



### **Spann Watson, Lt. Col., U.S. Air Force (Ret.)**

**O**n July 4, 1927, a 10-year-old Spann Watson stood wide-eyed as Charles A. Lindbergh made his historic flight in the "Spirit of St. Louis". The young Watson was hooked on flight and would realize his dream of flight as one of the pioneering members of the "Tuskegee Experiment" and the famed 99th Fighter Squadron.

In the summer of 1943, Watson was an eager young flying officer who saw combat for the first time in a dog fight with the elite German Luftwaffe over the Mediterranean Sea, marking the first time black pilots fought air-to-air combat. He served gallantly, flying missions over North

Africa, Sicily, Italy, and Southern Europe.

Watson's military decorations include an Air Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Mediterranean Campaign Medal, American Defense Medal, and a Japanese Air Defense Service Commendation Medal.

He retired as a lieutenant colonel on December 1, 1964.

Born on August 14, 1916, in Johnston, South Carolina, Watson is credited with playing a key role in developing an integration plan for the Armed Forces that became the nation's official policy.

In 1965, he joined the Federal Aviation Administration as an equal opportunity specialist. His honors include his election and induction as an "Elder Statesman of Aviation" by the National Aeronautic Association (1990) and his election to the association's Board of Directors in 1991.

Watson and his wife, Edna, make their home in Westbury, New York.



### **Hiram E. Little, Sr., Flight Officer, U.S. Army Air Corps**

**O**n March 25, 1941, six days shy of his 22nd birthday, Hiram E. Little, Sr., joined the U.S. Army Air Corps to fight Fascism and Nazism overseas but found himself taking "a giant step for equality," on the home front in America, along with more than 100 black U.S. Army Air Corps officers.

Little's first assignment was as an aircraft armorer trainee at Chanute Air Force Base in Illinois. In December 1943, he was appointed a Flight Officer and assigned to the 477th Bomb Group as a member of a B-25 bomber crew.

On April 5, 1945, F/O Little and black airmen and officers assigned to Freeman Field, Ind., engaged in a nonviolent, direct-action, ground assault on racism on military bases and attempted to enter the officers club, segregated as white-only by order of the base commander. The incident became known as the "Freeman Field Mutiny."

After his discharge, November 30, 1945, Little, who was born on March 31, 1919, on a farm near Eatonton, Georgia, and attended high school and college in Atlanta, returned to Atlanta and graduated from Morehouse College in 1947.

Little serves as the chaplain for the Atlanta Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., and retired in 1978 as a mid-level manager from the U.S. Postal Service. He has two children and seven grandchildren.

