



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 2022

We finished out 2022 with the annual International Council of Airshows (ICAS) annual convention in Las Vegas in early December. This is where the airshow producers, performers and support vendors gather to book their schedules for the next two seasons. Our new Logistics Coordinator Keri Ryan had done a great job filling up much of our 2023 schedule before we arrived, and so our mission was to fill in the open slots and start working on our 2024 schedule. The military jet teams announce their plans a year in advance now and that has been a great help to our business.

This year's ICAS attendees were LaVone Kay, Keri Ryan, Melanie Burden, Kim Pardon, Bill Shepard, and me. In addition to building our schedule there are several seminars on all aspects of our business and it is an opportunity to network with other performers and producers.

The CAF updated our display area this year with a new and very impressive booth space. The overall vibe of the convention was positive, and the CAF area was busy all week. The takeaway is that it is going to be a busy 2023! And now with our P-51 back on flying status and most of our pilots non-current, the next order of business is recurrency/requalification training. We are upping our game this year and all our pilots will meet in Atlanta in mid-January for an expanded training session. The CAF Airbase Georgia has a full dual control Mustang and has graciously agreed to help us get everyone back up to speed.

I think the thing that struck me most at ICAS was that after 10 years on the Road with our Rise Above Exhibit, the demand and enthusiasm is stronger now than ever. The message of "Hope and Opportunity" resonates with people after 2 years of uncertainty that has resulted from Covid and the associated shutdowns.

[Check out the 2023 schedule](#) - hopefully we will be in a city near you. If so, we always like to meet our supporters so stop by, introduce yourself, and say hello! We could not do it without your support!

Tailwinds,
Doug Rozendaal
Squadron Leader





America's Tribute to the Tuskegee Airmen

FEATURED TUSKEGEE AIRMEN PROFILE

William Handy Accoo

October 14, 1914 – August 27, 2008

William Accoo was drafted into the service in 1942 and fought with distinction for the 332nd Fighter Group, 99th Fighter Squadron during its World War II campaigns in North Africa, Sicily and Italy. For his service he was awarded a bronze replica of the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor in 2007 by Congressman Frank LoBiondoin Salem.

Upon his honorable discharge in 1945, he worked for A.W. Davis Lumber Co. for 26 years until the company went out of business. He worked at Mannington Mills in Salem County New Jersey until he retired in 1980.

He met the then Ida Mitchell when she was a popular school teacher in town, they married and raised their family here.

In the community, William Accoo was a dedicated member of the Mt. Hope United Methodist Church in Salem, overseeing its restoration after a fire destroyed the sanctuary and Sunday School room several years ago.

He became the first commander of the American Legion Post 444, and in 1963 was sworn in as the city's first black councilman, a position he held until 1966. He served on the mayor's task force and advocated for the Community Action Group.

"Being a councilman was a real highlight for him," Ida Accoo said. "There wasn't a lazy bone in his body."

He served on the United Way of Salem County Board of Directors for 21 years and organized a youth group called the Valiants.

[**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 have that drive, and are given the opportunity, there’s nothing you can’t accomplish”
~Tuskegee Airman John Adams, Jr.



An US Army Air Corps pilot landing his BT-13 Valiant aircraft at Gunther Field in Montgomery, AL
Taylor Field

During the Second World War, Taylor Field was used as one of 7 auxiliary airfields to support flight training operations at Gunter Field.

It was known during WW2 as Taylor Auxiliary Army Airfield #5.





Honoring the Women Airforce Service Pilots

FEATURED WASP PROFILE

Beverly Loyola Beesemyer

August 25, 1918 - 2019

Class: 44-W-6

Training Location: Avenger Field (Sweetwater, Tex.)

Assigned Bases: Merced Army Air Field (Calif.) and Las Vegas Army Air Field (Nev.)

Planes flown: PT-17, BT-13, AT-6, PT-22, B-17, AT-10, B-26, P-39

When World War II broke out, Beverly, like other women and men, sought a way to join the war effort. Women were barred from enlisting in the military, so she took a job at Lockheed Aircraft Co. in Burbank, California, working as a dispatcher and expeditor. Then, in 1943, she heard about a little-known opportunity for women to aid the U.S. Army.

With so many experienced pilots assigned to the war zones, the Army needed flight trainers. Only women who already knew how to fly could qualify, so Beesemyer took a leave of absence from Lockheed, paid for flying lessons and achieved the minimum 35 hours of flight time. Soon enough she became one of the few accepted for Army training at Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas.



Beesemyer once recalled getting off the train from California wearing a dress and high heels and, along with other WASP, climbing into the cargo trailer of a semi-truck. Once on the base, they lined up to receive their flight clothes, parachutes and other equipment.

Among other things, Beesemyer trained male pilots to use machine guns to attack enemy aircraft. "I towed targets and they fired 50 caliber machine guns at the sock (target) I was towing," she said during an interview at her home.

Her plane was hit by errant fire once, but she wasn't injured. But 38 of her colleagues died between 1942 and 1944 while transporting aircraft, conducting training or other military work.

After the WASP were disbanded, Beesemyer wasn't done flying. She eventually found a job as a flying instructor at the airport in Monrovia Airport in California, flying and then to ferrying planes from the factory to their destination.

[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.

"We were given the opportunity to fly wonderful aircraft that women hadn't flown. We were the experimental thing."

WASP Beverly Beesemyer



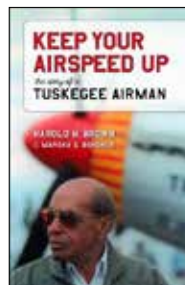
Beverly Beesemyer with her parachute gear during WWII

Find great treasures AND honor the history and legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen and WASP!

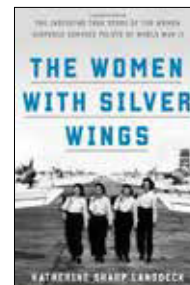
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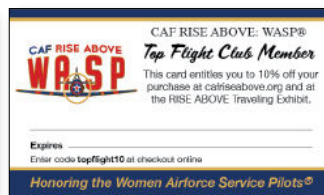
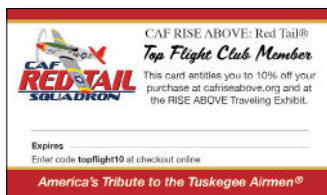
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For \$99 you can join the exclusive ranks of the Top Flight Club!

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 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.



Essay Contest

For students in 4th - 12th grade!

Aim High, Believe in Yourself, Use Your Brain, Be Ready to Go, Never Quit, Expect to Win

Inspire your students with the remarkable story of the Tuskegee Airmen and Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) by participating in the CAF Rise Above Squadron's Essay Contest!

The contest is a fun way to help students learn about the achievements of the Tuskegee Airmen and the WASP. They will get the chance to put into action what they have learned about the importance of education, training and especially determination, based on the Tuskegee Airmen and WASP example of overcoming adversity.

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

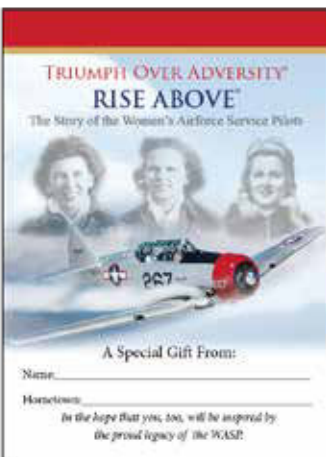
Educational resources



Find a wealth of information about the Tuskegee Airmen or WASP, educational resources and more. Look for [RESOURCES](#) in the menu bar!

Our **free, downloadable RISE ABOVE Resource Kits** provides users access to posters featuring the Six Guiding Principles, PowerPoint's, classroom activities and a wealth of material about the Tuskegee Airmen and the WASP.

Purchase dog tags featuring the Six Guiding Principles, DVDs, and other materials to enhance your classroom activities in the [online store](#).





Please help us ensure that the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen and WASP is passed on to future generations, so that their strength of character, courage and ability to triumph over adversity may serve as a means to inspire others to RISE ABOVE obstacles in their own lives and achieve their goals!

WAYS TO GIVE

- Does your employer have a matching gift program? Your donation to the CAF Rise Above may be able to be doubled or tripled. Ask your employer for details.
- Include the CAF Rise Above as a beneficiary in your will
- Name the CAF Rise Above as a beneficiary of a gift that pays you income (a remainder trust or gift annuity)
- Name the CAF Rise Above as the beneficiary of your investment portfolio or retirement account (IRA, Roth IRA, 401K, etc.)
- Leave a gift of real estate to the CAF Rise Above
- Name the CAF Rise Above as the owner and/or beneficiary of your life insurance policy

[Give online](#), or call 888-928-0188, or by mail at:

CAF RISE ABOVE
PO Box 416
Red Wing, MN 55066

The CAF RISE ABOVE® is an educational outreach program of the [Commemorative Air Force](#), (CAF) a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your contribution is tax deductible less the value of the benefits given in return for your contribution noted above, if any. CAF FEIN # 74-1484491

Please mail correspondence or donations to our home office at:

CAF RISE ABOVE®
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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!](#)



RISE ABOVE: Red Tail - Stay up to date in real time on Twitter

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!

