



Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.

# Buford A. Johnson Chapter Newsletter

August, 2016

## Picnic in Celebration Park Replaces August Meeting



Our August meeting will occur on Saturday, August 20<sup>th</sup> at Celebration Park. This meeting will replace our usual meeting at the credit union. We will not meet on the 13<sup>th</sup>. We plan to return to the credit union for our September meeting. We are requested to arrive at the park by 8:00 AM to help set up. We will have a booth. Posters and shirts will be available to help fund our educational fund. This fund will be used to give educational funds to local students who are not selected for the national scholarship. This is a part of the annual African American Family Reunion. It is a fun event. Bring your family and stay to fellowship with chapter members. **Bring your own chairs** and bring a lunch. Food is also available at the park. There is a fun water feature at the park for the children. We hope to see all of you there.



The park is located at 14965 Morgan Avenue, Moreno Valley, CA 92555

Celebration Park is located on the corner of John F. Kennedy Dr. and Oliver Street. To get there, take Moreno Beach Drive to John F. Kennedy Dr. Go west on John F. Kennedy and take it to the end. The park is on the corner.

## The Buford A. Johnson Chapter Bids Goodbye to Member Thomas Hughes



Mr. Thomas Hughes

On August 5, 2016, members of Mr. Thomas Hughes family and friends, including members of the Buford A. Johnson Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen gathered to bid farewell to Mr. Thomas Hughes. Mr. Hughes had been a member of our chapter for several years.

Mr. Hughes was born on October 14, 1940 in Chicago. He was named Thomas Hughes, III, but his family affectionately called him "Littleman."

According to his family, Mr. Hughes aspired to an Army career early in his life. As a child he loved to play war games and used matchstick men as his troops. As an adult, he joined the Air Force and served his country for 15 years. He married his first wife, Evelyn Simpson while stationed in Missouri. He had one son named Michael Hughes.

**Mr. Hughes** (continued from page 1)

After Missouri, Mr. Hughes was deployed to Viet Nam where he attained the rank of sergeant. He was assigned to the Military Airlift Command. Part of his job was to escort his fallen comrades to and from bases in body bags. During this time, he contracted malaria and became so ill that he was mistakenly placed in a body bag himself. He woke to find a priest administering last rites. He asked the surprised priest, "What's up?"

After receiving an honorable discharge, he moved to San Diego with his family and joined the San Diego Police force as a patrolman for a period of time.

After a divorce, he met and married his second wife, Karma Vela, while taking a court reporting course. Together they raised Karma's nephew Marcus.

This was typical of Mr. Hughes. Person after person attested to his giving nature. We saw an example of that when he offered his woodworking skills to help the chapter. He had a history of making memory boxes for the families of fallen veterans. He was not able to join us this past year as his health was too poor. Members of the chapter continued to visit him and to try to help him navigate the healthcare system at the VA. Even though he could not attend meetings he was still very much a member of our chapter in spirit. We will miss him very much, but we know that, as a man of faith, he is in a better place. We look forward to the day when we will see him again.



Air Force flag ceremony



Pictures from Mr. Hughes' life



Flowers from the chapter

Members in attendance included Mr. Buford A. Johnson, Chaplain and Mrs. Gilbert Williams, Mr. Alvin Ward, and Mr. and Mrs. Edison T. Marshall, Jr.

**Tribute Paid to Tuskegee Airmen at the Riverside Convention Center**

President Donald Fleming had an opportunity to visit the display on African American History at the Riverside Convention Center. While there, he was surprised to find a tribute to the Tuskegee Airmen and was able to take pictures to share with us.



Tuskegee Airmen such as Paul D. Lehman, Arthur C. Harmon, William R. Melton, and Buford Johnson all settled in California after their service and were great examples of the rise in social, cultural, economic, and political change that African Americans of the Second Great Migration brought to the western United States.

**Convention Center** (Continued from page 2)



Curator oversees exhibits



Colonel Smith next to an exhibit showing the contributions of African American women  
**National Convention of the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.**

National Elections were held this year.  
National board members include:  
President: Leon Johnson  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President: Randolph Scott  
Recording Secretary: Amani Phillips  
Treasurer: Cedric Flounory  
Financial Secretary: Richard Baugh  
Parliamentarian: Quincy Mosby  
The Western Region also held elections for Western Region President and for Western Region representatives. Rodney Gillead was re-elected president. Representatives are Linda Sunnye Simpson, Clyde Jones, Sr., Karen Robinson, and Chuck Hill. Dr. Ruth Jackson is our national historian and will travel to Tuskegee, Alabama to organize our records which are stored there.



President Leon Johnson addresses the convention

Members attending the convention from the Buford A. Johnson Chapter included Secretary Dixie Marshall, Parliamentarian Edison T. Marshall, Jr., Merchandising Officer Bill Richards, and new member George Hearn. Mr. Hearn has many great ideas and promises to be a wonderful addition to our chapter.

**Air Force Museum**

On the way home from the national convention, members Bill Richards, Edison Marshall, and Dixie Marshall along with Mr. Richard's fiancée, Maggie Arana stopped in Dayton and visited the Air Force Museum at Wright Patterson AFB. At the museum, there is an amazing exhibit on the Tuskegee Airmen which includes the trophy won in the Gunnery Meet.



Tuskegee Airmen War Bond poster

Air Force Museum (continued from page 3)



*A quarter century before the Tuskegee Airmen challenge prejudice in the military, a young black man named Eugene Bullard looks to the skies and dreams of wings. But like his female contemporary, Bessie Coleman, Eugene's color prevents him from flying in his native country. Instead, this grandson of slaves makes his way to France where he enlists in the French Foreign Legion at the dawn of World War I. Eventually, he enters pilot training with the French Air Service, becoming the first African-American flier. His combat skill and heroism earn him a variety of French accolades and medals, including the Legion d'Honneur, France's equivalent of the U.S. Medal of Honor.*

## Political Pressure

In the late 1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt anticipated that the US could be drawn into a war in Europe. His administration began a pilot training program in 1938 to create a reserve of trained civilian fliers in case of a national emergency. African American leaders argued that blacks should share with whites the burden of defending the United States, and the government opened the program to African Americans. In 1940, the Selective Training and Service Act banned racial discrimination in conscription, clearing the way for blacks to be trained for US Army Air Corps service.

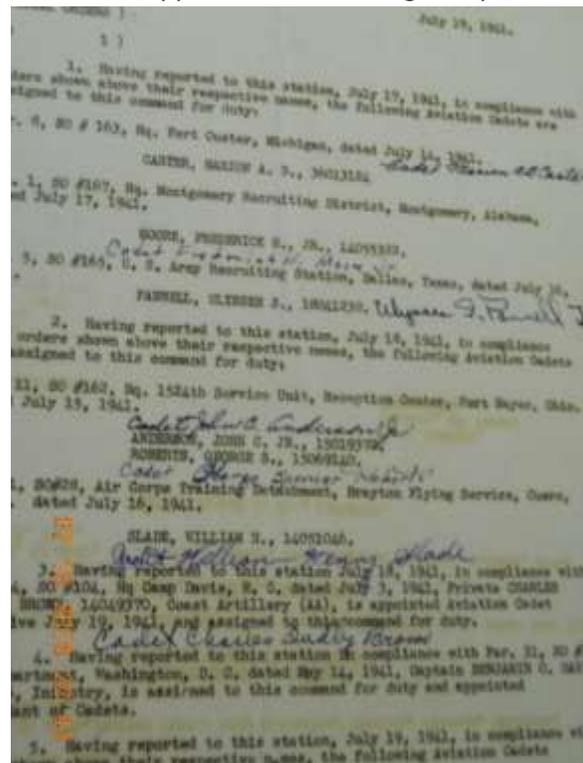
Tuskegee Institute, a black college founded in Alabama in 1881 by Booker T. Washington, participated in the Roosevelt administration's pilot training program, and graduated its first civilian-licensed pilots in May 1940. Tuskegee Institute and the flying school at Tuskegee Army Air Field were the main sources of black military pilots in WW II (nine others were trained as liaison pilots at Fort Sill, Oklahoma).

## Charles Alfred "Chief" Anderson

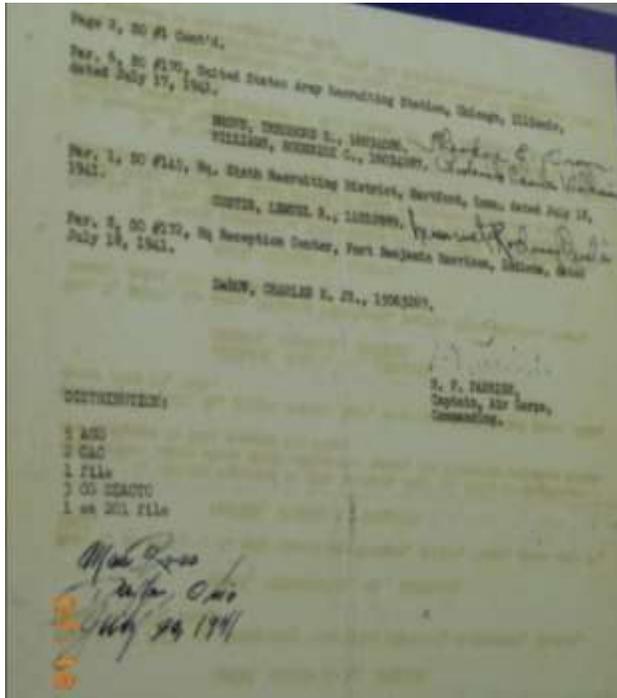
A world-famous flier before World War II, Chief Anderson became the first African American to earn a commercial pilot license. In 1940, the Tuskegee Institute hired him as its chief flight instructor to develop its pilot training program. The US Army Air Corps awarded Tuskegee the contract to provide primary flight training in February 1941. Chief Anderson earned national support for Tuskegee flight training when First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who had a keen interest in the program, visited the school in March 1941. When she accepted his offer of a flight, Anderson flew her around the school. This short flight, considered by most people at the time to be very daring, brought media attention to the program, demonstrated that blacks could fly airplanes, and showed that the Tuskegee program had the First Lady's complete trust and support.

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt supported the Civilian Pilot Training Program and the War Relocation Authority. She is pictured here in a P-51 Mustang with Chief Anderson, a pioneer black aviator and respected instructor at the Tuskegee Institute.

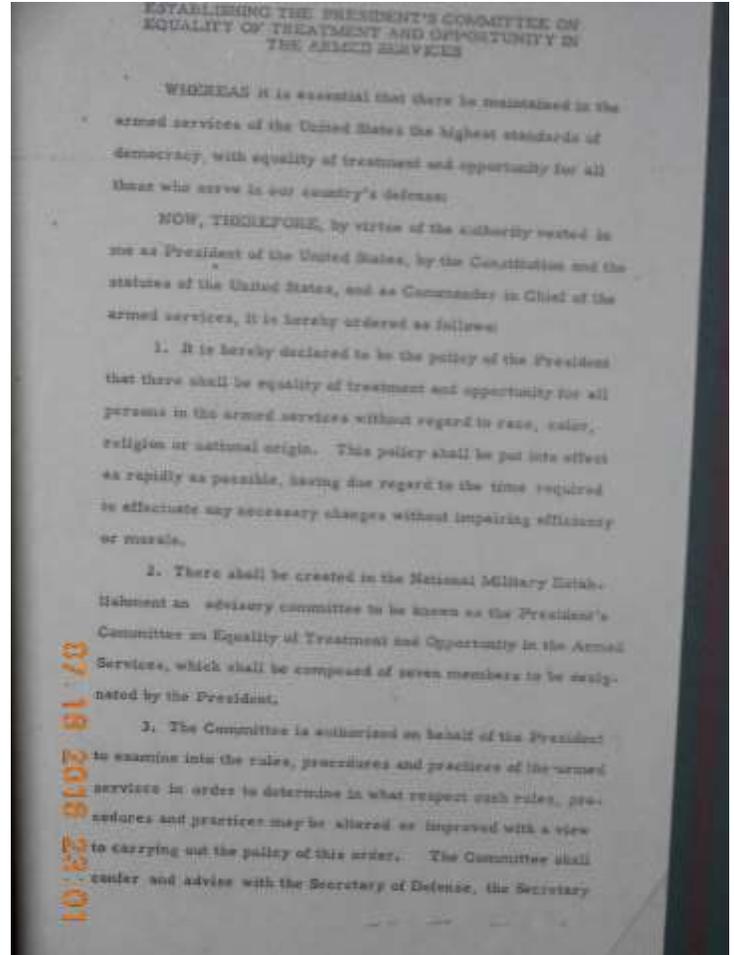
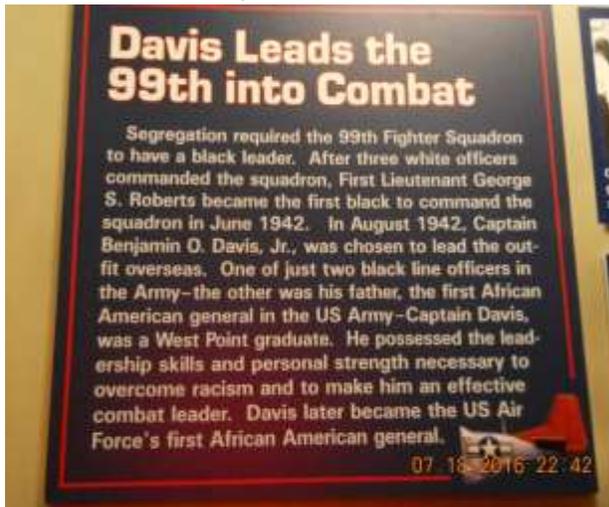
Eleanor Roosevelt flew with Chief Anderson and became a supporter of the Tuskegee Experience



Air Force Museum (continued from page 4)



Early documents



Armed Services become integrated. In reality, this did not happen overnight.



Maggie, Bill, and Edison study an exhibit

**Air Force Museum** (Continued from page 5)



Pilots who won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Gunnery Meet



Trophy won in the Gunnery Meet



Mr. Johnson was crew chief on the winning plane



Mr. Marshall in the flight simulator