

# BIOGRAPHY

## A DOCUMENTED ORIGINAL TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN INC. PUBLIC RELATIONS, P.O. Box 830060  
TUSKEGEE, AL 36083

## James McClain



James Roland Bryant McClain was born in Camden, South Carolina, in 1926. At an early age, his parents moved to Brooklyn, New York. After flying with aviation pioneer Amelia Earhart, he knew that he wanted to be a pilot. His elementary teacher took the class to Floyd Bennett Field, where Ms. Earhart took the students on a flight. At the age of sixteen, he was able to pursue his passion for becoming a pilot after his employer learned of his interests in flying and taught him how to fly. After learning to fly, he became part of the Civil Air Patrol and patrolled the New York coastline for U-boats.

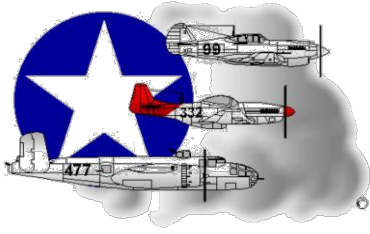
In 1945, he was drafted into the Army Air Corp and completed his basic training at Sheppard Army Air Field in Wichita Falls, Texas. Afterward, he served at Tuskegee Army Airfield and Mitchell Airfield in Hampstead, New York, while in the Air Force Reserves. He flew the P-51 Mustang while assigned to the 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force. Also, he was a control tower operator, a preflight inspector for B-25s, and a radio mechanic and apprentice photographer.

After leaving the Air Force, he worked for the New York Transit System as a conductor, the New York City Police Department, and retired from the New York City Fire Department after 23 years of service. In 1976 the United States Coast Guard presented him with a Public Service Commendation for his service with the Coast Guard Auxiliary, Third Coast Guard District (Northern Region).

In 1983, Mr. McClain worked for the United States Postal Service and retired in 2001. In 1991 he became a member of the United States Navy Department of Defense, Military Sea Lift Command, Merchant Marines, serving as a civilian employee aboard U.S. Navy vessels.

After receiving an education from the New York public schools, he attended Brooklyn College, Tuskegee Institute, the City University of New York, the New York City Community College, and the University of South





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Carolina. Over the years, he earned a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice and was a professional photographer, real estate broker, and teacher.

Roland McClain was a member of several organizations to include the NAACP, the Hiram E. Mann, and the Spann Watson Chapters of Tuskegee Airmen Inc. He was also a member of the Bethel A.M.E and the Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, the Disabled American Veteran Chapter #4, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Tuskegee Airman James Roland Bryant, Class 46C, became a Lonely Eagle on October 1, 2012

