General Douglas MacArthur

General MacArthur graduated from West Point Academy in 1903. He was head of his class and held the title of First Captain of the Corps of Cadets. He was the aide-de-camp to his father, General Arthur MacArthur, a heavily decorated war veteran, and later served as aide-de-camp to President Theodore Roosevelt.

MacArthur commanded the 84th Infantry Brigade in World War I. He always led his men in a hands-on style and stayed at the front with them. Because he never wore a gas mask, he later suffered from respiratory problems. Of all the American officers serving in World War I, MacArthur received the most military decorations.
After the war, he was the administrator for West Point Academy, updating the curriculum and the honor code of military cadets. He later served two tours of duty in the Philippines, gaining experience that would prove invaluable during World War II.

MacArthur also led troops against the Bonus Army protest in Washington, D.C., in 1932. He was historically reprimanded for his aggressiveness in clearing the protesters from the city.

In 1937, MacArthur retired from the military and worked for the Philippine government training the army assembled by President Quezon. He was recalled to active duty in 1941 by President Roosevelt and reverted to the rank of four-star general after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

During 1941 to 1942, MacArthur was based on Corregidor, an island in the Pacific. As the fighting intensified around that area, he was ordered to remove to Australia. MacArthur resisted at first and wanted to remain on the island and fight alongside the locals, but he eventually withdrew to Adelaide, Australia. He earned the Medal of Honor for his leadership and bravery while in the Philippines. He and his father were the first father-son in the military to both earn this high honor.

In the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA), MacArthur rose to the rank of Supreme Commander of Allied Forces. He also headed the Australia armed forces for a time. MacArthur used a military tactic of powerful air support, building up the airplane squadrons in the Pacific Theater and keeping the Japanese pushed back while cutting off their supply lines on the various islands.

At the end of World War II, he presided over the surrender of the Japanese forces aboard the USS Missouri. MacArthur was appointed as Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers in Japan (SCAP). He worked to keep members of the Japanese royal family from war crime trials, actions for which he was later criticized. From 1945 to 1948, MacArthur helped rebuild Japan and institute a democratic form of government. The Japanese constitution still in use today was drafted by MacArthur, and he was a key factor in leading Japan onto the road of world industrialization.

MacArthur was involved in the Korean War in 1950. By 1951, he was dismissed by President Truman for insubordination. MacArthur disagreed with Truman’s foreign policy regarding Korea and China.
His military service includes:

April 1904, promoted to First Lieutenant

December 1915, promoted to Major

June 1918, Brigadier General, National Army

June 1918, World War I, Commander of the 84th Infantry Brigade

February 1920, Brigadier General, Regular Army

January 1925, Promoted to Major General

December 1941, World War II, promoted to General, Army of the United States

1942, appointed Supreme Allied Commander, Southwest Pacific Area

1946, General of the Army, Regular Army

In his farewell speech to the Congress, MacArthur said,

"Old soldiers never die; they just fade away... And like the old soldier of that ballad, I now close my military career and just fade away — an old soldier who tried to do his duty as God gave him the light to see that duty. Good-bye."

MacArthur passed away in 1964 and is buried in Norfolk, Virginia.