



James “Pat” Harden Daugherty Served as a Buffalo Soldier During WWII

James Harden Daugherty served as a Staff Sargeant in the only African-American infantry division to see action in Europe during World War II during the 92nd's Italian Campaign. After the war, Daugherty returned to live in Maryland, where he encountered Jim Crow laws that segregated African Americans from whites in many aspects of life. Daugherty became the first African American to serve as a member of the school board of Montgomery County, Maryland.

During World War II, Daugherty had a job working for the U.S. government in Washington, D.C. for the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, and believed that because of this he would not be drafted into the military. However, in December 1943 he received a draft letter ordering him to report for duty; Daugherty was only 19 years old at the time. He had very mixed feelings about serving in the military, due to the reality of living under Jim Crow laws that deprived him and other African Americans of many of their civil rights and liberties. He felt that it was difficult for him to justify going to another country to fight for someone else's freedom under the flag of a country that denied him his own.

After the war ended, Daugherty returned to his home in Maryland, and ended up working in the same job at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing that he had held before being drafted. He used money from the G.I. Bill to put himself through college at Howard University. He had a distinguished career working for the United States Public Health Service in administrative capacities, as well as serving for many years in a governor-appointed position with the Maryland School for the Deaf.

Daugherty describes that he received no hero's welcome after coming home from World War II. Instead, he and the other African Americans who had fought in the war came home to face the same situation that they had left, including legally-sanctioned racial discrimination and segregation. The African American soldiers who served in World War II were overlooked when it came time to hand out medals, and it was not until many years later, and after significant changes in American life and law, that medals began to be awarded to some of the members of the 92nd Infantry Division, some of them posthumously. In 1997 two soldiers from the 92nd finally received the Congressional Medal of Honor from President Bill Clinton. Daugherty himself received the Bronze Star Medal for heroic achievement, and a Combat Infantryman Badge for outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy.

He wrote a self-published autobiography, *The Buffalo Saga: A Story from World War II U.S. Army 92nd Infantry Division known as the Buffalopians*. After his book was published, his home town of Silver Spring, Maryland, officially declared July 28 as "Buffalo Soldier James Daugherty Day".

Daugherty died at the age of 91 on January 20, 2015.