

Major General Nathaniel James - Artillery OCS Class RSP-59

Nathaniel James is the former Commanding General of the New York Army National Guard.

Born on July 25, 1935, in Branchville, South Carolina, his family migrated north to New York City during his childhood. James received early schooling in the New York City Public School system and attended Theodore Roosevelt High School before graduating from Bronx Vocational High School. James then enrolled at the State University of New York, earning his A.A. degree in business and his B.A. degree in political science.

After completing the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) training in college and subsequent two years of enlisted service, James was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in 1959, through the Army Artillery and Missile School OCS Class RSP-59.

During his thirty-three year career, James held a variety of positions and continued to develop his institutional knowledge of Army command, operations and strategy. James' military education includes the Army Artillery and Missile School; Army Transportation School; Army Command and General Staff College; Army War College; and the National Interagency Counter Drugs Institute.

In 1975, James became the commander for the 369th Infantry Regiment Transportation Battalion, 42nd Division Artillery and 42nd Division Support Command. Between 1988 and 1992, he served as the assistant Adjutant General and Headquarters State Area Command of the New York Army National Guard. Promoted to Major General on December 29, 1992, James became the first African American to obtain that rank in the history of the New York Army National Guard.

In addition to previously commanding the 369th Infantry Regiment Transportation Battalion, James is the founder and president of both the 369th Infantry Regiment Veterans Association, Inc. and the 369th Infantry Regiment Historical Society, Inc. The 369th Infantry Regiment was originally called the 15th New York Infantry and they were the first African American regiment to engage in combat during World War II. After the war, 171 soldiers in that regiment were awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French Government, and German soldiers gave them the name, "Harlem Hell Fighters," for the courage and valor they displayed in battle. James maintains hundreds of photographs and dozens of artifacts, papers, and other items to honor the legacy of the 369th Infantry Regiment.

General James' military decorations and awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Medal, and the New York Humanitarian Service Medal.