



# DMAVA

# HIGHLIGHTS



FEBRUARY 2, 2012

## Red Tail Angels: The story of the Tuskegee Airmen

By Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen, 177th FW/PA

Prior to World War II, the situation for African-American military aviators was grim.

The Army Air Corps had completely barred blacks from their ranks and the other services had assigned blacks only the most menial of duties. Their reasoning was based on an Army War College study, which stated that blacks, by nature, were physically, mentally and psychologically unfit for combat duty.

Civil rights organizations and the black press exerted pressure that, combined with congressional legislation, resulted in the formation of 99th Fighter Squadron based at the Tuskegee Institute in June 1941. The graduates of that program would become known as the Tuskegee Airmen.

Class 42C, the first Tuskegee class, began training on July 19, 1941 and included 12 cadets and one student officer Capt. Benjamin O. Davis Jr.

In 1936, Davis was the first African American to graduate from West Point Military Academy in 47 years and only the fourth to ever graduate from the institute. Davis served as an aide to his father, Brig. Gen. Benjamin O. Davis Sr., at Fort Benning, Ga., before transferring to Tuskegee. He would later retire as an Air Force lieutenant general, the Air Force's first black general and the nation's second African American general officer.

After completing basic training at nearby Moton Field, the Airmen were sent to the segregated Tuskegee Army

Airfield to complete their pilot training.

Class 42C earned their wings in March 1942, becoming the nation's first black military pilots. Between 1941 and 1945, Tuskegee trained 994 aviators for the war effort, 445 would be deployed, 66 were killed in action and 32 were shot down and became prisoners of war.

Despite all the training, the unit did not receive their deployment orders. After months of delays by the War Department, the 400 Airmen of the 99th Fighter Squadron were deployed to North Africa in April 1943. The 99th became part of the 332nd Fighter Group, which was comprised of the 100th, 301st, and 302nd African-American Fighter Squadrons based in Italy. The 332nd was initially based at Montecorvino Air Base near Salerno, Italy and then moved to Capodichino Airfield and finally to Ramitelli Airfield near Ancona, where, under Davis' command flew missions over Sicily, the Mediterranean and North Africa.

American bomber crews nicknamed the 332nd the Red Tails or Red Tail Angels after the distinctive red tail markings on the vertical stabilizers of the unit's fighters. The Luftwaffe called the Tuskegee Airmen "Die Schwarze Vogel-menschen", literally the Black Birdmen.

On March 24, 1945, Lt. Col. Davis led the 332nd on a 1,600-mile mission to Berlin where they escorted B-17 bombers whose mission was to level the Daimler-Benz tank works. The



Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress

332nd was supposed to be relieved by another fighter unit prior to arriving at the target, so when the relieving unit didn't show up, the 332nd continued the mission and went on to shoot down numerous enemy fighters including three German Me-262 jet fighters. As a result, the 332nd was awarded a Distinguished Unit Citation for "outstanding performance and extraordinary heroism" for the mission.

By war's end, the 332nd completed 15,553 sorties, 1,578 missions, destroyed or damaged 409 enemy aircraft, sank one enemy destroyer, and destroyed numerous enemy installations. The Tuskegee Airmen's awards included two Distinguished Unit Citations, 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, several Silver Stars, eight Purple Hearts, 14 Bronze Stars, 744 Air Medals, the

Croix de Guerre and the Red Star of Yugoslavia.

In 2005, Tuskegee Airmen Lt. Cols. Lee Archer and Robert Ashby, along with Master Sgt. James Sheppard, and Tech. Sgt. George Watson flew to Balad, Iraq, to speak to active duty Airmen serving with the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing.

During a ceremony at the air base, Lt. Gen. Walter E. Buchanan III, Commander of the Ninth Air Force and U.S. Central Command Air Forces, said that: "This group represents the linkage between the greatest generation of Airmen and the latest generation of Airmen."

The Tuskegee Airmen overcame prejudice and helped pave the way for President Harry S. Truman's Executive Order 9981, which mandated "equality of treatment and opportunity" for all members of the armed forces in July 1948.



**Brig. Gen. Michael L. Cunniff, left, the Acting Adjutant General of New Jersey, and Capt. Eric A. Balint, right, 108th Wing, pin chief warrant officer 5 rank on Vic Balint, New Jersey State Command Chief War-**

**rant Officer, during a promotion ceremony on Jan. 26, at New Jersey's Joint Force Headquarter in Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. (Photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA)**



**The New Jersey Army National Guard's combined 197 years of experience pose for a photo around newly promoted Chief Warrant Officer 5 Vic Balint, center, New Jersey State Command Chief Warrant Officer following his promotion ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters in Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst on Jan. 26. From left to right, Chief Warrant Officer 5 Chris Millevoi, State Training Officer, JFHQ-NJ; Chief Warrant Officer 5 Jeff Angle, State Standardization Officer, JFHQ-NJ; Warrant Officer 1 Aysu Cesmebasi - New Jersey's newest warrant officer, retired Chief Warrant Officer 5 Norman Stewart, the first chief warrant officer 5 in the United States Army and Chief Warrant Officer 5 Jim den Hartog, State Standardization Officer. (Photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA)**

## N.J. Vietnam Veteran's foundation to host benefit seminar in April

The New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation in conjunction with the Veterans Administration Health Care Community Outreach Team invites you to a FREE seminar on Saturday, April 14, at the Vietnam Era Museum and Education Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Come to this informative event and learn about the VA health care system. At 10:15 a.m., there will be a 45-minute presentation regarding health care eligibility and benefits followed by a questions-and-answers session.

Any veteran that is currently enrolled and wants to learn more about their health care benefits is encouraged to attend, and also learn about non-health related benefits such as: home loans, life insurance, filing disability claims, and death and burial benefits.

Furthermore, a VA mobile health unit will be on site for any "eligible" veteran to receive a brief health care assessment, including blood pressure check and patient education. Any veteran seeking information about how to enroll in the VA health care system should bring their DD-214.

Attendees are asked to RSVP their attendance to 732-335-0033.

The Educational Center is located at the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial off Exit 116 in the Garden State Parkway.

## NEW JERSEY NATIONAL GUARDSMEN IN AFGHANISTAN



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTOS BY  
STAFF SGT. JOSEPH HARDWOOD,  
455TH AEW/PA



Photos left, right and below, maintainers from the 177th Fighter Wing, Atlantic City, perform early morning maintenance on several F-16C+ Fighting Falcons at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan on Jan. 28. The aircrafts and Guardsmen are deployed here from New Jersey Air National Guard in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



ECM pod mechanic Staff Sgt. Stephen W. Gall, 177th Fighter Wing, performs an inventory check of Viper Support, Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Jan. 28.



Turbo jet mechanic Airman 1st Class Ian Colon-Cotto, 177th Fighter Wing, during an inventory check of Viper Support, Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Jan. 28. Colon-Cotto is currently deployed here to support coalition forces providing close air support.

Information manager Senior Airman Marie Madara and personnelist Airman 1st Class Christine L. Fryling, both with the 177th Fighter Wing, during an inventory check of Viper Support, Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Jan. 28. The 177th FW's F-16C+ Fighting Falcons are known as the Vipers.



**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS WILL HOST A "VETERANS OUTREACH CAMPAIGN" ON FEBRUARY 21-23 AT THE NEWPORT CENTRE MALL IN JERSEY CITY.**

**MEDAL CEREMONY WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST AT THE MALL'S CENTER COURT AT 11 AM**

**KIOSK HOURS:  
10 AM - 8 PM DAILY**

**MALL IS LOCATED AT  
30 MALL DRIVE IN JERSEY CITY**

## Give Kids a Smile Day scheduled for Feb 3 in New Jersey

Attention, the New Jersey Dental Association is participating in the "Give Kids a Smile Day", which is scheduled for Friday, Feb. 3.

All children ages 3-12 can receive FREE dental care throughout New Jersey by participating dentists, regardless of the parents' income.

Services that may be rendered include oral hygiene instructions, screenings, cleanings, x-rays, fillings, extractions, fluoride treatments, stainless steel crowns and much more.

An appointment is needed. Please follow this important link <http://www.njda.org/GKAS/docs/2012-PARTICIPATING-LOCATIONS.pdf> to view a list of participating dentists around New Jersey.














For more information about the program, please visit the NJDA's website at <http://www.njda.org/GKAS/>.

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## 2012 Officer Candidate School Orientation

Hosted by NJARNG Recruiting and Retention Battalion and the 254<sup>th</sup> Regiment (CA)

Now is the time to advance your career in the New Jersey Army National Guard! Come and meet with the current NJARNG OCS Class and Officers. Ask questions, receive guidance and get started toward a brighter future! We hope to see you there!

           	<p><b>Who:</b> All Current NJ National Guard Soldiers</p> <p><b>What:</b> NJARNG OCS Orientation</p> <p><b>When:</b> 04 February 2012, 0830-1300</p> <p><b>Where:</b> Building 26, NGTC Sea Girt, NJ 08750</p> <p><b>Why:</b> To learn how to become an officer through the OCS Program</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Additional Information:</i></p> <p>Please contact SFC Robert Freeman at (609) 703-8686 or <a href="mailto:robert.freeman6@us.army.mil">robert.freeman6@us.army.mil</a></p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Commanders may authorize SUTA for Soldiers to attend event. ACU or business casual attire</p>	           
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## Discounted tickets to Rutgers game

Attention New Jersey veterans and military service members: Enjoy Rutgers University men and women's basketball games at discounted prices.

All 200 and 300 level tickets will be 50 percent off regular price for the men's basketball game against Seton Hall on Feb. 8, at 9 p.m.

All 100 level tickets will be \$15 (normally \$35) and all general admission tickets will be \$5 (normally \$15) for the women's basketball game against Seton Hall on Feb. 21, at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets can be purchased online by clicking on the below link: <https://ev12.evenue.net/cgi-bin/ncommerce3/EVExecMacro?linkID=Rutgers&evm=prmo&RSRC=&RDAT=&caller=PR>

Type in the code "NJDMAVA" in the box and click the "go" button. You will be taken to a page where the tickets can be purchased at the discounted rate. Or you can call 866-445-GORU (4678). Offer is only good while tickets are available.

Both games will be played at the Louis Brown Athletic Center, which is located at 83 Rockafeller Road in Piscataway.

## Comedy night at Paramus Elks

The New Jersey Elks National Veterans Service Commission is hosting a comedy night on Saturday, March 10 as a fundraiser for homeless veterans.

Featuring several comedians at the Paramus Elks Lodge# 2001 at 7 p.m., tickets will be sold for \$30 per person.

For tickets or more information, call 908-510-8503.

Paramus Elks Lodge# 2001 is located at 200 N. Street, Route 17 in Paramus.

## New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Brig. Gen. Michael L. Cunniff – The Adjutant General (Acting)  
 Brig. Gen. James J. Grant – Director, Joint Staff  
 Raymond Zawacki – Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs  
 Chief Warrant Officer 3 Patrick Daugherty – Public Affairs Officer  
 Air Force Staff Sgt. Armando Vasquez - Public Affairs Specialist  
 Army Staff Sgt. Wayne Woolley – Public Affairs Specialist