

Brigadier General Roscoe Conklin “Rock” Cartwright

Brigadier General Roscoe Conklin “Rock” Cartwright was drafted in 1941 and assigned to the 349th Field Artillery Regiment at Fort Sill. He was commissioned a Field Artillery Officer upon graduation from Field Artillery Officer Candidate School Class 37-42 on 5 November 1942.

His first duty assignment was to the 599th Field Artillery Battalion, 92nd Infantry Division “Buffalo Soldiers.” at Camp Robinson, Arkansas. The unit moved to Fort Huachuca in early 1943, training for a year in the Arizona desert before departing for the Louisiana maneuvers and shipping out to Italy in September, 1944. He served with the 92nd Division in the North Apennines and Po Valley Campaigns until VE Day.

After a competitive active duty tour with the 999th Field Artillery at Fort Benning, he was commissioned in the Regular Army on 25 September 1950 and served a combat tour in Korea and a year with the First Cavalry Division Artillery in Japan.

From 1951 through 1955 he was an ROTC instructor at West Virginia State College. During a three year tour at the Presidio of San Francisco he completed a bachelor’s degree from San Francisco College in 1960. He earned an MBA degree from the University of Missouri in 1966, while serving as Comptroller, US Army Garrison, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

General Cartwright continually stressed education to his Soldiers. While commanding the 108th Artillery Group in Vietnam, he formed an education and information office, created a library, and found accredited teachers to teach college courses to his soldiers.

On 1 August 1971, he became the first Black OCS graduate promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and the third Black officer promoted to Brigadier General in the history the US Army.

Subsequent assignments included Deputy Commander, US Army Support Command-Vietnam, Cam Rahn Bay, Vietnam; Assistant Division Commander, 3rd Infantry Division in 1972-73; and Deputy Chief of Staff, Comptroller, US Army Europe and Seventh Army until his retirement in 1974.

General Cartwright took special interest in mentoring young African American officers. During the mid-1960s, a group of Army officers assigned to the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, began to meet informally to get to know each other better and learn how to "survive" at the school. The group dubbed itself the "Blue Geese," a term well known at CGSC as the vehicle used to convey a special assignment to a student officer. When the

school year ended, the group discovered that many were to be assigned to the Pentagon and other places in the greater Washington area. Upon reaching Washington, several informal meetings followed, the group continued to grow and the need for a more structured organization was apparent.

Brigadier General Cartwright led the initiative to formally organize the growing network into what became temporarily known as the "No Name Club" on October 9, 1974 with the focus on mentorship of young officers.

On December 1, 1974, the "No Name Club" assembled to decide on a name. The group received news that General Cartwright, the leader of the group, who embodied the spirit of nurturing, commitment and mentorship and his wife, Gloria had died in a plane crash earlier that day. The group decided that the organization would name the group in his honor.

Over the years, the ROCKS, Inc. has expanded its influence, both in and outside the military, and currently boasts over a dozen chapters and 1200 worldwide members. They continue to this day, focusing on the leadership development of all men and women officers. Prominent members of the Rocks have included Frederick E. Davison, Roscoe Robinson, Jr., Colin Powell and Lloyd Austin III.

General Cartwright's military education includes the Field Artillery Advanced Course, United States Army Command and General Staff College and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

His decorations include the Legion of Merit (2 awards), the Bronze Star (3 awards), The Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal (3 awards) and the Army Commendation Medal (3 awards).

General Cartwright and his wife Gloria are buried in Arlington National Cemetery.