



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 2024



Keeping important history alive through the visceral experience of seeing/hearing/touching aircraft which played key roles in determining that history is the mission of the Commemorative Air Force, a mission your CAF Rise Above Squadron fulfills with our P-51C. The complementary CAF Rise Above road exhibit is certainly at its most effective when accompanying the Mustang: the ability to share the Tuskegee Airmen documentary movie in widescreen in the traveling theater and then lead audiences out to the adjacent P-51C - as occurred in Wassau, Wisconsin's Downtown Airport for Armed Forces Day or will occur at Columbus, Ohio's Rickenbacker Airport this weekend for Fathers' Day - brings what they have just seen to life and makes it personal. That will never change... for an organization named the Commemorative Air Force, it never should.

The road exhibit is, however, a unique asset in the CAF's educational repertoire. It can go where aircraft typically cannot - to school parking lots, to special ceremonies, to museums, such as the War Memorial in Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan, to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings, seen above - and moreover, the Squadron and the Road Crew are ready and willing to see such messaging happen.

The Mustang will always be the centerpiece of the Rise Above mission, and the road exhibit will be there alongside it, at venues best suited to accommodate both. But there are opportunities out there - schools or museums or groundbreaking or parades - which the exhibit alone **can** reach. Perhaps somewhere in your neighborhood.

Help us bring the stories of the Tuskegee Airmen and the WASP to such places.

Respectfully,
Chris Allen
CAF Rise Above Road Exhibit Director



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 Keri Ryan, CAF Rise Above Squadron Logistics Coordinator, at (802) 371-8838 or logistics@cafriseabove.org for more information.

EVENT PHOTOS



Kylen Williams carries the Red Tails legacy in his new squadron backpack, and hopes to follow the family history of service into the military as a pilot. Aim High, Kylen!



Michael Jones hopes to be a pilot one day. He added a model P-51C Tuskegee Airmen to his collection of World War II aircraft and took in the CAF Rise Above documentaries with his mother Christy at the Gulf Coast Salute Air Show in Panama City Beach, Florida.



Meet Reina and Kinsey of the United States Air Force Womens' Rugby Team - who's mascot is the WASP's FiFiNella! Go Warthogs!



The Tuskegee Airmen's 301st Fighter Squadron continues to defend freedom today, flying F-35s from Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida!



The 4th grade class from Rib Mountain Elementary enjoyed both documentaries while the CAF Rise Above exhibit visited Wausau, Wisconsin as part of the EAA Chapter 640's Armed Services Day celebration!



5 yr old Ellen Hintz had her grandma watch the documentary about the WASP with her twice, declaring she intended to become one too!



Co-Sponsors with Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 640 of Wausau, Wisconsin's Armed Forces Day at the Downtown Airport, the Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin took in both documentaries at the CAF Rise Above exhibit.



Cathy Olszewski, daughter of WASP Mildred Jane Baessler Doyle - returned to see the CAF Rise Above traveling exhibit with husband John when we visited The War Memorial (visible in the background against Lake St. Clair) at Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan.



The Kurkle family returned to see the CAF Rise Above Tuskegee Airmen and WASP presentations for the third day while celebrating the 80th Anniversary of D-Day at the War Memorial in Grosse Pointe Farms, MI



John Halbur and Milton McGee assisted at the War Memorial for D-Day 80!

Thank you to our Ambassadors for being our “Boots on the Ground”



I finally have a moment to write about the Grosse Pointe event. It will be memorable for me for sure. I only spent one day there, but it was a fulfilling day to say the least. The venue/location was fabulous. The museum was awesome. The occasion was very special being the 80th Anniversary of D Day! The patrons were inspired, most of them thanked us as they left the theater. I love doing these events because of the people you get to meet and share a story with. I'm not a super social person, but working at the exhibit has helped me develop skills in that area. That's why I try to make as many events as I can, especially when there are no volunteers on board. A couple patrons asked questions before the movie and I looked up the answers so I could give them the correct information after the movie, I love learning...

The crew members are fantastic, I have known Don the longest and he is fantastic. Dedicated to giving the patrons the best experience possible while at the exhibit. We share jokes and tell stories, I can't tell a joke. so I enjoy listening and laughing. I almost met Chris last year in LaPorte, but we both had health issues and it didn't happen. We finally met in New Orleans, earlier this year. Chris is a polished speaker with knowledge to back it up. This was my first event with John, He was very nice too, he had a few good jokes/stories. I look forward to working with everyone again very soon.

The best thing I can say is that everyone I have come into contact with at the Rise Above Traveling Exhibit have been superior people with the goal of keeping the Tuskegee Airmen and Women AirForce Service Pilots Legacy's alive!! I'm so proud to be a part of it too!

Sincerely,
Milton McGee

Become CAF Rise Above Ambassador!
[Click here to learn more.](#)





America's Tribute to the Tuskegee Airmen

FEATURED TUSKEGEE AIRMEN PROFILE

Willie Ashley, Jr.

May 23, 1921 - February 9, 1984

Class Number: 42-F-SE

Graduation Date: 7/3/1942

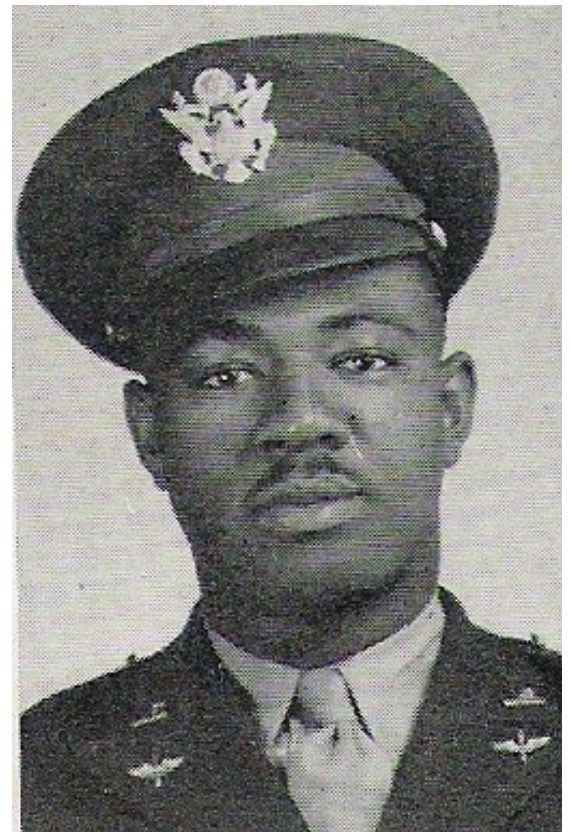
Rank Held at Tuskegee: 2nd Lt.

Serial Number: 0789641

Hometown: Sumter, South Carolina

Ashley graduated from Morris College High School and attended the Hampton Institute in Virginia where he learned how to fly with the Civil Air Patrol. He was a member of the first class of the Tuskegee Institute class 42-C, with 12 cadets, graduating July 3, 1942. Ashley was the first to fly solo, to receive his flying wings and to earn his second Lieutenant bars.

Ashley served for 14 months in North Africa, Sicily and in North Africa, Sicily and France, flying 77 combat missions and officially recording two downed enemy aircraft. He almost certainly downed a third aircraft for which he was not credited according to material provided by Shaw Air Force Base.



On June 9, 1943 six pilots of the 99th Fighter Squadron became the first Tuskegee Airmen pilots to engage in aerial combat. Led by Lt. Charles Dryden, Lt. Willie Ashley, Sidney P. Brooks, Lee Rayford, Leon Roberts and Spann Watson, exchanged fire with German fighter planes, with no losses to either side. The Italian garrison on Pantelleria surrendered on June 11, 1943, in large part due to the powerful air attacks it had been subjected to. The 99th Fighter Squadron was a key part of the air assault.

He returned home and continued to serve in the U.S. Air Force Reserve. Ashley graduated from University of Omaha and later earned a master's degree in parasitology from Catholic University and a doctorate in philosophy. He held positions in U.S. government agencies, was a professor at Howard University, and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. Ashley retired with the rank of Lt Col.

[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.

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN QUOTE OF THE MONTH

We had no idea we were making history. We were only doing our job."

~ Tuskegee Airman, Wilfred DeFour



Lt. Willie Ashley (left) with members of his squadron in 1944
Photo courtesy Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell, AFB, Alabama



A road on Shaw Air Force Base was named for two Sumter natives who flew with the famed Tuskegee Airmen in World War II. The road, now officially "Ashley-Bowman Boulevard," begins at the Sumter Gate on U.S. 378 and St. Paul's Church Road and continues on the base to Dryden Way. The road was named in memory of Lt. Col. Willie Ashley and 1st Sgt. Leroy Bowman, who both grew up in Sumter and later flew in World War II.



Honoring the Women Airforce Service Pilots

FEATURED WASP PROFILE

Ruth Humphryes Brown

Class 43-W-8

November 11, 1921 – December 30, 2010

Planes flown: PT-19, BT-13, AT-6, AT-11, B-26

Training Location: Avenger Field (Sweetwater, Tex.)

Assigned bases: Childress Army Air Field (Tex.) and Harlingen Army Air Field (Tex.)

"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..."

Ruth Brown from her interview: Wings Across America

Born Ruth Boettcher Humphreys on November 11, 1921 to the prominent A.E. Humphreys family of Denver, she grew up surrounded by the beautiful mountains of Colorado, steeped in the history of Colorado's 19th century mining, oil and manufacturing industries and her father's love of aviation. She attended Kent School and later Miss Porter's School in Connecticut and Finch College in New York City.



Ruth was determined to help her country during World War II. Once she learned the requirements for acceptance in the Army Air Forces Women's Flying training program, she decided it was time to learn to fly, and immediately began taking flying lessons. Eventually, she completing the 35 required hours, applied and was accepted into the Women Airforce Service Pilots program, class 43-W-8, leaving her beautiful mountains to travel to Avenger Field in the middle of West Texas. It was there that Ruth, along with 47 other young women pilots, completed training and earned her WASP wings on December 17, 1943.

After graduation, Ruth was stationed at Childress Army Air Base, Texas, where she trained bombardiers in AT-11's and later was stationed at Harlingen, Texas, where she flew as a B-26 tow target pilot, training gunners for combat. Her last assignment was to March Field, California, where she was stationed when the WASP were disbanded on December 20, 1944. From California, Ruth paid her way back to Colorado.

[Read her profile online!](#)

Learn more about the [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.

“There are salesgirls, college girls, teachers, stenographers. Every type and size but we all have this in common---- our hearts are in flying, so come what may, nothing else matters.”
Adaline Alma Blank, WASP Class 43-8



Under simulated flight conditions, Women's Airforce Service Pilots learn the intricacies of proper handling of equipment at high altitudes in a pressurized room at Randolph Air Force Base

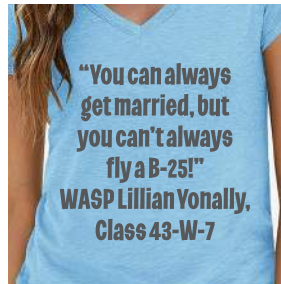
Photo courtesy of The WASP Archive, The TWU Libraries' Woman's Collection, Texas Woman's University, Denton, TX

SHOP WITH WITH A PURPOSE!

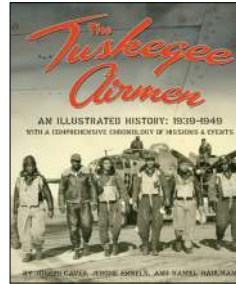
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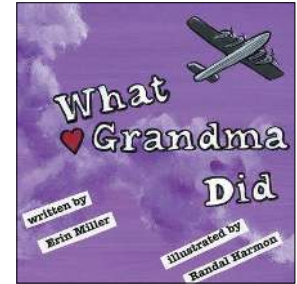
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Why 99? *(for each annual membership)*

[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.



Please mail correspondence or donations to our home office at:

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[CAF RISE ABOVE: Red Tail](#) - Share 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.

[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.

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Find an archive of all our best articles, featuring closer looks at original Tuskegee Airmen, the P-51C Mustang *Tuskegee Airmen*, and many more in-depth stories in our blog. [Check it out!](#)



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Join the conversation [@cafredtail on Twitter!](#) There's a lot going on here and you don't want to miss it. Want to help educate others about the history and legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen? Retweet to spread the word!

