

# BIOGRAPHY

A DOCUMENTED ORIGINAL TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

Tuskegee Airmen Inc. Public Relations, P.O. Box 830060  
Tuskegee, AL 36083

## LT. CHARLES A. HIGHSMITH, SR.

January 8, 1921 — January 17, 1995



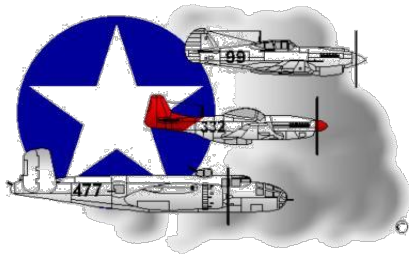
Dr. Charles A. Highsmith Sr., Ph.D., was born in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania on January 8, 1921. His parents were John Luther and Elizabeth Beville. As a child, Dr. Highsmith's family resided in Wilkes-Barre, where he received most of his early public education. He graduated with a National Honors Society membership at Coughlin High School, (1935-1939). Dr. Charles A. Highsmith Sr. made his mark with distinction in civilian life and in serving our country in the military during World War II.

Before he was an exceptional educator with the Philadelphia School District, Highsmith wanted to serve his country during WW II. He was an honor student who wanted to prove through his performance that African Americans could do anything others could do at a high level.

In February 1943, he began serving as a US Army Combat Engineer. He was discharged as a First Lieutenant and Company Commander. Lt. Highsmith attended a topographic school and was accepted as a Tuskegee Air Force school candidate. He served in the European and Philippine Islands combat zones as well as in Japan's Wakayama, Kobe, Osaka, and Tokyo areas. Upon Lt. Highsmith's death, the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. sent an official letter to his family highlighting his extraordinary service with deepest condolences.

In this reflection of his service, he was referred to as “a beloved friend and fellow Tuskegee Airman.” In sharing service stories, they stated that at each meeting, "Charlie's" name came up, always for something he did for the good of the organization. The Philadelphia Chapter President, George Bolden, described Charles Highsmith Sr. as a rare individual who few could emulate. These words eased the family's loss, knowing his fellow Airman Veterans were proud to have known the beloved Charles Highsmith as an equal. They wrote that “he represented the epitome of what a Tuskegee Airman stands for!”





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Lt. Highsmith also made his mark with distinction in civilian life. He graduated with honors from Cheyney State College and received a master's degree along with two certificates from the University of Pennsylvania. He also received a Superintendent letter of eligibility from Temple University and an Honorary Doctorate degree from Shaw University. Dr. Highsmith served successfully as a principal in five schools in the Philadelphia school district. He served in various Superintendent senior leadership capacities with his final service position being Deputy Superintendent and Acting Superintendent until his retirement on June 30, 1983. Charles A. Highsmith, Sr. received numerous recognitions from community, professional affiliation, and recognition of accomplishment awards. He was a deeply religious, man of God. His faith was evident as he lived his daily life. His priorities were God, family, service to others, and his country. It is no wonder why he chose to attend the Tuskegee Airmen School.

Lieutenant Highsmith was married to the former Magnolia J. White on July 23, 1944. They had three children, son Charles Jr., Daughters Karen & Pamela. He instilled in them the pride in his service to his country.

Lt. Highsmith fulfilled that early in life goal of serving his country and demonstrating through his service that African Americans can achieve at high levels. The Tuskegee Airman experience and everything else he did was a true testimony to his legacy of excellence.

