

## PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

### Eugene J. Bullard

*pilot, soldier*

*"All blood is red"*

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#### Background Information

Born: October 9, 1895

Death: October 12, 1961

Bullard was born in Columbus, Georgia to Josephine Thomas, a Native American and William Octave, a Bullard, a Black man. Eugene only went to school through fifth grade, but did learn to read. His mother died when he was twelve and his father was almost killed by White men because he was Black (lynched). Because of this, he wanted to protect himself and moved to Atlanta when he was 11.<sup>i</sup> He wanted to escape discrimination in America and worked on a boat to gain passage to Europe. While in Europe he became a boxer in England. He was a talented fighter and moved to Paris, a dream of his since he was a kid.<sup>ii</sup>

#### Bullard's Resistance

While he was living in France, World War I began. He decided he wanted to help protect France and joined a Foreign Legion fighting for France. He was seriously injured in combat and when he recovered, he joined the air service as a gun operator and then trained as a pilot gaining his license in early 1917, making him the first Black American fighter pilot in the world. He was involved in around 20 missions for France fighting German soldiers, and often brought his pet monkey, Jimmy. The United States entered the war in late 1917 and Bullard applied for a transfer to the United States Air Force, but was not accepted because he was Black. After World War I, he stayed in Paris and became the owner of two night clubs. Then, during World War II, he became a spy for France because his night clubs was popular among German soldiers. After the war, he moved to back to America, specifically New York City, with his daughters, Jacqueline and Lolita where he stayed until he died.<sup>1</sup>

#### Achievements

Bullard was inducted into the Georgia Aviation Hall of Fame in 1989. He was appointed Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force after his death by President Clinton in 1994. He was honored by the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum in 1994.<sup>iii</sup>

