



BIOGRAPHY

A DOCUMENTED ORIGINAL TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

Tuskegee Airmen Inc. Public Relations, P.O. Box 830060
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George Watson, Sr.



George Watson, Sr. was born on 10 August 1920 to the late Jack and Anna Watson in Wildwood, New Jersey. He attended grade schools in Neptune, Asbury Park, and Lakewood, NJ and graduated from Lakewood High School in 1941 where he was a football star. He played four seasons playing tight end and quarterback. Mr. Watson was inducted in the Lakewood High School Hall of Fame.

On 25 February 1942, George voluntarily enlisted in the United States Army. Following a short stay at Fort Dix Basic Training base, George was selected to go to Tuskegee, Alabama as part of the first group of recruits to form the 99th, 100th, 301st, and 302nd Pursuit Squadrons. These units were part of the 332nd Fighter Group.

Technical Sergeant Watson was assigned to Italy during World War II, serving with the 96th Maintenance Group, 523rd Service Group, and 332nd Fighter Group. While in Italy, he took part in OPERATION FUEL TANKS (also known as an unauthorized procurement). When segregation ended in the United States Air Force, TSgt Watson was assigned to the 332nd Fighter Wing. In addition to serving in Italy, he also served in Germany, England, Turkey, and Iran. Upon his return to the states, TSgt Watson founded an American Legion Chapter in Lakewood, NJ that was named after Captain Robert B. Tresville, a Tuskegee Pilot Killed In Action.

TSgt Watson was the first Black Man to serve as a Recruiter for both the Army and Air Force in Trenton, Lakewood, and Asbury Park, NJ from 1951-1955. He retired after 26 years of service. His final job was as an Aircraft and Missile Electrician. He spent the next 15 years with the New Jersey Bell Telephone Company as a frame man and telephone installer.

In 1999, TSgt Watson and Lieutenant Colonels (Ret) Lee Archer and Herbert Carter participated in a dedication ceremony to re-designate the 4406th Operations Group to the 332nd Expeditionary Group, Al Jaber Air Base (AB), Kuwait. In 2005, at the invitation of Lt. Gen. Walter E. Buchanan, III, 9th Air Force and U.S. Central Command Air Forces, TSgt Watson and four others visited the 332nd Air Expedition Wing at Balad AB, Iraq. The group also visited the 86th Airlift Wing Ramstein AB Germany; the 386 AEW, Ali Al Salem AB Kuwait; and the 712th Air Base Group, Moron AB Spain. The purpose of the visits was to inspire and motivate troops carrying on the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen while supporting the Global War On Terror.

On 29 March 2007, TSgt Watson and other Tuskegee Airmen travelling to Washington, were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in the Capitol Rotunda, Washington, D.C. TSgt Watson was selected to represent the Enlisted Corps on stage during the ceremony, garnering a salute from then President, George W. Bush.

TSgt Watson's military education includes: USAF Senior Non-Commissioned Officers Academy, Army and Air Force Recruiter School, Electronic Fundamentals, Aircraft and Missile Course, Warehouse Supervisor, Stock Control, Guided Missiles Course, and Aircraft Electrician Courses for the following owning aircraft: B-66, C-135, C-133, C-130, C-118, and C-47. TSgt Watson's civilian education includes: Ohio State University, 1948; Ricker College, 1959; and Ocean County College, 1982.

TSgt Watson's military awards include: Purple Heart, Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Force Good Conduct Medal with 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Good Conduct Medal with 1 Silver Loop, American Defense Service Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with 2

Bronze Service Stars, World War II Victory Medal, Army of Occupation Medal, National Defense Service Medal with 1 Bronze Service Star, Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon, Sharp Shooter Medal, New Jersey World War II Distinguished Service Medal. Mr. Watson was awarded the rank of Honorary Three Star General by Air Force General Rick Martin.

TSgt Watson's civic awards include: Key to the city of Tuskegee, Alabama; NAACP Lifetime Award; Greenwood Cemetery Association Commendation, Lakewood, NJ; National Tuskegee Airman Lifetime Award; Mayor's Award, Lakewood, NJ; Garden State Center of the Arts Community Service Award; Key to the city of Warner Robins, Georgia; Honorary Commander 353rd Maintenance Squadron, Okinawa, Japan; and Honorary Life Member, Navy Lakehurst Historical Society, NAES Lakehurst, NJ.

Mr. Watson authored two books; "Memorable Memoirs," which is a story about his life before and during World War II, and "A Salute to the Beginning".

Although he retired, George's love of the military life never waned and he loved his country. He was a frequent visitor to McGuire Air Force Base, Fort Dix Army Base, and Lakehurst Naval Air Station. He seemed to know everyone and everyone certainly knew him. George also spent countless hours speaking to and sharing his experiences with family and friends, active duty personnel, students in all grades, incarcerated veterans at two New Jersey State Prisons and the Incarcerated Veterans of America, Inc. at Rahway State Prison. George was a storyteller with an infectious laugh.

Mr. Watson was preceded in death by his wife of 71 years, Louise, in 2014. On 19 June 2017, George Watson, Sr. died due to complications of pneumonia. He was 96 years young. He is survived by his daughter Tina A. Watson, son, Maurice A. Watson, daughter-in-law Cheryl A. Watson, grandson, George B. Watson III and Mark B. Watson and granddaughter.

