



**Salute Serve!  
from Yard to Battlespace!**  
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This issue of Salute Serve! shines a spotlight on the remarkable history of HBCUs and AM&N/UAPB ROTC and its ongoing relevance. It also highlights the program's adaptability and evolution over the decades to underscore its commitment to excellence. This includes exploring the achievements of distinguished military officers and former cadets to celebrate the program's rich legacy and its role in shaping future leaders. Finally, it delves into the evolution of ROTC and how the COA uses ambassadors to employ ROTC history to enhance GLB support and contribute meaningfully to the AM&N and UAPB legacy. This is part of the COA strategy to bridge the gap with UAPB staff, current junior officers, and the next generation of army leaders.

### **Army ROTC and AM&N and UAPB GLB ROTC History**

The COA leverages AM&N/UAPB and HBCU ROTC shared history to inspire future generations of officers to live up to the tenet of **Duty, Honor, Country** and the philosophy to **Be** examples of effective and inspiring leaders, **Know** the fundamentals of military science, tactics, and leadership, and **Do** what is necessary to execute proper plans and make decisions to achieve mission objectives. Sharing history starts with knowing it.

Anyone familiar with the history of sales understands the power of product knowledge in building trust and rapport with potential clients. Similarly, the COA must approach Army ROTC and its rich history. By leveraging the shared history of GLB and HBCUs, the COA can forge meaningful relationships with UAPB staff, local government officials, and community leaders, advocating for the ROTC program and securing essential support.

Moreover, our history serves as a powerful tool for inspiring and preparing our cadets and junior officers. By delving into the legacy of Army ROTC and the UAPB ROTC program, we can instill a profound sense of pride, identity, and motivation in our cadets. By highlighting the Army and UAPB ROTC's adaptability and evolution over time, we can cultivate a strong sense of camaraderie and shared purpose.

Finally, by effectively utilizing digital communication tools, the COA can engage with diverse generations, addressing their questions and concerns with respect and understanding. This approach bridges generational gaps and demonstrates our commitment to current knowledge and relevance. Ultimately, by drawing inspiration and knowledge from our history, we empower our cadets and junior officers to confront the challenges of the future, preparing them for successful and fulfilling careers in the Army.

### **Historically Black Colleges and Universities ROTC**

The history of Army ROTC programs at HBCUs is rich and significant. Information about the second Morrill Act of 1890, which required states with segregated systems to provide equal educational opportunities for Black students. The work of Dr. Lawrence A. Davis to bring an Army ROTC program to AM&N College, which grew to 600 cadets, and more GLB history are available on the UAPB COA, National Alumni Association, and GLB websites and in the COA anniversary celebration souvenir books. Here is some HBCU specific history to fill some gaps.

Many members have heard or read stories of racial discrimination and injustices the first Black cadets endured from classmates, faculty, and upperclassmen and the challenges each overcame as the first Black people to receive appointments to the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point. They experienced social isolation and were subjected to practices like "silencing," where white peers would sever all nonessential communication with them. During matriculation and even after graduating, these Black officers continued to experience social and professional isolation due to their race. They had to constantly prove themselves and navigate a system that was inherently biased against them. Unfortunately, there are confirmed accounts of Black elementary and high school students forced to experience isolation and similar racial discrimination practices when Arkansas schools underwent expansive integration between 1968-1970. Also, present Army officers and service members experience overt and covert racism.

The most notable injustices are likely those of Henry Flipper and Johnson C. Whittaker. John Whittaker was brutally assaulted and then expelled from the USMA in 1881. West Point administrators court-martialed Whittaker in the mistaken belief that he staged his own attack, supposedly to avoid a philosophy exam. In 1883, President Chester overturned the USMA verdict; USMA officials reinstated the expulsion on the same day on the grounds that Whittaker had failed an exam. In 1995, President Bill Clinton rectified this injustice by formally clearing the name of John Whittaker and awarding an Army commission posthumously to his heirs, saying, "We cannot undo history. But today, finally, we can pay tribute to a great American and we can acknowledge a great injustice." In 1877, Henry Flipper was commissioned Second Lieutenant and became the first Black officer to command regular troops, Troop A, 10th Cavalry Regiment, also known as the Buffalo Soldiers. However, racial biases and discrimination followed him. In 1882, Flipper was court-martialed for what he called a systematic plan of persecution by White officers to force him from the army. He was dishonorably discharged for "conduct unbecoming an officer and gentleman." In 1999, President Clinton rectified this injustice by pardoning Henry Flipper.

USMA appointees John Alexander and Charles Young are the foci of this segment because of their history as Black officers and affiliation with the HBCU Army ROTC Program. Alexander and Young were the second and third Black officers, respectively, to earn a commission from the USMA. Flipper, Alexander and Young served in key positions with the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment. Alexander's story hits home because he was a native of Helena, Phillips County, Arkansas. After graduation from the USMA, Alexander was assigned to the 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry in Nebraska and Utah. He became the first Black officer to hold a command position by temporarily leading B Troop, 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry in 1889. Though Alexander is listed as first to hold a command position, his position was temporary or acting where Flipper's position as Commander was on orders. Alexander was another short termmer when he assumed the position as the first Black Professor of Military Science (PMS) and Tactics at Wilberforce University, Ohio in 1894.

USMA alums Alexander and Young connected again through Wilberforce University. Alexander's February 1894 assignment as PMS of Tactics at Wilberforce University was cut short when he tragically died suddenly of a ruptured aorta on March 26, 1894. Charles Young assumed the position as PMS and Tactics at Wilberforce University on May 21, 1894. Thus, he is often recorded as the first Black ROTC PMS. Though Wilberforce University was the first HBCU to establish a military science department and offer its students a training program, this was not an official ROTC program as we understand ROTC programs today. Howard University began organized military training of Black officers in 1917 and created an official ROTC detachment in 1918 under the National Defense Act of 1916. This was part of a broader effort during WW I to train Black officers for leadership roles in the rapidly expanding Army. The process of selecting Black Army officers as PMS at HBCUs initially involved recommendations and approvals from higher authorities, but evolved over time.

Regarding Alexander's hometown, Helena is near Elaine, Arkansas, the site of the Elaine Race Riot or Elaine Massacre of 1919. Elaine is also less than 25 miles from Marvell, Phillips County, Arkansas. This history is significant for several reasons. First, it was one of the deadliest racial confrontations in U.S. history. Second, several Black participants and victims in that race riot were military veterans who had served in World War I and the Spanish-American War in 1916. These veterans were Black sharecroppers involved in the Progressive Farmers and Household Union of America. It is known that the Elaine Massacre resulted in the deaths of an estimated 100 to 237 Black individuals. Though the exact number isn't known, the presence of American veterans among the victims highlights the tragic irony of their service to a country that still subjected them to such violence and discrimination upon their return. The general sentiment of European countries like Britain, France, Germany, and Italy was more accepting and less racially discriminatory of Black service members. This translated to World War I Black veterans generally being treated with more respect and equality in Europe, as European societies were more focused on the soldiers' contributions rather than their race. The Black veterans' experiences in the military had instilled in them a sense of equality and justice, which they carried back to their civilian lives in the U.S. Unfortunately, this newfound assertiveness and demand for fair treatment were seen as threats by the local white population, contributing to the violent outbreak. Third, Dr. Freddie Hartfield, AM&N alumnus and former professor and chairperson of mathematics at UAPB, was born in Helena and grew up in Elaine. Dr. Hartfield is the uncle of UAPB ROTC alumnus Amos King, 1983, a native of Helena. Additionally, Marvell, Arkansas, is the hometown of COA founders the late Thomas Vaughn and Delloyd Wilson, the COA first Vice President, present COA Historian, Calvin Farr, and COA member Dr. Edward Young. According to these proud homeboys, the largest number of cadets commissioned through the GLB hail from Marvell, Phillips County, Arkansas.

Unfortunately, the US experienced 20 notable race riots in the major industrial cities of Charleston, Longview, Washington, DC, Chicago, Knoxville, Omaha, Baltimore, Elaine, Philadelphia, New York City, Norfolk, New Port News, Scranton, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Youngstown, Gary, and Indianapolis underscored the pervasive racial tensions within the nation in 1919. Though the violence began in May in Charleston, South Carolina riot when white sailors, fueled by rumors of a Black man shooting a white sailor, attacked Black residents. The 3-day Elaine Massacre or Race Riot was the deadliest in a year of violent racial conflicts and military intervention driven by economic competition, housing tensions, post-war social changes, media influence, and police bias and inefficiency.

In 1919, several newspapers like the Baltimore Sun, Chicago Tribune, Omaha Bee, New York Times, and Washington Post played a significant role in perpetuating violence against Black people. They published often exaggerated, inflammatory stories and fabricated allegations of crimes committed by Black people. Some owners and editors were influenced by their own racial prejudices and the prevailing attitudes of the time. Others had a desire to sell more newspapers through sensationalism and fear-mongering and were known to permit unchallenged actions to occur near their paper. This led to blacks being beaten in front of the Washington Post and the White House with few consequences issued for the white attackers. As for the deployment of military forces during the riots, they were primarily used in Black neighborhoods and communities. After four days of police inaction, President Wilson ordered 2,000 federal troops to regain control in the nation's capital. Arkansas Governor Brough led a contingent of 583 US soldiers, with a 12-gun machine gun battalion in Elaine. There were few instances where the military was employed in or around white neighborhoods. This disparity in response highlighted the racial biases and systemic inequalities of the time.

A notable example is the Washington Post releasing a headline “Mobilization for Tonight” that called for all white servicemen to commune on Pennsylvania Avenue around 9:00 pm on the second night of the riot to crush the Black population. D.C. Black community groups responded by developing a defense plan to ensure a source of protection and defense from the attackers. The community pooled \$14,000, or \$246,000 in 2024 dollars, to purchase guns and ammunition from pawn shops and used military rifles brought home by Black soldiers returning from World War I. They gathered at or near the Black district in the capital's northwest to face their attackers. When the violence ended, 15 people had died: at least 10 white people and 5 Black people. The Washington, D.C. riot of 1919 was one of the few times in 20th-century riots of whites against Black people that white fatalities outnumbered those of Black people.

Allegations of attacks on white women was a common denominator in many of these riots, providing a pretext for white mobs to enact violence against Black communities. Beyond these allegations, the underlying causes included deep-seated racism, economic competition, and the return of Black soldiers from World War I who demanded equal rights and opportunities. Sadly, the WW I veteran's account of their experiences in Europe highlight the stark contrast between the relatively progressive attitudes in Europe and the entrenched racism in the US in 1919. The riots also highlighted the pervasive influence of Jim Crow laws and the systemic discrimination faced by Black people. There are current reports that show the riots in Elaine, those reported in 19 other US cities in 1919, and current racial tensions in the US are rooted in systemic racism and economic exploitation. These events reflected the deep-seated animosities and societal challenges of the era. The underlying issues of inequality and discrimination remain persistent challenges.

It is crucial that COA ambassadors know and understand historical events like this and these dynamics to be able to advise cadets and engage in conversations with UAPB staffs about addressing the root causes of racial tensions and their impact on UAPB students. As mentors, COA members could use this type information to educate and encourage the protégé to think critically about the challenges they may face as Army officers as well share resilience strategies to help them cope with and overcome adversity. Thankfully, the COA and the Army officer corps are resources available to cadets that Flipper, Alexander, and Young did not have access to.

Charles Young was the third Black person to graduate from the USMA in 1889. Young was the first Black Army officer to achieve the rank of Colonel, and he remained the highest-ranking Black officer in the Regular Army until his death in 1922. Among his many firsts, Young was selected as the Professor of Military Science (PMS) at an HBCU, Wilberforce University in Ohio; he served as the Superintendent of Sequoia National Park; and he was appointed as a military attaché representing the U.S. in Liberia. These achievements were not without significant racial discrimination and challenges. For instance, it is alleged that just as the U.S. was about to enter World War I, a group of white inferior officers conspired with civilian members of the War Department to get Young dismissed from the Army. This was intended to prevent him from deploying to Europe and likely being promoted to Brigadier General. The white officers did not want to be outranked by a Black man. In 1917, a medical examiner diagnosed Young with hypertension, arteriosclerosis, an enlarged heart, and potential liver damage. The prognosis was that Young was not fit for active field service requiring physical stress and endurance without danger to life. Despite his impressive military record, he was forced into retirement. In response to the War Department's decision, Young decided to ride his mare, Blacksmith, from Wilberforce, Ohio to Washington, D.C., about 450 miles, to demonstrate his fitness for duty and his right to be reinstated and sent to Europe to serve in World War I.

Young's decision and trip are significant because documents show that a physically fit Army cavalryman or Buffalo Soldier could typically ride a horse 20-30 miles a day, depending on factors

such as the horse's condition, terrain, and weather conditions. This generally translated as 6 to 8 hours of travel a day. The terrain in Ohio, Maryland, and West Virginia included flatlands, rolling hills, and the Appalachian Mountains. Weather conditions in June ranged from the mid-60s to the high 80s with relatively high humidity levels. Young departed Wilberforce on June 6, 1918, and arrived on June 22, 1918, covering the distance in 16 days. He used a ride, walk, rest cycle and averaged 28 miles per day, riding for about 3 hours (24 miles a day) and then walking for 1 hour (4 miles a day). This cycle ensured that Blacksmith could maintain a steady pace over the long distance while reducing the strain on Young's body. Upon arriving in Washington, DC, Young met with the Secretary of War and requested a new physical assessment. Although the assessment confirmed his fitness, Young was not given a combat command or promoted to general officer. Instead, he was reassigned to Liberia to serve as a military attaché.

Young's ride was a powerful testament to his dedication and courage in the face of adversity. The conspiracy by white officers and medical examiners highlights the racial discrimination and systemic challenges Black service members faced during that era, while Young's decision to make the ride demonstrated his resilience and determination to serve his country. As with other pioneers like Flipper, Whittaker, and Alexander, Young's treatment was somewhat rectified. In February 2020, Kentucky's Governor Andy Beshear posthumously promoted Charles Young to honorary brigadier general in Kentucky. Governor Beshear also requested federal recognition of Young's promotion. Gil Cisneros, then Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, approved the request with an effective date of February 1, 2022, and the promotion ceremony was held on April 29, 2022. Additionally, General Charles Young was one of the notable names considered for the renaming of Fort Hood, Texas, which was originally named after Confederate General John Bell Hood. However, the Department of Defense Naming Commission ultimately chose to rename Fort Hood to Fort Cavazos, in honor of General Richard Cavazos, the first Hispanic four-star general in Texas.

### **AM&N and UAPB ROTC**

Army ROTC began at Agriculture Mechanical and Normal (AM&N) College in 1968 under President Lawrence A. Davis, Sr. and PMS Alphonse Battiste in 1968. Three classes totaling 57 cadets were commissioned through the AM&N GLB (1970-72). All subsequent classes were commissioned through the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) GLB (1973-) when the school rejoined the University of Arkansas System and changed its name to UAPB in 1972. Nineteen Army officers have served as PMS of the AM&N/UAPB Military Science Department.

***State College, we greet thee with love and devotion  
Our hearts and our treasures we bring to thy shrine  
With arms that are strong from all harm we defend thee  
Thy name shall we cherish, dear mother of mine  
We walk through this wide world with peace and with courage  
We gained while we sat at thy sanctified seat  
We come when thou call us to battle dear mother  
And cast all we have at thy glorified feet***

### ***[Chorus]***

***Alma Mater, we love thee, we love thee, dear mother  
And all that we have we cast down at thy feet***

The tradition at Arkansas Agricultural, Mechanical, and Normal (AM&N) College, now known as the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB), was a unique and meaningful one during the era

of Presidents John Brown Watson and Lawrence Arnette Davis, Sr. These leaders instituted a practice where students were required to sing the Alma Mater each morning before breakfast or class. The primary purpose of this tradition was to instill a sense of unity, pride, and belonging among the students. This practice also aimed to foster discipline and a sense of responsibility, much like the way Army soldiers and officers learn and recite General Orders on command during Guard Duty or officers commit to memory important criteria like Deadly Force.

For many students, this tradition created a sense of camaraderie and community. The practice became a daily reminder of the connection to the college and peers. Also, faculty members appreciated the tradition as it reinforced the college's values and helped create a cohesive and supportive environment that extended beyond the classroom. Many alumni still cherish this tradition, much like how soldiers and officers often recall their training and call to duty years after their service. It became a part of their identity and a symbol of their time at AM&N College.

***With arms that are strong from all harm we defend thee;  
We come when thou call us to battle dear mother,  
And cast all we have at thy glorified feet.***

The essence of the three lines above from the Alma Mater reflect profound dedication, loyalty, and sacrifice, and the students' and alumni's readiness to serve and protect Dear Mother. Also, the message of the lines resonate deeply with the journey of William Bryant, 1973, George Akins, 1980, and the late Kenzie Wallace, 1987, and their nexus with the history of HBCU Army ROTC and General Charles Young. These alums were commissioned through the UAPB ROTC program and later volunteered to return to Dear Mother to serve as PMS of the MS Department. Bryant was the first UAPB alum to serve as PMS, 1990 to 1992, followed by Akins, 1998 to 2002, and Wallace, 2002-2006, respectively, emphasizing their shared dedication to preserving honor and legacy of UAPB. Each line connects to their commitment and experiences in profound ways:

***"With arms that are strong from all harm we defend thee"*** signifies the strength and experience gained from their military careers, which they used to defend and support UAPB. Their return to serve as PMS, and teach, develop, and mentor future leaders demonstrate their dedication to ensuring the continued success and safety of UAPB and GLB cadets.

***"We come when thou call us to battle dear mother"*** highlights their readiness and willingness to respond to the call of Dear Mother. This lyric signifies their dedication to return and serve in a new capacity, answering the call to educate, mentor, and develop the next generation of military leaders. Their response to the university's call to battle demonstrated a deep sense of duty and loyalty to the institution that shaped their careers.

***"And cast all we have at thy glorified feet"*** underscores their gratitude, reverence, and willingness to prepare, return as PMS, and offer their diverse experiences, knowledge, and skills gained from their military careers to their alma mater.

ROTC alums and COA members Bryant, Akins, and Wallace did not just defend their alma mater from harm. They also fortified the GLB by shaping future leaders and continuing the legacy of excellence that began with President Davis and PMS Battiste in 1968. Lawrence A. Davis, Sr. and Alphonse Battiste in 1968. Their return to serve as PMS at the very institution that commissioned them signifies a full circle of dedication, loyalty, and gratitude. Each leader's actions resonate with the spirit of Dear Mother and the MS Department, illustrating how the values instilled in them while matriculating continue to guide their contributions long after their military service.

Their nexus with the history of HBCU Army ROTC and General Charles Young are threefold: first, Bill Bryant was a first PMS. Second, during an interview in 2023, each former PMS was asked, "What was your greatest ROTC program challenge and how did you address it?" Each leader's challenge had to do with a threat national or military threat from Middle East factions. For Bill, it was Desert Shield/Desert Storm when his Simultaneous Membership Program MS 2 and 3 cadets were called to deploy to the Gulf, which, in effect, depleted his senior cadet leadership. For George, it was a 6:59 am Central Time, September 11, 2001, event (9/11), that occurred when terrorist attacked multiple sites in the US and the ushering in of Operations Enduring Freedom in Iraq. For Kenzie, it was the continuation of Operations Enduring Freedom. In addition to the effect of 9/11 and Operations Enduring Freedom on their programs, the PMS remained responsible for Cadet Command Mission Set to produce well-rounded capable leaders prepared to serve as Army officers and contribute positively to society.

Third, the three alumni are distinguished members of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., specifically through the Tau Sigma Chapter at UAPB. Notably, Young became a member in 1912, just four months after the fraternity was founded at Howard University on November 17, 1911. His unwavering commitment to excellence, perseverance in the face of adversity, and dedication to military and public service perfectly reflect the fraternity's values and mission. Omega Psi Phi Fraternity continues to honor General Young annually by conducting a Memorial Service on his fraternity birthday, March 12th. While Charles Young and the three UAPB alumni **firsts** featured in this issue of Salute Serve! are members of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, it is important to recognize that Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. is not the first Black Greek-Letter Organization (BGLO), and they are not the first members of a BGLO to serve in the armed forces.

### **HBCU ROTC and BGLOs or the Divine Nine**

In the early 1900s, Black students at predominantly white institutions and some HBCUs in the United States faced severe racial segregation, discrimination, and social isolation or marginalization. To address these challenges, Black Greek-Letter Organizations (BGLOs), collectively known as the Divine Nine, emerged. These nine historically Black fraternities and sororities, founded between 1906 and 1963, provided a sense of community, support, and identity for Black students. The Divine Nine, established as a collaborative umbrella council in 1930, promotes academic excellence, cultural heritage, leadership development, and community service. These organizations have also become a source of lifelong friendships, mentorship, and support for their members and communities.

Collectively known as the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) or the Divine Nine, these nine historically Black fraternities and sororities were founded between 1906 and 1963. The NPHC, established as a collaborative umbrella council on the campus of Howard University in 1930, continues to promote academic excellence, cultural heritage, leadership development, and community service. These organizations have also become a source of lifelong friendships, mentorship, and support for their members and communities.

The bond shared among members of the Divine Nine mirrors the camaraderie found in the military. Terms like brotherhood, sisterhood, brother in arms, band of sisters, combat sorority, warrior women, and battle buddy reflect the deep connections formed between service members, transcending race, age, and background. Similarly, Divine Nine members use terms like "frat brother," "Soror," "team," and "sands" to describe their unique bonds.

For military service members who are also members of the Divine Nine, this dual affiliation offers a unique advantage. The Divine Nine provides a network of support, mentorship, and accountability,



enhancing their ability to succeed in both their military and personal lives. It is common to see Divine Nine members in various military settings, from basic training to the highest levels of command. This shared bond transcends rank and position, fostering a sense of camaraderie and mutual respect that extend beyond the military.

The legacy of the Divine Nine is a testament to the power of collective action and the enduring spirit of Black students who sought to overcome adversity and create a better future for themselves and their communities. The Divine Nine's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion has allowed individuals from diverse backgrounds to join and contribute to their mission. This diversity of thought and perspective has enriched the organizations and strengthened their impact on society. An example of this is the Department of Defense's investment of \$50 million in HBCUs, a significant step towards promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within the military. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., exemplifies this commitment as the first African American Secretary of Defense in U.S. history. His leadership and experience highlight the valuable contributions that HBCU graduates make to the military.

The AM&N and UAPB ROTC program is integral to the long and rich history of Divine Nine members in the armed forces, highlighting their significant contributions and broader impact. Past President Grover Gibson and Former COA Secretary Jennifer Wesley are members of the oldest Divine Nine fraternity and sorority, respectively. Other AM&N/UAPB alumni and Divine Nine members include COA Advisor Aundre Piggee and member James Bosley - Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Current COA Secretary Warrick Craig - Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, UAPB liaison and COA committee chair Sharon Alexander - Zeta Phi Beta Sorority. Additionally, former and current COA officers Delloyd Wilson, the late Thomas Vaughn, Fulton Johnson, Charles Griffith, Jr., Eric King, Calvin Farr, James Parker, and Eric Buchanan are all members of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. It is also noteworthy that Divine Nine chapters have been established within the military, including international chapters in Europe and both Southeast and Southwest Asia.

### **Echoing Army Core Values and Principles**

UAPB Military Science instructors and cadre have a remarkable ability to transform GLB cadets into outstanding leaders. They achieve this by introducing cadets to powerful three-word phrases like Duty–Honor–Country, Values-Attributes-Competencies, and Be-Know-Do. These 3-word phrases encapsulate the Army's tenets, core values and principles, which are the foundation of strong leadership. The idea is to emphasize that "you can't get out what was never put in," highlighting the importance of instilling these values and principles from the start. By doing so, they help cadets understand and commit to professional and personal development and the Army's mission. The instructors and cadre then work diligently to identify and nurture each cadet's unique strengths, building upon the initial values and principles to develop effective and resilient leaders. Through this method, cadets are equipped with the skills to lead and the character to make a lasting impact.

This approach is exemplified by outstanding individuals like General Officers Aundre F. Piggee, 1981, and Tomika M. Seaberry, nee Miller, 1997. Both former GLB cadets were commissioned into the US Army and rose to the rank of General Officer after demonstrating exceptional leadership, dedication, and commitment to the Army's mission. These distinguished UAPB and GLB alumni continue to be honored for their remarkable military careers and contributions to the GLB and UAPB. In addition to being recognized by the UAPB National Alumni Association, General Piggee was inducted into the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame in 2018, and Brigadier General Seaberry was inducted into the Illinois Black Hall of Fame in 2024. Additionally, first Colonels James Bosley, 1970, James Childs, Andrew Johnson, 1970, Beatrice Maxey, 1984, Karen Chipchase, nee Danzie, 1985, and Jennifer Wesley, 1989, have successfully turned this philosophy into both thriving military and post-military careers.



## **Self-Actualization-Reaching Back-Paying Forward**

UAPB Military Science (MS) instructors Artis Lofton, 1974, and Edgar Brookins emphasized that true leadership involves mentoring and lifting others as you ascend. Mentoring in this context does not mean a more experienced or knowledgeable person is constantly overseeing or advising a protégé. Instead, it means a trusted advisor and sometimes friend is available and supportive at the point where the protégé needs guidance. Though never articulated by Captains Lofton or Brookins, this principle creates a ripple effect that fosters a culture of trust, support, collaboration, and ensures knowledge and opportunities are shared. This idea is beautifully captured in the sentiment "I come as one, but I stand as ten thousand." in Maya Angelou's poem "I Have Arrived." Maya's sentiment emphasizes how the collective strength, support and interconnectedness that comes from lifting others up contribute to the growth, strength, and success of individuals. Thus, building a strong, future-ready leadership pipeline and a more cohesive organization.

This principle was vividly demonstrated in professional events by former GLB cadets. Fulton Johnson, 1980, provided direction and an ear when needed to Aundre Piggee, 1981, and allowed him to develop his skills and confidence as a Quartermaster and Ordnance officer. Charles Griffith, Jr., 1983, provided James Parker, 1982, much needed maintenance support to ensure Parker could employ his medical teams to support US Marines the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division during Operation Desert Storm in 1991. Jennifer Wesley and Curtis Lindesay, 1989, transitioned from cadets to battle buddies providing mutual support throughout their careers. As Jennifer and Curtis crisscrossed Army battlespace, they extended their relationship from personal and emotional support into horizontal mentorship, skill and professional development, accountability, and helping each other build and maintain professional networks for new opportunities. This type of mutual support and camaraderie is crucial for building strong, resilient leaders who can thrive in any situation. Aundre Piggee selected talented and qualified subordinate Jennifer Wesley to serve on his General staff. His choice ensured the sharing of valuable knowledge and experience, fostering a culture of mutual support and professional development for Jennifer, which strengthened the G4 team and made it more cohesive.

BG Seaberry identified a gap in bearing, competitiveness, knowledge, and confidence among junior officers commissioned through UAPB compared to their peers. To address this gap, Karen collaborated with the UAPB MS staff and COA to organize and conduct pre-board and interview sessions in high-stakes settings, with BG Seaberry serving as a panelist on the annual COA Scholarship Board when available. The goal is to enhance the cadets' knowledge, experience, and confidence, making them more competitive for future command and staff positions. This initiative offers cadets a unique opportunity to gain firsthand experience and build confidence in high-stakes environments, an experience many lieutenants may not encounter within their first four years of service. Facing high-ranking officers in a controlled setting will significantly boost cadets' confidence, preparing them for similar high-pressure situations in their military careers. Moreover, the presence of a general officer on the board is crucial in providing comprehensive post-interview feedback and provides insights into strengths and areas for improvement. Also, real time feedback from an active duty senior officer enables cadets to address areas for improvement and build on identified strengths to aid personal and professional growth before commissioning.

Though Fulton, Aundre, James, Charles, Jennifer, Curtis, and Karen have transitioned from the Army, their impact continues to echo through their dedication to the COA and its mission. Fulton, the immediate past COA Treasurer, exemplifies this commitment. Aundre serves as a trusted COA advisor, mentor, and partner. James Parker and Calvin Farr, 1972, who share the duties as COA Historian, have been instrumental in collaborating with each COA President to create a souvenir book for periodic COA anniversary celebrations. Charles, now the Treasurer, previously held the

position of COA President, showcasing his enduring leadership. Jennifer, a past COA Secretary, has been a key organizer of the COA 2 Mile Walk & Run, an event that fosters unity among participants and raises funds for the COA. Curtis, the current COA President and immediate past Vice President, alongside Karen, the COA Vice President, continues to steer the organization forward. His contributions include upgrading the COA website and leveraging social media to connect and communicate COA efforts, milestones, and achievements. BG Seaberry and Karen actively contribute to the COA Scholarship Board. Tomika frequently engages with GLB cadets and participates in public events and ceremonies to elevate the ROTC program's profile. Both she and Aundre work tirelessly to keep the PMS and COA abreast of DOD and Cadet Command changes that could affect ROTC and the GLB to make sure the program remains robust and well-supported,

The strength, support, and interconnectedness of the COA officers and corps of ambassadors extend far beyond these professional events. With over 500 GLB alumni, the network boasts a wealth of experience and knowledge from both current and former military careers. These dedicated alumni are committed to highlighting the successes of cadets and the contributions of the ROTC program to the UAPB community, emphasizing the mutual benefits for both the institution and its students. Their mentorship, networking abilities, credibility, and prestige provide invaluable guidance and connections, shaping cadets into effective Army officers and well-rounded citizens. COA Public Affairs Officer, Dexter Henson, 1985, described COA efforts to support current cadets and officers commissioned through GLB ROTC this way, "...[GLB] graduates now have a network of servicemembers they can connect with...We're finding a way to say, 'Look at what we're doing' as far as mentoring or just for advice. It gives us a chance to be a linchpin for these students so they can become successful."

### **Bridging the Gap**

The charge from Loftin and Brookins to reach back and help others rise remains a guiding principle for the COA. The Association continues to serve as ambassadors, collaborating with university staff to increase visibility of the UAPB ROTC program. By removing communication barriers, creating effective mentorship opportunities, and hosting interactive events, the COA fosters a supportive environment for cadets and junior officers. Also, the Association is committed to bridging generational gaps and promoting the Army in a way that resonates with cadets, junior officers, and their families. Part of the strategy is to leverage the wealth of knowledge and experience within the COA to make a lasting impact. By sharing the authentic stories and experiences of UAPB ROTC alumni, the COA can bridge the gap between GenXers through Generation Alpha cadets and help UAPB staff and cadets understand the true value and benefits of military service.

Similar to how Secret Service agents must possess an intimate knowledge of U.S. currency, COA ambassadors must be well-versed in the history and traditions of the U.S. Army, particularly the experiences of Black officers. By understanding the challenges and triumphs of past generations, ambassadors can provide authentic and relevant mentorship to current and future cadets.

By sharing these stories, COA ambassadors can inspire and motivate cadets. They can highlight the sacrifices made by previous generations and the positive impact that military service can have on one's life. By bridging the gap between generations, COA ambassadors can ensure that the legacy of UAPB ROTC continues to thrive.

In 1865, the US Secret Service (USSS) was established in the Treasury Department to suppress currency counterfeiting. Rather than have agents spend their days scrutinizing fake bills, the USSS trains its agents to know and master the intricate details of genuine currency. Just as the USSS

meticulously studies the intricacies of U.S. currency to detect counterfeits, members of the UAPB COA possess an intimate knowledge of the Army and its rich history. This deep understanding, coupled with their firsthand experiences, enables them to serve as authentic ambassadors for the Army and the ROTC program. By drawing on their personal journeys and the collective experiences of past generations, COA members can effectively communicate the value and benefits of military service. They can bridge generational gaps, inspiring and motivating current and future cadets. By sharing stories of sacrifice, triumph, and personal growth, COA members can foster a deeper appreciation for the Army's mission and values.

As the COA continues to collaborate with university staff, military science departments, and cadets, they play a vital role in shaping the future of the Army. By removing communication barriers, creating effective mentorship opportunities, and hosting interactive events, the COA helps to ensure the enduring legacy of UAPB ROTC.