

PORTLAND'S OWN No. 1 HERO



Yank Airmen Block Italy Rail Traffic

A 15TH AIRFORCE BOMBER BACK IN ITALY Jan 24 (AP) Get

The 99th Gets A Real Home In Italian Village

The 99th Fighter Squadron appears to be all entrenched for a

12 Nazi Planes Shot Down By 99th Pursuit Squadron

ALLIED HEADQUARTERS, ALGIERS.—Smashing right into the heart of Rome itself, daring pilots of the all-Negro 99th Pursuit Squadron

Downs 2 Planes



LT. ROBERT W. DEIZ Of Portland, Ore., the Negro fighter pilot whose portrait features the war bond poster, "Keep Us Flying," is credited by the War department with having bagged two enemy planes during intense air action over the Anzio-Nettuno beachhead below Rome. More than 200,000 copies of the poster are on display throughout the country. Deiz, a graduate of the University of Oregon, and formerly a cello player in the Portland Symphony, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. William Deiz of Portland.

Negro Air Unit Bags 8 Enemy Planes in Italy

ALGIERS, Jan. 28.—(AP)—The 99th U. S. fighter squadron, an all-Negro outfit which has been in



Robert Deiz

operation in this theatre for several months, was credited with eight of the 28 enemy planes destroyed in dog-fights Thursday over the Nettuno beachhead. The squadron, first Negro squadron to go into action, was in fights both in the morning and in the afternoon. In the



LT. ROBERT DEIZ



MRS. ROBERT DEIZ

OTHER PHOTOS: Upper left corner, home of the Deiz family, 2254 S. E. 35th Place, where Lt. Robert Deiz was born. Lower right, Mr. William Deiz, Robert's father.

Negro Pilots Down Nazis

ROME, July 19 (INS)—Sixty-six German planes were shot down Tuesday—11 of them by a Mustang fighter group of American Negro pilots—in at-

HEADLINES TELL STORY OF EXPLOITS FORESIGHT OF PARENTS LEADS TO SUCCESS.

This is the story of a real war hero. We like it because it is real, not the kind that Hollywood and the typewriter experts think up out of their heads, but a definite, tangible kind that a lot of us knew and a lot more have met lately. We are sure you will like the story and you will also like Lieut. Robert Deiz when you meet him.

Newspaper headlines have told the story of the exploits of Lt. Deiz, told the story of his daring and the things that have made him internationally famous. Of the 93 missions on which he lead his squadron. Missions from which some of his friends and pals will never return; the story of Lieut. Deiz being the first Negro Airman to ever land on Leffridge Field in Michigan.

But what of the life of this famous Negro, what made it possible for this young man, not yet 26 years old, to be in position to achieve this great renown. Who is he, what was his childhood like, who are his parents? These and some more facts concerning this young hero are presented for the benefit of those who do not know Lieut. Robert Deiz, by the Portland Inquirer.

One Sunday afternoon recently, we went to the home of the parents of Lt. Deiz, Mr. and Mrs. William Deiz at 2254 S. E. 35th Place. Lt. Deiz had not been home long from overseas and he was spending a quiet Sunday afternoon just sitting around with those he held dearest and who he had not seen for so long. Present were his mother, father, wife, grandmother and one friend. After some persuasion we elicited the following story from this much heralded, publiced but very modest young man. We had to dig most of the story out of him, but by having the help of his loving parents and beautiful wife we got a fairly good picture of the boy who is now Portland's Number One Hero from Portland's Number One Family.

Robert was born in the same house in which his parents now reside and in which

we were sitting, in June 1919. He attended Richmond Grammar school, Portland and also Franklin High school. At the age of 13 he jointed the Boys Scouts and remained a member until his entry into the University of Oregon.

While in High School, Robert excelled in sports, his favorite was the Track team. He still numbers among his hobbies archery and skiing. Later he was Sports Editor on the Franklin High Call, a school paper. In 1937 he was awarded the Boyer Trophy for High Point man in the Oregon State Inter-Scholastic Track and Field Meet. He was also a Letterman on school track team.

Robert Deiz was the ONLY Negro in the graduating Class of 1937 from Franklin High School.

From the Year Book Benjamin Franklin High School, 1937:

Robert Deiz

Quill, Commerce Club
Beta Alpha Nau, Major
Lettermen Club, Band, Orchestra
Track '35, '36, '37.

Here was a Negro graduating with high honors in a large class and the only Negro in the class. What of the other Colored boys and girls of his age that should have been graduating in this class? Why did this boy complete high school training and none of the others who must have started with him had come this far? Who or what encouraged him to thus far? The Answer—his parents and a determination on their part to fit their children for the opportunities they felt sure would come. A far-sighted hope that has produced men like Frederick Douglas, Colonel Davis, A. Philip Randolph and Lieut. Robert Deiz.

We asked Mr. Deiz, the father of this American hero, what gave him the idea to train his boys? (His other son, Carl, is a tactical officer at Tuskegee Institute, Lieut. Carl Deiz). He replied: "It may seem funny to you, but, I have never seen my mother and father. I was born in the West Indies and brought to America when

I was 6 years old. If I had children, I was determined to prepare them for a better life. To begin with, they were and are my pals. On Sundays, when I was home, mother never had any bother with them, we were pals and we went everywhere together. Ball games, movies and other things. When they grew older and could take me, we still went together, and I did not want my children to be a waiter, I wanted them to have an education to fit them for better things."

We then asked Mr. Deiz if there was any criticism from his associates about sending his children to school? His answer was: "YES, MORE THAN ONE CRITICISED ME FOR SENDING MY KIDS TO COLLEGE WHEN I WAS NOTHING BUT A WAITER IN A DINING ROOM."

Question: "Mr. Deiz, how do you feel about it now?"

Answer: "I am proud of my boys, the sacrifice was worth it."

Young Robert went to the University of Oregon and the only Negro to enter the University that year, one of four in the University at that time.

At college, Robert continued to win honors because of his athletic prowess. He majored in Physical Education, but that was not the only thing that he was interested in. He is an accomplished musician, played with the University Orchestra and also with the Junior Symphony Orchestra of Portland. He is an Amateur Photographer and knows his Social Sciences. He is an all-around grand person and the logical person for Portland's Number One Hero.

Robert Deiz left college in his Junior year to enlist in the Armed Forces. He asked for and was placed in the newly formed Negro Aviation Unit at Tuskegee, Alabama where after completing his training he was commissioned a lieutenant in the Air Corps, one of the first Negroes in history to fly a combat plane or any

other kind of plane, for that matter, for the United States of America. He continued to show the same kind of ambition that had made him the only Negro to graduate in his High School class and was promoted to Leader of his Squadron. Nothing we can say can add to the pictured headlines above, they tell a story well worth the ambition of any man, regardless of race, creed or color.

Lieut. Deiz has returned home for a short furlough, his beautiful wife and parents are overjoyed, his friends are elated and he is glad to be home to see his friends and relatives.

In 1942, Lt. Deiz, then in training at Tuskegee, became engaged to Miss Ruby Lee Butler, the beautiful and talented daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Butler of Tuskegee, Alabama. They were married February 12th, 1943.

Among the souvenirs of their boys progress and fame are two letters which Mr. and Mrs. Deiz value very highly. One was the letter from the War Department informing them that their son had been chosen from a large group to have his portrait painted for the War Bond Poster (pictured upper right) that was to get nation-wide circulation.

Another letter is from His Honor Earl Riley, Mayor of Portland, it follows:

CITY OF PORTLAND

August 10, 1944

To Mr. and Mrs. Deiz:

This office has been advised by the 9th Service Command that your son, Robert W. Deiz is expected home on furlough some time this month.

If at any time during his leave I can be of help to him or you in making his visit pleasant, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

(signed) Earl Riley, Mayor.

Lt. Deiz intends to spend some time on the beach at Santa Monica, Calif., basking in the sun with his lovely wife before returning to active duty.

