

Col. William S. Middleton (1914-1992) of Gibson City, IL

Served with the U.S. Army in World War II and in the Korean War

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On July 28, 1936, William S. Middleton received his commission in the Field Artillery through the ROTC Program at the University of Illinois. On January 27, 1941, he entered active service in World War II as a first lieutenant in the Army. William was based near London, England and served in the Inspector General's Department in the European Theater. He was released on January 2, 1946 with the rank of lieutenant colonel.

Middleton joined the 44th Infantry Division of the Illinois National Guard on December 17, 1951. In 1952, during the Korean War, he was called into active duty with the division. He was released on December 15, 1953. After his release from active duty, William remained in the Illinois National Guard. He was promoted to full colonel on March 30, 1959. He retired in 1974, after 27 years and 11 months of service. At the time of his retirement, he was serving as Deputy Brigade Commander in the 33rd Division (formerly the 44th Infantry Division).

William Samuel Middleton was born in Jacksonville, Florida on June 27, 1914, the son of Oscar Ray and Sibyl (Hoover) Middleton. Although William (Bill) was born in Florida, he grew up and spent most of his adult life in Gibson City, Illinois. He graduated from the University of Illinois with a Bachelor of Arts degree in history and a Bachelor of Science degree in journalism. His law degree was received from the same university in 1939.

William joined the law practice of his parents in Gibson City in that same year. In 1940, at the age of 26, he married Margaret (Midge) Reese. His wife studied law under her husband, passed the bar, and joined the law firm, "Middleton and Middleton" in 1961, making four practicing lawyers in the family. Bill and Midge lived in and eventually bought the home at 529 North Church Street which had been his parents' first home. Here Bill and Midge raised their two children, Julie and William. In later years, the couple returned to England and revisited the sites of Bill's wartime stay. Their love of travel took them to other places in Europe and to Mexico, as well as throughout the United States.

Our Family History

Bill retired from the law firm in Gibson City, by then known as “Middleton, Middleton, and Dueringer,” in 1984. He and Midge moved to Harlingen, at the southern tip of Texas, to enjoy the milder climate and the town’s proximity to the Gulf Coast and to Mexico. Bill died at his home in Harlingen on January 26, 1992. His funeral was conducted in Gibson City and he was buried in the Drummer Township Cemetery of that city with military rites provided by the American Legion Post 568. Midge died on June 15, 2002 in Aurora, IL and is also buried in the Drummer Township Cemetery.

(Sources of information: Newspaper article “Wm. S. Middleton Retires From Service.” Gibson City Courier, date of publication unknown; Obituary for William S. Middleton, found on the back of a laminated memorial card, date and source of publication not listed; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, BIRLS Death File, 1850-2010; Family notes)

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