



# 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).

June 2025



I had a very thoughtful conversation with a Squadron supporter of longstanding at a recent event, regarding what a CAF RISE ABOVE [Volunteer Ambassador](#) can do.

My position since signing on to direct the Exhibit three years ago has been to try to position Volunteer Ambassadors to do what they most want to be doing - after all, a Volunteer Ambassador has come to help of their own volition using their own resources, is out there in the weather with us freezing or scorching, humid or parched-dry, sunshine or torrent; at the very least, they should be enjoying the activity they are assigned under such conditions!

Thing is - I have to know what the Volunteer wants, to either post them to such a task (or see they get the training to do it). And (to return to my conversation with the Volunteer) they have to know what activities are available to them, to better know what they want to do.

In the field, physically at the Exhibit, a Volunteer can assist arriving guests with registration, escort new crowds into the theater and exiting ones out, present each documentary and field audience questions about the Tuskegee Airmen, the WASP, the Mustang or the Second World War, represent these stories to local organizations and media, help guests select the right hat or T-shirt or patch or challenge coin from the PX to commemorate their visit; they can help physically set up the Exhibit the day prior to the show or help repack it on the final day; and none of the road crew will ever object to a Volunteer who sees some bit of cleaning or maintenance which needs addressing, and either points it out or (better still) cleans or fixes it themselves. Volunteer Ambassadors can even run each movie, if they have an interest in learning how. And when the P-51C is on static display, having a docent conversant with its history alongside is invaluable.

If the act of physically volunteering to preserve and share these histories out with the mobile theater and aircraft is not a fit for some Ambassadors, there are other roles one can fill I will cover in future - beginning with suggesting the Exhibit and Mustang to a local potential host they think might be a fit.

And if a Volunteer has other ideas, as that Ambassador which sparked this thread had - share them. Ambassadors by definition have out-of-the-box perspectives; the Squadron is better every time it takes advantage of that.

Respectfully,

Chris Allen

Rise Above Road Exhibit Director

## 2025 RISE ABOVE TOUR SCHEDULE

[Check online for updates and more information!](#)

Jun 10-11	VA - Aim High for Excellence
Jun 13-14	VA - TAKE IT TO THE STREETS
Jun 21-22	OH - Dayton Air Show
Jun 28-29	OK - Tinker Air Show
Jul 11-13	OH - Lorain County Discover Aviation Airplane & Car Show
Jul 21-27	WI - EAA AirVenture, Oshkosh, WI
Aug 15-17	NH - Aviation Museum of New Hampshire
Aug 22-24	OH - Columbus Air Show
Aug 30-31	MO - Wings of Pride Air Show
Sep 13-14	TN - Smyrna Rotary Intl Wings of Freedom
Sep 27-28	CO - Wings of Pride Air Show
Oct 2-5	VA - Dinwiddie RISE ABOVE
Oct 9-12	VA - Chesterfield
Oct 16-19	VA - MELFA
Nov 1-2	MS - Thunder Over The Sound



## THANKS FOR SHARING!

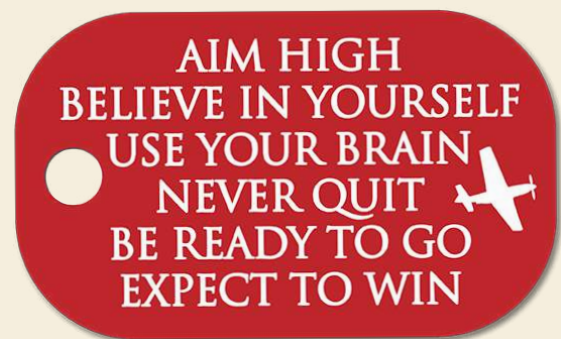
"I used the materials to guide my lessons and present to students. Our school hosts a Black History Month assembly every year. This year, we decided to have 7th school complete a poster project on the Tuskegee Airmen. My students benefited from the visual posters, and the information they learned helped them to complete their assignment. It was an excellent resource. I wouldn't change anything."

Adrienne, Detroit, Michigan

Thank you for your information concerning the [Tuskegee Airmen Resource Kit](#), the [Tuskegee Airmen Profiles](#) and the [P-51C Mustang](#) that your Commemorative Air Force maintains. My grandson, Nikolas is very enthused to research these web sites and utilize the information contained therein.

Please find the enclosed check in the amount of \$50.00 as a donation to the Commemorative Air Force RISE ABOVE to continue your good work in preserving our American history. Also, please send the P-51 Tuskegee Airmen cap to my address for my grandson so that he may add this to his research project during his presentation.

Sincerely,  
Joe Radman



### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

**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 and the WASP.

**Aim High: "The Aircraft of the Tuskegee Airmen"** This free online tool contains sound effects, slide shows and interactive questions designed to inform and entertain. Learn about the inspiration is history of the Tuskegee Airmen, their aircraft and their legacy to triumph over adversity!

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

Each kit includes 50 dog tags featuring the Six Guiding Principles and the "Triumph Over Adversity – RISE ABOVE: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen" or the "Triumph Over Adversity – RISE ABOVE: The Story of the WASP" booklets.

### Other Educational Resources

Purchase dog tags featuring the Six Guiding Principles, DVDs, and other materials to enhance your classroom activities in the online store.

Please consider [making a donation](#) to help us to continue offering these resources and to keep the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen and the WASP alive.



*America's Tribute to the Tuskegee Airmen*

## FEATURED TUSKEGEE AIRMEN PROFILE



**Robert Lee Maxwell**

**April 5, 1922 – August 27, 2010**

**Class: 44-I-1-TE**

**Graduation date: 10/16/1944**

**Rank at time of graduation: Flt. Officer**

**Unit: 477th Bombardier Group**

**Service # T66407**

**From: New York NY**

Robert Maxwell never got the chance to fly a combat mission in World War II.

A member of the Tuskegee Airmen Class of 1945, he finished his B-25 bomber flight training in September, less than a month after Japan surrender ended the war.

“When I was growing up, I was always interested in airports, read all the books. Made the model planes, went out to the airport,” Maxwell stated. He had two ambitions as a young man - to be an airplane pilot and to be an engineer.

He attended City College of New York and received a BS in Mechanical Engineering and completed Civilian Pilot Training to earn his commercial pilot's license. He was hired as an Installation Engineer by the Aeronautical Division of Curtis Wright Corporation in Woodbridge, NJ. Bob joined the Army Air Corps and was trained as a Bomber Pilot (B-25) in Tuskegee, Alabama.

After the war, Bob returned to Wright Aeronautical and worked on the design and development of turbojet and ramjet engines. He completed his MS in Mechanical Engineering, at Stevens Institute of Technology and later received an MBA from UCLA.

Bob was a propulsion system engineer in the aerospace industry with Wright Aeronautical, The Marquardt Corp, and Williams International. He was Director of the Office of Systems Engineering for the US Department of Transportation, Transportation Manager for the Office of Technology Assessment of the U.S. Congress, Marketing Representative for the General Electric Company, Vice President of Superior Engineering & Electronics, owner of Rancho Printing in Encinitas, and an Instructor of Entrepreneurship and Transportation Planning at UCSD Extension.

[Read his profile online!](#)

Learn more about the [CAF Red Tail Squadron](#), whose mission is sharing the inspiring legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen, America's first black military pilots and their support personnel. Their strength, courage, and ability to triumph over adversity during WWII can serve to inspire others about how to succeed today.



**“This is my country: I will hold her hand. I will fight for her. I shall protect her, but I’ll make her treat me the way she should.”**

**~ General Daniel “Chappie” James, Tuskegee Airman and the first African American four-star general of the United States Air Force**



Fliers of a P-51 Mustang Group of the 15th Air Force in Italy. Captain Andrew “Jug” Turner CO of the 100th Fighter Squadron ‘shoot the breeze’ in the shadow of one of the Mustangs they fly with some of his pilots. Left to right- Lt. Dempsey W. Morgan, Jr. - Lt. Carroll S. Woods - Lt. Robert H. Nelson, Jr. - Capt. Andrew D. Turner - and Lt. Clarence P. “Lucky” Lester.



*Honoring the Women Airforce Service Pilots*

## FEATURED WASP PROFILE



**Virginia "Virgie" Lee Jowell Hagerstrom**

**December 12, 1920 - May 28, 2015**

**Class: 43-W-4**

**Training Location: Houston Municipal Airport (Tex.) and Avenger Field (Sweetwater, Tex.)**

**Planes flown: AT-6, B-24, C-47, PT-17**

**Assigned bases: Romulus Army Air Base (Mich.)**

Virginia Lee Jowell Hagerstrom was born December 12, 1920 in the small East Texas town of Frankston. She excelled in school and had her heart set on going to college, even though it was the middle of the depression. She managed two years at Lon Morris, a small Methodist college in nearby Jacksonville, by literally singing her way through in a small band that toured the state on weekends and holidays. She then transferred to Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College in Nacogdoches where she graduated with a major in English and a Spanish minor. While there she participated in the Civilian Pilot Training Program and after graduation went to work for Delta Air Lines in Atlanta as a ticketing

agent. When the WASP were organized, she applied and was accepted.

During her time at Avenger Field in Sweetwater she made friendships that lasted her entire life. She was still a WASP when she met her future husband, James P. Hagerstrom - fresh back from his combat tour in New Guinea. They were both Army Air Force pilots passing through Orlando, Florida. He proposed three weeks later and they were married at Romulus Army Air Base, Michigan, where Lee was stationed, with a fellow 43-W-4 classmate Grace Clark Fender as maid-of-honor.

With the outbreak of the Korean War her husband was recalled to active duty and he again flew combat missions (he became a double fighter ace, as he was also an ace in WWII). The sixties were spent in Southern California where Lee returned to teaching and her husband attended law school at night while finishing out his Air Force career, including a tour in Vietnam and Thailand.

In the seventies the family began a series of adventures on sailing yachts, even building one from the keel up. They sailed down the coast of Mexico, to Hawaii, and to Micronesia. The eighties first saw Lee and James in the Dominican Republic, and then back in Micronesia where Lee taught at the college and James was legal advisor for the local government.

[\*\*Read her profile online!\*\*](#)

Learn more about the [\*\*CAF RISE ABOVE: WASP\*\*](#), whose mission is sharing the story 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.

**“Outside my family and my husband, the WASP program was the greatest thing that ever happened to me. I wanted to fly.... I loved it. If you know what you want to do, don’t let anybody stop you. You can do it!”**

**WASP Lee Hagerstrom, 43-W-4**



In August 1943, the Women Airforce Service Pilots program was formed. The WASP helped free men for combat and other duties, creating a legacy for U.S. Air Force female pilots who chose to follow in their footsteps. Though WASP played an important role during WWII, they were not recognized as military pilots until 1977, after Congress distinguished them as WWII veterans.

*Photo courtesy of The WASP Archive, The TWU Libraries' Woman's Collection, Texas Woman's University, Denton, TX*



## DID YOU KNOW?

During the graduation ceremony for the last WASP training class in 1944, the General of the Army and General of the Air Force – Henry “Hap” Arnold stated in his speech that he wasn’t sure “whether a slip of a girl could fight the controls of a B-17 in heavy weather.” He said that now, in 1944 he is convinced that women can fly as good as men.



General Hap Arnold pins brand new silver WASP Wings on Kitty Peddlar, class 43-4.

In May of 1943, General Hap Arnold authorized Jacqueline Cochran to see to developing a suitable uniform for the women pilots. He wants it to be 'blue'. In concurrence with the new Santiago blue WASP uniforms, on Aug 20, General Arnold, CG/AAF issued orders that 'The acronym for all AAF women pilots will be WASP (Women Airforce Service Pilots) period.'



Captain Edward Toppins



2nd Lt Leonard M. Jackson

On this date, the following Tuskegee Airmen events occurred:

4 June 1944: The 99th Fighter Squadron flew two 12-plane reconnaissance missions over roads north of Rome and destroyed ten enemy motor vehicles and damaged 34 more. Captains Edward L. Toppins and Leonard M. Jackson each earned the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroic actions on this date. (Fifteenth Air Force General Order 4041 dated 19 Oct 1944 and Fifteenth Air Force General Order 4876 dated 5 Dec 1944).

*The above information was taken from the current "Tuskegee Airmen Chronology," written by Daniel L. Haulman, PhD, Chief, Organization History Division, Air Force Historical Research Agency*



## EVENT PHOTOS



Ashley and Savannah enjoy the Golden Isles Air Show



Buddy uses his Dad's shoulders to see all of Red Tail he can!



Mrs. Boston and the Minor Elementary Astro Camp, Birmingham, Alabama





Deciding on precisely the right cap to commemorate their visit to the CAF Rise Above Exhibit and Mustang in Birmingham, Alabama was Manny and Monty's most difficult decision - deciding to pursue their pilot's license was easy!



Alan Henley and his new puppy, Wrigley, came out and spent the day with Doug in Birmingham



The Preman family fulfilled a lifelong dream for father Eddie when they made a donation to CAF Rise Above which came with a seat aboard the P-51C! Pending weather and pilot availability, if this is a dream of yours - you could be next!

## SHOP WITH WITH A PURPOSE!

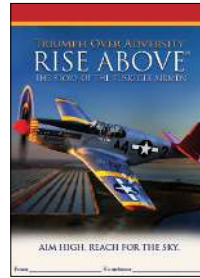
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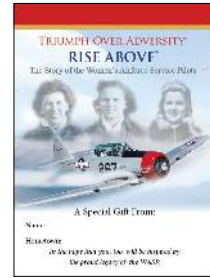
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## For \$99 you can join the exclusive ranks of the Top Flight Club!

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 annual 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.



WASP WINGS



TUSKEGEE WINGS







# Be A Hometown Hero

## Bring The RISE ABOVE Traveling Exhibit To Your Community!

The CAF RISE ABOVE Traveling Exhibit could be available to make a stop in your hometown. Imagine the draw an exhibit like this would be at your airshow, community event or festival!

Contact the CAF Rise Above Squadron at (802) 371-8838 or email [logistics@cafriseabove.org](mailto:logistics@cafriseabove.org) for more information.

## We Need Your Support!



The CAF RISE ABOVE is a part of the Commemorative Air Force (CAF), a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.

The mission of CAF RISE ABOVE is to educate audiences across the country about the history and legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen and the WASP - so their strength of character, courage, and ability to triumph over adversity may serve to inspire others to RISE ABOVE obstacles in their own lives and achieve their goals.

The operation of the P-51 C Mustang Tuskegee Airmen and the RISE ABOVE Traveling Exhibit are dependent on the generous support from people like you!

Here's how you can help:

[Make a one-time or recurring donation online.](#) Dedicate your gift in the following ways:

- Make a memorial gift to the Squadron to honor someone's memory. For donations of \$50 or greater the names will be listed on the online [Honorary Flight Log](#).
- [Join the Top Flight Club: Red Tail!](#)
- [Join the Top Flight Club: WASP!](#)

Purchase memorabilia, books and gifts from our [online store](#)

Join [The Heritage Club](#): The Heritage Club is made up of CAF supporters who have included CAF in their estate planning. Email [development@cafhq.org](mailto:development@cafhq.org) for more information.

Check out [FreeWill](#), a **free** estate planning tool which is provided as a benefit for our CAF members and supporters. Gifts from your estate may be designated as unrestricted or restricted to a specific aircraft, unit, or the CAF's endowment.

***Do you need to make a charitable gift from your IRA before the end of the tax year?***

Check out [Smart Giving from Your IRA](#) on the CAF website or contact your IRA administrator **TODAY** to arrange a QCD before the end of the year.

Please mail correspondence or donations to our home office at:

CAF RISE ABOVE®  
PO Box 416  
Red Wing, MN 55066



**RISE ABOVE contacts:**

**LaVone Kay**  
Marketing Director / Information  
[info@cafriseabove.org](mailto:info@cafriseabove.org)  
(888) 928-0188

**Doug Rozendaal**  
Squadron Leader  
[leader@cafriseabove.org](mailto:leader@cafriseabove.org)

**Kim Pardon**  
Public Relations/Media  
[PR@cafriseabove.org](mailto:PR@cafriseabove.org)

**Chris Allen**  
Traveling Exhibit Director  
[Exhibit@cafriseabove.org](mailto:Exhibit@cafriseabove.org)  
(802) 371-8838

**Milton McGee**  
Volunteer Coordinator  
[volunteer@cafriseabove.org](mailto:volunteer@cafriseabove.org)

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**[CAF RISE ABOVE: WASP](#)** - Share the story 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.



**Follow us on Instagram**

Check out archived photos and highlights as we tour the country!

**[RISE ABOVE: Red Tail](#)**

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



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