

## CAF Rise Above

The Tuskegee Airmen were a group of black people who were pilots in WWII. They succeeded by using the Six Guiding Principles they created. The Guiding Principles are, **Aim High, Believe in Yourself, Use Your Brain, Be Ready to Go, Never Give Up, and Expect To Win.**

During WWII, the government said all who wanted to be a pilot could sign up in school for training. Although it wasn't really everybody. Only whites could. It didn't change until Mrs. Roosevelt went to the Tuskegee University, a university for blacks only. She wanted to know if they knew how to fly. A black teacher agreed to take her on a flight. Shortly after that, they were qualified to learn. Hundreds of blacks signed up, but only 996 got in. They were taught how to fly, predict weather, and read maps. After all this training, they took the final test. It was to see if they could fly solo, or by themselves. They were very nervous, and one even said that all his dreams could be crushed by one single mistake. As you can guess, they succeeded. Because they **aimed high** and **believed in themselves**. They **aimed high** by trying as hard as they could to do their best. They **believed in themselves** by remembering; if they succeeded, their dreams would come true. And they had! Their dreams had come true! More and more black people signed up to become pilots.

Even though they proved themselves, the government and people still didn't think the Tuskegee would be good pilots. It would take just a short amount of time to prove the government wrong. The government started calling to recruit more pilots. Nobody wanted the Tuskegee Pilots, though. Finally, in March, they were told to go. In April, the Tuskegee arrived at Camp Shanks. Here, there were more experienced pilots. Their first mission was to attack Pantelleria, an Italian island. They did this successfully, but afterwards one of the Tuskegee pilots said it was mostly luck. The Tuskegee pilot also said it was partially because he watched a more experienced non-Tuskegee pilot drop his first. That was **using his brain**. He knew if he launched it by himself, he would have a chance of doing it wrong. But since he **used his brain** and watched before he did it, he had an even higher chance of succeeding. After this, the government gained some respect for them. Some respect.

The Tuskegee Airmen had to go to a different base, called Ramitelli Airfield. The Tuskegee actually felt sad leaving the old one because it was starting to feel like home. But they had to, in order to save Europe, and possibly, the entire world! When the Tuskegee got there, they realized it was a very segregated and discriminated area. But, the Tuskegee Airmen were also treated with a big surprise. It was the P-51 Mustang. They loved the beautiful machinery. After this, they realized something. They would need to identify each other, and also the allied bombers would, too. At the camp, they found red paint. The Tuskegee decided to use this, and they put it on the tails of their planes. Shortly thereafter, they earned the

nickname “The Red Tails.” Soon, they had a mission. Pilots flew into Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Germany, and attacked. Unfortunately, the Military decided to do this at day, so they were seen easily. That’s where the Tuskegee airmen come in. They fought against incoming enemy planes. While doing this, in all their years, not one bomber got destroyed while they were protected by the Tuskegee Airmen. Also, once, the Tuskegee were taking some allied planes to an air raid. Suddenly, they were surrounded. In just a few minutes, they had taken down five enemies. They did this because of being **ready to go**. If they weren’t paying attention, they probably would have been annihilated. All this earned them the nickname, “The Red Tailed *Angels*”. After this, they were also surrounded by German *Jets*. Jets were the newest type of aircraft, and were also faster than the P-51 Mustangs they had. Despite all this, they had destroyed three jets! The Germans started calling the Tuskegee Pilots, “The Black Birdmen,” because of their immense skill. In May, 1944, there was another successful mission. They were attacking German troops on Monastery Hill, Italy. German soldiers started climbing the hill, ready to fire at the aircraft. As soon as they made it to the top, the Tuskegee Airmen’s bombs exploded all around. The soldiers freaked out, and scattered. Soon, the German’s attack was abandoned. But the Tuskegee Airmen wouldn’t stop here. No, they went to a nearby German fortress, and forced it to surrender, too. And even with all this, they **never gave up**. Things were hard sometimes, but they **did not give up**.

With all these flights, the Tuskegee Airmen had gained respect from the government and other pilots. But, there were other people who they hadn’t gained the respect of; people at home! When the war was over, the military said, “We don’t need you anymore, the war is over,” and the Tuskegee airmen became the usual things black people became which were elevator operators, janitors, porters, and things like that and they weren’t treated like they were people formerly in the military! But even though they wanted to help in war, the Tuskegee Airmen also had a side goal; to eliminate segregation and discrimination in their home country by showing white people they are capable of many things. Through all of this, they **expected to win**. Winning, to the Tuskegee, meant winning the war. Winning back at home meant proving to whites that African Americans could do jobs whites could do.

Now that I have seen how the Tuskegee Airmen used the principles, I can use them myself to reach my goals. I can **Aim high** by doing my best in school. I can **Believe in Myself** by thinking I will do well. I can **Use My Brain** by scoring high on tests. I can be **Ready to Go** by being ready for a surprise test. I can **Never Give Up** by not dropping out of school. Lastly, **Expecting to win** for me would be doing well in school. Doing well in school would allow me to become an Astronomer.