
Buffalo Soldiers Research Museum Newsletter

January 2012

Volume 10 - Issue 1

Published four times each year ~ January, April, July & October

Indianapolis-based *Buffalo Soldier Tour* for Super Bowl 46

In October, our Buffalo Soldiers Super Bowl 46 Tour described many military sites and people connected to Indianapolis. Our list included -

- ✚ The Soldiers and Sailors Monument at the center of downtown
- ✚ The Congressional Medal of Honor Memorial in Military Park at Michigan and West St.
- ✚ Crispus Attucks High School and Museum at 1140 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr.
- ✚ The Indiana Historical Society at 450 W. Ohio St.
- ✚ Crown Hill Cemetery at 34th and Boulevard Pl.
- ✚ WWI Buffalo Soldier, Dr. John Morton Finney Educational Service Center at 120 E. Walnut St.
- ✚ The former homes of several veterans from World War I and World War II

Now, to complete our list...

A Historical Marker in Honor of the 28th Regiment, U.S. Colored Troops.

The corner of Virginia Ave. and McCarty St. (Fountain Square)

From December 1863 to March 1864, about 500 African American men from across Indiana enlisted in the 28th Regiment. They were Indiana's only trained at Camp Fremont which later became Fountain Square.

Soldiers from the 28th Regiment were among the 5,300 men who fell in about six hours at the Battle of Crater near Petersburg, VA on July 30, 1864. They were also among the first Union troops to march into Richmond, VA, the Confederate capital, just days before Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox Courthouse, VA on April 9, 1865. The only other designation in Indianapolis for the 28th Regiment is on approximately 250 gravestones at Crown Hill Cemetery.



Pompey Hawkins, Tuskegee Airman



We interviewed Pompey Hawkins and his wife, Margaret, at their north side home on July 24, 2004. They described growing up in Atlantic City, his love for photography, and their thriving marriage of more than 60 years.

During the interview, he told us about his days of protest in the

military. In 1942, when he arrived in Mississippi, he learned that blacks could not visit the Post Exchange, theater, or every other white amenity. He gathered 400 black soldiers who marched to each facility and demanded service. The base commander hit him with a swagger stick and Hawkins struck him back. He was court-martialed but was acquitted after documentation proved claims of discrimination. They called him “The Rebel.”

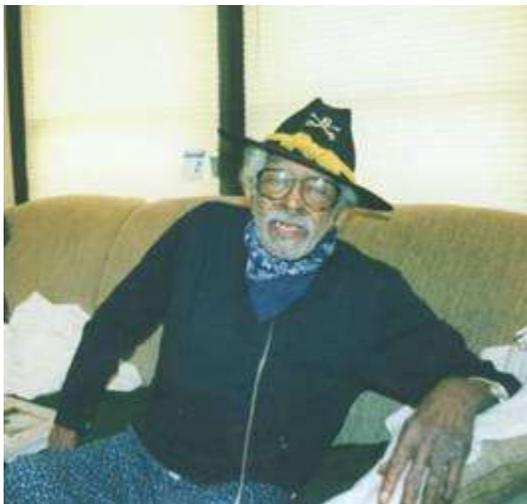


At his death on April 23, 2006, Hawkins was one of the oldest surviving members of the Tuskegee Airmen. He was one of the first African Americans to do reconnaissance photography during WWII and was the first black to command soldiers at Keesler Field in Mississippi and Jefferson Barracks in Missouri. His grave is located at Washington Park North located at the intersection where 56th St. connects to Kessler Blvd. and Cooper Rd.

Arthur Edwards, Buffalo Soldier

On February 25, 2005, we visited Arthur Edwards to learn more about his life as a WWII Buffalo Soldier. He joined the Army in 1941 and completed basic training at Ft. McClellan, AL. From there, he was stationed at Ft. Huachuca, AZ - home of the Buffalo Soldiers.

Edwards served as Lena Horne’s chauffeur for three days while she performed for the black troops. From Ft. Huachuca, he and the other troops from the 92nd Division were shipped to Italy. He stayed there for 19 months which was when WWII ended. He was honorably discharged in 1946. Edwards had fond memories of the southwest and overseas. He learned to speak Italian and was able to say a few sentences during our visit.



On August 15, 2005, Arthur Edwards passed away. His grave is located in New Crown Cemetery. His home was located on 11th and Holmes in Haughville. (We are not sure who lives there now.)



John Wesley Lee, Jr. U.S. Navy



John W. Lee entered the Naval Reserve in 1944 and in 1947 became an Ensign in the U.S. Navy. In 1966, he retired as a Lieutenant Commander. He was the first African American commissioned officer in the Navy. He earned his BS degree in Aerological Engineering and his MS degree in Physical Oceanography. He served as the fleet meteorologist where he performed underwater atomic bomb tests. He and his family made 29 PCS moves during his career.

His home in Indianapolis is located near the corner of Kessler Blvd. and Illinois St. Lee passed away on September 18, 2009 at the age of 85. His grave is in Crown Hill Cemetery.

James Sears, Indiana State Trooper

James Sears served in the U.S. Army from 1958-1962. He was a military police. He was the first black to wear an Indiana State Police uniform where he retired after 30 years of service. His final rank was Captain. During his tenure, he worked security when Presidents John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Gerald Ford came to town. He was also, a pioneer in setting the standards for hiring future black state troopers.



For more than 30 years, he quietly lived at the corner of 58th and Meridian St. (Another family now lives in the two-story home.) I saw “quietly” because he was my parents’ next-door neighbor. He was always a gentleman with a kind word or a chuckle. Sears passed away on January 1, 2003. His grave is located in Crown Hill Cemetery.

Note that several of the military veterans lived in the same neighborhood. Dr. John Morton Finney (see the October 2011 issue) lived around the corner from James Sears. And a few blocks north, is the residence of John W. Lee.

Fort Benjamin Harrison Historic District 56th St. and Post Rd.

Fort Harrison was the city’s major military post before it closed in the 1990s. In the wake of the Spanish American War, Congress established a series of regimental posts to accommodate the growing U.S. Army. In 1902, Congress established Fort Benjamin Harrison and the Army began land acquisition in (then) rural Lawrence Township, northeast of downtown.



Fort Harrison served in a training capacity for two World Wars, the Cold War, the Vietnam War, and other U.S. actions. The fort was a point of induction into or release from military service.

Many of the original 1902-1910-era buildings remain. The U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps used standardized building plans for the officers' housing, barracks, barns, and service buildings that were completed by 1910. Sergeant's Row, a series of doubles facing 56th St. was added in 1931. Lawton Loop, a naturalistic, roughly U-shaped drive, is lined with brick and stone trimmed officers' quarters, now converted to private housing.

In the 1990s, Fort Harrison was decommissioned. Private development has been allowed to use parts of the fort, adding new neighborhoods. The military maintains a small portion of the site and the 1950s finance center across 56th St. The State of Indiana acquired much of the natural grounds which include Fort Harrison State Park with hiking, golf, and horseback trails for the general public. The former officers' club is now a restaurant and meeting facility called The Garrison.

Wallace Corley, Montford Point Marine

Wallace Corley joined the Army Air Corps at the age of 16. Soon afterwards, he was discharged when they discovered his true age. Determined, he entered the U.S. Marines during WWII and served as a Montford Point Marine. He was stationed in Saipan as part of the Heavy Anti-Aircraft Artillery Provisional whose mission was to guard 2,000 Japanese prisoners of war. After the war, Corley served in the Marine Corps Reserve from 1949-1959 and was recalled in the Vietnam Conflict from 1970-1974. Corley served as a Commission Officer and Captain in the National Guard Reserve.



He describes his experience - When I joined the Marine Corps, I had no idea I would be part of history, being an original Montford Point Marine; however, Montford Point Marines were men of strength, pride, and vision. They overcame segregation while working for a common goal.

Corley currently lives in one of the housing area described in the Fort Benjamin Harrison Historic District.

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After your historical military journey around town, now you can relax or gear up for Super Bowl 46. Lots of interesting options are available for you, your family and friends.

Super Bowl Village

There are 10 days of events in the Super Bowl Village along Georgia Ave starting on Friday, January 27th. The village is not only for tourists but it is for folks who live in Indianapolis, too. The good news is that it is all FREE.

The Village is organized around “warm zones.” There are pedestrian walkways that connect hotels restaurants, and shopping to Lucas Oil Stadium. Visitors will be able to enjoy different types of entertainment on every “warm zone” corner. You can dance on one corner, listen to jazz on the

next corner, and dance the night away to rock and roll on the next corner. Modern, modular canopies with heaters and fire pits will ensure the comfort of all regardless of the weather.

There will be two stages with live bands. The Pepsi Stage at Meridian St. and Georgia St. will feature local bands like Cynthia Layne, Blackberry Jam, Indy's Legends of Doo Wop, Gentleman Alphonse, and many more.

The Verizon Stage at Pennsylvania St. and Georgia St. will feature national names like Patti LaBelle, En Vogue, Morris Day and the Time, Here Come the Mummies, and a variety of other talents.

Stars from the Food Network show Ice Brigade will do live ice sculpting. ESPN will set up a large outdoor set on Pan Am Plaza with shows open to the public. And a nightly pyrotechnic and light show will be worth the experience.

The Super Bowl Village is bound to be the best with 8,000 volunteers who will keep the level of entertainment going.

46 Murals for Super Bowl 46

Barb Stahl's mural of magnolias along the Canal under Ohio Street is just one of the artists selected for the public art project by the Indianapolis Arts Council. Each artist could design something unique or special about Indianapolis neighborhoods. The murals are all over town but several are on the canal. John Dumont created one called "Indiana Love Letters" which deals with rural life in Indiana and the beauty of the changing seasons.



A little further from downtown, check out Chicago artist, Damon Lamar Reed's two murals. One is on 27th St. and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. and the second one is on 30th St. and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. Reed says - when I do a mural, the most important thing is beauty. Some people get



political or social, some are ambiguous. But to me, if its not first beautiful, then my message really doesn't mean anything if you don't like looking at it, you won't get it.

Reed's goal is to bring joy to the community. Murals add a lot of culture to the city. It's llike a tourist attraction. People can ride around the city and see all of the different art projects. It enriches the city by adding historical value to it.

Continue north to 38th St. and Illinois St. to see Indianapolis artist, Michael Jordan's mural on the side of the Ace Hardware store entitled "The Pieces Fit." Jordan made a point to bring together elements of the Butler Tarkington neighborhood. He highlights Butler basketball, the area's



literary past (the hardware store used to be owned by Kurt Vonnegut's family), and the agricultural heritage of Indiana.

Jordan attended Herron School of Art (Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis) and also works with wood and bronze. His vibrant design has a strong impact on the neighborhood.

To see more murals, visit the Broad Ripple Village, Speedway, the Humane Society in Haughville, Irvington Flea Market, Massachusetts Ave, Union Station, and the East 10th St. corridor where five murals were completed by 1,100 Eli Lilly workers. There are many more, so keep your eyes open...

Now back downtown and moving toward Sunday, February 5, 2012 - 6:30 pm kick-off...

NFL Experience

The National Football League will produce the 20th NFL Experience at the Indiana Convention Center beginning on January 27th. It is an interactive theme park offering games, displays, entertainment, attractions, football clinics, autograph sessions, and the largest football memorabilia show ever. The ticket price includes all games and attractions - \$25 for adults and \$20 for children 12 and under.

Attractions -

- + Free autograph sessions with more than 50 NFL superstars - 10,000 free autographs
- + Live television programming from the NFL Network
- + NFL players host seminars on the fundamentals of football
- + Visit the official NFL draft set and take a seat behind the podium
- + See the collection of 45 NFL rings
- + See how the NFL game balls are individually produced
- + Visit a replica of the NFL locker room
- + NFLRUSH Zone for kids to play interactive football activities
- + NFL Command Center where you can make the call for any 2011 game
- + Look like a pro in a body-cast mold bearing the insignia of your favorite team
- + Breast Cancer Awareness exhibit with pink items worn by players, coaches, and referees
- + And more.....

It will be unforgettable!

For more information about the Buffalo Soldiers and/or plans for the 2012 Super Bowl tour, contact the

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