



PHI BETA SIGMA FRATERNITY, INC.

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International Military Affairs Committee

International Military Affairs Second Lieutenant Norwood C. Fairfax Military Sigma of the Year Award

I. Purpose and Legacy

The **Second Lieutenant Norwood C. Fairfax Military Sigma of the Year Award** is the highest honor bestowed by the International Military Affairs Committee (IMAC) of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., to recognize and celebrate the exceptional service, leadership, and brotherhood of Sigma men who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of the United States.

This distinguished award is named in honor of **2LT Norwood C. Fairfax**, a proud Sigma Brother, scholar, and trailblazing African American Army officer who made the ultimate sacrifice during World War I while serving in the 368th Infantry Regiment. As one of the first Black commissioned officers trained at Fort Des Moines, Iowa, Lieutenant Fairfax's courage, character, and commitment to service remain a beacon of honor for generations of military men and fraternity brothers.

II. Award Significance

This award honors a Brother of Phi Beta Sigma who has demonstrated:

- **Distinguished military service** in active duty, reserve, National Guard, ROTC, or as a veteran;
- **Leadership and excellence** within both military and fraternal spaces;
- **Service to humanity** aligned with the fraternity's principles of Brotherhood, Scholarship, and Service;
- And **commitment to the advancement of Sigma Military Affairs** at the local, regional, or international level.

III. Eligibility

Nominees must:

- Be a duly financial Brother of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.;
- Have served or currently serve in any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces (Active Duty, Reserve, National Guard, ROTC, or Veteran);
- Possess a verified service record with an **Honorable Discharge** (if no longer serving);
- Not have received a **Dishonorable, Bad Conduct, or Other Than Honorable** discharge (based on DD Form 214 or current official service record).

IV. Award Evaluation Categories and Rating Metrics

(This rubric emphasizes **service, character, and impact over accolades or rank**, ensuring ROTC cadets, retirees, reservists, and veterans of all stripes are evaluated fairly and consistently.)

Each nominee will be scored out of a maximum of **100 points**, across the following five categories:

1. Commitment to Brotherhood and IMAC Engagement – 25 Points

Recognizes meaningful involvement with Phi Beta Sigma and direct participation or support of Military Affairs initiatives.

- Active financial status and chapter/region participation – **up to 5 pts**
- Reported or documented efforts of engagement(s) with the local community, military community, or direct veteran population outreach on behalf of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity (e.g., VA Benefits awareness, Veteran Homeless, Wounded Warrior Project, Veterans War Homes, Veteran Cemetery) – **up to 10 pts**
- Support of IMAC events or strategic priorities (e.g., Veterans Voices, Project S.A.V.E., webinars) – **up to 10 pts**

2. Military Service & Integrity – 20 Points

Recognizes honorable service and ethical contributions in the military, without weighting based on rank or awards.

- Verified honorable service (DD 214 or current record) – **Mandatory / Pass-Fail**
- Service record consistency with Brotherhood values (e.g., leadership, teamwork, volunteerism) – **up to 10 pts**
- Participation in military mentorship, community projects, or support for fellow veterans (this may include awareness and recognition efforts through social media posting) – **up to 10 pts**

3. Community Service & Social Advocacy – 20 Points

Assesses alignment with the fraternity's principle of "Culture for Service and Service for Humanity."

- Involvement in community or military-focused service efforts – **up to 10 pts**
- Participation in social justice, mental health, or veteran transition advocacy (e.g., MST awareness, education benefits workshops) – **up to 10 pts**

4. Personal Development & Fraternal Growth – 15 Points

Recognizes self-investment in education, leadership, and life development beyond the uniform.

- Pursuit of formal education, trade skills, or certifications (civilian or military) – **up to 5 pts**
- Support or mentorship of undergraduates/ROTC/younger Brothers – **up to 5 pts**
- Development or leadership of new Sigma programs or initiatives – **up to 5 pts**

5. Legacy Alignment & Impact Statement – 20 Points

Evaluated through personal narrative and recommendation letters to reflect alignment with Fairfax's legacy and Sigma ideals.

- Personal statement describing commitment to 2LT Fairfax's legacy and Brotherhood – **up to 10 pts**
- Letter of recommendation (from Chapter, RMAD, or IMAC member) – **up to 5 pts**
- Optional: Impact statement or testimonial (from mentee, fellow Brother, or supervisor) – **up to 5 pts**

V. Nomination Requirements & Submission Guidelines

Eligibility and Regional Nomination Process

To ensure that the International Military Sigma of the Year Award reflects the highest standard of achievement and regional representation, the following eligibility and nomination rules apply:

- **Nominee must be a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. in good financial standing at all levels (Chapter, Regional, and International).**
- **Nominee must be an active or former military service member with verified honorable service.** This includes Active Duty, Reserve, National Guard, ROTC, or Veteran status.
- **Nominee must have been selected as a Regional Military Affairs Sigma of the Year Award recipient or runner-up** since the conclusion of the last International Conclave.
- **Each Region may submit no more than two (2) nominees per Conclave cycle.** These should be the top awardee and runner-up from their respective regional award program.
- **No Brother may receive the International Fairfax Sigma of the Year Award in consecutive Conclave years.** This ensures equitable opportunity and recognition across the Brotherhood.

Nomination Packet Must Include:

1. **Official Nomination Form** (provided by IMAC)
2. **DD-214 or current active/reserve service record** (verifying honorable service)
3. **Personal Statement** (1–2 pages): Describe your service, commitment to Brotherhood, and how you embody the legacy of 2LT Norwood C. Fairfax
4. **Letter of Recommendation** (from Chapter, Regional Military Affairs Director, or IMAC representative)
5. **Optional: Impact Testimonial** (from a mentee, fellow Brother, or supervisor)

6. **Evidence of Engagement or Supporting Materials** (e.g., service project photos, program fliers, news coverage, community letters)

Submission Process:


- **Regional Military Affairs Directors (RMADs)** are responsible for submitting nomination packets to IMAC on behalf of their Regional Award Winner and/or Runner-Up.
- All materials must be submitted **electronically** to the International Military Affairs Committee at **[official IMAC email]** no later than **60 days before Conclave**.
- Nominees will be scored using the approved **Fairfax Award Rating Metrics** by a designated panel of IMAC evaluators and Sigma military leadership.

Evaluation Methodology:

- Each nominee will be evaluated using the **Fairfax Award Rating Metrics** (max 100 points).
- The top-scoring nominee will be selected unless disqualified by a rule (e.g., repeat winner, incomplete file).
- In the event of a tie, the IMAC Chair will coordinate a final deliberation vote among award evaluators.

Brother Robert L. Barnes, Jr
Deputy Chair, International Military Affairs

Brother Kevin N. Williams
Chair, Awards Committee


Brother Cyrus A. Netter
Chair, International Military Affairs Committee

The Legacy of Brother Second Lieutenant Norwood C. Fairfax

*Namesake of the International Military Affairs Sigma of the Year Award
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.*

Brother **Second Lieutenant Norwood C. Fairfax** represents one of the earliest exemplars of Black military excellence, academic achievement, and fraternal brotherhood in American history. A man of distinction, principle, and ultimate sacrifice, his legacy as a soldier, scholar, and Sigma Brother endures through the award that now bears his name.

Early Life & Academic Excellence

Born in the early 1890s, Norwood C. Fairfax came of age during an era of racial division, yet he stood tall with dignity and drive. He attended the **West Virginia Collegiate Institute** (now West Virginia State University), where he graduated as part of the academic class of 1916. Known for his brilliance in academics and athletics, Brother Fairfax was admired by his peers and beloved by faculty. He would later continue his education at **Howard University**, a foundational institution for Black excellence and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

Military Service and Historic Training

In 1917, amidst the United States' entry into **World War I**, Brother Fairfax was selected to attend the first **Officer Training Camp for African Americans at Fort Des Moines, Iowa**. This historic camp trained more than 1,200 Black men to become U.S. Army officers at a time when the military remained largely segregated. Brother Fairfax distinguished himself among this pioneering cohort and was commissioned as a **Second Lieutenant**.

He was assigned to **Company E, 368th Infantry Regiment**, part of the famed **92nd Division**—one of only two African American combat divisions deployed to France during the war. In the trenches of **Binerville**, during the **Meuse-Argonne Offensive**, Lt. Fairfax led his men under fire during one of the bloodiest and most pivotal battles of the war.

The Ultimate Sacrifice

On **September 28, 1918**, Lieutenant Fairfax was **killed in action**, leading his men “with his face to the foe.” His death came just weeks before the Armistice, and his courage was immortalized in the words of those who served with him:

“He gave his all for his country, for the oppressed of the world.”

His legacy lived on in his family—among them Rev. L.M. Fairfax and siblings Charles, Frank, Irma, and Clara Fairfax—as well as at the West Virginia Collegiate Institute, where he is honored as one of the school’s immortal sons.

Fraternal Legacy

While records from the era are incomplete, it is known that Brother Fairfax was a member of **Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.**, either initiated through Howard University or later recognized as a brother in military service. His principles of Brotherhood, Scholarship, and Service were evidenced in both his academic journey and his military leadership.

Honoring His Legacy

In recognition of his sacrifice and service, the International Military Affairs Committee proudly honors Brother Fairfax with the **Second Lieutenant Norwood C. Fairfax Sigma of the Year Award**. This award celebrates Phi Beta Sigma military men who carry forward the values Lt. Fairfax embodied—courage, dignity, leadership, and unwavering service to humanity.

This award is not just a symbol of recognition—it is a living tribute to a Brother who gave everything for his people, his nation, and the ideals of freedom. By honoring our military Brothers through this award, we honor Brother Fairfax's enduring call: to lead, to serve, and to uplift all those who come after.