

# Serving With Honesty and Integrity

*Hereford breeder Donlie McMullin lives by the Army's nine core values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage.*

by **Angie Stump Denton**

**S**erving more than 20 years in the Army and now owning a realty business and ranch, Donlie McMullin of Copperas Cove, Texas, says he's found that the keys to success, no matter what your career, are leadership, work ethic, integrity and honesty.

Donlie describes leadership as an act of influencing people. "Good leaders lead. They don't stand behind and drive," Donlie explains. "Every time you visit a pasture, cattle teach you about leadership. Most times cattle respond better if you honk the

horn and call the animal instead of honking the horn and trying to push them to go somewhere."

Donlie and his wife, Linda, own McMullin Ranch, which is a registered Hereford operation that has been in business since 1998.

## **Early years**

While Donlie was growing up, his father worked in oil fields, so the McMullin family moved around frequently. One year Donlie attended 14 different schools.

Donlie got his first taste of ranching from his grandfather, who was in the commercial

Hereford business. When Donlie was 7, his grandfather gave him half of a calf crop.

At 13, Donlie started working in the oilfields. After high school graduation, he went to Indiana Tech to college, where he played college football and graduated with a major in geology and a minor in petroleum energy.

Then in August 1960 he was drafted to serve in the U.S. Army.

## **A leader**

Once enlisted, Donlie chose not to take the officer path. He says he wanted to be part of the



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*— Donlie McMullin*

combat arm, and after 22.5 years, he retired as a command sergeant major, which is the highest enlisted grade.

According to the U.S. Army website, the command sergeant major's counsel is expected to be calm, settled and unequivocally accurate, but with an energy and enthusiasm that never wanes, even in the worst of times (see "Command sergeant major").

During his time in the Army, Donlie was stationed at Fort Hood seven times. In 1980 he married Linda, who was a contractor in the Fort Hood area at the time.

### Ranching

After retiring from the Army in 1983, Donlie and Linda started acquiring land, and Donlie got his start again in the cattle business. Along with ranching, he also started Donlie McMullin Realty, which today continues to serve the Fort Hood, Copperas Cove, and Killeen areas.

When Donlie first started ranching, he purchased Simbrah cattle, but disposition led him back to the breed his grandfather had raised — Hereford.

"One day I was trying to load a 'rank' cow," Donlie explains. "I couldn't get her loaded by myself so I went in the house to take a break and my wife offered to help. The cow got her down and that was the last straw. I sold them and got into the Hereford business."

Donlie purchased his first Herefords at the Texas All-Star Sale.

### Breeding program

Today the McMullin herd numbers about 150 registered cows, 50 replacements and 100 commercial cows used to raise baldies. The herd is mostly spring calvers with only about 20 cows calving in the fall.

Donlie explains his herd is predominately Remitall, Star Lake and Felton genetics and his breeding program is performance



Replacement heifers are developed and AI-bred.

based. He uses artificial insemination (AI) and embryo transfer (ET) in order to use the best genetics possible and to continue to improve his herd.

When selecting replacements or bulls, Donlie says he looks at birth, weaning and yearling weight expected progeny differences (EPDs). He also wants everything to index 20 or higher for each of the four traits.

### Marketing

Donlie has utilized state and regional consignment sales to market his seedstock. He typically consigns cattle to the South Texas Polled Hereford Association Sale, Northeast Texas Hereford Association Sale, Cross Timbers Classic Sale and the Texas All-Star Sale.

McMullin-raised steers are sold at the local market. "Once we sell the steers we start getting calls about their heifermates," Donlie says.

### Future

Donlie says his future goals are to expand his herd to calve about 200 head per year.

"I hope to continue to weed out and improve my herd," he explains. He also says he plans to continue learning from other breeders and using that knowledge to improve his herd.

"The military teaches you to juggle a lot of balls," Donlie says. "You can't have tunnel vision. You have to have a vision of what is coming, which is similar to the cattle business. You can't participate in a flavor-of-the-month program and genetically meet the goals of your breeding program." **HW**

## Command sergeant major

Enlisted soldiers who attain the distinction of being selected by the Department of the Army for participation in the command sergeant major program are the epitome of success in their chosen field. There is no higher grade of rank, except Sergeant Major of the Army, for enlisted soldiers and there is no greater honor.

The command sergeant major carries out policies and standards of the performance, training, appearance, and conduct of enlisted personnel. The command sergeant major advises and initiates recommendations to the commander and staff.

Perhaps slightly wiser and more experienced than the first sergeant, the command sergeant major is expected to function completely without supervision. Like the old sage of times past, the command sergeant major's counsel is expected to be calm, settled and unequivocally accurate, but with an energy and enthusiasm that never wanes, even in the worst of times.

— Courtesy of U.S. Army