



# 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).

October 2022



If all goes according to plan, by the time you read this “Tuskegee Airmen” will be back in the air! It has been a disappointing summer having our airplane out of commission, but we are excited to get it back in the air and back on tour telling the stories of the Tuskegee Airmen and the WASP.

But there is more excitement to share. In September we attended the National Aviation Hall of Fame enshrinement ceremony in Dayton Ohio where we received the Combs-Gates Award, and a \$20,000 award. This prestigious award is presented was established to encourage and support relevant aviation history research and preservation efforts. Our Rise Above program qualifies in many ways and we honored and excited to receive this award.

Finally, it's time again for our annual essay contest which salutes the Tuskegee Airmen and the WASP by encouraging students to research, write and submit an essay highlighting how these American Heroes overcame seemingly insurmountable obstacles to achieve their goals.

Given all that we see in the media it would be easy to believe that things are bad and opportunities are scarce. But if young people look back at our history, they will see that times were much tougher 80 years ago, and yet the Tuskegee Airmen and the WASP both set out to prove that they could perform as well as anyone and in doing so they were able to achieve their goals and support a country that did not want their service.

These stories are especially relevant today and sadly they are not being widely shared in our schools. Our mission is to fill that gap and expose as many young people as possible to the stories of these Great American Heroes so that young people today can replicate their success!

It is rewarding work and we thank all of you for your support!

Tail Winds,

Doug Rozendaal  
CAF RISE ABOVE Leader



National Hall of Fame Director Amy  
Spowart, Doug Rozendaal, and NBAA  
President Ed Bolen



## *Essay Contest*

**For students in 4th - 12th grade!**

**Aim High, Believe in Yourself, Use Your Brain, Be Ready to Go, Never Quit, Expect to Win**

Inspire your students with the remarkable story of the Tuskegee Airmen and Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) by participating in the CAF Rise Above Squadron's Essay Contest!

The contest is a fun way to help students learn about the achievements of the Tuskegee Airmen and the WASP. They will get the chance to put into action what they have learned about the importance of education, training and especially determination, based on the Tuskegee Airmen and WASP example of overcoming adversity.

[Click here for the guidelines and prize information!](#)



# Mark your calendars!

**\*\*ONLINE EVENTS\*\* 7 p.m. Central**

Join us for 4 fascinating conversations with Sarah Byrn Rickman, WASP historian and award-winning author of 12 WAFS/WASP books and Carol Cain, WASP consultant for CAF. They will share their intimate knowledge of these bold women pilots of World War II, recounting stories of their service and the obstacles they overcame to serve their country in a time they were desperately needed.

[Visit the CAF Rise Above WASP Facebook page for these events, these will be archived on our page to watch anytime!](#)



**September 29th**

## **6 WAFS Up Close and Personal: The Actual Interviews**

Six original WAFS tell their own stories about ferrying WWII aircraft in Sarah Byrn Rickman's documentary film. Sarah met and interviewed WAFS Nancy Batson Crews, BJ Erickson, Teresa James, Florene Miller, Gertrude Meserve, and Barbara Poole as she prepared to write her first book about the WAFS/WASP, *The Originals*.



**October 6th**

## **Jean Landis: a WASP who "beats the drum" for the WAFS**

The subject of Sarah's latest biography, Jean Landis WASP Pilot, graduated from Sweetwater with WASP Class 43-4. Sent to Pursuit School, she went on to ferry "the love of my life, P-51 Mustangs" from Long Beach to Newark. Jean pays special tribute to the WAFS: "If Nancy Love and the WAFS had failed, there would have been no women's flying program."



**October 13th**

## **Nell "Mickey" Bright is one of ten Class 43-7 graduates who led the WASP into a new level of flying.**

Sent to learn to fly the twin-engine B-25 bomber, Mickey and the others proved up to the task. From there, they went to Biggs Field in El Paso where they flew searchlight and tracking missions – and much more – for gunnery troops on the ground.



**October 20th**

## **WASP Shirley Chase Kruse and Jean Terrill McCreary: Two go-getters!**

Sarah and Carol will talk to Shirley – Class 44-6 – and hear her choice flight stories firsthand. Jean's daughters, Emily and Martha, will talk about their mom's lifelong love-affair with the WASP and also what it meant to be in THE LAST CLASS. Sarah, who knew Jean well, will pass along what Jean's friendship meant to her.

[Visit our webstore to see the books authored by Sarah Byrn Rickman](#)





Hawthorne Elementary students read the Six Guiding Principles



Every student who visits receives a free dog tag!



Wife and son of Charles Taylor, a Tuskegee Airmen mechanic



Team members Kelly Collin and Keri Ryan





## THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR THOUGHTS!

Appreciate that you are spreading the news through this traveling exhibit. I loved the hats and tee shirts we bought to remind us of this time in history.

~ Sheila Davis

The video was Excellent, and very informative. It wasn't too short but not too long but still left there wanting to learn more.

~ Casey Wyckoff

I again had the honor/privilege to have time and personal lift of my day in the meeting of the Airmen present at the recent fly in at Oshkosh. Not only are you all dedicated to patriotism but also the building of integrity and character of those you encounter. Thank you for being the epitome of real Love and dedication of serving to others, no matter the circumstances life can deliver. FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE has delivered you to us, and blessed us. We will miss the Tuskegee Airmen who have passed before you, as I know you do. I thank the family of Brigadier General Charles McGee for continuing the inspiration of "Rise Above" legacy and your ever-present Love inspiration and respect of others.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL, from a past redhead, to the Red Tails and families,

Sincerely and respectfully,

~ Michael Elton Smith



Lt Col James Harvey and Lt Col George Hardy at KidVenture, Oshkosh 2022



*America's Tribute to the Tuskegee Airmen*

## FEATURED TUSKEGEE AIRMEN PROFILE

### **1st Lt. Robert H. Wiggins**

November 19, 1920 – October 7, 1944

Class 43-G-SE

Graduation Date: July 28, 1943

Unit: 332nd Fighter Group, 301st Fighter Squadron

Service # O-809259



Wiggins enlisted on April 1, 1942, he graduated from flight training on July 28, 1943, at Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama as part of Class 43-G. He was awarded many honors upon graduation, including expert pistol shot, conduct and service citations. He was stationed with the 332nd Fighter Group at Selfridge Michigan prior to his appointment overseas.

In late December, he deployed to Italy with the 301st Fighter Squadron, part of the 332nd Fighter Group. On June 9, 1944, the 332nd Fighter Group was escorting B-24 bombers to Munich, Germany, when it was attacked by enemy planes. Lt. Wiggins spotted a Messerschmitt 109 to his left, turned toward it and attacked, causing pieces of the enemy fighter to fall off. The ME-109 escaped, according to "The 332nd Fighter Group – Tuskegee Airmen" by Chris Bucholtz. Lt. Frederick D. Funderburg Jr. was credited with two aerial kills that day, the first for the 301st Fighter Group.

It was the closest Wiggins would come to an aerial victory.

On an escort mission to an oil refinery in Vienna, Austria, on Oct. 7, 1944 Wiggins's P-51 Mustang was hit by anti-aircraft fire. He struck out for Ramitelli Air Field in Italy, but was forced to land at Vis, Yugoslavia, an island in the Adriatic Sea, according to "The Tuskegee Airmen: The Men Who Changed a Nation" by Charles E. Francis and Adolph Caso. Wiggins repaired his plane and took off again for Ramitelli. On the way, the first lieutenant spotted a crippled B-17 bomber and escorted it to the Foggia area of Italy. After the bomber landed, Wiggins again struck out for Ramitelli. He crashed in the Adriatic Sea.

Wiggins is buried at the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery and Memorial in Italy. According to a government database, Wiggins was awarded an Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters and a Purple Heart for his military service.

[\*\*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

**This is the best country in the world, because in no other country do changes take place like they take place here. I have a view on life that says we can do better, and we are doing better. Try your best, do your best and be the best you can be - aim high."**

**~Tuskegee Airman George Boyd**



100th Fighter Squadron Crew Chiefs with Capt Andrew D. Turner

*Photo courtesy Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell, AFB, Alabama  
Colorized by Nathan Howland*





*Honoring the Women Airforce Service Pilots*

## FEATURED WASP PROFILE

### **Nell Stevenson Bright**

1921 –

Class: 43-W-7

Training Location: Avenger Field (Sweetwater, Tex.)

Assigned Bases:

Mather Army Air Base (Sacramento, Calif.)

Biggs Army Air Field (El Paso, Tex.)

Deming Air Field (N. M.)

Planes flown: A-24, A-25, AT-11, AT-7, B-25, B-26

Nell received primary and advanced flight training “just like the men,” and learned to fly B-25 twin-engine bombers, P-47 pursuit planes, a couple of Navy bombers and 15 other types of aircraft.

Those in the ferry command transported planes from manufacturer to base and one coast to the other, making deliveries as far away as Alaska, where Russian pilots would take them overseas.

At Biggs Field, Texas, Nell flew simulated bombing, gas and strafe missions. She towed target sleeves behind the B-25 for anti-aircraft boys to shoot at before going overseas.

“It was dangerous,” she explained. “They were shooting live bullets.”

While in transition school at Mather Field, California, Nell and twenty B-25 women pilots faced inequity with the same aplomb with which they took to the air. “The commanding officer didn’t particularly want us eating in the officers’ mess, but we were officers, so we did.”

This attitude held sway when twenty Tuskegee Airmen — the first black fliers in the armed services — arrived on base and were racially segregated. “These trained pilots and officers of the U.S. Army Air Force could not eat with us in the officers’ mess,” said Nell. “We spoke up. When they were finally allowed in, they had to sit away from everyone else. That was pretty bad, so we joined them.”

[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.



**“We felt like we had the best of both worlds, because we had so many different airplanes to fly and flew so many different kinds of missions. We had the same training as the men, and we flew everything that they had in the Air Force at that time.”**

**~WASP Nell Stevenson Bright**



Members of the 6th Tow Target Squadron, Biggs Field, El Paso, Texas. 1944. Nell Bright at far right, first row



Please help us ensure that the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen and 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!

## WAYS TO GIVE

- Does your employer have a matching gift program? Your donation to the CAF Rise Above may be able to be doubled or tripled. Ask your employer for details.
- Include the CAF Rise Above as a beneficiary in your will
- Name the CAF Rise Above as a beneficiary of a gift that pays you income (a remainder trust or gift annuity)
- Name the CAF Rise Above as the beneficiary of your investment portfolio or retirement account (IRA, Roth IRA, 401K, etc.)
- Leave a gift of real estate to the CAF Rise Above
- Name the CAF Rise Above as the owner and/or beneficiary of your life insurance policy

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

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

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

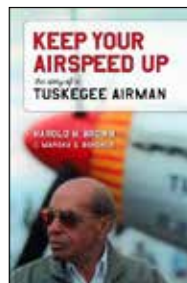
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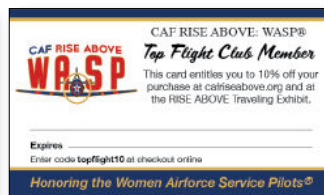
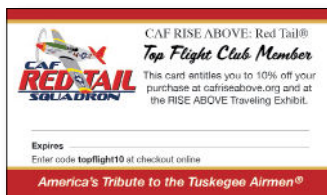
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There's no better way to support our mission to educate, inspire, and honor through flight and living history experiences than by joining a Top Flight Club!



**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.

Please mail correspondence or donations to our home office at:

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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.

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**RISE ABOVE: Red Tail - Keep an eye on our blog and don't miss out on a single story**

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!](#)



**RISE ABOVE: Red Tail - Stay up to date in real time on Twitter**

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!

