

Gordon T. Boyd, Jr.

Tuskegee Airman and Census Bureau Computer Specialist

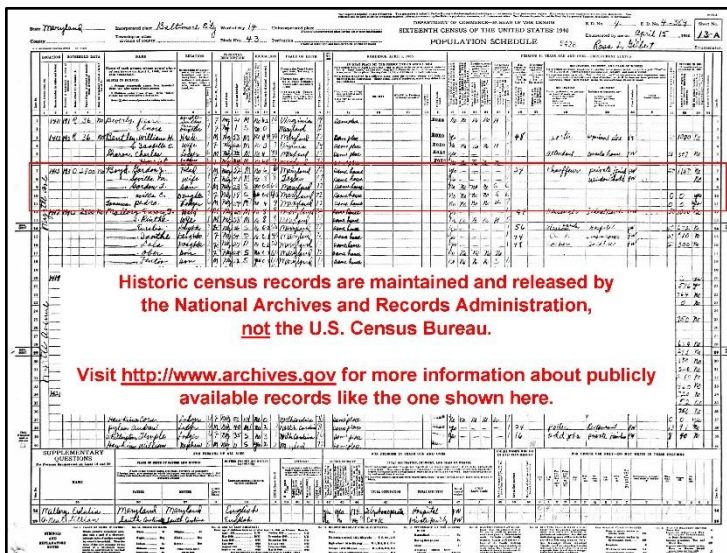
The U.S. Census Bureau is proud of its history of continually evolving to ensure an accurate count of the people of the United States. To accomplish this, the Census Bureau has long embraced the hiring of a diverse workforce representative of local communities and the people who were a part of the neighborhoods that they counted. For this reason, census work was often one of the few government jobs open to minorities. Beginning with the 1870 Census (the first after the abolition of slavery), the Census Bureau began hiring African Americans as enumerators and data processors. With the creation of a permanent Census Bureau in 1902, Black workers and statisticians found an environment with an inclusiveness far greater than many contemporary institutions.



Baltimore Sun (Baltimore, MD)
24 May 1995

Gordon Truman Boyd, Jr. was born on February 21, 1917, in

Baltimore, MD. His father, Gordon J. Boyd, worked as a chauffeur while his mother, Sevilla, kept house and held occasional side jobs. Gordon, Jr. attended Baltimore's historic Douglass High School, founded in 1883 as one of the nation's first high schools for Black students. Following high school, Gordon attended Howard University, where he studied music, a passion that would remain with him throughout his life. In 1939, Gordon married Corrine "Dimples" Scott. In the early years of World War II, Gordon worked briefly as an elevator operator before enlisting on October 11, 1943.

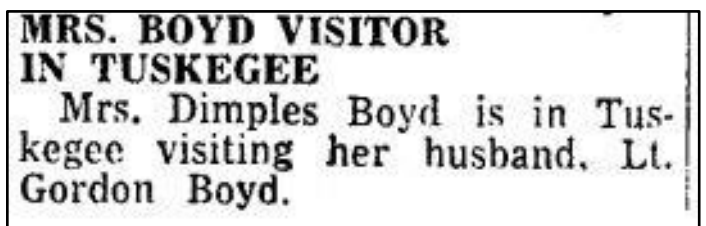


Historic census records are maintained and released by the National Archives and Records Administration, not the U.S. Census Bureau.

Visit <http://www.archives.gov> for more information about publicly available records like the one shown here.

Gordon Family, 1940 Census

After entrance processing and testing, the U.S. Army sent Gordon to the Army Air Force (AAF) aviator program. In addition to the training that all Black AAF aviators received in Alabama at Tuskegee Army Airfield, Gordon also took courses like the AAF Flexible Gunnery Course at Tyndall Airfield, Florida, where he graduated in December of 1944, and the Navigators/Bombardier course in San Angelo, TX. In an interview with fellow Tuskegee Airman Charles E. Francis, who authored one of the seminal works on the history of the Tuskegee Airman, Gordon recalled that during training, "while the white cadets socialized, we stayed with the books. It was nothing exceptional to the white fellows, but to us, it was an opportunity no black youths had ever been given."



Afro-American (Baltimore, MD) 4 Aug 1945



Gordon and a group of award winning Census Bureau employees, 1963

and the few officers that received reprimands later had their records expunged. Morale and training greatly improved, but the end of the war had already arrived, and Gordon mustered out of the AAF on April 4, 1946, as a first lieutenant.

Following Gordon’s military service, he went to work almost immediately with the Census Bureau, which followed precedents set since the Civil War in giving preference to veteran hiring. As a management specialist, Gordon worked in many divisions—including the Population and the Data Processing Services and Engineering Divisions. One of Gordon’s greatest accomplishments, for which he received an award in 1963, was his contribution to the wider use of FOSDIC (Film Optical Sensing Device for Input to Computers). These machines optimized the speed of the early UNIVAC computers and removed time consuming steps from the computing process. The process and machines remained so effective they stayed in service for the decennial censuses from 1960 to 1990, as well as for the Census Bureau’s many other censuses and surveys such as the 1963 Censuses of Manufactures, Businesses, and Mineral Industries on which Gordon worked as a FOSDIC Forms Specialist.

In 1950, Gordon had earned his mortician’s license, which he used to operate a D.C. funeral home, the House of Boyd from 1950 to 1970. In 1968, he and his wife moved permanently to their vacation home at Arundel-on-the-Bay outside of Annapolis, MD. During this time, Gordon continued to work for the Census Bureau. In recognition of his tremendous contributions, he received the U.S. Department of Commerce’s prestigious Bronze Medal in 1976. He finally retired from the Census Bureau in 1979, after almost 34 years of service. Around this time Gordon

Gordon trained as a navigator-bombardier as part of the 477th Bombardment Group. Although the war ended before the unit deployed to the Pacific, the 477th still had battles to fight. In April 1945, the base commander arrested over 100 Black officers who tried to integrate the illegally segregated White Officer’s Club. The episode resulted in the removal of biased White officers and their replacement with Black veteran officers from the 332nd. Almost all of the Black officers avoided punishment,



Gordon and Dimples at a social function in 1959. *Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD) 2 May 1959

became involved with the East Coast Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen Inc. He traveled to conferences and held offices within the organization which sought to retain, tell, and inspire with their history of conquering adversity and serving their country. Gordon T. Boyd, Jr. passed away on May 5, 1995, and is interred at Arlington National Cemetery. The Census Bureau is thankful to Gordon for his long service to his country.



Congressional Gold Medal awarded to the Tuskegee Airmen as a group by a 2006 Act of Congress. Gordon received personal recognition in a 2004 Congressional resolution honoring the Tuskegee Airmen.