

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Gen. James Boddie, Jr.

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## Overview of the Collection

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| <b>Repository:</b>           | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616<br>info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com   |
| <b>Creator:</b>              | Boddie, James T., 1931-   |
| <b>Title:</b>                | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Gen. James Boddie, Jr.,  |
| <b>Dates:</b>                | January 28, 2013  |
| <b>Bulk Dates:</b>           | 2013  |
| <b>Physical Description:</b> | 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:18:26).   |
| <b>Abstract:</b>             | Brigadier general Gen. James Boddie, Jr. (1931 - ) has logged more than five-thousand hours and flown over two-hundred mission as a U.S. Air Force command pilot. Boddie was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 28, 2013, in Plano, Texas. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| <b>Identification:</b>       | A2013_026   |
| <b>Language:</b>             | The interview and records are in English.   |

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. James T. Boddie was born on October 18, 1931 in Baltimore, Maryland. Boddie graduated from Fredrick Douglass High School in Baltimore in February 1949. Boddie received his B.S. degree in chemistry from Howard University in 1954, and his M.A. degree in public administration from Auburn University in 1975. In addition, Boddie completed military studies at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces in 1971, and the Air War College in 1975.

Boddie received his U.S. Air Force officer's commission through the Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Corps Program at Howard University, and then earned his wings in 1956. His first operational assignment was with the 560th Strategic Fighter Squadron at Bergstrom Air Force Base that was equipped with the F-84 Thunderstreak fighter plane. Boddie reported to Nellis Air Force Base in 1957 for gunnery and weapons delivery training in the F-100 Super Sabre. Upon completion, Boddie was assigned to the U.S. Air Force Europe Weapons Center in Tripoli, Libya where he served from until 1961. After his return to the United States in February 1961, Boddie assumed responsibilities as commandant of cadets at the Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Corps Program at Tuskegee Institute. In 1966, Boddie volunteered for combat duty in Southeast Asia, and was assigned to the 559th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Cam Ranh Bay Air Base in the Republic of Vietnam. In addition to his duties as operations and scheduling officer, Boddie completed a total of two-hundred and one F-4 combat missions, fifty-seven of which were flown over North Vietnam. In 1980, Boddie was promoted to Brigadier General. He then served as aviation director in the Aircraft Management office, at NASA Headquarters, from 1991 to 1996; and, between 2006 and 2008, Boddie served as president of Texas Southern University.

Boddie's experience as a command and combat pilot includes over five-thousand hours in jet fighter aircraft. His military decorations and awards include the Air Force Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Meritorious Service Medal, thirteen Air Medals, the Air Force Commendation Medal, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award ribbon, the Combat Readiness Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, Small

Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon, the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with palm, and the Vietnam Campaign Medal. Boddie also wears the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff badge.

U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. James T. Boddie, Jr. was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on January 28, 2013.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Gen. James Boddie, Jr. was conducted by Larry Crowe on January 28, 2013, in Plano, Texas, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Brigadier general Gen. James Boddie, Jr. (1931 - ) has logged more than five-thousand hours and flown over two-hundred mission as a U.S. Air Force command pilot.

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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:

Boddie, James T., 1931-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Boddie, James T., 1931- --Interviews

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United States--Armed Forces--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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United States. Air Force

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## Occupations:

Brigadier General

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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. James Boddie, Jr., January 28, 2013. 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. James Boddie, Jr., Section A2013\_026\_001\_001, TRT: 1:32:15 ?

James Boddie describes his family's background. Boddie's mother, Emery Mae Moore, was born in June, 1906 in Atlanta, Georgia. She was the oldest child born to Rossie Strickland and Reverend James Arthur Moore, a Baptist minister at Wheat Street Baptist Church in Atlanta. Emery Moore grew up in Atlanta, where she was a close friend of Alberta Williams King, who graduated with her from Spelman College in 1928. Her father later moved to Chicago, Illinois, Kansas City, Kansas, and Baltimore, Maryland. Moore's father, James Timothy Boddie, Sr. was born in September, 1900 in Darby, Pennsylvania. Boddie's paternal grandfather, Reverend Jacob Benjamin Boddie was also a Baptist minister. Boddie talks about his father's attempts to become a minister, his parents' marriage in 1928, their life in Baltimore, and their service to the Baptist church. Boddie also explains how he met his wife, Mattie Dwiggins.

African American families.

African American mothers--Georgia--Atlanta.

African American churches--Georgia--Atlanta.

African American fathers.

African American grandfathers.

Video Oral History Interview with Gen. James Boddie, Jr., Section A2013\_026\_001\_002, TRT: 2:31:15 ?

James Boddie grew up in Baltimore and Germantown, Maryland in the 1930s and 1940s. Here he attended Henry Highland Garnet School, Eleanor Cope Emlen School, Booker T. Washington Junior High School and Frederick Douglass Senior High School. As a teenager, Boddie was interested in airplanes, photography, chemistry, and reading. At the age of sixteen, he began to take flying lessons with the French Flying Service in Baltimore. Boddie talks about seeing Jackie Robinson play with the Brooklyn Dodgers, his father listening to the radio as boxer Joe Louis beats Max Schmeling, and watching a newsreel reporting on the Hindenburg disaster of 1937. After graduating from high school in 1949, he attended Howard University, where he majored in chemistry. Boddie also discusses his family's political affiliations, and how he met his wife, Matte Dwiggins, in 1961 in Tuskegee, Alabama.

Childhood--Maryland.

Education--Maryland.

Howard University.

Marriage.

Video Oral History Interview with Gen. James Boddie, Jr., Section A2013\_026\_001\_003, TRT: 3:28:39 ?

After graduating from Douglass Senior High School in Baltimore, Maryland in 1949, James Boddie enrolled in Howard University, where he majored in chemistry. While in high school, Boddie also worked at the post office at night to assist with his sisters' college education. Boddie describes his experience at Howard University, where Mordecai Johnson was the president. He talks about his chemistry teacher and mentor, HistoryMaker Lloyd N. Ferguson, and his classmates at Howard. Boddie stopped playing football and joined Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, where he befriended HistoryMaker The Honorable Andrew Young. He also joined the U.S. Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), and was commissioned as an officer in the Air Force in the early

1950s. He describes his assignment as a primary pilot trainer at Bartow, Florida in 1955, and the racism he experienced there.

Howard University.

Mentoring in education.

Ferguson, Lloyd N.

Young, Andrew, 1932-

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity.

United States. Air Force ROTC.

Video Oral History Interview with Gen. James Boddie, Jr., Section A2013\_026\_001\_004, TRT: 4:31:09 ?

James Boddie received his pilot's wings in March of 1956, and was assigned to the 560 Strategic Fighter Squadron at Bergstrom Air Force Base. In 1957, he moved to Nellis Air Force Base as part of a six-month F-100 fighter training program. He then was assigned to the 45th Fighter Day Squadron in Sidi Slimane, Morocco, before being rerouted to Wheelus Air Base in Tripoli, Libya. Upon returning to the U.S., he was stationed in Tuskegee, where he met his wife, Mattie Dwiggin. Boddie entered the Vietnam War in the mid-1960s, flying 201 F-4 fighter combat missions. He describes his experience in Vietnam. Upon his return in 1957, he was promoted to major in the U.S. Air Force, and was appointed to the 4457th Technical Training Wing. He recalls his last meeting with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his family's relationship with the King family.

United States. Air Force.

Bergstrom Air Force Base.

Wheelus Air Base.

Vietnam War, 1961-1975.

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968--Assassination.

Video Oral History Interview with Gen. James Boddie, Jr., Section A2013\_026\_001\_005, TRT: 5:30:01 ?

James Boddie describes his service during the 1960s and 1970s in the U.S. Air Force at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Randolph Air Force Base, Langley Air Force Base and Moody Air Force Base. In 1976, he toured in Korea, and was stationed at Osan Air Force Base as vice commander, and later, the commander of the 51st Composite Wing, where he was promoted to brigadier general. After his return to the U.S. in 1980, Boddie served as the deputy director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington, D.C. In 1983, he retired from the Air Force after more than twenty-eight years of service, and was appointed as Director of Air Force Requirements for the Link Flight Simulation Division of Singer Company. Boddie also recalls visiting Dr. Martin Luther King in Montgomery a day after his house had been bombed, and the March from Selma to Montgomery in 1965.

United States. Air Force.

African American generals.

United States.--Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Korea (South)

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968.

Video Oral History Interview with Gen. James Boddie, Jr., Section A2013\_026\_001\_006, TRT: 6:30:00 ?

After retiring from the U.S. Air Force in 1983, James Boddie served as Director

of Air Force Requirements for the Link Flight Simulation Division of the Singer Company. In 1988, he became the vice president of operations and business development for Operational Technologies Services, Inc., and formed his own company, Genesys Industries, to provide aviation expertise, logistics, management and operational management services. In 1991, he was appointed as Director of Aviation for NASA's Aircraft Management Office. Boddie discusses his service on the Board of Directors for the Military Officers Association, his tenure as the interim president of Texas Southern University, and his membership in the Tuskegee Airmen Organization. He also talks about his concerns for the African American community, his decision to move to Plano, Texas, attending fighter pilot reunions with his wife, Mattie Diggins, and being diagnosed with cancer.

Flight simulators.

United States.--Air Force--Examinations.

United States.--National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Military Officers Association of America.

Reminiscing.

Video Oral History Interview with Gen. James Boddie, Jr., Section A2013\_026\_001\_007, TRT: 7:15:07 ?

In this section of the interview, James Boddie discusses the progress of African Americans in the U.S. military, and reflects upon his life, career and legacy. Boddie also talks about his family, and shares how he would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Gen. James Boddie, Jr., Section A2013\_026\_BODDIE\_JAMES\_06\_MED\_001, TRT: 0:31:00

This tape contains a DVD program celebrating the life of Brigadier General USAF Retired James Boddie, Jr. for his 80th birthday.

The program can be found on the server under his archival box folder.

Video Oral History Interview with Gen. James Boddie, Jr., Section A2013\_026\_Boddie\_James\_06\_MED\_002, TRT: