



# 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 2024



The 2024 show season for both Traveling Exhibit and P-51C has ended, and both are receiving welcome maintenance and repair in anticipation of an aggressive and far-reaching 2025 schedule. The biggest news is RISE ABOVE is traveling west in the Spring of next year, expecting to appear at air shows in Yuma and Tucson, Arizona, Las Vegas, Nevada, western Oklahoma and Abilene, Texas - plus an additional destination surprise or two, potentially, if certain logistical challenges can be overcome. It has been longer than members, supporters or squadron would have liked - and if successful, should portend an even lengthier commitment west before too many further seasons pass.

The excitement of a return west does not diminish the squadron's commitment to bring the important histories of Airmen and WASP to all compass points, however. The season will begin in Tallahassee, Florida and Louisville, Kentucky, resume upon return from the Western swing with stops in Virginia, Massachusetts, Ohio, Wisconsin, Missouri, Tennessee and Colorado...and while details continue to take shape, a final swing through the Midwest and South is likely before season's end.

[Our schedule is a constantly evolving thing](#) - each stop requiring the combination of host, logistics, funding and desire to match at the right places and the right times...and in the case of the Exhibit especially, never too far from the engagement prior or the next in line to make the road trip in between unmanageable.

It always matters to us where our members want us to appear; hopefully these 2025 destinations will be appealing to many...and as work is aggressively apace on 2026, trust that some specific destination requests which have been long-asked-for are in negotiations for next year!

Respectfully,

Chris Allen

Rise Above Road Exhibit Director



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



Submit your essay for the CAF Rise Above Squadron's essay contest saluting the Tuskegee Airmen or the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP)!

Deadline is February 28, 2025

[Using the Six Guiding Principles](#) (**Aim High, Believe in Yourself, Use Your Brain, Be Ready to Go, Never Quit, Expect to Win**) describe how the Tuskegee Airmen or the WASP achieved success, or choose a goal for yourself and show how you could use the Six Guiding Principles to achieve that goal.

Entries will be judged on overall content, including spelling, grammar, and punctuation.  
Each entry must be an original composition written by the student.

The Essay Contest is open to students in the 4th – 12th grade in an accredited school or home school program during the academic year.

Entries must adhere to the following word count guidelines:

- 4th – 5th grades 250 words
- 6th – 8th grades 350 words
- 9th – 12th grades 500 words

Footnotes, citations, endnotes, and essay titles will not be counted as part of the word count allotment.  
Entries must be typed. Each page of the essay must include the author's name, grade level, name of school or home school program, address and telephone number in the upper right-hand corner of each page. This information will not be counted as part of the word count allotment.

Entries become property of the CAF Rise Above Squadron and will not be returned.

Winners will be requested to send their photograph to be featured along with their essay on the CAF Rise Above Squadron website, Facebook page and newsletter.

Entries must be emailed prior to 5:00pm on or before February 28, 2025.

Email your entry to: [info@cafriseabove.org](mailto:info@cafriseabove.org)

Essay contest winners will be announced on March 21, 2025.

Prizes will be awarded to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners in each grade category as follows

1st place: [Tuskegee Airmen Sculpture](#)

2nd place: [Mustang model kit P-51C "Tuskegee Airmen"](#)

3rd place: Choice of an aviator pin

- [Tuskegee Airman](#)
- [WASP Wing pin](#)

All entries will receive a [Rise Above dog tag](#) and [Triumph Over Adversity booklet](#).

## You Can Make a Difference!

The Tuskegee Airmen shaped the future through their ability to *Triumph Over Adversity*.

Established in 1941, this distinguished group of Black Americans were the first pilots to be allowed to fly combat missions in the U.S. military. Together they flew 1,600 missions, destroying over 260 enemy aircraft. In addition to their contribution in combat, the Airmen laid the foundation for desegregation in the armed forces.



Our original short film, played in our Traveling Exhibit, educates communities about the story of the Tuskegee Airmen and the obstacles they overcame to serve their country during WWII. This film was created using outdated technology and we need to update it.

Right now, this history is at risk of being forgotten. Your gift of \$41 or more by December 31st will help us meet our goal to raise \$400,000 to update the CAF RISE ABOVE Traveling Exhibit film.

That's why your support is so important today! Friend, [please give \\$41 or more](#) now and we'll recognize your commitment by sending you our specially designed Tuskegee Airmen Squadron ball cap and RISE ABOVE lapel pin. You can be among our supporters to proudly show your affiliation through this distinctive cap.

Future generations MUST hear the story of how the Tuskegee Airmen rose above any obstacle to fly and fight for America. [Your gift today](#) is vital to advancing our mission to bring this history to life.

P.S. If you've already given, thank you for your generous support! We are currently updating our records. If you haven't donated yet, [please make a gift by December 31st!](#)



## 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.



## My "Missions" for CAF / the "RedTail" P51

I was in my 60's before getting involved in aviation – too old to contribute work in the hangar or fly CAF aircraft but I wanted to help any way I could. I contribute financially but the most enjoyable thing I do is when I fly a Red Tail pilot to pick up, or take to get, the P51.

I met Doug Rozendaal (a "Red Tail" pilot) when he was among college friends on the same dorm floor I had been on, meeting again when we on the same "Senior Hockey" team in Mason City, IA. So, when I bought a second home at an airpark on a Mississippi River island and thought it would be cool to land a plane and park 100' away from the cabin, I looked up Doug about pilot training. After training, I got my PPL the year I turned 60 (then Instrument at year 65, I'm 70 now).

When getting advice regarding my quest for an airplane, Doug emphasized keeping in mind the "mission" goal for the aircraft, which I determined the Grumman Tiger filled – four seats, efficient and reasonable economy.

I seldom fly "just for the sake of flying", usually finding someone wanting to go up for a flight. It occurred to me that Doug was either going to pick up the "RedTail" or taking it somewhere, needing a return flight. I offered to provide one-way rides. Doug said my Tiger was the perfect plane for the mission – economical and reasonably fast. Another bonus I realized when going to Bemidji for annuals in the winter is that the Tiger has stayed warm down below 0oF. This year I had warmer flights taking Doug down to St. Louis, MO to get the Red Tail for OSH and then a few weeks later took him up to OSH to pick up the P51 for a show in New York.

This year I flew 100+ EAA Young Eagles youth, rewarded with finding out one first-flight led to that young man earning an EAA \$12K flight scholarship and another young man given a ride years ago getting his PPL this summer. Along with the "RedTail flights", I've had a lot of rewarding "missions".

Jim Kleinwort





*America's Tribute to the Tuskegee Airmen*

## FEATURED TUSKEGEE AIRMEN PROFILE

**2d Lt Wayne Vincent Liggins**  
**May 16, 1918 - March 9, 1944**  
**Class: 43-F-SE**  
**Graduation Date: June 30, 1943**  
**Graduation Rank: 2d Lt**  
**Unit: 332nd Fighter Group, 301st Fighter Squadron**  
**Service # O-807102**

2nd Lt Liggins completed basic training in Tampa and enrolled in the Air Pilot program in Tuskegee, graduating with the second such class in June of 1943. He married a fellow student he had met at Wilberforce, Kathryn Scott, in July of 1943.

While he continued his training at Selfridge field, he was piloting a plane when something went wrong with the motor and he was forced to land on a private farm in Michigan, owned by Harold E Van Sickle.



The plane was slightly damaged, but he suffered only a few bruises. In December of 1943, he was sent to Italy with the 301st Fighter Squadron.

On March 9, 1944, Vincent was flying out of Montecorvino on a routine training mission when he attempted a force landing, only to have his engine fail and the plane go into a spin. He was killed in the accident. Just the day prior, he had been praised for a successful mission with three others from his squadron.

He was an Anzio beachhead casualty, and his body was returned with 25 other casualties from the Cincinnati area in early July of 1948 for burial. He is buried at Cherry Grove Cemetery in Xenia, Greene County, Ohio.

[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.

**“If you push yourself and you set your mind to it, you can achieve it.”**  
**Tuskegee Airman John Flanagan, Jr.**



617th crew returns from bombing mission  
*Photo courtesy Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell, AFB, Alabama*

### TUSKEGEE AIRMEN: DID YOU KNOW?

On this date, the following Tuskegee Airmen events occurred:

18 December 1944: The 332d Fighter Group flew two missions, one to escort B-24 Liberators of the 49th Bombardment Wing to and from oil refineries at Blechhammer, and one to escort a P-38 on a reconnaissance mission to Innsbruck, Austria (Germany). (332d Fighter Group mission report numbers 135 and 136)

(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)





*Honoring the Women Airforce Service Pilots*

## FEATURED WASP PROFILE

**Mary Louise Webster**

**June 30, 1919 – December 9, 1944**

**Class: 44-W-8**

**Entered Army Air Force flight training: Avenger Field, Sweetwater, Texas, March, 1944**

**Graduated: October 16, 1944**

**Assignment: Administrative pilot, Engineering test pilot**

**Assigned bases: Frederick Army Air Field, Frederick, Oklahoma**

**Planes flown: PT-17, BT-13, AT-6, B-24, UC-78**



After graduation from Avenger on October 18, 1944, and following her 10-day furlough, Mary reported to Frederick Army Airbase to begin her advanced training. Mary and a two-man crew, 21-year-old Lieutenant George Crowe at the controls and 22-year-old Sergeant Melvin Clark, were flying into a cold front with intermittent snow and rain and temperatures dropping. Their UC-78 Bobcat, nicknamed “the bamboo bomber,” was taking them on a cross-country training flight to Chicago from Frederick Army Airfield in southwestern Oklahoma. Following her graduation that October, Mary had reported to Frederick for advanced training in B-24 Liberator bombers. With only 11 days remaining until WASP deactivation, it should have seemed ridiculous to continue training; yet, there she was, flying between Tulsa and Claremore, Oklahoma.

An hour out from Frederick on December 9, the UC-78 was flying at 9,000 feet above the clouds, when Crowe noticed ice forming on the wings. He radioed the air controller and received permission to descend; hoping warmer air would keep more ice from forming. Now, deep in the clouds, the aircraft began to fall and Crowe lost control. The UC-78 fell straight down and crashed, killing everyone aboard.

She was 26, and 11 days away from being discharged with the rest of the WASP when the program was to be disbanded. While they were serving in the Air Corps, WASP were considered civilians, so the Webster family had to pay for her body to be brought back. Webster’s fellow WASP chipped in to have a pilot, Nettie Winfield, escort Webster’s body back to Ellensburg.

In 1977, WASP were formally recognized as military service members and were granted veterans benefits.

[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.



**“Young women can fly wing-tip-to-wing-tip with their brothers in the sky.”  
AAF Commanding General Henry “Hap” Arnold, 1944**



Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) from the 2nd Ferrying Division on the wing of a Thunderbolt, Farmingdale in 1944.  
*Photo courtesy of The WASP Archive, The TWU Libraries' Woman's Collection, Texas Woman's University, Denton, TX*

**WASP: DID YOU KNOW?**

All WASP were women with previous flying experience and pilot's licenses. These women flew over 60 million miles in all kinds of military aircraft. In 1977, the organization acquired a veteran status, waiting until 2009 to be awarded with the Congressional Gold Medal..

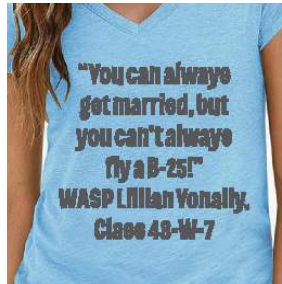


## SHOP WITH WITH A PURPOSE!

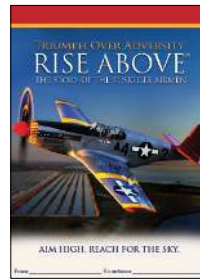
Find great treasures AND honor the history and legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen and WASP!  
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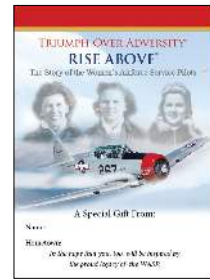
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There's no better way to support our mission to educate, inspire, and honor through flight and living history experiences than by joining a Top Flight Club!

**Why 99?** *(for each 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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**Follow us on Instagram**

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

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

AIM HIGH  
BELIEVE IN YOURSELF  
USE YOUR BRAIN  
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BE READY TO GO  
EXPECT TO WIN



**[You can order these inspirational dog tags here!](#)**