general is referred to as Oroville's Most Famed Soldier.