

Chicago DODO Chapter,
Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.®



The Flight Plan

Vol. XV no. 9 September 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.

2008 International Hall of Fame Gala



On October 25th 2008, the San Diego Air & Space Museum will be honoring national and international air & space legends at its 45th Hall of Fame Induction and Gala. Each honoree was selected for their historic contributions to aviation, space, or aviation technology.

This spectacular evening attracts numerous air and space legends to San Diego and will honor the "Distinguished Class of 2008:" Scott Carpenter, one of the Original Mercury Seven "Right Stuff" Astronauts; The Tuskegee Airmen represented by Roscoe Brown and Lee Archer; John & Martha King, King Schools; Dr. J. Robert Beyster, founder of Science Applica-

tions International Corporation (SAIC); Steve Pisanos, of the original Eagle Squadrons; and General Bob Cardenas, USAF Flying Wing Test Pilot.

Planned for the evening of October 25, 2008 in the San Diego Air & Space Museum Pavilion of Flight, guests join the honorees for an evening of fun and extraordinary recognition, as each attendee is offered an experiential peek into the lives of these living legends.

"We're especially pleased to honor the Class of 2008 because these pioneers have not only pushed back the frontiers of air and space exploration, they've also become strong positive role models for today's youth," said Jim Kidrick, San Diego Air & Space Museum President and CEO. "Aviation and space exploration, as embodied by the people we honor in our Hall of Fame, is a metaphor for the American pioneering spirit. It's a critical part of our legacy as a world technology leader. We must inspire today's kids to tackle the tough science, technology, engineering and math challenges, which lie ahead. October 25th will be an evening San Diegans will remember for a long time, and not want to miss. It's our chance to honor these legends on behalf of every San Diegan."

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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 25th** 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 25th of the month will be included in the following month's issue unless otherwise indicated.

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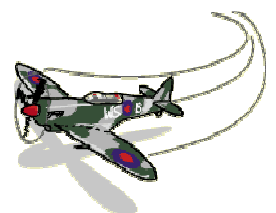
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CALENDAR OF



THIS MONTH IN HISTORY



October 14th
6:30PM - 8:30PM
TAI Director Meeting
Chicago Public Library
8134 S. Stony Island

November 8th
Young Eagles
Gary-Chicago Airport

Ethel Waters Died @ 77
September 1st, 1977

First African American
National Convention
September, 20th, 1830

**October 17th –19th
Grand Opening of the
National Historic Site
Tuskegee Army Airfield,
Moton Field
Tuskegee, Alabama**

November 11th
6:30PM - 8:30PM
TAI Director Meeting
Chicago Public Library
8134 S. Stony Island

Church Bombed
in Birmingham, AL
Killing Four African
American Girls
September 6th, 1963

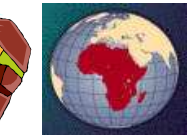
John Conyers Registered
at Annapolis
September 21st, 1872

October 21st @ 6:30 PM
Chapter Meeting
Chicago Public Library
8134 S. Stony Island

November 18th @ 6:30PM
Chapter Meeting
Chicago Public Library
8134 S. Stony Island

Ethiopian Leader,
Haile Selassie 1,
Dethroned
September, 11th, 1974

Dr. Ralph Bunche Re-
ceives Nobel Peace Prize
September 27th, 1950



**All General Meetings will be
held at the New Chicago Pub-
lic 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

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

Note:

Officers Installed:

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Kenneth Rapier - 1st Vice
President
Maj. Duane Hayden - 2nd Vice
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E-Mail Column



Flight Plan Publisher EMAIL is ehoosman@sbcglobal.net

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The Moton Field dedication is scheduled to take a place at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, October 10, 2008, when the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site (NHS) hosts its Grand Opening Ceremony sponsored by the National Park Service.

The special ceremony will kick off three days of special exhibitions and interpretive programs at the site and other special events honoring the Tuskegee Airmen throughout the Alabama River Region. Many of the original Tuskegee Airmen are expected to attend. Alabama Governor Bob Riley, Lt. General (Ret.) Russell C. Davis, President of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., City of Tuskegee Mayor Johnny Ford, and Tuskegee University President Dr.

Benjamin F. Payton are scheduled to attend.

Music at the 1:30 p.m. ceremony will be provided by Golden Voices Choir from Tuskegee University.

Numerous members of the Chicago "DODO" chapter are also planning to attend including our own Red Tail Flyers led by Chief Pilot Ken Rapier.

A significant highlight will be the somber moment when the Red Tails perform a flyover of the site to scatter the ashes of our most recent Lonely Eagle, George Taylor.

The ceremony at the Tuskegee Airmen site is free and open to the public on a first-come, first-served basis. There will be limited seating and standing room for the general public. Because of anticipated broad interest in this event, visitors are encouraged to arrive early and bring rain gear in case of inclement weather.,

The program is scheduled to begin at 1:30 p.m., with parking available in and adjacent to the site open at 10:30 a.m. Free educational programs telling the story of Moton Field and the Tuskegee Airmen will be available to the public after the ceremony and throughout the weekend. Park memorabilia, novelty items, and food and beverage vending will be available at the Historic Site and at the adjacent Tuskegee Municipal Airport, Moton Field.



More information on Tuskegee Airmen commemorative events in Alabama is available through the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site Park Headquarters at 334-727-6390.

Continue from cover page:

The San Diego Air & Space Museum's International Aerospace Hall of Fame is composed of hundreds of air and space pilots, engineers, inventors and innovators, along with adventurers, scientists and industry leaders.

NASA Mercury, Gemini and Apollo astronauts, and Russian cosmonauts are honored in the Hall of Fame, plus famous flying pioneers such as the Wright Brothers, Charles Lindbergh and Chuck Yeager. Other notable inductees include Jack Northrop, William Boeing, Reuben H. Fleet, Glenn Curtiss, Walter Zable Sr., Fran Bera, Wally Schirra, T. Claude Ryan, Jimmy Doolittle Jr., Frederick Rohr and Waldo Waterman.

"Inspiring kids to undertake tough science and engineering challenges is only the first step," Kidrick said. "We must also give them the resources they need to complete hard science education majors."

In November 2006, the San Diego Air & Space Museum launched its Hall of Fame Engineering Scholarship endowment fund drive. A part of the proceeds from the October 2008 Hall of Fame Gala Celebration will be used to build this scholarship fund with the goal of providing a full five year engineering scholarship to a deserving San Diego area graduating high school senior.

Time: 5:00 pm - VIP (meet the honorees) Reception
6:00 pm - Cocktail Reception
7:00 pm - Dinner
8:00 pm - Program

Location: San Diego Air & Space Museum Pavilion of Flight

Attire: Black tie optional

Gala Pricing

VIP Reception and Dinner (Per Seat)	- \$375
Reception and Dinner (Per Seat)	- \$275
VIP Reception and Dinner (Table of 10)	- \$3750
Reception and Dinner (Table of 10)	- \$2750

The Hall of Fame Gala Celebration is scheduled for Saturday evening, October 25, 2008 in the Pavilion of Flight in the San Diego Air & Space Museum.

2008 International Hall of Fame Gala Honorees



CDR Scott Carpenter, USN (Ret):

CDR Carpenter, USN-ret, is one the "Original Seven" Mercury astronauts and was the second American to orbit the earth in May 1962. Carpenter's goal during the three-orbit mission was to demonstrate that astronauts could work in space, a major prerequisite for Americas Apollo moon missions later in the decade.



The Tuskegee Airmen was composed of four all African-American fighter squadrons during the Second World War. The unit overcame adversity to become one of the most respected units of the Army Air Corps, shooting down over 100 German Aircraft. Their valiant efforts lead the way to the integration of the armed forces in 1948.

Continue on page 6:

Continue from page 5:



The Kings - King Schools, Inc.

John and Martha King have revolutionized the way pilots learn and are regarded by pilots throughout the world as their personal aviation mentors. For decades they have taught nearly half of the pilots learning to fly in the United States. Each of them has taught more pilots than any other instructor in the history of aviation. They continue to be avid students of aviation and are the first couple to both hold every category and class of FAA rating on their pilot and instructor certificates. Martha is the first and only woman to achieve this.



Dr. John Robert Beyster

Dr. Beyster is the founder of Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) of San Diego, the largest employee-owned research and engineering company in the United States. SAIC is a leading provider of Aerospace, scientific, engineering, systems integration and technical services and solutions, including sophisticated tactical decision aids for fighters, bombers, transport, and rotary wing aircraft.



Colonel Steve Pisanos, USAF (Ret)

Known as "The Flying Greek" Spiros "Steve" Pisanos joined the RAF and flew with the famed Eagle Squadrons, American volunteers flying Spitfires prior to the United States entry into World War II and the war in Europe. Later Steve flew with the US Army Air Force and would become a double ace. After the war he served as a test pilot and saw duty in Vietnam, before retiring as a colonel in 1973.



Brigadier General Robert L. Cardenas, USAF (Ret) After being shot down as a bomber pilot during World War Two, General Cardenas would become one of the most famous test pilots in US history.

A key member of the X-1 supersonic project, he was the command pilot of the B-29 that launched Captain Charles Yeager to become the first human to attain supersonic flight. He then went on to become chief test pilot for the Northrop YB-49 Flying Wing.

Source:

San Diego Air & Space Museum
2001 Pan American Plaza
Balboa Park, San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 234-8291

www.sandiegoairandspace.org/upcoming/iahf.html



"We dare not fail."

The BGen Noel F. Parrish Chapter

Of the Tuskegee Airmen

August 8, 2008 Dinner Report

August 9, 2008 Event Report

FRIDAY DINNER

Chapter members gathered for a dinner at *Johnny Carino's Restaurant* in Lexington, KY, Fayette Mall, off of Nicholasville and Reynolds Road, at 6 p.m., Friday, August 8th. In honoring two of the four Documented Original Tuskegee Airmen (DOTAs), arriving the day before the TA Presentations for the next day's "big" event, DOTAs LaVerne Shelton and Robert "Bob" Martin, Chicago, IL, DODO Chapter, gathered with the B/Gen Noel F. Parrish Chapter members: Ron Spriggs, Dan Wooten, John Croft, Lynne Fuller, Kaye Langer, Marilyn Dishman, and spousal guest, Chuck Fuller, for a time of reminiscing and celebration.

SATURDAY "BIG" EVENT

The next day's "big" event to honor and celebrate the accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen of 1941-1946, took place at Applebee's Stadium, home of owner Allan Stein's *Lexington Legends Baseball Team*. Five DOTAs responded to the "invitation" from the B/Gen Noel F. Parrish Chapter to attend this special recognition evening and included: 1) LaVerne Shelton, Chicago, IL, (2) Frank Weaver, Louisville, KY, (3) Alvin LaRue, Louisville, KY (4) Robert "Bob" Martin, Chicago, IL, and (5) Alexander Jefferson, Detroit, MI. Due to illness, Alvin LaRue of Louisville, KY, was unable to attend. The activities of the "big" evening began before the baseball game with an autograph session within the gates and at the main entrance area for the adult and child fans attending the evening's game. All four DOTAs were on display, seated in a row at a table with plenty of *Sharpie* pens (black and red). Children accompanied by their parents lined up for a *free* TA coloring book, and/or balsa airplane [provided by John Croft and the *Ron Spriggs Exhibit of the Tuskegee Airmen* (RSETA)] to be signed, and/or a photo taken with these heroic men of WWII and history beyond. The famous four sat near a framed, smaller version of Kentucky's *Tuskegee Airmen Memorial Trail* highway signs (the first in the country), a replica with signatures of TAs from all over the country.

Then the four DOTAs were escorted into the Ron Spriggs' RSETA van for the "next leg" of the event, and were driven to the other side of the baseball field. At the right moment the van pulled onto the field going around the diamond and stopped between first and third base, where they disembarked. The members and other dignitaries were there to greet them. After the singing of the national anthem, the presentations began with chapter president, Ron Spriggs, announcing to the crowds in the stands, a brief summary about the TA in WWII, their accomplishments, and the purpose of the presentations.

Continue on page 8:

Young Eagles Column



Normally there is no Young Eagles report after a cancellation but this is an exception. Let me begin by thanking all of the dedicated pilots and volunteers of the Tuskegee Airmen Young Eagles Team for standing at the ready to complete the Young Eagles rally if the weather had a change of heart and decided to cooperate. Unfortunately, that was not the case. September 13, 2008 found us under the influence of a Pacific tropical storm, giving us heavy rain, low ceilings, poor visibility and high winds. Conditions that put recreational flying out of the question. A special thanks to our head chef, Rob Strickland and his cadre of dedicated cooks, Cathy Bell, Don Clay, Carol MacCabe, Karon Thompson and Barb Werner. This committed group had plans for a spectacular luncheon feast, complete with birthday cake and ice cream. Birthday cake? That's correct, birthday cake and a celebration in honor of our sixth year at the Gary-Chicago Airport, returning for Young Eagles flights after a 90 day lay-off caused

by airshow cancellations and the 29th birthday of one our most dedicated volunteers. Oh yes, of course I should mention who just turned 29 and holding (still), Mr. Moses Jones. Happy Birthday Moses!

The next item is of vital importance: The Grand Opening of the National Historic Site, Tuskegee Army Airfield, Moton Field, Tuskegee, Alabama, is the second weekend of October. It is anticipated that all of the Tuskegee Airmen that are able to travel will be returning to their training base to witness it being dedicated as a National Historic Landmark along with the keynote speaker, President George Walker Bush. Everyone is invited to attend the ribbon cutting Friday and numerous other activities Saturday and Sunday. Pilots flying in are advised to fly in on Thursday due to the TFR over Moton Field on Friday. Plan on being at the next Young Eagles rally on Saturday, November 8, 2008.

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.



Continue from page 7:

Lexington Mayor Jim Newberry proceeded to give to each DOTA a plaque with the assistance of Youth Members' Tabitha Croft and Tajée Smith. Next, each DOTA received the "key to the city" from 1st District Councilwoman Andrea James. Each of the four DOTAs, Mayor Newberry, Councilwoman James, Lexington Legends Owner Alan Stein, and his wife, Cathy, were given a replica (approx. 3 ft. x 1 ft.) of Kentucky's Tuskegee Airmen Memorial Trail sign with signatures of the four DOTAs, BGNFP Chapter members, and guests attending the event. At the conclusion of the presentations, a "fly-over" above the stadium, zoomed in honor of this special event for the DOTAs.

Following the presentations, DOTA Alex Jefferson, was asked to throw out the first pitch which he did so with much vigor. After the ballpark ceremonies, the DOTAs exited the field to be taken to see the *Ron Spriggs Exhibit of the Tuskegee Airmen* displayed at the ballpark. The festivities continued to the President's suite donated by the Stein's in honor of the attending DOTAs and the BGNFP Chapter members, guest volunteers, and dignitaries. There was an array of ballpark food, snacks, fresh fruit, and non-alcoholic beverages on hand for everyone.

At the party, John Croft suspended the frivolity for a brief time to present a *plethora* of donated gifts he had sought from many contributors for the chapter to honor the DOTAs, as others looked on cheering and clapping. In addition, Ron Spriggs presented RSETA gifts to the honored heroes, and a replica of the Tuskegee Airmen Memorial Trail sign, as the groups' appreciation continued. To "top off" the gifts' presentation, a *Tuskegee Airmen P-51 Mustang* decorated, giant cookie, was cut up and shared among many.

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With the ballgame in “full swing” as the celebration in the suite carried on, the DOTAs settled in for baseball. At 9 p.m. *scrumptious* desserts were served before the end of the game.

A special thank you goes to Alan Stein, as owner of the Lexington Legends, making this event possible with his invitation to the BGNFP Chapter of TAI for the Tuskegee Airmen Recognition Day, and the donation of the President’s Suite and all that went with it.

It is with much gratefulness to member, John Croft, for his tireless efforts in seeking the donated gifts and special feature of the “fly-over”.

And, of course, the chapter extends appreciation to our fearless leader, Ron Spriggs, having been on top of everything, since the beginning of the summer with the RSETA display at Applebee’s Stadium.

More “thank yous” are asserted here for each person in the different roles accepted for making the weekend a momentous one:

- 1 ___ RESETA Display ___ Ron Spriggs, President, B/G NFP Chapter
- 2 ___ Public Relations ___ John Croft, 2nd Vice Pres., B/G NFP Chapter
- 3 ___ Photos ___ Dan Wooten, 1st Vice Pres., B/G NFP Chapter
- 4 ___ Recruit/Nametags ___ Lynne Fuller, Record. Sec., B/G NFP Chapter
- 5 ___ DOTA Aide ___ Charles Walker, Member, B/Gen NFP Chapter
- 6 ___ DOTA Aide ___ Bill McAtee, Member, B/G NFP Chapter
- 7 ___ DOTA Aide ___ Glenn Brown, Treasurer, B/G NFP Chapter
- 8 ___ Aide to Ron ___ Tabitha Croft, Youth Member, B/G NFP Chapter
- 9 ___ Aide to Ron ___ Tajée Smith, Youth Member, B/G NFP Chapter
- 10 ___ Attendee ___ Taelor Brown, Youth Member, B/G NFP Chapter
- 11 ___ Guest Volunteer ___ Rewa Smith
- 12 ___ Guest Volunteer ___ Carolyn Walker
- 13 ___ Guest Volunteer ___ Chuck Fuller
- 14 ___ Guest Volunteer ___ Marjorie Agvor ___ Tabitha Croft’s Friend
- 15 ___ Guest Driver ___ André Wilson, daughter of DOTA Frank Weaver
- 16 ___ Guests ___ Two granddaughters of Frank Weaver
- 17 ___ Friday Night ___ Kaye Langer, Corres. Sec., B/G NFP Chapter
- 18 ___ Friday Night ___ Marilyn Dishman, Parlim., B/G NFP Chapter
- 19 ___ DOTA ___ S/Sgt LaVerne Shelton, DOTA, DoDo Chapter, Chicago, IL
- 20 ___ DOTA ___ S/Sgt Frank Weaver, DOTA, B/Gen Noel Parrish Chapter
- 21 ___ DOTA ___ 1/Lt (Dr.) Bob Martin, DOTA, DoDo Chapter, Chicago, IL
- 22 ___ DOTA ___ Flt Off. Alvin LaRue, DOTA, B/Gen Noel Parrish Chapter
- 23 ___ DOTA ___ L/Col. (Dr.) Alex Jefferson, DOTA, Detroit Ch., Detroit, MI
- 24 ___ LFUCG ___ Jim Newberry, Mayor City of Lexington
- 25 ___ LFUCG ___ Adrea James, 1st District Councilmember
- 26 ___ Lex.Legen’. Owner ___ Alan Stein
- 27 ___ Guest Wife ___ Cathy Stein, State Repre.

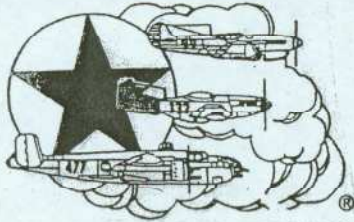
Our chapter expresses heartfelt gratitude, to the DOTAs Shelton, Weaver, Martin, and Jefferson, who were able to attend the “big” event, and who brought the reality home of the sacrifice and service for our families and families all across this great nation of the United States of America by the Army Air Corps’ Tuskegee Airmen of WWII.

They loved on us, and we loved them right back.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Fuller

Recording Secretary



**CHICAGO DODO CHAPTER
TUSKEGEE AIRMEN, INC.
P. O. BOX 19063, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60619-0063**

September 18, 2008

To: ALL MEMBERS of CHICAGO "DODO" CHAPTER, TAI, INC.
HERITAGE, NEW GENERATION MEMBERS
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Quentin P. Smith

Milton Williams

From: THE OFFICERS' INSTALLATION BRUNCH COMMITTEE

Following are details regarding the Year 2008 Gala Brunch event

Date: December 6, 2008 (Saturday) Time: 12:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Place: HARAMBEE HOUSE
11901 S. Loomis, Chicago, Illinois 60643 (Parking Available)

Donation: \$40.00 per person
(Checks to be made payable to: Chicago "DODO" Chapter, TAI)

Again, please remember that the EIGHTH Officers Instillation Brunch of the new century is being held on the 1st Saturday in December. We expect you to be present. We know you will bring a friend(s). Come on and let's CELEBRATE! Reserve space NOW for you and your party! We need to count guest 1-week before the brunch.

GOOD MUSIC / GOOD FOOD (BUFFET) / OPEN BAR

Fill out Response form below and return it together with your check (s) to

BARBARA WERNER
7701 s. Luella Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60649 773-375-8254

Any Questions: Call Mail person, **Mrs. Yola Moore**, at (708) 389-0712 or the person listed above

Note: Not responsible for late guest after 2p.m.

TIS the SEASON to CELEBRATE

RESPONSE FORM Kindly return on or before November 18th deadline

I plan to attend the INSTALLATION BRUNCH I will be unable to attend

Number of people in my party

My check in the amount of \$ is enclosed

SIGNED _____

Special Note: Thank You for returning this form. A count is needed one week before the event!

"FROM THESE ROOTS, BUILD TOMORROW!"

The KEY NEWS JOURNAL

Serving Central Kentucky's Black Community

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN VISIT LEXINGTON

August 18-31-2008

Reprinted with the permission of the KEY News Journal

FREE

By **Patrice K. Muhammad**
 Photos contributed by
 Dan Wooten, Noel Parrish
 Chapter of the Tuskegee
 Airmen

A few of the legendary Tuskegee airmen made an appearance in Lexington at Applebee's Park last week. The Lexington Legends hosted four of the decorated veterans, who were among the first African American airmen for the U.S. during World War II. They shared their experiences fighting in the war abroad and fighting segregation and racism in the United States with those who stopped to meet and greet them.

Airmen LaVerne Shelton (Chicago), Bob Martin (Chicago), Alex Jefferson (Detroit) and Frank Weaver (Louisville) represented the airmen at the ballpark in Lexington. Spriggs said that all living airmen were invited but most are in their midlate eighties.

Nearly 1000 pilots were trained and only 160-170 are still living. There were nearly 18,000 pilots, ground support, cadets, etc. but that number is an estimate and Spriggs does not know how many ground support crew are still living.

For several years now Ron Spriggs has been studying the famous Tuskegee Airmen and sharing the knowledge with others. After spending 8 years in the Air Force, Spriggs had an interest in planes and history. "Right after I saw the Tuskegee Airman movie I went to Wright Patterson AF base outside Dayton, OH and there was nothing about the Tuskegee Airmen," said Spriggs.

He has developed a traveling showcase, which is named The Ron Spriggs Exhibit of Tuskegee Airmen (RSETA). The RSETA has appeared at the Lexington Legend's stadium, but according to Spriggs, but missed last year. "I ran into [owner] Alan Stein at the airport and he asked why we didn't have exhibit there and I said, we weren't invited. He said that we always had a standing invitation," said Spriggs.



Dr. Alexander Jefferson, L/Col., USAF-Ret, Detroit, Mr. Frank Weaver, S/Sgt, USAAC, Louisville, Dr. Bob Martin Capt., USAAC 100th FS, Chicago, Mr. Verne Shelton, S/Sgt., USAAC, 100th FS, Chicago visited Legends Ballpark for honors.

Once Ron connected with the ballpark they informed him that they wanted to host a special program to honor the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen.



Dr. Jefferson accepts plaque from Councilwoman Andrea James, Tajee Smith, a youth member of TAI, Ron Spriggs and the Mayor look on.

The Tuskegee Airmen were dedicated and determined young men who enlisted to become America's first Black military airmen, at a time when there were many people who thought that Black men lacked intelligence, skill, courage and patriotism.

Those who possessed the physical and mental qualifications were accepted as aviation cadets. Most were college graduates or undergraduates. It is important to note

that unlike some programs, no standards were lowered for the pilots or any of the others who trained in operations, meteorology, intelligence, engineering, medicine or any of the other officer fields.

The term Tuskegee Airman applies to anyone who supported their training and assisted them in flight. Some members were trained to be aircraft and engine mechanics, armament specialists, radio repairmen, parachute riggers, control tower operators, policemen, administrative clerks and all of the other skills necessary to fully function as an Army Air Corps flying squadron or ground support unit. The airmen flew from Tuskegee Army Air Field (TAAF) in Tuskegee Alabama.

The first aviation cadet class began in July 1941 and completed training nine months later in March 1942. Thirteen started in the first class. Five successfully completed the training, one of them being Captain Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., a West Point Academy graduate. The other four were commissioned second lieutenants, and all five received Army Air Corps silver pilot wings. From 1941 through 1946, nine hundred and ninety-four pilots graduated at TAAF, receiving commissions and pilot wings.

Kentucky has a rich history of aviation including Willa Brown from Glasgow, KY, the first Black woman licensed pilot who was teaching Black men at Tuskegee. Because of that rich history Spriggs says, "we pushed hard to the Tuskegee Airman Memorial Trail highway marker." Kentucky was the first state to erect a sign, since then two other states, Georgia and Colorado, have too.

Currently, upon entering Fayette County on I-75 and at the I-64 entrance there are markers. Spriggs is working with Kentucky lawmakers to get the trail extended from Cincinnati to Jellico, TN.

Each airman was presented with a key to the city and plaque. Almost



Dr. Jefferson receives his "Key-to-the-City" from Ms. James Tabitha Croft a youth member of TAI, assists with the presentation.

30 companies donated gifts and mementos to the airmen.

Chapter members who assisted in making the event possible were Lynne Fuller, Charles Walker, Bill McAtee, Tajee Smith, Tabitha Croft, Rewa Smith, Chuck Fuller and Caroline Walker. Noel Parrish Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen Inc. and RSETA assisted also, especially Dan Wooten and John Croft who are co-chairs.

Anyone with an interest in the Tuskegee Airmen and want to assist in spreading the word of their history and attend national TA conventions can join the *Brig. Gen. Noel Parrish Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen* by calling 859-881-0546

PHOTO YOU WILL NOT SEE ON FOX!!



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