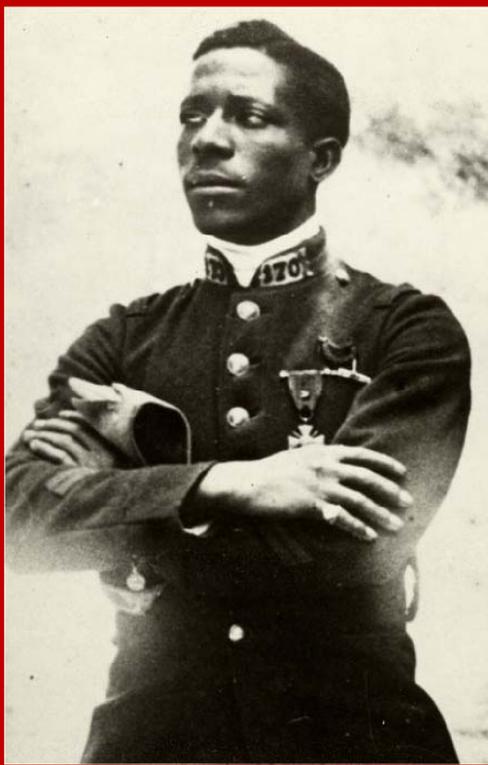


PRE-TUSKEGEE



Eugene Bullard

Bullard flew with the French on the Western Front in WWI. He was born in Columbus Georgia in 1894. He initially served as a infantryman with the French Foreign Legion.

The historic Wright Brothers flight in 1903 sparked enthusiasm for flying in all Americans. At the dawn of World War II African Americans faced obstacles in most areas of life .

There were no leadership roles or advanced training - definitely not in the military. Many thought they did not qualify for modern combat duty – especially aircraft. Black pilots were self-taught or trained overseas.



Bessie Coleman

As the first licensed black pilot in the United States, Bessie Coleman was awarded her pilot's license in 1921 by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale. Born in Texas, she learned French before she sailed to France to start flight training. She trained in France because no American flight school would accept a black woman as a student.

After her flight training in France, she returned to America to pursue a career as a "barnstormer", performing exhibition flights across the United States before her death in 1926 in an aircraft accident.

Although she only performed for four years, her brief career inspired many young blacks to enter the field of aviation. Coleman donated much of the proceeds from her shows to several civil rights organizations.



Alfred "Chief" Anderson

A self-taught instructor pilot at Tuskegee, he was the first black with Dr. Albert Forsythe to complete a transcontinental round trip flight. Quoted by Eleanor Roosevelt as 'Well, you can fly all right.'



'The Flying Hoboes' (1932)

When pilots James Herman Banning and Thomas C. Allen barnstormed from Los Angeles to Long Island in 1932, they made history for African-Americans.



Chauncey Spencer (1906-2002)

At the age of eleven, Chauncey fell in love with flying, yet after graduating from college, no aviation school in Virginia would admit him because of his color. He moved to Chicago in 1934 and joined with a group of African American aviators in organizing the National Airmen Association of America (NAAA). In May 1939, he and fellow aviator Dale Lawrence White, also an NAAA member, flew a rented Lincoln-Paige biplane with only two flight instruments on a ten city tour that started in Chicago and ended in Washington, DC. Realizing that war in Europe was imminent; they demonstrated the aviation abilities of "Negroes" and lobbied Congress to include people of color in the Civilian Pilot Training Program for the Army Air Corps. Their flight drew national attention and proved that African Americans could fly an airplane contrary to the beliefs and opinions of most Army Air Corps and government leaders. They met with Harry Truman and others in Congress, convincing them to support their cause.



Willa Brown (1906-1992)

Aviator, politician, educator and activist, Willa Brown was instrumental in establishing the Coffey School of Aeronautics and in doing so, fulfilled Bessie Coleman's long standing dream of an all black flying school. With a master's degree from Northwestern University and a Master Mechanic's Certificate, Willa became the first African American woman to earn a commercial pilot's license. She was also the first African American to achieve an officer's rank in the Civil Air Patrol and lead the fight to integrate African Americans into the U.S. Army Corps.

Obstacles to black flight continued ...

- Segregated facilities
- Hostile and unpredictable receptions at airfields
- Refusals at some airports to service black piloted aircraft

Civil rights organizations and black newspapers pressured the U.S. government to enact

- Public Law 18
- Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) Act
- Civilian Pilot Training Program (CPTP)

The Civilian Pilot Training Program (CPTP) increased the number of qualified black pilots.

- Six schools selected to sponsor basic African-American flight training.
- Still excluded blacks from military pilot training
- Aviation Squadron assignments limited to orderlies, barracks detail, street sweepers



THE TUSKEGEE "EXPERIENCE"

Yancey Williams' lawsuit questioned rejection of qualified blacks from Air Corps training

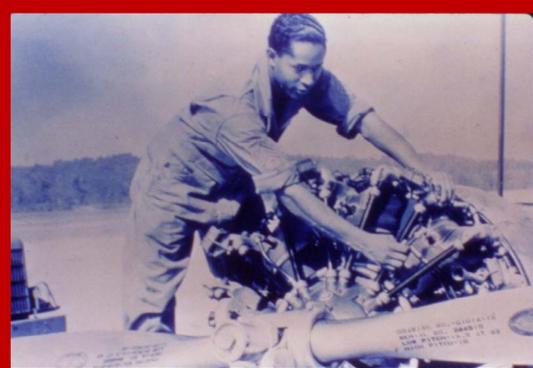
- War Department announced formation of 99th Pursuit Squadron and Tuskegee School
- Forced full compliance of Public Law 18 and Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) Act

Civilian Aeronautics Association (CAA) authorized Tuskegee Institute to provide advanced pilot training courses as well as:

- Aircraft Maintenance School at Chanute Air Field, Illinois
- Armament School at Lowry Field, Colorado
- Communications School at Scott Field, Illinois



**The Aircraft Maintenance School
Chanute Air Field, Illinois**



WHO WERE THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

The Tuskegee Airmen were dedicated, determined young men who enlisted to become America's first black military airmen, at a time when there were many people who thought that black men lacked intelligence, skill, courage and patriotism. They came from every section of the country, with large numbers coming from New York City, Washington, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia and Detroit. Each one possessed a strong personal desire to serve the United States of America at the best of his ability.

Those who possessed the physical and mental qualifications were accepted as aviation cadets to be trained initially as single-engine pilots and later to be either twin-engine pilots, navigators or bombardiers. Most were college graduates or undergraduates. Others demonstrated their academic qualifications through comprehensive entrance examinations.

No standards were lowered for the pilots or any of the others who trained in operations, meteorology, intelligence, engineering, medicine or any of the other officer fields. Enlisted members were trained to be aircraft and engine mechanics, armament specialists, radio repairmen, parachute riggers, control tower operators, policemen, administrative clerks and all of the other skills necessary to fully function as an Army Air Corps flying squadron or ground support unit.

The black airmen who became single-engine or multi-engine pilots were trained at Tuskegee Army Air Field (TAAF) in Tuskegee Alabama. The first aviation cadet class began in July 1941 and completed training nine months later in March 1942.

Thirteen started in the first class. Five successfully completed the training, one of them being Captain Benjamin O. Davis, Jr, a West Point Academy graduate. The other four were commissioned second lieutenants, and all five received Army Air Corps silver pilot wings.

From 1941 through 1946, nine hundred and ninety-four pilots graduated at TAAF, receiving commissions and pilot wings. Black navigators, bombardiers and gunnery crews were trained at selected military bases elsewhere in the United States. Mechanics were trained at Chanute Air Base in Rantoul, Illinois until facilities were in place in 1942 at TAAF.

Four hundred and fifty of the pilots who were trained at TAAF served overseas in either the 99th Pursuit Squadron (later the 99th Fighter Squadron) or the 332nd Fighter Group. The 99th Fighter Squadron trained in and flew P-40 Warhawk aircraft in combat in North Africa, Sicily and Italy from April 1943 until July 1944 when they were transferred to the 332nd Fighter Group in the 15th Air Force.

The outstanding record of black airmen in World War II was accomplished by men whose names will forever live in hallowed memory. Each one accepted the challenge, proudly displayed his skill and determination while suppressing internal rage from humiliation and indignation caused by frequent experiences of racism and bigotry, at home and overseas. These airmen fought two wars - one against a military force overseas and the other against racism at home and abroad.



The Armament School at Lowry Field, Colorado



**The Communications School at
Scott Field, Illinois**

A DISTINGUISHED WAR RECORD

- Over 15,000 combat sorties (including 6000+ for the 99th prior to July '44)
- 111 German airplanes destroyed in the air, another 150 on the ground
- 950 railcars, trucks, and other motor vehicles destroyed
- 1 destroyer sunk by P-47 machine gun fire (Lt. Pierson's flight)
- Sixty-six pilots killed in action or accidents
- Thirty-two pilots downed and captured, POWs
- A nearly perfect record of not losing U.S. bombers, a unique achievement
- 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses earned
- 744 Air Medals
- 8 Purple Hearts
- 14 Bronze Stars

TRAINING AT TUSKEGEE



Advanced pilot training
Tuskegee Institute

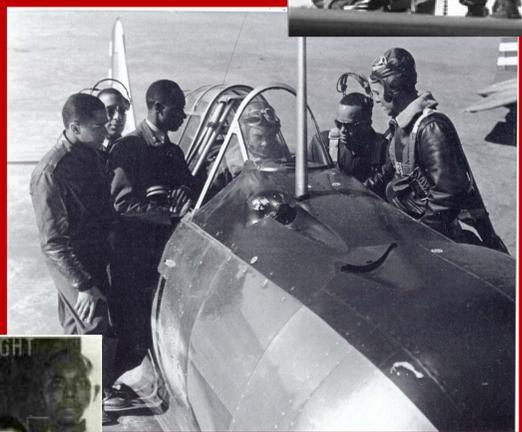
After pilot cadets passed primary flight training at Tuskegee Institute/Moton Field, they transferred to Tuskegee Army Air Field (TAAF).

- Little official confidence or support
- Located as a separate, segregated base far away from the center of military activities

Tuskegee Army Air Field became the focal point for training of African-American military pilots during World War II.

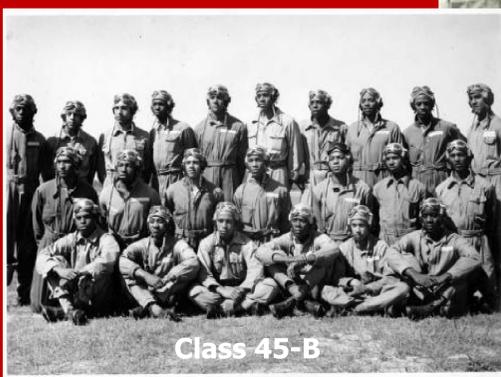
- Had the facilities, engineering and technical instructors
- Climate for year round flying

The first pilot class of Tuskegee, Class 42-C, had five graduates who completed training on March 7, 1942. A total of 966 fighter and bomber pilots graduated from Tuskegee



First Graduating Class
Class 42-C

A total of 966 fighter and bomber pilots graduated from Tuskegee.



Class 45-B



Four hundred and fifty Black fighter pilots commanded by Lt Col Benjamin O. Davis Jr. fought overseas in North Africa, Sicily, and Europe.

The 332nd Fighter Group included the 99th, 100th, 301st and 302nd Fighter Squadrons.

- Flew 15,553 sorties in 1,578 missions
- In P-40, P-39, P-47 and P-51 aircraft
- Were revered by white American bomber crews as the "Red-Tail Angels"
- A near-perfect record in defending escorted bombers
- Their German adversaries both feared and respected the "Schwartzte Vogelmenschen" or "Black Birdmen"



A total of 257 aviation cadets graduated from Tuskegee Army Air Field as B-25 twin engine bomber pilots, and were assigned to the 477th Bombardment Group. The Tuskegee Airmen of the 477th Bombardment Group never saw action in WWII.

However, they earned the respect of fellow bomber crews and military leaders in their fight for equal rights at Freeman Field, Indiana in April 1945.

- 101 members of the 477th peacefully protested illegal Base Regulation
- "Freeman Field Mutiny" led to change in command
- Key factor to Executive Order 9981 mandating "equality of treatment and opportunity" in the Armed Services

THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN AND THEIR AIRPLANES

The Trainers

The Tuskegee Airmen trained on four main types of aircraft, which were similar to training aircraft flown by pilot trainees at other Army Air Corps training facilities. Among the aircraft flown by the pilots were the PT-17 Stearman, BT-13, AT-6 Texan and the P-40 War Hawk. The PT-17 was a bi-plane with fixed landing gear. The BT-13 and AT-6 were monoplanes. When the flying cadets mastered the skills learned in basic training they graduated to the P-40, a fighter that the graduates of the 99th would eventually use as their standard equipment.



PT-17

The Boeing Stearman Model 75 is a biplane, of which at least 9,783 were built in the United States during the 1930s and 1940s as a military trainer aircraft. It served as a Primary trainer for the USAAF.



BT-13

The Vultee BT-13 was the basic trainer flown by most American pilots during World War II. It was the second phase of the three phase training program for pilots. After primary training, the student pilot moved to the more complex Vultee. The BT-13 had a more powerful engine and was faster and heavier than the primary trainer. It required the student pilot to use two way radio communications with the ground and to operate landing flaps and a two-position variable pitch propeller.



AT-6 Texan

The T-6 Texan was a single-engine advanced trainer aircraft designed by North American Aviation, used to train fighter pilots of the United States Army Air Forces, US Navy, Royal Air Force and other air forces of the British Commonwealth during World War II.

The Fighters



When the Tuskegee Airmen in the 99th Fighter Squadron arrived in North Africa, they flew the Curtiss P-40L War Hawk. The War Hawk was a familiar aircraft because they had flown it during their final training. The P-40 was an updated version of the fighter that the famed Flying Tigers flew in China against the Japanese prior to Pearl Harbor.

The P-40L had a top speed of 350 miles per hour and range of about 1,000 miles. It was armed with six fifty caliber Browning machine guns and could carry bombs and an external fuel tank. The P-40 was outclassed by some of the first line German fighters, notably the Me-109 and FW-190, which were faster and more maneuverable. However, the P-40 was a rugged aircraft and pilots learned to utilize the strengths of their airplane.



When the men of the 332nd Fighter Group arrived in Taranto, Italy, they were initially assigned the task of coastal patrol flying an obsolete aircraft the Bell P-39 Airacobra. The Airacobra was slow compared to first line German and Italian fighters. Its main claim to fame was the 37mm cannon that fired through the propeller spinner.

The P-39 was flown by other Allied pilots, especially the Russians who liked the cannon for ground attack missions. The men of the 332nd were fighter pilots and felt betrayed and frustrated. This feeling was underscored on March 17, 1944 Lieutenant Laurance D. Wilkins and Weldon K. Groves tried to intercept a German Ju-88 reconnaissance aircraft, which escaped with damage to its wing.

The Fighters



In May, 1944 the 332nd Fighter Group under the command of Colonel Benjamin O. Davis were assigned to fly escort missions with the 306th Wing of the 15th Fighter Command. They were given the Republic P-47 Thunderbolt, affectionately called "The Jug" because of its shape. P-47's were well armed and could perform well at high altitude in the escort role as well as ground attack aircraft. The pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group painted the tails of their P-47's red, thus their nickname "Red Tails". Their reputation for protecting bombers would slowly grow and later bomber crews would affectionately call them Red-Tail Angels.



The main fighter flown by the pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group from 1944 until the end of the war was the North American P-51 Mustang fighter. The P-51 was the best all around fighter produced by the United States during World War II and was flown in both the European and Pacific Theaters. It was the first Allied fighter capable of escorting bombers to and from targets deep into Germany with enough fuel to engage the enemy and attack "targets of opportunity". The British Royal Air Force (RAF) flew early models of the P-51 aircraft.

There were several modifications to the P-51 which improved its performance and effectiveness. The P-51 models "A" and "B" was initially powered by an 1,150 hp Allison engine, but its performance was significantly improved when the British designed 1,590 hp Rolls-Royce Merlin engine was introduced in the "D" model making it one of the fastest American fighters capable of achieving the speed of 437 miles per hour. A bubble canopy, which allowed greater all around vision for the pilots, was introduced in the P-51D version.

The early P-51's were armed with four fifty caliber Browning machine guns, however the P-51D and later variants were armed with six fifty caliber Browning MG53-2 machine guns. The Mustangs could be configured to carry bomb, rockets and external fuel tanks on external wing hard points. Range was increased from 450 miles (724 km) in the "A" model to 1,300 miles (2,092 km) in the "D" model when equipped with external fuel tanks.

The Bomber



By late 1944 the 477th was able to conduct combat training missions, but winter conditions reduced flying time. When not fighting weather and equipment, the men also faced racism from white officers and men. Promotions went mainly to the white officers and enlisted staff while black promotions were limited. In March, 1945 the 477th was moved to Freeman Field, Indiana.

The 477th Bombardment Group became the 477th Composite Group with B-25's and P-47's and trained for a possible role in the Pacific Theater. The war ended, however, before the 477th could be deployed overseas in a combat role.

The aircraft the 477th flew in training was the B-25 Mitchell medium bomber. This workhorse was used in both the European and Pacific Theaters. Variations of it included models with up to thirteen fifty caliber machine guns or a seventy-five (75 mm) cannon for anti-ship missions in the Pacific.

The Enemy



The main German fighters faced by the Tuskegee pilots were the Messerschmitt Me-109 Models "F" and "G". The Me-109G was powered by a 1,475 hp Daimler-Benz engine. It had a range of 435 miles (700 km) and a top speed of 400 miles per hour (640 km). It was armed with one 30mm MG FF cannon firing through the nose and two 13mm MG 131 machine guns firing through the propeller arc and two more 20mm MG151 cannons in the wings.

POST WORLD WAR II



After World War II ended, the "Tuskegee Airmen" were known as one of the most highly respected groups of Air Corps pilots, navigators, bombardiers, gunners, maintenance and support personnel in the military.

- Became the 332nd Fighter Wing in 1947
- Participated in firepower demonstrations at Eglin AFB FL and Myrtle Beach SC
- Won the Air Force Gunnery Meet in May 1949

The "Tuskegee Airmen" led the way for...

- Fair evaluation of African-American contributions to the military
- Support for the ability of African-Americans and all minorities
- Full integration of the U.S. Air Force in 1948 and the entire U.S. Military in 1951

But they didn't stop there...

General Benjamin Oliver Davis, Jr. (1912-2002)

- U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. (1936)
- Four years of silence
- Instructor at Tuskegee
- Graduate of Tuskegee's first pilot class in 1942
- First commander of the 99th Fighter Squadron
- Led 39 Tuskegee Airmen against 100+ enemy aircraft - no losses
- Defender of the Tuskegee Airmen
- Founder of the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds



General Daniel "Chappie" James Jr. (1920-1978)

- Graduated from Tuskegee in 1942
- Civilian instructor pilot
- Fighter pilot
- Squadron and Wing Commander
- Commander in Chief, NORAD, responsible for surveillance and air defense of North American airspace and for providing warning and assessment of hostile attack.
- Widely known for speeches on Americanism and patriotism
- Became America's first black four-star General in 1975



Red-tail P-51 flown by Tuskegee Airmen in WWII

Tuskegee Airmen after World War II

After the war in Europe ended in 1945, black airmen returned to the United States and faced continued racism and bigotry despite their outstanding war record. Tuskegee Army Air Field continued to train new airmen until 1946, with women entering the program in several support fields. Large numbers of black airmen elected to remain in the service but because of segregation their assignments were limited to the 332nd Fighter Group or the 477th Composite Group, and later to the 332nd Fighter Wing at Lockbourne Air Base, Ohio. Opportunities for advancement and promotion were very limited and this affected morale. Nevertheless, black airmen continued to perform superbly. In 1949, pilots from the 332nd Fighter Group took first place in the Air Force National Fighter Gunnery Meet at Las Vegas Air Force Base, Nevada.

During this period, many white units were undermanned and needed qualified people but were unable to get the experienced black personnel because of the segregation policy. The newly formed U.S. Air Force initiated plans to integrate its units as early as 1947. In 1948, President Harry Truman enacted Executive Order Number 9981 which directed equality of treatment and opportunity in all of the United States Armed Forces. This order, in time, led to the end of racial segregation in the military forces. This was also the first step toward racial integration in the United States of America. The positive experience, the outstanding record of accomplishment and the superb behavior of black airmen during World War II, and after, were important factors in the initiation of the historic social change to achieve racial equality in America.

OUR ORGANIZATION

In August 1972, the Tuskegee Airmen gathered in Detroit, Michigan and voted to establish a nation-wide organization with membership open to anyone who participated in the Tuskegee Experience as well as all supporters.

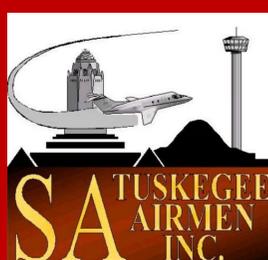
The present day mission of the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. ® is to inspire young people to outstanding achievement and leadership in our Democratic society through social and educational activities.

To achieve this objective, the Airmen motivate, inspire and stimulate young people to study, sacrifice and attain self-sustaining status, particularly with skills in the fields of aviation, aerospace and technology.

- Youth Aviation Programs
- Educational Assistance Awards
- National Scholarship Program



The San Antonio Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. ® invites you to take part in our goals and events toward preserving the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen and mentoring America's youth towards careers in aviation and technology. Membership is open to all civilians, officers, NCOs and airmen (active or retired).



www.sactai.com
**San Antonio Chapter of
 Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.**
 P. O. Box 264
 Randolph Air Force Base,
 Texas 78148-0264