



# West Point

"A SALUTE TO DISTINGUISHED  
AFRICAN-AMERICAN  
WEST POINT GRADUATES"



US LEGACY ART

## FRANK JOHNSON West Point Graduate and Historian

The United States Military Academy located at West Point, New York is one of the elite academic institutions in the United States. West Point was founded on March 16, 1802 with the stated purpose of producing professional military officers. In the years since its founding, West Point has produced, among its distinguished alumni, Presidents, prominent statesmen, and leaders in business and industry.



The first African-American Cadet (James Webster Smith) entered West Point in 1870, with the first graduate being Henry O. Flipper in 1877. African-American graduates of West Point have played an integral part in shaping the history of the United States since the last half of the 19th century.

A sampling of distinguished African-American graduates include: Henry O. Flipper, Benjamin O. Davis Jr. Roscoe Robinson, Fred Gordon, and recent graduates like Vincent Brooks and Lloyd Austin. Each graduate of West Point has a unique and interesting story of their journey leading to graduation and a much sought after commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Army.

In this pamphlet we have selected a number of noteworthy West Point graduates who by the bent of their character, personality, intelligentsia and perseverance entered and four years later graduated from West Point. Each has an inspiring story of achievement in overcoming substantial physical and social obstacles.

It might be added that the process of receiving an appointment to West Point is very select and drawn out, designed to weed out those who are not up to the academic and physical standard. Those finally accepted represent the "cream of the young American intelligencia."

For the first African-American cadets at West Point, mere survival was the first challenge. Henry Flipper, Charles Young, Benjamin Davis all endured unimaginable isolation during their terms of residence; they persevered and graduated.

Roscoe Robinson displayed intelligence and determination during his stay which he credited with helping him through the more trying moments.

Lloyd Austin and Vincent Brooks both excelled not only in the classroom but exhibited those leadership traits that enabled them to climb the Army career ladder leading to their current ranks of 4-star general.

The one thing each of these individuals had in common was their determination to graduate from West Point. The training each received was paramount in instilling in each the desire to reach out and capture the American dream.

We hope that reading the stories of the officers highlighted here will challenge African-American youth to pursue a West Point education, a career in the United States Army, and moreover, a lifetime of service to the United States.



## JOHN NELSON Artist

A Washington, D.C. native, John Nelson, is a completely self-taught Artist and Entrepreneur. His Artistic ability is incorporated in his entrepreneurial endeavors which has made each of his conceptual business developments a work of art. Mr. Nelson has over 30 years of history creating businesses that are unique and vastly different from his competitors.

His first business was John Nelson Galleries. This business was created initially in 1982 as a traveling art exhibit displaying and selling master pencil drawings of John Nelson. The marketing efforts of Mr. Nelson and Mrs. Nelson led to his international acclaim and his own stand alone Gallery which displayed his works along with other internationally acclaimed artists.

In 1992 he designed and created the concept for New Horizon Child Development Center which was an immediate hit. The business, in which he is the co-founder along with Mrs. Nelson grew from 70 to 500 enrollees in a period of 3 years.

In 1995 another business called Kiddie Kuts Barber and Beauty Salon. This conceptual salon was designed exclusively by Mr. Nelson. The theme for this salon was built around providing quality hair care services for children and their parents in a child friendly environment. This concept received rave reviews in major news media in the Washington, DC area, including The Washington Post and The Washington Times.

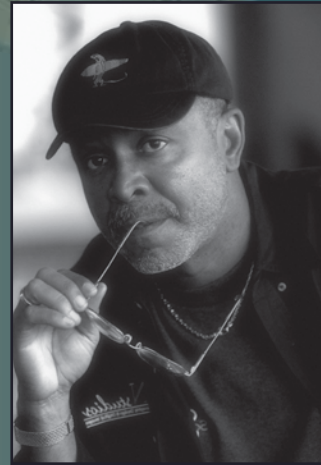
His latest artistic business endeavor is The Palms Resort, which was acquired in 2007. As co-owner Mr. Nelson has used his artistic and business talents to conceptualize and develop this amazing resort hotel in Negril, Jamaica. Drawing on more than 40 years of artistic experience and a gifted talent for creative expression and composition, the resort was designed to epitomize artistic innovation and deliver an unmatched retreat for the soul. More information about the hotel can be found at: [www.thepalmsnegril.com](http://www.thepalmsnegril.com).

His talents in fine arts, photography, graphic design and marketing, have landed him many projects with prestigious clients.

As a fine artist, he was selected from thousands of candidates for a coveted White House showing, which was critically acclaimed. This was followed by a McDonald's Corporation contract to provide art for a nationwide in-store promotion. His collectors rank among the notables like Bill Cosby, Cathy Hughes (WKYS), Eddie Murphy, Miles Davis and Dizzie Gillespie just to name a few.

As photographer, he has earned the patronage of icons such as the Library of Congress, National Football League, Black Entertainment Television (BET), and many Government and Corporate Institutions.

John Nelson is poised to become one of America's most popular and prolific artists with many years of creative productions and accomplishments to come...in an already illustrious career.



### EXHIBITIONS

White House Executive Office  
Building Office of Management and Budget

Congressional Black Caucus

Howard University

George Mason University

George Washington University

Washington, D.C. Public Schools

The National Security Exchange Commission

The National Bar Association

The National Medical Association

NAACP National Convention

Walt Whitman Center for the Arts

MP Muller Showcase of Fine Art

National Black Arts Festival  
Atlanta, Georgia

The State House  
Annapolis, Maryland

New York Corporate Office of AT&T

Master Artist Touring Association

NBC Cultural Series

NBC Cultural Arts Series...  
Art Expo '90 Awards

Arts & Humanities Award Presented by the  
National Association for Equal Opportunity  
in Higher Education

Merit Award, Miami Arts Festival

**(LT) HENRY O. FLIPPER**

Henry Ossian Flipper was the first African-American graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, NY. He was born a slave on March 21, 1856 in Thomasville, Georgia, and died on May 3, 1940 in Atlanta, Georgia. He was the eldest of 5 brothers. During his lifetime he was accomplished as a soldier, civil engineer, author, newspaper editor, surveyor, cartographer and pioneer in the oil industry.

He was taught to read in 1864 by another slave, and then attended several American Missionary Association schools prior to being sponsored by Representative James C. Freeman in 1873 to attend West Point. After enduring 4 years of being "silenced" and shunned by his fellow cadets, LT Flipper graduated from West Point in 1877, ranking 50th out of a class of 76.

At the time of his graduation from West Point, he was the only African-American officer in the United States Army. Having joined a segregated military, assignments for a black officer were extremely limited, and he was assigned to the all-African-American 10th Cavalry Regiment (one of the Buffalo Soldier regiments).

LT Flipper became known as a talented civil engineer and led his unit in several engineering projects, including the digging of a drainage ditch at Ft Sill, Oklahoma. This ditch was designed to protect soldiers from disease such as malaria. "Flipper's Ditch" is still in existence, a testament to the talent and skill of a young LT Flipper.

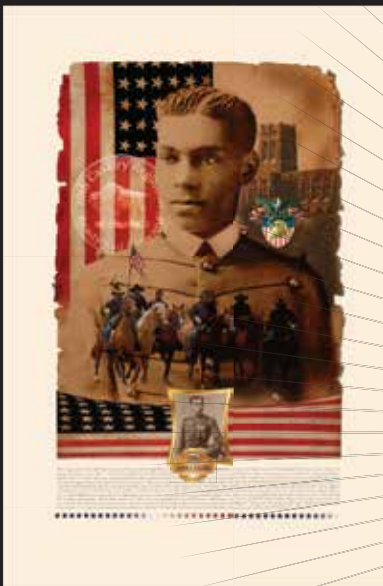
LT Flipper's military career was cut short when he was accused (later proven to be wrongfully so) of embezzling funds entrusted to his care. In December of 1882, a court-martial found LT Flipper innocent of the main charge against him of embezzlement but nonetheless found him guilty of a charge added belatedly. This charge "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman" was thought to be wrongfully motivated due to his commanding officer's opinion that his contact with a white female was inappropriate for a black officer.

After his dismissal from the army, Mr. Flipper became a highly successful civil engineer and an accomplished author, penning such seminal works as *The Colored Cadet at West Point*, and *The Western Memoirs of Henry O. Flipper*. He also became fluent in Spanish and wrote several books on legal subjects pertaining to Spanish and Mexican law.

President Bill Clinton, after reviewing the court-martial record of his 1881 "trial" granted a name-clearing

Presidential Pardon to LT Flipper in February, 1999, 118 years after his original dismissal from the United States Army.

He Died on May 3rd, 1940 and was originally buried in Atlanta, Georgia. Later, after receiving the Presidential pardon, his remains were "re-interred," this time with full military honors, beside his parents in Thomasville, Georgia.



**LT HENRY O. FLIPPER**



Born March 21, 1856; died May 3, 1940

First African-American West Point graduate (1877)

Was a soldier, civil engineer, author, newspaper editor, surveyor, cartographer, U.S. Justice Dept. agent, pioneer in the oil industry

Born a slave in Thomasville, GA

Taught to read in 1864 by another slave, then attended several American Missionary Association schools

Received appointment to attend West Point in 1873

Graduated West Point in 1877 after enduring 4 years of silence, physical and mental hazing

Graduated ranked 50th out of 76 in his class

Deployed to serve as the Army's first African-American officers with all-African-American 10th Cavalry Regiment (one of the Buffalo Soldier regiments)

Led unit in several engineering projects, including digging a drainage ditch at Ft. Sill, OK to protect soldiers from malaria. Flipper's Ditch is still in existence today.

Dismissed from the Army on trumped up charges of embezzlement in 1886

Later wrote 2 books, *The Colored Cadet at West Point* and *Negro Frontiersman: The Western Memoirs of Henry O. Flipper*

Became fluent in Spanish and familiar with Spanish and Mexican law; authored several books on legal subjects

Name cleared in February, 1999 by President Bill Clinton through a posthumous Presidential Pardon

After original burial in Atlanta, Flipper was given full military honors at his final burial beside his parents in Thomasville, GA



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*West Point was Henry O. Flipper, who was born a slave in Thomasville, Georgia and graduated from West Point in 1877.*



## GENERAL BENJAMIN OLIVER DAVIS, JR.

The life story of General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. is one of the most compelling tales of the triumph of the human spirit against overwhelming odds in modern American History. General Davis was born on December 18, 1912 in Washington, DC. General Davis was the only son of Army Brigadier General Benjamin O. Davis, Sr. and Elnora Davis. The elder General Davis was the first African-American general officer in the United States military.

At the age of 13, Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. went on a flight with a barnstorming pilot at what was then, Bolling Field in Washington, DC. It was here where his passion to become a military pilot took root. After attending the University of Chicago for two years, Benjamin O. Davis Jr. received an appointment to attend West Point by U.S. Representative Oscar De Priest, at the time the only African-American member of Congress. Cadet Davis entered West Point in the summer of 1932.

This is where his real test as a future leader began. In his years at West Point, he was totally shunned by his classmates. He never had a roommate, ate all of his meals alone, and never attended any of the social events sponsored by West Point for the Cadets during the entire 4 years he was a cadet at West Point. Interestingly, many of Cadet Davis' classmates, some of whom went on to have prominent military and public careers, never tried to befriend or help Cadet Davis.

This treatment did not dampen his desire to continue, but instead, made him more determined to graduate. His determination earned him the grudging respect of some of his classmates. The biographical note beneath his picture in the 1936 yearbook, "the Howitzer", reads:

"The courage, tenacity, and intelligence with which he conquered a problem incomparably more difficult than plebe year won for him the sincere admiration of his classmates, and his single-minded determination to continue in his chosen career cannot fail to inspire respect wherever fortune may lead him."

He graduated 35 out of 278 in his class, becoming only the 4th African-American to graduate from West Point and the first in the 20th century. Denied entry into the Air Corp, he was assigned to the 24th Infantry Regiment (a Buffalo Solider Unit).

Responding to public pressure to increase African-American participation in the military, the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt in early 1941 named Davis to the first training class of a black flying unit at Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama. General Davis' dream to fly was realized when he became the first African-American pilot to solo in an American military aircraft and earned his wings as a military pilot in March 1942.

In July 1942, LT COL Davis was named commander of the first all-African-American flying unit, the 99 Pursuit Squadron. It was not until 1943 that the unit was ordered

to Tunisia where they were equipped with the Curtiss P-40 Fighter. After some fits and starts the 99th first saw combat in June 1943. -

Colonel Davis personally led many of the combat missions assigned to the 99th flying P-40s, P-47s and P-51s. For his valor in leading these missions he was awarded the Silver Star and the Distinguish Flying Cross. In September 1943, Colonel Davis was called back to the United States to take command of the 332nd Fighter Group (the famed Red Tails), a larger all-African American unit preparing to go overseas.

After having proven his ability to lead, General Davis was successively assigned as commander of the 477th Bombardment Group, 51st Fight-Interceptor Wing (an integrated outfit flying the F-86 Super Sabre) and later command of the 13th Air Force.

Senior staff positions held by General Davis included: Director of Operations and Training at Far East Air Forces Headquarters, Tokyo Air Task Force 13; Chief of Staff 12th Air Force at Ramstein, Germany; Director of Manpower and Organization; Deputy Chief of Staff for Programs and requirements, Headquarters Air Force in Washington, DC. General Davis also served as Chief of Staff United Nations Command and U.S. Forces in Korea and Deputy Commander, U.S. Strike Command.

Upon retirement from active duty General Davis held the rank of a Lieutenant General (three stars) and was at that time the highest ranking African American officer on active duty in the United States Military. On December 9, 1998, General Davis was advanced in

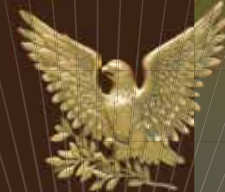
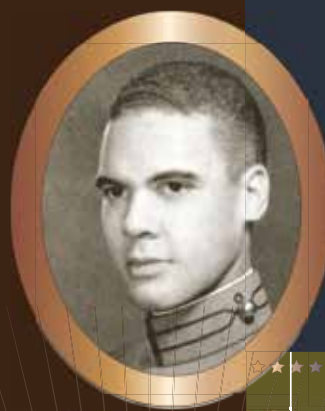
rank to General, U.S. Air Force (Retired), with President Bill Clinton pinning on his 4th star.

Myth has it that General Davis never returned to West Point after his graduation based on how he was treated as a cadet. This has been proven to be untrue. He returned in June, 1987 to see for himself the changes within the Academy since his graduation and to conduct research for his autobiography.

General Davis' wife Agatha died in early 2002 and he died a few months later at the age of 89. They had no children. He suffered from Alzheimer's disease, and died on July 4, 2002 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C. He was buried with full military honors on July 17, 2002 at Arlington National Cemetery. Symbolically, a Red Tail P-51 Mustang Fighter like the ones flown by the Tuskegee Airmen in Italy during World War II flew overhead during the services.



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## GEN BENJAMIN OLIVER DAVIS, JR.



Born December 18, 1912 in Washington, DC; died July 4, 2002

Father Benjamin O. Davis, Sr. was the first African-American general officer in the U.S. Army

At age 13, a flight with a barnstorming pilot inspired him to become a pilot

In 1932, after attending the University of Chicago, Davis was sponsored to attend West Point by the only African-American member of Congress

For 4 years, he was never spoken to outside of duty by his classmates; he always ate alone and he never had a roommate

He grew more determined based on these experiences and graduated ranked 35th out of 278 in his class; 4th African-American to graduate West Point in 1936

Denied entry into Army Air Corps because they did not accept African-Americans; assigned to 24th Infantry Regiment (Buffalo Soldiers) instead

In 1941, Roosevelt administration responded to pressure to increase the inclusion of African-Americans in the military and named Davis to the first training class of a black flying unit at Tuskegee Army Air Field

First African-American to solo in an Army Air Corps aircraft; earned wings in March, 1942

Commanded 99th Pursuit Squadron, 332nd Fighter Group (Red Tails), 477th Bombardment Group, 51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing, and Air Task-Force 13

Vice-Commander of the 13th Air Force, later assuming its command

Rose to rank of Lieutenant General (3-star); first African-American general officer in the Air Force; retired on February 1, 1970

Promoted to General (4-star) by President Bill Clinton well after his retirement on December 9, 1998

Never returned to West Point after graduation; buried in Arlington National Cemetery



*The founder and first commander of the legendary World War II Tuskegee Airmen, the first black fighter pilots, was Benjamin O. Davis, Jr who graduated West Point in 1936. At the time of his graduation, the only other African-American officer in the US Army was his father, Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Sr. (who would retire as Brigadier General).*

## GEN ROSCOE ROBINSON

In the summer of 1947, Roscoe Robinson entered the United States Military Academy at West Point, where he was one of a small number of African-Americans admitted. Robinson took away many things from West Point: a first-rate education (graduating with a bachelor's of science in engineering); leadership skills; a love for athletics; a deep respect for the Academy; and the lifelong camaraderie of his classmates. His graduating class also included four other African-Americans, which, at that time, was the largest number of African-American cadets ever to graduate from the Academy.

He graduated with the Class of 1951 and was commissioned in the Infantry. He went on to lead every size unit, from a Platoon to an Army. His first assignment was with the 11th Airborne Division as a Platoon Leader. He saw his first combat in 1952, as a Rifle Company Commander with the 7th Infantry Division in the Korean War, where he was awarded the Bronze Star. Robinson returned to the United States, became an instructor at Airborne School, then served a year in Africa as a military liaison with the United States mission in Liberia.

He attended the National War College and then received his master's degree in international relations from the University of Pittsburgh. In 1968, Robinson again commanded in combat. This time as a Battalion Commander for the 27th Cavalry in Vietnam, where he excelled in a time of significant and intense combat operations during the peak of war. He received two Silver Stars and a Distinguished Flying Cross for his leadership under fire. He then served in Vietnam on the staff of the 1st Cavalry Division.

After leaving Vietnam, he became the Executive Officer to Commander in Chief, Pacific Command (CINCPAC) in Hawaii and then went to Fort Bragg in North Carolina as a Brigade Commander with the 82nd Airborne Division. He returned to the Pacific as the Commander of United States Army Forces in Okinawa before deploying back to Fort Bragg. In 1976, he became Commanding General of his beloved and famed 82nd Airborne Division. His final command was back to the Pacific at Camp Zama, Japan, where he was the Commander of United States Army Japan and IX Corps. His final assignment in the Army was in Europe as a Four-Star General where he served as the United States Military Representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

His awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, two Silver Stars, three Legion of Merits, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star, and the two Combat Infantryman Badges.

It is impossible to appreciate all the challenges that Roscoe Robinson overcame as an African-American growing up in America under segregation. But he took it all in stride, always with a smile on his face and a positive attitude, and considered himself to be very fortunate. The United States Army is fortunate to have had a leader of such character who helped break down racial barriers and led soldiers of all races, color, and religions. In peacetime and under fire in combat, he proved he was a leader worthy of following.

In 1975, as a Brigadier General, General Robinson served as Commanding General of the U.S. Army, Garrison, Okinawa. In 1976 he was promoted to Major General and assigned to command the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. General Robinson was the first African-American to command the 82nd Airborne Division.

After his retirement, General Robinson was asked to supervise a panel that was evaluating the Korean War performance of some highly criticized Army units. He also served on the board of Northwest Airlines.

After a battle with leukemia, Roscoe Robinson, Jr. died on July 22, 1993 at the age of 64, and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

In April 2000, there was a ceremony and a dedication at West Point for a new auditorium, named the "General Roscoe Robinson, Jr. Auditorium" in his honor. The Roscoe Robinson Health Clinic at Womack Army Medical Center at Fort Bragg is also named in his honor.



## GEN ROSCOE ROBINSON



Roscoe Robinson was the first African-American Four-Star General in the history of the United States Army. He was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on October 11, 1928, during segregation. He was a trailblazer, a leader, and an inspiration to the soldiers who followed him in combat – especially the generations of African-Americans who came after him.

He had significant command time in combat as both a Company Commander in Korea and later as a Battalion Commander in Vietnam. He was renowned to his classmates, soldiers, and NCOs as being a great leader who people loved and followed.

During the early years of World War II, while in the Boy Scouts, Robinson developed a clear sense of patriotism, readily participating in such home-front efforts as collecting aluminum cans for recycling as part of the war effort.

He entered Charles Sumner High School, the first high school for blacks west of the Mississippi River, in 1942. He graduated from high school on January 21, 1946, as salutatorian, the second-highest academically ranked student in his class and class president. Determined to proceed with his academic career, Robinson enrolled for one semester in the all-black Stowe College.

- First African-American Army Four-Star General
- U.S. Representative to NATO Committee
- Commanding General U.S. Army Japan/IX Corps
- First African-American Commander, 82nd Airborne Division
- Commander, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, Vietnam War
- Rifle Company Commander, 7th Infantry Division, Korean War
- Silver Star (two), Combat Infantryman Badge

Then, in the summer of 1946, he was accepted to Saint Louis University.

Entering Saint Louis University was a historic event, as it was only two years after the Jesuit institution became the first school on any level in Saint Louis to admit African-American students. With racial integration at Saint Louis University still in its infancy, Robinson entered the school as an undergraduate with the intent of pursuing a degree in industrial engineering. Then, in his second semester, Robinson received a telephone call from Principal, George Dennis Brantley of Sumner High School, informing him that Brantley planned to nominate him to the United States Military Academy at West Point.

AIRBORNE



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**GENERAL FRED A. GORDEN** was born in Anniston, AL in 1940. He moved to Battle Creek, MI as a young child to be raised by his aunt. General Gorden finished high school excelling in academics and athletics as a member of the National Honor Society and all-city basketball team.

General Gorden was attending a local junior college in 1958 when he received word of his nomination and appointment to West Point by his local congressman. General Gorden entered West Point as one of two African-American cadets in his class, but by the end of the first semester, he was the only one.

Upon graduation from West Point in 1962, General Gorden was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Field Artillery Branch. After earning a Ranger tab and Airborne wings, he was assigned to the Panama Canal zone.

In 1967, General Gorden commanded a field artillery battery in Vietnam. Next, a Masters degree in Spanish literature, language, and civilization; followed by an assignment teaching Spanish at West Point.

Assignments that followed included Executive Officer in the Office of the U.S. Army Chief of Legislative Liaison and Commander of Division Artillery of the Seventh Infantry Division (Light) at Ft. Ord, California.

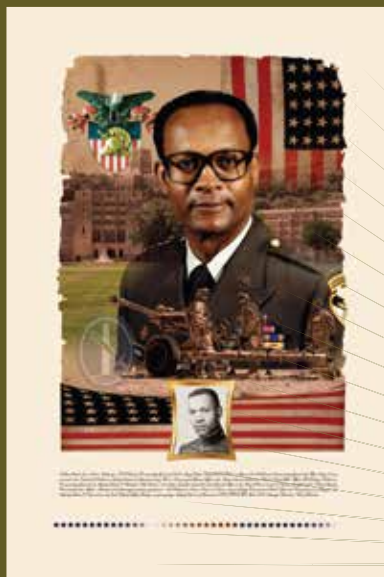
He was promoted to Brigadier General in 1984, and in 1987, he was appointed the 61st Commandant of Cadets at West Point. He became the first (and only to date) African-American to hold this position in the, then, 185-year history of West Point.

As Commandant, General Gorden was responsible

for the training, discipline, and physical condition of the Corps of Cadets. He was second in command to the Superintendent of West Point. General Gorden's focus and influence were clear. He sought to lead the Corps of Cadets, not to command them to do things. His presence alone served as acknowledgment of the existence and significance of the African-American cadets from the highest levels of the West Point command structure. General Gorden was willing to interact with African-American cadets in ways that validated their limitless possibilities. He represented African-American history walking among the cadets on a daily basis. In the same month that General Gorden began his tour as Commandant, General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. returned to West Point after his 50-year self-imposed absence from the Academy.

Following his assignment as Commandant, General Gorden assumed command of the 25th Infantry Division (Light) at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii as a Major General (2-star). From

1993-1995, he served as Commander, Army Military District of Washington. During this time, he escorted the family of President Richard Nixon during his funeral. He also escorted the family of General Benjamin O. Davis during his promotion to General (4-star). General Gorden retired from the Army in 1996 as a Major General after 34 years of military service that were characterized by his operating on the leading edge of combination of military and social healing and change.



## MAJOR GENERAL FRED A. GORDEN



In 1987, President Ronald Reagan spoke at West Point: "The only black cadet in his class, today General Gorden has come back to West Point as Commandant, setting an example for you, and indeed for all young Americans, of what hard work and devotion to duty can achieve. These last two names I mentioned, General Gorden and General MacArthur, call to mind a special moment in the history of this Academy. For it was 25 years ago that General of the Army Douglas MacArthur stood in this spot and addressed the cadets of West Point. And General Gorden, at the time Cadet Gorden, was sitting where you are today. It was a moment Cadet Gorden would never forget. Just days from graduation, he looked around this mess hall and saw war-hardened officers moved to tears by the power of MacArthur's words: 'The Long Gray Line has never failed us.' He said, 'Were you to do so, a million ghosts would rise from their white crosses, thundering those magic words: Duty, Honor, Country.'"

- *First African-American Commandant of Cadets at West Point*
- *Army Chief of Public Affairs*
- *Commanding General, 25th Infantry Division (Light)*
- *Commander, 7th Infantry Division (Light) Artillery*
- *Commander, 1st Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment*
- *Master's of Arts, Middlebury College*
- *West Point Assistant Professor Department of Foreign Languages*
- *Army Plebe Basketball; Army Men's B-Squad Cross-country (three); Army Men's Track and Field Letterman (four)*

His last assignments were in Washington, D.C. As Commanding General, Military District of Washington, he was frequently the Ranking Officer responsible for escorting dignitaries. He escorted the Nixon family to the funeral of President Nixon. He escorted South African President Nelson Mandela to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. When President Clinton found that the former commander of the Tuskegee Airmen Lieutenant General Benjamin O. Davis (USMA 1936) had not been promoted to full General no doubt due to matters of race, he promoted him in 1996, 30 years after he had retired. Major General Gorden escorted General Davis to the ceremony, and they became close friends until his death in 2002. While we celebrate many of these pioneers, it is often hard to imagine the challenges they faced at the time. General Davis described to Gorden, as he also does in his autobiography, that he had not returned to West Point from 1936 until 1987, the painful memories of being ostracized for four years at West Point as the fourth African-American graduate made returning to West Point undesirable. Major General Gorden closed his career in 1996, retiring as Army Chief of Public Affairs.



**GENERAL LLOYD J. AUSTIN, III** is the Commanding General, United States Central Command (CENTCOM), having been assigned this prestigious leadership position on 22 March 2013. In his more than 30 years of military service General Austin has served in many high-ranking and pressure-filled military billets. Prior to the CENTCOM posting, General Austin was Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army. General Austin is also a graduate of the Army War College

General Austin was born August 8, 1953 in Mobile, Alabama and raised in Thomasville, Georgia (coincidentally, the same hometown as the 1st African-American West Point graduate, Henry O. Flipper). General Austin's military career began with his appointment to the United Military Academy in 1971. He graduated from the West Point in June, 1975.

After graduation from West Point and commissioning as a 2nd Lt, General Austin's first assignment was to the Infantry Officer Basic Course at Ft. Benning, Ga. From Ft. Benning, he was assigned as a rifle platoon leader in the 3rd infantry division (Mechanized). Next was the Infantry Officer Advanced Course, then command of a Combat Support Company with the 82nd Airborne Division. General Austin has served in numerous airborne infantry slots throughout his career.

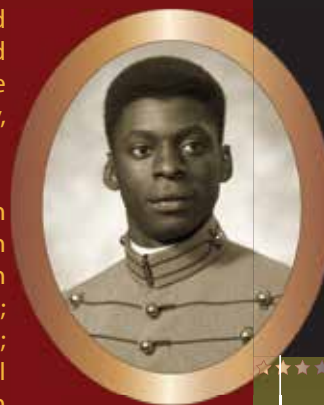
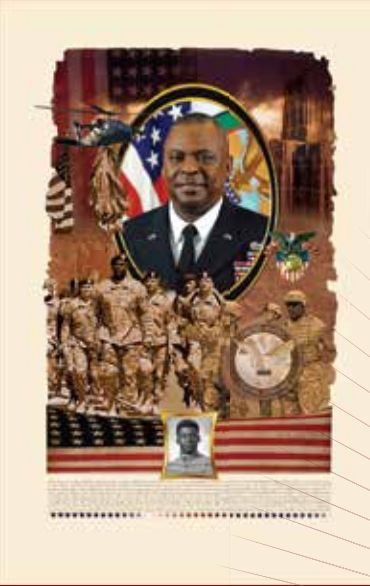
As General Austin advanced in rank, the nature and type of assignments reflected his increasing ascendancy as an army officer. He has served as the Assistant S-3 (Operations), 82nd Airborne Division, Operations Officer for the U.S. Army Indianapolis District Recruiting Command, and, as a Tactical Officer at his alma mater, West Point.

Other assignments on his rise to general officer included Operations Officer, 10th Mountain Division at Ft. Drum, NY and later as Battalion Executive Officer. His next assignment at Ft.

Drum was as a Brigade Executive Officer and Director of Plans, Training, Mobilization, and Security. General Austin was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General Officer in January, 2002.

High-level positions General Austin has been assigned to include: Assistant Division Commander, 3rd Infantry Division, which spearheaded the 2003 invasion of Iraq; Commanding General, 10th Mountain Division; Chief of Staff, CENTCOM; command of XVIII Airborne Corps. In August 2009, General Austin assumed the position as Director of the Joint Staff. And in September 2010, he became the last Commanding General U.S. Forces-Iraq. General Austin has commanded soldiers in war on the same scale of as the large theater-level wartime commands of Eisenhower and MacArthur.

His last executive level position before assuming command of CENTCOM was as Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Army. General Austin was the first African-American to hold this position.



**GEN LLOYD JAMES AUSTIN, III**



Born August 8, 1953 in Mobile, AL

Raised in Thomasville, GA (hometown of Henry O. Flipper)

Current 12th Commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) as of March 22, 2013

Prior, served as 33rd Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army (1st African-American to serve in this position) from January 31, 2012 – March 8, 2013

Last Commanding General of U.S. Forces-Iraq, Operation New Dawn, which lasted until December 15, 2011; oversaw draw down of U.S. forces and equipment, ensured security gains were preserved, Iraqis could secure and govern themselves

Graduated West Point in June, 1975; Master's in Education from Auburn University; Master's in Business Management from Webster University

Initial assignment after graduation from Infantry Officer Basic Course was rifle platoon leader in 3rd Infantry Division (mechanized); after Infantry Officer Advanced Course, commanded Combat Support Company with 82nd Airborne Division

Served as Assistant S-3 (Operations) in 82nd Airborne Division

In 1981, assigned as Operations Officer for U.S. Army Indianapolis District Recruiting Command; later commanded a company there

Returned to West Point as a company Tactical Office and Director of Plans, Training, Mobilization, and Security

1993, returned to 82nd Airborne

Division to command 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Regiment; later served as G-3 (Operations) for the Division

After graduating the Army War College, he commanded 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division

Next, Pentagon as Chief, Joint Operations (J-3) on the Joint Staff

Returned to 3rd Infantry Division as the Assistant Division Commander for Maneuver, helping spearhead the 2003 invasion of Iraq

From September, 2003 – August, 2005, Commanding General of 10th Mountain Division with duty as Commander, Combined Joint Task Force Forth-180, Operation Enduring Freedom, Afghanistan

From September, 2005 – October, 2006, served as Chief of Staff, U.S. CENTCOM; promoted to LTG in December, 2006, assumed command of XVIII Airborne Corps

In February, 2008, second highest ranking commander in Iraq, taking command of the Multi-National Corps-Iraq; directed operations of about 152,000 joint and coalition forces in all sectors of Iraq

In August, 2009 assumed position as Director of the Joint Staff

September 1, 2010, became the last Commanding General U.S. Forces-Iraq; drew down the deployment of U.S. Forces on December 18, 2011; large theater-level wartime command on the level of Eisenhower and MacArthur



*After graduating Army Command and General Staff College, assigned to 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), Ft. Drum, NY as Operations Officer and Battalion Executive Officer; later, served as Brigade Executive Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Army on January 31, 2012 (first African-American to hold this position) Assumed CENTCOM command on March 22, 2013*

*The first African-American to command an entire theater of war was General Lloyd Austin, Class of 1975, who commanded the Iraq War and who coincidentally, like Henry O. Flipper, hails from Thomasville, Georgia. General Austin is currently the Commander of US Central Command (CENTCOM) and his area of responsibility includes many of the hot spots of the world: Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan and Iran to name a few.*

**GENERAL VINCENT K. BROOKS** is the Commanding General of the US Army Pacific, the service component of the United States Pacific Command (USPACOM). The command, headed by an Army 4- star General exercises administrative control over all US Army force in the PACOM. General Brooks took command on July 2, 2013. The command is headquartered at Fort Shafter, Hawaii with portions of the command forward deployed throughout the Asia-Pacific Region.

General Brooks was born October 14, 1958 in Anchorage, Alaska. His was a military family, his father being Army Brigadier General (ret) Leo A. Brooks, Sr. The General has an older brother, also a retired Army General Officer, Brigadier General Leo Brooks, Jr. General Vincent Brooks attended and graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in May 1980.

A superb student, General Brooks graduated as the First Captain of the Cadet Corp, the first African American student to do so. He also graduated 1st in his class. He was commissioned a 2nd Lt on May 28, 1980, and was then assigned as a weapons platoon leader, B Company, First Battalion (Airborne), 504th Infantry at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

After his initial posting, the General was repeatedly given more challenging assignments, all which he earned high marks for his industry in carrying out of assignments. General Wesley Clark, who at the time was the Commanding

General of the US Army peacekeeping mission in Kosovo once described the major Brooks as a "no-nonsense leader who had studied his profession carefully, worked hard and delivered!"

The General has attended all senior Army leadership schools including the Command and General Staff College and Ft Leavenworth, KS as well as the senior leadership course at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Billets General Brooks has been assigned on the road to General Officer include assignment as an infantry platoon leader and Company Commander; also served as the Chief of Army Public Affairs; as Deputy Director of Operations during the war in Iraq (was the youngest general officer in the US Army at the time); various staff and command positions at and above the Battalion, Brigade and Division levels; Commanding general 1st Infantry Division, as a Corp

Commander, as the Commanding General, 3rd United States Army; and numerous other high level staff positions before receiving his current command..

The General is married to Dr. Carol P. Brooks, an educator.



## GEN VINCENT KEITH BROOKS



Born October 24, 1958 in Anchorage, AK

Current Commanding General of U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) as of July 2, 2013

Previous Commanding General of the Third Army (3-star command, above Corps level)

Served as Deputy Director of Operations during War in Iraq; youngest General Officer in the Army at this time

Served as Chief of Army Public Affairs, The Pentagon

Served as Commanding General of 1st Infantry Division

Admitted to West Point in 1976; father and brother attained the rank of General Officer in the Army

Rose to rank of 1st Captain, the highest position (Cadet Brigade Commander); first African-American to hold this prestigious position; graduated in 1980

Served in Korea, Kosovo; in Kosovo, served as Deputy Commander of U.S. Forces and Commander of 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division

Next, served on the Joint Chiefs of Staff at Pentagon; temporary duty as Deputy Director of Operations at CENTCOM

April, 2003, Strategic Planner for War of Terrorism

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*The first African-American Cadet First Captain was Vincent Brooks, West Point Class of 1980. Vincent Brooks is now a four-star General and the current Commander of US Army Pacific Command (USAPAC).*





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