



# FORT MOORE

As the new name for **Fort Benning, Georgia**

During the middle decades of the 20th century, the U.S. Army brought **Hal and Julia Moore**, and the rest of their family, across the country and around the world. Over the course of his 32-year career from 1945 to 1977, Hal Moore served a combined nine years internationally with assignments in Japan, Korea, Norway, Vietnam, and Korea once again. While stateside, Moore was stationed in North Carolina, New York, Kansas, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, California, three times in Virginia, three times in Georgia, and four times in Washington, D.C. For all but the first three of his 22 assignments, Hal was married to his wife, Julia, and together they raised, supported, and frequently moved their growing family to facilitate his service. Their story is representative of millions of other military families throughout our history, who have often endured many travels and movements, putting the nation's needs ahead of their personal preferences.

If it's a truism that families serve right alongside their service members, the Moore family lived that experience to the fullest; their stories exceptionally exemplifying the service of modern military families. As a soldier, Hal served in a wide array of assignments to include parachute testing, teaching at West Point, serving as a staff officer, studying in military colleges, and training troops for battle and leading them within it. As his partner in life and love, Julia made those assignments possible by supporting their family and five children (two of their sons became career Army officers), sometimes by herself and always in accordance with the demands of Hal's service.

Similarly, in their most dire moments, Hal and Julia felt the pain and loss of war both together and apart. Deployed to Vietnam in 1965 as the commander of an air mobile battalion recently reorganized as the 1st Battalion of the 7th Cavalry Regiment, Moore led his men into action in the Ia Drang valley. The resulting battle was the first major engagement between U.S. and North Vietnamese soldiers of the Vietnam War, and demonstrated how devastating it would become. Meanwhile, the men's families were required by policy at that time to move off post while the soldiers served overseas.

On the battlefield, Hal Moore and his men confronted what he later called a "depressing, hellish place, where death was our constant companion." The enemy outnumbered Moore's forces by a large factor, at times surround-

ing them in an area barely bigger than their landing zone. For three days, Moore led a defense on the ground that combined prescient strategy with excellent tactics, and resulted in a secure position and repulse of the enemy. The battle had a high cost – overall, 79 soldiers under Moore's command were killed and 121 wounded in less than 72 hours. Though Moore's skill as a commander undoubtedly reduced the losses amongst his men, the deaths were devastating nonetheless.

On the home front, Julia and the families of many other soldiers waited around Fort Benning – and the nation – in recently relocated households, dreading the news



that might arrive. Compounding the Army policy that sent families off post was the policy for news of death or injury to be sent by telegram, delivered by taxi drivers unprepared to relay such information. Faced with this crisis, Julia decided to accompany cabbies to deliver notices and give compassionate condolences. She also attended the funerals of the men in her husband's command who had been killed. Her complaints to the Pentagon led to the creation of casualty notification teams (as well as survivor support networks) that still carry out this difficult task today.

In the wake of Vietnam, Hal and Julia continued to make significant contributions to the Army and support military families. As a general officer, Hal oversaw and led the post-war transition to the all-volunteer armed forces the U.S. has maintained ever since. He also worked to stem racial strife and reduce drug abuse amongst his soldiers, and directed advancements in recruitment and training policies when he served as Deputy Chief of Staff for Army Personnel. Julia worked with the American Red Cross, and advocated for continued support for military families, including childcare and quality-of-life opportunities and initiatives relied on and refined upon by families to this day.

Hal and Julia Moore's service to the Army and commitment to military families serves as an inspiration and example for all. The Moore story also represents generational service; a common trend in the modern day all-volunteer military. As the U.S. continues to maintain forces and respond to crises around the world, many other military families will inevitably serve in ways that reflect the legacy of Hal and Julia Moore, continuing their traditions with the troops of tomorrow.