Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.

Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., was born in Washington, D.C., on December 18, 1912. His father, Benjamin O. Davis, Sr., was an Army officer. In 1940, his father became the highest ranking African American officer when he became a brigadier general.

Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., attended the United States Military Academy at West Point and was a United States Air Force officer. He was a leader of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II. The Tuskegee Airmen had an outstanding record in combat, and Mr. Davis himself flew 60 combat missions and earned the Distinguished Flying Cross. He helped with plans to desegregate the Air Force in 1948 and fought in the Korean War.

In 1959, Mr. Davis became the highest ranking African American military officer in the United States when he achieved the rank of major general. He became a lieutenant general in 1965 and retired from the Air Force in 1970 after serving during the Vietnam War. He was an assistant secretary of the Department of Transportation from 1971 to 1975. He published his autobiography in 1991 and was promoted to four-star general in 1998. General Davis died on July 4, 2002.

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Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.

Facts

1. Born in Washington, D.C., on December 18, 1912
2. Attended the United States Military Academy at West Point
3. Leader of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II
4. Flew 60 combat missions
5. Earned the Distinguished Flying Cross
6. Helped desegregate Air Force
7. Fought in the Korean War
8. Became highest ranking African American officer in U.S. in 1959
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