



Lt. Gen. Robert H. York

Twenty-five years ago, in Normandy, France on July 7, 1944, (then) Col. Robert H. York took command of the 331st Infantry Regiment of the 83rd Division.

Col. York was already a veteran of 11 major battle engagements and had fought in three D-Day landings at Oran, Sicily and Omaha Beach, heading an infantry battalion of the First Division. At 32, he became one of the youngest Regimental Commanders in the Army.

Today, after 31 years of military service, Lt. Gen. Robert H. York has retired. If ever a man deserves the tranquility and care-free benefits of retirement, he is General York for all of his devotion to the service of his country.

A front-line infantry regiment that was completely demoralized, having lost two regimental commanders in the first thirty days of combat—and having suffered heavy casualties in their first engagement (after landing on Omaha Beach — D-Day plus 12) against the entrenched forces of Nazi artillery and tanks in the Battle of the Normandy hedgerows, York's leadership transformed the 331st Infantry into a hard-hitting unit that went on to fight victoriously in five major campaigns in France, Luxembourg, Belgium and Germany to establish a bridgehead across the Elbe River, 65 miles from Berlin, two weeks before V-E Day. The Esprit de Corps that prevailed in the 331st with York's leadership was unprecedented as its fighting men, in a matter of weeks, followed him in devoted ad-

miration and respect.

General York was graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York in the Class of '38 and commissioned in the Infantry the same year. From the Gold Bar of a Second Lieutenant to the three stars of a Lieutenant General, York has held every combat command along the way.

General York was decorated 18 times with the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, The Bronze Star with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, the Purple Heart with Five Oak Leaf Clusters, two French decorations the Legion d'Honneur and the Croix de Guerre with Palms; and along the Combat Infantry Badge, York wears the wings of a Military Pilot as well as well as the insignia of the Airborne Corps.

Since World War II, General York's military assignments included Commandant of the Cadet Corps at West Point, Military Attache in Singapore, Military Advisor in Vietnam and Commander of Fort Benning. As Commanding General of the 82nd Airborne Division he led the landings at Santo Domingo, at the direction of President Johnson, to help stabilize and restore law and order to the Dominican Republic; and to protect the lives of American citizens. In 1968, he took command of the 18th Airborne Corps.

His erect, lean, solid, battle scarred frame, his handsome face lined with vitality and eyes that always smile in contrast to the line of his determined lips that coalesce with a rugged jaw. York's mere presence always commanded respect.

Today, a vigorous 56, General York's personality still radiates. When asked: "Taking into consideration all of the strategy, sophisticated equipment, qualified leadership and intelligence information in the preparation of a battle, what in your opinion is the single most important asset to victory?" York simply replied: "The will to fight."

General Robert H. York joins those few in history, who have personified the immortal words of Will Rogers: It's great to be a great man, but it's greater to be human."

Jack H. Strauss  
Regt. Hqs., 331st

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