



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).

November 2022

Back in the Air!

After almost a year on the ground following a landing runway excursion last November, on October 17th we took to the air again with a very successful test flight at Air Corps in Bemidji Minnesota. I personally did the flight and the airplane flew flawlessly. The following morning I flew it to John's 360 Coatings in Raymond, Mississippi to repaint the repaired wing plus spruce up the paint on the entire airplane.



John Mosley's crew made short work of it, and 10 days later with paint work complete, Alan Miller met Jim Jeffries of Jeffries Airworks who balanced the prop and Greg Morehead of Warbird Digest for a quick photo shoot before heading to Alan's home near Atlanta, GA.

As I write this Alan and the airplane are headed to Windsor Lock, Connecticut for our final Rise Above Exhibit event at the New England Air Museum. After that the airplane will fly to CAF headquarters for the CAF "Wings Over Dallas" airshow November 11, 12 and 13, at the Dallas Executive Airport.

The repair took longer than we anticipated because of supply chain and labor shortages, but we are thrilled to have "Tuskegee Airmen" back in the air and out on the road again inspiring young people and sharing the stories of how young Americans overcame seemingly insurmountable obstacles to achieve their dreams 80 years ago during WWII.

Over the winter in Dallas we will focus on getting our remaining pilots re-qualified in the airplane in anticipation of our 2023 season which is looking like another busy one.

We would be remiss not to give a special thanks to the many vendors who helped us get back in air. Air Corps is one of the premier restoration shops in the country. John's 360 Coatings did a wonderful job on the paint work, and in record time. Maxwell Propeller built up a new propellor and finally Assured Partners and US Specialty insurance did a great job working with on the insurance claim which covered much of the repair expense. It takes great partners to get through tough times and these companies have been great partners. Thank you!

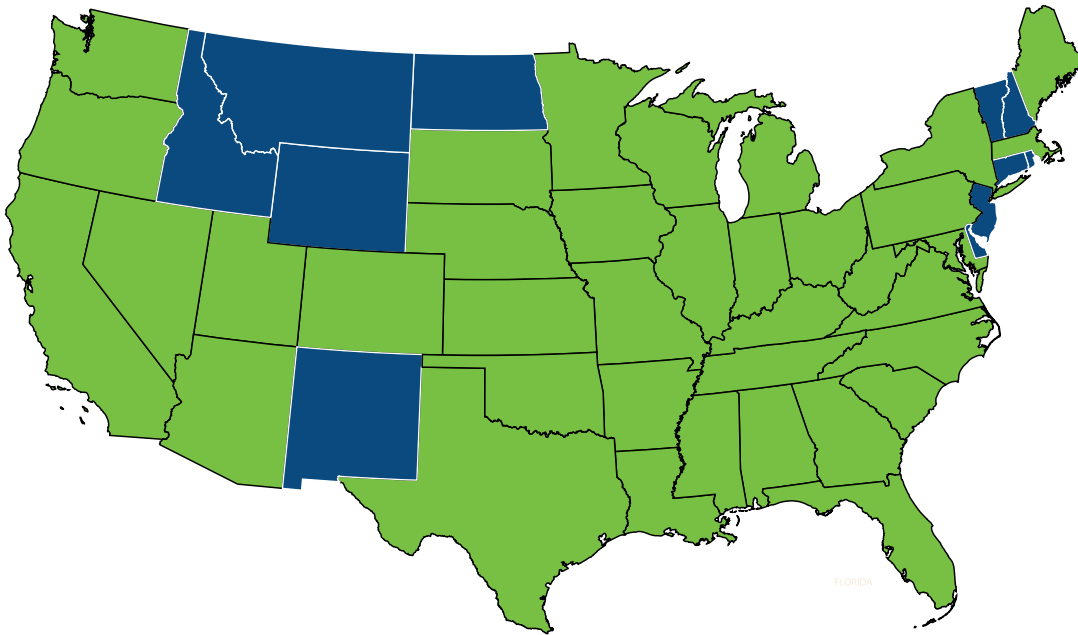
Tail Winds,

Doug Rozendaal
CAF RISE ABOVE Leader



RISE ABOVE: RED TAIL TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY

Tours 2011-2022 as of October 24, 2022



**47 STATES
VISITED BY THE
CAF RISE ABOVE
TRAVELING EXHIBIT**

■ Green are states toured
Including Alaska and Canada



148,002 ADULTS



149,047 YOUTHS



297,524 TOTAL VISITORS



DISTRIBUTED **249,954** EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS
INCLUDING RISE ABOVE INSPIRATIONAL BOOKLETS AND **FREE** RISE
ABOVE RESOURCE KITS.

YOUR MISSION: Be a Hometown Hero!

Book the *CAF Rise Above Traveling Exhibit* featuring inspirational movies about the Tuskegee Airmen and Women Airforce Service Pilots AND a fully restored WWII P-51C Mustang for your event!

Call Logistics Coordinator, Keri Ryan at (802) 371-8838
or email logistics@cafriseabove.org



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!](#)

I received your second letter describing the formation of the Tuskegee Airmen during the first few years of World War II. I have been slow to respond to the first letter and now this second one, because, truthfully, with each one I have been left speechless.

I was born in 1940 in a small town in South Jersey, decades after the Civil War but still under the vicious thumb of Reconstruction. So I keep asking myself - why would black men in America volunteer to go to war and expose themselves to injury and even death for a country that treated them so unspeakably badly.

I couldn't possibly know, and there are many doubtless reasons:

To show that black men are every bit able as white men?

To grab the opportunity to escape the limitations of their lives?

Or because, as Colonel Davis said, "Excellence is the best response to racism."?

But no matter. You have brought to light what are likely the most important and durable lessons from the Tuskegee Airmen experiment and now you are using these lessons to help youngsters and adolescents grow up with a much better understanding of why racial differences should be treated rather than abused. I look forward to learning more about how your work with children is progressing.

Sincerely,
Sigurd Ackerman, MD



Thank you, Ambassadors!

For volunteering with the CAF RISE ABOVE Squadron. As Jimmy Doolittle once said, "There's nothing stronger than the heart of a volunteer."

Your support is greatly appreciated and is vital to the success of our mission to carry on the history and legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen and the Women's Airforce Service Pilots.



Exhibit Coordinator Kelly Collin, Terry Loudermill, CAF Rise Above driver Don Larson



Sunny Cool



Students enjoying their visit to the Traveling Exhibit



Our visit and
the dedication at
Freeman Field



America's Tribute to the Tuskegee Airmen

FEATURED TUSKEGEE AIRMEN PROFILE

2nd Lt Leonard R. Willette

March 17, 1921 - September 22, 1944

Class: 44-B-SE

Graduation Date: February 8, 1944

Unit: 332nd Fighter Group, 99th Fighter Squadron

Service # T-062308

Leonard R. Willette was born March 17, 1921 in Belleville, NJ. Growing up, he was an avid artist, winning several awards for his art. He was a member of the track team and illustrated his high school yearbook before he graduated from Belleville High School in 1939.

Higher education was important to their family, but when the U.S. entered the War, Willette decided to answer the call to service and joined the Army Air Corps. At the time, he had been accepted into an art program and was a student at New York University. He also had attained a coveted appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, but turned it down in order to join the war effort more swiftly.



Willette was selected for pilot training at Tuskegee Army Airfield, where he graduated on February 8, 1944 in class 44-B-SE. After preparing for combat, he deployed to Italy to serve with the 99th Fighter Squadron where he flew a P-51 Mustang he named Wrong Woman.

On September 9 of that same year, after completing an escort mission with the B-17 bombers of the 5th Bomber Wing over Munich, Germany, Willette's plane began having engine trouble. He notified his wingman that he was losing oil pressure at 21,000 feet and would try to bail out. By the time his wingman circled back to try to escort him in, Willette's plane was seen descending through the clouds, and was eventually lost near Lake Chien in Germany. The time from the first distress call to the crash was only three minutes. At some later point his body was found as he is buried in France. He was posthumously promoted to 2nd Lt.

Upon learning of his death, the First Lady invited Mrs. Willette to the White House so she may deliver her condolences in person and the two met once again on January 21, 1945.

In 2018, the community of Belleville, New Jersey honored Willette with a memorial placed near the location of his family's home. See the memorial in the [CAF Red Tail Squadron Virtual Museum](#).

[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.

So the question is, “Why did we Black Aviators fly for a nation that did not respect us?”... Flying was a challenge and something I wanted to do. I wanted to be a valuable asset to our country.

- Tuskegee Airman Yenwith Whitney in a North Port Library lecture, 2003



Communications trainees posing for what may be a class photograph, possibly at Chanute Field, Rantoul, Illinois.

*Photo courtesy Chanute Air Museum, Rantoul, IL.
Heartland Library System*



Honoring the Women Airforce Service Pilots

FEATURED WASP PROFILE

Katherine Kupferberg Kornblum

August 15, 1917 - January 16, 2011

Class: 43-W-6

Training Location: Avenger Field (Sweetwater, Tex.)

Assigned Bases: New Castle Army Air Base (Wilmington, Del.) and Harding Army Air Field (Baton Rouge, La.)

Planes flown: BT-13, PT-19, AT-6, C-47, UC-78

As a young pilot, Katherine “Ruth” Kupferberg Kornblum served her country during World War II. In her later years she served her community as a nursing home volunteer.

In 1943, Kornblum became one of 1,074 female pilots out of 25,000 who applied and qualified for duty as a Women Airforce Service Pilot (WASP), flying military aircraft all over the U.S.

“You wanted to do something for your country,” she said in an interview with The Journal News. “It didn’t matter what. I was a registered nurse and had been planning to work in an overseas hospital, but when the chance came to fly, I took it.”

The WASP ferried military planes to various bases and airfields, transported equipment and passengers and towed targets for anti-aircraft and gunnery training (eventually, flying every type mission flown by the Army Air Forces except combat). Kornblum learned how to fly in 1940 and 1941. By the time the WASP disbanded in 1944, Kornblum had flown about 1,000 hours for her country. She never piloted a plane again.

Although they lived in barracks, wore uniforms and piloted military planes, the WASP were considered civilians and were not recognized as military veterans until 1977.

In March, Kornblum and about 300 other surviving members gathered in Washington, D.C., where they received the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation’s highest civilian award.

“It was wonderful, and I feel now that we’ve been recognized for what we did,” she said at the time

[Read her profile online!](#)

[Visit the WASP Virtual Museum to see her uniform and other artifacts!](#)



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 was a certain amount of publicity about the WASP program, and the minute I saw it, I knew I wanted to sign up for that. I joined because I wanted to fly and help where I could.”

~ Ethel Jones, WASP Class 44-W-5



Nancy Harkness Love, left, greets Cornelia Fort, Helen Mary Clark, Teresa James, and Betty Gillies, four of the 'Original 27' of the Women's Auxiliary Ferry Squadron (WAFS) as they arrive at the training base in New Castle, DE. James, who donated her WAFS uniform to the Museum, qualified to fly pursuit aircraft such as the P-47 Thunderbolt



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

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

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

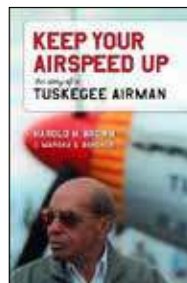
[Visit our online store.](#) *Shipping is included for state-side orders!*



[Apparel -Tuskegee Airmen](#)



[Apparel - WASP](#)



[Books - Tuskegee Airmen](#)



[Books - WASP](#)



[DVDs & Educational Resources](#)



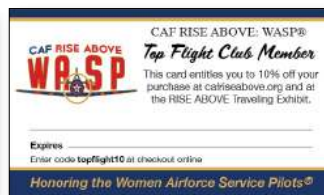
[Gifts](#)



[Sale items](#)

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.

Please mail correspondence or donations to our home office at:

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



To bring RISE ABOVE to your event, contact:

Keri Ryan
Senior Logistics Coordinator
logistics@cafriseabove.org
(802) 371-8838

Doug Rozendaal
Squadron Leader
leader@cafriseabove.org

Kim Pardon
Public Relations/Media
PR@cafriseabove.org

For general inquiries, contact:

LaVone Kay
Marketing Director & Donor Support
info@cafriseabove.org
(888) 928-0188

Melanie Burden
Volunteer Coordinator
volunteer@cafriseabove.org

Follow us on Facebook



[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.



Follow us on Instagram

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

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



See us in action on YouTube

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



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!