“TUSKEGEE EXPERIENCE”

According to researcher and DOTA Theopolis W. Johnson, the following information relates to the “Tuskegee Experience”:

“That is….anyone--man or woman, military or civilian, black or white--who served at Tuskegee Army Air Field or in <u>any</u> of the programs stemming from the ‘Tuskegee Experience’ between the years 1941 and 1949 is considered to be a documented original Tuskegee Airman (DOTA).”

There were an estimated 16-19,000 persons in the above category of which 14,632 persons have been personally documented by Johnson. (As of 10/16/05)

He also notes that:

928 – American pilot graduates
5 – Haitian pilot graduates
1 – Trinidadian pilot graduate
11 – Instructor pilot graduates
51 – Liaison pilot graduates

Total pilot graduates: **996** (**686** SE graduates and **248** TE graduates-American, Trinidadian and Haitian

only). [**SE** = Single Engine (fighter) and **TE** = Twin Engine (bomber)]

There were **44** classes that graduated during the "Tuskegee Experience."

The first class (42-C-SE) graduated **5** SE pilots (including then Captain Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.) on March 7, 1942.

The last class (Class 46-C) graduated with **8** SE graduates and **5** TE graduates on June 28, 1946.

- **2,483** persons were pilot trainees at Moton Field and Tuskegee Army Air Field (AAF), located in Tuskegee, AL, from July 19, 1941 until June 28, 1946.

- **996** pilots graduated from Tuskegee AAF.

- Tuskegee AAF closed August 20, 1946.

- Of the graduates, **352** pilots deployed overseas (Europe) for combat duty.

- **84** Tuskegee Airmen were killed overseas during WWII.

- **80** pilots lost their lives in combat, training, flying and non-flying accidents.

- **68** pilots were identified as either KIA or MIA.

- **12** pilots were killed overseas in training accidents or non-combat related incidents.

- **30** pilots were downed or captured as POWs.

- **4** enlisted persons were killed overseas while in the performance of their duties.

- During WWII, the Tuskegee Airmen (then known as the “Red Tails”) flew:

  1267 missions and **6381** combat sorties with the 12th Air Force (June, 1943 to May, 1944)

  311 missions and **9152** combat sorties with the 15th Air Force (June, 1944 to May, 1945)

  Total Missions: **1578**

  Total Combat Sorties: **15,533**

  Total Aerial Kills: **112**

The Tuskegee Airmen received the following combat awards:

Presidential Unit Citation (3)
Legion of Merit [COL Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.]
Silver Star [COL Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.]
Soldier Medal [CAPT Woodrow W. Crockett]
Distinguished Flying Cross (150)
Purple Heart (8)*
Bronze Star (14)
Air Medal (744)
Red Star of Yugoslavia [1stLT William W. Green, Jr.]

*Correct count pending

Partial list of Tuskegee Experience locations:

Atterbury AAF	Freeman AAF
Chanute AAF	Godman AAF
Douglas AAF	Hondo AAF
Eglin AAF	Lockbourne AAF
Ellington AAF	Maxwell AAF
Midland AAF	Tomah AAF
Selfridge AAF	Walterboro AAF
Sturgis AAF	Dale Mabry AAF

The 332nd Fighter Wing ceased all operations on June 1, 1949 (after President Harry Truman signed Executive Order #9981 on July 26, 1948, which

desegregated the U.S. Armed Forces) at Lockbourne AFB, Columbus, OH and was deactivated, officially ending the "Tuskegee Experience."

NOTES:

1. The name "Tuskegee Airmen" came into existence on May 15, 1955 with the publication of "The Tuskegee Airmen--The Story of the Negro in the U.S. Air Force" by Charles E. Francis. Prior to that date, they were known as the "Red Tails."

2. During WWII, 72 Tuskegee Airmen shot down 112 enemy aircraft, including the best of the German fighters. Three Tuskegee Airmen (Captain Joseph D. Elsberry, Captain Edward L. Toppins and 1st Lieutenant Lee A. Archer) each shot down **four** enemy planes. No Tuskegee Airman ever achieved "ace" status (**five** or more kills required).

3. Despite contrary reports, the Tuskegee Airmen **did** lose several U.S. bombers to enemy fire while escorting the bombers. But it should be noted that they did have one of the best records of not losing bombers, a unique achievement when compared to other American fighter units that escorted bombers. The then known "Red Tails" were in high demand for escort service by U.S. bomber crews because of their low loss record.

4. The "Tuskegee Experience" was originally called the "Tuskegee Experiment," and was conducted by the U.S. War Department and the Army Air Corps from 1941-1949. It should **not** be confused with the "Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment," which was conducted by the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) from 1932-1972. Both events occurred in Tuskegee, AL at different locations.
http://www.tuskegee.edu/global/story.asp?s=1207586

5. The Tuskegee Airmen were **collectively**, not individually, awarded the Congressional Gold Medal (CGM) by President George W. Bush and the U.S. Congress on March 29, 2007 in a ceremony inside the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol. The 300 airmen and widows, who attended the ceremony, received the CGM for all of the estimated 16-19,000 participants of the "Tuskegee Experience."
http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/goldmedal.html

Tuskegee Airmen Congressional Gold Medal Info:
http://www.tuskegeeairmen.org/Tuskegee_Airmen_Congression.php

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For more history information on the Tuskegee Airmen, go to:
http://www.tuskegeeairmen.org (click on "History")

10/09