

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Gen. Harry Brooks, Jr.

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Brooks, Harry W.
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Gen. Harry Brooks, Jr.,
<b>Dates:</b>	September 29, 2004
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2004
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:00:18).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Major general (retired) Gen. Harry Brooks, Jr. (1928 - 2017 ) was Commanding General of 25th Infantry Division and worked to promote improved education in the military. After retiring from the military, Brooks founded the Advanced Consumer Marketing Corporation, which was heralded as the Department of Commerce Minority Business Enterprise of the Year in 1989, and the Black Enterprise Company of the Year in 1990. Brooks was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 29, 2004, in Las Vegas, Nevada. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2004_186
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Retired Major General Harry W. Brooks, Jr. was born May 17, 1928, in segregated Indianapolis, Indiana. A good student, he attended P.S. 42, P.S. 87 and Crispus Attucks High School, graduating in 1947 as an officer in the ROTC. Joining the United States Army as a private, Brooks soon rose to sergeant and used the provisions of the G.I. Bill to attend college. Noticed because of his baseball prowess, he was invited to Officer Candidates School (OCS) and received his commission as a second lieutenant in 1949. Brooks went on to obtain his B.A. degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 1962 and an M.A. degree from the University of Oklahoma in 1973. He also completed the Stanford Graduate School of Business Executive Program.

Becoming an officer during the U.S. Army's desegregation efforts, Brooks served in Japan with a logistics command in support of Korea. Serving in Germany as an artillery officer, Brooks also served a tour in Vietnam. His subordinate officers included Colin Powell. While attending the United States War College from 1969 to 1970, he coauthored *The Gathering Storm: An Analysis of Racial Instability Within the Army*. Appointed Army Director of Equal Opportunity Programs at the Pentagon in 1972, Brooks was promoted to major general in 1974, as the 6th African American general in United States history. As the commanding general of the famed 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii, Brooks was responsible for 16,000 men and for ordering 10,000 of them to return to school for high school and associate degrees.

His decorations included: the Distinguished Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, two Legion of Merit Medals, two Bronze Star Medals, and seven Air Medals. Awards from NAACP and Kiwanis recognized Brooks volunteer activities. After retirement in 1976, Brooks became executive vice president of Amfac, Inc. He then founded, with some of his friends, Advanced Consumer Marketing Corporation, which was heralded as the Department of Commerce Minority Business Enterprise of the Year in 1989 and the Black Enterprise Company of

the Year in 1990. Married with four adult sons, Brooks was chairman of Brooks International and lived in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Brooks passed away on August 28, 2017 at age 89.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Gen. Harry Brooks, Jr. was conducted by Larry Crowe on September 29, 2004, in Las Vegas, Nevada, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Major general (retired) Gen. Harry Brooks, Jr. (1928 - 2017 ) was Commanding General of 25th Infantry Division and worked to promote improved education in the military. After retiring from the military, Brooks founded the Advanced Consumer Marketing Corporation, which was heralded as the Department of Commerce Minority Business Enterprise of the Year in 1989, and the Black Enterprise Company of the Year in 1990.

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## Restrictions

### Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

### Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

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## Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Brooks, Harry W.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Brooks, Harry W.--Interviews

African American generals--Interviews.

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## **Organizations:**

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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## **Occupations:**

Major General (Retired)

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

MilitaryMakers

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## **Administrative Information**

### **Custodial History**

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

### **Preferred Citation**

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Gen. Harry Brooks, Jr., September 29, 2004. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### **Processing Information**

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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## **Other Finding Aid**

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

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## **Detailed Description of the Collection**

## Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Gen. Harry Brooks, Jr., Section A2004\_186\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:44 ?

Retired Major General Harry W. Brooks, Jr. recalls memories of growing up in a middle class African American neighborhood in Indianapolis, Indiana, during the Depression and World War Two. He talks about his mother and father, schools, participation in football and ROTC, and his decision to join the military after high school. He also expresses his belief in the need for more discipline in today's schools.

Childhood and youth--Indiana--Indianapolis.

African American neighborhoods--Indiana--Indianapolis.

African American parents--Indiana--Indianapolis.

African Americans--Education--Indiana--Indianapolis.

United States--Armed Forces--African Americans.

Video Oral History Interview with Gen. Harry Brooks, Jr., Section A2004\_186\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Retired Major General Harry W. Brooks, Jr. describes his Army career from 1947, when he joined as a private, through the mid-1970s, just before his promotion to general officer. He details his experiences in basic training and Officer Candidates School, his first overseas duty in Japan, his transfer into the artillery division, and his first post as a commanding officer. Brooks describes race relations and the transition to integration in the armed forces, and gives his thoughts on leadership.

United States--Armed Forces--African Americans.

Basic training (Military education).

United States--Armed Forces--Race relations.

Leadership.

Video Oral History Interview with Gen. Harry Brooks, Jr., Section A2004\_186\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:28 ?

Retired Major General Harry W. Brooks, Jr. addresses the integration of the U.S. Army, detailing his appointment as only the sixth African American general in the history of the Army. Brooks describes how he helped to improve race relations in the Army in his new position. He also talks about his time commanding the 25th Infantry Division based in the Pacific. Under Brooks's leadership, the 25th became acknowledged as the best-trained division in the Army. Brooks also placed a premium on education; under his command, over 1,500 members of the 25th received high school diplomas.

United States--Armed Forces--Integration.

African American generals.

United States--Armed Forces--Race relations.

Education.

Video Oral History Interview with Gen. Harry Brooks, Jr., Section A2004\_186\_001\_004, TRT: 0:30:56 ?

Retired Major General Harry W. Brooks, Jr. reflects on his life and career in the military, and discusses his retirement activities, including his work with the Freedom Forum. Brooks also talks about his personal beliefs, family, and friendships, and shares his concerns for the future. Brooks then narrates his personal photographs. The photographs depict his life, family, and career.

Retired military personnel--Activities.

Freedom Forum.

African American families.

Photographs.