

U-TUBE MILITARY VIDEOS TO WATCH

- **African American Units of World War II 3:58 Minutes**
 - **6888 Central Postal Battalion 6:36 Minutes**
 - **761st Tank Battalion 4:38 minutes**
- **320th Barrage Balloon Battalion 3:01 & 1:20 Minutes**
 - **Red Ball Express 3:06 Minutes**
- **555 Parachute Infantry Battalion 2:35 & 1:29 Minutes**
 - **The Golden Thirteen 9:58 Minutes**
 - **92nd Infantry Division 3:09 Minutes**

WORLD WAR II U.S.ARMY UNITS FROM LARGEST TO SMALLEST

- **Army Group** 400,000- 1,000,000
 - **Field Army** 50,000 soldiers
 - **Corps** 20,000-45,000 soldiers
 - **Division** 10,000-15,000 soldiers
 - **Brigade** 2,000-5,000 soldiers
 - **Regiment** 2,000-5,000 soldiers
 - **Battalion** 100-1,000 soldiers
 - **Company** 60-200 soldiers
 - **Platoon** 18-50 soldiers
 - **Squad** 6-10 soldiers

THE SECOND WORLD WAR **(WWII)**

**AFRICAN AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MILITARY DURING WORLD WAR II
AND THE MILITARY UNITS THEY SERVED WITH**

PRE-WAR THOUGHTS ABOUT AFRICAN AMERICANS

- By early December 1941, the African American press, along with some of their white counterparts, were campaigning to expand the participation of blacks in the war that was already ensuing in Europe
- In turn, the U.S. Army clearly stated its position on racial integration
- Social integration was a civilian-sociological activity to figure out, it was never meant to be a military issue
- In regards to the anticipated war participation the Army first envisioned four all-black divisions, but in the end only two came to be, the 92nd & 93rd Infantry Divisions
- The 92nd. served in Italy & Europe, while the 93rd served in the Pacific Theater of Operation

THE WAR BEGINS

- World War II officially began in Europe on September 1, 1939, with the attack of Poland by Germany
- Japan invaded Manchuria China on September 18, 1931. The 2nd Sino-Japanese War began on July 7, 1937 was believed to have been the beginning of World War II in Asia
- The Empire of Japan attacked the United States on December 7, 1941 with an aerial bombing of the United States Naval and military bases around Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
- The next day December 8, 1941, the United States declared war on Japan, Germany and Italy the major countries known as the Axis powers

THE END OF WORLD WAR II

- Ending in Europe on May 8, 1945 with the surrender of Germany to the western Allies
- On May 9, 1945 Germany surrenders to Russia
- The bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 and Nagasaki on August 9, 1945
- Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945, ending World War II around the world
- On September 2, 1945 V. J. Day is when Japan signs the surrender documents ending hostilities

THE ENEMIES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

- ITALY: Benito Mussolini came to power in Italy in 1922 as Prime Minister, ousted from office and was killed
- JAPAN: Emperor Hirohito succeeded his grandfather and father as Emperor of Japan in 1926 and held this position until 1947
- GERMANY: Adolph Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany in 1933, committed suicide in a bunker in 1945
- These 3 countries & their leaders were the major members of the Axis Powers of World War II

THE ALLIES WERE VICTORIOUS LEADERS OF WORLD WAR II

- The Major Allied Leaders of World War II

- Great Britain: Winston Churchill
- United States: Franklin D. Roosevelt/Harry S. Truman
- Soviet Union: Joseph Stalin
- France: Charles de Gaulle (as a general rose to lead Free France after France surrenders)
- China: Chiang Kai-shek

REACTION TO THE WAR BY THE UNITED STATES

- The United States of America was involved in the fighting of World War II which lasted until August 15, 1945
- This declaration of war caused the increase of drafting of young men to fill the ranks of the U.S. military, many of these young men were African Americans and other minorities
- Women stepped up to perform many of the duties abandoned by men who left civilian jobs and entered the military, as well as military tasks that were deemed suitable for women to perform

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN WORLD WAR II **STORIES OF OUR ANCESTORS IN THIS CONFLICT**

- This report brings to light the fact that the segregated military units of African Americans have been left out or omitted from history books, articles, movies and conversations
- Racism by whites against Blacks was alive and well in both civilian life and military life here and abroad, yet enemy bullets did not discriminate
- African American combat units were established, most were service and labor units despite the accomplishment of African Americans in the Civil War, the Buffalo Soldiers of the Indian Wars, the Spanish-American War and World War I
- Many were snubbed when recommended for military medals until long after their service ended
- Both men and women performed their military functions admirably

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN WORLD WAR II

- African Americans were placed in segregated military units
- Our leaders did not want black & white military personnel serving together
- The navy believed that integrated units would disrupt discipline aboard ships, despite good results during the Civil War
- American leaders did not feel African Americans would fight or be able to handle the mental and physical challenges that war presents human beings
- Despite the negative references the many segregated military units of African Americans performed difficult tasks often with less than adequate equipment, either state side or over seas
 - They EXCELLED at every duty

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN WORLD WAR II

- Over 1 million African Americans served in the United States military during World War II
- African Americans were treated poorly by their white counterparts but found that many Europeans were thankful for their efforts to help them defeat their enemies
- Many of the African American soldiers considered remaining in Europe rather than return home to more racial mistreatment from the nation they were fighting for
- Several Medal of Honor nominations for African American military personnel were rejected and ignored initially
- Some medals were eventually awarded as late as 50 years after the war ended

ARMY UNITS OF THE UNITED STATES

- 909,000 African Americans served in the U.S. Army during WWII
- The **92nd** Infantry Division was the only unit to see combat in Europe. The **366th** Infantry Regiment (Buffalo Soldiers) was added to the **92nd** Infantry Division
- The **93rd** Infantry Division went to the Pacific Theater of Operations and captured the highest ranking Japanese officer, Colonel Ouchi, on August 2, 1945 on the island of Morotai, Dutch New Guinea

ARMY UNITS OF THE UNITED STATES THE 92ND INFANTRY DIVISION

- The 92nd Infantry Division was attached to the 5th Army that served in the Italian Theater of Operation
- It was also the only infantry unit comprised entirely of African Americans, to see combat in Europe
- During their time in Italy, from August of 1944 through the end of the war in May 1945, the 92nd advanced more than 3,000 square miles and captured more than 20,000 German prisoners
- They also suffered heavy casualties – with more than a quarter of the unit killed or wounded in action
- For their *Deeds* the 92nd earned more than 12,000 decorations and citations – including two Medals of Honor.

ARMY UNITS OF THE UNITED STATES THE 93RD INFANTRY DIVISION

The 93rd's story is one of overcoming obstacles

- Most military units only need to battle the enemy; the 93rd had to battle hatred and discrimination at home, a white-dominated military establishment that didn't want them, and officers that didn't want to lead them
- Worst of all, the 93rd had to fight the widespread belief that black soldiers were not capable of performing with exemplary courage on the battlefield
- During their two years in the Southwest Pacific, the men of the 93rd accumulated 825 military awards for valor and meritorious service: one Distinguished Service Cross, one Distinguished Service Medal, five Silver Stars, five Legions of Merit, 686 Bronze Stars, and 27 Air Medals

UNITED STATES ARMY UNITS, CONT'D.

- African American **Quartermaster Corps** soldiers proved their value during WWII, as logisticians
- **452nd** Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion, with less than 1,000 soldiers shot down 88 German aircraft
- **349th** Field Artillery Battalion (155 MM Howitzers, my dad's unit), **578th** Field Artillery Battalion
- **555** Parachute Infantry Battalion (Triple Nichol) made over 1,200 jumps to fight 88 fires, in the Pacific Northwest of America. The fires were started by Japanese exploding balloons that were floated across the Pacific Ocean

UNITED STATES ARMY UNITS, CONT'D.

THE 761ST TANK BATTALION

761st Tank Battalion (The Black Panthers) fought for 183 days in continuous operational employment from October 31, 1944 to May 6, 1945, suffering a 50% casualty rate

The 761st Tank Battalion was the first African American military unit to see combat during World War II, spearheaded Gen. Patton's thrust across the Siegfried Line and into Germany; fought at the Battle of the Bulge and was one of the first American units to link up with Soviet forces advancing from the east

Sergeant Warren Crecy earned a commission to officer & the medal of honor, others won 11 Silver Stars, 69 Bronze Stars and about 300 Purple Hearts



UNITED STATES ARMY UNITS, CONT'D.

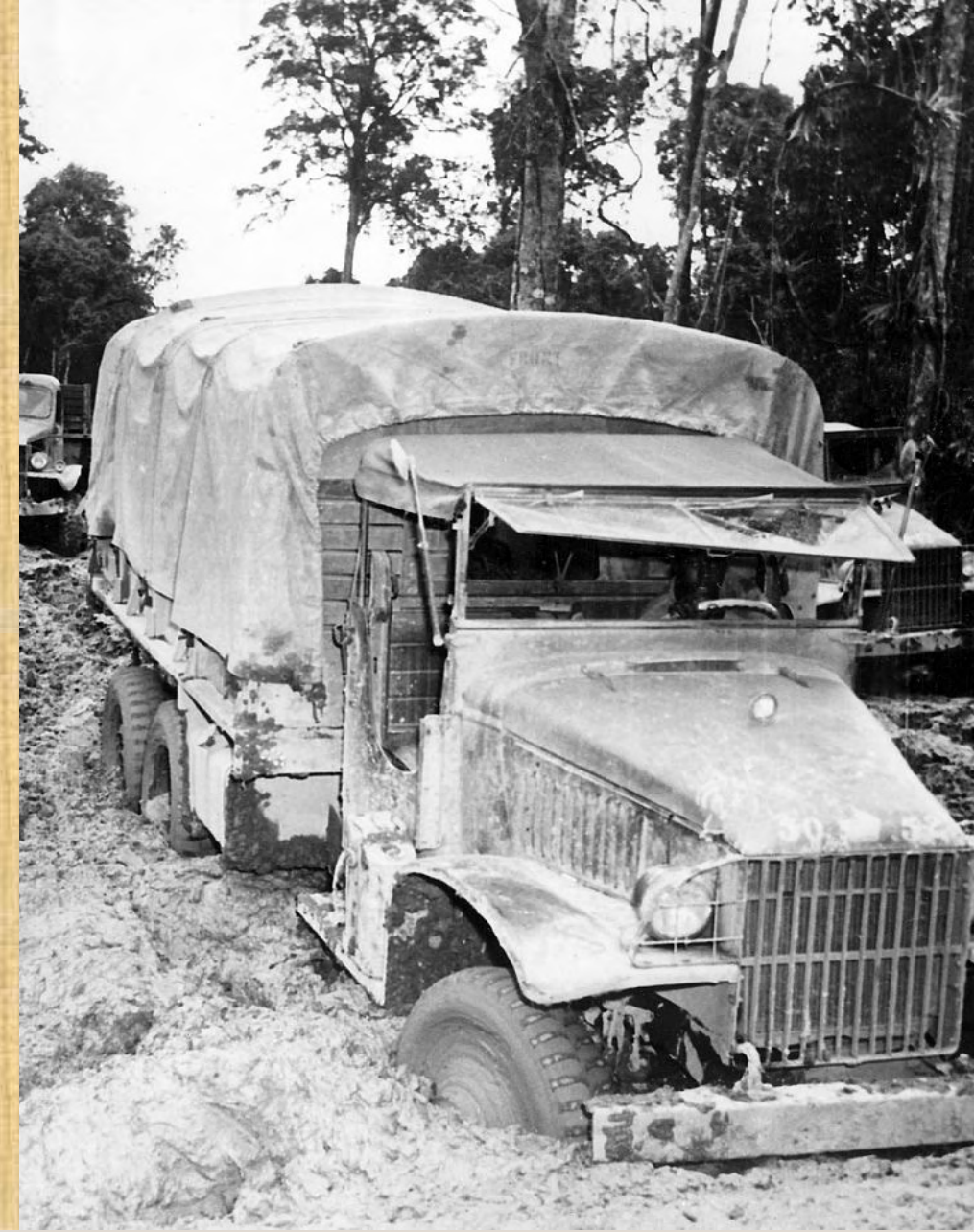
- Army Corp of Engineers: **224th**, **387th**, **810th**, **811th**, **823rd**, built roads and other military needs
- The 823rd Corp of Engineers worked on the 1,079 mile Ledo Road from India to China by way of Burma
- A Black unit of the Corp of Engineers was sent to India with bulldozers that did not have shovels & had to work on road construction for several months without shovels for their bull dozers
- The 387th Separate Engineer Battalion while in Italy was forced into combat, earning numerous medals

UNITED STATES ARMY UNITS, CONT'D.

THE ROADS TRAVELLED BY THE RED BALL EXPRESS

The Red Ball Express; were truck drivers (75% African American) using 5,958 vehicles supplied the U. S. Army advance in Europe by moving daily 12,500 tons of supplies to the front for 83 days starting on August 25, 1944. They delivered gasoline, ammunition, oil, food and other needed supplies to General Patton's troops. The route took 54 hours roundtrip

Col. John S.D. Eisenhower stated that, "the advance through France was due in as great a measure to the men who drove the Red Ball Express trucks as to those who drove the tanks..."



UNITED STATES ARMY UNITS, CONT'D.

THE 320TH BARRAGE BALLOON BATTALION

320th V.L.A. Barrage Balloon Battalion landed on Normandy Beach during D-Day. The balloons prevented German planes from firing at ground troops

Explosives on the balloons would damage any planes flying into the balloon



UNITED STATES ARMY UNITS, CONT'D.

ARMY AIR CORP:

(The Tuskegee Airmen) Benjamin Oliver Davis, Jr. First Black 20th century graduate of West Point class of 1936 and the son of the first Black Brigadier General Benjamin Oliver Davis, Sr., commanded the **99th** Pursuit Squadron & then the **332nd** Fighter Group, which also included the **100th**, **301st** & **302nd** Squadrons

Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. retired from the U.S. Air Force as a Lieutenant General (3 stars) after the Army Air Corp split off and formed the U. S. Air Force

Seen Here



UNITED STATES NAVAL UNITS

THE GOLDEN 13 OF THE U.S. NAVY

The Book is Edited by Paul Stillwell & Forward by
General Colin Powell

The Navy's Golden Thirteen, In 1944 became the first
African Americans commissioned as naval officers

The Golden Thirteen

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE
FIRST BLACK NAVAL OFFICERS



EDITED BY PAUL STILLWELL
FORWARD BY COLIN L. POWELL

UNITED STATES NAVAL UNITS, CONT'D.

- Samuel L. Gravely, Naval Officer, first Black Admiral & namesake of a Guided Missile Destroyer DDG 107 commissioned in 2009 enlisted in the navy and became an officer leading to admiral
- As an Ensign on May 2, 1945 Samuel Gravely was the first African American commanding officer of the Sub Chaser USS PC 1264
- Submarine Chaser USS PC 1264 initially had a predominantly all black crew with white officers, was commissioned on April 25, 1944 protected the U.S. coastline
- The USS Mason a Destroyer Escort ship was commissioned on March 20, 1944 , the USS Mason had a predominantly all black crew under the command of a white captain

UNITED STATES NAVAL UNITS, CONT'D.

- At the start of World War II, in February 1943 there were about 26,909 African Americans serving in the United States Navy as messmen and stewards mates for officers
- Over 12,500 African Americans served in Seabee units in the Atlantic and Pacific theaters during World War II, a group largely forgotten today. During the war these men not only built advanced bases and offloaded cargo, but helped break institutional conceptions of race, paving the road toward complete integration of the Navy
 - The Marine Corp a Division of the U.S. Navy:
- On June 1, 1942 the marine corp. enlisted African Americans. Montfort Point Marines of North Carolina were the first African Americans to train for the Marine Corp in 1942, they made up the 52nd & 51st Battalions

THE U.S. COAST GUARD

- March, 1942: The Coast Guard recruited its first 150 black volunteers, who underwent basic training at Manhattan Beach, New York. Over 5,000 African-Americans served as Coast Guardsmen in WWII, about 965 of whom were petty or warrant officers
- May, 1942: The Coast Guard began enlisting African-Americans to serve in capacities other than the rates of Stewards mate or Messman. The first recognized Coast Guardsman to make the switch was Oliver T. Henry. He served as a Steward aboard USCGC Northland on the Greenland Patrol but was a recognized and accomplished mechanic. He requested a transfer of rating and successfully made the transition to Motor Machinist's Mate while aboard Northland.

THE U.S. COAST GUARD

- In February, 1943, Louis C. Etheridge, Jr. and an all African-American gun crew on board the USCGC Campbell played a key role in sinking the German submarine U-606. Etheridge was later awarded a Bronze Star and a Letter of Commendation from the Commandant for his heroic actions
- On 14 April 1943 Joseph C. Jenkins graduated as Ensign in the Coast Guard Reserve, becoming the first recognized commissioned African-American officer in the Coast Guard and the first to graduate from Officer Candidate School at the Coast Guard Academy
- On 1 June 1943, the U.S. Coast Guard promoted Warrant Officer Clarence Samuels to Lieutenant, Junior Grade, making him the first African-American officer to reach that rank in the Coast Guard & the first African-American to command a "major" ship
- In December 1943, USS Sea Cloud became the first fully integrated warship (officers and enlisted) of the U.S. Fleet while under the command of Carleton Skinner. The warship remained in commission through 1945

WOMAN'S ARMY CORP (WACS)

The **WACS** were established by the U.S. Army in 1942

855 Black women that sorted & delivered a 2-year mail backlog were members of the **6888** Central Post Battalion, commanded by Major Charity Adams and Captain Abbie N. Campbell

The 6888 served from February 1945 till March 1946, to get mail delivered to servicemen from all of the military branches & Red Cross amounting to 7 million people The 6888 were the first black female unit to serve in Europe

Willa Brown & Janet Waterford Brogs were female graduates of the Tuskegee Pilot Training Program



THE NAVY MAKES SOME WAVES

The United States Navy created and opened their ranks to females in 1943

Freeing men working in non combat jobs for combat roles

This military unit of the navy was appropriately named the Waves

The first African American Navy Wave officers to be commissioned were a Lieutenant J. G. Harriet Pickens of Philadelphia and an Ensign Frances Willis

These ladies were the first Blacks to integrate the U.S. Navy



THE U.S. COAST GUARD WOMEN KNOWN AS

SPARs

October 1944, the Coast Guard opened enlistment to black women

The first black woman to enlist was Olivia Hooker

Hooker signed up for the Coast Guard after being rejected by the Navy WAVES due to her race

Hooker, was a survivor of the Tulsa Oklahoma Race Massacre of 1921

A total of five black SPARs, including Yvonne Cumberbatch, D. Winifred Byrd, Julia Mosley, Aileen Cooke & Olivia Hooker, would serve the Coast Guard as enlisted members during WWII



THE END OF WAR & THE WORLD CHANGES

- President Franklin Delano Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, ending his presidency which ran from 1933 to 1945
- Vice President Harry S. Truman succeeded Roosevelt as President of the United States
- On July 26, 1948 President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order #9981 integrating the United States military services
- World War II was the last war that the United States maintained and sent segregated military units into battle and harm's way
- This war led to the formation of the United Nations, which has had some success in maintaining world-wide peace between member nations worldwide
- World War II propelled the world into the Atomic age and Cold War Era

WHY DID AFRICAN AMERICANS FIGHT IN WWII

- Blacks had a vested interest in this country since before 1619 we have contributed to the growth of what would become this nation of immigrants
- Black Americans have always fought to preserve this country since before the American Revolution
- Their sacrifice provided hope for a better life after the war's end for all African Americans and other minorities

WHY DID AFRICAN AMERICANS FIGHT IN WWII

- The sprinkle of advancements made by Blacks in the military & the outspoken advocates for change gave proof that a possible change is going to come after the war
- The American leadership & way of life provided a much better form of being for Blacks
- Being in the military was a way to earn a living for their families

MILITARY UNITS THAT EARNED “MY” HONORABLE MENTION

- The Navajo Indian Code Talkers fought in the Pacific Theater to confuse Japanese radio intelligence
- The Alaskan Scouts
- 442nd Infantry Regiment made up of Japanese Americans that fought in Europe
 - **Puerto Ricans**
- 65th Infantry Regiment (Puerto Rican) (separate)
- 295th Infantry Regiment (Puerto Rican) (separate)
- 296th Infantry Regiment (Puerto Rican) (separate)
- 51st Coast Artillery Regiment (155mm Gun) (Mobile) (Puerto Rican)

'MY CLEARVIEW STREET DADS'

- The following men except for 2, all lived on a single block in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania after World War II
- Most had sons born between 1950 to 1956
- These sons and some daughters are still in communication with each other today
- Two men are added to this list because of their unusual military duties and their closeness to one of my Clearview Street friends (my uncle & my friends father in law)

ELMER ELIAS POLK, SR. TECH. SERGEANT (FATHER)

Elmer was born on January 12, 1920 in Wicomico County Maryland. Drafted August 29, 1942 Attached to the 349th Field Artillery Battalion in Europe during World War II.

Elmer was a company clerk, payroll master & correspondent, earned the rank of technical sergeant

He never saw close combat only fired his 45cal. pistol once at a tree, it worked

At the wars end Elmer only returned to the states because his family was still living in Maryland. The Europeans treated him so much better than Americans in Maryland

He experienced racist segregation which proved to have saved his life. While with a group of Black soldiers looking for safe lodging one night, they were denied entrance to a house by white American soldiers. The next morning while returning to headquarters the black soldiers passed the house & saw that it had been leveled during an all-night bombing by German artillery. There were no survivors in the exploded house



EDWARD BAILEY CORPORAL (NEIGHBOR)

Was born March 4, 1919 in Philadelphia Pennsylvania. His parents were Edmund Bailey and Sarah (Sallie) May Austin.

Inducted into the army on August 25, 1941, Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor. His military training took place at Fort Devens in Massachusetts. In Europe Edward was a member of the 366th Infantry Regiment, Headquarters, First Battalion. He earned the rank of Corporal and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

While stationed in Italy Edward Bailey was a member of the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Unit during the Rome Arno and Po Valley campaigns for the duration of World War II.

After the war Bailey was a chaplain and secretary of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of the veterans of the 366th Regiment of Infantry. An organization chartered in 1954.



MONROE ELLIS HILL, JR. PH'D. TECH SERGEANT (NEIGHBOR)

Monroe Ellis Hill, Jr. was born on November 7, 1919 in Lakewood, Florida. The son of Monroe Ellis Hill, Sr. and Jesse Knight Hill.

A member of the United States Army during World War II, reached the rank of Technical Sergeant, in Company A, Battalion 4, Infantry Replacement Center. During the war Monroe Hill remained in the continental United States, and was stationed at Fort McClellan near Birmingham, Alabama. While in the military his shooting qualified him in the marksman and sharpshooter levels. His military duties consisted of training new soldiers on the proper use of firearms.

Monroe was a graduate of Talladega University at the time of his enlistment into the army. He registered for the draft on July 1, 1941 and enlisted into the Army on August 4, 1942 in his home state of Florida.

On April 17, 1943 while in the army he married Gladys Cleo Lyons in Calhoun County, Alabama



JOHN WILLIAM POLK, SR. NEIGHBOR, NOT RELATED CENTER BOTTOM

Born November 11, 1920 in Philadelphia, PA. The only child of Austin Evan & Senora Noel Johnson Polk. His grandfather was drafted into the Civil War

Inducted into the army on January 7, 1943 at Fort George G. Meade in Maryland. Was assigned to the 485th Infantry Battalion and was discharged from the army on December 9, 1945 with the rank of sergeant

After the war he owned a home next door to a fellow 485th Infantry Battalion member, Reverend Willard McClaren Lamb



SAMUEL CROCKETT HUNTER, JR. A TUSKEGEE AIRMEN, & B-25 BOMBER PILOT (IN-LAW OF EDWARD H. BAILEY)

Samuel Crockett Hunter, Jr. was born September 1, 1919 in Crockett, Texas

Earned a BS degree in Business Administration in 1940 from West Virginia State College. Samuel was a student at Worsham College in Chicago, Il. studying mortuary science when drafted in 1940

While in the US Army Air Force he graduated in the class of 44-J as a 2nd Lt. B-25 pilot and cadet captain of his class

Honorably discharged from the army in November 1945 with a commercial pilot's license. Earning the rank of captain while in the reserves in the 1950's

A DOTA (Documented Original Tuskegee Airman) and recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal award in 2007



LEONARD MARVEL POLK SERGEANT (UNCLE)

Born October 14, 1918 in Philadelphia, PA. Leonard joined the Army on October 14, 1941, prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7, 1941

Leonard earned the rank of sergeant while in the army as a member of the 823rd Engineer Battalion in India and worked on the construction of the Ledo Road (now known as the Stilwell Road) which spanned from India to China

Leonard wrote home to his mother and specifically asked if she had heard from his younger brother Elmer hoping that Elmer was not having as rough a time as he was having



4 OF THE ABOVE 6 SOLDIERS LIVED ON THE 6400 BLOCK OF CLEARVIEW STREET IN PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

- Other dads from Clearview Street where an available military picture did not exist

- Monroe Bundick, born July 6, 1912. Truck driver in the U.S. Army from August 3, 1943 until March 2, 1946
- Hargis Volic Thomas, Sr. born November 4, 1917. In the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers from July 30, 1942 until December 1945 earned the rank of Staff Sergeant & a Bronze Star medal. Arrived in Europe on “D” Day plus 12 (June 18, 1944) and Traveled to the Rhineland in Germany
- Willard McClaren Lamb, born in 1921. A member of the U.S. Army 485th Infantry Battalion from December 31, 1942 until December 15, 1945. After the war he became an ordained minister
- Willie Ed. Fleming, born May 19, 1922. Entered the U.S. Army on August 9, 1941 was stationed at Fort McClellan in Alabama and learned to be a master carpenter while in the army which would be his field of employment in civilian life

BIBLIOGRAPHY, CONTRIBUTORS & CREDITS FOR THIS PRESENTATION

- **Photo & information Contributors:**

- Edward H. Bailey (photo of Edward Bailey & father in law Samuel C. Hunter, Jr.) (Editing Assistance)
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- Terry Handy, Jr. (photo of his great grandfather Leonard M. Polk, Sr.)
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- **Book Sources:**

- American Patriots by Gail Buckley Copyright 2001
- 1001 Things Everyone Should Know About African American History by Jeffrey C. Stewart 1996
- Timelines of African American History by Tom Cowan & Jack McGuire 1994

- For each listed military unit, & Pictures the **Internet & Wikipedia** were consulted & all videos were viewed

I AM ERWIN POLK, & I THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

ANY QUESTIONS?
