

The Tuskegee Airmen: When Freedom Takes Flight

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Introduction

Pilots, trailblazers, heroes, and legends. Although the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II are now well known and idolized for flying over 15,000 missions and skirmishes, destroying 410 enemy aircraft, and earning almost 1000 prestigious medals¹, the program had never been designed with that intent. “We were expected to fail. The whole thing was called the Tuskegee experiment.”² Yet in their overseas service in North Africa, the Mediterranean Sea, and the European mainland they did the opposite, serving their country with valor and distinction. As the first Black military pilots, the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II fought against fascism in Europe and racism at home, shattering the air force color barrier, inspiring the desegregation of the military, and dealing a powerful blow to racial inequality in American life.

Creation and Historical Context

Segregated units have been part of the United States Military since the American Revolution with Black Minutemen at the battles of Lexington and Concord in April of 1775.³ Just like many segregated units succeeding them, they failed to gain the respect they deserved and were practically punished for their service. This lack of appreciation dates to the belief of white supremacy prevalent in early American life. Many scholars made attempts to banish these opinions including Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois. Washington believed that as blacks acquired practical skills and proved their usefulness to society, racism would cease to exist. This opinion drove him to found Alabama’s Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute on

¹ Harvey, James H. *History of the Tuskegee Airmen*. 24 October 2012. www.tuskegeetopgun.com/tuskegee_airmen.php.

² Rumsey, Mark. “I Just Wanted To Fly’: A Tuskegee Airman Reflects On Pioneering WWII Squadron.” *WFAE*, 30 January 2018. www.wfae.org/post/i-just-wanted-fly-tuskege-e-airman-reflects-pioneering-wwii-squadron#stream/0.

³ “African Americans in the U.S. Army.” *Timeline of Events for African Americans in the U.S. Army*. 2014.

July 4th, 1881.⁴ Dissatisfied with this pleasant outlook, DuBois wanted immediate action and results, insisting that “persistent manly agitation is the way to liberty.”⁵ On February 12th, 1909, these opinions compelled him to found the NAACP; a group aimed at winning equality for African Americans and a key political player even today.⁶

The racial tension in the military flared in November of 1925 upon the leak of the War College study: *The Use of Negro Manpower in War*. The report enraged the African American community, going as far as to say, “(African Americans) have not the physical courage of the White. They simply cannot control themselves in fear of danger to the degree the White can.”⁷ Despite the outcry, the United States government adopted the findings and recommendations as the standard policy for African American employment in times of war.

In the mid-1930s, with Europe on the brink of World War II, generals began to lobby for the expansion of the Air Corps. President Franklin Roosevelt granted this wish in early 1939 by enacting Public Law 18 but makes no plans to include African Americans in the program. Upon discovery, the entire Black community jumped into action.⁸ The Chicago Defender, America’s foremost Black newspaper, begins an editorial campaign and the NAACP launched a lobbying campaign to let in African American recruits. Not long after, a barnstorming campaign kicked off to prove African Americans can fly just as well as Whites.⁹

⁴Blatty, David. “W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington Had Clashing Ideologies During the Civil Rights Movement.”

Biography.com, A&E Networks Television, 23 January 2020, www.biography.com/news/web-dubois-vs-booker-t-washington.

⁵Niagara Movement. “Niagara Movement Declaration of Principles.” 1905. Special Collections and University Archives. University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

⁶Blatty, David. “W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington Had Clashing Ideologies During the Civil Rights Movement.”

Biography.com, A&E Networks Television, 23 January 2020, www.biography.com/news/web-dubois-vs-booker-t-washington.

⁷Ely, Hanson Edward. “The Use of Negroe Manpower In War.” 10 November 1925.

⁸ Tuskegee Airmen National Museum Board of Directors “Who Were They.” *Tuskegee Airmen National Museum*. 2015. <http://www.tuskegeemuseum.org/who-were-they/>.

⁹Moye, J. Todd. *Freedom Flyers: the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

These efforts were a success and in the summer of 1939, Congress passed the Civilian Pilot Training Act, “authorizing hundreds of flight training facilities at colleges throughout the country.”¹⁰ This made aviation training available to African Americans but still barred them from the AAC until January 1941, when the War Department announced the creation of the nation’s first all-black military aviation unit; the 99th Pursuit Squadron.¹¹ They began to accept applications in March but set very high standards including a college education and previous completion of the civilian training program to limit the number of applicants. It instead brought all the best and brightest African Americans in the nation to Alabama. On July 19th, Tuskegee Army Air Field accepted its first class.¹²

Training

The first class of thirteen cadets to enter the Tuskegee program began training down the road at Moton Field on July 19th, 1941.¹³ Among them, only five graduated including Benjamin O. Davis Jr., the future commander of the 332nd fighter group and the first African American General in the U.S. Army.¹⁴ Originally, eleven White officers taught cadets (few Black pilots were qualified), holding them to much higher standards than White cadets in an attempt to force failure upon them.¹⁵ Basic training included classes on meteorology, radio, engines, and navigation. Once they master these they begin flying on PT-17 and PT-19 biplanes.¹⁶ For advanced training, cadets moved up to Tuskegee Army Air Field and switched to the BT-13

¹⁰ Moye, J. Todd. *Freedom Flyers: the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

¹¹ Haulman, Daniel L. *Tuskegee Airmen Chronology*. Montgomery. Newsouth Books. 11 May 2016.

¹² Haulman, Daniel L. *Tuskegee Airmen Chronology*. Montgomery. Newsouth Books. 11 May 2016.

¹³ “First Class of Colored Aviation Cadets Begins Training on Saturday, July 19th.” *The Palmetto Leader*. Page 5. 19 July 1941.

¹⁴ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.. 14 Dec. 2019. www.britannica.com/biography/Benjamin-O-Davis-Jr.

¹⁵ “Eleanor Roosevelt and the Tuskegee Airmen.” *FDR Presidential Library & Museum*. 2016. www.fdrlibrary.org/tuskegee.

¹⁶ Haulman, Daniel L. “Tuskegee Airfields During World War II.” *Air Force Historical Research Agency*. 23 June 2014.

single winged aircraft.¹⁷ Classes at Tuskegee Army Airfield were much more advanced than most aviation schools, resulting in a high rate of failure among trainees. The program often washed out better pilots than White schools graduated.¹⁸ Under white squadron commander Colonel Noel Parrish, the airfield was a home and oasis to Black trainees in the harsh racial climate of Southern Alabama.¹⁹ However, the climate outside the base led to growing tensions between White officers and Black cadets inside the base. Although no violent actions were taken, Black officers replaced White officers upon deployment.²⁰

Deployment

The AAC gave the Tuskegee Airmen their first chance in combat in April of 1943 upon the deployment of the 99th Fighter Squadron to the Mediterranean Theater of Operations in Casablanca, French Morocco.²¹ While in the Mediterranean they flew secondhand P-40s, planes often slower than ones they faced, on patrol, bomber escort, and attacked ground targets on the Italian islands of Pantelleria and Sicily as well as the mainland.²² Despite its handicap, the Tuskegee Airmen received their first Distinguished Unit Citation for outstanding air support while flying missions over Sicily from June to July of 1943 in preparation for the oncoming Allied invasion. The 99th Pursuit Squadron also scored its first aerial victory on this series when Lieutenant Charles B. Hall shot down a German FW-190.²³

¹⁷ Haulman, Daniel L. "Tuskegee Airfields During World War II." *Air Force Historical Research Agency*. 23 June 2014.

¹⁸ Rumsey, Mark. "I Just Wanted To Fly!: A Tuskegee Airman Reflects On Pioneering WWII Squadron." *WFAE*, 30 January 2018. www.wfae.org/post/i-just-wanted-fly-tuskegee-airman-reflects-pioneering-wwii-squadron#stream/0.

¹⁹ Haulman, Daniel L. "Tuskegee Airmen." *Encyclopedia of Alabama*. 5 Oct. 2011. www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3154.

²⁰ Moye, J. Todd. *Freedom Flyers: the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

²¹ Haulman, Daniel L. "Tuskegee Airmen." *Encyclopedia of Alabama*. 5 Oct. 2011. www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3154.

²² Haulman, Daniel L. "Tuskegee Airmen." *Encyclopedia of Alabama*. 5 Oct. 2011. www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3154.

²³ Haulman, Daniel L. "112 Victories: Aerial Victory Credits of the Tuskegee Airmen." *Air Force Historical Research Agency*. 17 January 2008.

The 99th transferred to Licata, Sicily in July of 1943 and in late January of 1944, they shot down thirteen enemy airplanes in two days while protecting Allied ground forces during the Siege of Pantelleria.²⁴ Days later they earned their second Distinguished Unit Citation while flying missions against enemy targets over Cassino, Italy in May 1944.

Later that May, the AAC reassigned 99th Fighter Squadron to the Fifteenth Air Force and they joined the other three Tuskegee segregated squadrons in the 332nd Fighter Group. The four squadrons of the 332nd Fighter Group (99th, 100th, 331st, and 332nd) were stationed at Ramitelli Airfield on the Adriatic Coast of the Italian Peninsula and assigned to bomber escort duty. The 332nd fighter group excelled at escorting B-17 and B-24 bombers on long-range missions deep into enemy territory. Since this new assignment, the Tuskegee Airmen flew 179 missions, escorting thousands of heavy bombers, and losing only 27 to enemy fire.²⁵ Their exceptional record led to a common myth claiming they never lost a bomber.

In the first month of bomber escort duty, the 332nd fighter group flew secondhand P-47 Thunderbolts, a major upgrade from the slow P-40s better suited for training yet still nowhere near the quality of the German Luftwaffe or other allied squadrons.²⁶ However, their aerial ability still exceeded many privileged units as shown on June 9th, 1944, when Lieutenants Gwynne Pierson, Windell Pruitt, and four others put a German destroyer out of commission by using their machine guns to ignite the munitions storage.²⁷ In July of 1944, the Tuskegee Airmen

²⁴ Haulman, Daniel L. "Tuskegee Airmen." *Encyclopedia of Alabama*. 5 Oct. 2011. www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3154.

²⁵ Haulman, Daniel L. *Eleven Myths About the Tuskegee Airmen*. Newsouth Books. 2012.

²⁶ Tuskegee Airmen National Museum Board of Directors "Who Were They." *Tuskegee Airmen National Museum*. 2015. <http://www.tuskegeemuseum.org/who-were-they/>.

²⁷ Haulman, Daniel L. "112 Victories: Aerial Victory Credits of the Tuskegee Airmen." *Air Force Historical Research Agency*. 17 January 2008.

were finally granted advanced planes previously barred by the bigotted leaders of the Army Air Corps and they made the switch to P-51 Mustangs, the “best U.S. fighter planes of the war.”²⁸

After painting on the signature red tails unique to their squadron, the red-tailed angels truly characterized aerial perfection; picking up their third Distinguished Unit Citation on March 24th, 1945, for escorting B-17s on an air raid of the Daimler-Benz tank factory at Berlin. There they fought and shot down three of the German Jagdgeschwader Sieben’s ME-262 jet planes.²⁹ The 332nd Fighter Group returned home in late April 1945 after proving to the entire world that African Americans were smart enough and brave enough to fly just as well, if not better, than White airmen. Yet despite their outstanding service, the Airmen were still segregated from other troops on the returning ship to the United States.³⁰

The Mutiny at Freeman Field

Despite never seeing action, no other graduates of Tuskegee programs experienced as much segregation and bigotry as the 477th Bombardment Group. The 477th Bombardment Group was established on January 15th, 1944, at Selfridge Field, Michigan with the intent to repeat the success of the 332nd Fighter Group in Europe with a bombardment group in Japan.³¹ The 477th had a similar application process to that of the 99th and included veterans of the Mediterranean theater that applied for additional service. However, unlike the accepting Colonel Noel Parrish, the 477th Bombardment Group was led by Colonel Robert E. Selway, a harshly bigotted leader that “ran the unit as a promotion mill for White aviators.”³² Command of all four

²⁸ Haulman, Daniel L. “Tuskegee Airmen.” *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, 5 Oct. 2011, www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3154.

²⁹ Haulman, Daniel L. “112 Victories: Aerial Victory Credits of the Tuskegee Airmen.” *Air Force Historical Research Agency*. 17 January 2008.

³⁰ Haulman, Daniel L. “Tuskegee Airmen.” *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, 5 Oct. 2011, www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3154.

³¹ “The 477TH Bombardment Group.” *ECCTAI*. www.ecctai.org/tuskegee-477th-bombardment-group.

³² Tuskegee Airmen National Museum Board of Directors “477th Bomber Group.” *Tuskegee Airmen National Museum*. 2015. <http://www.tuskeguseum.org/477th-bomber-group/>.

squadrons was reserved by Selway for Whites even though Black veterans often had greater flying time and combat experience. On May 5, 1944, Selway, without advanced warning, ordered the 477th to board trains to move to a new location. “Selway, concerned about racial tensions in Detroit that had never affected his unit...moved the unit to Godman Army AirField.”³³ Godman was nowhere near adequate for the unit and a major step down from Selfridge which had “four times more hanger space, seven times the acreage, five times the aviation gasoline capacity, more runways, and better flying weather.”³⁴ This move damaged morale and set the group far behind its training schedule. By March 1945, the 477th Bombardment Group had fallen far enough behind that the Army Air Corps ordered them to move to Freeman Army Airfield in Indiana. Although Freeman had the space needed to train the unit, the harsh racial climate of the surrounding Seymour, Indiana was another step down from the comfort of the Black community surrounding Godman.³⁵

The unit completely collapsed in mid-April when a mutiny formed after Colonel Selway built segregated clubs for personnel at Freeman Field. Selway created these clubs under the guise that one was for supervisors, most of whom were White, and one was for trainees, most of whom were Black. However, Black supervisors were barred from entry of the supervisors club while White trainees were accepted. “The intent of such divide was blatant because whenever Selway and Hunter telephoned each other or the Pentagon to talk about the issue, both called the supervisor club the ‘White officers’ club.”³⁶ On April 5, 1945 and the following several days,

³³ Tuskegee Airmen National Museum Board of Directors “477th Bomber Group.” *Tuskegee Airmen National Museum*. 2015. <http://www.tuskegeemuseum.org/477th-bomber-group/>.

³⁴ “The 477TH Bombardment Group.” *ECCTAI*. www.ecctai.org/tuskegee-477th-bombardment-group.

³⁵ Tuskegee Airmen National Museum Board of Directors “477th Bomber Group.” *Tuskegee Airmen National Museum*. 2015. <http://www.tuskegeemuseum.org/477th-bomber-group/>.

³⁶ Tuskegee Airmen National Museum Board of Directors “477th Bomber Group.” *Tuskegee Airmen National Museum*. 2015. <http://www.tuskegeemuseum.org/477th-bomber-group/>.

over sixty black officers, despite written orders from Colonel Selway to “stay out of his White club,”³⁷ entered it and were arrested. All of them were released by the seventh except for the ‘Freeman Field Three’ who were accused of jostling a superior officer. On the ninth, Selway issued his club order and requested signatures from all personnel on the base. All White officers and most Black trainees signed except for 101 dissenters who were arrested but later set free since Selway was acting contrary to U.S. Army policy. The ‘Freeman Field Three’ were tried for violation of the 64th Article of War (willful disobedience) and under threat of death stood their ground.³⁸ The Black press and NAACP championed their cause, sending Theodore M. Berry, president of the Cincinnati branch of the NAACP, to defend them in court. Only Roger C. Terry was convicted of shoving the Provost Marshall and fined 150 dollars; money that would be refunded decades later.³⁹

Post-mutiny, the 477th Bombardment Group moved back to Godman Field and in May 1945, Colonel Benjamin O. Davis took control of the unit and replaced the White officers with Black veterans. Under Davis, the 477th quickly got into fighting fitness and morale was boosted.⁴⁰ The unit had made a full comeback by the time the Allies won the war in the Pacific and ended World War II.

Executive Order 9981

On July 26th, 1948, President Harry Truman, in part inspired by the heroic deeds of the Tuskegee Airmen, enacted Executive Order 9981 which prohibited discrimination “on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin” in the United States Armed Forces.⁴¹ This order

³⁷ Haulman, Daniel L. “A Tale of Two Commanders.” *Air Force Historical Research Agency*.

³⁸ Tuskegee Airmen National Museum Board of Directors “477th Bomber Group.” *Tuskegee Airmen National Museum*. 2015. <http://www.tuskegeemuseum.org/477th-bomber-group/>.

³⁹ “The 477TH Bombardment Group.” *ECCTAI*. www.ecctai.org/tuskegee-477th-bombardment-group.

⁴⁰ Haulman, Daniel L. “A Tale of Two Commanders.” *Air Force Historical Research Agency*.

⁴¹ Truman, Harry. “Executive Order 9981.” National Archives. 26 July 1948.

expanded upon Franklin Roosevelt's Executive Order 8802 which prohibited racial discrimination in the civilian defense industry to the uniform military. Despite the many factors pushing for this law, veteran Harold Brown says, "There is no way in the world that Truman would have integrated had the 332nd Fighter Group been failures."⁴²

Civil Rights Movement

The heroic actions of the Tuskegee Airmen also set the stage for the Civil Rights Movement two decades later. Historians generally agree that the 1960s civil rights movement was more successful than previous efforts because of the greater role Whites played. While this may seem bigoted, the Civil Rights Movement needed to unite the majority of the nation to be successful.⁴³ The monumental achievements of the Tuskegee Airmen played key roles in this tactic, earning the respect and admiration of White airmen, and as they grew in popularity, the country.⁴⁴ As the movement developed, many former pilots took key roles including William T. Coleman Junior, the first Black supreme court clerk and Robert L. Carter, a lawyer on Thurgood Marshall's team of NAACP attorneys. Both were instrumental in the ruling of the landmark supreme court case; *Brown v. Board of Education*.⁴⁵ The actions of the 332nd Fighter Group helped sway public opinion from the traditional Southern views of White supremacy to modern views on equality

⁴² Rumsey, Mark. "I Just Wanted To Fly": A Tuskegee Airman Reflects On Pioneering WWII Squadron." *WFAE*, 30 January 2018. www.wfae.org/post/i-just-wanted-fly-tuskegee-airman-reflects-pioneering-wwii-squadron#stream/0.

⁴³ "The Civil Rights Movement And The Second Reconstruction, 1945-1968: US House of Representatives: History, Art & Archives." *US House of Representatives: History, Art & Archives*, history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/BAIC/Historical-Essays/Keeping-the-Faith/Civil-Rights-Movement/.

⁴⁴ Moye, J. Todd. *Freedom Flyers: the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

⁴⁵ Haulman, Daniel L. "Tuskegee Airmen Activists After World War II." *Air Force Historical Research Agency*. 24 December 2014.

Conclusion

Considering their Congressional Gold Medal in 2007, the Tuskegee Airmen are as relevant today as they were seventy years ago. The courageous deeds of the 332nd Fighter Group and 477th Bombardment Group truly proved their courage, breaking the color barrier in the Army Air Corps and earning three Distinguished Unit Citations, eight Purple Hearts, 95 Distinguished Flying Crosses, and 744 Air Medals.⁴⁶ Furthermore, they fought racism on the homefront through their intelligence and valor overseas and rebellion against their bigotted leader. By the time the Tuskegee Airmen disbanded, they had proven segregation in the armed forces “was so inefficient as to be counterproductive to the nation's defense.”⁴⁷ Thus provoking the enactment of Executive Order 9981 which ended all forms of segregation in the United States military. Moreover, the Tuskegee Airmen fought against the Axis Powers in Europe and Jim Crow at home, shattering the air force color barrier and dealing a powerful blow to discrimination in American life.

⁴⁶ Harvey, James H. *History of the Tuskegee Airmen*. 24 October 2012. www.tuskegeetopgun.com/tuskegee_airmen.php.

⁴⁷ Moye, J. Todd. *Freedom Flyers: the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II*. Oxford University Press. 2012.

Appendix



Five Tuskegee Airmen, pilots of a P-51 Mustang Group of the 15th Air Force stationed at Ramitelli Air Base in Italy, shelter themselves from wind in the shadow of Skipper's Darlin' III on August 1st, 1944. They are, from left to right, Lt. Dempsey W. Morgan, Jr., Lt. Carroll S. Woods, Lt. Robert H. Nelson, Jr., Captain Andrew D. Turner, and Lt. Clarence P. Lester. Photos such as these were common in black newspapers in America to convince white politicians that African Americans were aiding in the war effort, a strategy used to force the passage of Executive Order 9981.

“Pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group in front of P-51C “Skipper’s Darlin’ III” flown by Capt Andrew Turner.” Pictures of African Americans during World War II. *National Archives*. 1 August 1944. <https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/ww2-pictures>.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources:

“Eleanor Roosevelt and “Chief” Charles Alfred Anderson.” *Records of the Federal Aviation Administration*. 11 April 1941. Accessed 15 December 2019.

This image is of Eleanor Roosevelt and Charles Alfred Anderson on a televised visit of Tuskegee Army Air Field. The photo was taken prior to a flight which secured presidential support for the program.

Ely, Hanson Edward. “The Use of Negroe Manpower In War.” 10 November 1925. Accessed 19 January 2020.

This war college study from 1925 is a prejudiced document outlining the purpose African Americans served in previous wars and opinions on how they should be used for future wars. This study insults their intelligence and recommends ground infantry use only, a recommendation the Tuskegee Airmen would challenge.

“First Class of Colored Aviation Cadets Begins Training on Saturday, July 19th.” *The Palmetto Leader*. Page 5. 19 July 1941. Accessed 14 December 2019.

This newspaper article from the time of the first class of Tuskegee Airmen states several important dates and names regarding the first graduating class. Surrounding articles also provide a bit of historical context, mentioning a Woman’s Day rally and tuberculosis in children.

Frissell, Toni. “Photograph of several Tuskegee airmen at Ramitelli, Italy, March 1945.” *Library of Congress*. March 1945. www.loc.gov/item/2007675064/. Accessed 3 February 2020.

This photo includes several Tuskegee Airmen planning for an upcoming mission out of Ramitelli, Italy.

Haulman, Daniel L. *The Tuskegee Airmen an Illustrated History*. Montgomery. NewSouth Books. Spring 2011.

This book contains a collection of captioned images regarding the Tuskegee Airmen. There is also a data table with mission and service statistics of the Tuskegee Airmen.

“Keep Us Flying, Buy War Bonds.” Pictures of African Americans During World War II. *National Archives*. 1943.

<https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/ww2-pictures>. Accessed 30 November 2019.

This 1943 poster was the first war bond advertisement to feature an African American soldier. More specifically, the man in the photo is a Tuskegee Airman and an attempt to advertise toward the black population.

Liberman, Alexander. “United We Win.” *Pictures of African Americans during World War II*. *National Archives*. 1943.

<https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/ww2-pictures>. Accessed 15 December 2019.

This poster features an integrated aircraft factory with two workers of different races working on an airplane. It was made by the War Manpower Commission in an attempt to build a sense of unity in its forces.

Liberman, H. “Final Assembly of the Pilot’s Compartment is Being Made by These Negro Workers in a Large Eastern Aircraft Factory. These Youths Went Directly from a War Training Course to their Jobs at this Plant.” *National Archives*. May 1942.

<https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/ww2-pictures>. Accessed 15 December 2019.

This photo shows three black engineers assembling a pilot’s compartment, showing that African Americans were not just pilots but also held scientific design jobs.

Mosley, J.W. "Buy War Bonds and Stamps Here." *J.W. Mosley Collection*. Temple University Library. 1943. Accessed 14 December 2019.

This image shows a group of seven African American Women selling war bonds, demonstrating the effect of the Tuskegee Experiment on the black community which is inspiring others to help the country.

Niagara Movement. "Niagara Movement Declaration of Principles." 1905. Special Collections And University Archives. University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

This document is W.E.B. Dubois' Niagara Movement Declaration of Principles. It states his opinions and plans to end racism.

"Pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group in front of P-51C "Skipper's Darlin' III" flown by Capt Andrew Turner." Pictures of African Americans during World War II. *National Archives*. 1 August 1944. <https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/ww2-pictures>. Accessed 3 February 2020.

This is an image of several black pilots at Ramitelli Air Base in Italy during the deployment of the Tuskegee Airmen.

Rumsey, Mark. "I Just Wanted To Fly': A Tuskegee Airman Reflects On Pioneering WWII Squadron." *WFAE*, 30 January 2018. www.wfae.org/post/i-just-wanted-fly-tuskegee-airman-reflects-pioneering-wwii-squadron#stream/0. Accessed 25 January 2020.

This article is an interview with Tuskegee Airman Harold Brown by Mark Rumsey. Brown reflects on his years in the program and the challenges he faced.

Truman, Harry. "Executive Order 9981." National Archives. 26 July 1948. Accessed 25 January 2020.

This is Harry Truman's Executive Order 9981 which prohibited segregation in the armed forces. This document was inspired mainly by the actions of the Tuskegee Airmen.

“Tuskegee Airmen.” *The Mfiles*. Memphis and Shelby County Room. 1942. Accessed 14 December 2019

This image shows a group of 13 Tuskegee Airmen posing for a picture in front of a plane. Further information states that the man on the wing with headgear is Luke Weathers.

Secondary Sources:

“The 477TH Bombardment Group.” *ECCTAI*.

www.ecctai.org/tuskegee-477th-bombardment-group. Accessed 27 January 2020.

This article is a comprehensive overview of the 477th Medium Bombardment Group.

“African Americans in the U.S. Army.” *Timeline of Events for African Americans in the U.S. Army*. 2014. www.army.mil/africanamericans/timeline.html. Accessed 26 January 2020.

This webpage contains a timeline of African Americans and Segregated units in the United States military.

“And There Were Women.” *National Parks Service, US Department of the Interior*. 22 August 2017. <https://www.nps.gov/tuai/and-there-were-women.htm>. Accessed 14 December 2019.

This article is about female Tuskegee Airmen and their effect on the program Women included were Bessie Coleman, Willa Brown, and Mildred Hemmons Carter.

Blatty, David. “W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington Had Clashing Ideologies During the Civil Rights Movement.” *Biography.com*, A&E Networks Television, 23 January 2020, www.biography.com/news/web-dubois-vs-booker-t-washington. Accessed 26 January 2020.

W.E.B. Dubois and Booker T. Washington were two key players in the creation of the Tuskegee experiment and this goes over their contrasting ideologies.

“Chief Charles Alfred Anderson.” *National Aviation Hall of Fame*. 2013.

<https://www.nationalaviation.org/our-enshrinees/anderson-charles-alfred>. Accessed 15 December 2019.

This article gives a biography of the Tuskegee civilian flight instructor and father of black aviation, Charles Alfred Anderson.

“The Civil Rights Movement And The Second Reconstruction, 1945-1968: US House of Representatives: History, Art & Archives.” *US House of Representatives: History, Art & Archives*,

history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/BAIC/Historical-Essays/Keeping-the-Faith/Civil-Rights-Movement/. Accessed 11 January 2020.

This is a somewhat brief but in depth overview of the entire Civil Rights Movement.

“Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).” *The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute*. 21 May 2018. Accessed 10 February 2020.

kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/congress-racial-equality-core.

This article contains basic information on the Congress of Racial Equality, a key group that advocated peaceful protest during the civil rights movement.

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.. 14 Dec. 2019,

www.britannica.com/biography/Benjamin-O-Davis-Jr. Accessed 26 January 2020.

This encyclopedia entry contains basic biographical information on Benjamin O. Davis Jr., the future commander of the 332nd fighter group and first African American general in the U.S. Army.

“Eleanor Roosevelt and the Tuskegee Airmen.” *FDR Presidential Library & Museum*. 2016.

www.fdrlibrary.org/tuskegee. Accessed 1 December 2019.

This article provided information on the effect of Tuskegee Airmen on the segregated military and how Eleanor Roosevelt helped the program advance.

Haulman, Daniel L. "112 Victories: Aerial Victory Credits of the Tuskegee Airmen." *Air Force Historical Research Agency*. 17 January 2008. Accessed 19 January 2020.

This historical paper by Dr. Daniel Haulman gives a summary of most aerial victories of the Tuskegee Airmen overseas.

Haulman, Daniel L. "A Tale of Two Commanders." *Air Force Historical Research Agency*. Accessed 27 January 2020.

This research paper goes into detail about the rivalry and conflict between Col. Noel Parrish and Col. Robert Selway.

Haulman, Daniel L. *Eleven Myths About the Tuskegee Airmen*. Newsouth Books. 2012. Accessed 15 December 2019.

In this book, Dr. Daniel Haulman explains and corrects eleven common misconceptions of the Tuskegee Airmen.

Haulman, Daniel L. "Target Berlin." *Air Force Historical Research Agency*. 25 May 2012. Accessed 19 January 2020.

In this article, Dr. Daniel Haulman analyzes the role of the Tuskegee Airmen in the Fifteenth Air Force's bombing of Berlin on March 24, 1945.

Haulman, Daniel L. "Tuskegee Airfields During World War II." *Air Force Historical Research Agency*. 23 June 2014. Accessed 19 January 2020.

This historical paper by Dr. Daniel Haulman focuses on the various airfields used by the Tuskegee Airmen for various aspects of training. It also goes through the training program.

Haulman, Daniel L. "Tuskegee Airmen Activists After World War II." *Air Force Historical Research Agency*. 24 December 2014. Accessed 11 February 2020.

This essay by Dr. Daniel L. Haulman gives biographical information on several Tuskegee Airmen that played key roles in the Civil Rights Movement even after their deployment.

Haulman, Daniel L. *Tuskegee Airmen Chronology*. Montgomery. Newsouth Books. 11 May 2016. Accessed 18 January 2020.

In this book, Dr. Daniel Haulman constructs an in-depth timeline of the Tuskegee Airmen and their exploits. The timeline spans from December seventeenth, 1903 to April sixteenth, 2014.

Haulman, Daniel L. "Tuskegee Airmen." *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, 5 Oct. 2011, www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3154. Accessed 27 January 2020.

Dr. Daniel Haulman goes over the various overseas locations and airfields at which the Tuskegee Airmen served.

Haulman, Daniel L. "Tuskegee Airmen Questions and Answers." *Air Force Historical Research Agency*. 3 September 2014. Accessed 19 January 2020.

This is a self-conducted interview by Dr. Daniel L. Haulman, an expert on the Tuskegee Airmen.

Haulman, Sheppard, and Spriggs. "The Red Tail Origin." 20 September 2012. Accessed 19 January 2020.

This article contains several guesses and the truth about why the Tuskegee Airmen painted their plane tails red.

Harvey, James H. *History of the Tuskegee Airmen*. 24 October 2012. www.tuskegeetopgun.com/tuskegee_airmen.php. Accessed 26 January 2020.

This article contains background information and the official combat record of the Tuskegee Airmen.

History.com Editors. "A. Philip Randolph." *History.com*. A&E Television Networks. 27 October 2009. www.history.com/topics/black-history/a-philip-randolph. Accessed 10 February 2020.

This article contains an overview of the life and accomplishments of A. Phillip Randolph, a pioneer of civil rights.

History.com Editors. "The 54th Massachusetts Infantry." *History.com*. A&E Television Networks. 14 April 2010.

www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/the-54th-massachusetts-infantry

Accessed 25 January 2020.

This article contains a basic overview of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, the first black regiment in the United States. It is important to understand their story before moving to that of the Tuskegee Airmen.

History.com Editors. "Tuskegee Airmen." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 9 Nov. 2009,

www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/tuskegee-airmen. Accessed 30 November 2019.

This article is an overview of the entire Tuskegee experience including deployment statistics, their origins, and recent activity.

"The March on Washington." *NAACP*, 2018, www.naacp.org/marchonwashington/. Accessed 10 February 2020.

This contains an overview of the March on Washington for Jobs, a key event of the Civil Rights Movement.

Moye, J. Todd. *Freedom Flyers: the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

This book makes use of over 800 interviews of Tuskegee Airmen to create an in-depth overview of the entire Tuskegee experience

Rank, Scott M. "How Many Tuskegee Airmen Were There?" *History on the Net*, 26 March 2019. www.historyonthenet.com/how-many-tuskegee-airmen-were-there. Accessed 25 January 2020.

This article contained specific numbers of Tuskegee Airmen across several squadrons and divisions

“Stories.” *National Parks Service, US Department of the Interior*. 13 May 2019. Accessed 15 December 2020. <https://www.nps.gov/tuai/learn/historyculture/stories.htm>

This article has information on the Freeman Field Mutiny, a protest by several members of the 477th bombardment group.

“The Support Crews.” *CAF Red Tail Squadron*. 2019. www.redtail.org/the-tuskegee-airmen/the-support-crews/. Accessed 26 January 2020.

This article contains basic information and statistics on the support crews of the Tuskegee Airmen.

“Tuskegee Airmen.” *Historynet*. <https://www.historynet.com/tuskegee-airmen>. Accessed 19 January 2020.

This article provides a basic overview of the origins of the group and some statistics on each unit.

“Tuskegee Airmen History.” *Tuskegee Airmen Inc*. 2018. Accessed 30 November 2019. <http://tuskegeearmen.org/explore-tai/a-brief-history/>

This website contains a very basic overview and a large number of historical papers on the Tuskegee Airmen as well as what they are doing today,

Tuskegee Airmen National Museum Board of Directors “477th Bomber Group.” *Tuskegee Airmen National Museum*. 2015. <http://www.tuskegeemuseum.org/477th-bomber-group/>. Accessed 30 November 2019.

This article provides an in-depth summary of the 477th Bombardment Group, the persecution they faced, and the Freeman Field Mutiny in which they participated.

Tuskegee Airmen National Museum Board of Directors “Who Were They.” *Tuskegee Airmen National Museum*. 2015. <http://www.tuskegeemuseum.org/who-were-they/>. Accessed 30 November 2019

This article provides an overview of the Tuskegee Airmen program origins and their involvement in Italy.

Process Paper

I have always been interested in World War II, so naturally, when I found out that our history class was embarking on a freelance project I went straight to the early 1940s. Partway through my search, I decided that I did not necessarily want to do my project on the atrocities of war, but rather the triumphs within it. With this new goal in mind, I discovered the Tuskegee Airmen, a relatively small branch of the U.S. Army Air Corps that had a large impact on both World War II and the approaching Civil Rights Movement. Their many accomplishments including flying over 15,500 missions, destroying 1446 enemies, winning 895 awards, and persuading President Truman to issue executive order 9981, which abolished segregation in the armed forces made it clear that they were the perfect topic and I quickly chose it.

I began my research while citation mining a basic overview of the topic on History.com. From there, I found easily my most valuable source, *Freedom Fliers* by J. Todd Moyer. This book made use of over 800 interviews conducted by the National Parks Service and is a full study of the Tuskegee experience, including the perspectives of support crews as well as aviators. In addition, it had a truly massive bibliography of reliable sources that I could easily access and use for my project. The large collection of books and research papers by Dr. Daniel Haulman also helped me greatly. Due to the literal distance between myself and the place my topic occurred, the majority of my research took place online using websites and photographs from the time. I also did a great deal of citation mining from various books available online and at the local library.

I chose to write a paper because while most topics require skills I do not possess such as computer editing and acting, writing is a talent that I do have and like to use. Furthermore, while there is a significant amount of images featuring the Tuskegee Airmen, most have them doing little but standing by their airplanes or learning in a classroom. Neither of which offered much significance. The few valuable images could be used efficiently in a paper whereas they might be diluted in another category.

The Tuskegee Airmen broke many barriers throughout their existence, most of them in racial equality. First and foremost, they broke the color barrier in the Army Air Corps as the first African American military pilots. Through their excellence in this field, they broke the barrier of lies regarding black intelligence, as many believed that their minds were not advanced enough to control a complex machine. They also broke the color barrier in all branches of the military by inspiring President Harry Truman to enact executive order 9981 which abolished segregation in the armed forces and added momentum to the oncoming civil rights movement. This group's great achievements earned respect from their white comrades and proved equality among races.