



# BIOGRAPHY

## A DOCUMENTED ORIGINAL TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

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### Mr. Audley Coulthurst



Mr. Audley Coulthurst was a member of the bomber group on the Billy Mitchell Medium Bomber, known as the B-25, and assigned to the 477th Unit. He was one of a 6-man team. He manned one of the two “waist” guns, flew four hours a day and received hazard pay. As a Radio Operator, he was responsible for communication between the flight and ground crews. As a Mechanic Gunner, he maintained/repaired 50-caliber machine guns.

Mr. Coulthurst enlisted in the Army Reserve in December 1942 and trained for 6-months at Chamberlin Tech for Morse Code, Typing and 1<sup>st</sup> Echelon Radio Maintenance. After successfully completing his training, he was activated in September 1943 to conduct Basic Training at Kearns Utah until December 1943 when he was reassigned to Charleston, South Carolina Army Air Base.

In January 1944, Private First Class Coulthurst was transferred to Selfridge Army Field, Michigan as crew member of 477<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (M) 618<sup>th</sup> Squadron. He was classified as a ROMG (Radio, Operator, Mechanic, Gunner). His unit was moved to Godman Army Air Field, Kentucky, on the Fort Knox reservation in May 1944 and less than a year later, his unit was reassigned to Freeman Field Seymour Indiana in March 1945. In April 1945, 101-Black Officers were arrested for entering a White Officer only Officer’s Club instead of limiting themselves to the segregated Black Officer’s Club (which White Officers referred to as “Uncle Tom’s Cabin”) which erupted into what has been referred to as the Freeman Field Mutiny. Of the 101-Black Officers arrested, three were brought to trial (Roger C. Terry, Marsden A. Thompson, Shirly R. Clinton) and charged with Civil Disobedience. Additionally, Roger Terry was found guilty of shoving the Provost Marshall and fined \$150.00. Immediately following the incident, General Arnold replaced all the White Officers who commanded Black personnel with a new Commander...Colonel Benjamin O Davis, Jr.

PFC Coulthurst indicated that his unit was packing to deploy and bomb Japan when the Atomic Bomb was dropped in August 1945. His unit was moved to Lockbourne Army Air Field Ohio in March 1946 until the 477<sup>th</sup> joined up with the 332<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group. In the summer of 1947, before the U.S. Army Air Corps became the U.S. Air Force, the 332 Fighter Wing was formed. PFC Coulthurst was honorably discharged in March 1949.

A remarkable man, Mr. Coulthurst was one of the first black Certified Public Accountants in the country. He also served as Controller for the National Urban League before retiring and enjoying family, friends, bridge and serving as an active DOTA member of the Claude B. Govan Tri-State TAI Chapter. Mr. Coulthurst was survived by his wife, Matilda, daughter Audra, and son, Jeffrey Coulthurst.

To learn more about Mr. Audley Coulthurst, other Documented Original Tuskegee Airmen, please visit the Website at the following location: [www.TuskegeeAirmen.org](http://www.TuskegeeAirmen.org).

