



General Donald R. Keith
31 August 1981 - 28 June 1984

Donald R. Keith was born 31 January 1927 in Ludington, Michigan. During World War II, he served as an enlisted Soldier in the Army before attending the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. He graduated from the Academy in 1949 and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Field Artillery. He later attended Columbia University in New York City where he earned a Master of Arts in Science Teaching in 1958 before being assigned to the faculty of the Chemistry Department at West Point.

After graduating from West Point in 1949, General Keith served in various battery and battalion positions in the 517th FA Battalion in Wetzlar, Germany; as battery commander of the 36th FA Group Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Babenhausen, Germany; and as battery commander and S-3 in the 2d Guided Missile Battalion, White Sands, New Mexico. Later, he served in Eighth Army Operations in the Republic of Korea during the tense days of the Cuban missile crisis.

General Keith commanded artillery units at all levels, to include the 5th Battalion, 73d Field Artillery and the 36th Field Artillery Group, US Army Europe. He also served as the Executive Officer, Office of the Chief of Research and Development at the Pentagon, followed by a tour in Vietnam from 1971 to 1972 where he served as the Director, Research and Analysis Directorate, Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support in the US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. From 1972 through 1974, General Keith was in Washington, DC, in the Office of the Chief of Research and Development as the Director of Developments. He then became the Director of Weapon Systems in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Research, Development and Acquisition, also in the Pentagon, until October 1976.

From 9 October 1976 to 21 October 1977, General Keith served as the Chief of Field Artillery, Commandant of the Field Artillery School, and Commanding General of the Field Artillery Center and Fort Sill. Following his tour at Fort Sill, General Keith returned to Washington, DC, where he served as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Research, Development and Acquisition until August 1981, overseeing the largest modernization program ever undertaken by the Army: "The Big Five."

Upon promotion to General on 31 August 1981, he assumed command of the Army Materiel Development and Readiness Command in Alexandria, Virginia. He retired on 28 June 1984.

General Keith was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Bronze Star Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, and numerous foreign awards and service ribbons. He died on 9 September 2004.