

FROM THE FLIGHT LINE

September 2009
Volume 4, Issue 3

Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. 38th Annual National Convention Post Convention Newsletter

The 38th Annual National Convention was held on August 6–9, 2009, at the Palace Station Hotel & Casino, in Las Vegas, Nevada. Many thanks to everyone for a very successful convention!

Report of the President, Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. to the 38th Convention, Las Vegas, NV August 6, 2009

Dear Members:

Allow me to start this report with a summary of activities of the year. Following the Annual Convention in Philadelphia, PA, in August, we moved very aggressively forward towards the Grand Opening of the Tuskegee Airmen National Site at Moton Field. It was an exciting event and well attended by the Documented Original Tuskegee Airmen (DOTAs), elected officials and other dignitaries, plus family members and the general public. That event was followed by a tribute to the DOTAs including Lionel Richie and Tom Joyner, both with ties to Tuskegee.

Next began a number of recognition events to the DOTAs; recognition at the Department of Defense's Presidential Executive Order 9981, integrating the United States military; induction into the International Air and Space Hall of Fame at the San Diego Aviation Air and Space Museum in San Diego, CA; receipt of the Achievement Award from the Kentucky Aviation Hall of Fame; the Inauguration of the 44th President of the United States of America; receipt of the Trumpet Award in Atlanta, GA; and other awards and recognition for their exploits and achievements. Four DOTAs were the guest of The United States Air Force's and U. S. Central Command's Air Force's Central Air Force's Commander to visit Qatar, Iraq, and Kuwait and in particular the troops of the Armed Services assigned to that theater. The trip included spending time with personnel of the 332 Air Expeditionary Wing at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

I personally attended many of the chapters and their fund raisers and am truly proud of the great work that all of the Chapters are doing working with and for the young people in theirs and other communities.

Unfortunately we continue to lose many of America's heroes, our DOTAs, who are some of our country's greatest generation, as they join the Lonely Eagles. Will continue to pray for them and their families and honor them and their service as well as thank them for the freedoms that we enjoy today. This was brought about by their contributions and their sacrifices.

We recently hired an Executive Director, Gustave Thomas, who has come on board with a lot of ability, finesse and commitment to help us continue to move forward. We welcomed him to TAI last month and he has joined us here in Las Vegas. He is already working with our committees and is proving to be a valuable asset. Please say hi to him if you see him. He'll be introduced early during the Convention.

2009 is proving to be a better year than 2008 and we are planning to make 2010 an even better year than this one. Thanks for your continuing support and commitment.

Russell C. Davis, Lt. Gen. USAF (Ret.)

'Top Guns' Receive Awards at TAI Convention

The Top Guns honoring ceremony marked the 60th anniversary of the 332nd Fighter Group victory in the first National Fighter Gunnery Competition Conventional Division in 1949. Pilots Alva Temple, Harry Stewart, James Harvey, and relief pilot, Halbert Alexander of the 332nd FG, flying P-47-N Thunderbolts, were victorious at the first USAF National Fighter Gunnery Competition, held at Las Vegas AFB.

Retired Lt. Col. James Harvey III, a former P-47 Thunderbolt pilot, and retired Chief Master Sgt. Buford Johnson, a former crew chief held replicas of the trophies they received decades ago. Both men from the 99th Fighter Squadron, stood before hundreds of spectators who cheered the veterans for their diligence in the face of the era's stinging racism.

National Tuskegee Airman Inc., President Russell Davis, presented the trophies. Nicole Wright presented a proclamation on behalf Rep. Shelley Berkley and Robert Sharp presented the award on behalf of Sen. Harry Reid. Vernice Armour, a former Marine Corps AH-1W SuperCobra helicopter pilot and America's first black female combat aviator, read a proclamation on behalf of Las Vegas Mayor Oscar B. Goodman, officially marking this Tuskegee Airmen Week in the desert city.



Tuskegee Top Guns' Col. James Harvey (Dress Uniform) and Crew Chief Buford Johnson, flanked by Col. John P. Montgomery, USAF, Nellis Gunnery Range Commander, and Lt. General Russ Davis, USAF, Retired; President TAI



LONELY EAGLES MEMORIAL SERVICE

The following members of the Tuskegee Airmen family transferred to the Lonely Eagle Memorial Chapter during this year. Our family includes (1) the men and women who served in the Army Air Corps during the 1940s at Tuskegee Army Airfield, or in units at other locations that emanated from that experience, (2) spouses and off-spring who share the heritage of those who served, and (3) "associates" who joined the Tuskegee airmen organization and pledged to help preserve the legacy and present-day mission of those who served.

Mr. Williams Acoo
Dr. Caesar S. Bassett, Jr.
Mr. Howard L. Baugh, Sr.
Dr. William N. Brown
Mr. Ben Calloway
Dr. David Calloway
Mr. Benjamin S. Carr
Mr. Corsey R. Coy
Maj (Ret) Herndon M. Cummings
Mr. Edward Doyle
Col (Ret) William Eaton
Mr. Jean Esquerre
Mr. Clarence Forbes
Mr. Harry E. Ford, Jr.
Mr. Charles R. Foxx, Sr.

Mr. Leon Geter
Mrs. Joye Goodwin
Mr. Alfred Gorham
Dr. Lawrence Charles Hawkins, Sr.
Mr. Gilbert Langford
Mr. John Lehman
Mr. Eli Lindsey, Sr.
Mr. James "Jimmy" McDaniels
Mr. Odell McLeod
Mr. Littleton Mitchell
Mr. Horace Odom
Mr. August L. Palmer
Mr. Walter J. Palmer
Mr. James T. Price
Mr. Sherman T. Rose
SMSgt (Ret) Walter S. Seger, Sr.

Mr. Elwood Selby
Mr. George L. Smith
Mr. Vernon K. Sport
Judge Earl Strayhorn
Mr. Roger C. "Bill" Terry
Mr. George Thompson
Sgt (Ret) James F. Travis, Sr.
Mr. Andrew Wallace, Sr.
Mr. Rhohelia "Bob" Webb
Mr. Charles T. Westmoreland
Dr. David Williams, Sr.
Mr. James Wright
Mr. Oscar York

Congratulations to the Winners of the 38th Annual TAI National Convention Awards

General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. Military Award - Lieutenant Colonel Jacqueline A. Mudd, Flight Commander, Operating Room Services, 59th Medical Wing, Lackland AFB, Texas

Captain Robert W. Williams Military Award - Captain Robert W. Sturgill, 393d Bomb Squadron, Whiteman AFB, Missouri

Chief Master Sergeant Fred Archer Military Award - Master Sergeant Derek Fromenthal, 51st Combat Communications Squadron, Robins AFB, Georgia

Senior Master Sergeant Margaret Frances Barbour Military Award - Technical Sergeant Kenneth Bruce, 13th Intelligence Squadron, Beale AFB, California

Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation (TASF) Awards the 2009 Pratt & Whitney Scholarship to Jordan McIntyre of North Carolina

The Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation (TASF) awarded the 2009 Pratt & Whitney Scholarship to Jordan McIntyre of North Carolina. With over 300 people in attendance, he was presented the award at the Youth Luncheon during the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada on August 8, 2009.

The four year \$20,000 award recognizes a high school senior who has demonstrated an aptitude for aerospace technology and aviation. Pratt & Whitney, a world leader in the aerospace industry, will fully fund the scholarship. The Golden Eagle Scholarship is the largest single endowment of the Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation. Each year, TASF presents \$1,500 scholarship awards to 41 students and one Pratt & Whitney scholarship award of \$20,000 to a deserving student who instills the ideals, leadership and commitment as exemplified by the Tuskegee Airmen.

“In the fifth year of granting the Pratt & Whitney Golden Eagle Scholarship Award, I am still absolutely amazed at the maturity and perceived comprehension of these scholars.

Jordan McIntyre, holds a 4.44 GPA and will easily qualify in extending the legacy being set these young scholars”, said Jerry T. Hodges, Jr., President of TASF. Jordan McIntyre graduated from Goldsboro High in North Carolina and will attend North Carolina State University in the fall majoring in Aerospace Engineering with a minor on Business Management. His leadership experience includes President of the National Honor Roll Society, Student Government Association Class President, Goldsboro High Marching Band Section Leader, Boy Scouts of America Chaplain, Patrol Leader, and Wayne County Junior Leadership Ambassador. He was also the Varsity Baseball Captain, played Varsity Football, and put in many hours of volunteer work for 18 public and private charitable organizations.

CONGRATULATIONS

to

COLONEL STAYCE D. HARRIS

On the occasion of your promotion to

BRIGADIER GENERAL, USAFR



Brig. Gen. Stayce D. Harris is the mobilization assistant to the Commander, U.S. Africa Command, Stuttgart, Germany. General Harris received a commission in the Air Force through the University of Southern California's Reserve Officer Training Corps program. She spent eight years on active duty and has 17 years as a Reservist. The general has commanded an airlift squadron, air expeditionary group and air refueling wing. Before her current assignment, she was mobilization assistant to the Director of Strategic Plans, Requirements and Programs, Headquarters Air Mobility Command, Scott Air Force Base, Ill. In her civilian career, she is a first officer for a major airline flying routes to Asia and Europe.

YOUTH PROGRAM AT NELLIS
AFB

WINNERS OF THE 2009 TAI NATIONAL AWARDS

PRESIDENT'S AWARDS (For Distinguished Service)

Mr. Robert D. Rose
Mr. John Patterson
Ms. Lynda "Sunnye" Simpson
Dr. Lisa Bratton
Dr. Derrick Pitts
Mr. Ralph Smith

REGIONAL AWARDS

Mr. Marvin Williams - Eastern Region
Mr. Marv Abrams - Central Region
Ms. Shelia Johnson - Western Region

BRIGADIER GENERAL NOEL F. PARRISH AWARD

(Presented by Dr. Florence T. Parrish-St John, Widow of General Parrish)

Mr. Robert Ashby

**CONGRATULATIONS
TO ALL!**

TAI WELCOMES THE NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We welcome Mr. Gustave R. Thomas as the new Executive Director of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. Mr. Thomas brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to TAI and we look forward to working with him. His biography includes the following:

With advocacy as a cornerstone, Gustave Thomas has built a solid professional standing as a man who is a champion for justice. Through a varied career that began with "service to the public" as a police officer in law enforcement, ascending to his work with minority and women business development, to his work in state government, and later with child advocacy, Gustave has always stood for civil and human rights and promoted progressive public policy. It is these vast experiences that Gustave can now bring to his next opportunity and appointment to "serve the public."

Starting his professional career as a police officer in New Orleans, Gustave quickly earned a reputation as a leader. At a time when few African Americans patrolled city streets, he was able to successfully advocate for improved personnel and promotional practices for African American officers.

Retiring from the force with 17 ½ years of service, he became an advocate for women and minority owned businesses with the Virginia Regional Minority Supplier Development Council,

tripling the number of corporate contracts to minority entrepreneurs from \$98 to \$358 million. With the New Jersey Casino Control Commission, he encouraged the industry to hire more women and minorities. He developed an M/WBE certification program that identified a larger number of women and minority-owned businesses eligible to do business with the casinos, resulting in a 28% increase in dollars spent with small businesses.

Gustave discovered another cause worthy of his passionate commitment, working for Georgia's children. He provided leadership to Georgians for Children. In February 2000, he was recruited by the Board of Directors to lead the organization into the new millennium. He cites among his accomplishments, the completion of the 2000 Georgia Children's Agenda, and the 2000-2001 Georgia Kids Count Fact books, despite shrinking economic resources and a limited staff.

Community involvement includes currently serving on the Board of Directors as Secretary of Catholic Charities of Atlanta and previously as Director of the New Orleans NAACP. His awards include the Phi Alpha Alpha National Honor Society for Public Affairs & Administration. He is a licensed private pilot, has a BA in Criminal Justice from Loyola University of New Orleans and a Master of Public Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University of Richmond, VA.

TUSKEGEE: THE SEED OF THE DREAM

No admission ticket
to the Fraternity of Flight,
Disdained, as lesser beings
of limited intelligence,
Unfit to fly, much less to lead.
Waste of good government equipment
How could we *allow* them?
And who were *they* to think, to dare,
to dream?
They, of no hear, no courage,
and least of all, patriotism.
It wasn't their war anyway, was it?

But all those hundreds who trained at
Tuskegee, and went on to distinguish
themselves as pilots of front-line fighters
in that monumental war, carried a special
cargo aloft.
They bore the Seed of the Dream.

Each day, as flight cadets
in a harsh and rigid system
that treated them as less than men,
that missed no chance to put them,
and keep them, in their lowly place,
in that locked-tight prison
of prejudice,
they rose, donned flight coveralls,
swallowed the bile of daily fear and marched
out to meet the dreaded instructor,
who stood waiting menacingly
by the aircraft, checklist in hand,
eager to wash out
yet another unworthy.
Unflinchingly they ground it out,
thru merciless days
of constant castigation, gut-wrenching check

rides designed with a special purpose: to
eliminate the unfit.
Their reward was grudging, but simple.
Silver wings and assignment to a segregated
unit, flying the venerable Warhawk
against the might Luftwaffe.
Where the prophecy would
self-fulfilled, and Where they couldn't
dilute the gene pool of The Club.

In mortal combat won respect of friend and
foe alike, compiled envious records
of enemy aircraft and ground assets
destroyed.
Yes, and suffered losses.
Just like their pale brothers in those "other"
units. At last, a costly victory won,
they returned to a land still segregated, just
like the military, to which they had
so faithfully given their all.
Not yet heroes.
Not yet equal.
Still carrying the Seed of the Dream.

History provides a new prism through
which to judge the worth of noble deeds
done by quiet, uncomplaining
men, whose lives, we now know,
have worth incalculable.
Through the darkest hours, with hope
for a better day, they preserved.
Shamefully late, we recognize them
for the true heroes they really are.

They are the Tuskegee Airmen
They proudly carried
the Seed of the Dream.

George Thatcher, © 2009

TANHS MOTON FIELD

CONVENTION 2010

Convention info here!

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Phone number

Fax:
Fax number

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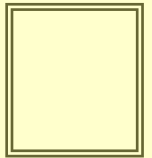
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