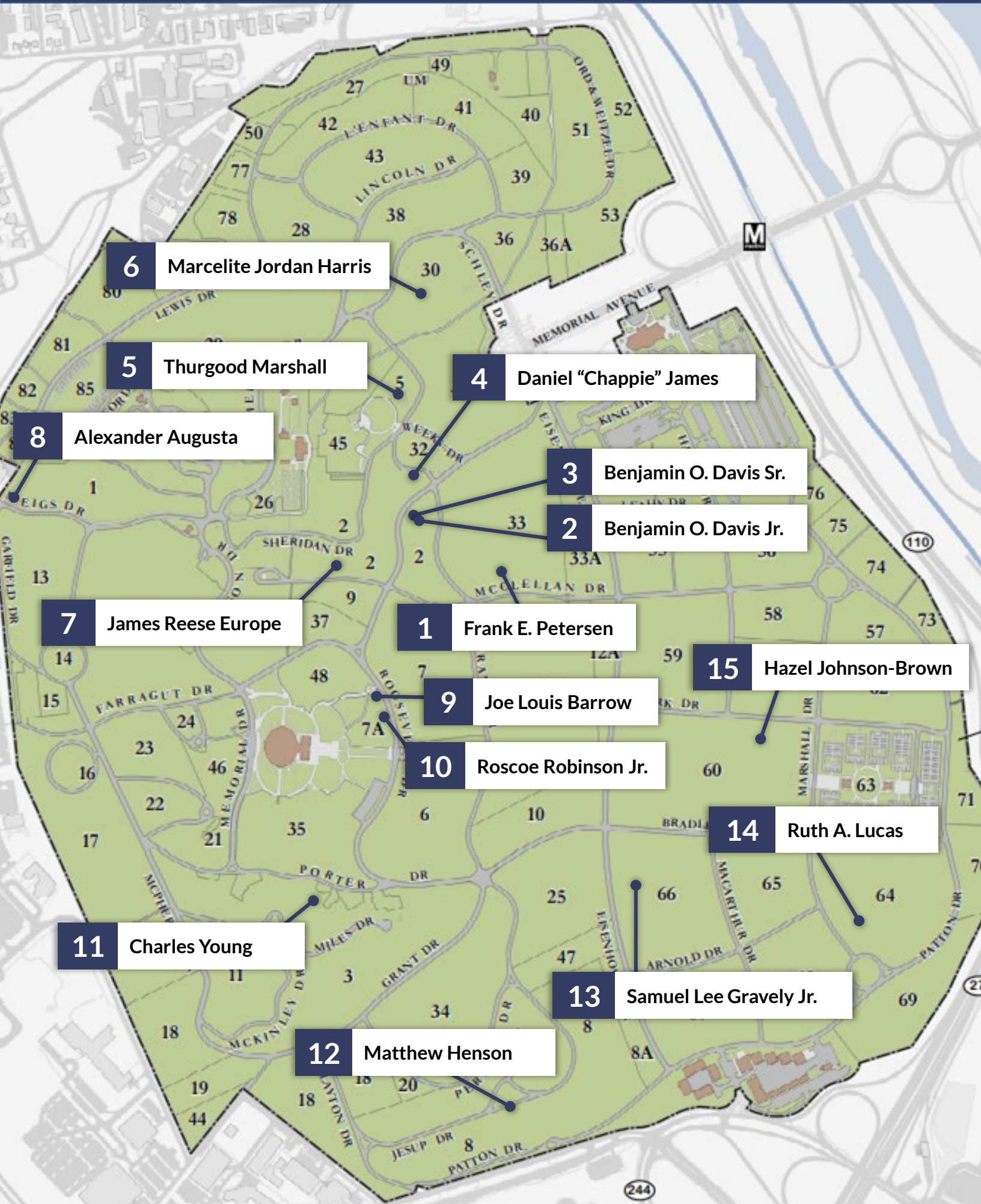


# ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY WALKING TOUR

## AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AT ANC: TRAILBLAZERS



We love hearing about your visit! Share your pictures, questions, and favorite parts of the tour on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

@ArlingtonNatI

#ANCEducation #BlackHistoryANC

# ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY WALKING TOUR


## AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AT ANC: TRAILBLAZERS

Length: ~5 miles


Starting Point: Section 33 (0.5 miles from Welcome Center)

Exertion Level: High


There are three types of stops on this walking tour:




















**HONOR**  
HONOR stops mark the gravesites of specific individuals.



**REMEMBER**  
REMEMBER stops commemorate events, ideas, or groups of people.



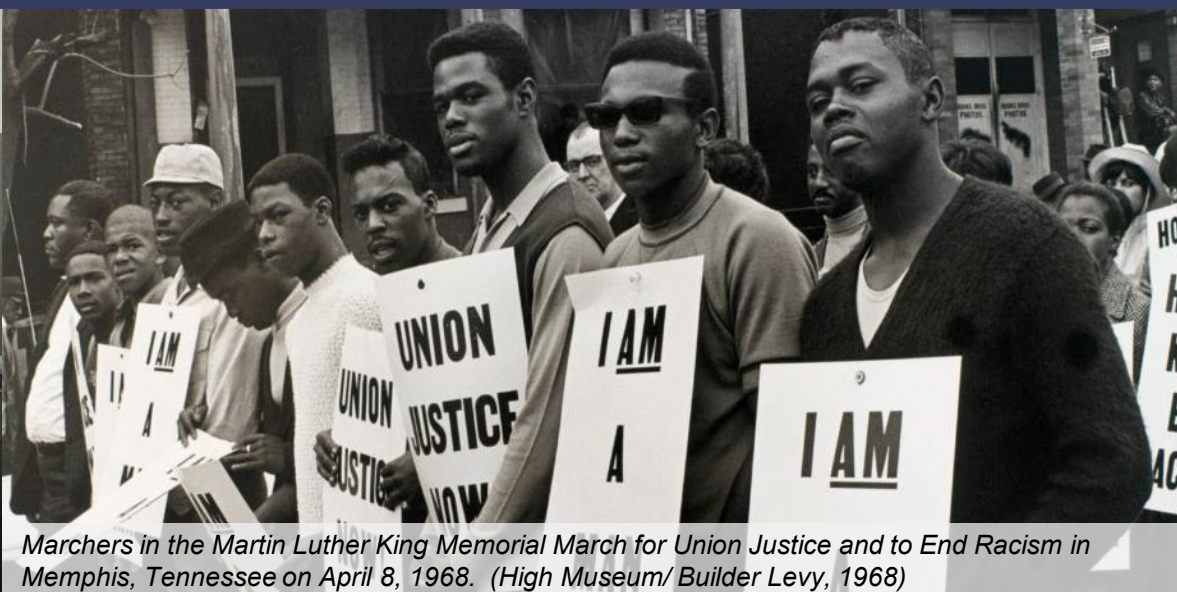
**EXPLORE**  
EXPLORE stops invite you to discover what this history means to you.

1	Frank E. Petersen	Section 33, Grave 4571	
2	Benjamin O. Davis Jr.	Section 2, Grave E-311-RH	 
3	Benjamin O. Davis Sr.	Section 2, Grave E-478-B	
4	Daniel “Chappie” James	Section 2, Grave 4968-B	
5	Thurgood Marshall	Section 5, Grave 40-3	
6	Marcelite Jordan Harris	Section 30, Grave 621-RH	
7	James Reese Europe	Section 2, Grave 3576	
8	Alexander Thomas Augusta	Section 1, Grave 124-C	
9	Joe Louis Barrow	Section 7A, Grave 177	
10	Roscoe Robinson Jr.	Section 7A, Grave 18	
11	Charles Young	Section 3, Grave 1730-B	
12	Matthew Henson	Section 8, Grave S-15-1	
13	Ruth A. Lucas	Section 64, Grave 6031	
14	Samuel Lee Gravely Jr.	Section 66, Grave 7417	 
15	Hazel Johnson-Brown	Section 60, Grave 9836	





A segregated waiting room in Florida. (High Museum/ Marion Palfi, 1945-1949)



Marchers in the Martin Luther King Memorial March for Union Justice and to End Racism in Memphis, Tennessee on April 8, 1968. (High Museum/ Builder Levy, 1968)

This walking tour celebrates the achievements of African American men and women in the U.S. military who made historic contributions to American society despite systemic racism and discrimination. In order to appreciate the contributions of these exceptional people, it is important to understand the historical background of inequality and segregation during the times in which they lived and worked.

## SEGREGATION IN THE UNITED STATES

The American Civil War (1861-1865) began as a war to preserve the Union of the United States of America. By its end, enslaved African Americans were freed and the practice of slavery in this nation was abolished. Following the Civil War, there was promise of racial equality. The United States ratified three constitutional amendments—the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments—that guaranteed African Americans’ legal status as United States citizens, and Congress passed civil rights legislation intended to provide them with educational and economic opportunities. However, state and local governments, largely but not entirely in the South, passed laws that restricted these newly granted freedoms. These laws included the racial segregation of public facilities (so-called “Jim Crow” laws), as well as poll taxes and literacy requirements that limited African Americans’ ability to vote.

In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court made racial segregation legal, ruling in Plessy v. Ferguson that the principle of “separate but equal” did not violate the 14th Amendment. After this ruling, America embraced segregation. Blacks and whites were kept separate in schools, restaurants, public transportation and even bathrooms; however, they were not equal.

Almost 60 years later, on May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court unanimously reversed the Plessy ruling, deciding in Brown v. Board of Education that separate schools were not equal and therefore the segregation of public schools was unlawful. This was a major victory for African Americans and civil rights activists, however, desegregation was neither immediate nor easy. Some white Americans opposed and even violently protested the integration of schools, restaurants and other public facilities.

After Brown v. Board, which only applied to public schools, it took African American activists and their allies another 10 years to secure passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which barred racial discrimination in the workplace and public spaces. Additional civil rights legislation included the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which gave the federal government oversight in state and local elections to protect African Americans’ right to vote, and the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which provided equal housing opportunities regardless of race, creed, or national origin and made it a federal crime to injure or intimidate anyone because of their race, color, religion, or national origin.



U.S.C.T. soldiers in Dutch Gap, Virginia in 1864. (LOC)



Soldiers from the 369<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment en route home from war in 1919. (NARA)



Members of the 6888<sup>th</sup> Battalion in a 1944 parade honoring Joan d’Arc. (NARA)



# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND



*Soldiers of the 24th Infantry marching in 1898. (LOC)*



*Well-wishers at the 369th Infantry Regiment homecoming in 1919. (NARA)*



*Tuskegee Airmen in Ramitelli, Italy in 1945. (LOC/Toni Frissell)*

## SEGREGATION IN THE U.S. MILITARY

The history of segregation within the U.S. military is similar to that of segregation in U.S. society at large: a slow march toward progress with many steps backward along the way. Approximately 5,000 African Americans served alongside whites in Continental Army regiments during the Revolutionary War, and some served with American forces during the War of 1812. After 1815, state and federal laws and regulations gradually restricted or prohibited African Americans serving in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps or state militias.

In July 1862, in the midst of the Civil War, Congress authorized the recruitment of Black soldiers, and after the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863 the Army established the Bureau of Colored Troops to supervise the units of the United States Colored Troops (USCT). Through World War II (1941-1945), most African Americans who wished to serve in the U.S. armed forces were assigned to segregated, all-Black units, often overseen by white officers. Although these segregated units served with valor and distinction, they received less support than white units and regularly had to deal with discrimination, unequal benefits and assignment to difficult duties such as building fortifications and occupying southern states during the years after the war.

On July 26, 1948, President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9981, mandating equality of treatment and opportunity in the U.S. military, to include burial at national cemeteries such as Arlington, regardless of race. Over the next few years, each of the military service branches (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard) implemented the executive order in different ways until the U.S. military was fully racially integrated by late 1954.

For more information on this topic, please see “African Americans in the Army” by the U.S. Army Center on Military History, found at <https://history.army.mil/html/faq/diversity.html>

## SEGREGATION AT ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

Following the segregation practices of the U.S. military, for many decades Arlington National Cemetery required African American servicemembers to be interred in segregated sections. Prior to World War II, African American service members were buried in Section 27 (from the Civil War through 1899), Section 23 (from 1900 through the 1920s), Section 19 (repatriations from World War I (1917-1918), and Section 25 (from the late 1920s until 1948). Through 1948, African American veterans who did not die during WWI were buried in Sections 23 and 25. It is important to consider how this practice of segregation affected not only the location of gravesites, but also the experience of African American mourners who may have experienced racism when attending funerals or visiting graves in segregated sections.

Desegregation for new burials began immediately following President Truman’s Executive Order in 1948, and Arlington National Cemetery has been fully integrated ever since.

Sources and more on information on segregation in America:

<https://ejj.org/reports/segregation-in-america/>

<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/brown/index.html>

<https://onlinellm.usc.edu/a-brief-history-of-jim-crow-laws/>

<https://history.army.mil/html/faq/diversity.html>



# LIEUTENANT GENERAL FRANK E. PETERSEN JR.



## WALKING TOUR STOP 1 Section 33, Grave 4571

**BIRTH:** March 2, 1932, Topeka, KS

**DEATH:** August 25, 2015, Stevensville, MD

**EARLY & PERSONAL LIFE:** Frank E. Petersen Jr. was born in Topeka, Kansas at a time when many public spaces and institutions were segregated. Petersen's father had worked on a sugar cane plantation in St. Croix before immigrating to the United States, and his mother worked as a schoolteacher. The attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 inspired Petersen to pursue a career in the military. He initially enrolled at Washburn University, but ultimately left to enlist in the Navy in 1950. Petersen had three daughters and one son with his first wife, Eleanor Burton, and one daughter with his second wife, Alicia Downes.

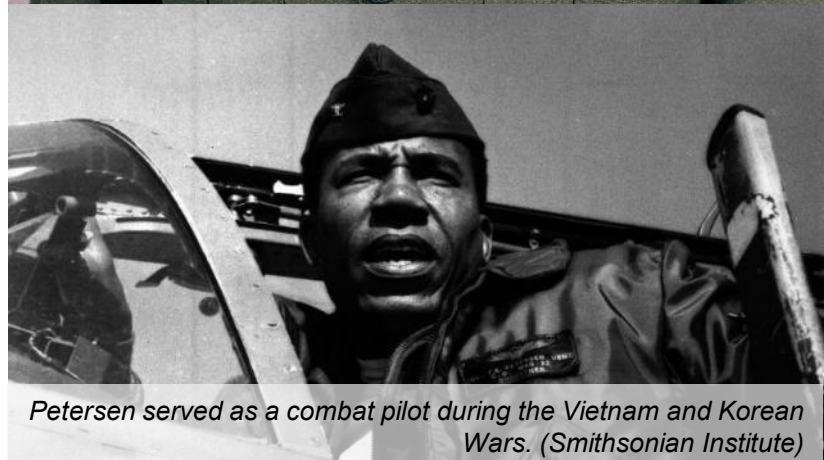
**CAREER:** After Petersen achieved a high score on his Navy entrance exam, a recruiter forced him to retake it under the suspicion that Petersen had cheated. Throughout his Naval career, Petersen remained dedicated to serving his nation despite racist indignities inflicted by superior officers. In 1951, Petersen enrolled in the Naval Aviation Cadet Program. The following year, he became the Marines' first African American aviator and was commissioned as a second lieutenant.

Petersen completed 350 combat missions while serving in the Korean and Vietnam Wars. During the Vietnam War he became the first African American Marine to command a fighter squadron. Petersen achieved a number of additional 'firsts' during his career, becoming the first African American general in the Marine Corps (1979) and the first African American commander of the Quantico Marine Base (1986).

**LEGACY:** Throughout his career Petersen earned twenty medals for bravery in combat and a Distinguished Service Medal. Despite the multitude of racial injustices perpetuated against him, his dedication to pursuing a career in the military remained unwavering.



Frank E. Petersen Jr. in 1986. (NARA)



Petersen served as a combat pilot during the Vietnam and Korean Wars. (Smithsonian Institute)



Petersen presenting his retirement speech at Quantico Marine Base in 1988. (NARA)

### AFRICAN AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS WALKING TOUR

From the Welcome Center, turn left on Eisenhower Dr. At McClellan Dr. turn right; Section 33 will be on your right. Petersen's grave is in the 38th row, 8th from the street.



- First African American aviator in the U.S. Marine Corps
- First African American General in the USMC
- First African American Commander of Quantico Marine Base



# GENERAL BENJAMIN O. DAVIS JR.



## WALKING TOUR STOP 2 Section 2, Grave E-311-RH

**BIRTH:** December 18, 1912, *Washington, D.C.*

**DEATH:** July 4, 2002, *Washington, D.C.*

**EARLY & PERSONAL LIFE:** Benjamin O. Davis Jr. was the son of Benjamin Davis Sr., a U.S. Army officer who is also buried at Arlington National Cemetery, and Elnora Dickerson Davis. After riding in the airplane of a barnstorming pilot at the age of 13, Davis decided to pursue a career in the Army Air Forces. He enrolled at the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1932. While at West Point, Davis was isolated from his white peers due to his race. Upon graduation in 1936, he became West Point's fourth African American graduate. After graduating, Davis married Agatha Scott.

**CAREER:** Davis was commissioned as second lieutenant of the 24th Infantry Regiment at Fort Benning, Georgia. At this time, he and his father were the only two African American officers in the military. After graduating from the Infantry School at Fort Benning in Georgia, Davis Jr. taught military science at Tuskegee Institute, a historically Black university in Alabama.

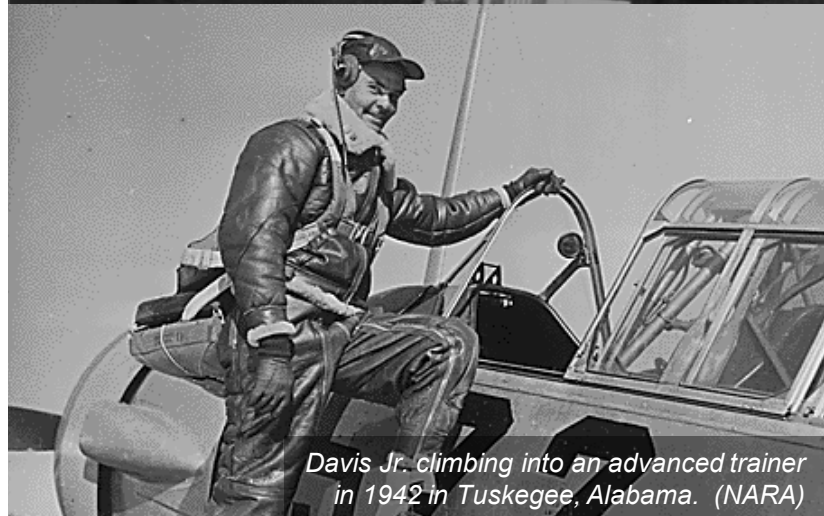
The U.S. Army initially barred Davis from joining the Air Corps because of his race. In 1941, however, due to concerns about a shortage of military pilots in the United States, the Army decided to train African American pilots, and Davis enrolled in advanced flight training at Tuskegee Army Air Base—the program that created the famed “Tuskegee Airmen.” Davis was the first African American officer to fly solo in an Army Air Corps plane and he received his wings in 1942. After assuming command of the 99th Fighter Squadron, which was made up of other graduates of the training program in Tuskegee, Davis was deployed to Tunisia in April 1943. Later the squadron went to Sicily to aid in the Allied invasion. In October 1943, Davis assumed command of the 332nd Fighter Group, which deployed to Italy. After successfully escorting U.S. bombers into German airspace, Davis was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross.

After the war, when President Harry Truman released his plan to integrate the military forces, Davis helped draft a plan to implement the order within the Air Force. In 1949, Davis attended the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, becoming its first African American graduate. When the Korean War broke out in June 1950, Davis assumed command of the 51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing, Far East Air Forces, Korea. He subsequently became director of operations and training at Far East Air Forces headquarters and was promoted to brigadier general, commanding the Thirteenth Air Force. This promotion became permanent in 1960. In Germany, Davis served as the Air Force's deputy chief of staff for operations. He retired from active military service on February 1, 1970, with the rank of lieutenant general.

**LEGACY:** Throughout his career, Benjamin O. Davis Jr. faced numerous instances of racial discrimination that tested his resolve. However, he refused to let bigotry keep him from pursuing a career in the Air Force. Along with his father, Davis paved the way for future African American soldiers to pursue careers in the Army.



*Davis Jr. in 1955. (Air Force Historical Research Agency)*



*Davis Jr. climbing into an advanced trainer in 1942 in Tuskegee, Alabama. (NARA)*

- First African American general in the United States Air Force
- First African American officer to conduct a solo flight in an Air Force aircraft
- First African American graduate of the Air War College



### AFRICAN AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS WALKING TOUR

*Davis Jr.'s grave is at the top of the third circle of graves.*



# THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN EXPERIMENT



In 1925, the War Department published a report asserting that African Americans were incapable of operating complex military equipment, such as airplanes. The military used this study to bar African Americans from enlisting in the Army Air Corps. On January 9, 1941, however, after years of intense pressure from prominent Black newspapers and civil rights leaders, the Secretary of War approved the formation of an all-African American pursuit squadron—the Tuskegee Airmen.



*Tuskegee Airmen in Ramitelli, Italy in March 1945. (Toni Frissell/LOC)*



*The first graduates of the Advanced Flying School at Tuskegee. Left-Right: G.S. Roberts, B.O. Davis, C.H. DeBow, R.M. Long, Mac Ross, and L. R. Curtis. (LOC)*

On July 19, 1941, Captain Benjamin O. Davis Jr. and 12 other cadets reported for aviation training at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. The Tuskegee Airmen project was originally framed as an “experiment,” and most high-ranking officers and civilians expected it would fail. The “experiment” did not fail, and Davis and five of the original 12 cadets passed the course. These six men became the first Tuskegee Airmen.

In July 1942, the 99th Fighter Squadron, equipped with 28 military aviators, became the first African American squadron mobilized for combat. Despite the squadron’s training, the Army did not deploy the 99th overseas until April 1943. It then took another month for the Army to give the squadron its first mission.

In late 1943, military officials and newspapers published reports questioning the skills of the 99th Fighter Squadron, forcing Davis to testify at hearings at the Pentagon. Throughout the hearing, Davis rebutted the negative reports and defended his squadron. However, the squadron was only exonerated after the military conducted a subsequent report on its operations.

Two years later, in November 1945, the War Department released a report stating that while escorting bomber planes, the Tuskegee Airmen of the 332<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group shot down fewer enemy planes than did white squadrons. The report failed to mention that the 332<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group was not deployed until near the end of the war, when the German air force was drastically depleted, and therefore the pilots of the 332<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group encountered fewer enemy planes than squadrons that had flown earlier in the war.

Despite the Tuskegee Airmen’s exemplary performance, the military remained segregated until 1948.

## REFLECTION:

Imagine working under the expectation that you will fail.

Imagine working for people who want you to fail.

Imagine working under conditions in which if you fail, others of your race/gender/ethnicity/etc. will never get the chance to succeed.

This was what the Tuskegee Airmen and other African Americans in the military faced. The Tuskegee Airmen were held to a higher standard and scrutinized to a greater degree than white aviation units because of their race.



# BRIGADIER GENERAL BENJAMIN O. DAVIS SR.



## WALKING TOUR STOP 3 Section 2, Grave E-478-B

**BIRTH:** July 1, 1877, Washington, D.C.

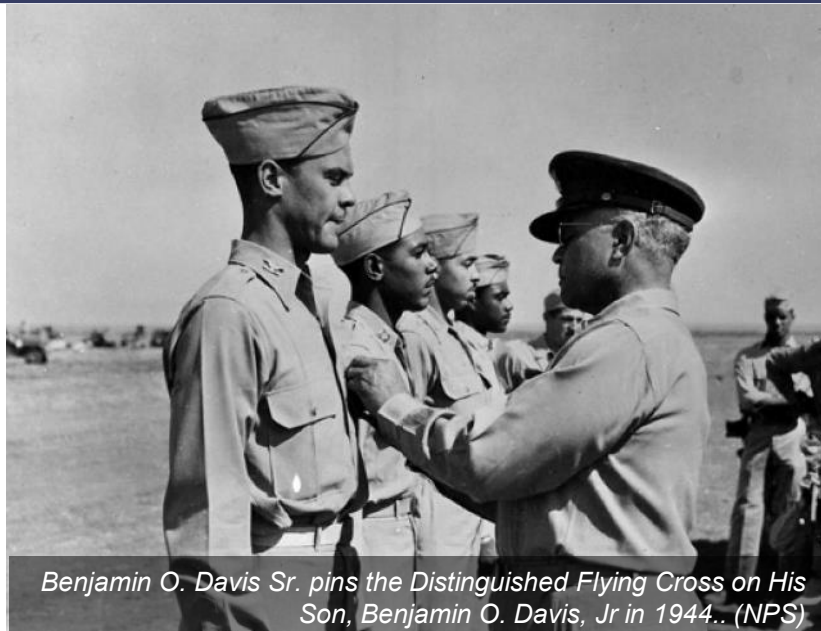
**DEATH:** November 26, 1970, Chicago, IL

**EARLY & PERSONAL LIFE:** Benjamin O. Davis Sr. was born to Louis Patrick Henry Davis, a messenger for the Department of the Interior, and Henrietta Stewart, a nurse. While his parents wanted him to go to college, Davis decided to pursue a military career. He married Elnora Dickerson in 1902, and they had two daughters and one son. Elnora passed away in 1916, a few days after giving birth to their youngest daughter. In 1919, Davis married Sarah Overton.

**CAREER:** Davis joined the U.S. Army on July 13, 1898, during the Spanish-American War, serving as a temporary first lieutenant in the 8th United States Volunteer Infantry. He was mustered out March 6, 1899, but re-enlisted several months later as a private in the 9th Cavalry Regiment. When an African American officer, Charles Young, assumed command of the 9th Cavalry Regiment, he encouraged Davis to pursue his goal of obtaining the rank of officer. In 1901, Davis passed the officers exam and assumed the rank of second lieutenant.

In the spring of 1901, Davis was deployed to the Philippines, as part of a force fighting to suppress a Filipino nationalist rebellion in the United States' newly acquired colony. At the conclusion of the Philippine-American War in 1902, the Army stationed Davis at Fort Washakie, Wyoming. Between 1905 and 1938, he intermittently taught military science at Wilberforce University and Tuskegee University, both historically Black institutions. During World War I, Davis served as a supply officer in the Philippines. From 1930 to 1933, as part of the Gold Star Pilgrimages, Davis escorted mothers and widows of World War I soldiers to Europe to visit the gravesites of those they lost. In October 1940, Davis assumed the rank of brigadier general —becoming the first African American general officer in the U.S. Army. During World War II, the Army sent Davis, as assistant to the inspector general, to the European theater to inspect the state of African American troops. After the war, he continued serving as assistant inspector general until his retirement, after a 50-year career in the military, on July 14, 1948.

**LEGACY:** Davis became the first African American general officer in the United States Army when he was promoted to the rank of brigadier general in 1940. Throughout his career, he continually advocated for the desegregation of the military, which occurred six days after his retirement.



*Benjamin O. Davis Sr. pins the Distinguished Flying Cross on His Son, Benjamin O. Davis, Jr in 1944.. (NPS)*



*Benjamin O. Davis Sr. in France in 1944. (NARA)*

- First African American to obtain the rank of brigadier general in the United States military



### AFRICAN AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS WALKING TOUR

*Davis Sr. is four rows up from his son Davis Jr.'s headstone, three plots in from Roosevelt Dr.*



# GENERAL DANIEL "CHAPPIE" JAMES JR.



## WALKING TOUR STOP 4 Section 2, Grave 4968-B

**BIRTH:** February 11, 1920, Pensacola, FL

**DEATH:** February 25, 1978, Colorado Springs, CO

**EARLY & PERSONAL LIFE:** Daniel "Chappie" James Jr. was the last of 17 children born in segregated Pensacola, Florida to Daniel and Lillie Anna James. His mother, unimpressed with the segregated public schools, established a private school for African American students, where James earned a quality education. James attended Tuskegee Institute, where he met his wife, Dorothy. The two married on November 3, 1942 and had two sons and one daughter.

**CAREER:** While attending Tuskegee Institute, James enrolled in the government-sponsored flight training program. He graduated in 1942 but remained at the campus to serve as an instructor in the Army Air Corps Aviation Cadet Program. In July 1943, he earned his commission as second lieutenant and joined the Tuskegee Airmen, assigned to a segregated unit based at Selfridge Field, Michigan.

President Harry S. Truman ordered the integration of the U.S. military on July 26, 1948; however, racist individuals continued to make efforts to restrict opportunities for African Americans. While stationed at Clark Air Base in the Philippines in 1949, James reported feeling isolated from most of his white comrades.

James flew 101 combat missions during the Korean War and 78 during the Vietnam War. In 1969, he assumed command of the 7272nd Fighter Training Wing and was transferred to Wheelus Air Base in Libya. James ended his time as a fighter pilot and assumed a position in the military's public affairs department in March 1970.

On September 1, 1975, James received a promotion to four-star general and was assigned as commander in chief, North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). This made him the first African American to obtain the rank of four-star general in any branch of the military. James retired from the Air Force on February 1, 1978.

**LEGACY:** During his career, James earned the nickname "Black Eagle" for his sharp flying skills and his impermeable patriotism despite segregation and discrimination. He advocated the importance of hard work and self-reliance and the recognition that every American should be equal under the law.

- First African American four-star general



General Daniel "Chappie" James Jr. (U.S. Air Force)



James with his F-4C Phantom during the Vietnam War. (Smithsonian Institution)



Lt. James stands next to a P-51 Mustang in Korea. (U.S. Air Force)



### AFRICAN AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS WALKING TOUR

At the intersection of Grant Dr. and Roosevelt Dr., with the John Dill statue on your right, James' grave is the first headstone in the third row on your left.



# SUPREME COURT JUSTICE THURGOOD MARSHALL



## WALKING TOUR STOP 5

Section 5, Grave 40-3

**BIRTH:** July 2, 1908, Baltimore, MD

**DEATH:** January 24, 1993, Baltimore, MD

**EARLY & PERSONAL LIFE:** Born on July 2, 1908 in Baltimore, Maryland to Norma and William Marshall, Thurgood Marshall was the grandson of a slave. From an early age, Marshall's father instilled in him an appreciation for the U.S. Constitution and the rule of law, taking him and his brother to watch legal proceedings and arguments in court. Growing up, Marshall attended segregated schools, although his family's income allowed him to attend a first-rate private high school. After completing high school in 1925, Marshall attended the historically Black Lincoln University in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Marshall married Vivian Burey shortly before he graduated from college. After Vivian's death in 1955, he married Cecilia Suyat, with whom he had two sons.

**CAREER:** In 1930, Marshall applied to the University of Maryland Law School, but was denied admission because of his skin color. He attended Howard University Law School in Washington, D.C. instead, graduating in 1933. In Marshall's first major court case—and his first of many cases litigating civil rights for African Americans—he successfully sued the University of Maryland Law School to admit an African American student. Marshall began working with the Baltimore division of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1934, and in 1936, he became the NAACP's assistant chief legal counsel, focusing on cases that would eradicate Jim Crow segregation. After Marshall successfully challenged many state-sponsored discrimination practices, including school segregation in the landmark 1954 *Brown v Board of Education* decision, President John F. Kennedy appointed him to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in 1961. As a circuit court judge, Marshall wrote more than 150 decisions supporting civil rights for immigrants and minorities. In 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson nominated him to the Supreme Court. Marshall was the first African American justice to sit on the Supreme Court, and his dedication to civil rights and ending racial discrimination earned him the nickname "Mr. Civil Rights." Marshall served as an associate justice on the Supreme Court until his retirement in 1991.

**LEGACY:** Thurgood Marshall was a leader in the 20th century civil rights movement. Throughout his legal career, Marshall fought to overthrow racial discrimination and to guarantee civil rights for all Americans, regardless of skin color or background.



*U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. (LOC, 1976)*



*NAACP leaders in 1956 holding a poster against racism in Mississippi, from left: Henry L. Moon, Roy Wilkins, Herbert Hill, and Thurgood Marshall. (Al. Ravenna/LOC)*



*U.S. Supreme Court in 1976, Marshall far right. (LOC)*

- First African American Supreme Court Justice
- First African American to serve as the United States Solicitor General



## AFRICAN AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS WALKING TOUR

*Facing the Kennedy Memorial, turn right onto Sheridan Dr. Marshall's grave is behind two headstones to the left of the Weeks memorial in Section 5 on your left.*



# MAJOR GENERAL MARCELITE JORDAN HARRIS



## WALKING TOUR STOP 6 Section 30, Grave 621-RH

**BIRTH:** January 16, 1943, Houston, TX

**DEATH:** September 7, 2018, Miami, FL

**EARLY & PERSONAL LIFE:** Marcelite Jordan Harris was born in Houston, Texas to Cecil O'Neal Jordan and Marcelite Terrill Jordan. She graduated from Spelman College in 1964 with a bachelor's degree in speech and drama. She married and had two children with Lt. Col. Maurice Harris of the United States Air Force. They are buried together.

**CAREER:** In 1965, Harris was commissioned as an Air Force officer through the Officer Training School at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. For the next ten years, she served in a variety of positions in the Air Force—from assistant director for administration for the 60th Military Airlift Wing in California to maintenance analysis officer in West Germany. In 1975, President Gerald Ford named Harris a White House social aide and personnel staff officer; she continued to serve in this position during the Carter administration. In 1978, Harris was named a commanding officer at the U.S. Air Force Academy — one of the first women to hold this position. In 1991, she became the first African American female brigadier general in the Air Force. Three years later, she attained the rank of major general and became the first female director of maintenance and deputy chief of staff for logistics at the U.S. Air Force headquarters in Washington, D.C. Harris retired in 1997 as the highest-ranking female officer in the Air Force and the highest-ranking African American woman in the Department of Defense. In 2010, President Barack Obama appointed her to the Board of Visitors of the Air Force Academy (the academy's governing body).

**LEGACY:** Throughout her career, Harris received numerous accolades that recognized her as a role model for women in the military. These awards included 1990 Woman of the Year, from the National Organization of Tuskegee Airmen, and the "Women of Distinction" Award, from the Thomas W. Anthony chapter of the Air Force Association. Harris inspired young African American women to combat sexism and racism in order to achieve their individual goals.



Marcelite Jordan Harris. (U.S. Air Force)



Brig. Gen Harris celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tinker Air Force Base on May 16, 1992. Harris was the first woman to command the Tinker Air Force Base. (U.S. Air Force)

- First African American female general officer in the United States Air Force
- First female aircraft maintenance officer
- One of the first two female commanding officers at the U.S. Air Force Academy
- First female deputy commander for maintenance



### AFRICAN AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS WALKING TOUR

On Custis Walk, facing the bench opposite Robert Todd Lincoln's tomb, Harris' grave is in the row to the right of the bench, approximately 18 headstones from the path and 9 headstones from the end of the section.



# LIEUTENANT JAMES REESE EUROPE



## WALKING TOUR STOP 7 Section 2, Grave 3576

**BIRTH:** February 22, 1881, Mobile, AL

**DEATH:** May 10, 1919, Boston, MA

**EARLY & PERSONAL LIFE:** James Reese Europe was born in Mobile, Alabama to Henry and Lorraine Europe. When Europe was ten, his family moved to Washington, DC, where he began his musical career, studying the violin with the assistant director of the Marine Corps Band. In 1904, Europe moved to New York City to pursue a career in music.

**CAREER:** Europe started as a pianist in New York and soon joined the Black theater music scene. In 1910, he founded the Clef Club, an all-Black orchestra and chorus that also served as a union and fraternal organization for Black musicians. The Clef Club gained acclaim and respectability after its orchestra performed at Carnegie Hall in 1912. The orchestra, which included instruments not typically used by orchestras (such as banjos and mandolins), played music exclusively by Black composers. After leaving the Clef Club in 1913, Europe founded the Tempo Club, another all-Black musical group that played at the dances captivating New York City social life. With the popular dancing duo Vernon and Irene Castle, Europe invented the turkey-trot and the fox-trot.

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, Europe was commissioned as a lieutenant in the all-Black 369th U.S. Infantry, popularly known as the Harlem Hellfighters. Europe was ordered to form a military band of the best musicians he could muster. Europe's band, known as the Hellfighters Band, performed to great acclaim for troops and citizens across continental Europe. Europe credited the band's success to the fact that the musicians played only their own original music, which was influenced by African American musical traditions.

When Europe and his band returned to the United States in 1919, he was received as a hero and the band embarked on a national tour. Tragically, however, before the second show on the tour, the band's drummer lashed out in anger over a disagreement and accidentally killed Europe. The city of New York honored him with its first official public funeral for an African American.

**LEGACY:** Europe elevated African American music as an art form and brought it into mainstream American society. His music, inspired by African American tradition and musical innovation, was a blend of ragtime and early jazz and influenced the evolution of jazz in the 1920s and 1930s.



Social Media  
Connection #1

*Lt. Europe and Hellfighters Band  
return home from war. (NARA, 1919)*



*Hellfighters Band led by Lt. Europe playing jazz for a wounded  
American soldier outside a Paris hospital in 1918. (LOC)*

### Europe's Music

These links are just a sample of recordings of Europe's music. More can be found on the Library of Congress website.

- <https://www.loc.gov/item/jukebox-134538/>
- <https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.100010756/>
- <https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.100010704/>

- Leader of the first all African American orchestra to play at Carnegie Hall



### AFRICAN AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS WALKING TOUR

*About halfway between Crook  
Walk and Roosevelt Dr. on  
McClellan Dr., Europe's headstone  
is three rows back in Section 2.*



# BREVET LIEUTENANT COLONEL ALEXANDER THOMAS AUGUSTA



## WALKING TOUR STOP 8

Section 1, Grave 124-C

**BIRTH:** March 8, 1825, Norfolk, VA

**DEATH:** December 21, 1890, Washington, D.C.

**EARLY & PERSONAL LIFE:** Born a free man in Norfolk, Virginia in 1825, Alexander T. Augusta was determined to pursue a medical career. Although Virginia law forbid African Americans from learning to read, Augusta secretly learned to read and write from local pastor Daniel Payne while working as a barber. The University of Pennsylvania's medical school denied him admission for lacking the necessary qualifications, although Augusta believed that he was denied because of racial prejudice. Concerned that American medical schools would continue to deny him admission, Augusta moved to Toronto, Canada in the 1850s and enrolled at Trinity Medical College. He graduated with a medical degree six years later and established his own medical practice in Canada. He married Mary Burgoin in 1847.

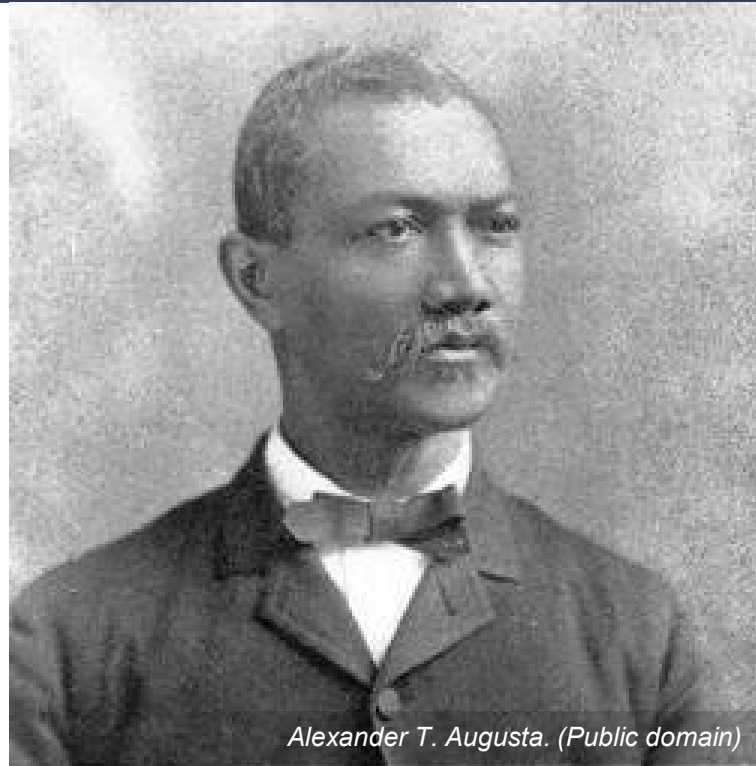
**CAREER:** In 1863, Augusta wrote to President Abraham Lincoln asking to serve as a doctor for the United States Colored Troops (USCT). He was commissioned as a major – the first African American to be commissioned as a medical officer in the U.S. Army. Augusta was assigned as the regimental surgeon for the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry of the USCT, however, white surgeons who refused to serve under his command wrote to President Lincoln to demand his termination. The Army decided to transfer him out of the regiment and appointed him as the surgeon-in-charge at the Contraband Hospital in Washington, D.C., making him the first African American hospital administrator in U.S. history. (At the time, enslaved people who escaped the Confederacy were referred to as “contraband of war”; the Contraband Hospital was for former slaves and free African Americans.)

In February 1864, while Augusta was wearing his uniform, a streetcar conductor ordered him to disembark because he refused to stand in the uncovered portion of the car. Augusta later petitioned government officials to address streetcar segregation. In March 1865, Augusta was promoted to brevet lieutenant colonel (similar to a warrant officer position today), making him the highest ranking African American officer of the Civil War.

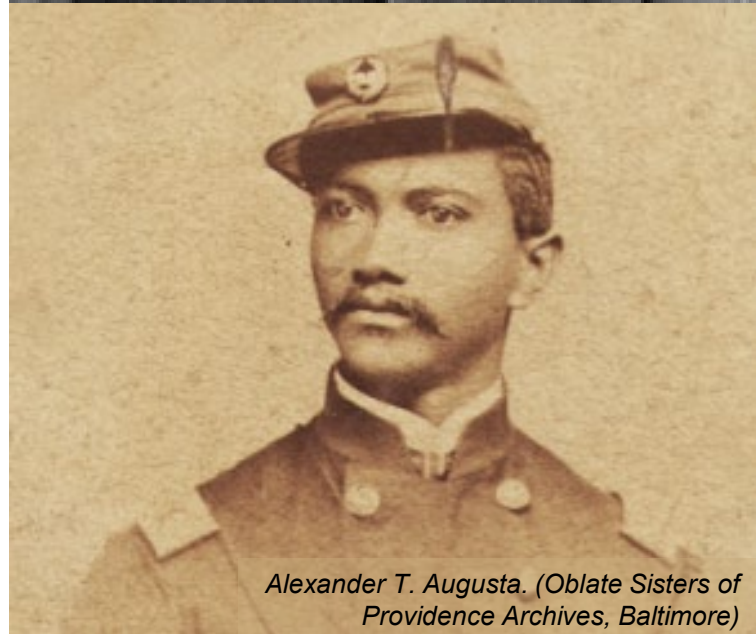
After the war, Augusta continued to practice medicine. He joined the medical faculty at Howard University, becoming the first African American to teach medicine at a U.S. university. Howard also awarded Augusta two honorary degrees, including the first honorary degree awarded to an African American by an American university.

For many years, Augusta attempted unsuccessfully to join the all-white Medical Society of the District of Columbia. In 1870, he and other Black medical professionals founded the National Medical Society, which was open to physicians of all races, and in 1884, Augusta helped found the Medico-Chirurgical Society, the first Black medical organization in the United States.

**LEGACY:** Throughout his life, Augusta protested and fought racial discrimination. Despite encountering prejudice at every step of his career, Augusta worked both within and outside of white institutions to push back against racist practices. He helped establish African Americans in the medical profession and encouraged young African Americans to pursue careers within the medical field.



Alexander T. Augusta. (Public domain)



Alexander T. Augusta. (Oblate Sisters of Providence Archives, Baltimore)

- First African American commissioned medical officer in the United States Army
- First African American hospital administrator
- First African American professor of medicine in the United States



### AFRICAN AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS WALKING TOUR

After passing the James Tanner Amphitheater, follow the walking path adjacent to Meigs Dr. to the end of the path. August's grave is in the 4th row, 8th from the wall.

# SERGEANT JOE LOUIS (BARROW)



## WALKING TOUR STOP 9 Section 7A, Grave 177

**BIRTH:** May 13, 1914, Lexington, AL

**DEATH:** April 12, 1981, Las Vegas, NV

**EARLY & PERSONAL LIFE:** Joe Louis Barrow was born in Lexington, Alabama in 1914. His parents, Monroe and Lilly Reese Barrow, were sharecroppers, and his grandparents had been enslaved. Like many African American families in the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century South, Barrow's family migrated north in search of greater freedom and economic opportunities, moving to Detroit in 1926.

**CAREER:** Barrow started boxing after his family moved to Detroit. He made his boxing debut in 1932 at the age of 17, at which point he dropped the name "Barrow" and went by Joe Louis. Just two years later, Louis won the U.S. Amateur Athletic Union crown and turned professional.

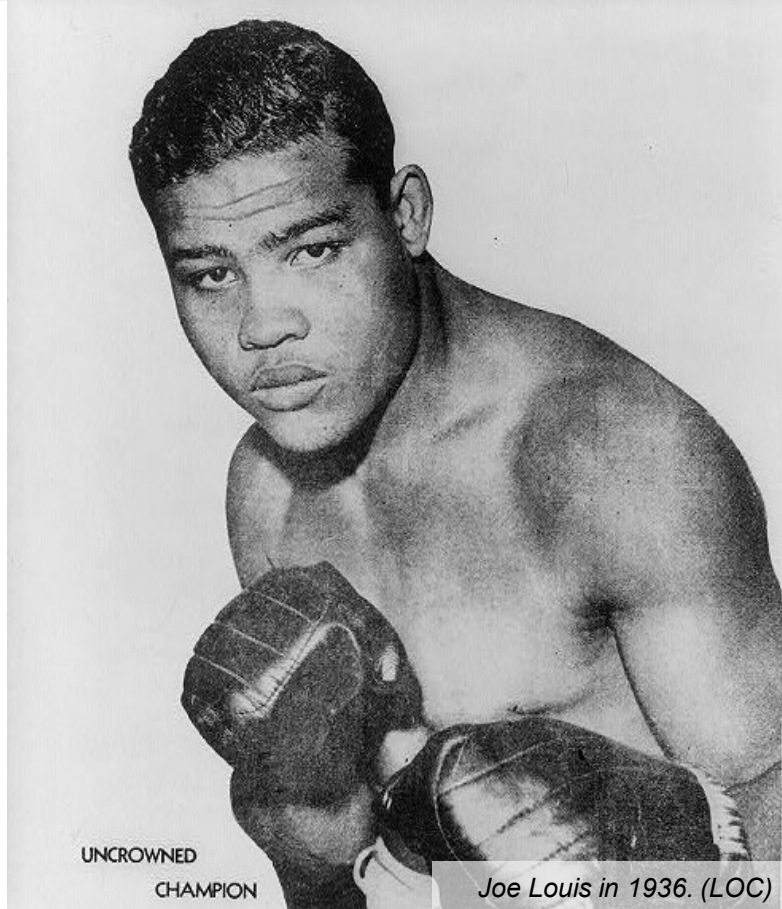
Joe Louis suffered only one defeat in his first 69 fights. That defeat occurred on June 19, 1936, at the hands of Germany's Max Schmeling, the reigning heavyweight world champion. One year later, Louis became the world champion after defeating James J. Braddock on June 22, 1937. He held the title of heavyweight champion of the world for 12 straight years.

In 1938, in one of the most famous boxing matches of all time, Louis faced Schmeling for a rematch. This time, Louis was the champion and Schmeling was the challenger. The match, which drew a crowd of 70,000 and earned the title "the fight of the century," quickly became a symbol of the political and soon-to-be military conflict between the United States and Nazi Germany. Louis, knowing he needed to win this match, defeated Schmeling in the first round and immediately became a national hero.

When the United States went to war against Germany in 1941, Louis enlisted in the Army. During the war, Louis fought 96 exhibition matches before more than two million troops. He also donated more than \$100,000 to Navy and Army relief efforts. When he left the Army, he had reached the rank of sergeant.

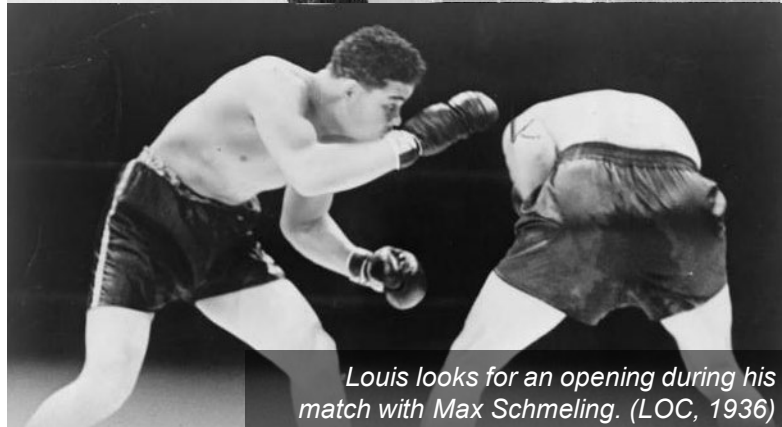
Louis retired in 1949 as the undefeated heavyweight champion, but financial troubles led to his return to the ring a year later. Louis challenged the reigning heavyweight champion Ezzard Charles, who beat him in the fifteenth round. He next challenged future champion Rocky Marciano, but was knocked out in the eighth round. Joe Louis never boxed again.

**LEGACY:** Joe Louis held the title "Heavyweight Champion of the World" longer and defended it more times than any other boxer in history. He was known as the "Brown Bomber" and ended his 17-year career with 68 wins, 54 knockouts and only three losses.



UNCROWNED  
CHAMPION

Joe Louis in 1936. (LOC)



Louis looks for an opening during his match with Max Schmeling. (LOC, 1936)



Sgt. Joe Louis addressing troops in 1943. (NARA)

- First African American to earn the Associated Press's Athlete of the Year award
- First boxer to appear on a U.S. postage stamp



## AFRICAN AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS WALKING TOUR

Louis's grave is in the eighth row on the far right.





# GENERAL ROSCOE ROBINSON JR.



## WALKING TOUR STOP 10 Section 7A, Grave 18

**BIRTH:** October 11, 1928, St. Louis, MS

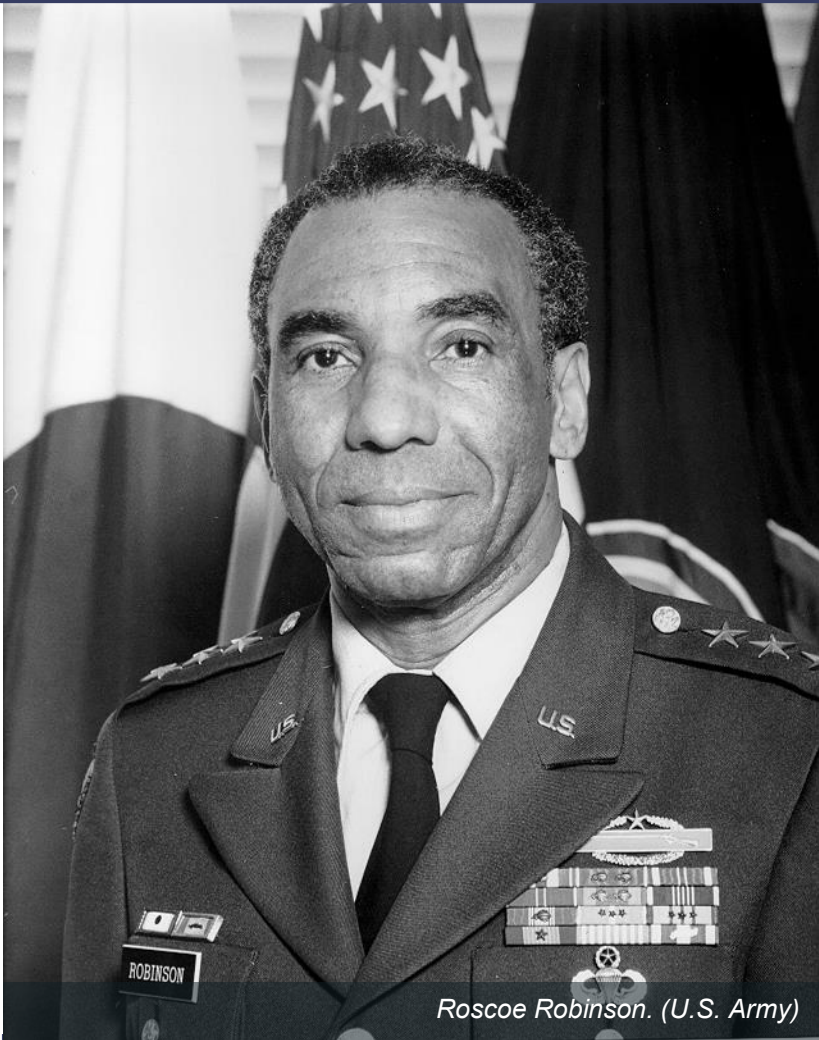
**DEATH:** July 22, 1993, Washington, D.C.

**EARLY & PERSONAL LIFE:** Roscoe Robinson, Jr. was born in St. Louis, Missouri in 1928. Following his graduation from West Point, he married Mildred E. Sims and together they had two children.

**CAREER:** Robinson graduated from the United States Military Academy (West Point) in 1951 with a degree in military engineering. He later attended the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the National War College. In 1964, he received a graduate degree in international affairs from the University of Pittsburgh. During the Korean War, Robinson earned a Bronze Star for outstanding valor in the battle for Pork Chop Hill (1952). After a year in Korea, he returned to the U.S. and worked as an instructor in the Airborne Department of the U.S. Army Infantry School. Robinson also served in the Vietnam War, earning a Silver Star in 1967.

After his service in Vietnam, Robinson held multiple commands, including the U.S. Army Garrison in Okinawa, the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg and the U.S. Army Japan IX Corps. When assigned as the U.S. representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Military Committee in 1982, Robinson was promoted to four-star general — the first African American to attain this rank in the U.S. Army and the second in the military (after Daniel “Chappie” James in the U.S. Air Force). He served in this position until his retirement in October 1985.

**LEGACY:** As the first African American four-star general in the Army, Robinson became a role model for generations of cadets.



*Roscoe Robinson. (U.S. Army)*

- First African American to command the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division
- First African American to obtain the rank of four-star general in the United States Army



### AFRICAN AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS WALKING TOUR

*Robinson's grave is the furthest grave from the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the second row.*

# COLONEL CHARLES YOUNG



## WALKING TOUR STOP 11 Section 3, Grave 1730-B

**BIRTH:** March 12, 1864, Mays Lick, KY

**DEATH:** January 8, 1922, Lagos, Nigeria

**EARLY & PERSONAL LIFE:** Charles Young was born into slavery in 1864 in Mays Lick, Kentucky. His father, Gabriel Young, escaped slavery and joined the 5th Regiment, U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery in February 1865. Shortly after his father's discharge in 1866, Young and his parents moved across the river to Ripley, Ohio. Young developed a deep admiration for learning and graduated from an integrated high school with academic honors. In 1884, Young entered the United States Military Academy at West Point, graduating in 1889 as West Point's third African American graduate.

**CAREER:** Young began his career as a member of the 9th Cavalry, one of the all-Black Army regiments that gained the nickname "Buffalo Soldiers" during their time serving in the American West. In 1894, Young was assigned to teach military tactics at Wilberforce University, a historically Black university in Ohio. When the Spanish-American War began in 1898, Young was temporarily promoted to major of the 9th Battalion Ohio Volunteers, an all-Black unit. During the Philippine-American War (1899-1902), Young served in the Philippines, and commanders praised him for his courage and leadership.

In 1903, Young became the first African American superintendent of a national park, overseeing what was then Sequoia and General Grant (now Kings Canyon) National Parks. In 1904, he became the first U.S. military attaché to Haiti and the Dominican Republic; he was the only African American military officer to serve in a diplomatic post during Theodore Roosevelt's presidency. Young continued to serve in various Army posts and was promoted to major in 1912.

In July 1917, Young was medically retired and promoted to colonel, the first African American to achieve that rank in the U.S. Army. Young was still eager to serve, however, and to prove his fitness he rode over 500 miles on horseback from Ohio to Washington, D.C. In 1918, the Army reinstated Young as a full colonel and assigned him to train African American soldiers in Illinois.

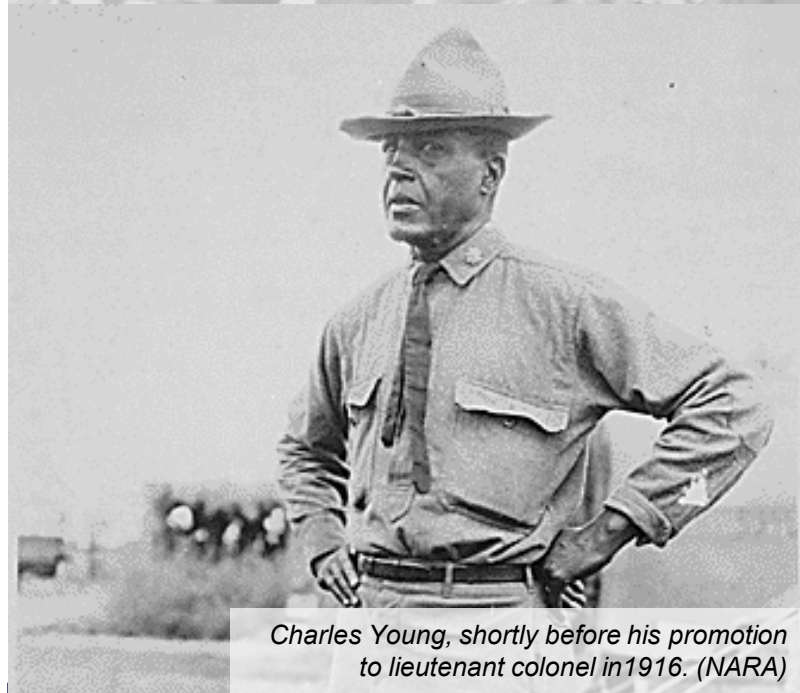
In 1922, while serving as a military attaché to Liberia, Young contracted an infection and died.

When his body was returned to the United States, he received a hero's welcome and became the fourth soldier honored with a funeral in Arlington National Cemetery's newly constructed Memorial Amphitheater.

**LEGACY:** Young persevered during a time of racism and segregation to cultivate an illustrious career within the U.S. Army. He inspired young Army officers to pursue further training – including Benjamin O. Davis Sr. who became the first African American general in the Army.



Major Charles Young in 1903. (LOC)



Charles Young, shortly before his promotion to lieutenant colonel in 1916. (NARA)

- First African American superintendent in the National Park Service
- First African American to obtain the rank of colonel in the United States Army



### AFRICAN AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS WALKING TOUR

Heading down Porter toward Roosevelt, turn right at the start of Section MD and walk up the hill. Young's headstone is about 3 rows back under a tree.





# MATTHEW HENSON



## WALKING TOUR STOP 12

Section 8, Grave S-15-1

**BIRTH:** August 8, 1866, Charles County, MD

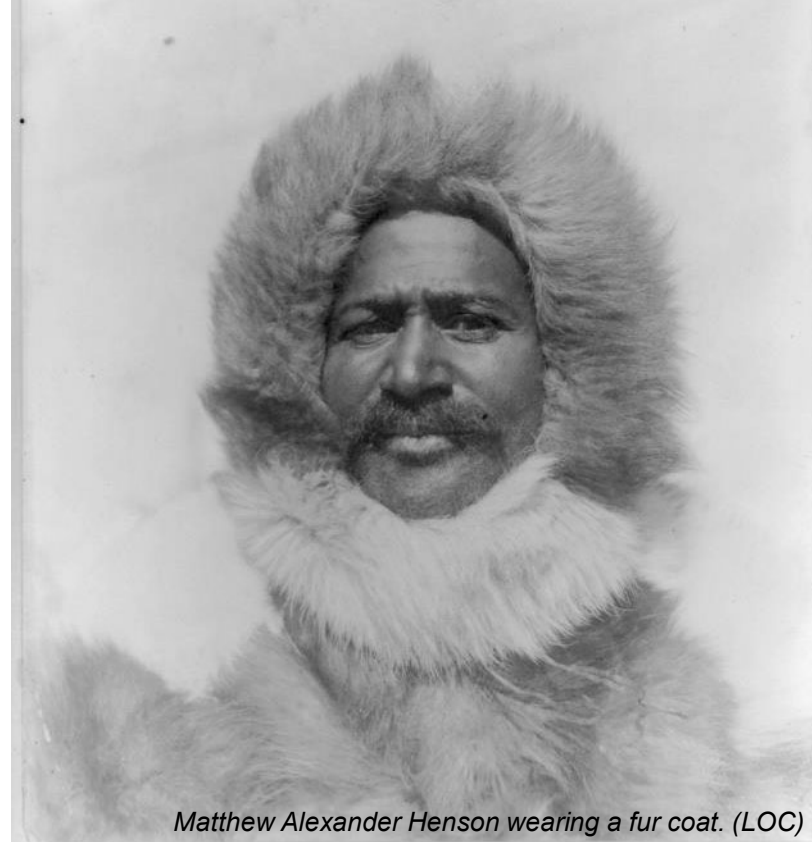
**DEATH:** March 9, 1955, New York, NY

**EARLY & PERSONAL LIFE:** Matthew Alexander Henson was born in 1866 in Charles County, Maryland to sharecropper parents who were free people of color before the Civil War. Orphaned as a child, at age 12 Henson ran away from his widowed step-mother and became a cabin boy on a sailing ship. As a cabin boy, Henson learned to read, write and navigate.

**CAREER:** In 1887, while working as a salesclerk in Washington, D.C., Henson met Robert Peary, a U.S. Navy engineer and explorer, who hired him as a personal valet for his expedition to Nicaragua the following year. Peary, impressed with Henson after that expedition, hired him as a navigator and craftsman for seven subsequent expeditions to the Arctic between 1891 and 1909.

On their seventh expedition to the Arctic in 1909, Henson, Peary and four Inuit assistants successfully reached the North Pole. Based on Henson's accounts of that trek, he — not Peary — was the first person to reach the geographic North Pole. In 1989, the National Geographic Society reexamined Peary and Henson's records and determined that due to limitations of the navigational instruments at the time, the team may not have actually reached the Pole.

**LEGACY:** Despite being partners in their trek to the Pole, Peary received almost all of the acclaim for the expedition. Congress refused three times to grant Henson a pension, and the prestigious Explorer's Club excluded him for many years (although he eventually became the first African American life member). Unlike Peary, Henson was not considered for burial at Arlington National Cemetery at the time of his death, and he was instead buried at Woodlawn Cemetery in New York City. In 1987, 32 years after Henson's death, President Ronald Reagan granted permission for him to be re-interred at Arlington National Cemetery, in recognition of his integral role in reaching the North Pole. That same year, the National Geographic Society posthumously awarded Henson the Hubbard Medal, its highest honor.



Matthew Alexander Henson wearing a fur coat. (LOC)



(L-R) Donald Baxter MacMillan, George Borup, and Thomas Gushue, and Matthew Henson on the sledge that went to the North Pole. (LOC)

- May have been first human to reach the North Pole



### AFRICAN AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS WALKING TOUR

Henson's headstone is to the left of  
the U.S. Coast Guard Memorial.



Social Media  
Connection #2

# COLONEL RUTH A. LUCAS



## WALKING TOUR STOP 13 Section 64, Grave 6031

**BIRTH:** November 28, 1920, Stamford, CT

**DEATH:** March 23, 2013, Washington, D.C.

**EARLY & PERSONAL LIFE:** Ruth Alice Lucas was born on November 28, 1920 in Stamford, Connecticut to Walter and Amanda Lucas. She was interested in education from an early age and graduated in 1942 from what is now Tuskegee University, with a degree in education and a minor in sociology.

**CAREER:** During World War II, Lucas enlisted in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) shortly after her graduation and was one of the few Black women to attend what is now the Joint Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia. When the United States Air Force formed in 1947, Lucas transferred from the Army to the Air Force, where she stayed for the remainder of her military career.

While stationed in Tokyo, Japan as chief of the Air Force Awards Division from 1951 to 1954, Lucas, a teacher at heart, spent much of her free time teaching English to Japanese students. After her return to the United States, Lucas decided to pursue a graduate degree in educational psychology. Following her graduation from Columbia University in 1957, she was transferred to Washington, D.C. to develop programs to

increase the education levels, particularly literacy levels, of service personnel. In 1968, she became the first African American woman promoted to colonel in the U.S. Air Force. She also received the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, awarded for outstanding non-combat service.

Speaking to Ebony magazine in 1969 about her initiative to increase education levels, Lucas said, "Right now if I have any aim, it's just to reach these men, to interest them in education and to motivate them to continue on."<sup>1</sup> After her retirement from the military, Lucas continued promoting education as director of urban services at the Washington Technical Institute. In this position, she designed outreach programs to encourage high school students to pursue higher education. Lucas retired in 1994 as assistant to the dean of the University of the District of Columbia's College of Physical Science, Engineering, and Technology.

**LEGACY:** Lucas dedicated her military career and her life to education. The programs she implemented helped open opportunities for service members who had received little education and raised education levels in the military.



*Ruth A. Lucas at her colonel promotion ceremony in 1968. (U.S. Air Force)*

- First African American woman to obtain the rank of colonel in the United States Air Force
- One of the first African American women to attend Joint Forces Staff College

### AFRICAN AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS WALKING TOUR



*At the intersection of Bradley and Eisenhower, look over Section 60 where Lucas is buried. Section 60, like other sections in this area, is an active burial site, so please be mindful of funeral services and family or friends who are grieving loved ones nearby.*

<sup>1</sup>"Air Force's Education Expert," *Ebony Magazine*, Nov. 1969, 88-89.



# VICE ADMIRAL SAMUEL LEE GRAVELY JR.



## WALKING TOUR STOP 14 Section 66, Grave 7417

**BIRTH:** June 4, 1922, Richmond, VA

**DEATH:** October 22, 2004, Bethesda, MD

**EARLY & PERSONAL LIFE:** Samuel Lee Gravelly Jr., the oldest of five children, was born on June 4, 1922 in Richmond, Virginia. He attended Virginia Union University for three years but left before he graduated to join the U.S. Naval Reserves in 1942.

**CAREER:** In 1943 and 1944, Gravelly attended the Navy College Training Program at the University of California, Los Angeles and the Midshipmen's School at Columbia University, becoming one of the first African American officers in the U.S. Navy. He was assigned as the only Black officer to the USS PC-1264, a submarine chaser that was one of only two World War II naval ships with a predominantly Black crew. Prior to June 1, 1942, African Americans were barred from enlisting in the Navy as anything other than steward's assistants, also known as messmen. Both the PC-1264 and the other predominantly Black ship (the USS Mason) were used by the Navy to evaluate the ability of African American service members to perform regular naval duties.

After World War II, Gravelly was released from active duty service, though he remained in the Navy Reserve. He returned to Richmond, Virginia, where he married and finished his undergraduate degree, earning a bachelor's in history. In 1948, when President Harry S Truman issued an executive order to integrate the armed forces, Gravelly was recalled to active duty and assigned to be a Navy recruiter in Washington, D.C., as part of an effort to recruit more African Americans to the military. Gravelly remained in the Navy for the next 38 years, transferring from the Navy Reserve to the regular Navy in 1955. During his career, Gravelly achieved numerous "firsts" – he was the first African American officer to command a U.S. Navy warship (USS Theodore E. Chandler), the first African American to rise to the rank of vice admiral and the first African American to command a U.S. fleet (Commander, 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet).

**LEGACY:** Samuel Lee Gravelly played key roles in integrating the U.S. Navy, first as a recruitment officer and later as an effective and respected naval commander. Gravelly held no illusions about race relations in the military, but that did not stop him from dedicating his career to the Navy. As he once said in an interview, "The military did a lot for me, and hopefully, I did some things for it."



*Samuel Lee Gravelly Jr. in 1972. (U.S. Navy Archives)*

- First African American officer to command a U.S. Navy warship
- First African American admiral in the United States Navy
- First African American to command a U.S. fleet



### AFRICAN AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS WALKING TOUR

*At the intersection of Bradley and Eisenhower, look over Section 66 where Gravelly is buried. Section 66, like other sections in this area, is an active burial site, so please be mindful of funeral services and family or friends who are grieving loved ones nearby.*



# THE ROLE OF THE FIRST



*Gravely Jr. being congratulated after his promotion to flag rank in 1971. (U.S. Navy Archives)*

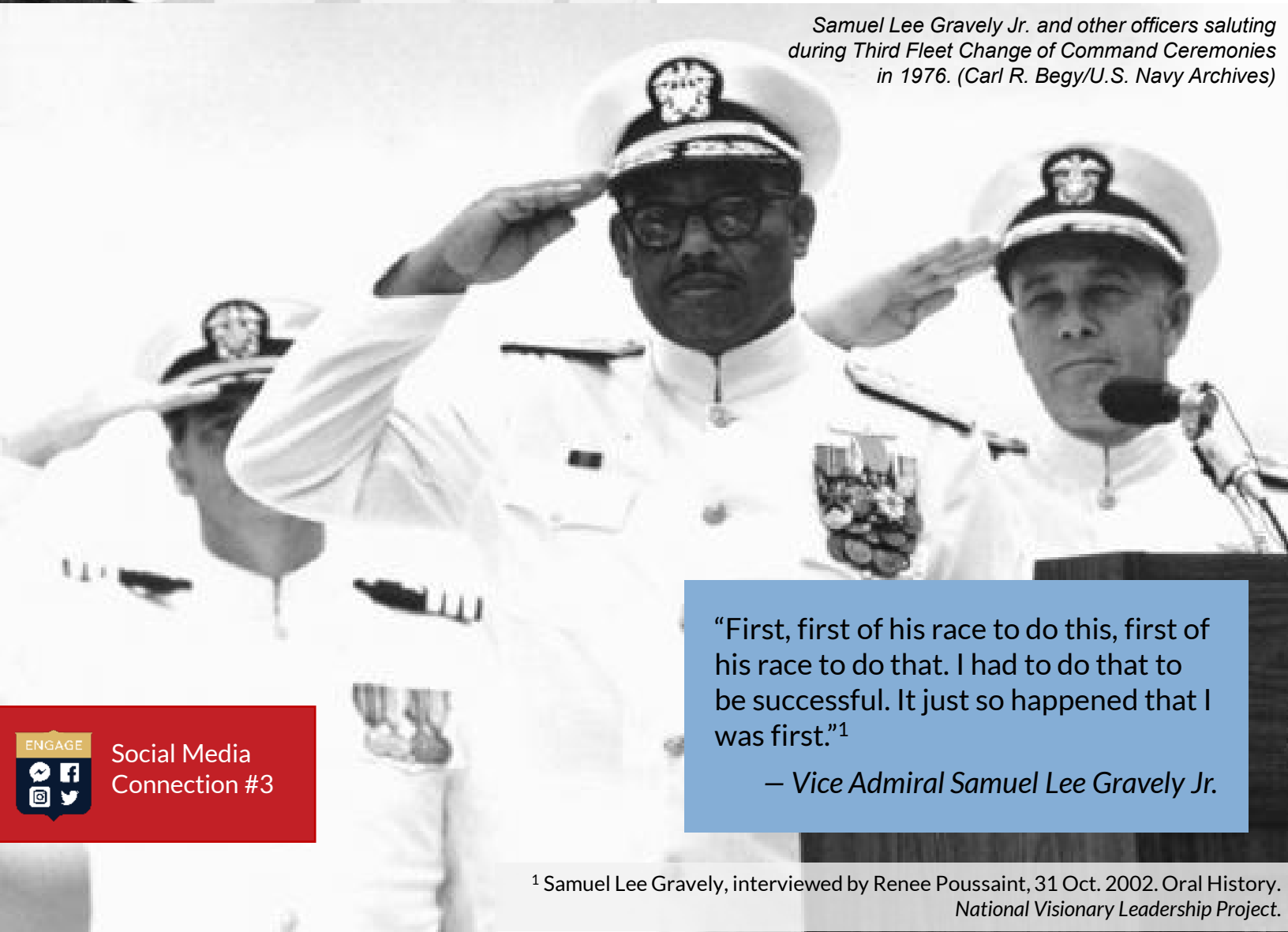


Samuel Lee Gravely Jr. expressed discomfort with the attention and acclaim he received for being the "first African American" to achieve a particular rank or to command a particular ship. He struggled to reconcile the role of race in his public recognition as "the first" and as a qualifier to his achievements, wanting to be known more for what he did than for the color of his skin.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Consider: How do you want to be known? How are your goals connected to your identity? How are they separate from your identity?
- Is it right for us to focus on the "first" aspect of Gravely's accomplishments when it made him uncomfortable?
- How can we reconcile his discomfort with recognizing the important strides he made in the U.S. military and for future African American service members?
- How can we remember Gravely and the other people on this walking tour as more than African American "firsts"?

*Samuel Lee Gravely Jr. and other officers saluting during Third Fleet Change of Command Ceremonies in 1976. (Carl R. Begy/U.S. Navy Archives)*



"First, first of his race to do this, first of his race to do that. I had to do that to be successful. It just so happened that I was first."<sup>1</sup>

— Vice Admiral Samuel Lee Gravely Jr.

ENGAGE



Social Media  
Connection #3

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Lee Gravely, interviewed by Renee Poussaint, 31 Oct. 2002. Oral History. National Visionary Leadership Project.



# GENERAL HAZEL JOHNSON-BROWN



## WALKING TOUR STOP 15 Section 60, Grave 9836

**BIRTH:** October 10, 1927, West Chester, PA

**DEATH:** August 5, 2011, Wilmington, DE

**EARLY & PERSONAL LIFE:** Hazel Johnson-Brown and her six siblings grew up on their parents' farm in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Her parents instilled in her a passion for education, which inspired her to pursue a career in nursing. During her youth, Johnson cared for her younger siblings, and by the age of twelve she was also working as a maid in another family's home.

**CAREER:** Johnson-Brown initially applied to the Chester School of Nursing but was denied admission because of her race. She instead enrolled at the Harlem Hospital School of Nursing, graduating in 1950. She worked in the emergency ward at Harlem Hospital for three years before joining the medical cardiovascular ward at the Philadelphia Veterans Administration. After only three months there, she was promoted to head nurse. During this period, she decided to pursue a bachelor's degree in nursing at Villanova University.

Johnson-Brown joined the Army Nurse Corps in 1955 and was deployed to Walter Reed Army Medical Center to work on the female medical-surgical ward. In 1966, as the United States escalated its involvement in the Vietnam War, the Army Nurse Corps assigned Johnson to evaluate a transportable hospital intended for use in Vietnam. The following year, after overcoming a lung infection, she assumed control of central material services at Valley Forge General Hospital. In 1976, Johnson-Brown served as director and assistant dean of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Nursing while working towards a Ph.D. at Catholic University. In 1979, the Army promoted Johnson-Brown to the position of chief of the Army Nurse Corps, with the accompanying rank of brigadier general—the first African American woman in U.S. military history to attain a general officer rank. Johnson-Brown retired from the Army in 1983.

**LEGACY:** Throughout her career, Johnson promoted the importance of academic scholarships for Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) students. She also worked to implement the first standards of practice within the Army Nurse Corps, and she laid the foundation for the expansion of the nursing profession within the military.

### In Her Own Words

In this video series for the Visionary Project, Johnson-Brown described her childhood as well as experiences in the Army.

<http://www.visionaryproject.org/johnsonbrownhazel/#2>



*Hazel Johnson-Brown as a brigadier general. (U.S. Army, ca. 1979)*



*Johnson-Brown's promotion to colonel ceremony. (U.S. Army)*

- First African American woman to obtain the rank of general in the United States military
- First African American appointed chief of the Army Nurse Corps
- First Chief of the Army Nurse Corps with a Ph.D.



### AFRICAN AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS WALKING TOUR

*At the intersection of Bradley and Marshall look over Section 64 where Johnson-Brown is buried. Section 64, like other sections in this area, is an active burial site, so please be mindful of funeral services and family or friends who are grieving loved ones nearby.*



Social Media  
Connection #4



# SOCIAL MEDIA CONNECTIONS



We love hearing about your visit! Share your pictures, questions, and favorite parts of the tour on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Tag Arlington National Cemetery using @ArlingtonNatl and hashtags #ANCEducation and #BlackHistoryANC.

## #1: JAMES REESE EUROPE

Music dominated Europe's life: it was his career and defined his military service. You can listen to recordings of his music through the Library of Congress. Throughout U.S. history, music has also been an important part of the military. From drums, fifes, and trumpets to military bands, music has been used to entertain, motivate, and signal in battle. How has music been important in your own life? If you were serving, is there a particular song or type of music you'd want to hear? Share your answer and your reasoning with @ArlingtonNatl using the hashtags #ANCEducation and #ANCeduAfAmExp.

## #2 MATTHEW HENSON

While the expedition to the North Pole was an endeavor shared by Henson, Robert Peary, and four Inuits, Peary received most of the recognition. Are there people in your community that have participated in a group endeavor only to find that their contributions have been unacknowledged or forgotten? How can you recognize those people and help others learn about their stories? Share your thoughts with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram by tagging Arlington National Cemetery using @ArlingtonNatl and the hashtags #ANCEducation and #ANCeduAfAmExp.

## #3 THE ROLE OF THE FIRST

Admiral Samuel Gravelly expressed a desire to be known more for his accomplishments than being the first of his race to achieve specific ranks or recognition. How would you want to be known and remember? What would you want others to recognize about you? Share your thoughts with @ArlingtonNatl using the hashtags #ANCEducation and #ANCeduAfAmExp.

## #4 HAZEL JOHNSON- BROWN

Did your understanding of the experience of African Americans in the military change after visiting these sites at ANC? How so? Share your thoughts with us by tagging Arlington National Cemetery using @ArlingtonNatl and the hashtags #ANCEducation and #ANCeduAfAmExp.



# AFRICAN AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS WALKING TOUR

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