

Chicago DODO Chapter,  
Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.®



# The Flight Plan

Vol. XV no. 6 June 2008 Chicago DODO Chapter, P. O. Box 19063, Chicago, IL 60619  
Beverly L. Dunjill, President

**Carrying on the legend and teaching young people about the opportunities in aviation.**

INTERNATIONAL  
Herald Tribune

Tuskegee Airmen to be subject of George Lucas film

**The Associated Press**  
Tuesday, June 17, 2008

**MONTGOMERY, Ala.:** The black airmen whose lives will be the basis of a George Lucas movie know the picture will highlight their record of successfully escorting thousands of U.S. bombers in World War II.

They also feel it should tell of the trials they encountered stateside, like seeing German prisoners of war being treated better and afforded rights that were withheld from black American citizens.

Now that "Red Tails" is in preproduction, some of the airmen say they are excited their story is coming to the big screen but torn over how much it should devote to each of their two historic fights — against Adolf Hitler abroad and Jim Crow at home.

Lt. Col. Eldridge F. Williams, 91, wants the film to recount the discrimination they had to overcome in their own country. Williams, who served in the military from August 1941 to November 1963, said a white doctor's false diagnosis of an eye condition kept him from achieving his dream of being a pilot, though he became a navigator.

"I think the story that has not been told is stories like mine in which the home battle that was waged ... shall we say, helped open the door so that the unit could enter combat and demonstrate its capabilities and be successful," he said.

Col. Herbert Carter, who also was with the airmen in the '40s, said the racism the men encountered should definitely be mentioned but not dwelled upon in the Lucas film.

"So many want the movies to focus in that sense and that's bitter history that has been thoroughly emphasized and publicized," the 88-year-old said in an interview.

He said the real story is how they blew apart the notion that blacks could not fly planes in war.

Producer Rick McCallum said both elements are addressed in a script by John Ridley that "balances difficult and painful issues with what is, at its heart, the story of men with a dream to fly and serve their country."

Lucas hopes to begin shooting by year's end or early 2009, McCallum said. The movie's title refers to the color of their fighter planes' tails, which were distinctive and allowed U.S. bomber crews to know they were being escorted by the aggressive Tuskegee Airmen.

"It is a story of incredible adventure and enormous courage," said the producer, who's scouting locations for "Red Tails" in Prague, Czech Republic, and Italy. "I think the story will speak to anyone who has ever wanted to succeed at something others told them was impossible."

At first called the "Tuskegee Experiment," the first aviation cadet class began with 13 students at the Tuskegee Army Air Field, about 40 miles east of Montgomery, in July 1941. Black people weren't allowed to fly in the military at the time and the "experiment" was to see whether they could pilot airplanes and handle heavy machinery.

Over the next four years, the airmen went on more than 15,000 combat trips throughout Europe, the Mediterranean and North Africa. Nearly 1,000 pilots were trained at the Tuskegee Army Air Field before its 1946 closing, after which the men from the all-black units were sent to an air base in Ohio. President Truman's 1948 order to desegregate the country's armed forces eventually led to a racially mixed military.

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# Chicago DODO Chapter Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. ®

## Mission Statement

"The Chicago "DODO" Chapter of TAI is a 501(c) (3) charitable organization whose mission is to perpetuate the historic legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen and to encourage and assist minority youth in pursuing post-secondary education and careers in the aerospace industry."

## Publisher

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Please submit all articles or pictures **no later than the 25<sup>th</sup>** of each month. Articles will be accepted via fax, as well as via email or in other electronic form. Pictures and other items can be mailed by the above deadline; also preferred to receive in any digital format for better quality printing. Typed or printed submissions are strongly preferred to handwritten ones. Submissions received after the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month will be included in the following month's issue unless otherwise indicated.

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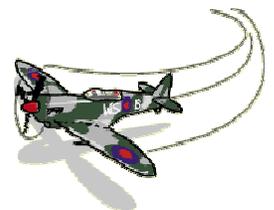
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# CALENDAR OF



July 8th @ 6:30pm  
TAI Directors Meeting  
8134 S. Stony Island

\*\*\*

July 12th  
@ 9:00am  
Young Eagles  
Gary-Chicago Airport

\*\*\*

July 15th  
6:30PM  
Chapter Meeting  
8134 S. Stony Island

\*\*\*

July 18th - 20th  
Gary Airshow  
Gary-Chicago Airport



**All General Meetings will be held at the New Chicago Public Library  
8134 S. Stony Island**



## HOTLINES

**CHAPTER HOTLINE:**  
(312) 409-3624

**CHICAGO YOUNG EAGLES HOTLINE:**  
(312) 409-5621

**GARY YOUNG EAGLES  
HOTLINE:** (888) 235-9824  
(888) 2FLY—TAI

*Note: Call the Young Eagles Hotline after  
7:30 a.m. on the morning of a flight for  
any cancellations.*

**CHAPTER WEBSITE:**  
[www.taichicago.org](http://www.taichicago.org)

**Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. National Office**  
1501 Lee Highway, Suite 130  
Arlington, VA 22209  
(703) 522-8589

## Note:

### Officers Installed:

Bev Dunjill – President  
Kenneth Rapier - 1st Vice  
President  
Maj. Duane Hayden - 2nd Vice  
President  
Camile Chappell - Recording  
Secretary  
TBA - Corresponding Secretary  
Alcus Cromartie -  
Treasurer  
Moses Jones - Assistant  
Treasurer  
Judge Earl Strayhorn -  
Parliamentarian  
Dr. Bobbie Anthony-Perez -  
Historian

## THIS MONTH IN HISTORY



First Combat Mission Flown  
By 99th Fighter Squadron  
June 2nd, 1943

\*\*\*

Henry Flipper, First African  
American to Graduate  
From West Point  
June 15th, 1877

Congressional Medal of  
Honor Awarded to Sailor  
Joachim Pease  
June 19th, 1864

\*\*\*

Joe Louis Defeated  
Max Schmeling  
June 22, 1938

\*\*\*

Songstress Lena Horne Born  
June 30, 1917





## E-Mail Column



Flight Plan Publisher EMAIL is [ehoosman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ehoosman@sbcglobal.net)

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For those of you who wish to start receiving the Flight Plan via email vs. US mail please forward your email address to [ehoosman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ehoosman@sbcglobal.net) for consideration.

Dateline: June 24, 2008

We have just discovered that the date for the Gary Air Show has been changed. We were told that this information was disseminated via newspaper. The result of this news, that was just verified by the airport is: the Young Eagles rally for July 12, 2008 will be CANCELED. Additionally, the Young Eagles rally for August is CANCELED. The next Tuskegee Airmen EAA Young Eagles rally will be on Saturday, September 13, 2008. Please mark your calendars accordingly.

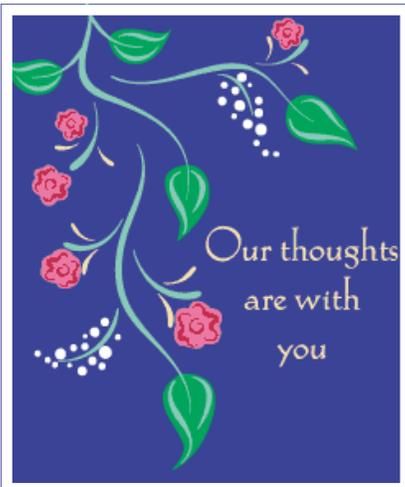
Ken Rapier, Chief Pilot  
Tuskegee Airmen Young Eagles Program

### LONELY EAGLE REPORT

#### CHICAGO TUSKEGEE AIRMEN HOT LINE MESSAGE 312-786-0468

On June 21, 2008 George Taylor, age 89, made his transition, which was attributed to prostate cancer.

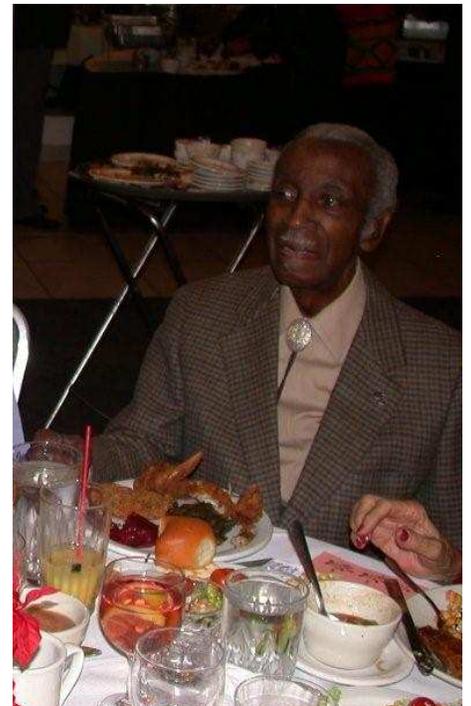
Joan wants you to know that God's miraculous blessings made the end of his life painless and peaceful.



George was our beloved past treasure of the DODO Chapter for over 20 years and TAI National Chairman of the Committee on Nominations for over six years.

His cremated remains will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery and distributed over Morton Field. A family service will be held in Middlesex Virginia in lieu of a church service.

A tribute to George will be held in Chicago at a later date.



*Continue from Cover Page:*

The men have been the subject of several documentaries and books. But a 1995 HBO movie "The Tuskegee Airmen," starring Laurence Fishburne, was the film that jump-started much of the attention the airmen have received in recent years, said Christine Biggers, a park ranger at the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site.

The HBO movie "was about 50 percent Hollywood, but it gave a good overview and got the word out. People all over the world saw it and it whetted their appetite to want to know more," Biggers said.

Lucas plans for the movie to be based on the historic record that brought the Tuskegee Airmen fame, drawn from their own accounts. Carter was one of several airmen who were invited to Lucas' Skywalker Ranch a few years ago to record their oral histories, which will be used in developing the film.

Carter tells of the constant adjustment of being respected as a soldier on base, then having that dignity snatched away once off-base, where they were "just another Negro in Alabama in the eyes of the civilian population."

But he said the real story is how they overcame an environment that said "they didn't have the ability, dexterity, physiology and psychology to operate something as complicated as aircrafts or tanks."

The black airmen's response was "train me and let me demonstrate I can," Carter said. "We said the antidote to racism was excellence and performance and that is what we did."

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#### New Logo Design Contest -Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.

Virtually every business or organization in America operates with a "logo" as a way to quickly associate a product with its owners. The logo which is widely associated with the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. (TAI) today is owned and trademark registered by the Los Angeles Chapter, TAI. (The Logo with the Circled Star with the clouds in the background and the 99th-P40, 332nd-P51, & 477th-B25 in the foreground)

The National organization has determined that in the long term it will be in the best interests of the organization to create and own our organizational logo. To this end, the National organization has announced the start of a contest to design a new logo for Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. (TAI). This is a great opportunity for any individual, local chapter or community organization to help enhance the image of the organization with a new logo by developing a rendering which they feel is reflective of TAI.

There will be some form of recognition, to be determined, including monetary recognition for the selected design if it is approved by the TAI body. If a design is submitted and approved as the new logo, a legal document will be executed with the submitting party and TAI, providing full ownership rights to Tuskegee Airmen Incorporated. Designs need to be submitted by June 23,2008 to be considered. Any submissions not selected as the approved design will remain the property of the individuals submitting them and will not be used by TAI.

A committee including the Region Presidents/Representatives and myself representing the Development Committee will review all drawings submitted. If we are successful with receiving something we believe would provide a suitable design for the organization, we would have that selection approved by the Board of Directors. The selected design will then be taken before the full body for ratification at the national convention July 17-20, 2008. In the event, a suitable design is not found by the above cut-off date, the date will be extended and new guidelines published.

Designs should be submitted to my attention at email; [gbrowntss@aol.com](mailto:gbrowntss@aol.com) or to my home address below.

Be a part of history and help us to put a new face on our organization as we all work diligently to keep TAI viable organization well into the future.

Gary W. Brown  
TAI Development Chairperson  
5013 Lupreese  
Lane Versailles, KY 40383-8815  
(859) 621-9342

Mr. Rapier,

My name is Anthony Burks and I was a scholarship recipient in 2004. I am writing to let you know that I just recently graduated from Saint Louis University with a BS in Aeronautical Science and a Certificate in Business Administration. I currently hold my Commercial single and multi-engine certificate with an instrument rating. Thanks to the generosity of the DODO chapter, I was able to make the most of my time spent at SLU and enjoy some once in a life time flight experiences such as a cross country to D.C. and First Flight Airport. Every time I embark on a flight I think back to my beginning in aviation at the BPA Summer Flight Academy and how great of an experience it was, an experience which wouldn't have been possible without the assistance of the chapter.

I recently moved back to the Chicago area and I am currently seeking employment in the aviation field. I prefer a job where I am able to build flight time but I am open to any aviation related employment. I'd appreciate any assistance you could provide. Below you will find a copy of my resume. I have also attached a copy. Please feel free to forward to anyone you think could be of assistance.

Thank you for your support,

Anthony Burks

**Anthony Burks**

10606 S. Leavitt  
Chicago, IL 60643  
773-315-5076

[burksar@slu.edu](mailto:burksar@slu.edu)

**Objective:**

To acquire a job in the aviation field utilizing my education and flight experience to benefit a progressive company

**Education:**

**Bachelor of Science in Aeronautics: Aviation Science/Private Pilot** May, 2008  
Saint Louis University, St. Louis, MO  
Parks College of Engineering, Aviation and Technology  
Certificate in Business Administration  
GPA 3.14/4.0

**Flight Experience:**

Total: 225      PIC: 79 Instrument: 50      MEL: 47 Dual Received: 169

**Employment:**

Midwest Valet Parking, Valet attendant, St. Louis, MO (Feb 2007 – May 2008)  
-assisted customers with valet services at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse  
Million Air Midway, Concierge/Line Agent, Chicago, IL (2005 – present)  
-Assist passengers and pilots in preparation for flights, marshal, fuel, and move airplanes on the ramp  
Transportation Services, Driver, St. Louis, MO (Jan 2005 – Jun 2007)  
-Drove shuttle van transporting pilot students between campus and airport on hourly schedule  
Namaste Laboratories, Warehouse clerk, Blue Island, IL (Summers 2001 –2003)  
-Assisted in warehouse operations

**Certificates/Ratings:**

Commercial Pilot, Single and Multi-Engine Land, Instrument Airplane  
First Class Medical

**Honors and Awards:**

Chicago Area Business Aviation Association,  
Recipient, Scholarship 2006 & 2007  
Saint Louis University  
Recipient, Vision 2000 Scholarship, Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship  
Tuskegee Airmen, Dodo Chapter  
Recipient, Dr. Anthony M. Perez scholarship  
Participated in Black Pilots of America Summer Flight Academy (2004)

## August 9th will be designated "Tuskegee Airmen Recognition Night"

Ron Brewington, PR Director, TAI

Ron,

I am pleased to announce that August 9th will be designated "**Tuskegee Airmen Recognition Night**" by the Lexington Legends baseball team at Applebee's Baseball Stadium here in Lexington.

This event is being hosted by the Legends in conjunction with the Ron Spriggs Exhibit of Tuskegee Airmen and comes on the eve of the 1st anniversary of the unveiling of "the **Tuskegee Airmen Memorial Trail**" which was performed on August 10, 2007. The Trail as you will recall was the first in the nation to be installed on the U.S. Interstate system.

On behalf of the B/Gen Noel F. Parrish Chapter of TAI and the Ron Spriggs Exhibit of Tuskegee Airmen, we would like to extend an invitation for any DOTA to attend this event. A table will be set up for a public meet and greet opportunity with the Tuskegee Airmen at the park. We will also use this opportunity to sign up new members for our chapter.

Also during this period, the Lexington Legends will be showcasing the Ron Spriggs Exhibit of Tuskegee Airmen display for the rest of the baseball season. As a returning attraction of two years ago, over 268,000 base ball fans came to the park where a conservative estimate of 1/3rd saw the display. For some fans and youths, this was the first time that they had heard about the Tuskegee Airmen and could see some artifacts of their existence.

Please contact Dan Wooten, 1st VP or John Croft 2nd VP of our chapter for any information or questions. Dan can be reached at [dwooten@ket.org](mailto:dwooten@ket.org) and John's email address is [jcrossed7007@yahoo.net](mailto:jcrossed7007@yahoo.net)

### Ron Spriggs, Chapter President

The ★ Brig.Gen. NOEL F. PARRISH Chapter off TUSKEGEE AIRMEN, Inc.  
Chartered August - 2007



**"We Dare Not Fail"**

**(859) 576-3636** (Mobile)

### Research, Not Record, Motivated Kittinger 48 Years Ago

Joe Kittinger Jr's major claim to aviation fame came not from flying, but from falling - almost 20 miles straight down. On August 16, 1960, then-U.S. Air Force Capt. Joseph Kittinger rode a helium balloon to 102,800 feet above the earth and proceeded to literally *jump* into the record books. His achievement: the highest parachute jump in history, which stands to this day.

Kittinger will make two appearances at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh this year. On Thursday, July 31, he'll present, "The Sky Is My Office - Skydive from Space" from 1-2 p.m. at the Honda Aircraft Pavilion. Kittinger will also appear on Saturday night, August 2, at Theater in the Woods during David Hartman's Aviation Legends program. After jumping from the edge of space 48 years ago, his speed reached 714 mph within 22 seconds, thus becoming the first and only person to break the sound barrier without a craft and live to tell the tale.

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## Young Eagles Column



June 14th, 2008. Flag Day and International Young Eagles Day and a beautiful day it was. Sunny, clear skies with unlimited visibility and light winds. A perfect day for pilots Butch Bejna, Vic Crowell, Joe Gmitter, Mark Odeen, Ken Rapier and Dan Skoda to team up with volunteers Rhonda Buss, Don Clay, Clarence Holland, Julius Jackson, Wil Johnson, Moses Jones, Hilton Joseph, Melvin Knazze, Bob Mullins, Keith Renfro, Carl Robinson, Vince Saunders, LaVerne Shelton, Welton Taylor, Karon Thompson, Mary Ward, Barb Werner, Milt Williams and Paul Wilson to fly 34 Young Eagles. The pilots and volunteers started the day with coffee doughnuts, sweet rolls and breakfast sausage sandwiches. The afternoon closed with chilli, hot wings, ribs, chips, cole slaw, carrots, celery, watermelon and birthday cake for Don

Clay. This is what happens when the volunteer cooks give Rob Strickland a day off from the grill. Our thanks to Don, Vic, Karon, Mary and Barb for providing such a delightful feast. A good time was had by all. Why not bring your significant other to meet the rest of the Team? You're invited to fly in, drive in or walk in, just join in. There will be no Young Eagles flights on Volunteer Appreciation Day. Reminder: The next Young Eagles rally will be July 12th. The Young Eagles rally for August is CANCELLED.

Summer dates are provided below as a reminder:

July 12th - Regularly scheduled Young Eagles rally  
July 18-20 - Gary Air Show weekend  
July 28-August 3 - Oshkosh Air Show week  
August 9th - Bud Biliken Day Parade  
August 16-17 - Chicago Air & Water Show

Note: Because of the full schedule in August...the August Young Eagles rally is CANCELLED.

Please mark your calendars accordingly. Happy Flyin'!

Ken Rapier, Chief Pilot  
Tuskegee Airmen Young Eagles Program



### **TUSKEGEE AIRMEN GROUP LOOKING FOR SUPPORT**

The Tuskegee Airmen, the first African American fighter pilots, recently received the group's second congressional recognition. With the conclusion of Black History Month, the group knows full well that its veterans are dwindling in numbers. Hoping that the legacy will not die with them, the nonprofit [Tuskegee Airmen Inc.](#) is looking for dedicated people to join the organization and carry out its mission of inspiring young people to achieve goals and take on leadership roles in society.



### **Tuskegee Airmen Young Eagles Success Story**

Pictured are (left to right) members of the Chicago "DODO" Chapter, Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. Keith Renfro, Vic Crowell, Ken Rapier, John Dixon (Young Eagles holding new Pilots License), Milt Williams and Melvin Knazze. John came out to the Tuskegee Airmen EAA Young Eagles rally on International Young Eagles Day, June 14, 2008, to thank the EAA and the Tuskegee Airmen for allowing him to participate in the Young Eagles Program and to share the joy of becoming a new pilot. John Dixon just completed his second year at Southern Illinois University. John took his Young Eagle flight with Butch Bejna at Meigs Field and went on to college to study aviation. John passed his checkride on December 4, 2007 to earn his Private Pilot Airmen Certificate. Join us in congratulating John on his accomplishment.

## New Young Eagle



Chief Pilot Ken Rapier & Mellonease Encalade

Hello Ken,

The attached flyer is a presentation on the Life of Pioneer Black Aviator JOHN C. ROBINSON. I will be presenting his story in the presents of his family members here in the Chicago Area. I would appreciate your sharing this OPEN TO THE PUBLIC presentation with the Chicago area

Tuskegee Airmen. Monday Aug.6 at 3:30pm at the Carter G. Woodson Library Auditorium located at 95th & Halsted St. Chicago.

Thanks so much.

Tyrone Haymore  
Local Historian

## William Loving Featured Bobbie M. Anthony-Perez

“High Flyer” William Loving. The Spring, 2008 issue of the Northwestern University magazine has “Tuskegee Airmen” listed on the cover and contains a two-page article titled “High Flyer,” describing how “As a pilot with the Tuskegee Airmen, William Loving helped break down racial barriers to African American soldiers.” There is a photo of William in his World War II uniform, a photo of him in his Clenco, IL home, and a photo of the newly commissioned navigation class at Hondo Army Air Field in Texas in 1945.” There is also a picture of the Congressional Gold Medal presented to the Tuskegee Airmen last year.



The article relates how William graduated from Hyde Park High School in Chicago, attended college classes at night, and joined the US Army reserves before going to Tuskegee Institute in Alabama and gunnery school in Florida. After training in Texas as a aerial navigator, William was commissioned a 2nd lieutenant in the army, prior to bombardier school.

He and several others were “mistakenly classified as white,” were treated discriminately , and, shortly, transferred to the Army Air Forces 477th Medium Bombardment Group at Godman Field in Kentucky.

After the war ended, William became a 1954 business administration alumni of Northwestern and taught high-school accounting in the Chicago Public Schools for 25 years. He also attained the rank of captain in the Air Force reserve.

The article notes that a part of the Tuskegee Airmen legacy is that African Americans work as pilots for major airlines, including William’s son. William states that the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen’s Chicago group, of which he is a member, continues because of their Young Eagles program, which encourages young people to fly. He says that “The Tuskegee Airmen are still flying.”

*Continue from Page 7:*

After free falling for more than four and a half minutes - the heavier air slowed his descent to where his parachute opened at 18,000 feet, and he floated down to the New Mexico desert floor. Total duration of the jump was 13 minutes 45 seconds. More than four decades later Kittinger's two world records - the highest parachute jump, and breaking the sound barrier - remain intact.

But records were not the goal during Kittinger’s three high-altitude jumps. (His 102,800-ft jump was preceded by others from 76,400 feet and 74,700 feet.) “We were trying to expand our horizons, gather information and research for the space program,” he said. “It wasn’t to set a record – I did it as an astronaut and a pilot.”

*Continue on Page 10:*

## SPRING FLING 2008

### Bobby M. Anthony-Perez



Congratulations to Velda Wright-Hamberlin on her leadership of the "DODO" 2008 major fundraiser and to her committee of Karon Thompson, Karen Junior, and Victor Crosswell. The event was "jam packed" and everyone seemed to enjoy it. The Sinatra-sounding singer was such a big, big hit that many guests and members were dancing to his music between dinner courses. And many who weren't, were nodding their heads, patting their feet, clapping their hands, and/or swaying from side-to-side. The line dancing later on was enjoyable to watch and the dancers were really "into it." The event was an affair for all ages, including Duane Hayden's cute son, and young children were dancing along with the other folk. And for the first time, Tidbits saw Beverly Dunjill dancing. And not just one time, but three or four! Originals Bob Martin and Quentin Smith were also rhythmic with the music. The Bautista Band played well, through most of their music sounded similar because of the strong bongo beat.

The dinner courses, though separated for longer than usual periods, were very substantial and good, especially the soup. Velda had arranged for each place setting to have candy in a small plastic bag with a paper closer which thanked the diner for supporting the Tuskegee Airmen.

Vince Saunders conducted the Missing Man and Lonely Eagle tribute without props, as used last year. But the ceremony was quite moving. When the trumpeter sounded taps, Tidbits felt sad in recognition of the significance of the song. A write-up of Dan Williams, who became a Lonely Eagle last October, was included in the printed program.

The message by President Beverly Dunjill described the activities of the "DODOs" Seven 2008 Educational Assistance Program awardees were listed in the program and were introduced. Each said a few words after being called to the front by Charlie Richardson. An overview of the Tuskegee Airmen history was printed on the back cover of the program.

There were many quality items at the silent auction, where "DODO" apparel was also used of gallery space for an event, and a dinner for two by sponsors Chef Cliff Rome (Parkway Ballroom Restaurant), Bryant Johnson (Steele Life Gallery), and Darryl Petty (Blu 47).

Tidbits was happy to see wheel-chair guest as well as the very young and octogenarians present.

- The 332nd Squadron is said to be named for the Tuskegee Airmen soon.
- The "DODO" Board has agreed that the "DODOs" will participate in the Memorial Day and Bud Billiken parades and, maybe, the Thanksgiving Day parade.
- The Military Academy reported on by Alcus Cromartie is part of the Scholarship Committee.
- The Merchandising/Property Committee consists of Cathy Bell (Chair) and Moses Jones. A printed report on the committee's activities was presented by Cathy at the April general meeting.
- The grant-writing Committee is chaired by Charlie Richardson.
- Cathy Bell's written report indicates that a newly designed Chicago log cap will be available for purchase in June.
- President Dunjill has indicated 18 "DODO" Chapter Committees and wants every member to be on a committee.

#### *Continue from Page 9:*

Kittinger was the appointed test director of Project Excelsior, which sought to investigate escape from high altitude craft. As jet aircraft flew higher and faster, the Air Force became increasingly concerned with the hazards faced by flight crews ejecting from high-performance aircraft. The project was established in 1958 to study and solve these high altitude escape problems.

Kittinger entered the Air Force in March 1949 as an aviation cadet and a year later was commissioned a second lieutenant. From 1950-1953 he served as a jet pilot in the 86th Fighter Bomber Squadron in Germany and then was assigned to the Air Force Missile Development Center at Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico. On June 2, 1957, while stationed at Holloman, Kittinger made a balloon flight to 96,000 feet in the first flight of the Air Force's Project Man High.

Kittinger also flew a total of 483 missions during three combat tours in Vietnam, where he served as commander of the famous 555th "Triple Nickel" Tactical Fighter Squadron flying F-4s. After shooting down a MiG-21 in aerial combat, he was shot down and spent 11 months as a prisoner of war. Kittinger subsequently continued his career and retired as a colonel in 1978.

*Continue on Page 11:*

# ***Pioneering member of Tuskegee Airman dies at 87***

## **The Associated Press**

### **ATLANTA --**

Lt. Col. Charles "Chuck" Dryden, one of the first of the pioneering black World War II pilots known as the Tuskegee Airmen, has died. He was 87.

Dryden died Tuesday in Atlanta of natural causes, said Roger Neal, a spokesman for the National Museum of Patriotism in Atlanta. Dryden was on the museum's board of directors.

"He was not just a part of American history; he helped to make it," museum founder Nick Snider said Thursday.

Dryden's 21-year military career included combat missions in Korea and assignments in Japan, Germany and U.S. bases. He retired from the Air Force in 1962.

About 1,000 pilots trained as a segregated Army Air Corps unit at the Tuskegee Army Flying School in Alabama during World War II.

Dryden was selected for aviation cadet training at Tuskegee in August 1941, only a month after the program began and four months before the U.S. entered World War II.

He was one of three men commissioned in April 1942 as a second lieutenant. Just five pilots had earned their wings in the program ahead of Dryden's class of three.

Dryden was a member of the famed 99th Pursuit Squadron and later the 332nd Fighter Group, which served in North Africa and Italy.

His P-40 airplane was nicknamed "A-Train," and Dryden titled his autobiography "A-Train: Memoirs of a Tuskegee Airman." It was published by the University of Alabama Press in 1997.

Last year, President Bush and Congress awarded the Tuskegee Airmen the Congressional Gold Medal. Some 300 surviving airmen - including Dryden - gathered in Washington for the ceremony in March 2007.

While attending the Washington gathering, Dryden told The Associated Press that he had mixed feelings about the event, since it came so many years after the war. But he added that the medal helped convince him that the country does recognize the airmen's contributions.

"It's really something," he said.

He recalled that after returning from his overseas service, he was stationed in Walterboro, S.C., where he saw German prisoners of war get privileges in theaters and cafeterias that were denied to black soldiers.

Dryden was born in 1920 in New York City to Jamaican parents. He earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Hofstra University and a master's degree in public law and government from Columbia University.

In 1998, Dryden was inducted into the Georgia Aviation Hall of Fame. He was also a professor of air science at Howard University.



In this April 7, 1943 file picture, Lt. Col. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. talks with Lt. Charles W. Dryden before Dryden goes on a mission in a P-40 fighter plane at the Army Air Base, in Tuskegee, Ala. Dryden, one of the first of the pioneering black World War II pilots known as the Tuskegee Airmen, died Tuesday, June 24, 2008. He was 87.

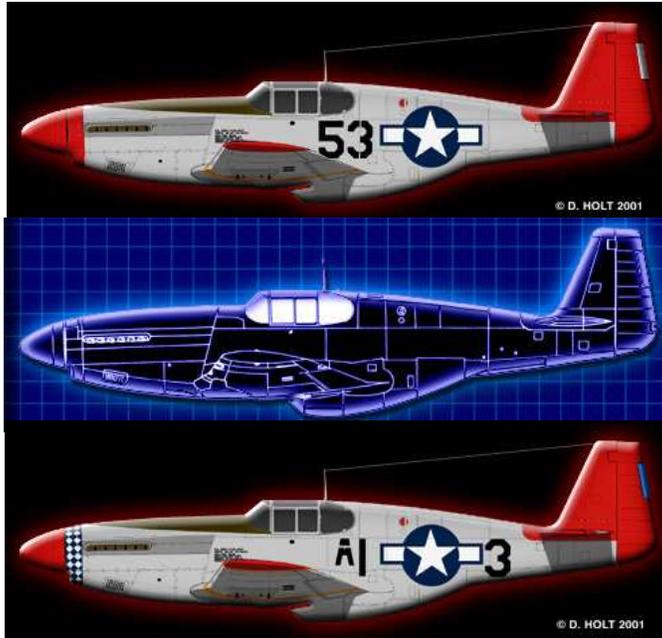
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After retiring at the rank of colonel, Kittinger continued to fly and also remained active in ballooning. In 1984 he completed the first solo Atlantic crossing in the 106,000 cubic foot *Rosie O'Grady's Balloon of Peace* (September 14-September 18).

He has received numerous awards for solo transatlantic balloon flights, and he is the author of *The Long, Lonely Leap*, describing the record jump. In 1997, Kittinger was inducted into the National Aviation Hall of Fame, and he was recently presented with the Smithsonian Airspace Lifetime Achievement Award.

Now 84, Kittinger still flies a 1929 New Standard biplane for Rosie O'Grady's Flying Circus, and has a total of 16,800 flight hours in 93 aircraft types. "I look forward to coming to the Mecca of aviation and sharing my story," he said. "I've had a very fascinating life."

**Source: EAA**



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