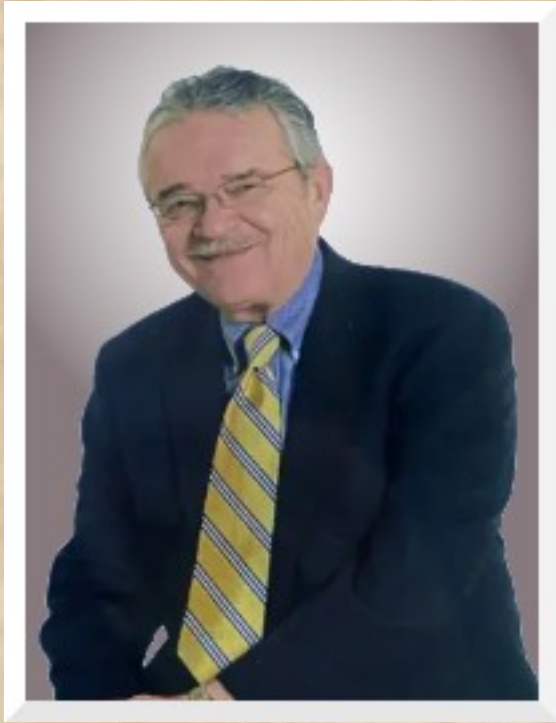




Railsplitter Obituary



Michael Mitchell Berzowski

Michael (Mike) Mitchell Berzowski was born on March 27, 1940 and he passed away peacefully on June 3, 2024. He is survived by his best friend and wife of 57 years, Jan Lee Berzowski who supported him throughout their entire marriage. He is also survived by his brother Patrick Berzowski and son, Jeffrey M. Berzowski, Esq. and daughter-in-law Karla Berzowski and their children, Alex, Ella and Lucy, his daughter Julia A. Martinez and son-in-law Stephen Martinez, MD and their children Jake and Kevin and daughter Jessica L. Perlewitz and son-in-law Patrick Perlewitz. His parents, Irene and Mitchell Berzowski and his brother Brian predeceased him.

Mike practiced law for 55 years in a firm bearing his name and was a Certified Public Accountant and previously practiced accounting at Price Waterhouse. He attained the rank of and retired as a Major General in the United States Army.

Mike was a member or life member in numerous professional, honorary, business, civic, religious and fraternal organizations and held multiple leadership positions. He served four terms as the President of the Wisconsin Club. He also was a member of the Sovereign Military Order of Jerusalem and attained the rank of Grand Croix and received its Distinguished Service Medal.



Railsplitter Obituary

Mike was the recipient of numerous awards and decorations throughout his life. He was particularly proud of his US Army Distinguished Service Medal; his Marquette University Law School distinguished alumnus of the year award and his Leaders in Law award.

Mike was the original Chair of the Polish Center of Wisconsin Facility Committee and served in that capacity for 15 years. During that time he led two major fund raising campaigns for the Polish Center.

Mike enjoyed driving Cadillacs (since age 25), fishing, music, playing the piano, spending time with his grandchildren and motorcycling (for 37 years). He was also very fond of mentoring others and seeing them succeed.

Memorials can be made to the US Army War College Foundation in Carlisle, PA or to the National Museum of the United States Army in Ft. Belvoir, VA.



“He was the very model of a modern Major General” - W. S. Gilbert

Tributes to MG Berzowski follow on subsequent pages



Railsplitter Obituary

Major General Michael Berzowski
A Personal Note from COL (Ret) Allen Cottrell

General Berzowski and I first met fifty-three years ago when I was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 351st Regiment, 84th Division as a 1Lt. Then Major Berzowski was my boss as the XO. That's when I learned of his moniker "Iron Mike." I was soon to learn that his professionalism and caring far outweighed any negative thoughts the handle "Iron Mike" might suggest.

Throughout our following military and other connections, General Berzowski's handling of issues exhibited the highest levels of integrity, professionalism, and care. His penchant for getting the job done with excellence was ever present, bringing out the very best performance

in those under his command, and those with whom he worked. And he did this with his "dry" sense of humor often betrayed by his "wry" smile. His talent challenged others to pursue excellence as well

On one notable occasion, during my promotion to colonel, while he and my wife Patt pinned on my rank insignia, in a hushed remark he said, with a wry smile, "well, it looks like the Army made another mistake." That promotion took me out of the 84th, no 06 slots available. I took it as a challenge to continue the march in another venue, as I did. Thank you General.

In a historical study done by the Army in 1936, entitled "Generalship, its Diseases and their Cure," addressing the personal factors of command, they found the one "pivotal moral virtue" distinguishing extraordinary leadership was "courage." Courage to make the decisions needed to achieve success, I was there, and I witnessed General Berzowski demonstrate that courage on many occasions. At all levels of command.

One such occasion was his leadership of his staff and command team assembled during an Army interview to reduce the force structure. That exercise would determine whether the 84th's flag would be put on a shelf. With General Berzowski's direction and demand for excellence, his courage in leadership at the session held in the 85th Divisions' Headquarters in Illinois, the result was mission accomplished. The 84th's flag would remain. His courage in decision making in personnel and structural issues concerning the 84th's conversion to Armor Training



Railsplitter Obituary

was likewise felt at all levels and met with success for the command and soldiers alike.

General Berzowski expressed his care in various ways, such as stating he considered his staff and commanders as “family”, and the loss of any would feel to him as a loss of a family member.

As a community oriented and collaborative problem solver, General Berzowski’s creative intelligence and courage was sought out to fill leadership roles in many organizations. The many honors and awards he has received bear clear testament to his success. And he was also a mentor to many, myself included, getting much satisfaction and personal enjoyment from his success of his mentees.

The War Memorial Center, The Wisconsin Club, securing of a Battle Cross Monument at the Union Grove Veterans Cemetery, The Polish Cultural Center, The Knights Templar organization, his law firm and the Marquette Law School, and others are better because of Mike’s efforts and presence.

And General Berzowski was the first to recognize the support and care given him by his wife Jan and their family, reminding us all of the poet John Milton’s words, “They also serve who sit and wait.”

Based on our many conversations at weekend drills, administrative meetings, annual training periods, briefings and additional training exercises, and other events, we also shared a similar taste for some poetic works. And I think General Berzowski’s challenge to us is well stated in the last stanza of soldier, physician and poet (Lieutenant Colonel) John McRaes’ “In Flanders Fields,”

“Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you with failing hands we throw
The Torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields.”

General Berzowski, Thank you for your service.



Railsplitter Obituary

Michael “Mike” Mitchell Berzowski

March 27, 1940 to June 3, 2024

My thoughts, by COL (Ret) Peter (Skip) Pochowski

June 2024 brought the Railsplitters and all friends of the 84th Division tragic news with the death of our former Commanding General, Major General (ret) Michael Berzowski. In January, General Berzowski and his family were informed that he was suffering from a serious and rare cancer, and that his time was very limited. He died peacefully on June 3, 2024.

It is hard to describe the impact Michael Berzowski had on the 84th Division and its soldiers. As my friend COL Cottrell has stated, General Berzowski had a major influence on every officer and senior NCO under his command. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, he would be honored knowing his troops will be quoting him and talking like him and leading like him for many years to come.

I was blessed to work for him for several more years after we both had retired from the Army. My post-military relationship began when he was appointed Chairman of the Board of the Milwaukee County War Memorial Center in 2012. He asked me to be his Vice-Chairman, and we worked together for the next three years. At that time, the WMC was in serious financial trouble. Within a few years it was financially sound and growing with renewed vigor. Along with his wife Jan, he started our first Education Program that welcomed Milwaukee area school children to learn about life in the military from veterans of our Armed Services. This was often the students’ first class on patriotism. Today, thousands of children visit the WMC each year, and it was Mike and Jan who planted that seed.

I recall one session that he taught on saluting – while he was standing with his broken foot in a cast. Imagine this distinguished officer joking with the kids about his accident, and he loved every minute of it. The kids didn’t see the “Iron Mike” his soldiers had experienced.

Additionally, the idea for the acclaimed and recently opened Medal of Honor Exhibit and the POW/MIA Exhibit at the War Memorial were born on his watch, as were many other projects. I sincerely believe the War Memorial exists today because Mike Berzowski was our leader.

General Berzowski was also one of four volunteers who created, developed, funded, and built the Battle Cross Memorial at the Wisconsin Veterans Cemetery at Union



Railsplitter Obituary

Grove. The project stalled at one point due to the bureaucracy in the VA System. Then he stepped in, and used his significant influence to make things happen. The project went from start to finish in less than one year. It was fully funded, and the team raised so much money it expanded the size of the statue, then the base, then the area around the statue, and closed it all out when lights and benches were added. Finally, when all had been done to complete the monument and surrounding area, he directed the remaining dollars to be donated to the Fisher House. That monument had no chance of getting built without him, and every time I look at it, I see him standing behind it, reassuring those it watches over, that all is well.

Rest in peace, sir, your job here is over, but your legacy will live on in the Battle Cross, the War Memorial, and in the hearts and minds of thousands of your soldiers. I think he would like that.

On June 3rd, 2024, we lost Major General Michael M. Berzowski. Major General Berzowski was a great leader, a supporter of causes and people, a mentor to those of us who served under him and with him, and a gentleman who dedicated his life to helping others.

In 1993, MG Berzowski hired me as the Command Executive Officer of the 84th Division. I had tough competition, many of whom were peers who had more experience than myself. But, with his decision, I became the first female NCO in the U.S. Army Reserve assigned to the position of CXO. A position I held until the command moved to Fort Knox when they re-located in 2008

These are just a couple of the phrases he was known for “strength, MOSQ, drill sergeant strength & instructor strength” or there was always “this isn’t no country club.” He was a guy who you liked or disliked. I personally found him to be a Commander who was fair, expected people to give 100% and meet or exceed standards.

My working relationship with MG Berzowski did not end with his retirement. In recent months, we have been working together in establishing a charter at Fort Knox. His passing is a great loss to the 84th Railsplitters. Please join me in a final salute to him.

Goldie M. Schuh, MSG (Retired)
President, 84th Railsplitters Association, LTD
