

African Americans in Times of War

There have been several African Americans who have played an important role in the history of our country and in times of war. Many people tend to focus on people from our past, but I feel it is important to focus on the everyday people of our present day. One such person is my neighbor, Colonel Jackie L. Thompson. I had the opportunity to get to know him when I moved to Carlisle Barracks. I learned about his life story as an African American Army lawyer currently at the Army War College. Through hard work and determination, Colonel Jackie L. Thompson became a successful Army lawyer guided by his experiences, mentors, and aspirations.

Colonel Jackie Thompson has had many positive and negative experiences of becoming a lawyer. One that had changed his life forever was when he was treated unfairly by the police as a teenager. Colonel Thompson was not angry; he turned it into something positive and used that situation to motivate him to work harder in school. Another experience that convinced Colonel Thompson to join the military was growing up in Waukegan, Illinois. He lived right next to a Naval Base, so seeing the sailors became part of his daily routine. Another experience was his parents did not have enough money for him to attend college, so Mr. Thompson joined the Illinois National Guard to pay for his college tuition.

Not only did his experiences help him along the way, a few mentors did as well. There are many people who impacted and shaped the person he is today. One mentor was his father. Mr. Thompson's father was a medic in the military. As his dad always told him, "Take pride in serving your country, for we have worked hard for this." Another mentor he remembers fondly is Colonel Douglas Cartinale. Colonel Thompson said, "He was someone I could just go to for

advice.” Finally, Colonel Thompson is thankful for Major General Daryl Williams. He believes Major General Williams was a “beacon for African Americans officers” and a strong leader.

Even after his service in the military, Colonel Thompson has many future aspirations he wants to pursue. Colonel Thompson said his drive and hard work is what keeps him going. He aspires to become a civilian judge. After he is retired, he also wants to continue to serve others in law, and he is an example for the community. In doing that, he also wants give back to the mentors that helped him so much along the way.

Colonel Thompson has accomplished a great deal in his army career and gives credit to his experiences, his family, and his mentors. I know he will always work hard for what he wants in life and will continue to help people along the way. He is admired for his service to our country, and he is someone I will look up to and will remember even when I move away from Carlisle.