

It's BIOGRAPHY

A DOCUMENTED ORIGINAL TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

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Biography of Lt. Col. James C. Warren

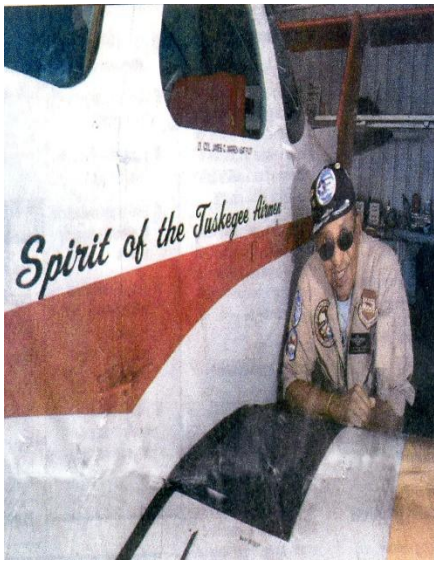


Lt. Col. James C. Warren was born in August 1921 in Gurley, Alabama. He lived in Alabama until he moved to the Chicago/Evanston area in 1938. He graduated from New Trier Township High School, Winnetka, Illinois. Lt. Col. Warren made his first mark in history by becoming the first African American to play quarterback on a high school varsity football team. In November 1942, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps and entered active-duty service in March 1943. Warren entered the Aviation Cadet training program at Tuskegee Army Airfield, Tuskegee, Alabama. However, he washed out as a pilot but was selected for Navigation School. He completed navigation training at Hondo Army Airfield, Texas, in August 1944. Then he went to Bombardier School at Midland AAF, Texas. Warren completed that school in February 1945. He was one of a small number of African American aviators to hold dual qualifications as both a navigator and bombardier.

Lt. Col. Warren served as a member of the 477th Bombardment Group, training for deployment as the Army Air Forces' first all-Negro medium bomber group flying B-25J medium bombers. While a member of the 477th, he participated in one of the first 20th-century military civil rights protests against the segregated policies of the U.S. military. Warren (then Flight Officer Warren) was among 101 Black officers who refused to sign the base commander's order, Base Regulation 85-2, accepting segregated recreational facilities. These officers were arrested and charged under Article 64 of the War for refusing the direct order of a superior officer. They were eventually released, but Letters of Reprimand were placed in their military records, where they remained until 1995. Colonel Warren never forgot the incident and wrote a book, "The Tuskegee Airmen Mutiny at Freeman Field," which influenced the Department of the Air Force in 1995 to correct the military records of those who wished to have the reprimands removed from the records of all officers participating in the Freeman Field action. The war ended before the 477th could be deployed for combat action. Lt. Col. Warren was released from active duty in March 1946.

From 1947 to 1950, he attended the University of Illinois, majoring in architecture. He was employed with Holsman, Holsman, Klekemp, and Taylor and was an Associate Member of the American Institute of Architects, Chicago Chapter. Warren was recalled to active duty in March 1952 for the Korean War, where he flew 50 combat missions in the Douglas B-26 "Night Intruder" medium bomber. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Service Medal, and several other citations and awards for his service during the Korean War.

After the Korean War, Captain Warren remained in the Air Force, flying a variety of transport aircraft on worldwide routes, visiting almost all areas of the world. In his assignment as Flight Facilities Officer at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, he had the distinguished honor to serve as command navigator for Major Gen. Benjamin O. Davis, Commander, U.S. Air Force Europe. General Davis was an original Tuskegee Airman serving as the commander of the 332nd Fighter Group during WWII. Lt. Col Warren was assigned to combat duty during the



Vietnam War, in which he flew 123 combat missions in Vietnam, where he received his third Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC).

During his flying career, Lieut. Col. Warren has logged over 12,000 flight hours, which include some very significant missions. These missions included:

- The Bob Hope Christmas Show from Southeast Asia on the final segment from Vietnam to Los Angeles (1964)
- Retrieved the Apollo 14 Lunar Crew from splashdown in the South Pacific near Pago Pago in 1971
 - Served as chief navigator for “Homecoming One,” the first flight into North Vietnam to return American POWs to freedom

Throughout his 38-year military career, he earned 23 distinguished medals and ribbons for his service to the United States of America. He retired from the Air Force in 1978 but did not retire to a life of ease. He worked for General

Dynamics as a Personnel Recruiter for 10 years. He finally retired for good, but not from work. He continued to involve himself with young people through the Young Eagles program. He visits young people at Juvenile detention centers to encourage them to make positive changes in their lives. Lt. Col. Warren is invited to speak to diverse groups worldwide, in which he promotes the exploits of the Tuskegee Airmen. During his retirement, Warren became involved in bicycle racing, marathons, and skiing, for which he won several awards. But his real passion was flying. On September 1, 2010, he earned his FAA Private Pilot’s license. At which time, he entered the “Guinness World Record Books” as the oldest person (87) to achieve such a license.

Col. Warren, unfortunately, left us to join the Lonely Eagle Squadron on May 17, 2014. He leaves behind his wife, Xanthia Warren; Three sons, James, Stewart, Dwayne, and daughter Sharron.

