

VSC NAACP VETERANS NEWSLETTER
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Africans, at Home and
Abroad, Remember
General Colin L. Powell,
USA (Ret.)

Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo described Colin Powell in the (Nigerian) Daily Post as a “trusted colleague and comrade-in-arm, whose closeness as an African-American with the mother Africa assisted in the growth of the continent.”

Former Secretary of State Colin Powell, the first Black American to serve in the post, died on October 18 at the age of 84 due to complications from COVID-19, his family announced in a statement.

The family said the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff had been fully vaccinated and was receiving treatment at Walter Reed National Medical Center for multiple myeloma **cancer** and **Parkinson's** disease.

“General Colin L. Powell, former U.S. Secretary of State and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, passed away this morning due to complications from Covid 19. He was fully vaccinated. We want to thank the medical staff at Walter Reed National Medical Center for their caring treatment,” the Powell family said in a statement posted to Facebook.

“We have lost a remarkable and loving husband, father, grandfather and a great American,” the family added.

Powell, born on April 5, 1937, in New York City, was raised by Jamaican immigrant parents in the South Bronx.

Following a decorated military career that included tours in Vietnam, Powell held key military and diplomatic positions throughout government, serving under both Democratic and Republican presidents.

Former President George W. Bush, who tapped Powell to serve as his secretary of State, said he was “deeply saddened” by the military leader’s death.

“Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of Colin Powell. He was a great public servant, starting with his time as a soldier during Vietnam. Many Presidents relied on General Powell’s counsel and experience,” Bush said in a statement.

“He was National Security Adviser under President Reagan, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under my father and President Clinton, and Secretary of State during my Administration. He was such a favorite of Presidents that he earned the Presidential Medal of Freedom — twice. He was highly respected at home and abroad. And most important, Colin was a family man and a friend. Laura and I send Alma and their children our sincere condolences as they remember the life of a great man,” he added.

Powell’s tenure in the elder Bush’s administration was marked by his involvement in some of the most notable American military actions of the late 20th century, including the 1989 Panama operation, the 1991 Gulf War and the US humanitarian intervention in Somalia, though he retired from the Army days before the disastrous Battle of Mogadishu.

Although Powell was initially reluctant to commit US troops when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, he became one of the administration’s most trusted spokesmen when the assault on Saddam Hussein’s army finally came.

His efforts during the war earned him two prominent awards: a Congressional Gold Medal in March 1991 "in recognition of his exemplary performance in planning and coordinating" the US response to Iraq's invasion, and a Presidential Medal of Freedom.

In 1991, Powell received the **NAACP's** highest honor, the Spingarn Medal. Powell, America's Promise Alliance Founding Chair, received the NAACP's 2011 President's Award at the 42nd NAACP Image Awards on March 4, 2011.

The funeral service for Colin Powell was held November 5th at Washington's National Cathedral. The noon service included tributes from Powell's predecessor, former secretary of state and longtime friend Madeline Albright, Richard Armitage, his deputy under former President George W. Bush, and his son, Michael Powell.

President Biden and first lady Jill Biden, in addition to former presidents, Barack Obama and Bush, and their wives, Michelle Obama and Laura Bush. Former President Bill Clinton, who was hospitalized last month for a urological infection, did not attend the ceremony. However, former secretary of state and first lady Hillary Clinton was in attendance.

The former U.S. General was the son of Jamaican immigrants. He grew up in the Bronx, where his family attended St. Margaret's Episcopal Church. He is survived by his wife Alma.

Following news of Powell's death October 18, Mr. Biden called him "a dear friend and a patriot," a great military leader and "a man of overwhelming decency."

In October, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin called Powell "one of the greatest leaders that we have ever witnessed" as well as a "tremendous personal friend and mentor."

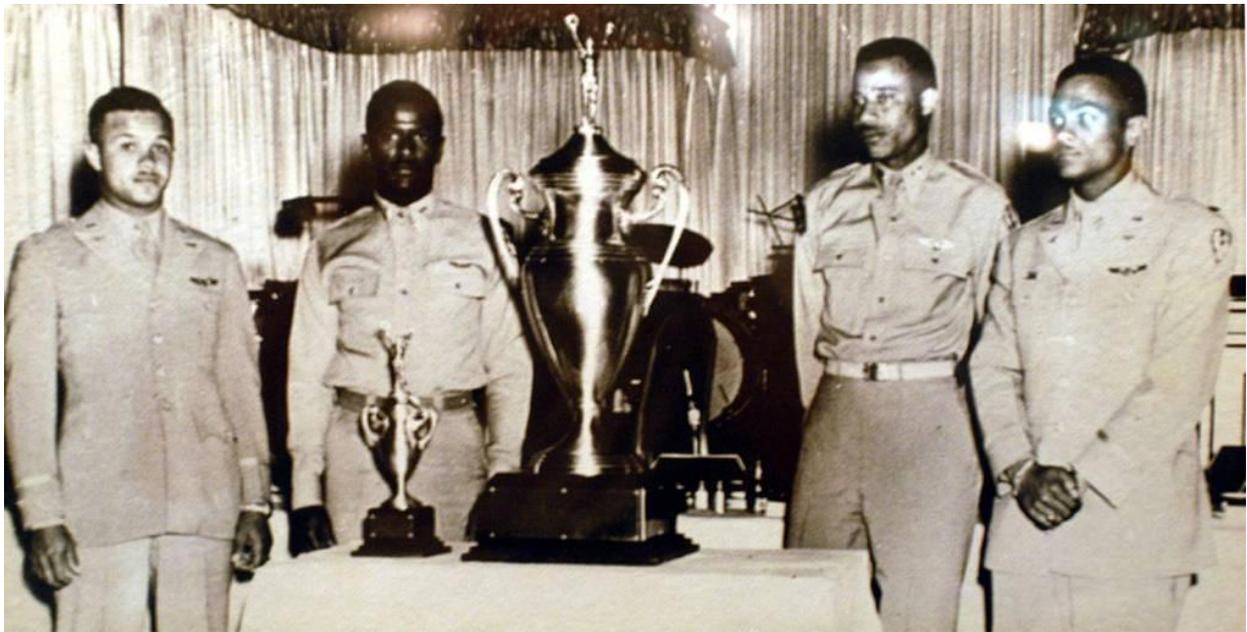
Members from five branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, the U.S. Army Band, and the 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) Caisson Platoon honor the late Gen. (ret.) Colin Powell during a special military funeral at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

Continue on to [The Hill](#) to read the complete article.

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This Tuskegee Airman accomplished a lot. But nothing topped winning the 1st ‘Top Gun’ trophy



U.S. Air Force Capt. Alva Temple, 1st Lt. James Harvey, 1st Lt. Harry Stewart and 1st Lt. Halbert Alexander pose with their 1949 Weapons Meet trophy in May 1949 at the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas, Nev. (U.S. Air Force photo)

U.S. Air Force Capt. Alva Temple, 1st Lt. James Harvey, 1st Lt. Harry Stewart and 1st Lt. Halbert Alexander pose with their 1949 Weapons Meet trophy in May 1949 at the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas, Nev. (U.S. Air Force photo)

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md.—James Harvey doesn't want to be known as the first Black fighter pilot to fly in Korean airspace. He doesn't want to be known for his Distinguished

Flying Cross or the 11 Air Medals he earned in combat. And he doesn't want to be known for his time as a commander, a test pilot or an officer reporting to the head of NORAD.

Harvey, one of the few members of the Tuskegee Airmen still living, wants to be remembered for an honor that eluded the public eye for nearly 50 years: winner of the first "Gunsmoke" aerial shooting competition in 1949.

The 98-year-old retired lieutenant colonel spoke to Air Force Times ahead of a Sept. 21 ceremony here to honor his legacy as a flying ace, hosted by AARP and Raytheon.

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CVS returns to the military Tricare pharmacy network. Walmart's out

Military community beneficiaries who use Walmart and Sam's Club pharmacies will have to go elsewhere to fill their prescriptions, as those pharmacies leave the Tricare network as of Dec. 15.

Officials are adding CVS Pharmacy back into the network pharmacy mix, also effective Dec. 15, after a five-year hiatus.

The Tricare Pharmacy Program, which serves 9.6 million active duty, retirees and family members. There are currently more than 56,000 pharmacy locations in the TRICARE retail pharmacy network, including national chains, grocery chains and independent pharmacies.

Have you ever wanted to reconnect with someone you once served with? Or wanted to find witnesses to events that occurred during a loved one's military service? Together We Served has connected veterans since 2003 and has recently launched their brand new Veteran Finder and Memorial app, Veterans Roll of Honor, making it easier than ever before to find these important connections.



Search For Veterans

Find people you served with, quickly and easily, on the app's comprehensive directory of more than 2 million U.S. Military Veteran Members. The app also includes comprehensive memorials of servicemen and women who died serving their country.

View the Military Service of Veterans

View complete service histories including medals and awards, insignia and badges, basic training unit, unit assignments, combat/non-combat operations, and formal schools and courses. Browse military photos and service memories.

Ready to reconnect with people you knew and rekindle old friendships? Download on the Apple App Store or Google Play.

[Click Here to Download](#)

Little Rock, Arkansas VA Honors World War II Army Vet, 96



The [Little Rock VA](#) has a special way of celebrating World War II Veterans. At Little Rock, a commemorative coin is presented to the World War II Veteran in an informal ceremony during their visit to the medical center, and ample time is provided to listen to their life story and celebrate their service.

There are less than 400,000 of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II still alive.

One such coining ceremony was carefully planned to celebrate 96-year-old World War II Veteran Irunoes Johnson from Holly Grove, Arkansas.

Johnson joined the Army March 30, 1944, at the age of 18. He completed his basic training in Louisiana and served in Germany, Indochina and France. He drove a truck during the final drive across the Rhine and into the heart of Germany.

At 96, he still cooks, cleans, does his own laundry, does lawn work and maintains a garden. He loves watching sports and enjoys frying and eating catfish.

Veteran care and recognition remain a high priority during the pandemic. World War II Veterans like Irunoes Johnson deserve to be acknowledged and celebrated for their service to our country. The presentation of a commemorative coin is one way for the Little Rock VA to show gratitude to Veterans.

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Tennessee city adds adds statue of Black Civil War soldiers



The statue, titled "March to Freedom," honors the Black enslaved men who enlisted in the United States Colored Troops, a segregated part of the Union Army during the Civil War, The Tennessean reported. It was revealed to the public October 23rd 2021. It stands at the foot of Franklin's historic courthouse, directly across the street from a monument to Confederate soldiers known as "Chip."

It is one of the few standalone monuments honoring the hundreds of African Americans from Franklin's Williamson County and over 170,000 across the nation who joined the Union Army.

The soldier stands with one stepping on a decaying tree stump that signifies the end of the "tree of sorrow," which Black people were tied to for sale or even hanged from as punishment, sculptor Joe Frank Howard, black artist, said. A pair of broken shackles lie partly buried in dirt, signifying that the Black soldiers were "never to be chained again."

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Research shores up airmen's sense that shaving waivers hinder promotions



Airmen who receive waivers from the Air Force to grow beards due to a skin condition that worsens with shaving experience significant delays in promotion compared to their beardless counterparts, a new study found.

The delay in promotions affects Black airmen disproportionately because the condition, commonly called razor bumps, is prevalent among them, according to the study published in the journal *Military Medicine* on July 1.

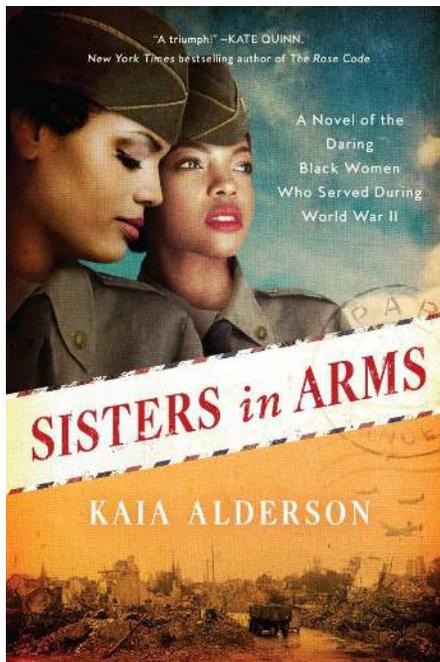
The findings dovetail with an Air Force review of racial disparities in the service released in December, which found inequality in “certain promotion rates” based on race but did not determine cause.

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EDITOR’ S NOTE: As an airman stationed at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, TX in 1973, I suffered from Pseudofolliculitis barbae (razor bumps), It is a common condition of the beard area occurring in up to 60% African American men and other people with curly hair. The problem results when highly curved hairs grow back into the skin causing inflammation and a foreign body reaction. I was given a shaving waiver and instructed

to keep the hair on my face at ¼” or lower. After several months I began to shave again and after many years the severity of the condition has lessened.

Book of the Month: ‘Sisters in Arms’ A novel of Black women in WW II



[Kaia Alderson](#) loves history, so much so that she decided to tell the unknown story of the first all-woman, all-Black Army Unit, the 6888th Battalion. [Kaia Alderson's](#) debut novel, [Sisters in Arms](#) is a fictionalized account of the 6888 Army Postal Battalion.

Grace Steele and Eliza Jones may be from completely different backgrounds, but when it comes to the army, specifically the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), they are both starting from the same level. Not only will they be among the first class of female officers the army has even seen, they are also the first Black women allowed to serve.

[Sisters in Arms](#) is available today on www.blackbookstore.com Also available in Audio CD.

VA resumes debt collections after 18-month pause due to the coronavirus pandemic

WASHINGTON — Millions of veterans must begin paying back debts to the Department of Veterans Affairs now that the agency resumed collections following an 18-month pause. ⁰²², the agency will restart deducting veterans' debts from their benefits payments.

About 2 million veterans owe debts to the VA. The department sent letters to the veterans notifying them that payments would now come due.

In a statement, the VA said it would continue to provide some debt relief options for veterans who have been affected financially by the pandemic. "The department will continue to provide relief options such as extending repayment plans, waivers and temporary hardship suspensions during these challenging times," the agency said. "It has been and will remain a priority of the department to work individually with each veteran."

To seek relief from the collections, veterans are asked to call 1-800-827-0648 for debt from benefits overpayments and 1-866-400-1238 for debt from medical co-pays.

Heated exchanges and a flood of suggestions for the Confederate renaming commission

A congressionally mandated group tasked with making a list of Defense Department “items” named in honor of the Confederacy and suggesting new names, held some town halls over the summer, soliciting feedback from communities about changing the names of the eight Army posts and one Navy base they’ve so far visited.

The Naming Commission planned to visit Fort Pickett, Virginia, and Fort Polk, Louisiana, by the end of November, according to retired Adm.

Michelle Howard, who heads up the commission, before finalizing a list of posts, ships, streets, etc. to change.

The commission launched a crowdsourcing site in September, the renamingcommission.org, to take renaming suggestions, of which they’ve received about 27,000, she said, roughly 5,000 of which have had multiple submissions.

The commission briefed the House and Senate Armed Services on their progress September 30, along with an early cost estimate for the expenses associated with name changes, including new signage. Deadline for submissions was December 1.

The commission has until October 1, 2022 to get a final list of items for renaming to Congress, according to the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, and then another year after that to implement changes.

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McEachin Leads Drive to Rename Fort Lee after Lt. Gen. Arthur J. Gregg



A. Donald McEachin

James Clyburn

Lt. Gen. Arthur Gregg

A group of Congressional Black Caucus members led by Congressman A. Donald McEachin, representative of Virginia's 4th Congressional District, co-wrote, signed and sent a letter to the Chair of the Naming Commission, Admiral Michelle Howard intended to support the renaming of Fort Lee in Central Virginia after Lt. General Arthur J. Gregg.

This was after Congress voted for the Defense budget bill with a requirement that confederate monuments must change names within three years or lose Defense funding. Four of the Confederacy stations located in Richmond with statues already removed included Fort A.P. – Caroline County, Fort Lee – Va., Fort Pickett – Nottoway County and Fort Belvoir – Fairfax County.

Before his retirement as Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, Gregg commanded an Army depot, supply and services Battalion in Vietnam, directed

logistics for the Joint Chiefs of Staff and commanded a supply and services Battalion in Vietnam. Throughout his career, he improved supply performance, enhanced readiness, and better equipped Army warfighters. [Click Here To Read More](#)

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