

Dr. Frank Erdman Boston (1890–1960)

Hidden History Hero | World War I Veteran | Physician | Surgeon | EMS Pioneer

World War I Veteran

- Graduate of Fort Des Moines Provisional Army Officer Training School
- Served in France with the 92nd Division (Buffalo Division)
- Served as a military doctor and surgeon during World War I

Medical Pioneer and First Responder

- Founder of the VMSA Ambulance Corps (1933), one of the first African American-established ambulance corps in the United States
- The VMSA Ambulance Corps was a pioneer of modern Emergency Medical Services (EMS) nearly 40 years before EMS was formally recognized
- Founder of a hospital in 1934, now part of Jefferson Health, which continues to serve the community today
- One of the first African Americans to establish both a hospital and an ambulance corps, with both institutions still operating

Historic Firsts and National Recognition

- One of the first African American families of doctors (his brother was also a physician)
- One of the first African American doctors to become a lifetime member of the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States
- First African American to serve as Vice President of the American Medical Society of Vienna
- One of the earliest monuments dedicated to an individual African American was erected in honor of Dr. Boston

Legacy and Honors

- A roadway was named in honor of Dr. Frank Erdman Boston, recognizing his lasting impact on the community
- A hospital lobby was dedicated in his name, preserving his medical legacy for future generations
- Dr. Boston was honored with a Presidential Honor Guard salute
- The Pentagon flew the American flag in his honor, recognizing his national service and historic contributions on July 4th

National and Global Acknowledgment

- The U.S. Department of Defense selected Dr. Boston's story as its Black History Month featured profile, published and shared globally
- Lt. General R. Scott Dingle, Surgeon General of the United States Army, formally recognized Dr. Boston's contributions at the national level.
- Members of the U.S. Congress and United States Senators have also supported recognition of Dr. Boston's story, underscoring its national importance

Dr. Frank Erdman Boston's life represents service, innovation, patriotism, and perseverance, and his contributions laid the foundation for emergency medical care that saves lives to this day.