



Dr. Frank Erdman Boston

Recognizing a true American hero

Deployed to France with the 92nd Division (Buffalo soldiers) serving as a field surgeon

One of the First African American Family of Doctors (his brother was also a doctor)

One of the First African Americans to start an Ambulance service and a Hospital:

- Ambulance Corps -1933 VMSC
- Hospital- Elm Terrace 1934 - now part of Jefferson Health Systems

One of the First African American Doctors to become a member of the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States

One of the First African American Doctors to receive Two U.S. Presidential Citations

One of the first Monuments built to honor an individual African American anywhere in the US was for Dr. Frank Boston

When Boston was dying of cancer, his supporters had asked the trustees of the original hospital to commission and hang his portrait, but the trustees refused, saying, “if we did it for Boston, we would have to do it for everyone”. Despite efforts, his legacy faded away until now.

Listed below are just some of the organizations that have officially recognized Dr. Boston:

Pentagon

U.S. Department of Defense

U.S. Army General Raymond Dingle

U.S. Military Honor Guard

WWI Memorial Commission

Veterans Foreign Wars (VFW)

U.S. Senator Bob Casey

U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley

U.S. Senator Joni Ernst

U.S. Senator Pat Toomey

Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick

Congresswoman Madeleine Dean

Congressman Dwight Evans

Congresswoman Christina Marie Houlahan

Congresswoman Mary Ann Scanlon
Congresswoman Susan Ellis Wild
Fort Des Moines Museum
EMS Museum
Gamunu Wijetunge, (NHTSA)
D.C. Fire and EMS Department
Gov. Josh Shapiro
Gov. Tom Wolf
Gov. Ed Rendell
Pa. AG Josh Shapiro
Hon. Joe Hoeffel
Major General Mark J. Schindler, of the Pennsylvania National Guard
Dr. Val Arkoosh, Montgomery Chair and Pa. Secretary HHS
Diane Ellis-Marseglia, Bucks Chair
State Senator Bob Mensch
State Senator Marie Collett
State Rep. Steve Malagari
State Rep. Todd Stephens
Jefferson Health Systems
VMSC
Afzal Family Foundation
Bucks County
Upper Gwynedd Twp.
Hatfield Twp.
Hilltown Township
Hilltown Historical Society
Rotary International
Bucks County Community College
Montgomery County Community College
North Penn School District
Central Bucks School District
Lansdale Historical Society
HealthSpark

FAMILY OF VETERANS— Service to the country runs deep in the Boston family. When Black Americans were finally permitted to serve in the Union Army, Charles A. Boston—father of Dr. Frank Boston—enlisted and served honorably in Company I, 113th Regiment of the 12th Pennsylvania Cavalry under the command of Marcus Reno. Unusually for the time, Charles served within a white cavalry unit, a role made possible by his position as the company bugler.

FIRST COMMANDER - LT. WILLIAM G. JUNKEN VFW POST - In 1924, the new post of the VFW held its first public obligation at the G.A.R. Post 2 Hall, in Philadelphia with Dr. Frank Boston as the post commander of the VFW.

W.E.B. DUBOIS CONNECTION - Dr. Frank Boston corresponded with W.E.B. DuBois about his wartime experiences. DuBois was one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909.

BOSTON FAMILY TRACES BACK TO THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR - The Boston family has been in the Philadelphia area since before the American revolution. Our ongoing historical investigation has now taken us back to Samuel Boston 1760-1820 (Sarah Boston), who we believe may be a Free African Society signer (as Samuel Baston). The Free African Society (FAS) was founded in Philadelphia in 1787 by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones as one of the first independent, Black-led mutual aid organizations in the United States.

A few of the milestones achieved to date, with more to come.....

- 1) **DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE** - The U.S Department of Defense selected the Boston story for their 2024 Black History Month story published in the DOD news.
- 2) **PENTAGON** - The Pentagon flew a U.S. Flag on July 4th to honor Army Veteran Dr. Frank Boston with the US. Military Honor Guard, including the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard), saluting Dr. Boston.
- 3) **EMS RECOGNITION** - National recognition given to Dr. Boston as the first African American to start an ambulance corp in 1933 and remained as its commander until his death. His vision was a precursor to the modern EMS profession, which was not formalized until 40 years later.
- 4) **HOSPITAL RECOGNITION by JEFFERSON HEALTH** – Lobby named after one of the first African Americans to start a hospital anywhere in the country, joining only two other hospitals started by an African Americans in Pennsylvania.
- 5) **PORTRAIT** - to correct a wrong from the past, a portrait was commissioned to create a portrait which now hangs in the lobby of the Jefferson Lansdale Hospital after the original Hospital refused to hang his portrait.
- 6) **STREET RENAMING** – Governor Wolfe signed a bill to dedicate and rename a section of Broad Street in Lansdale and Hatfield Township to honor Dr. Frank Boston.
- 7) **COMIC BOOK** - A 22-page comic book created by a Marvel Illustrator. The comic highlights a diverse team who assist Dr. Boston and his dedicated nurse in saving lives.
- 8) **FORT DES MOINES BOOKLET** - 11-year-old Mikey Houser, an African American artist created the illustrations for a booklet on the men of Fort Des Moines, the first training camp for African American soldiers.
- 9) **NAME ON AMBULANCES** - the VMSC placed Dr. Boston's name on the side of their new ambulances to honor his legacy.
- 10) **DOCUMENTARY FILM** - "Doc Boston- Black Hero" Dr. Frank Erdman Boston was a World War I hero and pioneering African American physician whose legacy reshaped community health care. After serving with distinction as a medical officer in the Great War, Dr. Boston returned home and should have made history as the first Black American to establish both a hospital and an ambulance corps. At a time of deep racial segregation, he created lifesaving institutions that offered emergency care to all. The film will be released in 2026, which coincides with America's 250th celebration, and hopefully highlights an overlooked chapter of American history.

Summary created by George Whitehair, Boston Legacy Foundation @ 2025