

July  
2017

THE

**Hawk's**



**Cry II**

[HawksCryII@gmail.com](mailto:HawksCryII@gmail.com)

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**RED TAIL DEBUTS**

IN AWE, APPRECIATION  
AND IN TIME

# TUSKEGEE AIRMEN CONTACT LISTING

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**2nd Vice President**—Eric Love  
**Treasurer**— Gregory Whiting  
**Secretary**— Theodore Whitely  
**Parliamentarian**— Robert Tillman  
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**Ways & Means**— Tony Stevenson  
**Planning**— Eric Love  
**Public Relations**— Eric Palmer  
**Historian**—Lawrence Milben  
**Good & Welfare**—Tony Stevenson  
**Youth Programs**— Brian Smith  
**Speakers Bureau**—Alexander Jefferson  
**Chaplin**—Dr. Theodore Whitely

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 William Henderson  
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**NEW Meeting START Time**  
**6:45pm**  
**ABSOLUTELY**  
**No Entry after 7:00pm**

## CENTRAL REGION

**Marv K. Abrams**—TAI Central Region President  
[abramsmk@aol.com](mailto:abramsmk@aol.com)

### SITES OF INTEREST

*Simply SELECT The Link*

[National Organization](#)

[TA National Museum](#)

[TA National Historic Site](#)

[Detroit Chapter TAI Website](#)

Detroit Chapter [Facebook](#) - [Instagram](#)

Hawk's Cry II [Facebook](#) - [Instagram](#)

Detroit Chapter Red Tail [Facebook](#) - [Instagram](#)

**ON THE COVER: DOTAs Harry T. Stewart, Jr, Frederick Henry and Alexander Jefferson join Detroit Chapter President Miguel Thornton with the chapters new mode of outreach, "Red Tail"...a TA Tribute Ford Mustang owned by Hawk's Cry II Editor/Publisher, Eric Palmer.**

# THE PRESIDENTS' PAGE



## THE NEXT TWO CHAPTER MEETINGS

**Thursday, 13 July 2017 and 10 August 2017 @ 1900 hours (6:45 p.m.)**

**Please Arrive between 6:30 & 6:45pm. Doors WILL BE Locked at 7pm**

*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 to all. We have had another banner month (June) in service to our youth and DOTA's. We were re-introduced to recently turned 102 year old local DOTA [Preston Jowers](#) and found that his application had not been completed. At recent check, it has been and he wants to be active in service. Several birthdays were celebrated, Uncle [Al Jamison](#) and [Bob Tillman](#) to name two. Happy birthday to all that celebrated them during the month.

We were active again with the youth, flying over fifty (50) young men and women during the EAA Young Eagles Program. **Our next two [EAA/Young Eagles rallies](#) are on **July 9th** and **August 13th**.**

[Detroit River Days](#) was very successful. We spoke face-to-face to over **six thousand (6000) people** and over 100,000 were able to see the three (3) Tuskegee Air Shows, staged by the [Tuskegee Airmen National Historical Museum](#).

We also participated in a Patriots Day, Sunday, June 25th and July 2nd at [Brightmoor Christian Church](#) in Novi, Michigan. The Pastor has invited us back to participate in other activities during the year that will Honor Veterans.

This month of July is very important also. Mark your calendars as follows: our monthly meeting shall be one of the most important and informative of the year. First, on Thursday, July 13th we shall have Mr. Jones from Ensure Financial Group speak to us about how to save thousands of Dollars on our Insurance Policies. We are throwing away money on many of the policies we have. He requests that you take a moment and bring your policies with you so they can be analyzed (free). I have personally found that he saved me over thirty five thousand dollars on my policies that I had purchased over the years. Second, at the conclusion of his presentation we shall be treated to dinner hosted by the same folks that treated us several months ago. The members that were in attendance several months ago read about the food and so they decided to share their menu with the larger group.

Lastly, we are planning our Christmas Dinner a little different. It shall be held on Thursday, December 7th at Bert's Place on Russell St. There will be a charge for the dinner and as we work out the details I shall share that information with you. There are two options on the table; one, in which you order off the menu and another, in which we select several items and you pick which one you would like and the price would be the same for all the participants. **Mark your calendars for these events.**

August 3 -5, 2017

National TAI in Orlando, Florida

August 19 - 20, 2017

Selfridge Air National Guard Base 100th Anniversary 18th Family and Friends

September 2 - 4, 2017

Thunder Over Michigan, Willow Run 75th Anniversary

Be blessed, Go Out and Visit a DOTA and bring a friend to our next meeting so we might entice them into joining and continuing the Legacy of The Tuskegee Airmen. **Also...PLEASE NOTE that the new building management will be more strict on building access. Their security has been instructed NOT to let anyone into the building after 7pm. So please be at the meeting between 6:30 and 6:45pm because the NEW meeting start time will be 6:45 starting this Thursday.**

## YOUNG EAGLES

**Every 2nd Sunday until October**

*(Weather Permitting)*

Coleman A. Young International Airport  
Main Terminal

## REGISTRATION

**Starts at 9:30 am and  
cuts off at 12:00 pm**

*Flights Start at 10:00am*

**NEW Meeting START Time  
6:45pm  
ABSOLUTELY  
No Entry after 7:00pm**

God bless you all,

**Miguel Thornton**

**President**

Detroit Chapter  
Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.





# Oldest surviving Tuskegee Airman celebrates 102nd Birthday

**Preston Jowers celebrated his birthday Saturday**

By [Steve Garagiola](#) - Reporter/Anchor, [Troy Blevins](#) - Online Editor  
Posted: 11:26 PM, June 24, 2017 Updated: 11:27 PM, June 24, 2017

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. - It was a day to remember at American House Senior Living community in Southfield. **Preston Jowers** celebrated his **102nd** birthday Saturday. He is now the oldest surviving member of the [Tuskegee](#) Airmen who served with honor during World War II. Jowers has seen amazing changes in this country over 102 years, but he said some lessons haven't changed in the century of his life. "We as men can stick together if only we stop and think before we do," Jowers said. Think before we do -- not many people do that any more. **Sgt. Jowers was a mechanic in the famed unit.** For all the wonderful things in his life, Jowers cites a long and loving marriage, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Is there anything that he still wants to do and see? He said there's nothing in particular because he finds a sense of wonder in every day. "Every time I wake up in the morning and see another day that I've never seen before, that's a great experience for me. So as long as I can do that, and in my right mind, I thank God. I couldn't ask for no more," Jowers said.



**NEW Meeting START Time**  
**6:45pm**  
**ABSOLUTELY**  
**No Entry after 7:00pm**



## 360 Tuskegee Airman

Posted: 2:48 PM, June 23, 2017 Updated: 6:01 PM, June 23, 2017

The [Tuskegee](#) Airmen, the first African American military pilots and a most fierce fighting machine. Today, that history lives on with the airmen of the [Tuskegee Airman National Museum](#) on the grounds of Detroit's Historic Fort Wayne. Local 4 was invited to fly with [Team Tuskegee's](#) John "Outhouse" Harte and the



[Tuskegee Airmen Glider Club](#) as they prepare for their air show over the Detroit River for the [GM River Days](#). For more information, [click here](#). You can see a 360 video from the flight to the right. (Piloting is Tuskegee Airmen National Museum President Dr. Brian "Iceman" Smith)

# Northwestern High School

Select Title to see a photo album of the photos of the day





# LOCAL HAPPENINGS



## Tuskegee Triple

6/22/2017 • [AVIATION HISTORY MAGAZINE](#)

Harry Stewart earned a Distinguished Flying Cross in his first dogfight as a Tuskegee Airman. Given the immense obstacles faced by black Americans who aspired to fly in World War II, obtaining the Army's coveted silver wings at Tuskegee Army Airfield on June 27, 1944, was a remarkable accomplishment for **Harry T. Stewart Jr.** But the greatest test for the newly minted pilot lay ahead. The manner in which Stewart and his comrades acquitted themselves in the unforgiving crucible of the air war would burnish their reputation as outstanding fliers and patriots. After earning his wings, Stewart accumulated an additional 80 hours in P-47 Thunderbolts at Walterboro, S.C., in preparation for his deployment overseas. An uneventful voyage to France was followed by yet another

cruise—the source of fond memories to this day. Onboard the luxury liner Citie Doran, en route from Marseille to the Italian port of Taranto, immaculately attired stewards waited on Stewart and his squadron mates. He recalled it was more than a little awkward to have caricatures of the stereotypical English butler all but bowing to their every whim as they sailed to a war zone, shortly to be thrust into combat. Once the airmen arrived, in early January 1945, their accommodations changed dramatically. They were herded into dirty, malodorous boxcars destined for Naples. Then trucks carried them to the air base at Ramitelli. Ramitelli had become the operational nerve center for the all-black 332nd Fighter Group and its four squadrons the preceding summer. Fortunately for Stewart, the veteran pilots in the 301st Fighter Squadron took him under their wing. They mentored the newcomer as only grizzled combat fliers could, filling in the gaps in his training so that when his time came to face the Luftwaffe in eyeball-to-eyeball encounters, he would be ready. Indeed, when asked about his heroes during a panel discussion of Tuskegee Airmen in 2012, Stewart turned to those seated around him and said quietly: “These gentlemen up here with me now. They were there for me; they are my heroes.” By the time Stewart arrived in-theater, the 332nd had been assigned to the Bari, Italy-based Fifteenth Air Force, which—in sync with the Eighth Air Force operating out of England—was pressing the strategic bombing campaign into the enemy's home territory. Since the 332nd was flying P-51 Mustangs with distinctive red tail markings, the black fliers became known as the “Red Tails.” The missions in which they regularly participated involved hundreds of B-17s and B-24s, layered in massive formations. From Stewart's aerie, riding shotgun well above these flying armadas, the sheer magnitude of the assemblage was awe-inspiring, especially on missions where, as a junior member of his squadron, he flew as Tail-end Charlie. Years later, his eyes beaming as he reminisced, Stewart said it was “a sight to behold.” Of his 43 combat missions, none resonates in his memory as vividly as the one he flew on April Fool's Day 1945. The briefing called for his element of eight Mustangs to lead a Liberator formation of the 47th Bomb Wing over the railway marshaling yards at St. Polten, Austria. Once the bombers reached the target area, Stewart and his squadron mates veered west to a Luftwaffe air base near Wels, to look for targets of opportunity. One of the pilots in Stewart's element called out four German fighters below, not far from the air base. “Our eight Mustangs cranked over in a mass dive on the enemy aircraft,” Stewart recalled. Suddenly, though, the hunters became the hunted. “The sky filled with at least another dozen fighters bearing Luftwaffe insignia,” he remembered. The low-flying fighters were decoys, used to lure the Americans into an ambush. Barely out of his teens and facing his first dogfight, Stewart was initially almost overwhelmed by his emotions. There was anger at having been suckered into a trap, accompanied by terror at the high-stakes duel about to unfold. But then his survival instinct kicked in, with fear and doubt giving way to determination, bolstered by the young airman's training and talent. Stewart fastened his eyes on an enemy two-ship element beneath him. He dived toward his prospective quarry as skirmishes broke out around him. As he bore down on the enemy planes, he saw that they were long-nosed Focke-Wulf Fw-190Ds, the finest piston-powered fighters in the Luftwaffe's arsenal. Closing to firing range, Stewart first concentrated on the nearest aircraft, squeezing off a few short bursts of .50-caliber rounds from his six wing-mounted machine guns. Smoke and flames quickly erupted from the enemy fighter. When the second Luftwaffe pilot realized what had happened to his wingman, he yanked his plane into a hard right turn, trying to shake off the American. But Stewart turned just as tightly, pulling high Gs that stretched his P-51 to its limits. In the space of a fleeting second, the Tuskegee Airman trained his sight on the tail of the fleeing German. It was sufficient to squeeze off one more burst. An instant later, the German plane started to disintegrate “in a cloud of black smoke and orange flame just like the first one.” Stewart had scored his second victory of the day, but just then he heard a squadron mate's call: “Bandit on your tail!” Tracers whizzed past his cockpit, frightfully close. The sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach returned, but as before the survival instinct came to his rescue. This time he used the Mustang's speed in his own defense, dashing to the deck. The Focke-Wulf pilot on his tail was tenacious, much as Stewart had been moments earlier. With an enemy glued to his six, Stewart reefed his mount over into an extreme right turn—a desperate maneuver. The German followed, turning and turning in a test of strength and will. With the men and machines ratcheted up to their limits, something had to give. Suddenly Stewart realized he was free of his pursuer. Looking back, he spotted the Fw-190 cartwheeling across the ground, then exploding in a ball of fire. Stewart and his squadron mates who had witnessed the episode later speculated that the German had either stalled or snap-rolled too low to the ground. Perhaps he had become so fixated on Stewart's Mustang that he simply failed to pull up in time over the undulating terrain. Whatever the cause, **Stewart had racked up three victories during his first dogfight, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross. Stewart remained in the Army Air Forces after the war in Europe ended five weeks later. In May 1949, he participated in the first U.S. Air Force gunnery meet, in which his Tuskegee Airman team won the “top gun” trophy for propeller planes** (see “Tuskegee Top Guns,” March 2012 issue). Soon afterward he left active duty, but he retained his commission in the reserves, eventually retiring as a lieutenant colonel. After earning a mechanical engineering degree from New York University, Stewart went on to a successful career with Bechtel Corporation in San Francisco and ANR Pipeline Company in Detroit. In 2007, when the Tuskegee Airmen were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, he was among the half-dozen fliers on hand to accept on behalf of all who had played a part in the pioneering program. Today, on good flying days, Stewart can be found at Detroit's airport, mentoring inner-city youth and sharing his love of flying with a new generation. *Originally published in the September 2013 issue of Aviation History.*



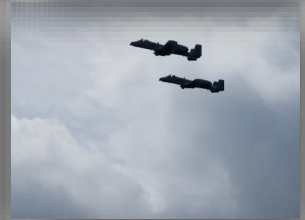


# LOCAL HAPPENINGS

## GM River Days 2017

Select Title to see a photo album of 270 photos of the day

*The Hawk's Cry II*

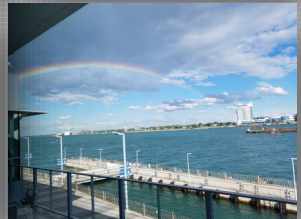
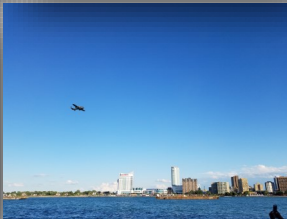




# LOCAL HAPPENINGS

## Ford Freedom Fireworks 2017

Select Title to see a photo album of 130 photos of the day



The Hawk's Cry II



# LOCAL HAPPENINGS

## Chapter Cadets Visit Hangar

Select Title to see a photo album of 57 photos of the day



## Montford Point Marines Dinner

Select Title to see a photo album of 3 other photos of the day



## Southfield Spirit Fest Parade 2017

Select Title to see a photo album of 27 photos of the day





# LOCAL HAPPENINGS

## River Days Hangar Party

Select Title to see a photo album of 74 photos of the day



The Hawk's Cry II



# LOCAL HAPPENINGS

## St Clair Shores Memorial Day Parade

Select Title to see a photo album of 41 photos of the day



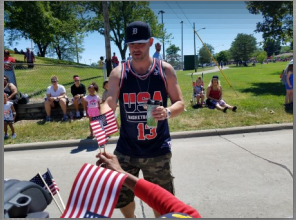
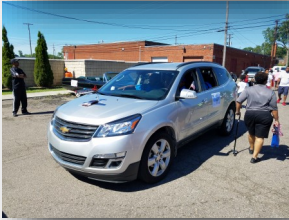
The Hawk's Cry II



# LOCAL HAPPENINGS

## Oak Park 4th of July Parade

Select Title to see a photo album of 128 photos of the day



The Hawk's Cry II



# LOCAL HAPPENINGS



Detroit Torchbearers Bob Tillman and James St Clair are picture with Cook Elm School Principle after a speakers bureau outing

**NEW Meeting START Time  
6:45pm  
ABSOLUTELY  
No Entry after 7:00pm**



DOTA Harry T Stewart, Jr runs into family members of one of his classmates at Detroit River Days 2017



Seated with Detroit Torchbearer Bev Brown is Mary Jo Smith, retired Teacher, Head of Social Studies and Assistant Principal at Cass Tech HS. She donate a Tuskegee Airman dossier, that she found at an estate sale, to the Detroit Chapter.



Seated with DOTA Fred Henry is a woman's whose son found a 99th Fighter Squadron flight jacket in a home that he was cleaning out. She donated the jacket to the chapter.

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Starring Lt. Col. Alex Jefferson

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

American Airlines

**Watch Trailer**

**THE LUFT GANGSTER**  
MEMOIRS OF A SECOND CLASS HERO

## Tuskegee Airman George Watson dies at 96

Updated on June 30, 2017 at 2:14 PM Posted on June 29, 2017 at 1:00 PM  
BY CINDY CAPITANI NJ Advance Media for NJ.com

**LAKEWOOD** - George Watson Sr. of Lakewood, one of the original Tuskegee Airmen has died. He was 96. Mr. Watson died of complications due to pneumonia on June 19. Services will be held at 11:30 a.m. Saturday at Calvary Lighthouse Church, just a few hundred feet away from the Watson home on East County Line Road. During [his 26 years of service](#) in the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force., he was assigned to stations in Germany, England, Turkey and McGuire Air Force Base in Burlington County, his grandson Bryce Watson said. His duties during World War II included delivering aircraft parts to the "Red Tails," the nickname for the African-American airmen responsible for flying escort for heavy bombers. His grandson said he was injured while on guard duty, but later returned to service. After retiring, Tech Sgt. Watson managed the Greenwood Cemetery in Lakewood, his grandson said. He also made a life out of talking to schools and community groups about the Tuskegee Airmen. Two films were made about the legendary Tuskegee Airmen, and Watson was interviewed and credited for his contribution to George Lucas' 2012 movie "Red Tails." [Experts estimate that fewer than 200](#) of the airmen are still alive. "He was very excited when Lucas Films came to town," his grandson said. Tech Sgt. Watson waited a long time to receive long-overdue honors, like the Purple Heart and the Congressional Gold Medal, which was awarded collectively to all of the Tuskegee Airmen. The Congressional Gold Medal is presented to civilians and military by the U.S. Congress as the nation's highest civilian honor. In 2010, Congressman Chris Smith (NJ-04), personally handed Watson a replica. "I was dismayed to learn of the passing of George Watson," Smith said. "You read about Mr. Watson in history books. He faced Nazis. He faced racism in the military. He overcame. He helped make the world a better place." "It was humbling for me to be in the presence of one of the legendary Tuskegee Airmen," Smith said. Mr. Watson was born on Aug. 10, 1920 in Wildwood, to Jack and Anna Watson. He played football for Lakewood High School and was recently inducted into its football hall of fame. In 1942, just weeks after high school, he enlisted in the US Army Air Corps. He was sent to Tuskegee to help form the 332nd Fighter Group and the 96th Air Service Group, where he served as a supply sergeant and support personnel. In [a talk at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst two years ago](#), Tech Sgt.



Watson said he joined the service because his mother was scrubbing floors to make a living. The Army's Air Service was a way "to make a better life for himself." Bryce Watson said there still a great deal that hasn't been reported about his grandfather and the Tuskegee Airmen's role in the war, including what he called "Operation Fuel Tank," more popularly known as "The Great Train Robbery." He was in Italy, based at Ramitelli Airbase. Operation Fuel Tanks is Bryce Watson said. "It was a US military train which was enroute to another base that these men stopped and took the fuel tanks from so they could complete the final long range escort mission to Berlin," Bryce Watson said. "There was a hijacking of a military train by 22 guys, who parked across the tracks and took the fuel tanks at gun point. It was kept very quiet and wasn't something he was willing to discuss," he said. Bryce Watson suspects his grandfather was one of those 22 men, as well as one of 12 assigned to work with the Black Op spies in Germany during World War II. "He used to talk about the Tuskegee Airmen all the time while I was growing up," Bryce Watson said. In 1969, Tech Sgt. Watson retired from McGuire Air Force Base, where he worked as an aircraft and missile electrician. Watson was an ardent volunteer in the Lakewood community where he grew up. In addition to being active in community service, he took photographs free of charge at high school football and basketball games. He also founded the American Legion Chapter named after Captain Robert B. Tresville and was awarded the NAACP Lifetime Award and the Community Service Award for outstanding contributions. Tech Sgt. Watson was predeceased by his wife Louise, whom he was married to for 71 years before her death in 2014. He is survived by two sons and one daughter. In lieu of flowers, the family is asking mourners to make contributions in his name to the Honorable Hannibal Cox Tuition Assistance Fund, in honor of Watson's many efforts over the years to support students. Mail checks to: Honorable Hannibal Cox TAF, c/o Sharon Hunter, 1 Durham Way, East Windsor, NJ 08520.



# Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors

2009 Edition

## Phone Numbers

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Bereavement Counseling.....               | 1-202-461-6530 |
| Education.....                            | 1-888-442-4551 |
| Headstones and Markers.....               | 1-800-697-6947 |
| Health Care.....                          | 1-877-222-8387 |
| Homeless veterans.....                    | 1-877-222-8387 |
| Home Loans.....                           | 1-877-827-3702 |
| Life Insurance.....                       | 1-800-669-8477 |
| National Suicide Prevention Lifeline..... | 1-800-273-8255 |
| Pension Management Center.....            | 1-877-294-6380 |
| Special Health Issues.....                | 1-800-749-8387 |

**Telecommunication Device  
for the Deaf (TDD) 1-800-829-4833  
VA Benefits 1-800-827-1000**

## Web Sites

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| VA Home Page.....                     | <a href="http://www.va.gov">www.va.gov</a>   |
| Education Benefits.....               | <a href="http://www.gibill.va.gov">www.gibill.va.gov</a>   |
| Health Care Eligibility.....          | <a href="http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility">www.va.gov/healtheligibility</a>                                 |
| Burial and Memorial Benefits.....     | <a href="http://www.cem.va.gov">www.cem.va.gov</a>   |
| Returning Service Members.....        | <a href="http://www.oefoif.va.gov">www.oefoif.va.gov</a>   |
| Home Loan Guaranty .....              | <a href="http://www.homeloans.va.gov">www.homeloans.va.gov</a>   |
| Records .....                         | <a href="http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel">www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel</a> |
| VA Benefit Payment Rates.....         | <a href="http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/rates">www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/rates</a>                                   |
| VA Forms.....                         | <a href="http://www.va.gov/vaforms">www.va.gov/vaforms</a>   |
| Mental Health.....                    | <a href="http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov">www.mentalhealth.va.gov</a>   |
| Federal Jobs.....                     | <a href="http://www.usajobs.opm.gov">www.usajobs.opm.gov</a>   |
| Veterans Preference.....              | <a href="http://www.opm.gov/veterans/index.asp">www.opm.gov/veterans/index.asp</a>                             |
| Employment Assistance.....            | <a href="http://www.vetsuccess.gov">www.vetsuccess.gov</a>   |
| Veterans Employment and Training..... | <a href="http://www.dol.gov/vets">www.dol.gov/vets</a>   |

## Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Life Insurance.....        | <a href="http://www.insurance.va.gov">www.insurance.va.gov</a> |
| Department of Defense..... | <a href="http://www.defenselink.mil">www.defenselink.mil</a>   |

# EDITOR'S CORNER

## Original Tuskegee Airmen Signed Certificates of Appreciation

Refreshed with new background and now with the  
signatures of 12 Detroit Chapter DOTA's.

The certificates come in six (6) different ribbon color  
combinations;

- Yellow text on Black background
- Black on Yellow
- Yellow on Red
- Red on Yellow
- Yellow on Blue
- Blue on Yellow
- Green on White and
- White on Green

Inquire with [HawksCryII@gmail.com](mailto:HawksCryII@gmail.com) to get your  
electronic version.



Please communicate all newsletter inclusions to:

**Eric Palmer**

TAI-Detroit Chapter Newsletter Publisher/Editor

[HawksCryII@Gmail.com](mailto:HawksCryII@Gmail.com)

**NEW Meeting START Time**  
**6:45pm**  
**ABSOLUTELY**  
**No Entry after 7:00pm**

**MEMBERSHIP CORNER**  
**Bill Welborne**

[welborne313@gmail.com](mailto:welborne313@gmail.com)



**Tuskegee Armymen, Inc.  
Detroit Chapter  
P.O. Box 44825 Detroit, MI 48244**



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

