

Rise Above Essay

In 2019 my family went on vacation to Oshkosh AirVenture in Wisconsin. Among many amazing experiences, the highlight of our trip happened when my Mom spotted a banner reading “Tuskegee Airmen” hanging from a tent near the warbird area of the air show. I was very interested in meeting them after hearing a story my Mom told my sister and I about the Tuskegee Airmen, and their P-51 Mustangs with the red tails. She told us about the difficulties these amazing men faced, and how important they were to the history of our country. We entered the tent and met Lt. Col. Harry Stewart and Col. James Harvey III. As we talked I noticed Col. Harvey’s hat, which said “First Top Gun Pilot, P-47, Winner”.

I then learned that Col. Harvey had not only flown a P-47 Thunderbolt in WWII, but had also won the first Top Gun competition while flying a P-47! Overjoyed, I told Col. Harvey and Lt. Col. Stewart that I loved the P-47, it is my favorite plane. I liked the way it looked and had read about it being a hard plane to bring down in combat. They kindly signed my autograph book and took a picture with me. Lt. Stewart called me a “fellow Jug pilot”.

Since that day, I have learned more about the Tuskegee Airmen and the hardships they faced. Their stories have inspired me to “Aim High” and hopefully become a pilot one day. Their bravery has encouraged me to “Believe in Myself” when I face challenges in my own life. When I struggle in school, I remember my goal of becoming a pilot, and I’m driven to “Use My Brain” and get good grades. I want to sleep in, but to succeed, I must “Be Ready to Go”. Sometimes, I

want to give up when math seems too hard, but I remember to “Never Quit”. Every day, I “Expect to Win” no matter what the day has to throw at me.

I will always remember these men, and I am thankful for how they changed my thoughts about my future.