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Obituary

Edwin Walker; General Fired by Kennedy

From Associated Press

DALLAS—Edwin A. Walker, the ultraconservative Army general fired by President John F. Kennedy and allegedly shot at by Lee Harvey Oswald, has died. He was 84.

Walker died at home Sunday, reportedly of lung disease.

A decorated World War II veteran, Walker rose to the rank of major general, but was relieved of duty in the early 1960s. Kennedy removed him partly for distributing to troops John Birch Society literature implying that Kennedy was a traitor.

It was not the first time Walker had tangled with a President. In 1957, Walker led federal troops to force school integration in Little Rock, Ark., only after President Dwight D. Eisenhower refused to accept his resignation. Walker later fought integration at the University of Mississippi.

After leaving the Army, Walker ran against Texas Gov. John Connally in the Democratic primary in 1962. He finished last in a field of six.

The Warren Commission said Oswald, identified as the sole gunman in Kennedy's assassination in November, 1963, tried to shoot Walker in April, 1963, but missed.

Walker also figured prominently in a landmark libel case.

In 1964, the Supreme Court had ruled that public officials cannot recover damages for reports about official duties unless they can prove actual malice.

In Walker's case, the Supreme Court in 1967 reversed a \$500,000 judgment against the Associated Press, extending the libel law exception for public officials to all public figures.

The dispute centered on an AP story that said Walker had "assumed command" of anti-integration rioters at the University of Mississippi and "led a charge of students against federal marshals." Walker said those statements were false but could not prove any malicious intent in them.