



Morehouse is unparalleled in its tradition of building strong black men for leadership positions throughout the world. But there have been some Morehouse Men who have taken their commitment to lead to an even higher plateau.

Trading in jeans and sneakers for dress blues and/or fatigues, they become military Maroon Tigers who many times serve on the nation's front lines, domestic or abroad.

Many were prepared on campus during their undergraduate years as part of the Army or Navy Reserve Officers' Training Corps, in which they become commissioned officers the same time they receive their bachelor's degrees.

The Army ROTC program has a reputation for excellence and is represented by the Panther Battalion consisting of Morehouse, Spelman College and Clark Atlanta University students.

In 2007, the Naval ROTC program celebrated its 20th year of being commissioned on the Morehouse campus.

"These are the men and women who are going to lead," said U.S. Navy Capt. R. Wayne Radloff, who is in charge of the NROTC program for Atlanta, which includes Morehouse.

The military recognized it needed more African American leaders in its ranks to thrive in a rapidly changing world. The AUC, Radloff said, was a logical place to look.

MOREHOUSE
MILITARY
MEN
By Eric Sturgus



"We knew we were going to have to improve our diversity with our officers and knew we had to reach out to the HBCUs," he said. "Morehouse has a great reputation for character."

The ROTC programs represent only the beginning of storied Morehouse military careers.

There are many Morehouse Men who have gone on to long, illustrious military careers that have them holding some of the highest ranks, receiving some of the most distinguished medals and honorably serving the United States in noble ways.

Here are just a few of those distinguished Morehouse Military Men and their stories.

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Personnel Privileges

Ronald Kenyatte Booker '96 came this close to living out his boyhood dream. Raised in Bay St. Louis, Miss., a small Gulf Coast city, Booker excelled at football and planned to accept a scholarship at Grambling State University in neighboring Louisiana, where he would play under one of the most successful coaches in American history: Eddie Robinson.

But Booker wanted to study biology, and that presented a dream-deferring problem.

"Robinson was truthful," Booker recalled. The legendary coach told him: "If you want to study biology, Grambling is not the place for you."

So Booker realigned his sights and spotted Morehouse. He had relatives in Atlanta and the city was home to the acclaimed Morehouse School of Medicine.

Today, Booker is a major in the U.S. Air Force, where he serves as Aide de Camp to Gen. William Fraser III, the Air Force's vice chief of staff. Booker is the right-hand man to Fraser, who assists the chief of staff with organizing, training and equipping nearly 700,000 active-duty guard, reserve and civilian forces serving in the United States and overseas.

In the Air Force, Booker said he's learned many lessons he was first taught at Morehouse. One is service before self.

"When people see you are a Morehouse Man, they expect you to do greater things," he said. "That's what the military wants. They expect you to lead."

Booker used a ROTC scholarship to pay his way through Morehouse, where he earned his psychology pre-med degree. After graduation, he wanted to pursue a career in Special Forces. Again, his plans changed when his commanders pushed him toward specializing in personnel. However, he soon discovered the advantages of working in personnel. He went on assignments to Afghanistan, Belgium, Bosnia, Kyrgyzstan, Italy and Turkey. He also assisted counterterrorism units in search of al-Qaeda and Taliban forces, investigated domestic disputes, performed evaluations and helped organized special deployments.

"I didn't realize how rewarding it was until I returned from Afghanistan," he said. "On my flight home, the airline put me in first class. Once we landed, the flight attendant announced that we have a special passenger on board who just returned from his deployment in Afghanistan... Everyone on the plane began to clap. Some said 'USA.' Many said 'Thank you for everything you do.' It was very moving to me." ■



Of God and Government

They way Glynn Harden '96 explains it, he serves God and fights for Uncle Sam. His two devotions are not incongruent.

"Although war is a military reality born of political necessity, our troops are not lovers of war," he said. "I am no warmonger—I am no Hector [the Greek warrior]. I am a peacemaker, cousin to Achilles, willing to go to war out of love of God, family, country and friend—to ultimately secure the greater peace."

As a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy, Harden serves as the Strike Group Officer for Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center Atlantic, responsible for overseeing the technical support onboard Mid-Atlantic cruisers, destroyers and frigates. He professes his faith as an evangelist at Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in Portsmouth, Va. Harden navigates life, and these two distinct worlds—he said in one sermon—by opening his Bible to Psalms 90 and 91.

"No matter what is going on around me," Harden said, his voice rising in the familiar hoarse and husky tone of a Baptist preacher as he recites Psalms 91:7. "A thousand may fall at your side... It shall not come upon me."

He gets much of his strength and comfort from the Bible and from the lessons he learned at Morehouse, where he earned a degree in general science.

God never takes you to a place that has not been prepared for you.

A rising tide raises all ships.

You keep the doors open for the people behind you.

Harden's road to Morehouse began in Detroit, where he was born and raised. His teenage years came during the mid 1980s, when the city was an urban desert of dreams for many African Americans, with its endless stretches of boarded-up homes. Harden did not want to stay there. He was accepted into the Navy's Broadened Opportunity for Office Selection and Training Program. The year-long program in San Diego was geared toward people like Harden – smart and talented with the potential to become a Naval officer, but lacking the required educational background.

A fan of "A Different World," the hit television sitcom about life at a fictional historically black college, Harden watched an episode during his training. He saw many similarities between Morehouse and the show's college and decided to come to Atlanta.

"It was great to be at a place where black manhood was affirmed and incubated," said Harden, who earned his degree in 1996.

After graduation, Harden served as the fire control and gunnery officer on the USS Saipan. He's completed deployments to the Mediterranean and the Adriatic seas. ■



The Great Communicator

Otha Thornton '89 grew up in Elberton, Ga., a small town 110 miles east of Atlanta that is known as the "Granite Capital of the World."

About twice a month, Thornton is among a group of highly-selected people who spends the day working in a city and a building that are a little more recognizable than Elberton.

The White House, Washington, D.C.

There, Thornton, 41, a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army,

serves as the director of human resources and the presidential communications officer for the White House Communications Agency Director of Human Resources.

"This is a long way from Elberton," said Thornton, who graduated from Morehouse in 1989 with a degree in urban studies. He is responsible for the planning, preparation and execution of communications for the president. Thornton organized the communications for an event where Bush visited wounded servicemen and women. The agency is responsible for making sure that the president has instantaneous communications anywhere and anytime around the globe, which is no small feat. The agency is also known as "the voice of the president."

A quiet, soft-spoken man, Thornton is modest about his duties and the people he has met on the job. He met former President George W. Bush twice, U.S. Sen. John McCain and the famed Italian opera singer, Andrea Bocelli. He commanded a counterdrug unit that chased druglords—some drug dealers offered a bounty on him—and human traffickers. In September, he received the Knowlton Award for his work in military intelligence.

Thornton was recommended by a senior commander for his current position. In a three-hour interview, he was asked details about his life and morals, as well as technical questions. He credits Morehouse with helping him get selected for his current position, saying his alma mater nurtured his desire to serve other.

Thornton began his military career as an infantry officer in Hawaii and has since traveled to 20 countries. Two of his brothers, Charles, from the class of 1999, and Eric, from the class of 1995, also graduated from Morehouse. Both are in the military.

"Between all of us, we've probably covered every corner of the earth," he said. ■



Getting the Job Done

U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Milton Troy III '95 sat down with his eight-year-old son shortly after learning he was being deployed to Iraq.

"I'm going away to help people," said Troy, hoping to remove any fear his son may have about the assignment.

"Are you going to find some buried treasure?" Milton Troy IV asked his father.

"If I find some, I'll bring it home to you," Troy replied.

Troy was sensitive to what his son could be thinking about his

current mission. His own father, a retired Army lieutenant colonel, had similar conversations with him before embarking on assignments.

Troy left Dec. 1 for his training for Iraq, a critical battleground in the war on terror. His specialty is logistics: making sure people get what they need. His job will largely be to make sure his crew has the equipment it needs to complete its mission.

"If I don't do my job, then they won't do their job," he said.

According to Troy, most Americans do not understand the threat of terrorists.

"When people think of war, they think World War II, with a start and an end," he said. "This isn't like that. It's not your average war. How do you identify the enemy? It might be a woman with a bomb strapped to her. It might be a plane striking the World Trade Center. This is totally different."

He credits Morehouse with teaching the importance of serving others. Even today, Troy says he relies on the support system of the Morehouse Military Alumni affinity group, which he also credits with helping scores of young people graduate from college.

"Master Chief [Jeff] Hutchinson [who is now retired] is worthy of the utmost respect, and many of the [Navy ROTC] alumni and Atlanta metropolitan high schools will be forever in his debt," Troy said.

Born in Mullins, S.C., Troy grew up understanding the military life. He earned a ROTC scholarship with the Navy, but he wasn't sure he wanted a military career. His perspective changed, thanks to the mentorship of his second boss, Michael Rutten. Rutten told Troy he could make the military a career and steered him to programs that helped Troy earn his master's degree in business from the University of Georgia. Troy, who served as a logistics adviser to the Kuwaiti Navy, also has a master's degree in national security and strategic studies from the U.S. Naval War College.

"He really turned it around for me," Troy said of Rutten. "I'm glad I stayed."

Troy said he is excited about his latest mission.

Nervous?

"A little," he admitted.

Troy said some friends have stared sadly at him when he told them he was headed to Iraq. "I'm coming right back," he assures them.

After all, he has some buried treasure to bring back to his son. ■