

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Vincent Brooks

PERSON

Brooks, Vincent , 1958-

**Alternative Names:** Brooks, Vincent , 1958-

**Life Dates:** October 24, 1958-

**Place of Birth:** Anchorage, Alaska

**Residence:**

**Occupations:** General, U.S. Army

## Biographical Note

U.S. Army General Vincent K. Brooks was born in Anchorage, Alaska on October 24, 1958. His father, Leo Brooks Sr., was an army officer who began his career one year after the military received the order to desegregate. He ended his military career nearly 30 years later having achieved the rank of Major General. His mother, Naomi Lewis Brooks, was a school teacher and Army wife. Brooks graduated from Jesuit High School in California where he excelled in academics and athletics. His class at the United States Military Academy at West Point was among the first to include women. At West Point, Brooks played varsity basketball in his freshman year under Coach Mike Krzyzewski. Brooks went on to graduate from West Point with a B.S. degree in 1980 and achieved the historic honor of being appointed Cadet Brigade Commander or “First Captain” for his senior year. This was an historic first for an African American cadet, coming 177 years after the establishment of West Point and 102 years after the first African American, Henry O. Flipper, graduated from the Academy. Brooks went on to earn his master’s degree (Master of Military Art and Science – MMAS) from the prestigious School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas and later served as a National Security Fellow at the Harvard

University John F. Kennedy School of Government.

While still on active duty, thirty-three years after graduating from West Point as a commissioned officer, Brooks served in command and staff positions in the United States and around the world. His tours of duty with combat units include the 82nd Airborne Division, the 1st Infantry Division, the 2nd Infantry Division, the 3rd Infantry Division, the 1st Cavalry Division, the III Corps, Third Army/U.S. Army Central, U.S. Army Pacific, and U.S. Central Command. Prior to becoming a General, Brooks commanded forces in peacekeeping operations and armistice enforcement in Kosovo and Korea, respectively. As a General, he also commanded combat forces on four different tours in Iraq, the Middle East and Central Asia. Brooks served as aide-de-camp to the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army at the Pentagon, and later as the U.S. Army's Chief of Public Affairs. He also served on The Joint Staff as Deputy Director for Political-Military Affairs for the Western Hemisphere, and later as the Deputy Director for the War on Terrorism. On July 2, 2013, he was appointed by President Barack Obama to command the U.S. Army Pacific.

Brooks' has many military honors and decorations; the highest being the Distinguished Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters. Brooks was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the New England School of Law in Boston, Massachusetts and is part of the only African American family to have three Generals within two generations.

Brooks is married to his wife of thirty years, Carol, a physical therapist and educator who also comes from a career Army officer family.

U.S. Army General Vincent K. Brooks was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on June 20, 2013.

## Related Entries

**Lewis, James, Jr.** [GRANDCHILD OF]  
**Maternal Grandfather**

**Brooks, Houston, Sr.** [GRANDCHILD OF]  
**Paternal Grandfather**

**Brooks, Naomi** [CHILD OF]  
**Mother**

**Lewis, Eunice** [GRANDCHILD OF]  
**Maternal Grandmother**

**Brooks, Evelyn** [GRANDCHILD OF]  
**Paternal Grandmother**

**Brooks, Marquita** [SIBLINGOF]  
**Sister**

**Brooks, Leo, Jr.** [SIBLINGOF]  
**Brother**

**Brooks, Leo, Sr.** [CHILDOF]  
**Father**

**West Point Military Academy** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to 1980-05-28]

**B.S.**

**Jesuit College Preparatory High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to 1976-06]

**U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to 1992-06-05]

**MMS**

**Thomas Jefferson High School** [STUDENTOF]

**United States Army** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1980 to ?]

**Commissioned Officer**

**Pentagon, Department of the Army** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 2000 to 2003]

**Military Officer**