



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).

January 2024



Our annual trek to Las Vegas for the ICAS convention was again successful. Keri and Melanie did a great job in the Commemorative Air Force's massive booth and we had lots of interest by airshows all across America and have a good start on our 2024 schedule. Keri will be following up and confirming those contacts this month so be sure to [check our events calendar](#) periodically for updates!

We start our season in late January in this year with our annual visit to Tallahassee, Florida where Dr. A.J. Bricker hosts us and brings hundreds of school kids to the airport to see the exhibit and the airplane. Dr. Bricker is a long time supporter and we look forward to that as our first stop of the year.

On our list of things to do for 2024 is to begin the process of updating the Tuskegee Airmen story in the Exhibit. Technology has improved and we learned a lot in the first version of the story, and even more making the WASP movie. We are in the [fund raising](#) stage right now and when we have enough secured we will start that process. Our program has been well received since its inception, but we want to do better. Creating a new story is both exciting and scary, but I am confident we will have something even better when it is done!

On the airplane front, the Mustang is finishing winter maintenance as I write this and it will go to Dallas for a short stay at the National Aviation Education Center at CAF headquarters before going to Tallahassee. It was an easy annual with no major maintenance issues at all.

The last item is our annual pilot ground school and recurrent flight training. That is the last thing remaining to launch us into our next season. We are planning on another good year and we hope to see you out on the road somewhere this season. Happy New Year!!!

Tailwinds,
Doug Rozendaal
Rise Above Squadron Leader



Brad Lang departing in the
P-51C Tuskegee Mustang.
Photo courtesy
Phantomphan1974 Photography

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.

The Tuskegee Principles

On the field trip I learned many things. I learned about planes, how they fly, and how they work. But most importantly I learned the six Tuskegee principles. I know how to aim high to get good goals. I will believe in myself to start those goals. I will use my brain to help me meet those goals. I will never quit to finish those goals. I will be ready to go to always be ready for any challenge. I will expect to win those goals every time because of the lesson I learned about the Red Tails. The Tuskegee principles will guide my life as long as I live because I know they will help me accomplish my dreams.

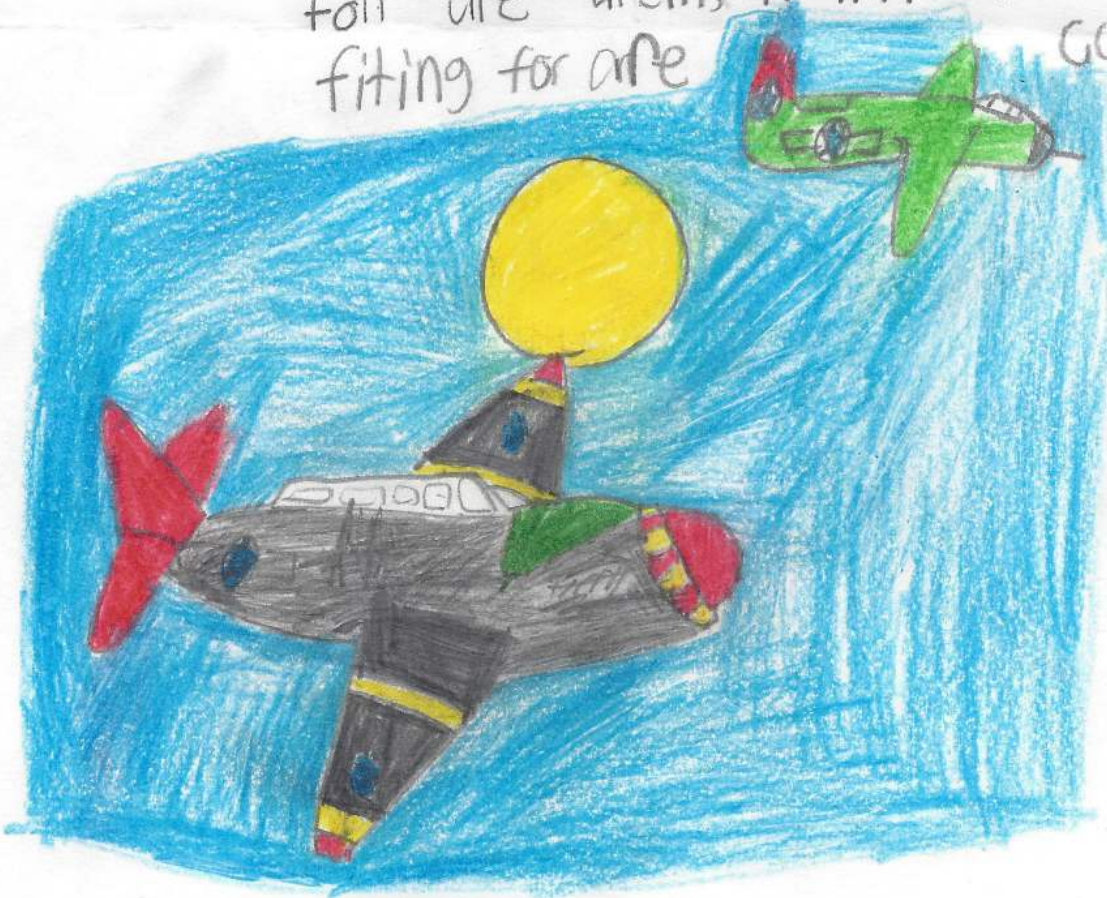
Student Chase Spooner

The movie about the Tuskegee airmen was awesome and so inspiring. Our field trip to the DeRidder airport was one of the best and next time you'll be in town I'll recommend you'll to everyone. The planes in the DeRidder airport were very cool. The P-51c mustang was very cool. You'll told me to aim high and now I want to be a veterinarian, I will use my brain, and never quit studying to be one. I still remember how the face of the colored got changed when Eleanor Roosevelt didn't care if a black man flew her in a plane. We might not have won WWII if it wasn't for the Tuskegee airmen because they escorted our bombers. The Tuskegee airmen were very brave because they went through a hard time for African Americans. Even when they got home the United States of America was still a segregated country. Thank you for letting our class watch rise above and never stop inspiring people to chase their dreams.

Student Drew Brown

Dear Tuskegee Airman,

I learned that Wall
had to fit in segregation
and you told us to
follow our dreams thank you for
fitting for our country.



From your friend Damian Ruhnow

Your support enables us to reach children and inspire them with the lessons and legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen and WASP!



[Please donate \\$41](#) or more today to help update the Red Tail film telling the story of the Tuskegee Airmen in our mobile movie theater.

Based on our experience over the past years, we know the story of the Tuskegee Airmen resonates with young people and that it is a powerful and inspirational story that can impact everyone's life. That is rewarding work and we hope you will join us in that endeavor.

Calling all students 4th through 12th grade!

Submit your essay for the CAF Rise Above Squadron's annual essay contest saluting the Tuskegee Airmen and WASP!

Entries must be emailed prior to 5:00pm on or before February 15, 2024. Email your entry to: info@cafriseabove.org

Essay contest winners will be announced on March 15, 2024.

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

[Be sure to download the free Rise Above Resource kit for great information about the Tuskegee Airmen!](#)



Essay Contest



America's Tribute to the Tuskegee Airmen

FEATURED TUSKEGEE AIRMEN PROFILE

Halbert Leo Alexander

June 12 1922 – March 25, 1953

Class: 44-I-SE

Graduation date: 11/20/1944

Rank at time of graduation: 2nd Lt.

Unit: 99th Fighter Squadron

Service # 0839082

From: Georgetown, IL

First Lieutenant Halbert Alexander was assigned to the 99th Fighter Squadron. He also flew as alternate pilot for the first Gunnery Meet in May of 1949.

The then Chief of Staff of the Air Force sent a directive to all the fighter groups in the United States, stating there would be a competition between the three highest scoring fighter groups. This was the first Gunnery Meet the Air Force ever held.

The 332nd Fighter Group, had impressive scores, and despite the racial tension at that time, was invited to the competition. The primary competitors were: Capt. Alva Temple, 301st Fighter Squadron; 1st Lt. Harry Stewart, 100th Fighter Squadron; and 1st Lt. James Harvey, 99th Fighter Squadron. The alternate was 1st Lt. Halbert Alexander also from the 99th FS.

There were only two trophies to be presented, one for best team and one for best individual, and Col. Benjamin Davis, 332nd Group commander, told his four pilots, "If you don't win, don't come back."

The 332nd Group's competitors were flying P-51 Mustangs and F-82 Twin Mustangs. The Tuskegee Airmen were flying obsolete P-47 Thunderbolt. The missions were aerial gunnery at 12,000 and 20,000 feet, dive bombing, skip bombing, rocket firing and panel strafing.

The trophy somehow disappeared, but Zellie Orr, president of the Tuskegee Airmen chapter in Atlanta, made it her mission to find the trophy. After five days she found it in the storage area of the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force at Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio.

Halbert Alexander was later killed in an F-86 Aircraft accident over one of the New England States.

[**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 ARMEN QUOTE OF THE MONTH

**Performance is the measure of merit.
~ Chief Charles Anderson**

The pilots from the 332nd Fighter Group team won the conventional (propeller) aircraft category at an Air Force gunnery meet in Las Vegas in 1949. Another fighter group won the jet airplane category. The names of both groups were later engraved on a large trophy. The names of two other groups, that won the meet in 1950, were also later engraved on the trophy, but by 1950, the 332nd Fighter Group had been inactivated. The trophy is now displayed at the National Museum of the United States Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio, at Dayton.

Shown L. to R. Lt Halbert Alexander (alternate pilot), Lt James Harvey, Capt Alva Temple, and Lt Harry Stewart.

[Learn more about the 1949 Gunnery Meet](#)



Photos courtesy Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell, AFB, Alabama



Honoring the Women Airforce Service Pilots

FEATURED WASP PROFILE

Dawn Y. Rochow Balden Seymour

July 1, 1917 - July 18, 2017

Class: 43-W-5

Training Location: Avenger Field (Sweetwater, Tex.)

Assigned Bases: New Castle Army Air Base (Wilmington, Del.), Buckingham Army Air Field (Fort Myers, Fla.), Roswell Army Air Base (N. M.) and Lockbourne Army Air Base (Columbus, Ohio)

Planes flown: PT-17, AT-6, B-26, B-17

Dawn Seymour graduated Cornell University in the Class of 1939. She was 22 years old, and while she had not had tremendous exposure to flying, she had a favorite tree to climb when she was young, and had found something attractive about being “Up above.”

Following her graduation, Seymour was approached by Professor Richard Parmenter who offered her a once in a lifetime opportunity. He explained that he had been tasked with running an experiment, under the Civilian Pilot Training Program – whereby he could accept one female candidate for pilot training, for every 10 students enrolled. Seymour had never flown before – so Parmenter took her over to the Ithaca airport, and on October 16, 1944 she would take her first flight in a yellow Piper cub.

When she learned of the new WASP Program, she enrolled and was accepted for training as part of Class 43-W-5. Following her training at Sweetwater, Seymour was assigned to Lockbourne Army Air Field where she was to be trained to fly the B-17 Flying Fortress. On her first flight in a B-17, the number three engine caught fire, and Seymour thought to herself “Oh my goodness, this is the airplane for me!”

Following the completion of her B-17 Training, Seymour would be stationed at Buckingham Army Air Field in Florida, where she would fly B-17s being used for gunnery training. Each day, she would take up a B-17 loaded with gunnery cadets, and each of them would take turns practicing shooting at moving targets, from the moving B-17. Seymour has more than 700 hours in the B-17.

[**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.

"I wanted to serve my country in a very active way."- Dawn Seymour, Class 43-W-5



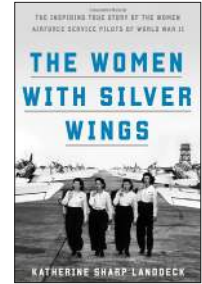
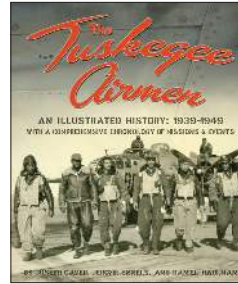
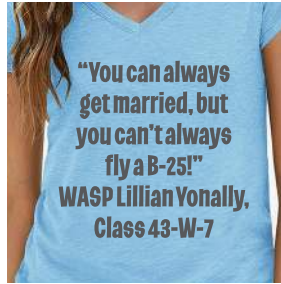
Dawn Seymour, at left, with five other Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) in front of a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress at Fort Myers, Florida, in 1944



Dawn Seymour in the B-17 Flying Fortress

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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!

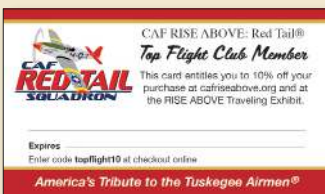
Why 99? (for each annual membership)

[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.



Please mail correspondence or donations to our home office at:

CAF RISE ABOVE®
PO Box 416
Red Wing, MN 55066



To bring RISE ABOVE to your event, contact:

Keri Ryan
Senior Logistics Coordinator
logistics@cafriseabove.org
(802) 371-8838

Doug Rozendaal
Squadron Leader
leader@cafriseabove.org

Kim Pardon
Public Relations/Media
PR@cafriseabove.org

For general inquiries, contact:

LaVone Kay
Marketing Director & Donor Support
info@cafriseabove.org
(888) 928-0188

Melanie Burden
Volunteer Coordinator
volunteer@cafriseabove.org

Chris Allen
Traveling Exhibit Manager
Exhibit@cafriseabove.org

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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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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!](#)

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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!