



BIOGRAPHY

A DOCUMENTED ORIGINAL TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

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ROLIN A. BYNUM 1921 - 2005



Rolin Augustus Bynum was born in Columbia, South Carolina, on May 18, 1921, to Benjamin Bynum and Beatrice Williams Bynum First. His Father was an Army World War I Veteran and Rolin grew up in Montclair, New Jersey. Rolin's Mother remarried to John First and they remained married until her death in 1961. Before enlisting in the U.S. Army Air Corps as an Aviation Cadet, Rolin attended West Virginia State College and was a Pre-Medical Student at New York University. He was also a Member of the Alpha Phi Alpha

Fraternity, Incorporated.

On January 7, 1944, Second Lieutenant Bynum graduated in the Tuskegee Army Airfield (TAAF) Class 44-A-TE (Twin Engine) at Tuskegee Institute. He was the second Black Montclair resident to receive his Pilot Wings in the United States Air Force. Lieutenant Price D. Rice was the first Black Montclair resident to receive his Pilot Wings, and he flew the P-40 in Italy. 2LT Bynum left for Multi-Engine training duty in the B-25 Bomber School at Mather Field, California, then Instrument School training at Barksdale, Louisiana, and afterwards, he reported to Selfridge Field, Michigan, where he was assigned to the 477th Bombardment Group.



After WWII ended in 1945, LT Bynum continued to serve in the USAF as a Pilot during the Korean War. The Montclair Times "Military Bag" newspaper column reported that LT Bynum was selected to attend the "first Class" of the Air Tactical School at Tyndall Field, Florida (now Tyndall Air Force Base, which is known for its Interceptor, Gunnery and Weapons Controller School training). Over a 16-week period, he received 'academic instruction, supplemented by field problems that were rounded out with a flying program in the latest of the Air Force's aircraft. After his successful course completion, his next duty station was Lockbourne Army Air Base, Ohio, where he served as an Instrument Instructor and a Member of the Standardization Board.' While assigned to Lockbourne, it was reported in the July 30, 1949, edition of the "The Afro-American (Baltimore, Maryland) CAPITAL SPOTLIGHT" newspaper by Louis Lautier, that LT Bynum served a short stint as "Public Information/Relations Officer for Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Jr." Afterwards, he was assigned to the Pentagon as a Public Information Officer (PIO), and on August 5, 1950, it was reported in "The Chicago Defender" newspaper that LT Bynum was finally promoted to Captain. In the same article it was reported that Colonel B.O. Davis, Jr., received the permanent rank of full Colonel (versus Lieutenant Colonel).



Immediately following his Pentagon PIO service, where he acted as Liaison between the Air Force and the American Press on Family Housing and Base Construction subject matter, Captain Bynum was now referred to as a “Veteran Public Information Officer on the USAF Press Desk at the Pentagon” (per the February 20, 1954, edition of The Republican, Springfield, Massachusetts). Captain Bynum was subsequently promoted to the rank of Major, and the following month, he was transferred to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), Fountainebleau, France.

After a few years in France, Major Bynum was transferred to Pease Air Force Base, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to become the B-47 Bomber Squadron Commander. At right, and while serving his second tour as a Squadron Commander at Travis Air Force Base, California, he was presented a trophy for the 5th Organizational Maintenance Squadron being cited as the Strategic Air Command’s (SAC) “Best Squadron” of the Year.



VICTOR—THE SPOILS—Brig. Gen. Sam Griley, commander of the 14th Air Division, presents trophy to Lt. Col. Rolin A. Bynum, commander of 5th Organizational Maintenance Squadron at Travis AFB, for best squadron during 1964 in Strategic Air Command. Col. Roger Howard, commander of the 5th Bomb Wing, is at right.

Tuesday, September 10, 1968



Air Mail Flights Begin

Rolin A. Bynum, center, pilot, accepts bags of mail from postal officials for the first air taxi mail flight from Cumberland last night at Municipal Airport. The new service is being provided by Washington-Baltimore Airways, Inc. In photo are, from left, Glenn W. Ryan, postmaster at Moorefield, W. Va.; William B. Orndorff, postmaster at Cumberland Sectional Center; Mr. Bynum; John B. Hawsa, postmaster at Petersburg Sectional Center, and Charles R. Lueck, from the air transportation office of the Post Office Department in Washington.

Following his USAF retirement, Lieutenant Colonel Bynum was a Commercial Pilot for the Washington-Baltimore Airways, Inc. He flew the twin Beech Airplane. See photo at left.

Lt. Col. Rolin A. Bynum joined the “Lonely Eagles Chapter” on March 10, 2005. He was interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

