



# 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).

December 2023



The 2023 Rise Above Exhibit tour concluded in mid-November in Monroe, NC at the Warbirds over Monroe Air Show. I write this from Las Vegas NV at the International Council of Airshows Convention, ICAS, where we will book the appearances for 2024.

ICAS is where the entire industry comes together for education, fellowship, and to do the industry's business. By the time you read this we will have the framework of the 2024 season built and our Logistics Coordinator Keri Ryan will then spend the next weeks and months filling in the holes in the schedule.

Keri did a great job of keeping our Road Crew, Chris Allen and Amy Beechler, and Driver, Don Larsen busy almost every weekend last summer. Last year we had 29 events in 19 states. It was a hectic schedule and they are all home for a much needed break for the holidays. A big shout out to all of them!

Last year completes our 12th season on the road and in that time over 300,000 people have been touched by the stories of the Tuskegee Airmen and more recently the Women's Air Service Pilots.

Every year we receive letters and emails that we share here in our newsletter with you about how this program has impacted the lives of many. It is rewarding work!

Doug Rozendaal  
Rise Above Squadron Leader



Melanie Burden and Keri Ryan at ICAS ready to book the 2024 season, be sure to check our [event calendar](#) for updates and [contact Keri](#) if you are interested in bringing Rise Above to your community!



[Please donate \\$41](#) or more today to help update the Red Tail film telling the story of the Tuskegee Airmen in our mobile movie theater.

Based on our experience over the past years, we know the story of the Tuskegee Airmen resonates with young people and that it is a powerful and inspirational story that can impact everyone's life. That is rewarding work and we hope you will join us in that endeavor.



*Essay Contest*

## **Calling all students 4th through 12th grade!**

Submit your essay for the CAF Rise Above Squadron's annual essay contest saluting the Tuskegee Airmen and WASP!

Entries must be emailed prior to 5:00pm on or before February 15, 2024. Email your entry to: [info@cafriseabove.org](mailto:info@cafriseabove.org)

Essay contest winners will be announced on March 15, 2024.

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

[Be sure to download the free Rise Above Resource kit for great information about the Tuskegee Airmen!](#)



## 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](mailto:logistics@cafriseabove.org) for more information.



I loved this exhibit! I knew some information about the Tuskegee Airmen and nothing about the WASP! Amazing! I recommend this educational experience to everyone!!!

Ben Knickerbocker

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This was an amazing exhibit. I came to cover it for the paper, but I got so much more out of it. Not a history buff, I am a huge woman's right advocate as well as against racists. This brought so much to reality if what those heroes went through for our country. Thank you for being here and bringing this exhibit to Adams County.

Sherri Bradley

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My Army Vietnam Veteran husband, his caregiver, and I all were very impressed with and inspired by the film and the plane on display. We had viewed a couple of commercial movies about the Tuskegee Airmen, and were excited to learn more.

My husband is a 100% disabled, service connected, veteran and we really appreciated having the wheelchair lift and expedited entry to the film (it was a very hot day and it would have been difficult for my husband to be out in the heat for a long time).

Thank you to all who made the film and exhibit possible!!

Janet Miles



2023 Dazhanir Blockmon, of Blytheville Middle School, Arkansas, was third-place winner in last year's CAF Rise Above essay contest. She visited the exhibit at the National Cold War Center at the former Ira Eaker Air Force Base.







Andrew Bowens, a Senior at Gosnell High School, Arkansas, was an award-winner in the CAF Rise Above essay contest, and came out with his class to see the traveling exhibit at the National Cold War Center at the decommissioned Blytheville Air Force Base, now Arkansas AeroPark.



Air Force Veteran Anis Abraham and her friend Linda Gamble get up close with CAF Rise Above P-51C Tuskegee Airmen By Request at the National Cold War Center in Blytheville, Arkansas!







Lochlan and Shirley Bennett - who's grandfather was a Master Sergeant in the US Air Force

**Thank you to our Ambassador for being  
our "Boots on the Ground"**

Rob Carlson, also a CAF Col  
SECAS secretary/treasurer



AIM HIGH  
BELIEVE IN YOURSELF  
USE YOUR BRAIN  
NEVER QUIT  
BE READY TO GO  
EXPECT TO WIN





*America's Tribute to the Tuskegee Airmen*

## FEATURED TUSKEGEE AIRMEN PROFILE

**Earl Sylvester Sherard, Jr.**  
**February 15, 1924 - July 1, 1983**  
**Class: 43 J-SE**  
**Graduation Date: 11/3/1943**  
**Service # 0814837**

Earl Sherard was born in Columbus, Ohio in 1924 and grew up in the prominent African-American community of Poindexter Village. A young man in his twenties, Sherard embarked on a journey that would change his life.

On November 3, 1943, 2nd Lt. Earl Sherard graduated from Tuskegee Flight School. By June 24, 1944, the 332nd Fighter Group was assigned a low-flying mission to bombard an enemy supply line near Aircasea, Italy. Among the pilots was 2nd Lt. Sherard.



On that mission, the belly of his plane hit the water. Luckily, Sherard was able to exit his plane, walk out on the wing, and inflate his dinghy before his aircraft sank into the ocean. The rest of the unit continued on to their mission, leaving Sherard to be rescued by a British ship and returned to the base later that day.

Sherard continued to serve as a pilot until 1945 when he was one of the first servicemen mustered out of the military with 96 points. His heartwarming return to Columbus was documented by All-American News. All-American News made the first newsreels produced for a black audience. The reels were made in the 1940s and 1950s and "intended to encourage black Americans to participate in, and support the war effort, and to reflect an African-American perspective on global and national events."

After his time in the military, Sherard went on to become a pioneer in the fields of pediatrics and epilepsy, serving as the director of the Division of Neurosurgery at Children's Hospital. In fact, Dr. Earl Sherard was portrayed by Morgan Freeman in the 1987 film, Fight For Life.

The film was based on the true story of Dr. Sherard's treatment of a young girl suffering from epilepsy and his determination to bring an anticonvulsant drug approved for treatment in the United States in the late 1970s.

Dr. Sherard's life of service and his accomplishments speak volumes about the content of his character.

[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.



“We got the reddest paint we could and painted our aircraft. We wanted the bomber crews to know when we were escorting them and we wanted to make sure the Luftwaffe knew when we were airborne and in their territory.”

– Tuskegee Airman Lt. Col. Herbert Carter



*Courage Has No Colour* features Lt. Lee (Buddy) Archer shown flying his Mustang P-51C a squadron of B-17 bombers flying a mission in Europe during WWII. [Artist Colin Parker](#)





## FEATURED WASP PROFILE

*Honoring the Women Airforce Service Pilots*

**Mary Anna “Marty” Martin Wyall**

**January 24, 1922 – March 9, 2017**

**Class: 44-W-10**

**Training Location: Avenger Field (Sweetwater, Tex.)**

**Assigned Bases: Goodfellow Army Air Field (San Angelo, Tex.)**

**Planes flown: PT-17, BT-13, AT-6, PT-19**

*“We didn’t care so much about the pay or the recognition, we just wanted to help our country win the war.”*

By her own recollection, being a WASP was the best thing that happened to Marty Wyall. Wyall graduated from DePauw University in 1943 and joined the WASP program in early 1944. Like many other WASP, Wyall had never been to Texas, and was unsure of what was going to happen during training. When she arrived at Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas on a windy day in May, she remembers questioning her own abilities, and thinking she would never be able to fly the large military airplanes.

The WASP experience helped Wyall recognize that through hard work and perseverance, anything was possible.

Wyall originally heard about the WASP program from a magazine article, which said applicants were required to have at least 35 hours of flying time before they could be considered. Wyall earned her hours by paying for private flying lessons while she was at DePauw University studying Bacteriology.

WASP training took several months and involved many aspects. In addition to flight training in many increasingly complex, military airplanes, the WASP also received training in navigation and in the mechanical aspects of each aircraft. Wyall recalls that her training involved a great deal of cross country and night flying. She graduated and earned her coveted silver wings, just two weeks before the WASP program was shut down.

Wyall understood that the fate of the program was uncertain, and their “heaven on earth” would come to a close eventually. Wyall recalled how Gen. Henry ‘Hap’ Arnold, the commander of the Army Air Forces, attended the WASP graduation, and eaten with her and several of her colleagues. Arnold was initially opposed to women flying U.S. military airplanes, but he was very proud of how the WASP program had turned out.

Wyall felt there would be a need to tell the WASP story and started collecting historic materials and WASP memorabilia in 1945. Her collection now resides at Texas Woman’s University in Denton, Texas, serving as the foundation for their official WASP repository.

**[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.

## WASP QUOTE OF THE MONTH

There's a romance to flying. You're away from the earth, defying gravity, and you have to do your best; there's no safety net.

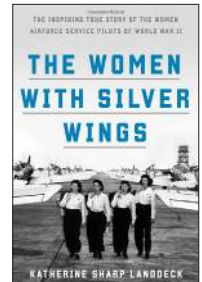
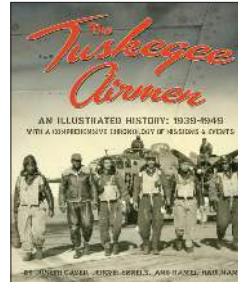
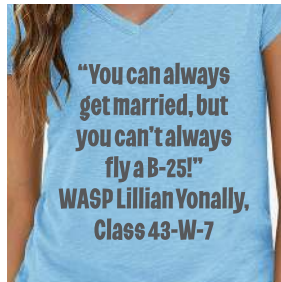
WASP Ethel Meyer Finley, Class W-43-5





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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!

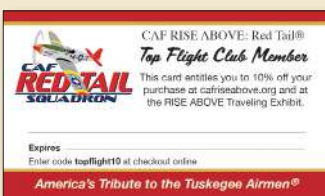
### Why 99? *(for each annual membership)*

#### [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.



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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**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!](#)



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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!

