TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

Red Tail Honor with Pride

CIVIL AIR PATROL

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TUSKEGEE AIRMEN:

RED TAIL HONOR WITH PRIDE

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This book is a condensed version of the book with only Lt Col George Hardy's chapter included in honor of his 99 birthday on June 8, 2024.

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Dedication

This middle school book is dedicated to the courageous and tenacious men and women who comprised the total force of the Tuskegee Airmen. These proud men and women exemplified traits most desired in any human, such as perseverance, respect, and honor.

To those Tuskegee Airmen who started their aviation journey in Civil Air Patrol as a cadet during WWII, and returned to CAP as adult Senior Members, Franklin Macon (Colorado Wing) and George Boyd (New Jersey Wing as cadet and Kansas Wing as the Wing Commander), CAP feels an extra amount of pride. These two gentlemen received two Congressional Gold Medals in their lives, one as Tuskegee Airmen and one as CAP members during WWII.

This book will recognize several key Tuskegee Airmen, with reference to several others. With all the significant accomplishments of each Tuskegee Airmen, both while in the United States Air Force and in follow-on civilian life, there is no way to capture all the stories, contributions, achievements, and legacies each life had to share. Thus, it is hoped that this book will be the beginning of a quest to learn more about each member in this book, and the thousands of others across our nation who were a part of some 14,000 people who contributed as a Tuskegee Airmen as pilots or support teams which made the Tuskegee Experiment such a success.

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Prologue

"The Tuskegee story is an important civil rights story of Americans who happen to be black, in service to their country, their family, and to their friends -- in that order."

-- BG Charles E. McGee, Former National President of the Tuskegee Airmen

The U.S. Mint Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site Coin was issued in 2021 and commemorates the heroic actions and achievements of the famous Tuskegee Airmen. The site preserves five historic structures used during primary flight training in World War II. The reverse side of the coin (shown) depicts a Tuskegee Airman pilot suiting up to join the fight during World War II with the Moton Field control tower in the background. The pilot looks upward with pride and confidence as two P-51 Mustangs pass overhead.

The inscription **"THEY FOUGHT TWO WARS"** is arced across the top as a reference to the dual battles the Tuskegee Airmen fought:
(1) fascism abroad - *Fascism is the political viewpoint that one's nation and race are superior to all others.*
(2) racial discrimination at home - *Racism, at its most basic definition, is when people think that one color or race is better than another, and they treat or mistreat people based on that belief. Essentially, it's when someone is treated unfairly because of how they look.*

"Tuskegee Airmen" refers to both men and women of diverse nationalities who were involved in the "Tuskegee Experiment," the Army Air Corps program to train African Americans to fly and maintain combat aircraft. The Tuskegee Airmen included military pilots who trained and fought in World War II. The group also included mechanics, flight instructors, navigators, bombardiers, crew chiefs, and all the logistical and support personnel who kept the planes in the air and maintained all aspects of living and working on the flying bases. Research shows that there were over 14,000 individuals who served in the Tuskegee group; 992 were pilots.

The name Tuskegee Airmen was taken from the most important of their training bases, Tuskegee Army Airfield, but there were four other fields where they also trained—Griel, Kennedy, Moton, and Shorter Field, all in the Tuskegee area of Alabama. This area was chosen for a number of reasons: good flying weather; plenty of cheap, rural land; uncongested airspace; no nearby large cities filled with racial tension; a local culture of segregated Blacks; and Tuskegee Institute as an already Black civilian pilot training school and well regarded as one of the foremost African-American institutions of higher learning in the country.

Photo: Military.com | By Melissa T. Miller

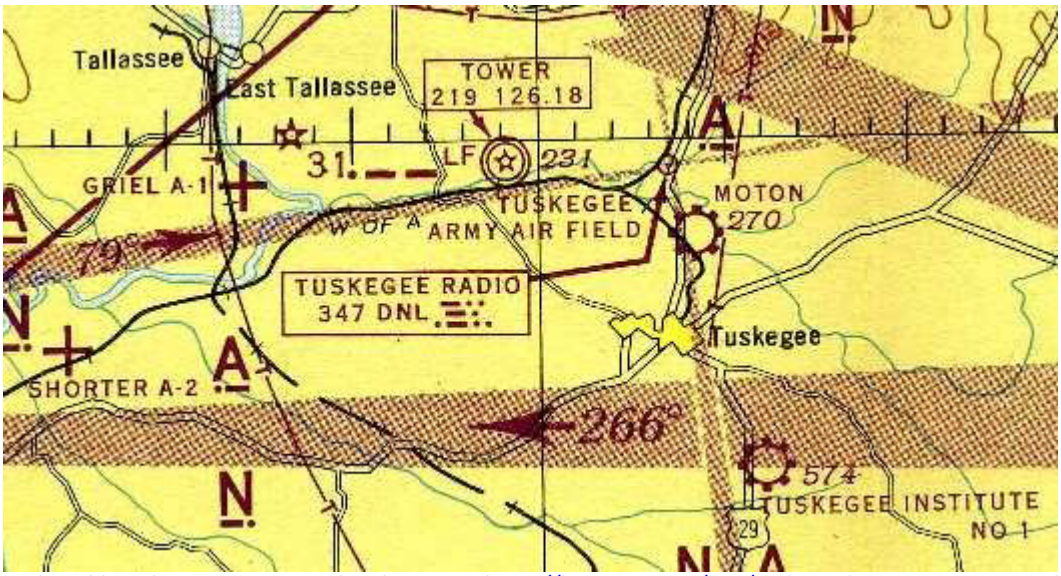
In the 1940s, the United States military, like so much of the nation, was segregated. Blacks were prohibited from entering public places, such as libraries, restaurants, and movie theaters. And, although African Americans served in the armed forces, they were restricted in the types of jobs and positions they could hold. The "Tuskegee Experiment" would help bring about some change.

Preceding World War II, tensions were high in Europe, Asia, and North Africa, and fear of war was encroaching the minds of military leaders. In 1938, the United States began the Civilian Pilot Training Program (CPTP) to create a pool of general aviation pilots which may be needed as military pilots in the future. President Franklin D. Roosevelt supported the CPTP's plan to train 20,000 college students a year as civilian pilots. In order to teach as many civilians as possible to fly to help meet future military needs, the U.S. government established CPTP flight school programs at many colleges and universities.

Many people believed that African Americans were not capable of flying and would not be able to perform well in combat. This came as the result of a 1925 study conducted by the Army War College. Thus, African American pilot training was not included in the original plan. There was pressure to change this from the Black Press, Black aviators, civil rights groups, and supportive legislators.

On April 3, 1939, President Roosevelt approved Public Law 18, which provided for an expansion of the Army Air Corps. One section of the law offered hope for those African Americans who wanted to advance their military careers beyond the kitchen or the motor pool. It called for the creation of training programs to be located at Black colleges which would prepare blacks for service in a variety of areas in the Air Corps support services. Thus, six Black colleges and two Chicago area non-collegiate Black institutions were added to the CPTP list.

- Delaware State College in Dover, Delaware
- Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia
- Howard University in Washington, D.C.
- North Carolina A & T College in Greensboro, North Carolina
- Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama
- West Virginia State College in Institute, West Virginia
- The Coffey School of Aeronautics at the Harlem Airport in Oak Lawn, Illinois
- North Suburban Flying School in Glenview, Illinois



Kennedy Field, Tuskegee, AL National Park Service: https://home.nps.gov/tuai/civilian-pilot-training-program.htm

When Tuskegee Institute was approved for the CPTP, G.L. Washington, Director of Mechanical Industries, leased and upgraded a small 55-acre private airfield located 5 miles south of Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, AL. Tuskegee Institute aviation students volunteered their labor to upgrade the field to CPTP standards. The grass runways at Kennedy Field were improved and runway markers were erected. Tuskegee Institute also built a wooden hangar, lavatory, fuel depot, and post-flight briefing shack for full airfield operations.

Kennedy Field's most famous event was the visit of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt on March 29, 1941. Black pilot and chief flight instructor, Charles "Chief" Anderson, took Mrs. Roosevelt for a flight in a Piper J-3 Cub over the Tuskegee countryside. She took this flight to help counter skepticism about the ability of black pilots to fly and became an outspoken supporter of Tuskegee's flying program. She shared this experience with her husband, President Roosevelt, who pressured the War Department to approve plans for an all-black Army Air Corps pursuit squadron. Soon funding was approved and the first class of all black Army Air Corps pilot trainees arrived at the Tuskegee Institute campus.

Photo: National Museum of the United States Air Force

On July 19, 1941, twelve cadets and one officer, Captain Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., made up the first class. The first military class of cadets (42-C class) began training at Kennedy Field in August 1941. After nearby Moton Field was completed, primary flight training moved there in September 1941.

On March 7, 1942, the first class graduated from Tuskegee Army Air Field as U.S. Army Air Corps pilots. The 42-C class started with 13 cadets but eight washed out of the rigorous training. The five who remained had accomplished something that no black man had ever done before. One of these became the first commander of the Tuskegee Airmen, Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.

This was known as the "Tuskegee Experiment." The popular expectation was that all would fail. These men were facing opposition to be military pilots and dealing with segregation. However, they persevered and were successful in flying combat missions and protecting the bombers they escorted through enemy territory.

The first black pilots in the American armed forces became famous as the Tuskegee Airmen. The 99th Pursuit Squadron joined with the 100th, 301st, and 302nd fighter squadrons to form the 332nd Fighter Group, the only African American flying group in WWII combat.

The Tuskegee pilots shot down 409 German aircraft, destroyed 905 units of ground transportation, and sank a destroyer. The traditional report is that not one friendly bomber was lost to enemy aircraft during 2,000 escort missions. However, this has been questioned because of the difficulties in precisely determining if a loss was due to enemy fighters or other causes and where the loss occurred. Sixty-six Tuskegee pilots were killed in combat and thirty-two were shot down and became prisoners of war.

Ninety-six Distinguished Flying Crosses were presented to members of the 332nd Fighter Group or its squadrons. In 2007, the Tuskegee Airmen group was presented the Congressional Gold Medal.

Contrary to expectation, the "Tuskegee Experiment" was a success. The Tuskegee Airmen proved that black aviators could fly and fight as well as their white counterparts. They proved themselves to have the natural ability to survive the rigors of training and possess the courage and fortitude to excel in combat.

The success of the Tuskegee Airmen led to President Harry S. Truman's 1948 signing of Executive Order 9981 which declared that the military would begin full integration of the force. It took about 15 years for full integration to take effect, but it all started with Truman's executive order in the wake of the success story of the Tuskegee Airmen.

Tuskegee Airmen Six Guiding Principles

Aim high; Believe in yourself; Use your brain; Never quit; Be ready to go; Expect to win

References and Good Links to Read and See More:

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.org/Tuskegee at www.fdrlibrary.org/tuskegee

National Park Service/gov at www.nps.gov/tuai/civilian-pilot-training-program.htm

National Museum of the United State Air Force at www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Visit/Museum-Exhibits/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/579632/charles-alfred-chief-anderson/

The U.S. Mint.gov at www.usmint.gov/coins/coin-medal-programs/america-the-beautiful-quarters/tuskegee-airmen-national-historic-site

History Channel.com 6 Renowned Tuskegee Airmen at https://www.history.com/news/6-renowned-tuskegee-airmen-davis-brown-mcgee

The Air Force Association's Air Force Magazine, Daniel L. Haulman, 2014, at www.airforcemag.com/PDF/MagazineArchive/Documents/2014/June%202014/0614tuskegee.pdf

A Tale of Two Air Forces: How the Tuskegee Airmen Bridged the Divide by Rachel Kersy, 502nd Air Base Wing Public Affairs, U. S. Air Force, November 18, 2020 at www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2418944/a-tale-of-two-air-forces-how-the-tuskegee-airmen-bridged-the-divide/

Tuskegee Airman-The Biography of Charles E. McGee by Charlene E. McGee Smith, 5th Edition, 2015. Order at Amazon HERE.

I Wanted To Be A Pilot- the Making of a Tuskegee Airman by Franklin J. Macon with Elizabeth G. Harper, 2019. Order at Amazon HERE.

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National Standards of Learning

Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) align with the STEM activities in the book. The correlated standard layers are descriptive of the overarching standard. Middle School (6-8)

MS-ETS1-2 Engineering Design
Evaluate competing design solutions using a systematic process to determine how well they meet the criteria and constraints of the problem.

MS-ETS1-3 Engineering Design
Analyze data from tests to determine similarities and differences among several design solutions to identify the best characteristics of each that can be combined into a new solution to better meet the criteria for success.

MS-ETS1-4 Engineering Design
Develop a model to generate data for iterative testing and modification of a proposed object, tool, or process such that an optimal design can be achieved.

MS-PS1-4 Matter and its Interactions
Develop a model that predicts and describes changes in particle motion, temperature, and state of a pure substance when thermal energy is added or removed.

MS-PS2-1 Motion and Stability: Forces and Interactions
Apply Newton's Third Law to design a solution to a problem involving the motion of two colliding objects.

MS-PS2-2 Motion and Stability: Forces and Interactions
Plan an investigation to provide evidence that the change in an object's motion depends on the sum of the forces on the object and the mass of the object.

Common Core State Standards: adopted by Forty-one states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA). Middle School (6-8)

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8

Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.8

Distinguish among facts, reasoned judgment based on research findings, and speculation in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.9

Compare and contrast the information gained from experiments, simulations, video, or multimedia sources with that gained from reading a text on the same topic.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.3

Follow precisely a multistep procedure when carrying out experiments, taking measurements, or performing technical tasks.

Text Types and Purposes:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

Character Connection Organizations support a strong premise of this historical aviation book. Each site can be joined or the basic tenants of each site can be used to support the character education aspects of the chapters. The character traits of the Tuskegee Airmen covered in this bosk, and the thousands more who overcame barriers and rose above the adversity they faced, utilized Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as a key component of overcoming and achieving in life.

Character.org provides a guide and framework to cultivating a culture of good character, which is a strong basis for this entire book. Based on decades of research, the *11 Principles* is a guidepost to plan, implement, assess, and sustain commitment to character development in youth at home, at school, or in the community.

The *11 Principles* focus on all aspects of school life, including school culture and climate, social and emotional learning (SEL), student engagement and academic achievement. These all translate into daily life, especially when trying to help overcome racial and other barriers to learning. The 11 Principles are described in details HERE.

CHARACTER COUNTS! is based on Model Standards of Academic, Social and Emotional (SEL), Character Development, and School Climate. The standards provide a comprehensive integration of four core domains comprising the mission of modern educational institutions and objectives of education and reform movements.

The Standards supplement content standards with objectives concerning the development of:

- critical and creative thinking
- decision-making, and problem-solving abilities
- social and emotional life skills
- ethical character traits
- practical knowledge and competencies reflecting the demands of modern life and the workplace.

The Six Pillars of Character are the core ethical values of CHARACTER COUNTS! These values were identified by a nonpartisan, secular group of youth development experts in 1992 as core ethical values that transcend cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences. The Six Pillars of Character are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

The CHARACTER COUNTS! Model Standards have also been linked to CASEL's core five competencies, which define social and emotional learning (SEL) as an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. SEL can help address various forms of inequity and empower young people and adults to co-create thriving schools and contribute to safe, healthy, and just communities.

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Career and Organizational Connectons

As the stories are read of these amazing Tuskegee Airmen, young people should take note of all the various jobs they held both in the U.S. Air Force and afterward as civilians. Some were directly related to aviation; others indirectly or not related to aviation. No one followed the same path in life as everyone had different interests and skills sets. All young persons have their own interests and should explore every option that comes before them to see which is their niche.

Franklin Macon, Tuskegee Airman who began his career as a Civil Air Patrol cadet, had this to say:

"All of us are different. That is just how we were made. Everybody has their own niche for what they're good at, and if we can put that to work, we can really accomplish a lot of things. There is no place where one group of people is better than another group. Just always do your best and when times get hard, you just keep going."

~ Tuskegee Airman, WWII CAP Cadet, and CAP Colorado Wing Senior CAP member

Some sample career connections to be explored after learning about all these Tuskegee Airmen follow. Hopefully, by reading about these American heroes, new pathways toward a potental future in aviation will be realized by many more young people.

Aviation offers many exciting and rewarding opportunities for life-long hobbies (avocations) or careers (vocations). If one dreams of flying for the thrill of it, that can be accomplished by working toward and earning a pilot certificate. For those who desire to work in some type of aviation career, it is hoped that the information given below will only be a start to a search of the best aviation-related job to fit individual aptitudes and attitudes!

To begin an investigation about the myriad aviation careers, one may simply want to do an online search for "aviation careers." These online sites will give sample jobs, types of training required, special schools for specialized positions, and salary ranges---all important information. Youth should be cautious when entering any online site, as with any other online search.

Reading about how each exciting and daring Tuskegee Airman in this book became interested in the specific area of aviation may give hints to others searching for something meaningful. Some of their experiences, listed below, may give youth an idea about how to find out more about something of interest, or, learn about something of which they are totally unaware!

- taking a "shop" class in school may lead to learning about aerospace engineering, avionics and mechanics, building or maintaining engines, fuel usage, or, even airplane "body" work
- participating in individual and/or competitive sports could help prepare the body for strenuous and heavy workload jobs, stunt flying, cross-country/international flights, high-altitude jet flying, working as a team, becoming involved in sports medicine, baggage handling, and even being competitive in the workforce
- joining respected adults to visit and/or tour airports, both large and small, could introduce the various jobs that are required to make the aviation industry work; give the opportunity to meet persons who may become a mentor; or open doors to getting flights, on-the-job training, etc.
- attending air shows will give a wide perspective of the different types of aircraft and the skills/training needed to fly these aircraft

Looking at some jobs/careers indirectly related to aviation experienced by some of our featured Tuskegee Airmen in this booklet helps us to identify some common skills that could be used by young persons today.

Writer:

- chronicled their flying experiences in newspapers, magazines, books and movies to delight and inspire others
- explained technical training and instructions in composing comprehensive flight training, flight safety, and mechanical manuals
- taught in high schools and colleges
- became an aviation historian

Artist:

- drafted maps for flights and drew plans for new types of aircraft, training equipment, and better safety features

Medical Field:

- became a health care worker
- worked in and designed medical evacuation aircraft (air ambulances)

Mechanics and Engineering:

- repaired and built new aircraft engines
- worked on fuel efficiency
- designed safer landing gear and airframes
- studied the causes of airplane crashes to make flight safer

As our nation throttles up the initiative to prepare the next generation aviation workforce, take a glance at some of the general positions needed in the aviation industry. Hopefully the next aviation pioneers are being connected, engaged, and inspired in many of these areas.

Aircraft Manufacturing

- aerospace manufacturing and assembly workers
- aeronautical systems design scientists
- airframe equipment and engine assembly technicians

Airline

- aviation maintenance
- cargo handler
- aircraft fueler
- cabin maintenance mechanic or service person
- air freight agent
- baggage handler, ground or station attendant
- administrative personnel
- flight dispatcher
- food service personnel
- flight instructor
- sales manager
- meteorologist
- passenger service, reservations, and ticket agent
- ramp planner and service personnel
- schedule coordinator

Airport

- general aviation pilot
- airport management and operations
- fixed base operator
- airport safety and security

In Flight

- commercial airplane or helicopter pilot
- flight attendant
- air taxi, ferry, or charter pilot
- co-pilot or first officer
- patrol pilot

Government

- air traffic control specialist
- aviation safety inspector
- electronics engineer and technician
- aircraft accident investigator
- national weather service
- airspace system inspector
- civil aeronautics board
- test pilot
- US military service aviation careers
- US military civilian careers

What other aviation careers can be explored? What new and technologically advanced aviation careers are emerging? What education and training is needed for each career? What colleges, universities, airports, and organizations are working to train the aviation workforce?

Many jobs are entry-level jobs with no post-secondary educational requirements, so anyone interested in an aviation career can at least get started. For the higher-level jobs, specialized education and training are required, but scholarships and additional support can be acquired with hard work, diligence, and connections with the right people and organizations.

Civil Air Patrol is pleased to present this booklet of historical perspectives, pioneering spirits, and potential aviation career pursuits. As the official Auxiliary of the United States Air Force, ***CAP is THE premier youth organization for any young person interested in any aspect of aviation***. CAP has squadrons in every state in America. Any interested young person, age 12-21, can find a CAP squadron near them by going to **www.GoCivilAirPatrol.com** and entering their ZIP code at the "Find a Squadron Near You" link.

Taking powered and non-powered airplane flights, working with a team conducting search and rescue missions, learning about aerospace careers, being mentored by aviation experts, and earning flight scholarships are just some of the amazing things that can be experienced as a CAP cadet. For those truly interested in becoming a pilot, CAP has that pathway toward earning Wings. Many CAP cadets tend to be leaders in their squadrons and they yearn to help other young cadets become successful in this dynamic youth organization. Leadership has been a key quality for the Tuskegee Airmen we will be exploring in this book. Hopefully, this book of amazing pioneers in aviation will connect, engage, and inspire more young people to aim high in life!

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As a partner in this book's pursuit to promote a sense of equality and opportunity to any young person who has a desire to become a part of an aviation organization or workforce team,

Tuskegee Airmen Inc. (TAI) has a website, Tuskegee Airmen.org, where young people can learn about other Tuskegee Airmen, and can be mentored by the members of the TAI chapters. TAI offers scholarships, flight academies, and many other educational opportunities. In their aviation/STEM opportunities section, young people can learn about the Red Tail Flight Academy (RFA) scholarships and much more. The Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation seeks to

provide educational assistance to those in need and with strong desire to succeed in an aviation career.

Young people can find the closest TAI chapter by entering their ZIP code in the Organization Chapters section.

Another organization which strongly promotes the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen is the **Commemorative Air Force Rise Above** organization. The CAF's Rise Above program states that

"the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen and the Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASP) are so much more than a page out of a WWII history book…they are an example of how to overcome any obstacle and triumph over your own adversities."

The CAF Rise Above: Red Tail section, which includes the CAF Red Tail Squadron is committed to telling the inspirational story of the Tuskegee Airmen, America's first black military pilots and their support personnel.

They are on a mission to educate people of all ages about these important American icons so their strength of character 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.

- Check out their Tuskegee Airmen profiles and tour the Red Tails virtual museum.
- And, check out the Commemorative Air Force, where many of the planes described in this book are being restored and maintained for flight and showcased in the Collection/CAF Fleet. The CAF has many education opportunities for interested persons of all ages.

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TUSKEGEE AIRMEN: RED TAILS

Chapter 4:

Lt Col George E. Hardy

Lt Col George Hardy, USAF, ret, reflects on life as a Tuskegee Ariman, "I grew up in a segregated country, but it was my country to."

Yet, he persevered and helped pave the way for future Black pilots --- and for youth who need a role model to emulate.

"I

Objectives

George Hardy encourages discipline and teamwork.

Explain how these traits were important to him in becoming a successful pilot in three wars.

Objectives

Becoming an engineer was important to George Hardy.

Design and build items according to the specifications given in each project.

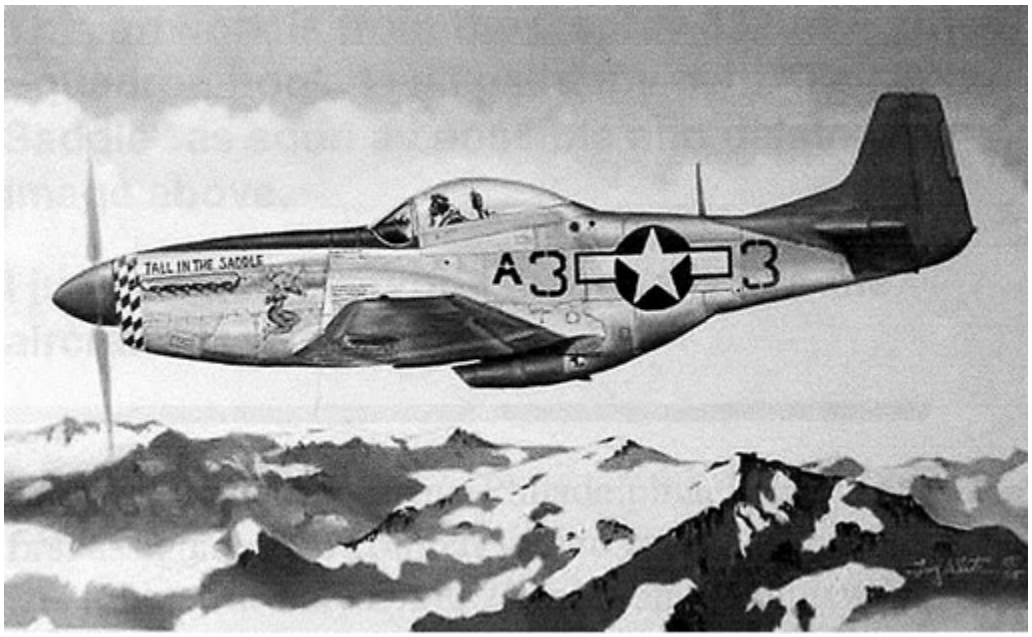
Lt Col George E. Harvey was born on June 8, 1925 in Philadelphia, PA. He had three brothers and three sisters and is second from the oldest in his family. He is the youngest of the surviving Tuskegee Airmen. George was exposed to racism as he grew up in Pennsylvania, but it was nothing like he experienced in the South. He wanted to join the military when he graduated from high school in 1942 because his older brother had joined the Navy in 1941.

When he turned 17 in 1943, he joined the Army Air Corps and began his flying career at Tuskegee Air Field. Getting from Pennsylvania to Alabama was a new experience for him. He and two other African Americans traveled by train and were put on a Pullman car. They were the only three blacks on the train and had to ride in a car by themselves. The biggest shock came when they went to the dining car. They were made to sit behind a heavy curtain at the far end of the car where the whites could not see them eating. When they arrived at Tuskegee, black instructor-pilots taught them the basics of flight in a PT-19 single-engine airplane. After 10 weeks of basic flight school, they graduated to an AT-6 single-engine trainer with retractable landing gear.

From there, George was transferred to Keesler Army Air Field in Biloxi, Mississippi, for basic training where he flew P-40s. He graduated as a Second Lieutenant and transferred to Walterboro Army Air Field in South Carolina for combat training. He trained in the P-47 Thunderbolt.

2nd Lt. George Hardy is shown in his flight garb graduation picture from Tuskegee September 1944. Photo provided.

George became a member of the-all black 99th Fighter Squadron known as Tuskegee Airmen and was one of only 350 who were sent to Italy. He flew 21 combat hours over Germany in World War II. He flew the P-51 Mustang and his mission was to protect the bombers as they flew into combat. In an interview in 2009, George said, "I flew my 21 missions in March and April 1945. I didn't run into any German fighters." he said. "Mostly I flew escort missions for B-17 'Flying Fortresses' and B-24 'Liberator' bombers. When we completed these missions, we could look for targets of opportunity to strafe." (Strafe means to attack repeatedly with bombs or machine-gun fire from low-flying aircraft.)



Lt. Hardy is pictured flying his P-51D Mustang, "Tall in the Saddle," over the Italian Alps as a member of the 99th Fighter Squadron during World War II. Photo courtesy Troy White http://www.stardustst udios.com/tuskegee-airmen.html

At the conclusion of World War II, George returned to Tuskegee and was an instructor pilot, teaching others to fly. He found that nothing had changed at Tuskegee and the segregation was continuing so he got out of the military in 1946. He had always planned on becoming an engineer, so he then attended the New York University School of Engineering and Science until 1948. That year, the military was being integrated and he received a letter from Colonel Benjamin Davis, commander of the 99th Fighter Squadron during World War II, inviting him to come back to the Air Force. He accepted the invitation and reported to Keesler Air Force Base in Mississippi.

He was sent to Guam with the 19th Bomb Group. From there he was sent to Kadena Air Base in Okinawa. George flew a B-29 Super Fortress and piloted 45 combat missions over Korea during the Korean War.

George then served in the Viet Nam War where he flew a Fairchild C-119. This was a cargo plane that carried troops but they added mini guns to make it a gunship. He flew 70 combat hours in Viet Nam.

George Hardy loves this country and continues to enjoy sharing his story with young people. He encourages them to look for opportunities and take advantage of what is available to them. He encourages teamwork and discipline. His fondest memories are of flying the P-51 Mustang. He and other Tuskegee Airmen were given a Congressional Gold Medal in 2007 by President George W. Bush.

George Hardy will always remember the exact words that George W. Bush said to the Tuskegee Airmen as he awarded the Congressional Gold Medal: "For most of the salutes you didn't get, I salute you."

George Hardy, "I thought I was a good formation flyer." Find out more about how he started his aviation career, the training he was provided, the airplanes he flew, and the wars he overcame- in life and in the military.

Press control and click on photo above to hear George Hardy: Tuskegee Airman Overcame Discrimination|World War II As They Saw It **Video from the** [WWII Veterans History Project]

Lt Col George E. Hardy, Recognitions/Awards

Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor

The Air Medal with 11 Oak Leaf Clusters

Presidential Unit Citations (2)

Congressional Medal of Honor 2007

Commitment to Pass the Torch Forward

Perhaps his greatest accomplishment throughout his life has been his dedication to the mentorship of young people. Seen here, Hardy is talking to young people about the importance of staying in school.

Read more about George Hardy in the Commemorative Air Force's Rise Above Profile HERE.

***Commemorative Air Force Rise Above Mission*: Inspiring young people to RISE ABOVE adversity using the lessons and stories of the Tuskegee Airmen, such as George Hardy.**

References

George Hardy, Interview, the Digital Collection of the National WWII Museum; Oral Histories, 2015: https://www.ww2online.org/view/george-hardy

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Tuskegee Airman Lt. Col. (Ret.) George Hardy, Bing video, National Museum of the U.S. Air Force (early life, joining the military, segregation in the South, flying combat missions overseas) https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Geprge+Hardy+Tuskegee&docid=607994149317379984&mid=6ED075A7ED2ECAE0A1B96ED075A7ED2ECAE0A1B9&view=detail&FORM=VIRE

George Hardy of Sarasota was a Tuskegee Airman in World War II, War Tales, by Don Moore, 2011 (www.donmooreswartales.com) https://donmooreswartales.com/2011/11/07/george-hardy/

Review

Discuss Lt. Col. George Hardy's military life in the questions below:

1. In what three wars did George Hardy serve?
2. What award did George Hardy and the surviving Tuskegee Airmen receive in 2007?
3. What was George Hardy's favorite airplane to fly?
4. What type of airplanes did George Hardy protect during World War II?
5. What was the name of the P-51 that George Hardy flew in World War II?

EXTRA: Listen to the WWII History Project Video of George Hardy. Then, explain how discipline and teamwork were important to George Hardy for him to become a successful pilot in three wars.

Answers:

1. World War II, Korea, and Vietnam
2. Congressional Medal of Honor
3. P-51 Mustang
4. Bombers
5. Tall in the Saddle

Engineering Design Activities

Lt Col Hardy always planned on becoming an engineer, so he attended the New York University School of Engineering and Science from September 1947 through June 1948 when he was called back to military duty. Engineering careers come in many areas of science, technology, and math to design, build, and invent machines, systems, products, and structures for society's needs. In the next activities, students will use common items to design and build according to the specifications given to them.

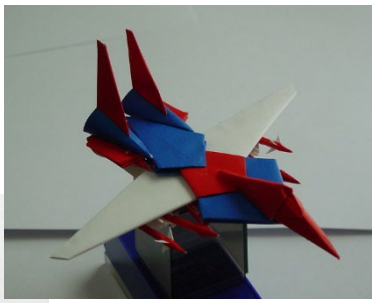
1. Tallest Paper Tower Challenge: Building a tower from paper and tape may sound easy, but finding the right balance between height and stability requires testing and innovation. The challenge is to build the tallest paper tower that is sturdy enough to support an unopened can of food for at least sixty seconds. (This was the 2021 Science Buddies Engineering Challenge! Learn about other Science Buddies Engineering Challenge projects.)

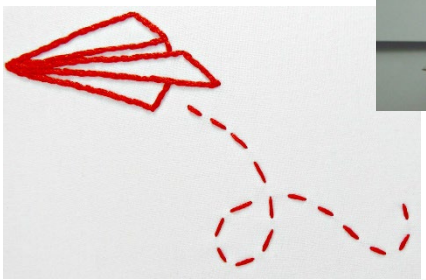
- As you click on the website to view the video and work on the project, think of how George Hardy felt as he was trying to build what he thought would be an easy path to success in life. With the restrictions against him and others in his community and in the military, he had to find the right balance between strength of character and committed resolve to push through to accomplish the things he set out to do.

2. Wind Maze: In aviation, wind is a determining factor of whether or not an airplane gets off the ground and maneuvers in the air as the pilot desires and needs. In this challenge, students will explore the elements by designing a wind maze, a device that can direct the wind along a specific path.

   Each team should try to design a wind maze and investigate how to guide wind where it needs to go by creating curves and bends in the maze.

   Any items can be used to make the maze and to create the wind to propel the items through the maze.





Character Connection Activities: **Team Building**

Lieutenant Colonel George Hardy emphasizes the importance of teamwork. Team building brings people together by encouraging collaboration and teamwork. Fun activities that help people see each other in a different light allow them to connect in a different setting. Reflect on George Hardy's struggles to overcome the adversity of living in a segregated world where people did not see him or others as they truly were.

Through a series of team-building activities, teams build skills like communication, planning, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. Team-building ideas that work can help facilitate long-term team-building through fostering genuine connections, deeper discussions, and processing.

Below are team-building activities to help with communication. Communication is at the heart of any team's productivity – or lack thereof. These quick activities are designed to get groups talking and comfortable working together no matter their preconceived differences.

#1 Like It. Pin It. Own It.

An initial activity when new groups are formed to engage others in conversations to get to know them better.

Materials needed:
--- enough small pins in a container for each participating person (plastic pins to put on clothing or pieces of paper or other material with a pin to attach to clothing)
--- Sharpies/Magic Markers

This is a great icebreaker! When everyone walks into the room, they choose a pin from the basket. (Beforehand, someone would need to organize the pins and write on them statements with which people can identify themselves. Or, the persons can write their own "statement" on the pin they select.)
Examples: I've read all Harry Potter Books, I am a cool Chef, I play soccer, I love video games, or, I dance for candy, or, for fun, "I really wish I weren't here right now!"

Once a pin has been chosen, it is worn for the remainder of the day.

When people interact during the day, they notice which pin each person chose to wear and can strike up a conversation about the statement on the pin. It allows an instant connection with another person. At the end of the day the pins are put back so a new one can be selected at the next gathering. This will help people find commonalities that will go far in building the teams needed in group work and throughout the programs being conducted.

Then, have the students watch the Ted Talk video, Respecting the Differences in People.

#2 Penny For Your Thoughts

This sharing game is often used as an icebreaker and provides a unique way for team members to learn more about each other. “Penny For Your Thoughts” can reveal commonalities between persons for further team bonding.

Materials: Jar of pennies that are no more than 15 years old
Step 1. Each team member draws a penny from the jar.
Step 2. Each person shares something memorable or important that happened to them in the year on the penny.

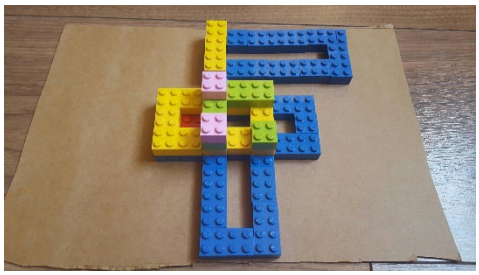
Team Building Activities to Identify Strengths

Team building activities that involve a range of tasks can help team members better understand their individual strengths and how those strengths contribute to the larger group. The following team-building activities help persons identify and use their best talents as a team.

#1 Replication

This exercise brings both communication and strength-identification to teams’ bonding time. To successfully complete the challenge, tea m members will need to work together using their various skills in different roles.

Materials:
A completed Lego structure, plus enough sets of Lego pieces for each group to recreate the structure



Step 1. Divide the team members into even groups.
Step 2. Display the completed Lego structure to all the groups for 30 seconds, then hide it from them.
Step 3. Provide each team with the appropriate Lego pieces to replicate the Lego structure.
Step 4. After a minute, give one team member from each group the opportunity to view the structure again for ten seconds, then brief the group on what they saw for 25 seconds.
Step 5. Step 4 can be repeated as needed with new team members.
Step 6. The winner is the first team to accurately recreate the Lego structure.

#2 Spider Web

In this game, the team must work together to get all individuals through the challenge. The twist is that selecting the various roles for the team will be very important to the team's success in defeating the Spider Web.

Materials: String and tape

Step 1. Fix pieces of string across a doorway at various heights and at different angles, with the strings crossing each other to create a web. (Or, create the web outdoors, as in photo.)
Step 2. The team is required to get all team members through the "web" without touching the strings.
Step 3. Each team member must go through a different opening in the string.
Step 4. Instruct the team to choose one person who is responsible for selecting the order and hole for each team member, one member who is allowed to speak, and one person who is allowed to touch and move one string at a time.

Lt. Col. George E. Hardy, at age 99 as of June 8, 2024, is one of the last living Tuskegee Airmen. As a motivational speaker and historical educator representing the World War II, African-American pilots, the Tuskegee Airmen, he serves as an inspiration to all to work through adversity in life and persevere to reach set goals, as that is one key to living and sharing a long and happy life.

U.S. Air Force photo/ Sr Airman Malcolm Mayfield

Watch one last video of George Hardy from PBS.org to find out more about this inspirational leader still making an impact wherever he goes and with whomever he works to help give them a chance in life.

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