

VITA

CLARENCE W. BLOUNT

State Senator
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EDUCATION:

- * A.B. Political Science, Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland
- * M.L.A., The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore Maryland
- * Four years Graduate Study in International Law and International Relations, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES:

- * Elected to Maryland State Senate in 1970. Re-elected in 1974, 1978, 1982, 1986 and 1990
- * Currently Majority Leader of Maryland Senate
- * Currently Chairman of the Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee
- * Currently Member of Fiscal Leadership Committee
- * Currently Member of Legislative Policy Committee
- * Former Assistant Majority Leader of Maryland Senate from 1979-1982
- * Former Chairman of the Maryland Legislative Black Caucus from 1982-1984
- * Former Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Health, Education and Human Resources
- * Former Chairman of Baltimore City Senatorial Delegation to Maryland General Assembly from 1972-1982
- * Former Vice Chairman of Committee on Budget and Taxation
- * Also, Member of the following committees:
 - * Executive Nominations
 - * Rules
 - * Joint Committee on Budget and Audit
 - * Joint Committee on Federal Relations (Ex Officio)
 - * Joint Committee on Spending Affordability
 - * Joint Committee on the Management of Public Funds
 - * Chairman of Standing Committee on Savings and Loan Industry
 - * Senate Facilities Committee
 - * Executive Legislative Workshop on Higher Education

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- * Was an Educator with the Baltimore City Public School System for 24 years as Teacher and Administrator.
- * Formerly served as Principal of the Paul Laurence Dunbar Community High School
- * Chairman of the Department of Social Science
- * Executive Assistant to the President of the Community College of Baltimore
- * Blount has been active on the Boards of many organizations, including:
 - * Board of Trustees of Sinai and Provident Hospitals
 - * John F. Kennedy Institute
- * Blount has been award the following citations and honors:
 - * He is listed in Who's Who in American Politics
 - * Ebony Success Library's 1,000 Successful Blacks, Who's Who in the East
 - * Who's Who in Black Corporate America
 - * The Handbook of State Legislative Leaders
 - * Awarded the Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree by Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland in 1980; and by Western Maryland College, Westminster, Maryland in 1982.
- * Blount is the recipient of numerous Civic and Service Awards not listed here.

MILITARY SERVICE:

- * War Service 1942-1946 - Mediterranean Theater of Operations
- * Accorded Divisional Citation for Leadership and Bravery in Action
- * Received Battlefield promotion
- * Awarded Combat Commission
- * Assisted in repatriation of refugees and prisoners of war from the Mediterranean area of Yugoslavia, Germany and Palestine (1 year)
- * Defense Trial Lawyer - American Military Courts - Mediterranean Theater of Operations

. . . Go Where I Send Thee!

As the winds of war flamed the world, Clarence W. Blount prepared for the next giant step toward the fulfillment of the dream - college!

In the hot summer of 1942, he went to work in Ilchester, Maryland, at the Bartgis Papermill, where he saved enough money to enter Morgan State College and attend for the four years it would take for graduation. He was ready, to pay his own way to college.

September, he came on Campus and went about the business of answering the challenge. Of course, the Guardian Angel was there.

It lasted one month!

On October 30, 1942, the same date we now honor this warrior, his "friends and neighbors" selected him to be drafted into the service of his country and go to battle in World War II.

Motherless, since the age of four; barefooted with only overalls for cover; nine years of age entering school; graduating from Senior High at twenty-one; finally on the college campus, for the moment - lesser men would have broken!

One can only surmise that Clarence's remembrance "what my father did for me" - prevailed.

He answered the call of duty!

The Angel was already packed.

Clarence was sent to Fort Meade, Maryland for three days and then to Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, for a month, as a part of the Aviation Engineers. From there, to Hammerfield, outside of Fresno, California.

December, 1942, the first Christmas away from family and home, and in a warm climate, indigenous to the State of California.

Clarence recalls:

"It was a 'cultural shock'. There were women colored like the rainbow, all of them pretty, walking around in shorts in December."

Quite a shock, for a country boy, a long way from South Creek, North Carolina!

Clarence was assigned to the 855th Aviation Engineers Battalion, being trained and readied to go to North Africa to build airstrips and become an infantry component to protect these strips from enemy attack.

Excerpt from "The Elder Statesman"

His leadership qualities were fast seen and by 1943 when he was sent to Engineering School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, he had attained the rank of sergeant. After Belvoir, he was ordered to Macdill Field Florida, outside of Tampa, where he was in charge of the Non-Commissioned Officers School.

He recalls that the Military Policemen in the Tampa area were "mean and white". The Military curfew in Tampa was twelve midnight, and Clarence had been visiting a friend there. It was about 1 a.m. in the morning and he was standing on a corner, waiting for the bus to take him back to camp, when the M.P.'s came upon him.

With his Guardian Angel still protecting him, Clarence endured the ominous moment and was allowed to catch his bus.

The experience made him want to become an M.P. - "so I could handle things differently." His superiors informed him that he had "too much education" to become a Military Policeman.

Drawing on this "education," he wrote to the Adjutant General of the United States Army, requesting a transfer from the South. His request was granted and he was assigned to the Engineer Battalion of the 92nd Infantry Division at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. The year was 1944.

He received a furlough and came home to Catonsville. While there, he married Jeanette Quarles, a neighbor and a freshman at Morgan State College whom he had met when the family moved from Carey Street. Ten days later, he left for Arizona and didn't see his bride again until 1946.

At Huachuca, he joined a Division, historically known as "The Buffalo Soldiers," a carry-over from the 9th and 10th calvary of Black Soldiers that fought the Indian wars, during the settling of the West. Their famed insignia is the Black Buffalo on an Olive Green Patch. Clarence wore his patch, proudly. He had been promoted to Technical Sergeant - three stripes up, two stripes down!

Also, while at the Fort, he was transferred to the Combat Engineers and became the Acting First Sergeant and then, First Sergeant of the Headquarters and Service Company.

In less than two years, 1942-1944, he held every non commissioned rank, from private to top kick (1st Sergeant).

From Arizona he was shipped to Fort McHenry, Virginia. From there, he boarded a troop ship and 18 days later arrived in, what the Americans called "Leghorn" - Livorno, Italy.

There were many Baltimoreans stationed in Italy and they were good medicine for this soldier, abruptly snatched from the halls of learning to the battlefields of war.

His Mathematics teacher from Booker T. Washington Junior High School, Charlie Brown, was the Division Postal Officer.

J. Laws Nickens, Sr. was a Lieutenant with the 317th Engineers Combat Battalion of the 92nd Infantry; Parren J. Mitchell, a Purple Heart recipient, who would one day be a main influencing factor in Clarence's political endeavors, was also an officer there.

Miles Gaither Harrison, Sr., and Hernian Briscoe, were with the Medical Battalion; and Lt. Ulysses (Slick) Glover and Earl Davis were there, with dozens of others. The Afro-American Newspaper had their War Correspondents there.



"Slick"

Noble Sissie and Eubie Blake's All-Black Musical Revue "Shuffle Along" had been sent over by the USO to entertain the troops. One of the stars was Corneia (Nicky) O'Daniel, who would later come to Baltimore and wed Loyal Randolph, owner of the then famed York Hotel. Loyal would also be a guiding hand, in later years, in the political career of Clarence W.



"Nicky"

Older Baltimoreans recall the Afro's War Correspondent's account of the fight for dignity, in an Italian Cabaret when "Slick" Glover went to war with a patron who thought fair "Nicky" was a white woman, fraternizing with "the Negroes" (polite language).

Most importantly, Clarence learned that the older brother, Charles Jr., was stationed farther South in "The King's Forest" with the 758th Tank Battalion, attached to the 92nd Infantry Division. Clarence drove two hours from Massarosa, Italy, for a reunion with his brother who had sacrificed for the education of their sisters.

The year was 1945 and the Allies had the Germans on the run. The War was winding down and Clarence, perhaps could return in pursuit of the challenge to finish college. He had been decorated for Good Judgement, Leadership and Bravery in Action; and had received a Battlefield Commission.

His Second Lieutenant bars were pinned on by one of the men who had inspired him to persevere to the top of the education ladder - Math Teacher, Capt. Charles E. Brown.

The "Good Judgement," cited for the Battlefield Commission, would save his life!



Brothers in War

He was on detached duty with the 34th Infantry (The Texas National Guard) and they were under heavy bombardment in Central Italy. The Germans were atop the Apennines Mountains and Blount and his platoon were trapped below. This is Clarence's account:

There were thousands of our troops pinned down and under fire. The Eighty-Eights (German 'walking' shells) were coming in with accuracy - they could put them in your pocket. We had been in this situation for over 36 hours. We were tired and hungry. On the second day, Gen. Mark Clark ordered in fresh troops to relieve us. I ordered my men to move out in zigzag fashion - according to the Army Manual: I watched them scurry to safety; and now came my turn.

The Germans knew that the officer in charge would be the last to leave. Having watched my men zigzag, they had zeroed in. Something told me not to move and I watched as the shells fell on the exact spots where I should have been.

"It was 'Divine Guidance'".

His Guardian Angel went with him, as he fled to safety, while the enemy changed sightings.

The bad news awaited him, his hero, his idol - his father had passed.

The request by The Blount brothers to return home, was denied by The Red Cross.

Today, Clarence still has "bad feelings" about the denial. Charles, Jr. and the other Blount children have gone to their reward.

On April 12, 1945, America and its Allies mourned the death of President Roosevelt (Clarence vividly recalls the year 1932, when his daddy voted for a Democratic President; the excitement when Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected; and listening on the radio to those great fireside chats. These events began to shape his political philosophies - "and that's why I'm a Democrat today").

A country boy from Missouri, Harry S. Truman became the 33rd President of the United States. He would later order the Armed Forces to end its "Jim Crow" practices - the beginning of integration in America.

About a month later, on May 8, 1945, the war in Europe ended. It was called V-E Day - Victory in Europe.

Lieutenant Blount began training for service in the Far East. And then came V-J Day, September 2, 1945. Japan had fallen.

And the lights went on again all over the world!

It wouldn't be too long now, before Lieutenant Blount would be homeward bound.

His Guardian Angel had never unpacked!