



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).

February 2024



The story of the service rendered during the Second World War by the Tuskegee Airmen and the Women Airforce Service Pilots, and the adversity beyond that global conflict they respectively overcame, is once again touring the nation in 2024, brought into vivid focus through the restored P-51C Mustang flown by the CAF Red Tail Squadron and the traveling history exhibit that is the CAF Rise Above Squadron's educational centerpiece.

The 2024 season began before January was complete, with a week-long stop in Tallahassee at the International Airport. The Tallahassee location, and its sponsor Dr. A.J. Brickler, are Rise Above veterans - this year's was the thirteenth time the exhibit has returned to Florida's

capital city - and are exemplars of how to do it right, with an easily accessible site, plentiful parking, a beautiful well-lit hangar for the P-51 immediately adjacent to the exhibit display...and in this year's instance, a week of absolutely gorgeous weather for the show! Dr. Brickler enhances the visit with historical items pertinent to both Red Tail history and the larger historical struggle the accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen did so much to help our nation advance beyond - including this year's display of the cap-and-ball percussion pistol abolitionist Harriet Tubman carried along the Underground Railroad. With numerous area classrooms supplementing weekday attendance, and a vigorous Saturday blessed by the weather, over a thousand visitors saw the Squadron documentaries about the Airmen and WASPs, to consistent positive response. Though progress is being made, both stories remain less well known than should be so, in general terms, and often misunderstood in specifics; seeing the exhibit films - and creating a personal connection to history through firsthand encounter with the Mustang, an artifact with a beauty and presence all out of proportion to its simple physical dimensions - regularly has a profound, and illuminating, impact on the show's audiences.

But then, as supporters of the Squadron's outreach, you know all that. Having reassured you then that the mission still matters, and the hoped-for effect is still being achieved, let me close by inviting you to come see it at firsthand, as an in-person exhibit volunteer with Rise Above. The framework of the 2024 schedule is already in place, and can be found elsewhere in this newsletter and [on the website](#), with additional schools, events and airshows being added as the calendar moves forward. Whether it be a child visitor who has never seen (or heard!) a Mustang, a young person caught up in the exhilaration of learning aviation history, or a veteran for whom film and aircraft evoke something deeply-felt, nothing will convey satisfaction like being a part of providing them those experiences.

Your support matters. Consider seeing just how much sometime with us at firsthand, in 2024!

Respectfully,
Chris Allen
CAF Rise Above Road Exhibit Director



Chris Allen with Tallahassee Sponsors, Dr. AJ Brickler and his wife, Mildred



Don Larson presents Dr Brickler with a Sam Lyons print



The Turner Family



Ms. Ingram's Rickard High School College Prep Scholars viewed both the Tuskegee Airmen and WASP documentaries



Rickard High School at the Exhibit



The Ford family are joined by Tallahassee event sponsor Dr. AJ Brickler at the CAF Rise Above Squadron's first event of the 2024 season!



The Andrews Family joined their classmates from the Forgotten Coast Home School at the CAF Rise Above exhibit at Flightline Group Inc.

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



John Halbur



Kimberly Homer



We are looking for exceptional volunteers to become CAF Rise Above Ambassadors!

[Click here to learn more.](#)

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.





FEATURED TUSKEGEE AIRMEN PROFILE

America's Tribute to the Tuskegee Airmen

Lt. Samuel G. Leftenant
March 16, 1924 - April 12, 1945
Class 44-H-SE
Graduation Date: September 8, 1944
Graduation Rank: 2d Lt
Unit: 332nd Fighter Group, 99th Fighter Squadron
Service # O-838032
From Amityville, New York

Samuel graduated from flight training on Sept. 8, 1944, at Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama and soon deployed to Italy with the 99th Fighter Squadron 332nd Fighter group.

On April 12, 1945, four weeks before World War II ended in Europe, 2nd Lt Leftenant and fellow P-51 pilot Lt. James L. Hall Jr., his flight leader, were escorting a formation of American bombers on a mission to Germany.

They had left Ramitelli air base in Italy. Fellow Tuskegee pilot, and Leftenant's buddy, George E. Hardy, 19, of Philadelphia, was flying another P-51 nearby.

It was Leftenant's third mission, his family said. He had been overseas less than three months.

Shortly after 3 p.m., Hardy glanced off to his right and saw something sparkling near Leftenant's fighter. Hall's plane and Leftenant's plane had collided, and "the prop chewed part of the other airplane, which caused all this aluminum" to fly off, Hardy said.

Hardy said he saw Leftenant's aircraft start to go down but couldn't stop to help and witnessed nothing more. "Last I saw of him," he said.

Hall and Leftenant both bailed out. Hall was captured and held as a prisoner of war until the war ended. Leftenant transmitted that he could not keep his plane up very much longer, and asked for instructions, 1st Lt. Wendell M. Lucas wrote in a military report. Maj. William Campbell instructed him to fly as far east as possible. The plane seemed to be under control.

Leftenant was never seen again. He was reported "Missing-In-Action" on April 12, 1945 and was declared dead in 1946.

[**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

“What you do now and how you do it, is going to determine the future.”
~ Tuskegee Airman, Gen. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.



Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. United States General



Honoring the Women Airforce Service Pilots

FEATURED WASP PROFILE

Alyce Stevens Rohrer

1922-2024

Class: 44-W-4

Planes flown: PT-17, PT-19, BT-13, AT-6, AT-11, UC-78

Training Location: Avenger Field (Sweetwater, Tex.)

Assigned bases: Perrin Army Air Base (Sherman, Tex.)

Taken from an August 8, 2018 interview with Shannon H. Polson, Author, Veteran and Founder

Before she was fifteen, Rohrer had earned her private pilot's license at the Provo Airport. Her parents expected her to head to Salt Lake City for college, but Rohrer heard about Jackie Cochran's flying program. When she was 18 years old, the Army recruiting bus showed up. She lied about her age (women had to be 21 to be accepted into the WASP program), and climbed aboard to begin the journey of a lifetime.

Her journey was unique both for her time, the 1940s, as well as her family's culture. Growing up Mormon, "girls were expected to get married and have lots of babies," she said. "I never wanted to do that." But her parents "didn't give me any trouble," she says. They knew their daughter, and she had been born to fly.

"I arrived at the barracks [at Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas] with women who had all finished college," Rohrer says. "It was quite a struggle."

"It sounds glamorous, but it wasn't. We were just flying the training aircraft that were all beat up. All they had were BT13s 450 HP and the AT6s Pratt and Whitney 650 HP and most of them were very old, because all of the good new airplanes were being shipped overseas. The ones that were used for training were the ones that had something wrong with them. I enjoyed it because I loved acrobatics."

When the women begin aerobatics training in the Stearman biplane, they are given strict instructions never to do a maneuver below 5,000 feet. Rohrer (Kathleen) is assigned a notoriously tough instructor, and after a successful flight, on return to the airfield at 4,500 feet, he asks her to do a spin. They were much too low to be doing any type of acrobatics, and she knew he was aware of it. He obviously expected her to protest and remind him of the fact in order to show she had been listening to his lecture. It might also just be a ploy to get her to talk to him. The thought increased her irritation. She yanked the nose of the plane high into a stall, kicked left rudder, spun three times, and pulled out at less than 1,000 feet. Glancing in the mirror, she saw him pull out his handkerchief and wipe his forehead."

[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.

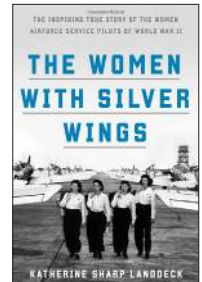
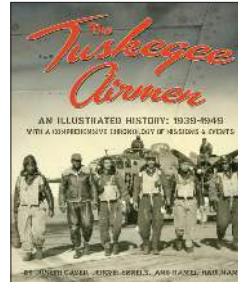
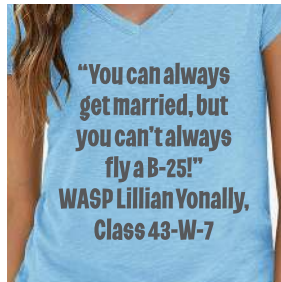
**"Excuses were unacceptable."
WASP Alyce Rohrer, Class 44-W-4**



Pilots in the winter flight suits walking the runway, Avenger Field, Sweetwater, Texas, 1944.
Rohrer (right)

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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.

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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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