



## Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.

# Buford A. Johnson Chapter Newsletter

November, 2016

### November Meeting

Our chapter will meet at Altura Credit Union on Saturday, November 12, 2016 at 10:00 AM sharp. It is important that you attend as our scholarship materials have finally arrived and we are running short on time.

### Scholarship Applications



Each year, Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. Scholarship Foundation provides 40 scholarships of \$1500 each for graduating high school seniors. This opportunity is open to all graduating seniors who qualify.

Tomorrow, Mr. Marshall will take applications to as many schools as possible. We would like other chapter members to take scholarship applications to high schools in their area. Mr. Fleming will have scholarship applications and instructions at the meeting.

Please try to make personal contact with the principal and/or the counselor in charge of handing out applications. This is the time to wear a uniform, or at least, a pair of slacks and the chapter polo shirt. Mr. Marshall plans to visit North High School and Ramona High School tomorrow. He will attempt to make it to Moreno Valley High School if possible. In the past, Mrs. Williams has gone to schools in Perris. If you plan to bring applications to a school, will you please let Mr. Marshall know at 951-544-2919 or

[etmarshallj@roadrunner.com](mailto:etmarshallj@roadrunner.com)? This will avoid our making repeat visits. Applications can be returned to our PO Box which is on the front of the application or, you may give them Mr. Marshall's phone number and we will be happy to pick them up. The sooner we get them back the better as we can go back to the student if information or required items are missing and rectify the situation.

### Looking Ahead



Did you know that you are a part of the living history of the United States? Maybe you were a member of the military. Perhaps you were a military "brat" who grew up on bases all over the world. You might have been a military spouse (the most difficult job in the military.) Maybe you were an activist in the sixties or were the child of a World War II veteran. Did you grow up in the segregated South? Are you an original Tuskegee Airman? These experiences are a part of history class for high school juniors. Reading a history book may give the facts, but meeting someone who lived through these times is exciting. Make history come alive. Each year, we are invited to several schools to share our experiences. We go to Moreno Valley High School in January or

February and will visit King High School in March. We also visit Rancho Cucamonga High School and Corona High School each year. In addition, we are often asked to present awards in May and June to JROTC groups throughout the area. More information will be available at meetings and in this newsletter. Please plan to set aside some time to reach out to our youth and make history a real and living experience.

#### **Pursuit Squadrons at War**



Activated on July 19, 1941 at Tuskegee, the 99<sup>th</sup> completed training in the late spring of 1943. The men were then sent to North Africa where the Allies had invaded in November of 1942. They were assigned second-hand P-40s that could not maneuver as easily as the German Messerschmitt Bf or the Focke-Wulf 190 fighters. By summer, they were issued the P-51 Mustangs we associate with the Redtails.

The 99<sup>th</sup>, under command of Benjamin O. Davis, was not wanted by the commander of the fighter group to which it was assigned. Davis pleaded with Chief of Staff George C. Marshall to prevent the unit from being shipped back to the United States. They saw action in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy.

February of 1944 saw the 100<sup>th</sup>, 301<sup>st</sup>, and 302<sup>nd</sup> Pursuit Squadrons (later called fighter squadrons) which comprised the 332<sup>nd</sup> Pursuit Group commence flying combat operations in Italy as a part of the Twelfth Air Force. They were transferred to the Fifteenth Air Force in April of 1944 and by July, the 99<sup>th</sup> was transferred to their group. Previously, it had

flown as a part of a predominately white fighter group and had won two Presidential Unit Citations.

In order to be easily identified and also to form esprit de corps, fighter groups painted their tails in distinctive patterns. The tails of the 332<sup>nd</sup> were painted red which gave them the name "Red Tails."

Their primary missions were to escort bombers in Southern Europe. They would eventually go as far as Berlin. Davis ordered them to stay close to the bombers rather than peeling off to pursue enemy fighters as had previous groups. This was the philosophy of General Ira Eaker and had changed when General Jimmy Doolittle replaced Eaker. Doolittle made the destruction of enemy aircraft the primary goal. Eaker was transferred to the Fifteenth Air Force in Italy of which the Tuskegee Airmen were a part. Because of the policy of staying close to the bombers, the 332<sup>nd</sup> did not rack up as many kills as other fighter groups. However, they lost less bombers.

There was a widely believed claim that the Tuskegee Airmen never lost a bomber in over 200 missions. This was a claim made by an African American newspaper, the Chicago Defender. It was widely circulated and believed. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, records were reviewed and it was discovered that a total of 27 bombers escorted by the Tuskegee Airmen had been lost. A comparison with other fighter groups of the Fifteenth Air Force showed that the average number of bombers lost by these groups was 46 which was nearly double the rate of those protected by the Red Tails.

*Source: History.com*