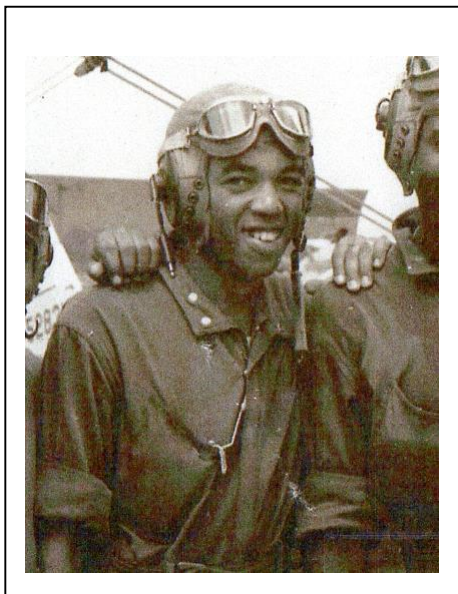


BIOGRAPHY

A DOCUMENTED ORIGINAL TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

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

WALTER KENNETH ROBINSON, Sr. (1920 ~ 2020)



Cadet Walter K. Robinson, Sr., 1945

Walter K. Robinson, Sr. was born in Baltimore, Maryland on November 23, 1920, the second son of Dr. John C. and Mrs. Clara Denning Robinson. He grew up in Baltimore and was educated in Baltimore City schools, notably Douglass High School, “the only high school available to us”. In the late summer of 1941, Walter volunteered for the U. S. Army Air Corps with his cousin and a friend. In November, 1941, he married his high school sweetheart, Edmonia Bailey. As a new Department of Defense worker, he was provided a stipend and living quarters for his family in Washington, DC. In 1943, he was sent to Camp Lee, VA; Keesler Field in Biloxi, MS; and finally, Tuskegee Army Air Field (TAAF), Tuskegee, AL.

He began training at Tuskegee Institute for Basic Ground School (Mathematics, English, Physics, and Basic Flying Instruction), and after three months, was scheduled to continue on in Pre-Flight, Primary, Basic, and Advanced Flying Training.

During Primary Training, he had an accident that severed his Achilles tendon and was hospitalized for 362 days, enduring six operations and extensive physical therapy. He credited the excellent care he received under Commanding Officer Capt. Theodore Pinckney with his ability to return to full duty with Class 45-I-SE. Walter successfully completed Primary and Basic Flying Training at TAAF. While he was in Advanced Training, WW II ended. As he was married with a young son, he was consequently offered the opportunity to return to civilian life, which he did on November 8, 1945. He had earned his pilot’s license, but could not afford to continue to learn to fly as a civilian.

Walter’s father had died in 1924, at age 44. His mother, a former nurse, trained in New York to become the first Black physiotherapist in Baltimore. After his honorable discharge from the military, Walter and his wife returned to Baltimore, where they cared for his mother until her death in 1955. For twelve years, he commuted an hour each way by train from Baltimore to his job in Washington, DC at the U.S. Postal Service (USPS). His days back then usually began at 7 AM at the Atlantic gas station he leased near his home. He would then take the train to DC to work at the post office from 9 AM to 5 PM. After work, he returned home for dinner and family time, and finally headed back out to close the gas station at 11 PM each night.

The family moved to Washington, DC in 1959. Despite the challenges of segregation and racism, Walter worked his way up through the ranks of the DC Post Office from Clerk, to Station Manager, to Assistant Manager of Delivery and Collection. At one point, he even campaigned for a position directly with the General Superintendent, using his experience rather than a college degree as his rationale. He eventually served as Superintendent of a large, new post office in Bethesda, MD. His final role was as the second Black

Manager of Delivery and Collection for Washington, DC. He retired from the USPS after thirty-five years of dedicated government service.

The Robinsons had one son, architect Walter K. Robinson, Jr. He and wife Barbara had one child, Gretchen Kathleen, now the VP & General Counsel for the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (NY). Walter always proudly described his granddaughter Gretchen as “the love of my life”. His revered older brother, Lt. Col. John C. Robinson, Jr. (d. 1988) spent his career in the Army and was stationed all over the world. Walter’s devoted and beloved wife Edmonia passed away in 2000, after fifty-nine happy years of marriage.

Walter was a long-time, active member of Peoples Congregational United Church of Christ in Washington, DC. He was an avid golfer until age 98 and was a member of several DC-area golf clubs. He served as President of Peoples Golf Club for fourteen years and was associated with the highly successful Peoples Credit Union for twenty-eight years. A member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, he was also Past President and Secretary of the Bachelor-Benedict Club, the oldest Black social and philanthropic club in Washington, DC. In addition, he was a proud member of the fabled Brookland Literary and Hunting Club, founded in 1942 during segregation by illustrious Black professionals in the Washington, DC area. He attributed many of his lasting friendships to being “a joiner”.

Walter was a distinguished member of the East Coast Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. (ECCTAI), and a frequent guest speaker at local events. He was always willing to share his experiences and valuable insight as one of the few active remaining Documented Original Tuskegee Airmen. Having joined ECCTAI after President Bush’s 2007 Tuskegee Airmen Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony at the Capitol, Walter received his personal bronze replica of the Congressional Gold Medal from DC Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton at a special ceremony held in her office in April 2017. That most auspicious event was attended by family, friends, and four of his ECCTAI Documented Original Tuskegee Airmen colleagues. Following this ceremony, a celebratory luncheon was held on Capitol Hill in his honor.

Walter passed away on his 100th birthday, one day after enjoying a Motor Parade in front of his home featuring his family, ECCTAI members, friends, and neighbors. He is buried with members of his family in his beloved hometown of Baltimore, MD.

MILITARY LOCATIONS / ASSIGNMENTS

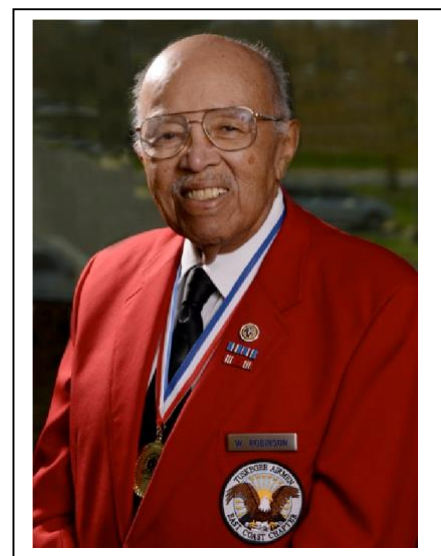
Camp Lee, Virginia
Keesler Field, MS
Tuskegee Army Air Field, AL

MILITARY SERVICE

July, 1941 through November, 1945

CIVILIAN AWARDS / HONORS

Congressional Gold Medal (awarded collectively)



Walter K. Robinson, Sr. at age 93