

NEWSLETTER OF THE **DETROIT CHAPTER** OF
THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN INCORPORATED

April
2016



Hawk's



Cry II

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TAIDETNewsletter@Comcast.Net

75 Years Ago

Birthplace of the
Tuskegee Airmen
March 1941

Today

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(OFFICERS-BOARD MEMBERS - 2012)

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2nd Vice President—
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Secretary— Erma Leaphart-Gouch
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THE PRESIDENTS' PAGE



THE NEXT TWO CHAPTER MEETINGS

Thursday, 14 April 2016 and 12 May 2016 @ 1900 hours (7:00 p.m.)

Please Arrive between 6:30 & 6:45pm-before doors are locked.

At 613 Abbott in Downtown Detroit (3rd and Abbott)

REMEMBER: CHAPTER MEETINGS ARE ALWAYS THE 2ND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS

Please Wear Tuskegee Airmen Marked Clothing to Meetings to Show Uniformity

Greetings All,

⇒ Remember this is the 75th Anniversary of the Tuskegee Airmen (Red Tails). **How many people have you shared this Historical event with?**

⇒ This has been another month or so working for the youth. In fact many young people participated Sunday at our first Young Eagles Program. The flying had to be cancelled due to inclement weather, however our Airmen gave the kids and their parents a very good presentation followed by some of the kids going onto the simulator to get a better feeling about flying. Remember, **Young Eagles will be 2nd Sunday of the Month until the Fall.**

- ⇒ The Tuskegee Airmen National Museum is hosting and presenting an air show (Detroit River Days) on June 25-26 with the support and help of our Detroit Chapter. Help will be needed from many of us to make this a success.
- ⇒ We need a volunteer to oversee and chair our election committee. Hopefully some of you will step forward to run for an office in our Chapter.
- ⇒ We are putting the final touches on our special day, July 24, 2016. The Honors and Awards presentation will take place at the Charles Wright African American Museum on the 24th. It shall take place from 3PM to 5PM. This will allow all those going on our Annual Cruise to get there on time. During our presentation many will have the opportunity to view the Documentary about Lt. Col. Alexander Jefferson (Luft Gangster), for the first time in Detroit.
- ⇒ **There are several events coming up that will honor Art Green.** One will be in Washington DC. Where the DNR will Honor him and his work. Another will be the State of Michigan which is planning to name a street after him that will be on Belle Isle, there is one other in the planning stage but I don't have enough information to share with you right now.
- ⇒ I have received the draft of the Leadership Academy for young men that we will hopefully run the second week in July. Col. Williams is the POC for this endeavor. He will need our help and support.
- ⇒ We are planning to re-institute the Civil Air patrol at City Airport, Major Davenport will be the POC for this. He will need our help and support.
- ⇒ Finally, I am concerned about the many folks that have not paid their dues. In order for all of us to participate in the things we do, we need to have you be financial (Paid Dues) for the year. We shall share with you at our next meeting the roster of those that have paid their dues. From the moment you joined The Detroit Chapter of The Tuskegee Airmen, you set in motion your desire to share with our children the "Legacy of THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN." We thank you! As your President, I accepted the task to work for you and with you. We all know that these are trying times, however we need each other to be truly successful with our vision and our goals.
- ⇒ National TAI is kicking off their efforts with a special two-day event, honoring our DOTA'S and establishing a Tuskegee Airmen Foundation and STEM Academy that will help to preserve our legacy. They are calling this event a "Commemoration", that will build on the successes of the past, identify needs of our youth and highlight our DOTA role models.
 - * Ticket sales for our Cruise are moving along at a turtles pace
 - * Downtown Detroit River Days June 24-25, 2016
 - * Freedom Fireworks June 26, 2016
 - * 3rd Annual Cruise July 24, 2016, Jefferson Beach Marina, Jefferson Ave. at 9 Mile Rd. 6 to 9 PM
 - * Honors and Awards Reception, 2:00 PM to 4:30 PM, Site TBD, July 24, 2016
- ⇒ Our Annual Conference will take place from July 13-16, 2016. It shall take place in Indianapolis, IN., We should be able to have many members attend and since it is so close we could if we have the numbers rent a bus. In fact we could set up a payment plan once members commit to take care of our transportation and hotel, which would help in impacting the total cost. [Register for Convention.](#)

Thank you,

Miguel Thornton

President

Detroit Chapter

Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.

The Hawk's Cry II

2

Soaring High, Continuing the Legacy

Third Annual Detroit Chapter Tuskegee Airmen Fundraising Gala Dinner Cruise
Sunday July 24 2016, at 6:00-9:00 pm aboard the luxurious Ovation Yacht. Located at
the Jefferson Beach Marina

24400 Jefferson Ave, St Clair Shores MI 48080

For more information contact

Miguel Thornton (734) 635-0477 or Eric Love (248) 709-3748

Cost \$100.00 per person



Proceeds from the "Soaring High" fundraising dinner will benefit the Detroit Chapter Tuskegee Airmen's Downs-Coles Education program, which supports minority youth in pursuit of their aviation and aerospace careers.



TUSKEGEE AIRMEN INC.
Convention Registration

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Tuskegee Airmen Inc.

45th National Convention - July 13 - 16, 2016
Indianapolis, Indiana



Photo courtesy of Westin Indianapolis Hotel



Welcome to The TAI 45th National Convention Registration

The TAI 45th National Convention, [Westin Indianapolis Hotel](#), Indianapolis, Indiana.

Each registrant must complete all information on this form to ensure your complete registration is processed. For additional information or questions regarding registration, please contact us by phone at 210.421.2485 or e-mail: info@taiconvention.com.

Please review important [registration](#) and [cancellation](#) policies before registering.

Convention Registration Checklist

- ✓ Special Hotel Reservation Instructions
- ✓ Complete Your Registration Online
- ✓ Download Convention Registration Form
- ✓ Review Registration/Cancellation policies
- ✓ Download Convention Schedule of Events
- ✓ Download Convention Volunteer Package

Exhibitors, Sponsors, Advertisers

- ✓ Download Convention Information Guide
- ✓ Sponsorship Opportunities
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ENGAGE
To
Register
For the
Convention

LOCAL HAPPENINGS

2016 Tuskegee Airmen Documentary - OFFICIALLY RELEASED!

[BUY NOW](#) on DVD & BluRay:

"THE LUFT GANGSTER: MEMOIRS OF A SECOND CLASS HERO"

THE COMPLETED FEATURE LENGTH VERSION OF THIS AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARY IS NOW RELEASED HONORING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LEGENDARY TUSKEGEE AIRMEN (the "RED TAILS")

This Inspirational Film Starring Lt. Col. Alexander Jefferson is A MUST HAVE for Now and for Future Generations.



Watch
Trailer

ORDER NOW AT:
WWW.LUFTGANGSTERMOVIE.COM

"The film itself is a loving, reverent tribute to an honorable man, worthy of being honored."

★★★★ - Tom Santilli, Examiner.com

Order
Movie



This award-winning documentary was shown pre-released on all equipped AA aircraft worldwide to celebrate diversity for Black History Month 2016

American Airlines 

The Hawk's Cry II



A tough lesson learned

By Bill Shepard

I have been a proud member of the Detroit chapter of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. for over ten years. I have been privileged to be the show pilot for our organization, flying the T-6 as a way to help share the wonderful history of the Tuskegee Airmen. I am also concurrently the Squadron Leader of the CAF Red Tail Squadron and the Vice President of Education of the Commemorative Air Force, and in both those roles I am dedicated to honoring the Airmen. Yes, the love of WWII aviation is in my blood and I am wholeheartedly dedicated to preserving the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen, but that doesn't mean there aren't a few lessons to still be learned along the way.



In early February, I was involved in a gear up landing of the CAF's P-51C Mustang *Tuskegee Airmen*. I've flown this aircraft for years, taking it around the country and talking to countless people about the Tuskegee Airmen and why their story is still so relevant today, now more than ever. But all that experience and time in the aircraft still did not make me immune to pilot error. It's an unfortunate part of aviation, and it happens. I just didn't plan on it ever happening to me.

I walked away uninjured - and for that I am grateful - and I do take full responsibility for the incident. Fortunately there was no sort of critical engine issue, and the damage the aircraft sustained is completely repairable. Since that time, I have placed myself at the forefront of ensuring the plane returns to service as quickly as possible. Believe me, I've been given many chances to practice humility through all of this...

One of the most positive things to come out of this experience, though, is I'm reminded how strong the spirit of goodwill and collaboration can be. I'd barely made my way off the runway before the calls of support started to come in. The CAF Red Tail Squadron is able to continue their cross-country tour, sharing the important inspirational message of the Tuskegee Airmen, because other Mustang operators offered their help and our team was determined to press on regardless of the circumstance. The respect and admiration for the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen extends far beyond our community here at TAI. I've seen it surround me in a time of need, and it has given me even more zeal to honor the Airmen and ensure their history is known to all.

My pride was hurt, no doubt about it. But it's clear to me now that those insecurities are insignificant. The work we're doing within our organizations is what matters. It matters to future generations who stand to gain so much from the history of the Tuskegee Airmen. And we'll continue to work hard for them.

LOCAL HAPPENINGS

CALLING ALL RUNNERS, WALKERS AND ROLLERS

THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN NATIONAL HISTORIC MUSEUM HAS LAUNCHED ITS FIRST VIRTUAL 5K.

EACH PARTICIPANT WILL RECEIVE A BEAUTIFUL BIB AND A CUSTOM DESIGNED MEDAL.

We launched on VETERANS' DAY 2015 TO *Celebrate Our Heroes*.
We conclude on MEMORIAL DAY 2016 TO *Continue The Legacy*.

HOW IT WORKS:

- 1) Sign up at Eventbrite.com: <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/tuskegee-airmen-national-historic-museum-1st-virtual-5k-tickets-18581871879?aff=es2>
- 2) Run, walk or roll for a total of 3.1 miles (5K) sometime in May 2016. You choose the place. You choose the time.
- 3) Too excited to wait until May? No problem. Complete your 3.1 miles at any time between now and Memorial Day, May 30, 2016. Your bib and finisher's medal will be mailed to you in May.
- 4) Share your accomplishment on our facebook page: www.facebook.com/TheTuskegeeAirmenNationalMuseum
- 5) Tell others about this event. Proceeds support the youth programs and mission of the Tuskegee Airmen National Historical Museum.

NOTE: This is a nation-wide event that will sell out. A limited quantity of medals have been made. Please register early to guarantee a medal. The medal will be revealed in the Hawk's Cry and on our Facebook page in early 2016.

Thank you / Tammy Smith / Race Director / VerdictInVegas@yahoo.com





Surviving Tuskegee Airman reflects on service 75 years ago

[Rebecca Burylo](#), Montgomery Advertiser 9:46 a.m. CDT March 21, 2016

Sitting in a plush living room overlooking the woods and lake of a quaint Georgia community, **Val Archer**, 86, lives peacefully with his wife, Victoria, but life was not always so comfortable. The retired tech sergeant is one of the few remaining Tuskegee Airmen, the first group of black fighter pilots and personnel, who answered the call 75 years ago, in the midst of World War II, racial inequality and poverty. This week, Archer will be traveling with a few of his fellow airmen, back to where it all began: Tuskegee, Tuesday marks the 75th anniversary of the legendary group, which was initiated on March 22, 1941. At least four of the original Tuskegee Airmen, including, Archer, Wilbur Mason, Thomas Bristow and Hillard Pouncy, who also live in Georgia, are scheduled to travel to Alabama for the anniversary commemoration events in Tuskegee and Montgomery, where Archer attended school at Maxwell Air Force Base. Serving as an airplane mechanic from 1945-1949 for the Tuskegee Airmen's 332nd Fighter Group, Archer never thought he would be a part of history. Of course in retrospect, he would help change the fabric of the nation and assist in the eventual demise of segregation throughout the armed services. "I'm proud of the legacy that we have," Archer said. "A lot of us came from all over, Tuskegee Airmen, we had people who came off of farms and those who came out of cities, but what came out of that experience had an impact on our whole culture at that time, largely because of the success that we had and what that meant for other opportunities." At that time, African-Americans were deemed unfit both physically and mentally to fly something as complex as an aircraft, but with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's help, they proved the myth wrong. Famously known as "Red Tails" because of the red hue painted on their P-47 and P-51 tail wings, Tuskegee Airmen quickly became legendary for their superior flying performance during the war against the Nazi airships. Thousands of black men, who signed up to fly, in the 1940s, proved the myth wrong. By the end of the war, they had achieved a near-perfect record of not losing an aircraft against enemy fighters in more than 200 bomber-escort missions. They only lost 27 ships, compared to an average of 46 among other 15th Air Force P-51 groups. During 1,578 total combat missions for the Fifteenth and Twelve Air Forces, the Tuskegee Airmen destroyed 150 enemy aircraft on the ground and 112 in air-to-air combat. Archer was among 16,000 of men who signed up to fight with the Red Tails, only Archer was much younger than most. When he enlisted, he was 16 years old, and altered his documents to make him appear 19. "One of my buddies and I ... we had already tried to enlist in the Marines, Navy and the Merchant Marines, but they told us we were not old enough," he said. "On this particular day, we were in downtown Chicago when we passed by this Army recruiter." They were ushered in and processed the same day, Archer said. "We went into the place at 1 p.m. and didn't get out until 7 p.m.," he said. "We came back next day and we had fixed our birth certificates so that we looked a couple years older. They didn't question anything." The next day, Archer was on the back of an Army truck headed to basic training and leaving behind a life of racial barriers and jobless opportunities. "That time, young men were beginning to question ... What are you going to do? What are you going to be? What job are you going to have? Of course, in those days, there were no jobs," he said. "Information about employment was put in the newspaper and pages would say, 'Job Wanted' or 'Help Wanted,' but there would be a subhead saying, 'Negros need not apply,' so don't waste our time," Archer said. "That's just the way it was ... race was a barrier and age was a barrier." The Tuskegee Airmen were breaking those barriers down, and being a part of that team was the most exciting time of his life, he said. After basic training and demolition school, Archer was introduced to the Tuskegee Airmen in 1945, when he was assigned to the 332nd Fighter Group. "The biggest surprise that I had when I got there was when I found out that everyone was black and all the officers were black and enlisted," Archer said. However, it was not the first time he had heard of the famous group. "They had received a lot of notoriety in the Chicago Defender ... I was a paper boy for them and had a chance to read up on what they were doing," Archer said. With the 332nd, Archer worked on the flight line, followed the crew chief and make sure all planes were air-worthy before pilots took off. "That was in fact one of the most exciting periods of my life up to that time," Archer said. "First of all to acknowledge that you have responsibility for not just for the airplane, but for the person who was flying it." After the war, Archer would continue active-duty service for 21 years with stints at Maxwell Air Force Base, where he attended advanced instructor training, and then later served in a civilian capacity for the Department of Defense. The Tuskegee Airmen Foundation will host a series of events beginning at Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site at Moton Field at the Tuskegee Airport and ending in Montgomery's Renaissance Hotel Convention Center, for a gala fundraising event. The 99th Pursuit Squadron, later called the 99th Fighter Squadron, was the first black fighting unit along with the 100th Fighter Squadron, 301st Fighter Squadron and 302nd Fighter Squadron. Those squadrons have been preserved and aircraft from those units are scheduled to fly over Moton Field at 10:30 a.m. A reception and gala dinner is scheduled at 6 p.m. at Montgomery's Renaissance Hotel to raise money for student scholarships and will include a silent auction, photos with Tuskegee Airmen, an induction ceremony, dinner and speakers.

and later as an Aircraft Instrument Specialist from 1945-1949 for the Tuskegee Airmen's 332nd Fighter Group, Archer never thought he would be a part of history. Of course in retrospect, he would help change the fabric of the nation and assist in the eventual demise of segregation throughout the armed services. "I'm proud of the legacy that we have," Archer said. "A lot of us came from all over, Tuskegee Airmen, we had people who came off of farms and those who came out of cities, but what came out of that experience had an impact on our whole culture at that time, largely because of the success that we had and what that meant for other opportunities." At that time, African-Americans were deemed unfit both physically and mentally to fly something as complex as an aircraft, but with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's help, they proved the myth wrong. Famously known as "Red Tails" because of the red hue painted on their P-47 and P-51 tail wings, Tuskegee Airmen quickly became legendary for their superior flying performance during the war against the Nazi airships. Thousands of black men, who signed up to fly, in the 1940s, proved the myth wrong. By the end of the war, they had achieved a near-perfect record of not losing an aircraft against enemy fighters in more than 200 bomber-escort missions. They only lost 27 ships, compared to an average of 46 among other 15th Air Force P-51 groups. During 1,578 total combat missions for the Fifteenth and Twelve Air Forces, the Tuskegee Airmen destroyed 150 enemy aircraft on the ground and 112 in air-to-air combat. Archer was among 16,000 of men who signed up to fight with the Red Tails, only Archer was much younger than most. When he enlisted, he was 16 years old, and altered his documents to make him appear 19. "One of my buddies and I ... we had already tried to enlist in the Marines, Navy and the Merchant Marines, but they told us we were not old enough," he said. "On this particular day, we were in downtown Chicago when we passed by this Army recruiter." They were ushered in and processed the same day, Archer said. "We went into the place at 1 p.m. and didn't get out until 7 p.m.," he said. "We came back next day and we had fixed our birth certificates so that we looked a couple years older. They didn't question anything." The next day, Archer was on the back of an Army truck headed to basic training and leaving behind a life of racial barriers and jobless opportunities. "That time, young men were beginning to question ... What are you going to do? What are you going to be? What job are you going to have? Of course, in those days, there were no jobs," he said. "Information about employment was put in the newspaper and pages would say, 'Job Wanted' or 'Help Wanted,' but there would be a subhead saying, 'Negros need not apply,' so don't waste our time," Archer said. "That's just the way it was ... race was a barrier and age was a barrier." The Tuskegee Airmen were breaking those barriers down, and being a part of that team was the most exciting time of his life, he said. After basic training and demolition school, Archer was introduced to the Tuskegee Airmen in 1945, when he was assigned to the 332nd Fighter Group. "The biggest surprise that I had when I got there was when I found out that everyone was black and all the officers were black and enlisted," Archer said. However, it was not the first time he had heard of the famous group. "They had received a lot of notoriety in the Chicago Defender ... I was a paper boy for them and had a chance to read up on what they were doing," Archer said. With the 332nd, Archer worked on the flight line, followed the crew chief and make sure all planes were air-worthy before pilots took off. "That was in fact one of the most exciting periods of my life up to that time," Archer said. "First of all to acknowledge that you have responsibility for not just for the airplane, but for the person who was flying it." After the war, Archer would continue active-duty service for 21 years with stints at Maxwell Air Force Base, where he attended advanced instructor training, and then later served in a civilian capacity for the Department of Defense. The Tuskegee Airmen Foundation will host a series of events beginning at Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site at Moton Field at the Tuskegee Airport and ending in Montgomery's Renaissance Hotel Convention Center, for a gala fundraising event. The 99th Pursuit Squadron, later called the 99th Fighter Squadron, was the first black fighting unit along with the 100th Fighter Squadron, 301st Fighter Squadron and 302nd Fighter Squadron. Those squadrons have been preserved and aircraft from those units are scheduled to fly over Moton Field at 10:30 a.m. A reception and gala dinner is scheduled at 6 p.m. at Montgomery's Renaissance Hotel to raise money for student scholarships and will include a silent auction, photos with Tuskegee Airmen, an induction ceremony, dinner and speakers.



Wilbur G. Mason was born in Tuskegee in 1924 and attended Tuskegee Institute High School while working part-time at the Tuskegee Army Airfield as a civilian employee for base supply in 1944. First, he was received and stored Air Force property, which included equipment for the pilots and ground crew and then became an inspector. After studying Industrial Arts and Electrical Engineering at Tuskegee Institute, Mason moved to Detroit and became an electrician.

Rev. Thomas Bristow—enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1946 at age 17 and completed training in Aircraft Sheet Metal and as a Fuel Cell Specialist. After graduation, he was assigned to the 477th Anti-Aircraft and then to the 100th Fighter Squadron, serving under the legendary Col. Benjamin O. Davis for the Tuskegee Airmen. He was later made Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of the entire Sheet Metal Shop and promoted to the rank of sergeant in 1949 prior to being discharged. He later served in Korea and was called into ministry in 1962.

Hillard Pouncy, from Eufaula, was 20 years old when he enlisted with the Army Air Corps in 1941 and stayed on active-duty for three years during WWII. He later served as a reservist for 17 years in the New York Air National Guard. He attended college at Tuskegee Institute, where he was first introduced to the Tuskegee Airmen. In 1944, Pouncy graduated as a bombardier, second lieutenant and was assigned to the Tuskegee Airmen's 477th Bombardment Group, which had the B-25s.



Tuskegee Airmen honored with highway signs

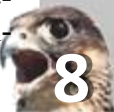
By Anna Carrera | acarrera@wcia.com

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY -- Rantoul was the first training site for the Tuskegee Airmen back in 1941. That's a legacy people say they want to remember. To do that, they're putting signs to honor the black fighter pilots on the interstates and state highways. Anyone who drives through Champaign County will be able to see them. So even though Rantoul looks different now than it did back then, its history will be preserved. It's been 75 years since the Tuskegee Airmen started training at Chanute, but their story is still being told as if it happened yesterday. "The aviators were absolute heroes," said Rob Gorham, who is a veteran. "They were told they were probably not skilled or qualified to fly. They flew as well as anyone's ever flown." People from all over Illinois came together to remember those men. They were brave enough to stand together and fight for their country, even while racism was rampant. "You realize they started in 1941, 14 years before Rosa Parks wouldn't give up a seat on the bus," said Gorham. "It was a struggle," said Robbie Walker, who is a Veterans Services Officer. "And our struggle is less as a result of what they did for us." One Tuskegee Airman still lives in the area, but he wasn't able to make it to the ceremony. "Chief [Walter] Weathersby was a Tuskegee Airman," said Champaign Police Chief Anthony Cobb.

Select Image to Watch Video



"And it's nice to know we have one living among us. At the same token, Chief Weathersby was also the first African American Chief Master Sergeant in the United States Air Force." Organizers say they're running out of time to honor those men while they're still alive, but that makes this effort even more important. "There are thousands of signs along the highway," said Command Sergeant Major Peter Thomas. "You need to stop today and tell everyone what happened here and why those signs are up there." Those signs will serve as a constant reminder of their service. "As long as we are living and breathing, we will preserve the history of the Tuskegee Airmen and make sure the Tuskegee Airmen never become extinct," said Kenneth Rapier, who is the Chicago "DODO" Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen President. There were 950 original black fighter pilots. Only 14 of those Tuskegee Airmen are still alive to share their story, so organizers say it's up to everyone else to keep it going. It was President Roosevelt's plan to include black Americans in combat roles. St. Louis and Detroit were originally picked to be the first training sites for black fighter pilots, but both locations refused to let them train there. That's when Champaign County leaders stepped up to host train-





Tuskegee Airmen formed 75 years ago today

By [The Associated Press](#) on March 23, 2016 at 1:59 PM

Ten of the original Tuskegee Airmen returned to where they made history 75 years ago. On Tuesday the men were honored during anniversary events at the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic site at Moton Field, as well as in Montgomery. Those honored include George Hardy, Leslie Edwards, Eugene Richardson, Ted Lumpkin, Levi Thornhill, James Shipley, James H. Harvey III, George Boyd, Val Archer and Samuel Sams. Tuesday marked the date the legendary group was initiated on March 22, 1941, in what would be dubbed

the "Tuskegee Experiment." They were the first group of black fighter pilots and personnel to fight during World War II. The day began in Moton Field where staff from the National Park Service and the Tuskegee Airmen Foundation along with military cadets, officers and government officials welcomed the airmen, their family and friends and public to visit the Tuskegee Airmen museums, sit in the cockpit of a replica aircraft and take pictures with the guests of honor. A historic flyover kicked off the occasion with aircraft from the 99th Flying Training Squadron, the 100th Fighter Squadron, the 301st Fighter Squadron and the 302nd Fighter Squadron, all of which represent the original fighter squadrons belonging to the Tuskegee Airmen's 332nd Fighter Group, which are still active today. The museum's auditorium was filled with students and educators from the Macon County School System and Georgia. The sacrifices the Tuskegee Airmen made should inspire youth, said Brigadier Gen. Leon Johnson, the National President of Tuskegee Airmen Incorporated and board chair of the Tuskegee Airmen Foundation. "We're here to talk about the young people in the room and I'm going to leave you with three words that symbolize what the Tuskegee Airmen: progress, demand sacrifice," Johnson said. "Nothing in life happens without someone making a sacrifice ... someone sacrificed for you to be here today." Aisha Williams, 14, an eighth grader at Tuskegee Institute Middle School, said the Tuskegee Airmen were an inspiration. Because of their drive to succeed, she wants to pursue Junior ROTC in high school. "I look up to their bravery and their courage," Williams said. "It's an honor to be here with them today." Fighter pilot George Hardy, 90, of Sarasota, Fla. stressed education when offering advice to the youth. "The main thing is you must have a goal. You must want to do something and you strive for it, and you must have some determination to get there," Hardy said. "You may have an obstacle, but you must overcome them." Hardy retired as a lieutenant colonel and first flew with the 99th Fighter Squadron, flying 21 combat missions over Germany. He continued to serve in the Korean and Vietnam War. Camellia Floyd brought her 5-year-old daughter, Chloe, and her 9-year-old son, Christopher, from Lee County to meet with the airmen. She said her grandfather was a Tuskegee Airman and that it was important for her children to witness living history. "It's important as a parent, because we have so few still living to tell the story and for children of any age to have this experience to speak with them and to hear their stories first-hand is a blessing," Floyd said. In 2007, President George W. Bush awarded the group the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation's highest honor, because of their exemplary combat record. It was that record, which inspired Harry Truman to eliminate racial divides in the military services. By the end of the war, the Tuskegee Airmen only lost 27 ships against enemy fighters during their 179 bomber-escort missions, compared to other 15th Air Force P-51 groups that lost an average of 46 ships. The Tuskegee Airmen would complete 1,578 total combat missions for the Fifteenth and Twelve Air Forces, destroying 150 enemy aircraft on the ground and 112 in air-to-air combat. At the time when he served as a Tuskegee Airmen fighter pilot, 2nd Lt. Eugene Richardson, 90, of Philadelphia, wasn't concerned about making history. He wanted to fly. "I was a cadet here and a student flyer. I finished flight school in order to be a fighter pilot for single engine fighters in March of '45," Richardson said. However, he never had a chance to see combat. "I went to combat training, and (German dictator Adolf) Hitler heard I was coming over seas and he surrendered," Richardson joked. "My dream was just to fly an airplane, I didn't know about history or any of that famous stuff. I got to fly an airplane and that was my dream come true." Famously known as "Red Tails" because of the red color on their P-47 and P-51 tails to distinguish them from other escort ships, Tuskegee Airmen quickly became legendary for their superior flying performance as bomber escorts. For intelligence officer Ted Lumpkin, 96, of Los Angeles, it is almost unimaginable to believe what he and other Tuskegee Airmen helped achieve. He served with the 100th Fighter Squadron in Italy. "To represent what it does today to people is probably the most satisfying thing, because when we came back from the service, it was not as nice as it is now. People then, didn't realize what we had done and what it meant to this country and to ourselves," Lumpkin said.

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN HONORED AT 75TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

[Birmingham Times](#) | March 24, 2016

On Tuesday, dozens gathered for a reception and gala dinner at Montgomery's Renaissance Hotel downtown to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Tuskegee Airmen Experience. Of the 16,000 men and women considered original Tuskegee Airmen there are fewer than 1,000 still alive. The reception and gala commemorated the activation of the U.S. Army Air Corps 99th Pursuit Squadron at Chanute Field on March 22, 1941 which began the legacy of The Tuskegee Airmen, the nickname of the first African-American unit to fly combat airplanes in World War II. Tuesday's event honored the pilots and support personnel trained at Tuskegee Army Air Field. The Airmen were named after the Tuskegee Army Airfield near Tuskegee, Alabama, where they received their pilot and aircraft maintenance training during World War II.

The Tuskegee Airmen were not just flyers but also radio operators, navigators, bombardiers, aircraft maintainers, support staff, instructors, and all the personnel who kept the planes in the air. Before 1940, African Americans were barred from flying for the U.S. military. Civil rights organizations and the black press exerted pressure that resulted in the formation of an all African-American pursuit squadron based in Tuskegee. "Tuskegee Airmen" refers to all who were involved in the so-called "Tuskegee Experience," the Army Air Corps program to train African Americans to fly and maintain combat aircraft. While the red jackets the Tuskegee



ee Airmen wear symbolize their "Red Tails" name and the achievements in the sky above Germany during World War II, they also represent other victories as well. The 996 pilots and more than 15,000 ground personnel who served with these units flew more than 15,500 combat sorties and earned more than 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses. The training at Tuskegee was the U.S. War Department's answer to a shortage of pilots, along with mechanics and other ground support personnel needed to maintain aircraft for battle, according to historical accounts from Tuskegee University and Tuskegee Airmen Inc., a national group that supports the airmen. In an era when black military personnel were fighting segregation and being arrested at installations like Freeman Army Airfield in Indiana, the Tuskegee Airmen were integrating the U.S. war effort at the front lines. "At the same time that black officers were incarcerated for resisting segregation at Freeman Field, for example, other black officers were earning Distinguished Flying Crosses and aerial victory credits by shooting down enemy airplanes in combat over Europe, while still other black cadets were learning to fly military airplanes," Daniel Haulman of the Air Force Historical Research Agency wrote in a 2015 chronology of the Tuskegee Airmen. The Hollywood film "Red Tails" was released in 2012 and brought the Tuskegee Airmen's story to a new generation. The Tuskegee Airmen's successes encouraged President Harry Truman to integrate the armed forces in 1948.





Tribute for Bessie Coleman, black female aviators planned at Lincoln Cemetery

Nick Swedberg Daily Southtown

Years before hundreds of brave black men as part of what's commonly called The Tuskegee Airmen flew combat missions during World War II, there was Bessie Coleman. Known as "Queen Bess," Coleman was the first black woman aviator who dazzled audiences with her stunt flying. Later this month, a group of airplanes will fly over the Chicago cemetery where she is buried as part of a tribute to aviation pioneers. The 37th Annual Fly-Over and Tribute to America's Pioneering and Colorful Women in Aviation is scheduled to kick off at 1 p.m. April 30 at Lincoln Cemetery, 12300 S Kedzie Ave., Chicago. Shortly before the flyover, hundreds of balloons will be released in honor of the achievements of the courageous women. A Tuskegee Airmen group and other partners are putting on the flyover tribute to honor the legacies of women aviation pioneers, such as Coleman, Willa Brown and Janet Harmon. Coleman and Brown are both buried at Lincoln Cemetery. "All three of those women represented open doors for aviation for all people," said Sandra Campbell, a spokeswoman for the event. Unable to find anyone to teach her in the US, Coleman traveled to Europe to obtain her pilot and international pilot license after she was encouraged by Chicago Defender publisher [Robert Abbott](#). Europe also is where she began stunt flying before returning to the U.S. to achieve fame. Organizers behind the event said a big goal is to encourage young people to consider careers in aviation. "We want to let them know there is a shortage of black aviators," said Tyrone Haymore, a Robbins historian who worked with the committee behind the event. Robbins is credited with being the site of the first black operated airport in the country. It no longer exists. The Tuskegee Program had nearly 1,000 black pilots during the war, Haymore said. Today, there are less than 400 black pilots in the U.S. "We gotta get those numbers back up," he said. Few young people realize that aviation can be a viable career for them, Campbell said. But it's not just career flying, she said. Campbell has tried to pair young people with adults from a wide range of careers in order to show them how simple it could be to get into if they were interested. *Nick Swedberg is a freelance reporter for the Daily Southtown.*

Why I Fly Young Eagles

"My neighbor, Robert Shurney, a NASA engineer, got a friend of his to take me flying in his Cessna 172 when I was 12 years old. After that flight I spent many hours building airplanes and rockets. I eventually earned a Ph.D. in biomedical engineering, and later in life I dedicated myself to educating other underrepresented youth to careers in aviation."

"I started EAA Chapter 1351 around the turn of the century with the sole purpose of doing Young Eagles rallies. Several of the Young Eagles I flew went on to pursue careers in aviation, and several are in the Tuskegee Airmen Flight Academy, an aviation program run by the Tuskegee Airmen National Museum, where a dedicated student can earn a pilot certificate."

> Brian Smith, Ph.D., EAA 495180

President and founder of EAA Chapter 1351 in Detroit, Michigan. More than 750 Young Eagles flown to date.



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The Hawk's Cry II

We must bid farewell to another heroic Tuskegee Airman

[Rochelle Riley](#), Detroit Free Press Columnist April 2, 2016



This year marks three-quarters of a century since they began their service during World War II. But the heroism of the famed Tuskegee Airmen continues to resound in films, museums and in the sustained pride felt by those in awe of their accomplishments. As time marches on, the original airmen are leaving us, dying and joining what they call their Lonely Eagles chapter. Eddie Marcy joined that group last Saturday. His farewell came at Kindred Hospital on Detroit's East Outer Drive. His funeral is today, at Cantrell Funeral Home. He was 96. On Friday, as his children gathered to mourn him, one thing that struck them was that their dad, an honest, humble man — whose first real job was as a coal miner in Virginia — didn't reveal that he was a Tuskegee Airman until eight or nine years ago. "He didn't talk about it," his son, Dwain Fennoy, said Friday. "He would just say he was in Italy. I was very much surprised." "I was astonished," said his daughter, Jevita Terry of Rocky Mount, N.C. "It was just a feeling of great joy and pride." She surmised that her dad "didn't think his job was more important than anyone else who served. He was proud of what he did. He was proud of who he was. But he didn't see it as anything so great or greater than anyone else who served his country. One thing he wasn't, and that was haughty. He was a proud man, but never haughty." Eddie Marcy was born in Birmingham, Ala., on June 13, 1919, the

son of Arthur and Callie Marcy. When his parents moved to Big Stone Gap, Va., so his father could work in the coal mines, the younger Marcy found his first career. After high school graduation, he spent year and a half as a coal miner in Derby, Va. But he was drafted and headed into World War II. His brush with destiny came on Dec. 20, 1943, when he was assigned to the 100th Fighter Squadron, 332nd Fighter Group and later the 305th Bombardment Wing. But Eddie Marcy never flew a plane. Instead, he was a fueler. "His main job was to fuel," said his son, Charles. "He had a truck and he would go around to every plane and put so much fuel in. He wasn't the only fueler, but each fueler had so many planes they had to fuel three times a day. "From northern France to the Balkans to Germany, he was tied up to the Red Tails," Charles said. "He knew most of the pilots, but he never flew planes. He fueled them. He kept them running." Lest anyone think that all that mattered were the pilots whose exploits were depicted in George Lucas's 2012 film "Red Tails," Eddie Marcy received major awards honoring his service, including a Certificate of Merit for his service in the European, African and Middle Eastern campaigns and the Bronze Star for meritorious service in Rome-ARNO, Southern and Northern France, The Balkan Campaign, and the Germany/Berlin Campaign among others. His family said he was very proud of the merit certificate because it was signed by Col. George S. (Spanky) Roberts, the first African American accepted for U.S. Army pilot training. After the war, Marcy returned to Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Harrison Township until he was discharged and began what would be a 30-year career at Chrysler. When he retired, "he took it easy," said Charles. His days after retirement were spent fishing, watching baseball and spending time with his five children. "My dad, to me, was one of the greatest men I've ever known, and I'm proud to be his daughter," said his oldest daughter, Thelma Monroe, of Columbus, Ohio. His job as a Tuskegee airmen was one of the greatest things that he could have ever done for our country, and I'm very proud of him for that. "The thing people would say about my father is that he's a good man and most importantly he was an honest man. He had integrity. He lived his life the way he wanted to live his life and he was always there for his children." By the time he revealed his service, his children were grown. But slowly they learned bits and pieces about his career. "He did mention a couple of times about how things were, that there was prejudice between the blacks and whites, but what made him really proud was when the Tuskegee airmen carried all those bombers safely, and he was a part of that. He was really happy about that," said son Dwain. He also is survived by a third son, Kevin Fennoy of Indianapolis. Eddie Marcy talked more to his children about life in Detroit than about life in war. "He used to talk to me a lot about spending time in Black Bottom," said Charles, referring to the neighborhood where most black people lived decades ago in a segregated Detroit. "He liked to go out and have a few beers with his buddies. He always talked about where Black Bottom used to be and enjoyed that. "He said that he liked Detroit because there was opportunity here for a black person who had lived down South," said his son, Dwain Fennoy. "He did pretty good, from Birmingham to a small town in southwest Virginia to come up here. I think he did very well." Fennoy said in his later years, Marcy spent a lot of time watching television. "He liked to watch the old movies that dealt with Hitler and World War II. He would watch those a lot. It would bring back memories of what he went through," Fennoy said. Eddie Marcy spent the last decades of his life in the big, two-story house on Wilshire where he'd lived since 1980 with his wife, Constance, and their cat, Charlie. But he had two routine reasons to go out. "He liked to fish," Charles Marcy said. "He and Dwain were always on the river waiting until the silver bass were running. Anything that was biting, he was out there trying to get it. And Dwain Fennoy said, "every two weeks, I would take him down to Eastern Market so he could get him some bacon and on the way, he would stop and visit a good friend of his who served with him in the war. That friend is Fletcher Williams, a fellow Tuskegee Airman. "Every two weeks, Dad would have me take him to see his buddy. His nickname was Swine. He said, 'Take me to see my buddy, Swine.'"

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Homeless veterans.....	1-877-222-8387
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Web Sites

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Health Care Eligibility.....	www.va.gov/healtheligibility
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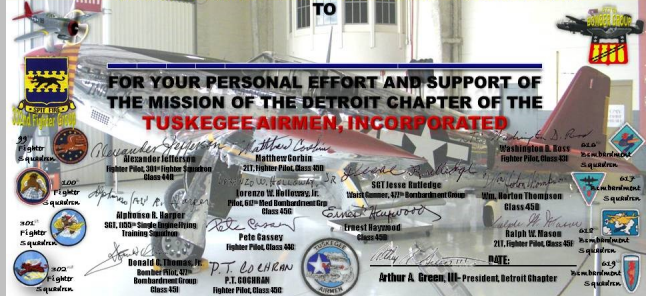


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The Hawk's Cry II



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ATTENTION ALL CHAPTER MEMBERS: To ensure we have adequate coverage of local activities, please get your local and recent Tuskegee Airmen related news stories to the editor ASAP. Contact info inside

