

HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL ORDER OF THE LEGION OF HONOR



During the French Revolution all the orders of the kingdom were abolished. It was the wish of Napoleon, the First Consul, to create a reward to commend civilians and soldiers regardless of their stature in life. In 1802, a **Légion d'Honneur**, (Legion of Honor) was established as the first modern order of merit. The **Légion** was open to individuals of all ranks and professions. The order is France's highest award and is conferred upon men and women, either French citizens or foreign nationals, for outstanding achievements in military or civilian life.

The President of France is the Grand Master of the Order and appoints all other members of the Order — by convention, on the advice of the Government. Its principal officers are the Chancellor and Secretary-General. The order has five classes: Grand-Croix (Grand Cross); Grand Officier (Grand Officer); Commandeur (Commander); Officier (Officer); and Chevalier (Knight).

High Flight

*Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
of sun-split clouds,—and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of—wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air*

*Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or even eagle flew—
And, while with silent lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.*

The poem was written by John Gillespie Magee Jr. a Royal Canadian Air Force pilot killed in a training accident during World War II.



CONSULAT
GÉNÉRAL
DE FRANCE
À LOS ANGELES
*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*



PRESENTATION CEREMONY

OF THE FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR MEDAL

TO WORLD WAR II VETERAN

TECH SERGEANT ERWIN C. POWELL, U.S. ARMY AIR FORCE



ERWIN POWELL

**BROOKDALE MERIDIAN ARVADA
ARVADA, COLORADO 80004
SEPTEMBER 12, 2025— 1:00 PM**

Erwin Powell



BROOKDALE Brookdale Meridian Arvada is an independent living community. We have won awards for being the friendliest senior living community. It's like the "Love Boat" on land. There is so much to do here. From going on excursions, Bridge Club and other games, weekly entertainment and a restaurant style dining room. The residents here really care about and look after one another. We offer housekeeping, transportation to appointments, and our community is really something special.

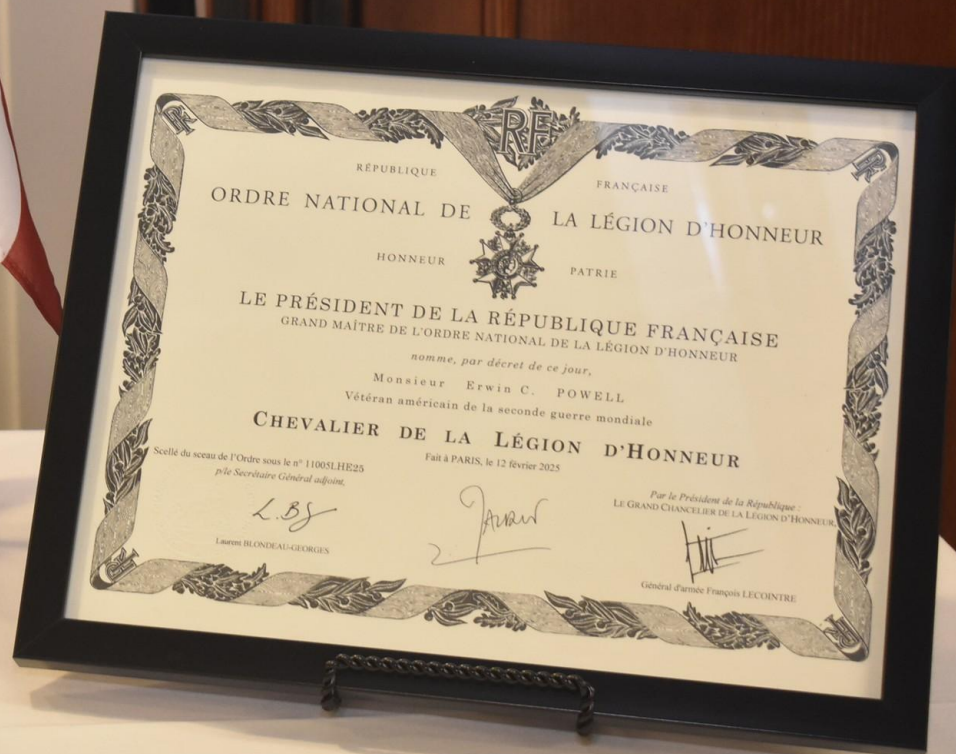
BIOGRAPHY

Technical Sergeant Erwin C. Powell, 101, U.S. Army Air Force, was born in Stockton, CA in February 1924 and graduated from Stockton High School in 1942. He was the only child of Edith and Isaac Powell. Erwin entered active service in March 1943 in Stockton, California and did Basic Training in Monterey California, Advanced Training radio operation in Sioux Falls South Dakota, aerial gunnery in Las Vegas Nevada, and air crew advanced training Barksdale Louisiana. He arrived in England in late June 1944 and joined the 391st Bomb Group, 572nd Bomb Squadron, flying B-26 Marauder bombers as a radio operator and aerial gunner. In September 1944 the 391st Bomb Group was moved to Roye-Amy Airfield, France, then in April 1945 to Asch Belgium, a former Luftwaffe airfield. Tech Sergeant Powell completed 55 bombing missions in the European theater including 18 over France. His campaigns included Northern France, the low countries and Germany. Erwin returned to the U.S. and was discharged at Camp Beale, California on 14 July 1945. **His significant decorations include the Air Medal with 9 Oak Leaf clusters, the EAME Campaign Medal with 2 battle stars, the Good Conduct Medal, and the Distinguished Unit Citation.** After the war Erwin obtained a degree in Business from Humphreys College in Stockton, California and was employed there with Southern Pacific Railroad, a cannery & JB Beard Steel. He and his family moved to San Jose in 1959 where he worked as an accountant for Modern Ice and Cold Storage for 25 years until retiring in 1984. In his retirement, he worked for H&R Block until 2013, officially retiring at 89. In recent years he has volunteered with the Arvada Historical Society. Erwin was married to his late wife Nancy for 66 years and their family includes 5 children (Ed, Nick, Dean, Sharon and Diane), 5 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. He resides in Arvada, Colorado in an active senior living community.

PRESENTATION PROGRAM Brookdale Senior Living

Welcome/Opening Remarks	Lt Col Bob Johnson, USAF (Ret) Master of Ceremonies
Pledge of Allegiance	Diane Georgia, Daughter
The French National Anthem	
The U.S. National Anthem	
Welcome	Daun Whitworth Resident Engagement Director Brookdale Meridian Arvada
	Lauren Simpson, Mayor City of Arvada
Introduction of Special Guests	
Presentation of Award	Lt Col Robert Johnson, USAF (Ret) Volunteer Liaison Officer Consulate General of France, Los Angeles Chevalier, Legion D'Honneur
Reflections	
Closing & Acknowledgments	Lt Col Johnson
Photographs followed by reception	





RÉPUBLIQUE

FRANÇAISE

ORDRE NATIONAL DE

LA LÉGION D'HONNEUR

HONNEUR

PATRIE



LE PRÉSIDENT DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
GRAND MAÎTRE DE L'ORDRE NATIONAL DE LA LÉGION D'HONNEUR

nomme, par décret de ce jour,

Monsieur Erwin C. POWELL

Vétéran américain de la seconde guerre mondiale

CHEVALIER DE LA LÉGION D'HONNEUR

Fait à PARIS, le 12 février 2025

Scellé du sceau de l'Ordre sous le n° 11005LHE25

p/le Secrétaire Général adjoint,

Laurent BLONDEAU-GEORGES

Par le Président de la République :
LE GRAND CHANCELIER DE LA LÉGION D'HONNEUR,

Général d'armée François LECOINTRE



Left to right: Tom Georgia (Diane's husband), Diane Georgia (daughter), Bob Johnson, Lt Col, USAF (Ret) and Master of Ceremony, Hon Lauren Simpson, Mayor City of Arvada, Nick Powell (son)
Not present Ed Powell (son), Deane Powell (son), and Sharon Skyrdlak (daughter)