

Tuskegee Airmen Essay Contest

Who are the Tuskegee Airmen, and how did their legacy influence millions? In the 1930s and 40s, young passionate African Americans who had the ambition of becoming pilots weren't accepted, sometimes even joining was impossible due to the deeply rooted segregation throughout America, but it was possible. In 1941, the name *Tuskegee Airmen* was first heard. They are remembered as the first African American aviators to train and fly for the US military during World War 2. The journey of the Tuskegee Airmen was tough, from combating enemies abroad as well as fighting for the end of segregation in the military. The Tuskegee Airmen strived to achieve success within the military by overcoming racial prejudices and inspiring millions to continue their legacy. In this essay, I will explain the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen and how they impacted America using their six guiding principles. (1) The Tuskegee Airmen began their training in the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama as they sought an opportunity to become professional pilots. Along with all civilian locations, the US military was also segregated at time which created obstacles amongst the young pilots. The pilots were denied the opportunity to achieve higher status within the army while they were treated with no respect and were discriminated against. They never quit. Despite the obstacles, the Airmen keep aiming high and believing in their self worth to continue studying the courses at the Tuskegee Institute to one day navigate an aircraft. This allowed them to finally incorporate themselves into battle, in which they became navigators for the larger bombers in Europe and North Africa in WW2. Believing in themselves and knowing their worth was essential and crucial in setting the foundation for the end of segregation within the military. (1)

In 1945, a group of Tuskegee Airmen went out and protested near the entrance of the white instructors club because they weren't allowed in, which was a direct violation of AAF regulations. (2)

With their combined efforts they were able to integrate the Executive Order 9981 in 1948 in which the discrimination of race, religion, and color was abolished in the military. Their combined efforts formed the new Air Force, one where the chances and ability to become a pilot is not defined by

someone's color, race, or religion but instead defined by their ambition and skills to fight enemy airlines. Their legacy in the AirForce was the root of the acceptance of black excellence. Their importance in the AirForce is just as important as how they established the cornerstone to inspiring others to also fight for the end of racism outside the military.

Coming home from battle, the Tuskegee Airmen came back to their loved ones after spending continuous months in air. They had expected that serving and giving up their life for America would have changed the minds of American Society, but it didn't. The endless continued fight to end segregation was still in the air despite their contribution to America.

I believe that they're journey through the Tuskegee Institute and dealing with racism inside the base contributed to the Civil Rights movement. It gave hope to those who were fighting, like Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., other influential black figures, even civilians that their efforts can change America, like how the Tuskegee Airmen changed the military. After seeing how they endured racism and ended up eliminating it in the military serves as important in today's world, where people of color are still being discriminated against due to the racism that is still rooted into America.

This is why their legacy is important and should be taught in schools of America because in the end, after all their struggles, they were able to win and succeed props to their six guiding principles; the six principles that encouraged, determined, and influenced their success. We can use their six guiding principles in our world by applying them to goals or for bigger things: to see the end of discrimination.

Learning about the Tuskegee Airmen was defiantly new and found them to be leaders, fighters, and barrier breakers. From becoming the first the African American aviators in the US military to ultimately making change within and outside the military, it's a refreshing story to learn. It's not only convenient to understand the history of the Tuskegee Airmen, but they're collective efforts of non-violent protests helped revolutionize the Air Force gradually and influenced the millions actively protesting in the Civil rights movement with their six guiding principles. If we adapt and use the six guiding principles in

our life, we can carry on the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen in trying to fight for the end of discrimination.

#### Work Cited

1. <https://airandspace.si.edu/stories/editorial/mutiny-freeman-field-tuskegee-airmen-trial-part-2>
2. <https://www.archivesfoundation.org/documents/executive-order-9981-ending-segregation-armed-forces/>