

# Charles H. Schilling 1941

Cullum No. 12262 • Nov 05, 1996 • Died in Clarksville, TN

Interred in West Point Cemetery, West Point, NY



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As the Prophet Isaiah said in Chapter 57, "The righteous are taken away to be spared from evil "...they "enter into peace...they find rest...in death." That is the only viable explanation of the sudden death of *Charles Henry Schilling*. He was the best!

The only child of Henry Maynard and Caroline Ravenscroft Schilling, Charlie was raised in Louisville, KY, in modest economic means, but with the fullest possible parental commitment of love, care, and moral training. His father was active in amateur entertainment with the Masons and the Shrine as a musician, leader of the drum and bugle corps, and theatrical presentations, to all of which Charlie was exposed. In his own right, Charlie excelled in basketball and academics. He spent the 1936-37 year at the Citadel and then joined our great West Point Class of '41.

Throughout his cadet years, Charlie strived to absorb all the best the Academy offered—and he succeeded. He excelled in varsity basketball, despite his I Company height; was the top cadet lieutenant on the First Class "make list;" became adjutant of the 3rd Battalion; and graduated number 23 in the class. More importantly, everyone recognized him as an outstanding man of integrity and ability, good-natured, loyal, friendly, trustworthy, a man's man. Everyone liked him.

Upon graduation, 2LT Schilling chose Engineers and the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion, 3rd Armored Division. His qualities continued to be evident, and with the Army's rapid expansion, he was repeatedly cadred to more responsible combat Engineer troop assignments.

In 1943, LTC Schilling took command of the 165th Combat Engineer Battalion (Separate) and led it across France and Germany. The 165th developed such high esprit under his leadership that it still holds annual reunions, attended by more than 40 percent of its survivors.

Among Charlie's WWII duty stations was Ft. Campbell, KY, adjacent to Clarksville, TN, home of Martha Hunter Wall, a lovely equivalent of Charlie's commendable characteristics. As soon as Charlie returned from Europe, he and Martha were married, and Charlie became "Chuck." Martha was the peerless Army wife. She continuously reinforced Chuck's talents with her character, personality, and ability. They had five fine children: Carolyn, Charles, Jr., Kathryn, Stephen, Robert; and eight grandchildren.

After WWII, Chuck acquired a master's degree in civil engineering from the University of California-

Berkeley; commanded the Army Engineer Battalion which, with German contract support, extended and upgraded the Rhein-Main Air Base; taught engineering at West Point; and, as a colonel, supervised all military construction in Iceland. In 1956, he was chosen to be a permanent professor of engineering at USMA, a position he held for 24 years. In 1959, Chuck earned a Ph.D. in civil engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Upon retirement in 1980, he was promoted to brigadier general. He was the last member of the Class of '41 to leave active duty after 39 years of commissioned service.

Chuck and Martha then settled in Clarksville, TN, and Chuck promptly commenced a 16-year second career, designing foundations for electric power generation and transmission systems.

Throughout Chuck's service at West Point and in retirement, he contributed much to his profession. A licensed professional engineer, Fellow of the Society of American Military Engineers, and member of the American Society of Engineering Education, American Society of Civil Engineers, and National Society of Professional Engineers, he wrote numerous articles, texts, and technical papers concentrating on the use and development of computers in engineering, engineering education, and structural analysis. He was rewarded by election to the engineering honor societies Phi Kappa Phi and Sigma Xi, and received the Army Distinguished Service Medal. In addition, in 1998, at the suggestion of the USMA Department of Engineering, Chuck's classmates established the Charles Henry Schilling Award for Excellence in Civil Engineering, presented annually to the graduating cadet with the highest grade point average in that subject.

Typical of Chuck's unassuming modesty, he cited as most fulfilling during his years at West Point: being permitted to teach and return to others what had been given to him as a cadet; seeing those who served under him rise to high levels of command and responsibility; being honored by the presence at his retirement ceremony of 16 men from his WWII battalion; and being able to be involved with youth basketball. He viewed his illustrious career as "merely doing his best to do what is expected of a West Pointer and what the Lord expects of a Christian." To him, his achievements were all "blessings the Lord had granted him."

Raised in a Christian home, Chuck maintained his faith through cadet days and into the Army. In matrimony, his and Martha's faith deepened. In later years, it flourished. They abided by Christian ideals in all that they did.

Most college and professional athletes transition to less active sports when they retire. Not Chuck Schilling; he never retired from basketball. During his service at West Point, he not only coached youth teams, but also played on men's teams. In retirement, he still continued. On 5 Nov 1996, at age 78, during his usual, twice-a-week game with members of his church, a break was called. He left the court, sat on a bench—and died. We know that there was no better place or way he could have found "rest in death."