

Beginning 24th year of articulating the concerns, frustrations and aspirations of black Nevadans

# SENTINEL-VOICE ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

By Alice Key

With the merger of the Las Vegas Voice and Las Vegas Sentinel newspapers, Publisher Colonel Ed Brown and his wife, Betty, effected the continuation of uninterrupted since 1963 by the Las Vegas Voice, Nevada's first Black newspaper.

The late Dr. Charles I. West, the State of Nevada's first black medical doctor, founded the Las Vegas Voice newspaper in 1963 to articulate the concerns, frustrations and aspirations of black Nevadans.

Until 1974 when Dr. West sold the newspaper to one, Lawrence Albert, a local businessman, the Voice was circulated on Thursday of every week in the Las Vegas black community of some 30,000 residents offering coverage of current national events from the black perspective and reporting the civic political and social activities of the Las Vegas black community.

The next several years saw the Voice suffer an unstable period as the ownership passed from Albert to one Jack Ferris, a newcomer to



Alice Key

the area who became a controversial figure in the community and then later to Louis Connors, another local businessman.

In 1980, Col. Ed Brown provided an alternative to the Voice by the initiation and publications into the Las

Vegas Voice/Sentinel. The paper now serves Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Reno, Carson City, Sparks, Hawthorne, Henderson and Tonopah.

Under the proprietorship of Ed and Betty Brown, the Las Vegas newspaper has flourished and expanded. The newspaper is truly Nevada's only black newspaper with coverage of activities of Nevada's blacks throughout the State made publication of the Las Vegas Sentinel newspaper and in 1982, Colonel Brown purchased the foundering Las Vegas Voice newspaper and merged the two

possible by a staff in Northern Nevada. It is an award winning newspaper with accredited memberships with The National Newspaper Publishers Association and the West Coast Black Publishers Association

with distribution certified by the Community Papers Verification Service, Madison, Wisconsin.

The paper now serves approximately 73,000 black residents throughout the state of Nevada.

## THE SENTINEL-VOICE

Nevada's only black community newspaper.

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Ed Brown, President, Co-Publisher, Director of Sales; Betty Brown, Vice President, Co-Publisher-Editor; LeRoy Brown, Marketing Director; Delores Feemster, Reno General Manager.

Members: National Newspaper Publishers Association, West Coast Black Publishers Association.

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## 'Black Redtail Angels' gather with 'Eagles'

When the Air Force Association's "Gathering of Eagles -- 1986" officially opened in Las Vegas Monday for a four-day stand, there are at least two people who will be proud attendees.

They definitely fall into the category of "unsung heroes."

They were Charles E. McGee and Hannibal M. Cox Jr., both retired colonels.

They are black.

McGee and Cox were "Lonely Eagles" -- airmen destined to fly alone because of the racial segregation that prevailed in the Air Force during World War II.

But this week they'll be standing tall and shoulder-to-shoulder with the likes of Gen. Jimmy Doolittle, Gen. Curtis LeMay, Brig. Gen. Chuck Yeager and many more at functions scheduled for the Las Vegas Convention Center and Bally Grand hotel.

Few American have heard of the exploits of the "Lonely Eagles," simply because even the nation's press crops were prejudicial in its reporting during the war.

Nevertheless, the "Lonely Eagles" of the 99th and 332nd Fighter Squadrons did their job for their country.

They flew in aerial combat over North America, Sicily

and Europe in P-40s, P-39s, P-47s and P-51s. In 15,553 sorties and 1,578 missions, they destroyed 269 German



Col. Charles McGee

planes and damaged 148, sank a Nazi destroyer and blew apart hundreds of military vehicles when strafing convoys.

Sixty-six did not come back. They were killed in combat. Thirty-two others were shot down and captured as prisoners of war.

The black airmen who came home had won 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, Legions of Merit, the Red Star of Yugoslavia and laid the groundwork for integration in the United States' armed forces.

They were later to tack on Silver Stars, Bronze Stars, Purple Hearts and other awards in combat missions during the Korean Conflict and the war in Vietnam.

The achievements for these segregated blacks came while they were under the microscope of federal studies.

"The army operated under an official 1928 study which stated that black men, due to their smaller cranial size, were incapable of flying airplanes," said Bill Melton, a former fighter pilot.

"You can't imagine what it was like then, to be a young American, enamored with flight, in love with your country, wanting to fight for it and not being able to," he said.

Melton is now public relations officer for the Tuskegee (Ala.) Airman Inc., the organization which trained black pilots.

In the skies they were

identifiable by the red paint on their planes' tail assemblies. "The Black Redtail Angels" they were called by white bomber crews -- probably because they never lost a plane during all their duties. The Germans called them the Schwartze Vogelmenschen (Black Birdmen).

McGee was one of their fiercest warriors.

With more than 6,000 hours in the air, McGee has 1,156 combat hours to his credit, flying 138 missions during WWII, 100 missions in Korea and 173 missions in Vietnam.

"I flew with the 332nd," said McGee via telephone from his home in Missouri. "At first we were in P-39s, but they were too slow for some missions we went on."

"Then in June of 1944 we flew out of Rematelli Air Base in the Foggia area in Italy," he continued. "From there

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