

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Col. Christine Knighton

PERSON

**Knighton, Christine B., 1957-**

**Alternative Names:** Col. Christine Knighton;

**Life Dates:** November 23, 1957-

**Place of Birth:** Benevolence, Georgia, USA

**Residence:** Springfield, VA

**Occupations:** Colonel

## **Biographical Note**

U.S. Army Colonel Christine B. Knighton was born in Cuthbert, Georgia in 1957. After graduating from Randolph County Comprehensive High School in 1975, she attended Tuskegee Institute and graduated with military honors in 1979. Knighton's military education includes the Aviation Officer Advanced Course, the UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopter Qualification Course, the Combined Arms Staff and Services School, and the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. Knighton also received her

M.A. degree in national security and strategy from the National War College at National Defense University.

Upon graduation from college, Knighton was commissioned a second lieutenant and served briefly in the Quartermaster Corps and the Transportation Officer's Corps. In 1980, she became the second African American woman in the U.S. Department of Defense and the first woman from the State of Georgia to complete aviation training. Knighton then reported to the U.S. Army V Corps in West Germany where her assignments included that of flight section leader of the 205th Transportation Battalion; platoon leader of the 62nd Aviation Company; and logistics officer of the 11th Aviation Battalion. In 1988, she assumed command of Delta Company, the 227th Aviation Regiment – 1st Cavalry's Combat Aviation Company, and then served a tour of duty at Camp Stanley in Uijeongbu, South Korea with the 2nd Infantry Division as the Aviation Brigade logistics officer.

Knighton reported to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in 1990 and was assigned as an aviation logistician for the Combat Structure for the Army Study Group. She then was deployed to Operation Desert Storm with the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) to assess aviation units positioned in Saudi, Kuwait and Iraq. In 1993, Knighton was appointed as commander of Hotel Company in the 159th Aviation Regiment (AVIM) and deployed to Mogadishu, Somalia in support of the United Nations "Operation Continue Hope." Knighton became the first woman in the U.S. Army to command a tactical combat arms battalion on November 3, 1996 when she was assigned as commander of a Blackhawk Helicopter Battalion in the 1st Cavalry Division and deployed to Tulza, Bosnia-Herzegovina to conduct aviation operations.

Knighton is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the Tuskegee Airmen Association, and served as vice president of the Bessie Coleman Foundation. Knighton was nationally recognized by Glamour

Magazine in 1989 as one of its “Top 10 Outstanding Working Women in the United States” and appeared on the cover of USA Today. In 1999, Knighton’s Blackhawk Helicopter Battalion was named U.S. Army Aviation Unit of the Year. Her military decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Southwest Asia Service Medal, the NATO Medal, the Kuwait Liberation Medal, and the Army’s Senior Aviator Badge. Knighton is also authorized to wear the Office of the Secretary of Defense Staff Badge, and received the Order of Saint Michael which recognized outstanding contributions to U.S. Army Aviation.

U.S. Army Colonel Christine B. Knighton was interviewed by The HistoryMakers in July 26, 2013.

## **Related Entries**

**The Broad Academy** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Superintendents Training Program**

**Georgetown University** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Leadership Coaching Program**

**U.S. Army War College** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Randolph County Comprehensive High School**

[STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**High School Diploma**

**Tuskegee University** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**B.S. Home Economics**

**2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, Blackhawk  
Helicopter Battalion** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 199611 to 199811]

**Commander**

**United States Army** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1969 to 2000]

**Various Staff Assignments**

**1st Cavalry Division's Aviation Intermediate  
Maintenance Company (AVIM)** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1980 to ?]

**Armament and Technical Supply Platoon Leader**

**United States Army** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1990 to ?]

**Commander**

**Aviation Requirements for the Combat Structure for  
the Army (ARCSA-V) Study Group** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1990 to 1990]

**Aviation Logistician**

**Army Personnel Command** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1994 to 1996]

**Assignments Officer**

**Soldier Support Institute** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1982 to 1985]

**Director, Training Development**

**Hotel Company, 159th Aviation Regiment (AVIM)**

[EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 199306 to 199401]

**Commander**

**8th Aviation Battalion (AVIM), 101st Airborne  
Division** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 199207 to 199306]

**Operations Officer**

**Tuskegee Airmen, Incorporated** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Member**

**Bessie Coleman Foundation** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Vice President**

**Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Member**

**Self-Esteem, Harmony, Awareness, Pride and  
Education (S.H.A.P.E.)** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Founder**