



BIOGRAPHY

A DOCUMENTED ORIGINAL TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

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James J. Johns was born in Springfield, Tennessee, on October 12, 1917. He was raised in Alliance Ohio and attended Central State University (HBCU) in Xenia Ohio where he met and married his college sweetheart Lillian Saxon. While at CSU, he applied for OCS (Officer's Candidate School) and was denied three times with no explanation. Eleanor Roosevelt, the First Lady, was an advocate for minorities, so he traveled to Washington D.C. to plead his case there. After meeting with her, she promised that she would make some inquiries. When he returned to Central State University, he had been accepted and entered OCS on April 8, 1942. He was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant on April 16, 1943, and held the position of Adjutant to the 99th Fighter Squadron in the 332-Fighter group stationed at the Tuskegee Army Airfield in Alabama. In 1946 the 99th Fighter Squadron moved from Tuskegee to Lockborne Air Base in Columbus Ohio where he continued serving as Adjutant of the 99th Fighter Squadron. He achieved the rank of 1st Lieutenant on July 26, 1944. On December 13, 1946, his wife Lillian gave birth to their first child, Sandra Elain Johns. He was promoted to Captain on September 12, 1947. He continued serving as Adjutant of the 99th Fighter Squadron until September 1949. In May of 1950, he was stationed at Clark Air Force Base where he served as a Finance Officer. On December 7, 1951, his wife Lillian gave birth to twins, Janet Marie, and James Johns II. He achieved the rank of Major on June 19, 1952. Later that month, he returned to Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio and served in the Finance Division of HQ 2750 Air Base Wing. On August 1, 1956, he was stationed at the 51st Fighter Wing at Naha Air Base, Okinawa and served for 3 years as Wing Disbursing Officer. On the 26th of January 1959, he returned to the United States and was stationed at the Air Force Finance and Accounting Center in Denver Colorado where he retired on March 31, 1963. After retiring from the Air Force, he started a business called 3-J Enterprises in Denver's historic Five Points neighborhood. He passed away on June 7, 1989.