

GENERAL ORDERS

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The Department of the Army announces with deep regret the death of the Honorable CHARLES ERWIN WILSON, former Secretary of Defense, which occurred at Wilson, Louisiana, on 26 September 1961.

Mr. WILSON was born in Minerva, Ohio on 18 July 1890. He graduated from the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1909 with a Bachelor of Science Degree. He served in many capacities including president of General Motors Corporation and Chief Executive Officer of General Motors Corporation prior to his appointment as Secretary of Defense.

For ten years following his graduation from the Carnegie Institute of Technology, Mr. WILSON was employed by the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company in the Pittsburgh district. In his work at Westinghouse, he came in contact with automobile manufacturers and learned the importance of costs and volume manufacturing, and obtained excellent training in the practical application of engineering knowledge.

In 1912, Mr. WILSON designed the first automobile starting motors made by Westinghouse and in 1916 was given charge of all Westinghouse automobile electrical equipment engineering. During World War I, he was in charge of design and development of Westinghouse radio generators and dynamotors for the Army and Navy.

Mr. WILSON joined General Motors in April 1919, as chief engineer and sales manager of the automobile division of the Remy Electric Company. Later he became chief engineer of the company. While serving in this capacity, he initiated a redesigning program that helped materially in putting the Remy Electric operations on a sound financial basis. In December 1921, he was made factory manager and in February 1925, he became general manager.

A year later, the Dayton Engineering Laboratories Company was added to the Remy Electric Company and Mr. WILSON became president and general manager of the newly-organized Delco-Remy Corporation.

In December 1928, Mr. WILSON was made a vice president of General Motors. He was given increasing responsibilities in labor relations matters and business planning of production, while continuing his supervisory relation with the parts and accessory divisions. He was made executive vice president of General Motors on 1 May 1930 and elected president of the corporation on 6 January 1941.

In the four wartime years, Mr. Wilson led the production forces of General Motors in turning out a huge volume of the Nation's armament. They manufactured tanks, armored cars, airplane engines, machine guns, carbines, and trucks for the Armed Services. They also supplied most all of the Diesel engine horsepower used by the Navy.

Mr. WILSON was appointed Chief Executive Officer of General Motors on 3 June 1940 and took a continuing active interest in management-labor relations. He was largely responsible for the scaling of wages with the cost of living index and the history-making five year contract entered into in 1950 between General Motors and the United Automobile Workers C.I.O.

Mr. WILSON was appointed Secretary of Defense by President Eisenhower on 20 January 1953, was sworn into office on 28 January 1953, and served in this capacity until 30 October 1957. During his service as Secretary of Defense, major advancements were made in guided missiles and atomic propulsion. Numerous experiments and tests of nuclear weapons were conducted. He took an active part in planning and coordinating the continental defense program.

The United States Government awarded Mr. WILSON the Medal of Merit in 1946. He received the following honorary degrees: LL.D., Wayne University; Doctor of Engineering, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; Doctor of Science, Columbia University; LL.D., Mt. Union College; and Doctor of Engineering, Michigan State College. In 1950, he was presented the Wharton School Alumni Society Gold Medal by the University of Pennsylvania and the Technology award for Distinguished Achievement by the Carnegie Institute of Technology.

Throughout his entire career, Mr. WILSON proved himself an outstanding executive. He successfully met every demand made upon him. During the wartime period, his business acumen and vast experience made him an information

source for many military and industrial bodies of the Government, including Congressional Committees, on the use of resources and manpower. This service was of inestimable value to the Nation. With his passing, the country has lost a very loyal and prominent citizen.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

G. H. DECKER,
General, United States Army,
Chief of Staff.

Official:

R. V. LEE,
Major General, United States Army,
The Adjutant General.

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