



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).

May 2024



Without question, air shows are the bread-and-butter venues for the CAF Rise Above Squadron to present the still-undertold stories of the Tuskegee Airmen and the Women Airforce Service Pilots; air shows are by definition places where the audience is likeliest to be receptive to - and may even recognize - the 'Red Tails' or the 'WASP.' A cursory glance at any year's show schedule (including 2024's) will illustrate the predominance of air shows as venues...and of course for the jewel of the Squadron, our P-51C, an air field is something of a necessity!

It is worth remembering, however, that the road exhibit is a more flexible thing - and in many ways a unique asset in the CAF 'history-through-a-tangible-object' fleet. The road exhibit can get - and has gotten - into places to tell these essential stories which have no airfield. It can still do this in conjunction with the Mustang - I am thinking of shows such as last year's Festival of Transportation at the Port of Monroe, Michigan, where the P-51C and other vintage aircraft made event overflights from a nearby field but the road exhibit was an anchor attraction at the actual festival, or the Memorial Day Parade in Omaha, Nebraska, with the P-51C overflying the parade and the exhibit set up at its conclusion - BUT the exhibit can also show as entirely its own thing, and has done so at graduations, at groundbreaking, at ceremonies honouring Airmen, at historical celebrations and, probably most commonly, as 'field trips which come to the students,' at school campuses all over the country.

What these opportunities require, however, is 'boots on the ground' to recon them. Or perhaps even to recruit them. Squadron staff and logistics has the chance to meet with air show promoters at gatherings throughout the year...but there are no such similar things, for one-off events which the traveling theater might be perfect for. THOSE happen either because someone associated with them experiences the stories we tell and comes to us, or because someone who knows and loves the histories we are keeping alive sees such an opportunity, and brings us to them.

This is a real chance for all who believe in the mission of CAF Rise Above, to become '[Volunteer Ambassadors](#)' in a tremendously tangible way. Consider the matches which might make sense, wherever you are. And then consider how any such interested match might be able to offset the expenses of bringing the exhibit in. For schools, field trip funds should be considered (even though we are coming to them); for schools and any other potential site, sponsors are often very eager to associate themselves with our message, if they only know about the possibility (car dealerships especially seem common partners). And of course taking advantage of this kind of opportunity in conjunction with an air show makes both logistic and fiscal sense: a terrific example is the upcoming August Rochester Air Show, where Squadron members and volunteers have undertaken not only to find sponsors for both exhibit and Mustang to attend the air show, but tied an additional school and camp experience in nearby, for the exhibit, in the week prior (applause due to Amy Marie Beechler and Duane Sims for this exemplary work - and for inspiring this month's View, in the process!).

Every person who might see the documentaries and learn the histories we are dedicated to preserving who never would, if you did not find such an opportunity, would be a legacy worth the efforts you expend...and you would have the gratitude and thanks of the entire CAF Rise Above Squadron community, in the doing.

Respectfully,
Chris Allen
CAF Rise Above Road Exhibit Director



Tuskegee Airman Daniel Keel - 101 years old last September - made it to MacDill Air Force Base in March 2024 to see CAF Red Tail Squadron's P-51C honoring the Air-men's service. Keel accomplished the rare feat of achieving ratings as a pilot, bomb-ardier and navigator and was commissioned as a B-25 medium bomber aircraft commander by war's end. Rise Above!



The Baptist Hill, SC, JROTC visited the CAF Rise Above Traveling Exhibit at Joint Base Charleston



Wyatt Wojtalik currently 'flies' a Corsair pedal car built by his dad (a pretty ideal way to take in the Air Show at Joint Base Charleston)...but *someday*



Torie and Annabelle Poole braved weather in Charleston, SC, to experience the P-51C firsthand at the CAF Rise Above Traveling Exhibit!

Thank you to our Ambassadors for being our “Boots on the Ground”



John Halbur



Judy Halbur and Shelly Burr

We are looking for exceptional volunteers to become CAF Rise Above Ambassadors!

[Click here to learn more.](#)

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.





FEATURED TUSKEGEE AIRMEN PROFILE

America's Tribute to the Tuskegee Airmen

Stanley Harris

April 11, 1919 - August 5, 2001

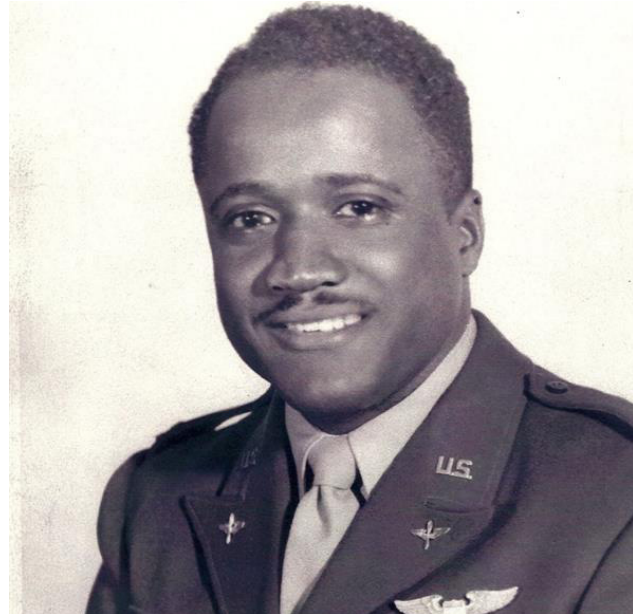
Class: 43-K-SE

Graduation date: 12/5/1943

Unit: 301 Fighter Squadro

Service # 0817587

After graduation from Washington High School, Stanley entered the University of Minnesota. On December 5, 1943, after two years of college, he enlisted in the Army Air Force and was sent to Moten Airfield in Tuskegee, Alabama. In March of 1943 he graduated from flying school and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant. He was sent to Ramitelli, Italy to join the 301st Fighter Squadron of the 332nd Fighter Group – a part of the 15th Air Force.



The planes assigned to the 332nd were P-51 Mustangs, the first fighter planes able to fly long distances without refueling. Their mission was to escort the bombers as they flew deep into Germany to bomb and strafe the countryside.

Stanley returned to the United States in April 1945. He had flown 77 missions. He received the following medals:

- Air Medal with 1 silver and 1 bronze oak cluster.
- American Theatre Ribbon
- EAME (for service in Europe, Africa and the Middle East)
- 2 Overseas Service Bars
- Victory Medal
- Distinguished Flying Cross

Stanley returned to the University of Minnesota and graduated with a degree in electrical engineering. He was the first Black engineer hired by Minneapolis Honeywell. He left Honeywell and moved to Sunnyvale, California where he worked for Lockheed Missiles and Space Division for 37 years.

[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.

“The first thing I did when I arrived at TAAF was to go to the flight line and watch those Black Pilots fly over. An all Black unit, we were all together. I wanted to see America become Ameri-can—America the Beautiful”.

~ Tuskegee Airman William “Joe” Johnson



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



Honoring the Women Airforce Service Pilots

FEATURED WASP PROFILE

Cornelia Clark Fort

February 5, 1919 – March 21, 1943

Class: WAFS "The Originals"

Planes flown: PT-19, PT-26, BT-13, AT-6

Training Location: New Castle Army Air Base (Wilmington, Del.)

Assigned Bases: New Castle Army Air Base (Wilmington, Del.) and Love Field (Dallas, Tex.)

Cornelia Clark Fort was a United States aviator who became famous for being part of two aviation-related events. The first occurred while conducting a civilian training flight at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 when she was the first United States pilot to encounter the Japanese air fleet during the Attack on Pearl Harbor. She and her student narrowly escaped a mid-air collision with the Japanese aircraft and a strafing attack after making an emergency landing.



The following year, Fort became the second member of what was to become the Women Airforce Service Pilots or WASP. Nancy Love recruited her to serve in the newly established Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAF), precursor to the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP). She was the second woman accepted into the service.

Stationed at the 6th Ferrying Group base at Long Beach, California, Cornelia Fort became the first WAFS fatality. On March 21, 1943, while flying in formation enroute from Long Beach to Love Field in Dallas, the left wing of her BT-13 was struck by the landing gear of flight officer Frank Stamme Jr.'s plane. Stamme had been flying too close to Fort's plane, approaching her and then pulling back. On one of the close passes, the collision took place, breaking off the tip of her wing and six feet of leading edge. He was able to control his plane, but Fort went into an irreversible dive and crashed. The accident occurred ten miles south of Merkel, Texas in Mulberry Canyon, Texas. At the time of the accident, Cornelia Fort was one of the most accomplished pilots of the WASP. The footstone of her grave is inscribed, "Killed in the Service of Her Country."

Cornelia Fort was portrayed in the film *Tora! Tora! Tora!* by actress Jeff Donnell. The Cornelia Fort Airpark in East Nashville is named after her.

[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, for one, am profoundly grateful that my one talent, my only knowledge, flying, happens to be of use to my country when it is needed.”

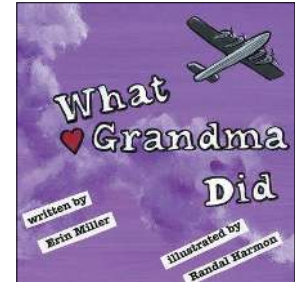
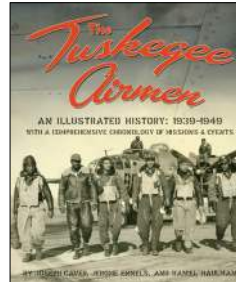
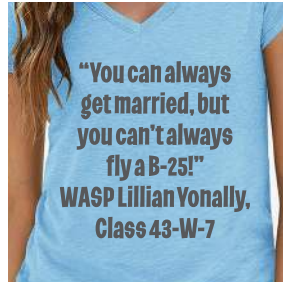
Cornelia Fort, WAFS



Cornelia Fort posing with other WASP

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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!

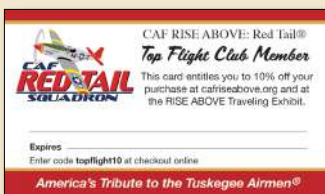
Why 99? *(for each annual membership)*

[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:

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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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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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