



# CAF RISE ABOVE®

Inspiring young people to RISE ABOVE adversity using the lessons and stories of the Tuskegee Airmen and the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP).

Late last month the Commemorative Air Force cut the ribbon on the Henry B. Tippie National Aviation Education Center, NAEC, at our Headquarters in Dallas Texas. And we are proud to announce that part of the CAF NAEC is the Brigadier General Charles McGee and Don Hinz Theater.

This is exciting news that you will learn more about in the weeks and months ahead as we finish the Theater. It will utilize the content that we have created for the RISE ABOVE Traveling Exhibit and will replicate the experience that we have created in our extraordinarily successful mobile exhibit.

We are excited to expand our ability to deliver the inspirational stories of the Tuskegee Airmen and the WASP in this new venue. The NAEC will be visited by 1000s of young people from the Dallas area school system, and by other visitors from across America around the world.

While the structure of the building is complete and we have a certificate of occupancy, there is much work to do before the building achieves its full potential. The NAEC will serve as a prototyping laboratory where we can develop and employ educational programs that can then be used by all CAF units. It will also serve as home to aviation vocational education for schools in the Dallas area to provide students the skills needed work in the robust aviation industry in Dallas and nationwide. The Theater will serve to inspire these students and the visitors to the NAEC.

We are excited to share this great news with you about this addition to our RISE ABOVE program. Despite the adversity of the pandemic, we have been working tirelessly to grow our program and we believe this is a great addition. Without the continued support of you, our donors, this would not be possible, and we are forever in your debt for your generosity.

Tail Winds,

Doug Rozendaal

CAF RISE ABOVE Leader



Photo courtesy Max Haynes

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We have numerous events that are still in the planning stages, closely monitoring local Covid cases and restrictions to finalize details, so [please check our event calendar often for updates.](#)

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
April 17	Thunder over Louisville P-51C Mustang	Louisville, KY
April 24	AirPower History Tour Ride Day P-51C Mustang	Lake Charles, LA
May 29-30	National Salute to America's Heroes P-51C Mustang	Miami Beach, FL
June 19	1940's WWII Era Ball RISE ABOVE Traveling Exhibit and P-51C Mustang	Boulder, CO
July 3-4	Kansas City Airshow RISE ABOVE Traveling Exhibit and P-51C Mustang	New Century, KS
July 26-August 1	EAA AirVenture RISE ABOVE Traveling Exhibit	Oshkosh, WI
August 6-8	Wings and Wheels Spectacular RISE ABOVE Traveling Exhibit and P-51C Mustang	Owls Head, ME
August 14-15	Props & Pistons Festival RISE ABOVE Traveling Exhibit and P-51C Mustang	Akron, OH
November 3-7	Rise Above Tallahassee RISE ABOVE Traveling Exhibit and P-51C Mustang	Tallahassee, FL
November 13-14	Stuart Airshow RISE ABOVE Traveling Exhibit and P-51C Mustang	Stuart, FL



To book RISE ABOVE for your event contact Kristi Younkin,  
Logistics Coordinator, at  
[logistics@cafriseabove.org](mailto:logistics@cafriseabove.org) or call (479) 228-4520



*Volunteer Coordinator  
Melanie Burden*

Our squadron is built on the heart of volunteers who give freely of their time to help on the road or from their own home. If you want to make a difference and be a part of a community, while learning something new and having fun, **WE WANT YOU!**

We have ample opportunities to volunteer within the squadron:

- The Exhibit/P-51C Mustang
- Photography
- Virtual Museum
- Education
- Graphic Design
- Marketing, and
- Creative Writing

If you are interested in joining our team, please go to our website at [cafriseabove.org](http://cafriseabove.org) and find out how you can become a CAF RISE ABOVE Ambassador today!



## WE NEED YOU!

Make a [one-time or recurring donation](#) to help us ensure that the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen and the WASP is passed on to future generations, so that their strength of character, courage and ability to triumph over adversity may serve as a means to inspire others to RISE ABOVE obstacles in their own lives and achieve their goals!

Give [online](#), by calling 888-928-0188, or by mail at:

**CAF RISE ABOVE  
971 Hallstrom Drive  
Red Wing, MN 55066**

Please be assured that the CAF RISE ABOVE Squadron responsibly and carefully allocates donation dollars to further our mission. If you believe, like we do, that the values based educational potential of these two initiatives are relevant and important for young people today, we would appreciate your continued support. We are also interested in your comments and suggestions about the program and will [welcome any input](#) you have to offer.

The CAF RISE ABOVE® is an educational outreach program of the [Commemorative Air Force](#), (CAF) a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. [Your contribution](#) is tax deductible less the value of the benefits given in return for your contribution noted above, if any. CAF FEIN # 74-1484491

## OUR MISSION IN ACTION

*Enjoy reading the essays submitted for the annual Tuskegee Airmen essay contest!*



**1st place:** An autographed print of "Tuskegee Tales" autographed by Lt Col Alexander Jefferson

**2nd place:** A RISE ABOVE hat

**3rd place:** A 99th Squadron Tuskegee Airmen patch

All entries will receive a Red Tail dog tag and RISE ABOVE Triumph Over Adversity booklet



On behalf of the CAF Red Tail Squadron, we wanted to thank all students for participating in the 2021 Tuskegee Airmen Essay contest. We were impressed with their work and are so pleased to see what they have learned about the Tuskegee Airmen and how it has impacted them.

[You may read ALL entries published on our website.](#)

Grade level	1st place	2nd place	3rd place
4th - 5th	<a href="#">Devin Garner</a> PEGS @ Rose Acres Elementary	<a href="#">Hannah Hope</a> PEGS @ Rose Acres Elementary	<a href="#">Aliyah Brown</a> PEGS @ Rose Acres Elementary
6th - 8th	<a href="#">Clare Greaney</a> Hommocks Middle School	no other entries	no other entries
9th - 12th	<a href="#">Ashlyn Manzano-Hernandez</a> Academy Charter High School	<a href="#">Alexis Ramirez</a> Academy Charter High School	<a href="#">Julissa Pacheco</a> Academy Charter High School

## **The Tuskegee Airmen**

by Devin Garner

Grade 5

PEGS @ Rose Acres Elementary School

On December 7th, 1941, Japan attacked American ships in Hawaii; every American was shocked at this sudden attack, and wanted to help the United States win WWII. Then, Nazi Germany, who was friends with Japan, declared war on America. America had to stop Japan from taking over the entire Pacific and Asian regions. Plus, they had to help stop Germany from taking over Europe and committing genocides against people who weren't "perfect" Germans. Everyone wanted to help stop Japan and Germany, including African Americans. Sadly, at the time America wouldn't let blacks serve in the American Army, and they certainly wouldn't let them be pilots, until in 1941 when FDR created the Tuskegee Airmen.

However, at the time, the program wasn't called the Tuskegee Airmen. It was called the Tuskegee Experiment, because people didn't think that they would succeed. Yet they did succeed, because they had six guiding principles that would help them become amazing pilots. The first one was Aim High. The airmen had to aim high and do the best they could to defend the bombers moving over Italy and Germany. The Airmen knew that these bombers were vital to winning the war, so they did the best they could to fight off the German planes. The second principle was Believe in Yourself.

The airmen had to believe in themselves, because the people who saw the program didn't believe in them, hence the name Tuskegee Experiment. The airmen, however, believed that they could do amazing things. The third principle was Use Your Brain. The airmen like all pilots, had to use their brains in order to shoot down German planes and defend bombers on missions to weaken the Wehrmacht (German Infantry) defenses or to bomb cities and German camps. Every pilot had to use their brains to counteract enemy plane movements. The fourth principle was Be Ready to Go. The Tuskegee

Airmen went on about 1,800 missions between 1941 and 1945, and anything could happen when they weren't on missions. In war, you always have to be prepared for anything so you don't die. You have to always be prepared, because most of the time you don't know what the enemies are going to do, until they are already doing it. The fifth principle is Never Quit. They experienced a lot of racism and horrible treatment even while they were pilots, but they didn't let other people's prejudices get to them. They didn't listen to others hurtful words, because the airmen knew those words weren't true. Lastly, there is Expect to Win. The Tuskegee Airmen were known for getting bombers safely to the enemy positions and back. The reason they had such a great record is because they believed that they could do the missions successfully. If they thought that they couldn't do the missions then they wouldn't have been as good. This is the same with normal things!

All of the six principles can also be applied to modern day situations, not just life threatening dogfights in the air. First, Aim High. I usually aim to do well on tests and use technology very well. Second, Believe in Yourself. If I believe in myself then I can do great things. I believe that I can make good animations and they turn out good. Third, I have to Use My Brain. If I don't use my brain I can't do anything good so I have to use my brain to do things. For example, the main reason I get good grades in math is because I use my brain. Fourth, Be Ready to Go. I always have to be prepared in life for things that might take us by surprise. The pandemic took us all by surprise and we weren't prepared. What happened afterwards is what happens when you aren't prepared for things. Fifth, Never Quit, because if I quit then I can't do the thing I am trying to do. For example, I make animations and even though it takes hours, I don't quit. Lastly, Expect to Win. Like believing in myself, I have to think that I can win and do well on something if I want to win. When I take a test I can expect to get a good grade and I end up getting a good grade. Those six principles helped the Tuskegee Airmen be great pilots and they can also help me be great.

## **The Tuskegee Airmen Principles**

By: Clare Greaney

Grade: 8th

Hommocks Middle school

The Tuskegee Airmen were very successful in both fighting in WWII as well as fighting the war they were facing at home, equality. And they used the six guiding principles to achieve what they believed in.

The first two guiding principles which go hand and hand for the Tuskegee Airmen are to aim high and to expect to win. During the time period, many people in the army believed that African Americans were not intelligent enough to fly planes on their own. They were given very few rights and many of the deprived people hated it but didn't do anything because of fear. But the airmen put their hopes high and gave themselves a mindset of positivity. They couldn't achieve their goal if it weren't for those two guiding principles.

The next pair they used to complete their goal was to believe in yourself and never quit. These two principles are extremely important for anyone to accomplish something difficult. When things get hard, a human beings first thought is to give up but you can't do that. And the goal of the men was more than difficult. Without their extreme perseverance and self confidence in their abilities to fly, they wouldn't have fought long enough to achieve what they did.

Lastly, using your brain and being ready to go are necessary to win. The men were very talented flyers. They also knew that they needed to prove themselves to all the right people to be even considered to be allowed. Being ready to go could apply to them in war where you must always be prepared but they must also be prepared for people to question or fight against them. Overall, they needed to really use their brains to obtain the rights they wanted and they needed to be ready for anything.

In conclusion, all six guiding principles were extremely crucial to the success of the Tuskegee Airmen. Also, the completion of their goal helped not only them but it was a huge step for all African Americans. These principles can make anyone's goal achievable!

## Tuskegee Airmen Essay

Ashlyn Manzano-Hernandez

Grade 10

Academy Charter High School

The country has progressed over the last decades. Little by little, African Americans and other people of color have gained more rights. But these rights were not just handed to us, there were strong men and women who worked relentlessly to reach their goal. We have the Tuskegee Airmen to thank for setting a path for future Black leaders! Do you know who the Tuskegee Airmen are? Have you ever wondered what helped the Tuskegee Airmen strive forward and what was their significance in American history? Well let me tell you about their six guiding principles!

The Tuskegee Airmen were the first African American pilots who fought in an American war; they helped fight in WWII. The Tuskegee Airmen were officially named 332nd Fighter group and were deployed in Italy in 1944. They had the role of protecting the bomber planes, which was an important role. Following their Six Guiding Principles, they never gave up in battle, expected to win, believed in themselves, aimed high, were ready to go, and never quit. The Six Guiding Principles also helped the Tuskegee Airmen face and overcome the racism they had to endure during their training. In this paper I will describe these principles and how they pertain to the Airmen.

The Tuskegee Airmen came to be when the NAACP had pressured President Roosevelt into ordering the Army Air Corp to begin training Black pilots in Alabama. During this time, they had received a college education that was paid by the government. But in the 1940s, segregation was legal. The army was "separate but equal." During their training, white instructors tried to wash out the black cadets because the white cadets had a wash out rate of 63% and black cadets at 40%. White instructors would call black cadets racial slurs and get attempted to provoke them. By believing in themselves and never giving up, two of their Guiding Principles, the Tuskegee Airmen were able to overcome these obstacles and continue proving that they were reliable.

In 1944, the men of the 99th who were now a part of the 332nd Fighter squadron, had an important role in Italy. They had the role of protecting the white pilots who flew the bomber planes. This role was the riskiest due to the fact that the bomber planes flew slowly and they had to be protected from the German fighters. In order for the American pilots to determine which planes were there to assist them and which weren't, the 332nd Fighter squadron had the tails of their planes painted red. The sight of a red tail meant help was there.

To the surprise of many white pilots, the ones who helped save them were black! The Tuskegee Airmen had expected to win, and with their determination, they brought victory to the United States. After the victory of WWII, the Tuskegee Airmen looked forward to coming back to their home and hoped for it to be no longer segregated. They'd hope that the country they had fought for to realize that the same people who brought victory in the war deserve equal rights. To their disappointment, when the Tuskegee Airmen returned home, not only was the military still segregated but so was everywhere else. Many of the Tuskegee Airmen decided to continue to fight for their freedom in their towns and the others decided to fight for the end of segregation in the military. Even after the war, they continued to aim high.

The Tuskegee Airmen had made a strong impact then and it still affects us to this day. Their success and strength had inspired many black leaders to rise up and to continue down the path the Tuskegee Airmen had paved. It is also important to remember that there were women who had also gone through the Tuskegee program, but they couldn't fly during that time. Instead they had supporting roles. General Clark, the first African American superintendent, had said "We are becoming an Air Force more and more where it doesn't matter what your skin color is, what your ethnicity is, your religion, your gender, you can achieve your dreams." The Tuskegee Airmen laid a foundation for all future black people and their legacy continues to live on even after decades later.

Find great treasures AND honor the history and legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen and WASP!

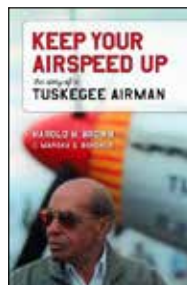
[Visit our online store.](#) *Shipping is included for state-side orders!*



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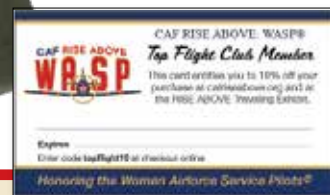
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***For \$99 you can join the exclusive ranks of the Top Flight Club!***

**There's no better way to support our mission to educate, inspire, and honor through flight and living history experiences than by joining a Top Flight Club!**



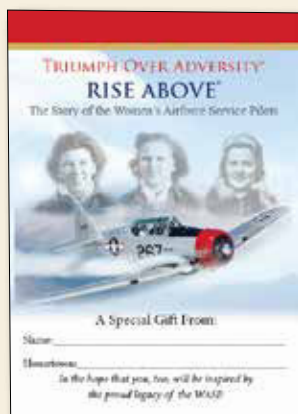
**Why 99?** *(for each membership)*

## [Join RISE ABOVE: RED TAIL](#)

The 99th was originally formed as the U.S. Army Air Forces' first African American fighter squadron, then known as the 99th Pursuit Squadron. The personnel received their initial flight training at Tuskegee, Alabama earning them the nickname Tuskegee Airmen.

## [Join RISE ABOVE: WASP](#)

The Ninety-Nines was founded November 2, 1929, at Curtiss Field, Valley Stream, Long Island, New York. All 117 women pilots at the time were invited to assemble in mutual support of the advancement of women in aviation. In 1942 members of the Ninety-Nines were asked to join the Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASP) class of 43-W-1 in Houston, Texas.

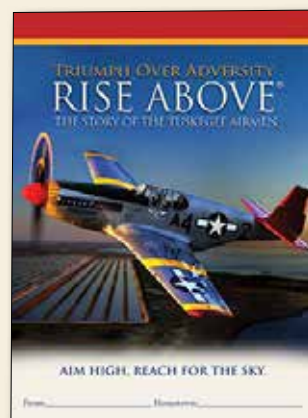


Our Inspiration Packs are perfect for the parent, teacher, youth leader or community group looking for a tangible reminder of the lessons of the Tuskegee Airmen or the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP)!

**Cost is \$95 each pack, includes s/h**

The [Inspiration Pack: WASP](#) pack includes:

**50 each** CAF RISE ABOVE: WASP dog tags featuring the Six Guiding Principles and the "Triumph Over Adversity – RISE ABOVE: The Story of the Women Airforce Service Pilots" booklets.



The [Inspiration Pack: Red Tail](#) pack includes:

**50 each** CAF Red Tail Squadron dog tags featuring the Six Guiding Principles and the "Triumph Over Adversity – RISE ABOVE: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen" booklets.



The [RISE ABOVE Back-to-School Campaign](#) provides free electronic resources to support and inspire educators and students to Triumph Over Adversity and work together to persevere through their challenges. School kick-off resources and "flight plans" will be available for PreK, primary, elementary, middle, and high schools. Inspiring short videos about WWII Tuskegee Airmen and Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) are also included to help educators and students "rise above" crisis and challenges. Teachers can use these resources to provide help to students setting personal achievement goals for the year.

Be sure to watch the [Back-to-School Campaign graphic novel](#) that features video interviews with Tuskegee Airman Dr. Harold Brown talking to students about applying the Six Guiding Principles to their lives!

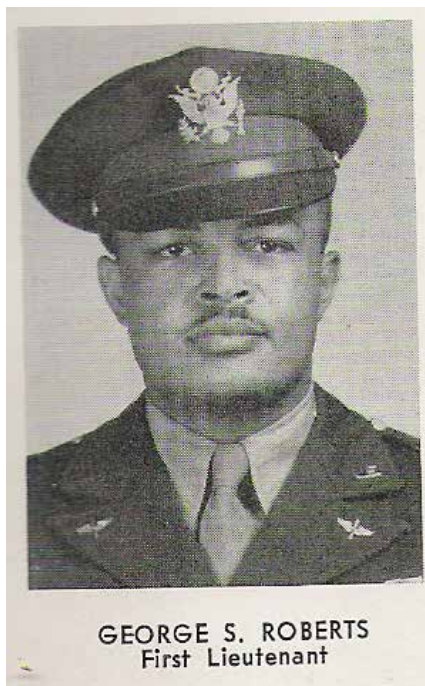
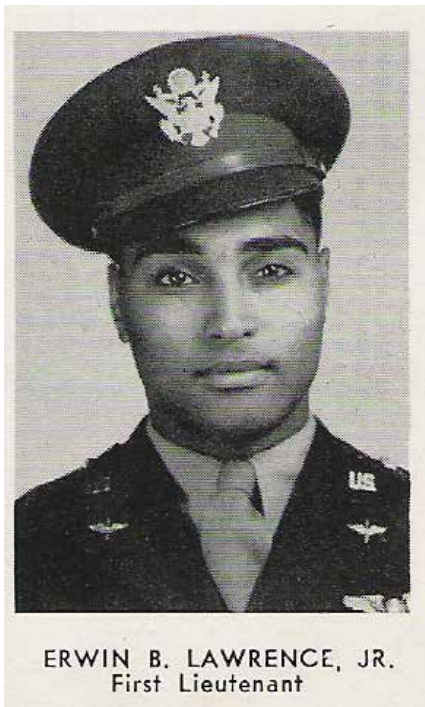


## Check the free RISE ABOVE Resource Kits!

Our [free, downloadable RISE ABOVE Resource Kits](#) provides users access to posters featuring the Six Guiding Principles, PowerPoint's, classroom activities and a wealth of material about the Tuskegee Airmen or the WASP.

**Want to go a step further?** Check out all the supporting [educational resources](#) - look for **RESOURCES** in the menu bar. Be sure to check out the books about [Tuskegee Airmen](#) or [WASP](#) that are available!

## TUSKEGEE AIRMEN: DID YOU KNOW?



On this date, the following Tuskegee Airmen events occurred:

13 April 1944: The 99th Fighter Squadron in Italy flew one dive bombing mission. That same day, Captain Erwin B. Lawrence succeeded Major George S. Roberts as commander of the 99th Fighter Squadron. Major Roberts soon returned to the United States for rest and recuperation, but he would eventually return to command the squadron again, for the third time.

13 April 1945: Capt. Erwin B. Lawrence succeeds Major George S. Roberts as commander of the 99th Fighter Squadron (Tuskegee Airmen). This action was made so that Maj. Roberts could return to the United States for some much needed rest and recuperation. Maj. Roberts would later return to the 99th as its commander for the third time.

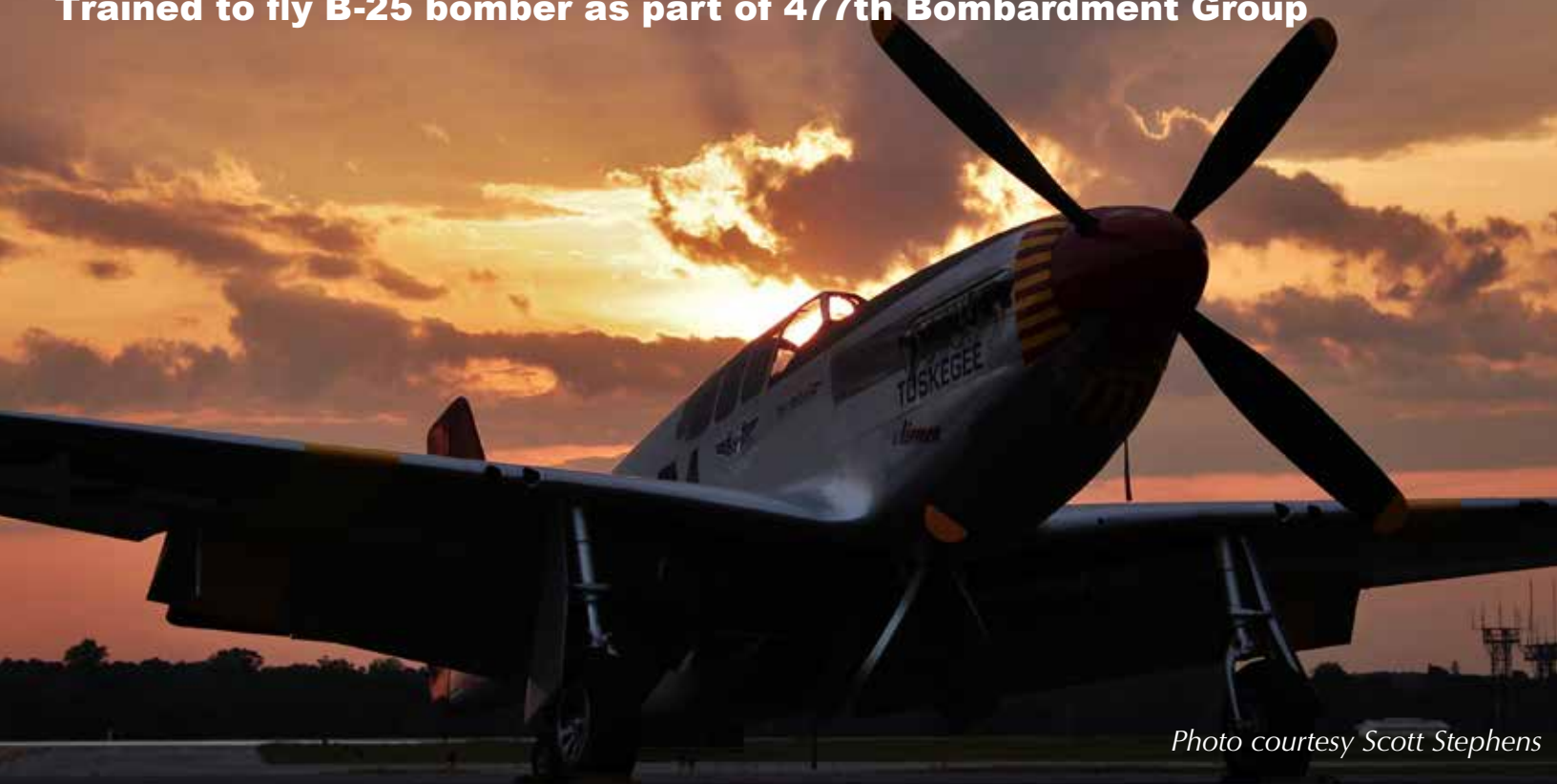
13 April 1945: The 101 black officers who had been confined at Freeman Field for refusing to sign a regulation requiring two separate officers' clubs were flown in six C-47 airplanes to Godman Field, Kentucky. Once there, the officers were placed under arrest in quarters.

## TUSKEGEE AIRMAN QUOTE OF THE MONTH

**"You have to believe in yourself. You can do anything you want to do as long as you put in the effort."**

**~Tuskegee Airman Robert Ashby**

**Trained to fly B-25 bomber as part of 477th Bombardment Group**



*Photo courtesy Scott Stephens*



**Joseph Dubois Elsberry**  
**Class 42-H-SE**  
**April 25, 1921 – March 31, 1985**  
**Unit: 301st Fighter Squadron of the 332nd**  
**Fighter Group**



Elsberry earned the Distinguished Flying Cross by becoming the first black pilot to destroy three enemy aircraft in a single mission on July 12, 1944. After attending his hometown Langston University, Elsberry graduated from the Tuskegee Army Flying School on September 6, 1942, a member of Tuskegee Airmen Class 42-H-SE. He was a gifted pilot who was recognized as one of the most aggressive and fearless members of his unit.

Elsberry's first major achievement was to lead an attack of P-51 Mustang fighter aircraft against an enemy destroyer and sink it at Trieste Harbor on June 25, 1944. On July 12, Elsberry lead pilots of the Ramitelli, Italy-based 332nd Group on a mission to escort B-17 bombers of the 5th Bombardment Wing to a target in southern France. Through early recognition of the silhouettes of approaching enemy fighters, Elsberry directed a successful interception. During this furious encounter, Elsberry personally destroyed three Focke-Wulf 190 aircraft and was credited with a probable destruction of a fourth Focke-Wulf. When Elsberry was later credited with the destruction of an enemy Messerschmitt 109 aircraft on July 20, 1944 his accomplishments were tantamount to those of an "ace" fighter pilot.

The discipline and aggressiveness shown by Elsberry and his colleagues assigned to protect the bombers resulted in the award of Distinguished Unit Citations to three of the Group's squadrons, and cemented the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen. Elsberry received his Distinguished Flying Cross from Brigadier General Benjamin Davis Sr. in a September 10, 1944 ceremony that was also attended by Lieutenant General Ira C. Eaker, Commanding General of the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces, Major General Nathan P. Twining, Commanding General of the 15th Air Force, and Brigadier General Dean C. Strother, Commanding General of the 306th Fighter Wing of the 15th Air Force.

After the war, Elsberry completed an Air Force career and rose to the rank of Major. He passed away in 1985 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

To learn more about the Tuskegee Airmen's aerial victories, [read about their War Service](#) on our website and "[112 Victories: Aerial Victory Credits of the Tuskegee Airmen](#)" by Dr. Daniel L. Haulman of the Air Force Historical Research Agency.



Joseph D. Elsberry with his plane "Jodabelle"



Visit [Tuskegee Airmen Profiles](#) and take a closer look at the lives and accomplishments of some of the famed Tuskegee Airmen. New profiles are added regularly and will grow as the staff and volunteers of the CAF Red Tail Squadron continue their tireless efforts to research and share the remarkable stories of these important American figures.

We invite you to share stories and photos with us to feature! Contact LaVone [info@cafriseabove.org](mailto:info@cafriseabove.org), by calling (888) 928-0188, or by mail at:

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971 Hallstrom Drive  
Red Wing, MN 55066

## CAF Red Tail Squadron Virtual Museum Artifact Spotlight

The [CAF Red Tail Squadron Virtual Museum](#) is a community collaborative effort, made up of photos, information, and artifacts pertaining to the Tuskegee Airmen submitted from all around the country. Anyone with an item of significance to the Tuskegee Airmen, or has visited the location of a memorial in tribute to the Tuskegee Airmen, can share their knowledge by [submitting your own virtual artifacts](#).

### [Tuskegee Airmen Art Collection by Troy White](#)

**Submitted by:** Troy White

**Location:** [online at Stardust Studios](#)

**About:** In Troy's own words..."The subjects of the majority of my paintings are inspired by a life-long interest in aviation in general. I enjoy painting all types of planes and their pilots but confess an affinity for historic military aircraft, especially aircraft from the WWII era. I like to use vivid colours and large canvases while focusing on portraying the more radical angles and manoeuvres of flight. I draw from my experiences as a pilot and skydiver to stretch beyond the flat and level world into the dynamic passion and freedom of the limitless sky. I strive to add an element of tension to each piece and draw the viewer into experiencing the sensation of flying through my artwork."



Above the Alps



Portrait of Lt John Morgan

## AND THEN THERE WERE WOMEN! Toni Frisell

Have you ever wondered who took those iconic wartime photos of the famed WAAC (Women's Army Auxiliary Corps) and the Tuskegee Airmen?

A young woman took them by the name of Toni Frisell.



Born in 1907 she started out as an actor but soon took up writing for Vogue magazine. However, that job did not last as she was fired due to poor spelling. She was eventually encouraged to take up photography and soon found her passion.

Fast-forward to 1941 as did most Americans Toni wanted to contribute to the war effort. She volunteered for the American Red Cross as a photographer. Toni traveled to the war front where she took some of the most iconic photos of the Tuskegee Airmen and the WAACs in action. Those photographs were sent home as propaganda to support the wartime effort. I remember as a child seeing the pictures of the Airmen and saying wow, these people are cool. Toni truly captured the determination of African Americans and women to show what they could do.

In 1966, Life Magazine paid tribute to Toni as she continued on taking photographs for Vogue and Sport Illustrated. Sadly, Toni passed away in 1988. Therefore, if you are ever in the Philadelphia Airport or the Atlanta Hartsfield Airport and you see a very cool picture of the Airmen or the WAAC be sure to think about Toni and tell others about her.

Thank you to Toy Brown, III for writing this interesting article!



## ARCHIVE PHOTOS - TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

UNLESS NOTED ALL PHOTOS ARE COURTESY OF THE AIR FORCE HISTORICAL RESEARCH AGENCY, MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA



Tuskegee cadets in an armament class study the 30-caliber machine gun. June 1942.



As part of his comprehensive flying training course an aviation cadet practices instrument flying in a Link Trainer at Tuskegee Army Air Field, Alabama, June 1942.



An instructor at Tuskegee Army Air Field, Alabama, discusses maneuvers he wants flown during a solo flight, while his student pilot listens intently.



Another important mission of the WASP was serving on tow target squadrons. The pilots, including Laurine Nielson, Viola Thompson, Mary Clifford, and Lydia Linder, would fly planes with canvas targets attached to the back for male students to practice gunnery for combat, firing ammunition at the targets.



Visit [WASP PROFILES](#) and take a closer look at the lives and accomplishments of the Women Airforce Service Pilots in order to inspire others, especially girls and young women, to RISE ABOVE expectations and find a greater appreciation of their potential.

New profiles are added regularly and will grow as the staff and volunteers of the RISE ABOVE: WASP continue their tireless efforts to research and share the remarkable stories of these important American figures.

We invite you to share stories and photos with us to feature in upcoming editions!

Contact LaVone [info@cafriseabove.org](mailto:info@cafriseabove.org), by calling (888) 928-0188, or by mail at:  
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971 Hallstrom Drive  
Red Wing, MN 55066

## WASP PROFILE: Francis Edyth Standefer Acker



Francis Edyth Standefer Acker  
May 9, 1920 – July 3, 1987  
Class 44-W-4

Planes flown: PT-17, BT-13, AT-6, BT-14, AT-17, AT-9, B-25, UC-78, B-26, AT-11  
Assigned bases: Douglas Army Air Base (Ariz.) and Yuma Army Air Field (Ariz.)

Frances Standefer wanted to fly, and she was willing to do whatever it took to make that dream come true.

In 1942, while working as a secretary at the Department of Transportation in Washington, D.C., Standefer was approached by Jacqueline Cochran regarding a nascent organization of female pilots established to assist the war effort. But there was a catch: You had to have a civilian pilot's license to join.

"With every spare nickel she could save, mom traveled from Washington to Maryland every weekend to take flying lessons," recalls Standefer's son, retired Air Force Col. John Acker of Henderson, NV. "She was bound and determined to be one of 'Jackie's Girls.'"

Standefer, who died in 1987, helped train pilots from the Republic of China and pulled cloth targets so fighter pilots could hone their aerial gunnery skills, Acker says. It was potentially hazardous duty, he reports, noting: "Mom said there were days when she would come back with as many holes in the tail of her aircraft as the banner had in it."

Acker acknowledges his mother's military service inspired him to become an Air Force pilot in the late 1960s. During his junior year in college, he says, his mother hosted a WASP reunion at their home in Vacaville, Calif. "We lived next door to a restaurant called The Nut Tree that had its own airstrip, so several of the WASP who had their own planes flew in. When the ladies found out I was working on my pilot's license, they took me up in their private planes, and I heard a lot of war stories. That solidified that I was on the right track."

Acker attended the 75th anniversary celebration with his three sisters and will be donating more items from their mother's war-era collection. Sadly, a flood in 1948 destroyed 95 percent of Standefer's military memorabilia, but her dress blues survived and already are part of the museum's permanent collection. Still to come are war-era issues of Life magazine featuring WASPs on the cover and related ephemera.

"It's all a little overwhelming," Acker says. "I know my mother would be standing proud and trying to get to the reunion if she was still alive. I'm really looking forward to seeing if any of the attending pilots were classmates of my mother's. Just to meet them will be a huge honor for myself and my sisters."

Sources:

[Findagrave.com](http://Findagrave.com)

[MOAA](http://MOAA)

[Texas Womens University](http://Texas Womens University)



**“I heard about the (WASP) program--and all the gals were trying to do something for the war effort. It was either that or Bundles for Britain and I decided flying sounded a little more exciting than knitting...”**

**WASP Ruth Brown, Class 43-W-8**

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The [CAF WASP Virtual Museum](#) is a community collaborative effort, made up of photos, information, and artifacts pertaining to the WASP submitted from all around the country. Anyone with an item of significance to the WASP, or has visited the location of a memorial in tribute to the WASP, can share their knowledge by [submitting your own virtual artifacts](#).

### Leather flying uniform

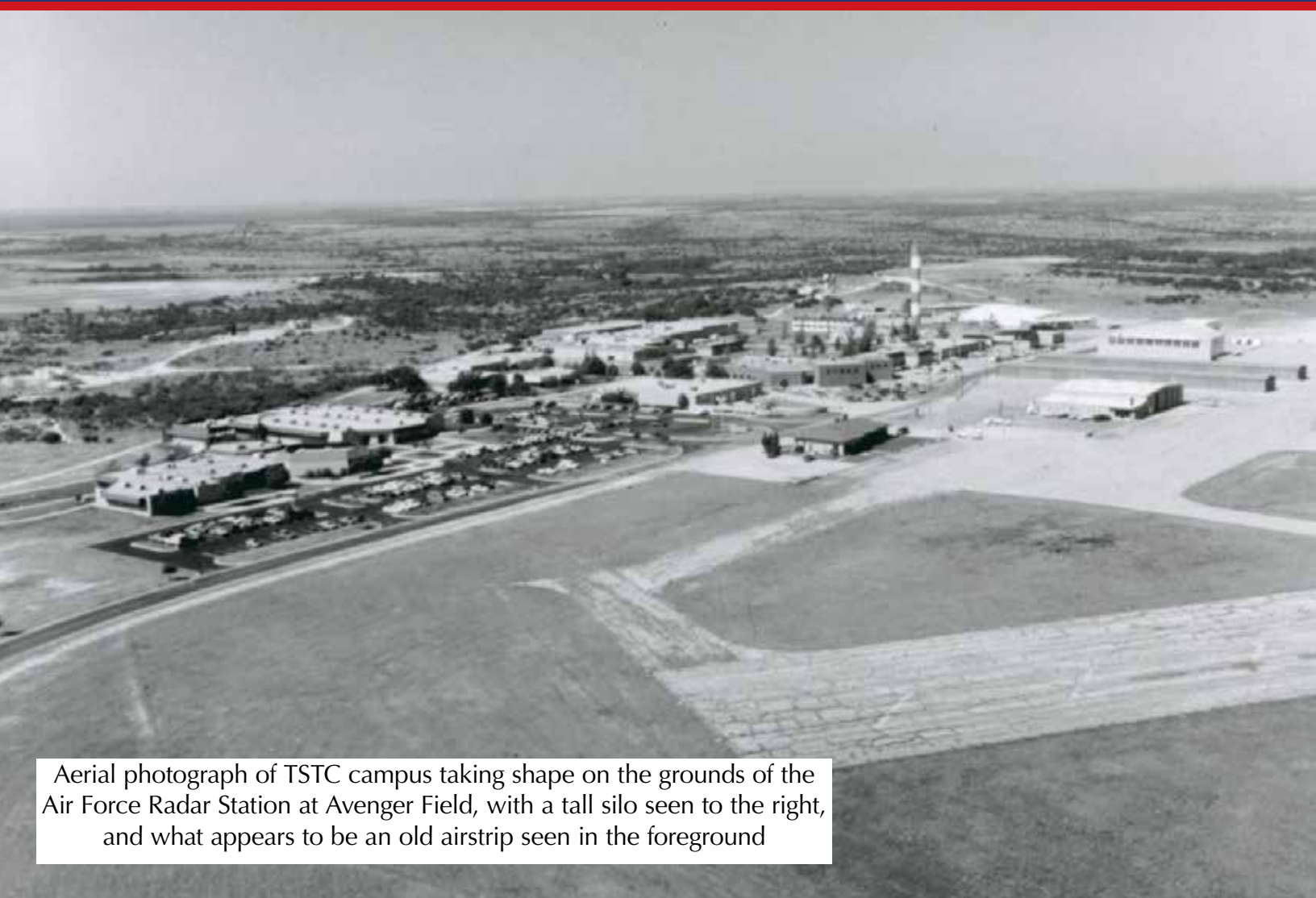
**Submitted by:** LaVone Kay

**About:** Heavy leather suits were available in mens sizes only. Worn by trainees and ferry pilots when flying in cold weather or open cockpit aircraft. Photo shows Mildren Jane Doyle (middle of back row) poses with fellow classmates in Sweetwater, Texas.



## ARCHIVE PHOTOS - WASP

PHOTO COURTESY NATIONAL WASP WWII MUSEUM IN THE PORTAL TO TEXAS HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS LIBRARIES.



Aerial photograph of TSTC campus taking shape on the grounds of the Air Force Radar Station at Avenger Field, with a tall silo seen to the right, and what appears to be an old airstrip seen in the foreground



Aerial view of graduation

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