

Lt.Col. James C. Warren

Biographical Brief

1. The Early Years

James Warren was born on August 16, 1923 in Gurley, AL. He was only two and a half years old when his father, a grocery store employee, was struck with appendicitis. His father was taken to the hospital, refused access to an operating room and died on a makeshift operating table in the hospital's basement. Although James had older sisters in Huntsville, AL and Chattanooga, TN, he and his mother were very much alone in Gurley. His mother took in laundry from "white folks" which she washed by hand for a pittance. When he was old enough, James would pick up the laundry at the homes, carry it home and return it to his mother's customers when she would finish the load of clothes.

Growing up disadvantaged, Warren worked hard from a very early age. "I never had a childhood," he said. "In the summer, I'd get up early and pick blackberries and sell them to the white folks for ten to fifteen cents a gallon. I would catch crawfish and sell the tails for bait. I also sold the Pittsburg Courier for ten cents a copy in Gurley. I then walked five miles, barefooted, to Paint Rock and sell the extra copies. I'd use the money from selling newspapers to buy shoes for the winter. In the spring, summer and fall, I'd work in the cotton fields."

Work in the cotton fields was difficult. James started when he was nine years old, ending each day with his hands cut by the sharp and brittle boll that surrounded the cotton ball. Cotton pickers were paid 35 cents per 100 pounds picked. Starting with a "short sack," James graduated to a 6-foot long sack when he was 10 years old. At 11 he could finally pick 100 pounds of cotton per day.

James's early school years were structured to accommodate the cotton season. School began in late October after the harvest and ended in March when James and the other children would return to the fields for tilling and planting. His school was staffed by two teachers who taught sixty students in twelve grades. As part of his education, James was the janitor when he was in the fourth grade. He swept the floors, started fires to warm the classroom and filled a bucket to provide students with drinking water throughout the day.

James honed his early literary skills by reading the old newspaper pages that his mother, using glue made from Red Cross contributed flour, stuck to the walls of their home to keep out the wind. James's passion for reading was influenced by Charlie Powell, an elderly black man who collected books that had been discarded by white



folk. Each time they met, Mr. Powell would offer him a new book to read. "I knew I had to read the books because he was going to ask me questions about them whenever we met," he said. James became particularly interested in reading about history and explorers. By the time James was ten years old, he could recite the names of all of the Presidents in one breath.

James's mother was determined to move him out of Alabama's dangerously racist environment. The Ku Klux Klan had achieved tremendous strength, emboldening non-members along the way. Her fears were warranted as illustrated in a particularly powerful story that occurred when James was 14 years old. At the time, he was shining shoes in a white barber shop while he temporarily lived in Huntsville, AL. There, he was known simply as "Shine." James noted that was the most degrading name a Black person could be given.

Another incident that hastening his mother's decision to get James out of Alabama as soon as possible happen as James was leaving work one day. A group of white men who were "hanging out" at a nearby grocery store surrounded him and told him that they were going to execute him. They took him to a location that had been set up, secured him to a chair and attached leads from a car battery to his body, reaffirming their intent as they worked. After completing the preparation, the men turned on a switch, sending a current from the battery through James's body. James said that they "fell about laughing" over their joke. Quietly, he added that he had nightmares about the incident for years. It was time to leave Alabama. Mother was already in Winnetka.

2. "The Magic of New Trier"

Entering a New World

In 1937, James's mother secured a job as a live-in maid in Winnetka for \$8 per week. After several months, she saved enough money to pay for "a train ticket and a cheap suit" so James could join her. He made the trip and settled in Highland Park where he lived in the basement of a home of a young white couple and served as their houseboy while attending school. He was not allowed to attend Highland Park High School due to his race, but the family who employed his mother in Winnetka arranged for James to attend New Trier. At the time, New Trier had 2,800 students including 13 African Americans.

One month after leaving Alabama, James set out for his first day at New Trier. As he did every morning, James finished his morning houseboy chores and rode the Northwestern train to Winnetka. The school was a daunting, alien sight for a 15-year old boy whose previous school housed 60 students and two teachers. James had never seen a library or interacted on a peer level with well-dressed whites. New Trier steeped in a tradition of excellence, endless resources had more teachers with PhD's than the average college. Students at New Trier, attended school ten months a year and had been raised under the rigorous Chandler-Washburn teaching method, developed skills that he could not hope to duplicate overnight. James sensed it immediately, along with other gaps between New Trier and the upbringing of an Alabama farm boy.

James was assigned an advisor (Mr. Richard Gadske) an advisory room. He was escorted to his advisory room. He was welcomed by the other advisees as if he had always been one of them and by his advisor, Mr. Richard Gadske. At the end of the day he returned to Highland Park where, as usual, he completed his cooking and cleaning chores consistent with his job as the houseboy. This daily routine was “a confused mess” but James pressed on.

New Trier had an impressive roster of extracurricular activities but James had never heard of many of them. Nevertheless, he found ways to participate in a few student activities. He joined the traffic squad. Although he had never seen a football before he arrived at New Trier, he qualified for the freshman/sophomore football team. By the end of the first year, he played quarterback (see accompanying Winnetka Times photograph), even if that meant blocking as much as throwing the football. James also played baseball, which he had learned in Alabama, earning cherished varsity letters in his junior and senior years along with junior varsity letters for football.

James’s freshman grades were mostly C’s and D’s. He struggled with catching up to his classmates. His hectic extracurricular work schedule left little time for studying. He had “no mentor, no direction and no help.” Somehow, he completed his requirements. James did manage to do well in Ancient History, partly because he could make a slingshot and demonstrated this ancient art of defense. He “prayed and wished to be involved in Honors Society but (he) didn’t have a chance.” He believed he could have made it if he had a home to go to where he could ask questions and study. The demands of his mother’s job left him with no one but himself to rely on. Regardless, James pressed on.

Overcoming Challenges

James’s life during the New Trier years was marked by disruptions and demands that would have defeated the bravest heart. Of necessity, he had a transitory home life, continuously moving from one residence to another and finding new ways to support himself. Typically, he earned money working in time-intensive jobs that left him with no time for studying. He worked in the kitchen at a restaurant at Plaza del Lago where he made \$10-12 per week. After work, it was too late to go home, so he would sleep in the basement, wash his face in the morning and go to class after the breakfast shift. On weekends, he would work throughout the day. If there was a New Trier baseball game, he would take a break from work, play the game and then return to finish his job.

James supported himself with a range of other jobs in restaurants which could also be a source and one of his favorite foods; milk. Occasionally other New Trier students would come into the restaurants to eat. James envied them but recognized that he *didn’t have much* and worked through the social gap. Among other jobs, he also worked as a caddy at the Skokie Country Club. He recalled returning to the Club years later for a New Trier reunion when he was allowed to walk through the front door for the first time.

James found one other source of funds at New Trier. After the other students left at the end of each day, he would go to the TriShip Lounge and scour the sofas and easy chairs. There he

would sometimes find several nickels and/or dimes that he could use to fund his lunch the next day.

In addition to changing jobs, James lived in a variety of locations. Along with the basement of the Plaza del Lago restaurant, these included the YMCA and other rooms in Evanston and Wilmette. Wilmette offered an advantage over the other locations: he could hitch-hike home from work and save five cents a day that would otherwise pay for his train ride. His living quarters typically included a room which he may have shared with another tenant. Rooms were located in neighborhoods inhabited by butlers, maids, yard workers and other black laborers. James recalled the Father of the family he was living with in Wilmette was a nationally rated speed typist among the fastest typist in America, but worked as a chauffeur because he could not secure a job where he could use his typing skill due to his race. He would see his mother on Thursdays – maids' day off – and occasional Sundays.

With a few exceptions, the students at New Trier were nice to James and provided a positive social foundation. In particular, his football and baseball teammates established relationships with him at school although James was never invited to their homes. During the summers, James did not have the chance to associate with his fellow students. Many of them played American Legion baseball but James was not allowed into the league due to his race.

Personal Transformation

After a difficult freshman year, James underwent an intellectual and social transformation during his sophomore and junior years. He accelerated especially quickly in his academic achievements. He recalled a turning point in his junior year when Dr. Windoes - his physics teacher, mentor and head of the Science Department - persuaded him that he should become a "professional man." The concept of pursuing a professional career was a foreign concept but his steady progress in school, support from his teachers and extracurricular achievements created a foundation from which he could begin to consider alternatives to the limited options that would have been his choices without New Trier.

In his junior year, James was assigned a research paper on a profession. He chose architecture, became aware of luminaries such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies Van Der Rohe and developed an understanding of the profession's requirements and opportunities. With this knowledge, James adopted a professional goal and, in the process, irretrievably crossed a threshold that severed him from his past and pushed him into a new world, albeit one filled with social and cultural landmines.

James blossomed over the course of his junior and senior years. He majored in pre-engineering with challenging courses such as calculus and physics. During his senior year, James completed a research study on the budding science of nuclear energy. By his senior year he was earning A's and B's in his classes despite still having nowhere to study outside school and no "home" support. Clearly, he had crossed the educational barriers that had separated him from New Trier's other students as a freshman, dealt with a seemingly insurmountable set of challenges and achieved academic standing at one of the nation's top high schools.

James modestly noted that Mr. Gaffney, New Trier's principal, would have said that James may not have exceeded above all others but did better than his background had prepared him. James was driven to excel, and learned early how to turn adversity into opportunity. James proudly recalled making the honor roll in his senior year and graduating with a pre-engineering curriculum in June 1942.

James's progress was proven in two subsequent academic achievements. First, he passed the architectural entrance exams with their strong emphases on physics and mathematics. Second, he scored in the 98th percentile when he took the cadet exam and consistently ranked in the top group at cadet school. James also attributed his later success at learning celestial navigation to the education he received at New Trier.

Certain faculty and staff members were instrumental in helping James navigate his way through New Trier. Dr. Windoes encouraged James to undertake a career and made a new level of unimagined professional and social achievement into an achievable goal. Mrs. Ethel Evans taught James mathematics and served as another mentor. She gave James a subscription to Reader's Digest and sent him \$10 per month out of her personal funds as a scholarship when James left the service and attended university of Illinois. Mr. Gadske continued as James's advisor as well as his football and baseball coach and accompanied James to New Trier's father/son events.

James fondly recalled his memories of Joe Schmitt who was New Trier's locker room attendant. Joe knew the name of every student who walked into the locker room. Joe also watched out for James and would lend him money to pay for his lunch which James would always pay back when he could.

While the faculty and students at New Trier overwhelmingly treated James fairly, he was subjected to racist comments when his teams would visit other schools. James recalled an incident when New Trier took a risk in standing for its social values. The New Trier baseball team was playing a game in Cicero, a community which then had a reputation for racism. When the umpire made a call against James that appeared racially motivated, New Trier's coach called the entire team in off the field until the call was changed.

In addition to the lessons of academic excellence, James absorbed the ubiquitous influences of the arts including music, visual arts and drama. James was especially influenced by the music programs at New Trier. Attending concerts that were held throughout the year, he developed a lifelong love for classical music. The annual jazz festival exposed him to artists such as Benny Goodman.

James was also influenced by the cultural values at New Trier. In particular, he absorbed the value of a stable family life and admired the beautiful homes that the families of New Trier could afford. These inspired him to develop his own values to achieve a comparable situation one day.

After four challenging years, James attended his "magical" graduation. He recalled renting a tuxedo with a white jacket. The event was held at the Edgecomb (? Edgewater) Hotel where New Trier ensured that the white-only policy was suspended for the day). James's mother

proudly attended the graduation ceremony. Frank Ellis Sublett was graduated in class 1938 who was later one of the Golden Thirteen enlisted men who became the first African American commissioned and warrant officers in the United States Navy.

In retrospect, James speaks lovingly of the way that New Trier enabled him to make the unlikely transition from shining shoes and picking cotton to an intellectually advanced high school graduate with values and a vision for his future. His accomplishments at New Trier had overcome the bad experiences of his past and given him a strong sense of identity and accomplishment that could not be taken away. James refers to this as “the magic of New Trier.”

3. The Tuskegee Airmen and the Freeman Field Mutiny

Getting Off the Ground

James did not stand a chance of entering college following graduation and took a job at a drug store. One day, between deliveries during the summer of 1942, he read “I Got Wings,” written by second lieutenant Charles Debow and published in American Magazine. Second Lieutenant Debow was one of the first five black cadets to graduate at Tuskegee Army Air Field and earn his silver wings. “I was so proud; it brought tears to my eyes,” James recalled. “The thought of ever being a part of that program never even touched my mind.”

A boyhood friend, Warren Spencer, told James about a new Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) program, and a test being given at the Wabash YMCA in Chicago to qualify for the program. Originally the program was open only to whites, but an amendment to Public Law 17 authorized the formation of seven units, five at predominantly black colleges. The test was conducted by Miss Willa Brown, who ran a flight school at Harlem Airport in Chicago. James passed the test, qualified for the program and was ordered to report to Harlem Airport on Oct. 22, 1942.

When he reported, Brown advised him he must take the Air Corps Cadet qualifying test, adding that he should not try to score too highly because it would make him ineligible for the CPT program. Unfortunately, James scored highly. Disappointed, he felt he wouldn’t be allowed to continue in the CPT program and went straight home, only to discover later that he would have been admitted to the CPT program if he had returned to Harlem Airport.

Undaunted, James enlisted in the Army Air Forces on November 19, 1942 and was called to active duty in March, 1943. Boarding a train in Chicago, James left for Keesler Air Base in Biloxi, MS. “Once we crossed the Mason Dixon Line, the conductor dragged me out of my Pullman compartment and put me into the first car,” he said. “It’s the worst place to be because there’s soot and cinders throughout the car.”

After attending basic training at Kessler Field for less than a month, James was assigned to the College Training Detachment at the Tuskegee Institute for 11 weeks. The training of black American pilots began at the Tuskegee Institute on July 19, 1941. On March 7, 1942, only five

of the original 13 black candidates got their wings. Although training proceeded slowly, enough pilots graduated to form the 99th Pursuit Squadron.

On June 19, 1943, James entered pre-flight cadet training at Tuskegee Army Air Base. Following the completion of preflight, he returned to the campus for primary flight training. After three weeks, one of the white directors informed James and his class that there were too many cadets in the class and that ten had to go. A week later, after two difficult check rides in which he was instructed to do maneuvers in which he had no training; James was eliminated from the program. "It was the most devastating night of my life," he said.

Because of the education and training level of the ex-cadets, they were assigned to administrative areas at the air field. James was assigned to the personnel unit.

Flight Officer Warren

In October 1943, all former cadets (121 in total) were sent back to Kessler Field to determine their qualifications for training as navigators or bombardiers. After three days of testing, only seven were selected. Warren was one of the seven.

"None of us ever believed the results were valid or correct," he explained. "They didn't know what do with us this was not sufficient number of cadets for the next class of navigators. We remained at Keesler for several weeks. We made up our own squadron. We'd be first in line at the dining hall, and then disappear into the library all day."

Eventually the Air Force qualified 26 additional individuals for navigation training, including Warren, and sent them to pre-flight training at Tuskegee followed by navigation school in Hondo, Texas. After arriving in Hondo early in the morning on Easter Sunday, the 33 cadets attended a church service where they were seated in a separate section. Afterwards, the group was introduced to their classroom: a tarpaper shack in an open field away from the main base.

"We worked all afternoon cleaning it up in 100+-degree heat," he recalled. "We lived in barracks by ourselves. We marched in our own formation and we always won the competition for best marching unit. But we weren't allowed in the cadet club. We had to go to the back door to order food. We had a couple of guys who were light skinned enough to pass for white go to the front door and order. We considered this a victory."

Navigation school lasted from April until graduation on August 24, 1944 (as class 44-11-9B, with the "B" designating "black"). Thirty of the 33 ex-cadets graduated. "I was given the rank of flight officer (F.O.) when I should have been second lieutenant," he said. "The board was supposed to determine if we were to be rated as flight officers or second lieutenants. But there was never a board held."

On February 4, 1945, Warren graduated from bombardier school at Midland, Texas and now was dual-rated as a navigator and bombardier.

Racism in the Military

Up to and during World War II, the United States military was a convincingly segregated, if not racist, organization. Practices reflected behaviors and cultural patterns that were still common in many parts of the nation but flew in the face of national values of equality. On October 20, 1925, a study conducted by the Army War College and signed by Commandant Maj. Gen. H. E. Ely concluded that black men believed themselves to be inferior to white men and lacked initiative and resourcefulness. The report claimed “Negro officers not only lacked the mental capacity to command, but courage, as well.” Lt. Col.’s future superiors - Major Gen. Frank O’Donnell “Monk” Hunter and Commander Col. Robert Selway – clearly supported the study’s conclusion which created a context of social injustice for Lt. Col. Warren lifelong fight against segregation and racism.

In mid-February 1945, F.O. Warren joined the 477th Bombardment Group at Godman Field, KY where all the commanders were white. General Henry H. “Hap” Arnold, Commanding General of the AAF, tried to abort the unit before it was even born. Commander Col. Selway’s hostility toward the black bombardment program was reflected by his commander, Major Gen. Hunter (a decorated “ace” from WWI), who resented being associated with bombers, especially one including black flyers.

The 477th Bombardment Group was activated at Selfridge Field, MI on January 15, 1944. One day, with the Selfridge base theater full of black officers, Maj. Gen. Hunter laid down his law when he said, “The War Department is not ready to recognize blacks on the level of social equal to white men. This is not the time for blacks to fight for equal rights or personal advantages. Anyone who protests will be classed as an agitator, sought out and dealt with accordingly. This is my base and, as long as I am in command, there will be no social mixing of the white and colored officers. The single Officer’s Club on base will be used solely by white officers.”

“General Hunter was more interested in keeping the clubs segregated than getting our group ready for overseas combat,” Warren said. On May 5, 1944 all gates at Selfridge Field were locked and the 477 BG was moved to the small, dilapidated Godman Field, Ky.

In late February 1945, a few weeks after Warren joined the 477th BG, the Air Force started moving the group from Godman to Freeman Field, IN, a far superior facility. On April 3, 1945, two days before the last officers were moved to Freeman Field. A group of officers, including Warren, gathered around a lone B-25 at Godman Field and discussed what awaited them at Freeman Field.

“Several of us read a copy of the new letter dated April 1, 1945,” Warren explained. “Col. Selway had designated the former noncommissioned officer’s club as ‘Officer’s Club Number One’ for black officers (who called it “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” and refused to use it) and ‘Officer’s Club Number Two’ for supervisor and instructor personnel (who were all white). We decided that once we got to Freeman Field, we’d take action.”

The Freeman Field Mutiny

That evening, the officers had a meeting and decided that there was only one thing left to do: go to the club. The officers agreed that their confrontation must be a non-violent direct action. If arrested, they would simply leave the club, commit no acts of violence, but continue entering the club in small groups.

On April 5, 1945, a train arrived at Freeman Field with Warren and several other officers. Once settled in, they put their plan into action. The first officer to enter the club was Lt. Marsden A. Thompson. Two paces into the club, Thompson was met by Lt. J.D. Rogers, the "Officer of the Day." Rogers told Thompson, "This club isn't for you fellows." When Thompson proceeded to enter, Rogers grabbed him. As Rogers and Thompson conversed, Warren and several other officers entered the club. When the first 19 officers refused to leave, they were arrested and returned to their quarters. Meanwhile, a group of 14 more officers entered the club, then later, another group of three. That night, a total of 36 black officers were arrested.

The next day, 25 additional officers, some of whom were combat veterans from the 332 FG, entered the club in small groups and were arrested. This brought the two-day total to 61 arrests.



First Lieutenant William Ellis (in front) and (L to R) Capt. Richard Stanton, Flight Officer Warren and Second Lieutenant Leroy Roberts leave Godman Field for some recreation in the fall of 1945.

On April 9, with the help of Col. Wold and Maj. Osborne, Col. Selway created Base Regulation 85-2 and added an endorsement stating that anyone signing it would agree to have understood it and would obey. By signing it, the officers would agree to being segregated and discriminated against. The following day, Warren and 100 other officers refused to sign the new base regulation. "My commanding officer said, 'I order you, Flight Officer Warren, to sign Base Regulation 85-2,'" he said. "Do you intend on carrying out my orders, yes or no?" I told him, 'I have no statement to make, sir,' and he replied. 'I am ordering you under arrest for disobeying my order.'"

Of the 400 black officers stationed at Freeman Field, 101 refused to sign base regulation 85-2 and were placed under arrest. Maj. Gen. Hunter and Col. Selway tried to charge the officers with the 66 Article of War (Mutiny) and the 64 AOW (Disobeying a direct order from a superior officer in a time of war, punishable by death). "It didn't bother me a damn bit," Warren said. "We were young, educated, well trained and determined."

Two days after their second arrest, the officers were ordered to march to the flight line where six C-47s awaited. With a camera hidden in a shoe box, a Black non-commissioned officer managed to take a photo of several officers standing on the tarmac with their belongings. On April 28, 1945, the photo appeared on the cover of the Pittsburg Courier with the headline "61 Pilots Arrested, Offense?--Visiting White Officer's Club" with an in depth story. Irate American citizens flooded the War Department with more than 50,000 telegrams.

The C-47s took off from Freeman Field with 101 officers wondering if they were headed to Fort Leavenworth prison. They soon realized they were heading back to Godman Field. When they arrived, dozens of Military Police were waiting for them armed with submachine guns. “The German and Italian POW’s, walking freely without guards, were laughing at us,” Warren said.

Meanwhile, Maj. Gen. Hunter, Gen. Giles, Gen. Welch, Gen. Stewart and Col. Selway were discussing their next moves over the phone and recording these conversations. It was not a normal process to record the officer’s telephone conversations using huge wire cylinder recorders. These conversations were recorded and later transcribed to paper and classified as top secret.

For 28 years following the end of the war, these conversations remained classified top secret. In 1973, at the insistence of Col. Alan Gropman, author of *The Air Force Integrates*, these files were declassified. In those transcripts, Gen. Welch said, in reference to the 477th BG, “Maybe we can eliminate the program gradually and accomplish our end.”



On April 12, 1945, President Roosevelt died and Harry S. Truman became President. Five days later, all officers at Godman Field were released from arrest with the exception of Clinton, Thompson and Terry, who were later put on trial. Lt. Roger Terry was convicted for offering violence to a superior officer and fined \$50 a month for three months.

On July 1, 1945 Col. Benjamin O. Davis Jr., commander of the 332nd Fighter Group in Italy, officially took command of the 477th BG and all white personnel were removed. However, on August 14, 1945, WWII ended and the 477th BG never saw combat. On March 12, 1946, Warren was released from active duty and returned to his home in Evanston, IL.

The 477th Bombardment Group was the first group to challenge a major department of the U.S. government on civil rights. To put the event into perspective, not only was the protest held within the strict command structure of the military, but it occurred nine years before Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks refused to obey the bus laws in Montgomery, AL. The effectiveness of the non-violent, conscience driven efforts of the 161 total officers arrested at Freeman Field was evident by President Harry Truman issuing Executive Order 9981, bringing an end to official segregation in the armed forces in 1948.

For Warren and the other arrested officers, the reprimands doled out by Gen. Hunter stuck to their records and proved devastating. The statement, “He displayed an uncooperative and stubborn attitude toward constituted authority,” plagued Warren’s career. Consequently, no arrested officer in the Freeman Field Mutiny ever got a rank higher than lieutenant colonel.

4. Post World War II Service

Lt. Col. Warren returned to civilian life and majored in architecture at the University of Illinois from 1947 to 1950. He was employed with Holsman, Holsman, Klekamp & Taylor, an architectural firm in Chicago. He became an associate member of the American Institute of Architects Chicago Chapter.

Lt. Col. Warren was recalled to active duty March 13, 1952 for the Korean War. "The orders from the 10 AF at Selfridge had me listed as white. There was a parenthesis after my name with a "W" inside, indicating I was white. I think that's why I got recalled. I was dual-rated, so they must have figured, 'He must be white.'" After completing refresher training, B-26 combat crew training and survival school, Warren reported in November 1952 to the 17th Bomber Wing in Korea. He was assigned to Pusan AB Korea, and served with the 17th Bomb Wing and 34th Bomb Squadron. In all, he flew fifty combat missions in the Douglass B-26 "Night Intruder" which carried six 500-pound bombs internally and two on each wing. "We also did strafing at night," he recalled. "I would call out the altitude and warn the pilot to pull up so we wouldn't hit any mountains. Sometimes I'd have to hit the pilot and holler, 'Pull up!' We got hit quite a few times but were never shot down. Sometimes I even had three missions in one day. With no briefing, they'd just give you paperwork and you'd go right back out."

Lt. Col. Warren's 50th and final mission was on July 22, 1953. Five days later, the war ended.

Lt. Col. Warren was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) with one Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of a second Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal (AM) with two oak leaf clusters and several other decorations and awards.

Lt. Col. Warren remained on active duty following the Korean War. He was assigned to the Military Airlift Command and flew a variety of transport missions, visiting almost all areas of the world. He was later assigned as the Flight Facilities Officer at Ramstein AB in Germany. He also served as the Command Navigator for the Commander of United States Air Forces Europe. Lt. Col. Warren was reassigned to Travis AFB, California from 1960-65 and served as the Chief Flight Examiner Navigator for the first all-jet transport squadron.

In February 1967 Lt. Col. Warren was assigned to the 360th Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron at Tan Son Nhut AB, South Vietnam where he flew 123 combat missions during his tour of duty. He was awarded his third Distinguished Flying Cross, an accomplishment that few airmen have achieved.

He returned to Travis AFB, CA from 1968-71 where he continued to fly and commanded two Squadrons.

During his career Lt. Col. Warren served as Commander of several squadrons and as Chief of Social Actions for several Air Force Wings. The Social Action program was designed to provide equal opportunities, human relations education and drug and alcohol abuse control for all Air Force personnel. While serving as Chief of Social Action for the 93rd Bombardment Wing at

Castle Air Force Base, California his unit was awarded the Col. L. Joseph Brown Award, representative of the most outstanding Social Action Office in The United States Air Force. In 1976, the unit he commanded was selected as the most outstanding Social Action Unit in the entire Air Force.

Memorable Missions

During his total career, Lt. Col. Warren flew over 12,000 hours including several memorable missions. In 1964, he flew the Bob Hope Show from Vietnam to Los Angeles on the final segment of its Vietnam (Southeast Asia) Christmas tour. He also flew the Apollo 14 "Moon Crew" from splashdown in the Pacific near Pago Pago, American Samoa to the manned Space Center in Houston, Texas.

Lt. Col. Warren's most memorable mission was when he served as the navigator for the C-141 aircraft that flew the first group of POWs from Gia Lam airport in Hanoi, North Vietnam to Clark AB in the Philippines. On Feb. 12, 1973, aircraft 60177 - call sign "Homecoming One" - was commanded by Maj. James Marrott. "Once on the ground at Gia Lam, we were instructed to 'cock the aircraft' and be ready for immediate take off once the ex-POW's were aboard," he said. "When we were taxiing out, one of the passengers asked me to tell him when we were three miles out (in international waters) and I told him, 'Don't worry, you're going home today.' We left the cockpit door open and when we rotated off that runway, the loudest roar of joy came up from the cabin. I can still hear it today."

Warren knew his friend of many years, Maj. Fred V. Cherry, was aboard. Maj. Cherry was an AF F-105 fighter pilot and was a POW for 7 years and 5 months after being shot down in Oct. 1965. "Twenty minutes into the flight, Cherry walked past the cockpit and saw me. He jumped into the cockpit and we hugged each other for about five minutes," he said.

During a CNN interview on May 12, 2004, Maj. Cherry was asked about a photo taken on the "Hanoi Taxi." "The gentleman who is lighting my first American cigarette is an old friend of mine who I didn't know was on the aircraft," Cherry recalled. "He was the navigator for the flight. He didn't know what psychological condition I might be in, so he got the word to me quietly that he was in the cockpit if I remembered him. I remembered him very well. His name is Jim Warren."

"My flight jacket, flight suit and cap from that mission are in an enclosed glass case at the AF Museum, at Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton, OH." Lt. Col. Warren said. "And in the background is a huge blow-up of that photo of me lighting Fred's cigarette. This picture is also displayed in the Pentagon."

On November 1, 1978, Lt. Col. Warren retired from the United States Air Forces after over 35 years of total military service including over 29 years of active duty. During his career, he was awarded numerous decorations and awards, including three Distinguished Flying Crosses, 11 Air Medals, three Meritorious Service Medals and many additional awards. He completed advanced military education including the Squadron Officers School, Air Command and Staff College, the Air War College and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. In 2007, he was awarded the

Congressional Gold Medal which has been given only 300 times since it was first presented to heroes of the American Revolution.

5. A Career of Justice and Community Service After his retirement from the Air Force, Lt. Col. Warren joined General Dynamics Corporation as a Personnel Specialist and, later, Director of College Relations. He also remained active in the United Air Forces Social Action Program. He retired from General Dynamics on January 18, 1985.

Seeking Justice

After retirement from General Dynamics, Lt. Col. Warren read *The Air Force Integrates* by Col. Alan Gropman and renewed his hope of convincing the AF Board for the Corrections of Records to remove the reprimands on his record and those of the other 100 airmen. Warren also sought to fulfill another dream: to completely and accurately tell the story of the Tuskegee airmen mutiny at Freeman Field.

For three years, he researched, wrote and rewrote a manuscript. "I would get tired and quit writing," he admitted. "I was so angry. I tried to get the reader as angry as I was. That ruined the story. My wife suggested that I just tell the story."

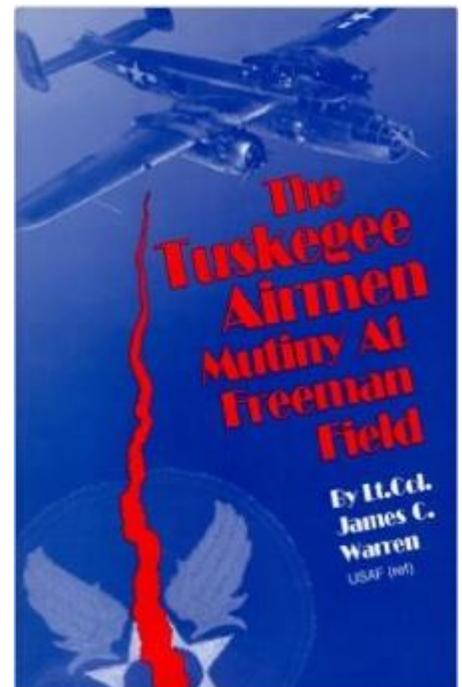
The *Tuskegee Airmen Mutiny at Freeman Field*, by James C. Warren, was published in July 1995. "At that time, I wrote to the board and made my request for the removal of my reprimand from my records," he said. "I also wrote the Assistant Secretary of the AF, Rodney Coleman, and requested his assistance." Because of his diligence and convincing research – and 50 years after the mutiny at Freeman Field – the Air Force removed the reprimands from the permanent military records of the arrested officers as well as the court martial conviction of Roger Terry who was also reimbursed for the payments he made toward his fines.

Community Service

Lt. Col. Warren continues to enrich the lives of others based on his experiences and achievements in social justice and educating children.

Throughout his adult life, Lt. Col. Warren has had a driving desire to help young people find their way. While on active duty he spent numerous hours giving presentations to young people in all grades of schools as well as Head Start programs. He continued this activity upon his return to civilian life and continued to educate students in schools, youth organizations and juvenile correctional facilities.

In 1997, Lt. Col. Warren began a program to involve young people in aviation. He established a Young Eagles flying program at the Nut Tree Airport in his home town of Vacaville, CA. This



program is part of a worldwide program of the Experimental Aircraft Association's Young Eagle Program. Volunteer private pilots fly youths aged eight to seventeen for approximately twenty minutes around the local area. His program has flown over 4,000 Young Eagles to date, a number of whom have gone on to Air Force and other flying careers.

Lt. Col. Warren has incorporated a non-profit scholarship fund that provides assistance to high school graduate who attend college this program. He has also assisted several youth to continue to pursue private aviation certification. He funds this scholarship program with contributions and fees received from speaking engagements to businesses and other organizations.

In 2006, realizing that teachers had been using their private funds to purchase additional supplies and programs with which to assist them in making greater presentations to their students, Lt. Col. Warren organized and held a fundraiser that secured over \$32,000. This was presented to teachers in three local school districts to purchase needed supplies. Lt. Col. Warren did this without publicity of any sort.

In 2007, Lt. Col. Warren was awarded the Martin Luther King, Jr. "Living the Dream" Achievement Award by the Solano Community College in Fairfield, CA for his activities in Civil Rights.

Maintaining the Tradition of the Tuskegee Airmen

Lt. Col. Warren also serves as an Air Force goodwill ambassador. In 2004, he travelled to the Ali Al-Salem Air Base in Kuwait and the broader Area of Responsibility (AOR) for a three-day visit. From April 23-25, 2009, he joined Lt. Col. Alexander Jefferson, Major George Boyd and former Staff Sgt. Philip Broome on visits to Al Udeid Air Base (Qatar), Al Air Base (Iraq), Ali Al-Salem Air Base (Kuwait) and the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Joint Base (Balad, Iraq). There, they met the airmen who are continuing the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen in the 21st century. In addition to meeting airmen across the wing, they visited several facilities and attended the 322nd Dining-In. During their visit, the Tuskegee Airmen shared their wisdom and encouraged service members to continue to better themselves as individuals.

Lt Col. Warren is a life member of a number of civilian and distinguished military and flying organizations:

- The Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.
- Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity
- The Brotherhood of Vietnam Veterans
- The Distinguished Flying Cross Society
- The Disabled Veterans of America
- The Military Officers Association of America
- The Aircraft Owners' and Pilots' Association
- The Experimental Aircraft Association
- The United Flying Octogenarians (UFO).

Lt. Col. Warren is also a private pilot having earned his certificate on September 20, 2010 at the age of 87 (see accompanying article). Prior to Lt. Col. Warren's private pilot certification, the oldest person to be certified in the United States was 84.

Lt. Col. Warren is married to the former Xanthia Francis Cooper of Springfield, MO. He and Xanthia have two sons Captain Stewart T. Warren, USNR and former Lieutenant Commander Dwayne C. Warren and, by a former wife, Captain James C. Warren, Jr. USA (ret).

Sincerely yours,

James C. Warren
Lt. Col. USAF (Retired)

