2016 Ammunition Hall of Fame Inductee

JOHN L. BYRD, JR.

Mr. John L. Byrd, Jr. was born in Simms, Texas on June 12, 1935 and graduated from Texas A&S University with a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering in 1962. For 30 years he was a major figure in the ammunition world, taking on progressively higher leadership roles and influencing ammunition processes and programs that remain relevant today. He began at the Savanna Ordnance Depot in Illinois, first as an instructor at the Ammunition School, then as the Chief of the Management Engineering Office from 1965 to 1967, then as Chief of the Army Materiel Command Ammunition Center, and finally as the Director of the Defense Ammunition Center until his death in 1995. In 1989, Mr. Byrd achieved the highest civilian rank and was appointed a Senior Executive Service member. Mr. Byrd was a tremendous visionary, developer, and innovator of ammunition programs, many of which have become mainstays within the Department of Defense (DOD) ammunition community.

From 1959 to 1964, Mr. Byrd served as a Training Instructor at the Ammunition School located as a tenant on the Savanna Ordnance Depot, Savanna, Ill. In 1965, as Chief of the Management Engineering office, an element of the Comptroller Directorate, he gained valuable ammunition management experience in depot operations involving over 400 employees.

From 1967-1979, Mr. Byrd served as Chief of the AMC Ammunition Center, still located at the depot. He was responsible for career program management, design and testing of ammunition equipment and procedures, as well as managing technical assistance programs.

From 1971-1979, Mr. Byrd was mainly involved in ammunition logistics engineering activities. During that time, he is credited with the development of the Army Ammunition Containerization Program, internal restraint systems for containers and Ammunition Peculiar Equipment (APE). A major thrust during that time was pollution abatement and its impact on ammunition demilitarization. Mr. Byrd also served as the principal Army representative of chairman on the resulting Joint Service panels. His ideas and engineering expertise were critical to improving demilitarization processes and techniques.

In 1979, Mr. Byrd was promoted to the position of Director of the Defense Ammunition Center and School (DACS). For the remainder of his career, he was responsible for administering and coordinating the activities of all the DACS elements in the performance of assigned missions and in the provision of staff assistance to other military services, HQDA, Major Command, and Major Subordinate Commands (MSCs), as directed, in relation to ammunition commodity, component, equipment, and administrative matters. He participated in high level management planning actions having significant impact on ammunition logistics programs of Army CONUS and OCONUS installations, as well as implementation DODD 5160.65, Single Manager for Conventional Ammunition (SMCA). This document identifies and establishes the need for the Ammunition Center to provide education and training for

ammunition managers, specialists, and operating personnel who are required to perform conventional ammunition logistics missions and support related ammunition civilian career programs in accordance with requirements of the SMCA and of the military services.

Mr. Byrd created the first civilian career program for ammunition operations personnel based on commodity knowledge. He established and directed the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program. Mr. Byrd headed the Joint Ordnance Commanders Group (JOCG) Wholesale Ammunition Stockpile Program Review and Assessment Team. He was instrumental in establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the United States and the Republic of Korea for a research and development program to develop underground storage criteria for ammunition. From 1991 forward, Mr. Byrd served as the Functional Chief Representative for Quality Assurance Specialist (Ammunition Surveillance) (QASAS) Career Program 20. As technology evolved, he furthered development of automation and capabilities to provide distance learning programs and opportunities.

Mr. Byrd was recognized as a national leader in developing environmentally-acceptable disposal methods for large rocket motors and conventional munitions for all military Services. He provided technical approaches for the disposition of the former Soviet Union's intercontinental ballistic missiles. He was also a driving force behind the development of the secondary steel container that safely moved chemical rounds from Europe.

Over the course of his career, he was responsible for the technical and managerial ammunition training of over 56,000 U.S. military, civilian, and contractor students and 422 foreign military students from 34 countries.

In addition, Mr. Byrd was appointed as the first Director of the U.S. Army Technical Center for Explosives Safety in 1987 establishing the path forward for standardization in explosives safety with doctrine that remain relevant today.

Mr. Byrd was active in his community and a volunteer as a member of the Association of the United states Army, Conventional Systems Committee for Munitions, Executive Steering Committee for Biotechnology at Texas A&M University, American Defense Preparedness Association, senior member and past President of the Blackhawk Chapter of Institute of Industrial Engineers, past Master of Savanna Moose Lodge 385, and a member of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association. He loved working on his farm and was a licensed pilot. He enjoyed playing guitar, singing, flying model planes, riding motorcycles, boating, fishing, camping and visiting Australia where he hoped to retire to. Sadly, Mr. Byrd passed away in an accident on his farm in 1995 He is missed by his wife and son. He is inducted posthumously into the Ammunition Hall of Fame.