



## Lt. Col. Shelton "Ivan" Ware USAF, Ret.

### Original Tuskegee Airman - Campaigns: World War II and Korean War

While college attendance gave him a legitimate reason "to duck the draft" as others had done, Ware instead joined the US Army Enlisted Reserve Corps on April 1, 1942 and reported for active duty in 1943. He was assigned to the 3420th Ordnance Medium Automotive Maintenance Company in England in November, 1943, and was on Omaha Beach in Normandy, France on July 3, 1944. His unit "kept the wheels rolling and the guns firing" as part of the renowned Red Ball Express.

Ware served a total of 26 months as a Weapons and Vehicle Maintenance Technician in England, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, and Germany during WWII. After hostilities, he served another six months of Occupation Duty in Munich, Germany. He earned Service Stars for the Battle of Normandy and the Battle of Northern France. He was honorably discharged in June, 1946 at the rank of Staff Sergeant.

Ware still had two years of junior college credits when he returned to the U.S., so he enrolled at Howard University utilizing the GI Bill. He had originally intended to enroll at the law school, but was encouraged by the dean to consider a Liberal Arts degree, as he could begin his studies immediately. He still vividly remembers the difficulties of returning to civilian life after having served in extended combat. He graduated from Howard University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Government (cum laude), and having completed the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) program, was commissioned as a USAF 2nd Lieutenant in June of 1948. He was in the first class of AFROTC at Howard and had served as Cadet Battalion Commander. Ware and five of his Howard University classmates reported to Col. B.O. Davis, Jr. and the 332nd Fighter Wing at Lockbourne Army Air Base (later Lockbourne Air Force Base) on July 13, 1948.

In September 1948, Ware led a convoy to Eglin Army Base, FL in support of 332nd Fighter Wing's participation in Operation Combine III. Later that year, Lockbourne AFB was closed. In 1949, he attended Food Service Management Training at Fort Lee, Virginia followed by On-the-Job-Training at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio and then Rome Air Depot, New York. In 1952, he became Assistant Director at the Army Food Service School, Fort Hood, Texas. For eighteen months, he conducted the training of Air Force Cooks and Bakers for the transformation of Air Force Contract Food Services into military-conducted Food Services.

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Following a three-year tour of duty as Director of Military Training at Wiesbaden Air Base, Germany, Ware served three years in the early 1960s with the Tuskegee Institute AFROTC Program, Alabama. After a year as with the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) Minuteman Missile Education Program (MMEP) at Malmstrom AFB (MT), he directed all six MMEP detachments from AFIT HQ in Ohio. During this time, he also completed the Air War Correspondence Program and the National Security Program. He returned to Washington, DC as AFROTC Professor of Aerospace Studies (PAS) at Howard University from 1969 to 1972. Ware retired from the USAF in September of 1974 with thirty years of military service.

In retirement, Ware continued to serve his alma mater as Assistant Director of Auxiliary Services. He also earned his Master of Business Administration degree (MBA) from Howard in 1981. Ware went on to earn his Master of Public Administration degree (MPA) from the University of Southern California (USC) in May, 1995 and his Doctorate of Public Administration degree (DPA) from that same university in August, 1995.

Ware is a Charter Member of the East Coast Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. (ECCTAI). He served a term and a half as Secretary starting in 1975, when the organization was newly formed. He also served two terms as First Vice President, three terms as Director, and for many years as both chapter Parliamentarian and Chair of the ROTC Committee. An active Documented Original Tuskegee Airmen (DOTA) member of ECCTAI, he has volunteered tirelessly as a panelist and speaker in the Washington, DC area to help tell the story of the Tuskegee Airmen and preserve their legacy.

Ware played an important role in retaining the Air Force ROTC program at Howard (Detachment 130) during his time there in the 1970s. As a result, he was recently honored with the creation of the ECCTAI Lt. Col. (Ret) Ware ROTC Award, to be given in the future to a deserving cadet from each of the following Washington, DC area institutions: Howard University, Bowie State University, and University of Maryland.

Ware is a Life Member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and a 32nd Degree Prince Hall Mason. He was happily married for 46 years to educator Vivian A. (Lindsay) Ware, a Life Member of Delta Sigma Theta and a long-time Art Therapist in Washington, DC, until her death in 1994. Ware was among the DOTAs honored by President Bush in 2007 at the Tuskegee Airmen Congressional Gold Medal Award Ceremony at the U.S. Capitol.

Lt. Col. Ware turned 100 years old on January 29, 2023. He has resided in Silver Spring, Maryland for over 50 years.

View Ware's interviews from C-Span: [www.c-span.org/person/?1031018/WareWare](http://www.c-span.org/person/?1031018/WareWare)



Col. Davis welcomes the first (6) Howard University AFROTC graduate Officers to Lockbourne AAB in 1948. Ware is second from the right.