



Buford A. Johnson Chapter Newsletter

Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.

September, 2015

September Meeting

Our September meeting will take place on Saturday, September 12th at the Visterra Credit Union at 10:00 AM sharp. **Please note that the name of the credit union has changed from Visterra to Altura, but the meeting place is the same.** The credit union is located at the corner of Cactus and Graham in Moreno Valley. We will be voting on amendments to our bylaws. Please note that only members who have paid their 2015 dues may vote. At this time, we have 35 paid members. We hope to see you there.

Memories of the National Convention 2015

The National Convention of the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. was held August 17-22, 2015 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Nine members of the Buford A. Johnson Chapter were in attendance. Two of our members, Alvin Ward and Edison T. Marshall, Jr. were on a panel hosted by AmVet and Sunnye Simpson regarding benefits for veterans and widows of veterans. Colonel Crump of the George "Spanky" Roberts chapter in Sacramento, Dr. William Upton, and Monica Lowry from the Las Vegas VA were also on the panel.

General Sessions

General Sessions are the part of the convention where business is conducted, reports are given, and the membership is afforded the opportunity to vote on matters that will affect the organization nationally, regionally, and at the local level. Any member

that is "financial" meaning who has paid his/her dues and is a member in good standing may address the meeting and may vote. If you are not there, your voice will not be heard. Also, those who vote need to have registered for the meeting.



National President, Leon Johnson addresses the general session.

During the general sessions, Parks and Recreation spoke about the Jr. Ranger Program and the Legacy Flight Academy. Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. works closely with Parks and Recreation due to the fact that Moton Field is a national park. They also have an Oral History Project. Next year is the 75th anniversary of the Tuskegee Experience. A large celebration is planned. Also, the next National Convention in Indianapolis will celebrate this important date in history.

Western Region Caucus

In addition to the general sessions, each region meets in a caucus to discuss matters that affect that region. In the Western Region, we were told that in 2015, we were given \$10,000 plus \$5,000 for travel for youth programs. The travel funds have been eliminated for 2016, but will have access to the \$10,000. Instead of sending youth to a distant program, each

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Western Region (continued from page 1) chapter could apply for funds to send youth to a local program. It is hoped that this would affect more youth.

An interim representative was elected to represent our region. Karen Robinson from Washington State was elected to represent our region. Ms. Robinson is a heritage member.



Western Region President Rodney Gillead conducted the caucus.



Interim Representative Karen Robinson



DOTA Ted Lumpkin addresses the group



DOTA Buford A. Johnson speaks. DOTAs are given the opportunity to speak on any subject they care to address.

Veteran's Benefits Seminar

Am Vets sponsored a seminar on veteran's benefits. The event was coordinated by Sunnye Simpson. Alvin Ward of the Buford A. Johnson chapter passed out materials on benefits and spoke on resources for vets and their widows.



Alvin Ward of the Buford A. Johnson chapter which has a military outreach program speaks at the seminar. Mr. Ward heads the program for the chapter.

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Benefits (Continued from page 2)

Colonel Crump, of the George “Spanky” Roberts Chapter, was a fount of information. He spoke of his experiences in assisting various people in getting their benefits.

Dr. William Upton stated that the first time applying, people will get a denial. He reminded attendees to keep trying. He said that the VA was not evaluating female veterans as quickly as male veterans.

Edison T. Marshall, Jr. who is on the military outreach committee, spoke of his experiences with the Loma Linda VA. He also encourages people to get the assistance of a group that is designed to help vets applying for benefits such as county offices, the DAV, or the Am Vets.

Filling in at the last minute when a scheduled speaker was unable to attend, Monica Lowry who is a Decision Review Officer with the VA and a retired Navy Corpsman addressed concerns with the evaluation process at the VA. She said that there are no time limits in filing a claim. In order to get the benefits, the vet must show that the disability occurred during time in the service or is because of activity or an event that occurred while the vet was in the service. The vet can use a diagnosis from his/her time in service. A current diagnosis or a statement is also needed. The working suggested is “ I injured _____ in service and it has been bothering me to present.” This will get the vet a VA exam. A link needs to be shown between the two. A doctor can make the connection.

Regarding the time for evaluation for female vets, Ms. Lowry stated that the claims come with a number and often the evaluator does not know whether the claimant is male or female. She advised attendees to be careful when applying, because a claimant can be rated as less disabled rather than getting more disability.

Permanent and total disability is available for certain vets over the age of 55. In these cases, a future exam is not needed and will not be required unless a vet asks for an increase. The example given was watchful waiting in certain cancer patients.

Ms. Lowry advised the group to keep a copy of all information and all VA medical centers where they were seen. Each person should keep a copy of all claims made. In an appeal, they are looking for a “clear and unmistakable error.” Use this wording.

Ms. Simpson said that she was going to try to make a seminar on veteran’s benefits an annual event.



Panel members, Alvin Ward, Dr. William Upton, Edison T. Marshall, Jr. and Monica Lowry

Scholarship Committee Meeting

The Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation held a meeting at 7:00 AM. Attending from the Buford A. Johnson Chapter were Edison T. Marshall, Jr., Donald Fleming, Dixie Marshall, and Buford Johnson.

The distribution of scholarship applications goes as follows. The committee sends the applications to the president of each region who in turn emails them to each chapter president. This occurs in September or October. The chapter president sends them to the chair of the chapter committee (in our case, Edison Marshall). The chair is responsible to make copies of the applications. The committee members then distribute them to surrounding high schools.

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Scholarships (continued from page 3)

Packets must be in by January. It helps if the chapter checks the packets for completeness before they are sent in. In the past, the Buford A. Johnson chapter has been cited for having thoroughly checked the packets. National then scans the packets that are complete and places them in the cloud to be evaluated by each individual evaluator. The national committee also checks to be certain that the chapter is financial or that it has paid national dues for at least 10 members by the end of January. All dues for 2016 fall due in December and the beginning of January. It is very important that we pay them on time so that our scholarship applicants can be considered. Winners and runners up are sent back out to chapters on a spreadsheet.

High school transcripts are required, but we may open them to check for completeness of information. Sealed transcripts are not a requirement.

It helps to copy the application so that it is single-sided. Also, send a clean copy of essays. It helps to make a second copy for the chapter so that the chapter evaluator can mark problem areas and get them back to the applicant for correction. A 3.0 GPA is required. Students whose GPAs are less than 3.0 will not be considered.

Third African-American Family Reunion

On August 29th, the Buford A. Johnson chapter attended the Third African-American Family Reunion in Perris, CA. We had an informational booth. In attendance were Buford A. Johnson, Mr. Ivan Berry, Mr. and Mrs. Edison Marshall, Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Williams (who had a booth for the Buffalo Soldiers), Kenny Bell, Ms. Marva X. and Phoenix Collins (who also represented Honor Flight), the Jones family, Mr. and Dr. Fleming, Alvin Ward, Michael Thomas, and Keith Beard. This picnic

replaces our August meeting. While there, we celebrated Mr. Johnson's 88th birthday.



Flying our colors



Keith Beard came by to enjoy the day with us.



Chaplain Gilbert Williams

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Picnic (Continued from page 4)



Member Kenny Bell



Members relax and socialize in the booth



Mr. Johnson's birthday cake



Denise and Donald Fleming honor Mr. Johnson at the picnic



Mr. Johnson examines a gift from the Williams



Mr. Johnson with his gifts

In Memorium: Edith Roberts, Widow of George "Spanky" Roberts



Edith Roberts, born on March 18, 1919 in Gilliam, West Virginia died on August 15, 2015. Mrs. Roberts was the widow of George "Spanky" Roberts who was the first cadet accepted into the Tuskegee Airmen program. Because Mr. Roberts could not be a cadet and be married, they waited until he graduated and then were joined in wedlock. A music and French major at West Virginia State College, Mrs. Roberts conducted many choirs, theatrical productions, and taught English in Okinawa during her 27 years as a military wife. After Mr. Roberts retired, Mrs. Roberts continued her education, earning a master's degree in Social Work. She became the first African-American social worker in the Sacramento school district. Mrs. Roberts was devoted to the Tuskegee
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Edith Roberts (continued from page 5)

Airmen and to keeping the memory of her husband alive. The George "Spanky" Roberts Chapter has established a scholarship in her honor. In lieu of flowers, the family has requested donations be made to the Edith Roberts Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 15029, Sacramento, CA 95851.

Mr. Johnson and General Harris

At the meeting, Mr. Johnson attended many events. On one occasion, he met General Harris, a female fighter pilot and a two-star general.



Chapter Picture



Left to right: Alvin Ward, Ivan Berry, Jackie Jempson, Buford A. Johnson, Donald Fleming, William Richards, Dixie Marshall, and Edison Marshall. (Not pictured: Denise Fleming)