

# TAU PI

## CHAPTER NEWSLETTER- Columbia, MD



In August thru October 2017, the last quarter of the Fraternity's fiscal year, Tau Pi Graduate Chapter has been very active. The chapter gathered blankets for the Leola Dorsey Community Resource Center in preparation for the winter. Brother Art Colbert (PHOTO/RIGHT) attended the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC)'s Omega Psi Phi event. Several Tau Pi members attended the September CBC sessions.

**PHOTO ABOVE:** New chapter members presented gifts to their MSP chairman, and co-chairman during the September meeting. Highlighted inside are stories about Brother Sidney Holmes and Brother Oliver Jackson just in time to honor them before Veterans Day in November.



# Courage Under Fire

## Two-Time Bronze Star Awardee Bro. Sidney Holmes Recalls His Service

**H**e speaks with a quick, but peaceful deliverance. His steps are measured with purpose. Seemly when he passes his movements are stealth.

During his naval service, Brother Sidney L. Holmes, Jr.'s operational directives aboard ships were as precise as his retirement journey now with wife Helen.

After 28 years of service, Brother Holmes retired in 1991 at the rank of Captain. During his prestigious career in the U.S. Navy, Holmes was awarded two Bronze Stars for Combat, and two Navy Commendation Medals with Combat Distinguishing Devices.

On April 5, 1971, Navy Rear Admiral R.S. Salzer, the Commander of the U.S. Naval Forces in Vietnam awarded Holmes with his first Bronze Star. Admiral Salzer noted that, *"Lieutenant Holmes was flying the Command and Control helicopter providing air cover for a convoy traveling from Dong Hung to Kien An. The helicopters came under heavy automatic weapons fire. During the firefight that followed, one of the pilots was wounded and had to make an emergency landing."*

The Admiral also added, *"Lieutenant Holmes without regard to personal safety and in the face of great danger ... assist the wounded pilot. Lt. Holmes' exemplary professionalism, devotion to duty and courage under fire reflected great credit upon himself and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."*



"I got to Vietnam in early January of 1971. People would be shooting at you all the time. I was a naval advisor of the Navy's Woverine Force. Some boats were mined as we escorted them down the river. We often had to return fire when fire came from the beach. The best part of that experience was getting back alive," smiled Brother Holmes.

The Norfolk, VA native enlisted into the U. S. Navy on November 22, 1963, the day President John F. Kennedy, a navy man and the 35th U.S. President was assassinated in Dallas. Holmes said, "I joined the Navy because I am from a Navy town-Norfolk.

Brother Holmes said that his favorite ship was the U.S.S. Northampton, a presidential command communication ship. He noted that when he joined the ship in 1965, he was one of only two Black officers out of 75. "It was a little different--the enlisted people were shocked to see me. They had to stop because they didn't believe what they were seeing--a Black naval officer," commented then Ensign Holmes.

A few years later, Holmes, now a Lieutenant was a Department Head, the only junior officer in that important position. As the Department Head on the U.S.S. Chicago, he was responsible for three deck divisions, a key duty for a Navy Lieutenant and a junior officer. "All the other officers that served as Department Heads had the rank of Lieutenant Commander and above," said Omega's Navy Lt. Sid Holmes.



*The U.S. Navy Captain uniform that Bro. Holmes wore at the Pentagon as he served as a project manager.*



signature event, "Holiday With Omega" and as the Keeper of Finance.

On September 15, 1971, Holmes received his second Bronze Star, "For heroic achievement while serving at Kien An Operating Base engaged in armed conflict against the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong communist aggressors in the Republic of Vietnam," said R. S. Salzer, Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy, Commander of U.S. Naval Forces in Vietnam. "My two most joyful moments in the Navy was that I was happy that my Vietnam tour was over, and serving as the Commander of Little Creek, VA Reserve Naval Facility," mentioned Holmes.

His last duty was serving with the rank of Captain at the Pentagon. Holmes served in an administrative role as a Project Manager. Holmes' duties included overseeing Naval Reserve units that reported to the Pentagon.

Holmes graduated from North Carolina A&T State College in 1963 with a B.S. in Architectural Engineering. In 1968, he also received a B.S. from Hampton Institute in Architecture. Brother Holmes was initiated into Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., through Mu Psi Chapter on the campus of North Carolina A&T State College. He is currently a member of Tau Pi Chapter where he served on several committees including the chapter's

During his career Holmes served on five ships; he was for the most part was based in the Navy's Atlantic Fleet. "I had three children, and my family never had to relocate. They stayed in Norfolk, because most of my assignments were in the Norfolk area, except for Vietnam and a short tour in San Diego, CA. Holmes was the father of three sons, and he said with a laugh, "none of them joined the Navy, they all joined the Army."

After Navy retirement, Bro. Holmes worked for the Army Corp of Engineers in the Norfolk area as an architect. Later he moved his family to the Washington, D.C., area where he served as an architect for the Naval Facilities Command. He also worked as a project manager and later the head of the Engineering and Planning section for the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Omega's U.S. Navy Captain Sidney Lawrence Holmes (Ret.), said that his "success in the military was because I remembered two of the most important leadership principles. The first principle is know yourself and seek improvement. The second principle is know your men and lookout for their welfare. If you can do that-- everything else will take care of itself.

**Story by Brother Milbert O. Brown, Jr.,  
International Editor of The Oracle**

## U.S. ARMY RANGER CAPTAIN (RET).

# BRO. OLIVER JACKSON

Story by Bro. Milbert O. Brown, Jr., Editor of *The Oracle*

**A**rmy Lieutenant Oliver S. Jackson's first tour during the Vietnam War was a mixture of a triumphal march and agonizing torment. The young Jackson had just been commissioned as an infantry officer and placed in the 1st Cavalry Division after completing Morgan State University's ROTC program in 1962.

A few months after graduating from the Army's Airborne and Ranger Schools, the Lieutenant headed to Vietnam's treacherous jungles and rice fields, a landscape much different from his native Brooklyn, NY. While training as an Army Ranger, an elite special operations combat unit, Jackson became exposed to the Army's new air assault concept, Airmobile. Omega's Jackson mentioned that during the Vietnam conflict, soldiers had begun going into combat with helicopters. Brother Jackson also said that "as a Ranger, we use to set up ambushes, and we would then search for the Viet Cong."

"I wanted to go to Vietnam. I was a reconnaissance battalion leader when I got over there in 1965," said Lt. Jackson. "As the leader of the first brigade's advance party, I and nine enlisted men were assigned to bring over all of the 1st Cavalry Division's equipment overseas. During his tour in Vietnam, Lt. Jackson was awarded the Bronze Star for combat.

Sadly, he reflected on his worst experience while serving in Nam. "It was a hot day, and I saw a lady and her two little kids were wounded. When the medivac helicopter landed, I had to get on the aircraft. There was news that my wife had been in a serious car accident, and I had orders to return home. I was broken up when we left those people injured on that hot day. That day has haunted me my whole life."

A little over one hundred years before, during the Crimean War, a British cavalry unit met the Russians in the Battle of Balaclava in 1854. Words from the conflict were pinned by Alfred Lord Tennyson in his narrative poem entitled *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. Tennyson wrote "Theirs not to make reply/Theirs not to reason why/Theirs but to do and die. Into the valley of Death[the Calvary] rode." Similar to words from the famous poem, orders for Jackson to leave that wounded family still rings in his heart today, but it was not for him to reason why.

After his return to Baltimore, and closer to the family, Brother Jackson served as an induction officer at Fort Holabird, a Baltimore Army post. After about year, the

**PHOTOGRAPH:** Bro. Oliver S. Jackson wears the Cavalry Stetson hat worn during the late 18th century and by the Army's Buffalo Soldiers. The headwear is still worn as a Cavalry ceremonial hat. Oracle photograph by Bro. Milbert O. Brown, Jr.

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE





Army sent Jackson to Special Warfare School at Ft. Bragg, NC. "When I went back to Vietnam on my second tour in 1968, I served as psychological warfare officer. During the Tet Offensive, we were teamed up with Vietnamese and America units. His other overseas assignments included serving in Germany and Korea.

After serving on active duty, Captain Jackson again returned to Baltimore in search of an Army reserve unit. "They wouldn't take me in the reserves because all those rich white guys were getting those assignments. I met a Black General, and he found me a spot as a transportation officer at Curtis Bay, an Army Reserve Center," said the Captain. While serving his reserve commitment Jackson worked as a civilian equal employment specialist.

Omega's Captain Jackson retired from the Army in 1980, after serving first as an Air Force enlisted man for four years before enrolling at Morgan State University. He graduated from Morgan with a B.A. in History, and he also served ten years on active duty (Army), and eight years in the Army Reserves.

"I loved being in the Army. I loved the comradery. It's like being an Omega. Being an Omega made it easy for me to be in the Army. It was the closeness of the men," said Brother Jackson. Originally, Jackson began pledging

Omega at Morgan State in 1960. As he recalls, "Zeta Psi Chapter was in Brooklyn, and I didn't live that far from their frat house. I got word that they were taking on a line, so me and two other guys from Morgan, Herbie Frazier, and Bill Goins jumped on the line.

So when I came back to Morgan in the Fall of 1960, I was Que," smiled Brother Jackson. During his military career, Bro. Jackson joined several chapters. After ending his active duty service, he joined Phi Omega Graduate Chapter. Later, he was one of the founders of Tau Pi Chapter.

"I was a proud soldier. When you are a leader people, look up to you. I never was disrespected when I use to walk around with my uniform on at airports. People would only say nice things to me."

Jackson added, "I was considered to be a crack soldier. I had a bunch of metals, a Ranger insignia, and a strong 6'3 frame."

Brother Jackson said that his Army episodes had their challenges. He noted that he is a 100 percent Disabled Veteran. He now suffers from post-traumatic stress caused by his battlefield experiences in Vietnam.

"I finally went back to Vietnam in 2015. I went in Hanoi and where we operated in the south. Since that visit, I have been sleeping better ever since. I have been going to therapy for the last 15 years at Vet Center. I have an acupuncture treatment in my ears every week, but that trip back to Vietnam helped me the most," calmly expressed Brother Oliver S. Jackson, U. S. Captain (Retired).

The 81-year retired soldier said "My joy has been my children. I didn't have boys--I had three girls. God knew what he was doing."

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**SECOND DISTRICT FALL COUNCIL**  
Buffalo, NY November 4, 2017

**TAU PI CHAPTER ACHIEVEMENT WEEK/FOUNDERS DAY**  
November 13-19, 2017 Various Times

**Uplift Monday, November 13, 2017** –  
Community Service Initiative (CSI)  
Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center,  
4:30 PM – 6:30 PM  
6700 Freetown Rd, Columbia MD 21044

**Leola Dorsey Day Center, 7:00 PM**  
10390 Guilford Road, Jessup, MD 20794  
Deliver blankets, clothes and nonperishable items to residents.

**Rededication Ceremony at Howard University, Friday, November 17, 2017.**  
Fellowship and Bus trip,  
Departure @ 4:30 PM Prompt – Begin  
Return @ approximately 9:00 PM  
\$20.00 per passenger – LIMITED SEATING

**Founders Day Program** – Guest Speaker GKRS Brother Kenneth Rodgers  
TIME: 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM  
Founders Program @ The Meeting Place  
5885 Robert Oliver Pl, Columbia MD

Brothers will be requested to pay/sponsor a mentee  
\$10.00 for Financial Brothers – \$20.00 for Guests and Non-Financial Brothers  
Scholarship Saturday, November 18, 2017

**Reclamation Event**  
With Chapter Brothers, and Reclaimable Brothers @ Nottingham's 8850 Stanford Blvd #1100, Columbia MD 21045

**Manhood Sunday**  
November 19, 2017, 10:00 AM. Sunday Service for Brothers and Family @ West United Methodist Church. 2000 Sand Hill Road, Marriottsville MD 21109

**HOLIDAY WITH OMEGA GALA 2017** Saturday, December 9, 2017