

GENERAL ORDERS

No. 50

HEADQUARTERS
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, D.C., 23 November 1963

It is with deepest sorrow that the Department of the Army announces the tragic death of our Commander-in-Chief, JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY, 35th President of the United States, by an assassin's bullet on 22 November 1963 at Dallas, Texas. With his untimely death the Nation and the world have lost a distinguished leader and friend, and his passing is a source of personal bereavement for us all.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY was an energetic, courageous, imaginative humanitarian who brought to the Nation's highest office the same tenets which had motivated our founding fathers and other great men of our history: "that all men are created equal" and are endowed "with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." His personal creed was expressed in his Inaugural Address: "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

Demonstrating his unshakable faith in these beliefs, he entered the United States Navy in September 1941 and served with distinction as a PT boat commander in the South Pacific. During an engagement in that theater, his boat was splintered by an enemy ship, and for his courageous actions in saving his men from drowning and encouraging them to keep going until they were able to rejoin the American forces, he was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal as well as the Purple Heart for injuries received.

Upon his separation from the Navy in March 1945, he worked for a short period as a news correspondent, but his strong sense of service to country prompted him to seek public office, and in 1946 he was elected to the United States House of Representatives from the 11th Congressional District of Massachusetts. After serving six years as United States Representative, he was elected Senator from Massachusetts and served in that important position until November 1960 when he was elected President of the United States.

As President, he set himself two major goals—equality of opportunity at home and peace in the world. While a man of peace, determined to make the world safe from nuclear war and to bring an end to aggression in his own time, he knew the way to achieve this end was to make the world unsafe for the aggressor. To accomplish this goal, he built up the strength of the Armed Forces and enlarged its capacity to respond immediately to all types of aggression. In his role as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, he had an intelligent and warm understanding of the problems and sacrifices of military

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personnel as individuals, and his personal interest extended throughout the entire structure of the services, to Active and Reserve Component organizations alike.

Throughout his life JOHN F. KENNEDY cherished the vision and ideals of our founding fathers and worked fearlessly toward the freedom, equality, and peace of mankind. As he welcomed his responsibilities, he would have us carry on his work beyond this hour of national tragedy.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY said: "The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it—and the glow from that fire can truly light the world."

As an expression of sorrow and as a mark of respect to his memory, the National Flag will be displayed at half staff on all installations under the control of the Department of the Army for 30 days from the date of his death.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY will be buried in Arlington National Cemetery on 25 November 1963.

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

EARLE G. WHEELER,
General, United States Army,
Chief of Staff.

Official:

J. C. LAMBERT,
Major General, United States Army,
The Adjutant General.