



TUSKEGEE AIRMEN



PIMA AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM



TUSKEGEE AIRMEN



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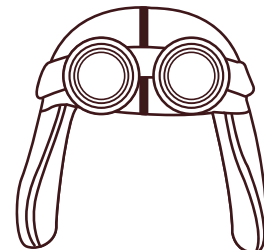
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THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN



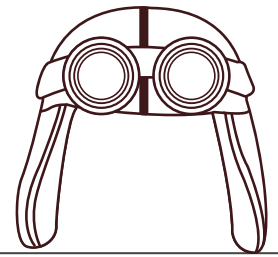
HISTORY OF THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

The group known as the Tuskegee Airmen refers to all people (men, women, black, white, enlisted, officer) who served or were trained at the Tuskegee Army Airfield in Alabama. In 1939, Congress passed the Civilian Pilot Training Act to increase the number of trained pilots available leading up to the United States' entry into World War II. The act allowed universities and colleges to train civilian pilots. There was a provision in the act to allow black students to train, although those training schools remained segregated.

In July of 1941 construction began on the Tuskegee Army Airfield and the first class of cadets arrived for pre-flight training. By October of 1941, 7 classes of cadet pilots had graduated from Tuskegee and the 332nd Fighter Group was activated, becoming the first African American group in the Army Air Force. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and the United States entered World War II, the need for qualified pilots increased dramatically. In addition to multiple fighter squadrons, maintenance, service, and medical squadrons were also added to the 332nd. The 99th Fighter Squadron was the first African American squadron in the Army Air Force to be sent overseas for combat, arriving in Morocco in April 1943. They encountered enemy aircraft for the first time in June of that year, with their first aerial victory occurring in July over Italy when 1st Lt. Charles B. Hall shot down an enemy plane.

Over the next months and years, more black pilots were sent overseas as part of segregated groups and squadrons. Some of the most well-known missions they flew were as bomber escorts. Known as the Red Tails for the red markings on the tails of their P-51 Mustangs, these squadrons provided cover and protection for bomb groups from enemy planes. While the myth that they never lost a bomber to enemy fire has been widely circulated, the truth is no less impressive; they had one of the lowest loss records of all fighter escort groups during WWII.

THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN



When people hear the term “Tuskegee Airmen” they often associate the term only with pilots. However, as mentioned earlier, anyone who received training or was stationed at the Tuskegee Army Airfield during WWII is considered a Tuskegee Airman. Some other roles Tuskegee Airmen filled included aircraft mechanics, navigators, meteorologists, control tower operators, administrative assistants, and instructors.

Legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen

During WWII, the 332nd and its servicemembers were awarded numerous honors and medals for their service. These include three Presidential Unit Citations, 96 Distinguished Flying Crosses, multiple Air Medals and Bronze Stars, and a Silver Star.

Due in large part to the success of the Tuskegee Airmen and other black units in the military during WWII, President Truman enacted Executive Order 9981 in 1948, which stated that “...there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Armed Services without regard to race...”. Although not explicitly stated in the order, it eventually led to the United States military becoming desegregated, paving the way for people of color to serve and be promoted equally.

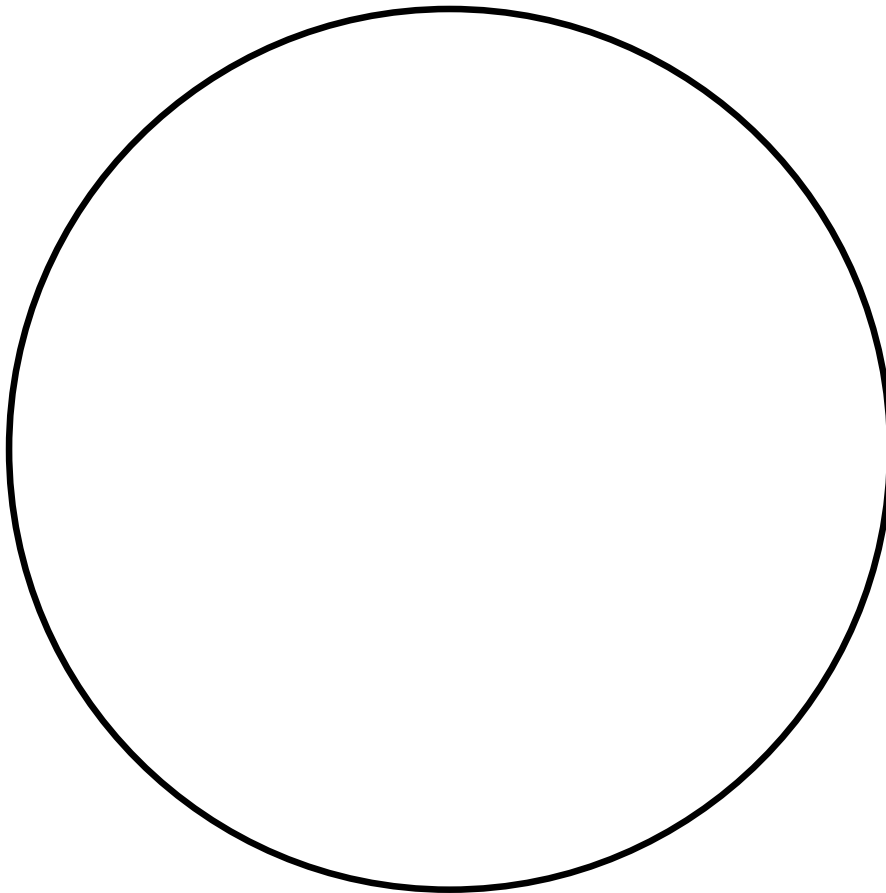
Many members of the Tuskegee Airmen went on to have distinguished careers in the United States military. Benjamin O. Davis, a fighter pilot with the 99th Squadron, became the first African American general in the United States Air Force after it became its own branch in September 1947. Charles McGee and Daniel James Jr. both remained in the military and flew combat missions in WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War earning various awards and citations. Daniel “Chappie” James, who served as a training instructor at Tuskegee during WWII, became the first African American four-star general in the Air Force.

On March 29, 2007, President Bush awarded the Tuskegee Airmen with the Congressional Medal of Honor. Surviving Tuskegee Airmen as well as relatives of fallen servicemembers attended the ceremony to honor their sacrifices and heroism in the face of not only a world war, but racism and discrimination from fellow countrymen as well

TUSKEGEE QUARTER DESIGN

To commemorate the Tuskegee Airmen's service during World War II, the United States Mint designed the Alabama quarter in their America the Beautiful series to represent the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site. The "tails" design on the quarter shows a Tuskegee Airman pilot looking up at two P-51 Mustangs as they fly over the Tuskegee Airfield. Inscribed above is the phrase "They Fought Two Wars" as a reference to the fact that they fought in WWII while simultaneously fighting racism and discrimination in their own country.

Directions: Design your own quarter below to represent the Tuskegee Airmen along with a phrase to go on the quarter.



TUSKEGEE TIMELINE

Using the provided reading, create a timeline of significant events in the Tuskegee Airmen group's creation up until the first aerial victory credited to the group. You must have at least 5 events on the timeline.



FREEMAN FIELD MUTINY

Watch the first 9 minutes of “The Red Tail Angels- The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen” Part 3.

Imagine you are the defense lawyer defending Lt. Roger Terry against his court martial charge and come up with a 3–5-minute oral defense to be presented in front of the class. Part of your preparation should include more research into the incident. Draw from at least 2 sources, not including the video you watched in class. Use the space below to plan your defense.

Tuskegee Airmen Reading

Use the reading as an introduction or supplemental resource to the Tuskegee Airmen.

Quarter Design

This activity is intended for grades 5-8 but can be used for high school as well.

Timeline Activity

This activity is intended for grades 5-8 but can be used for high school as well. You can also choose require information from class or independent research to add to the timeline.

Freeman Field Mutiny

This activity is intended for high school students but can be used for grades 5-8 as well. Students will need to view the first 9 minutes of the documentary “The Red Tail Angels” to complete the activity. The entire documentary can be found on the United States Air Force Youtube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DvLjnMImOms>

Once students have initially learned about the Freeman Field Mutiny, they will need to research on their own to create a 3-5-minute oral defense of Lt. Roger Terry. You can adjust so the defense can be a written assignment and make it longer or shorter depending on the needs of your class.