

Moton Field / Tuskegee Airmen

Special Resource Study



United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service • Southeast Region

MOTON FIELD/TUSKEGEE AIRMEN SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY

OCTOBER 1998

**SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ATLANTA, GEORGIA**



Cover: Jim Butcher, *The Legacy*, Courtesy of the Tuskegee Airmen National Museum, Detroit, Michigan.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this *special resource study* is to evaluate the potential of adding Moton Field in Tuskegee, Alabama, to the National Park System to commemorate the role of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II. In 1997, Dr. Benjamin F. Payton, President of Tuskegee University, and United States Representative Bob Riley, 3rd District, Alabama, requested that the National Park Service (NPS) study how best to interpret and celebrate the role of the Tuskegee Airmen in World War II and their initial training at Moton Field. The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) provided a \$75,000 grant for printing, travel and the bulk of salary cost for NPS project personnel. The NPS Southeast Regional Office, Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site, Tuskegee University, and the State of Alabama furnished additional staff support for the preparation of the report. The study applies national significance, suitability, and feasibility criteria and presents feasible management and development alternatives. This study does not include a preferred alternative.

STUDY PROCESS

In accordance with the NPS planning process, a *special resource study* is the first step in evaluating a proposed addition to the National Park System. The study is a fact-finding effort based on readily available information, and is used to determine if the area resources have national significance, the degree of existing protection, and the suitability/feasibility of including the area in the National Park System.

The National Park Service planning process begins with a reconnaissance survey in which the study team collects basic information and assesses the resource's significance. If the area appears to have potential as a unit of the National Park System, a detailed study of management alternatives is then conducted.

Special resource studies are prepared in consultation with other interested federal, state and local agencies and the public. The study team determines the format for public involvement based on resource issues and the level of public interest in the project.

DEFINITION OF SIGNIFICANCE, SUITABILITY, AND FEASIBILITY

An area must meet all criteria for national significance, suitability, and feasibility as a

prerequisite for inclusion in the National Park System. According to the NPS *Management Policies* (1988), **to qualify as nationally significant, an area must** meet all of the following criteria:

It is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource.

It offers superlative opportunities for recreation, for public use and enjoyment, or for scientific study.

It possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage.

It retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of the resource.

Moreover, the NPS *Management Policies* state an area that is nationally significant must meet criteria for suitability and feasibility to qualify as a potential addition to the National Park System.

To be suitable for inclusion in the system, an area must:

Represent a natural or cultural theme or type of recreational resource that is not already adequately represented in the National Park System or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by another land-managing entity.

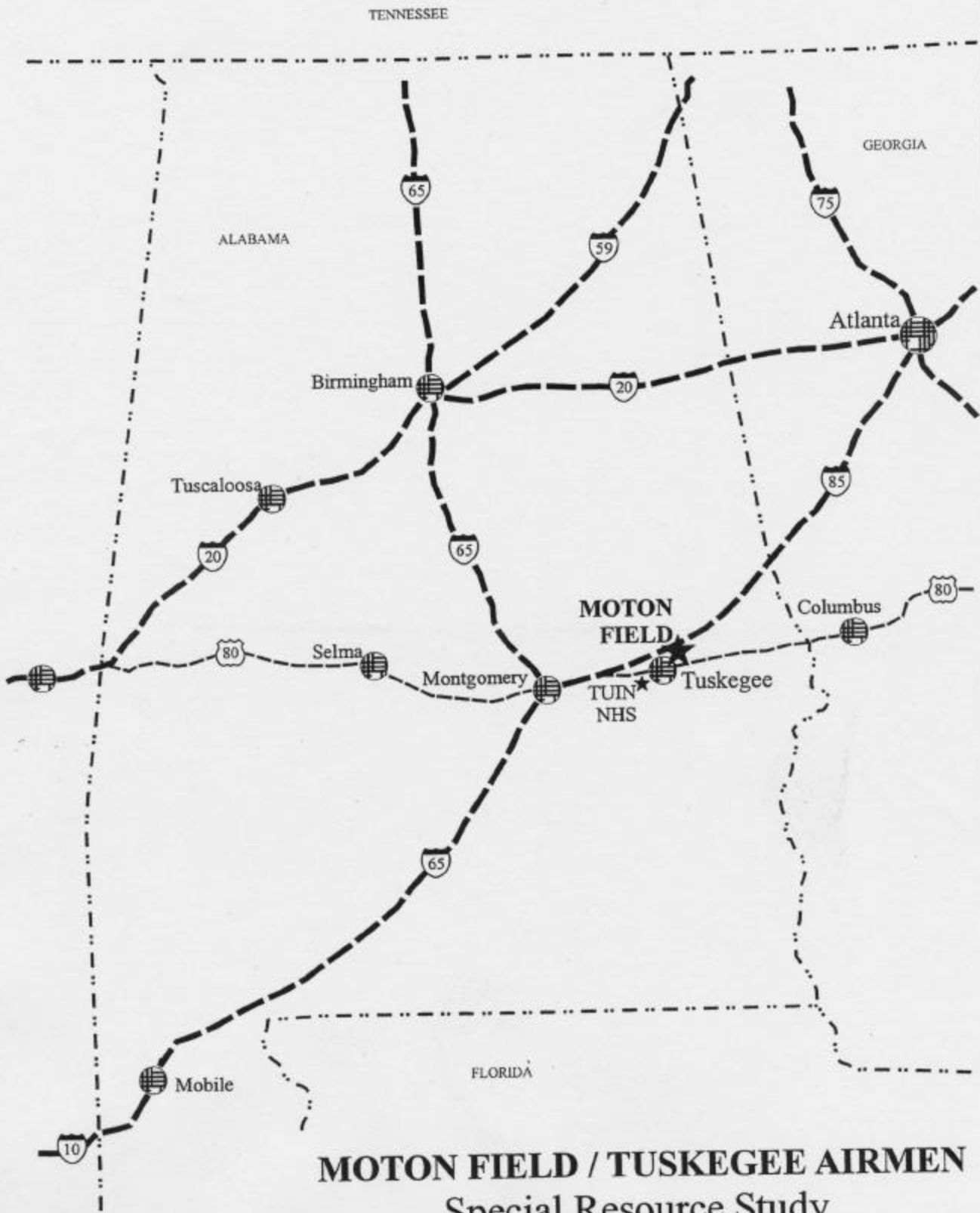
Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the proposed addition to other units in the National Park System, considering differences or similarities in the character, quality or combination of resources, and opportunities for public enjoyment.

To be feasible as a new unit of the National Park system, an area must:

Be of sufficient size and appropriate configuration, considering natural systems and/or historic settings, to ensure long-term protection of the resources and accommodate public use, and it must have potential for efficient administration at a reasonable cost. Significant feasibility factors include land ownership, acquisition costs, access, threats to the resource, and staff or development requirements. Although some of these factors can be evaluated from existing data, others must be based on broad alternatives. For instance, long-range development and staffing costs must be based on past experience until a general comprehensive management plan has been prepared.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

The National Historic Landmarks (NHL) program of the National Park Service provides a clear definition of “*national significance*” which is useful for the evaluation of potential national historic sites. The standard of national significance must be met before a candidate property can be considered for addition to the National Park System. Other criteria as mentioned



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Region Map

National Park Service / Southeast Regional Office
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previously must be successfully met by the resource. The primary purpose of such a designation is to give the resource national recognition and to encourage its protection outside the National Park Service.

BACKGROUND

National historic landmark designation is usually the first step in considering an area's potential eligibility for the National Park System.

A survey of Moton Field and Tuskegee Army Air Field was initiated in September 1988 when William Penn Mott, former director of the NPS, requested that the NPS Southeast Regional Office (SERO) conduct a preliminary study of the sites for potential designation as a national historic landmark. The survey concluded that a strong case could be made for the national significance of the fields and facilities at Tuskegee to commemorate the heroic deeds of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II. The proposed study would illustrate the segregation practices of the marines, army, and Army Air Corps (Army Air Forces) from their inception until 1947. More importantly, it would carefully examine the remaining historic resources to determine if Tuskegee Army Air Field and Moton Field possessed a high degree of integrity.

Responsibility for the Tuskegee Army Air Field NHL study was given to the SERO. In February 1989, representatives from SERO decided that "both Moton Field and Tuskegee Army Airfield are nationally significant in that they both commemorate the birth of Black participation in United States military aviation." Furthermore, the sites "are associated with individuals that are nationally significant in their own right--Generals Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., and Daniel 'Chappie' James." The facilities at the Tuskegee Army Air Field, however, had long since been completely destroyed or removed. In addition, according to SERO's findings, Moton Field retained only a few structures that "minimally satisfy the requirement of physical integrity as mandated by the [NHL] regulations." Shortly thereafter, a fire destroyed one of the two hangars at Moton Field. Because of this, SERO concluded that no further consideration should be given to Moton Field as a potential NHL.

Nonetheless, this earlier survey was based on an evaluation of integrity that considered the remaining historic structures but not the overall airfield site and its historic setting, including cultural landscape features. Therefore, it was recognized at the outset of this special resource study that the NPS should reevaluate the Moton Field site to determine its eligibility as a national historic landmark.

STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

National Significance

Only in recent years have the valuable contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen¹ been exposed through personal memoirs, documentaries, television dramas, and scholarly studies. During the course of World War II and thereafter, the presence of these African-American fighter pilots in the Army Air Corps and their exemplary combat activities went quietly unnoticed by the American public. Indeed, the “Tuskegee Experiment,” as one source observed, “was the military’s best kept secret” due to the Air Corps’ unwillingness to forego its policy of segregation.²

Though the formation of the 99th Fighter Squadron resulted from intense pressure exerted by civil rights organizations and the black press, the “Lonely Eagles” as they were called, overcame the “separate but equal” conditions sanctioned by the United States Army. The Tuskegee Airmen essentially acted as lone representatives determined to prove, as did their predecessors, that African Americans were truly capable of being excellent combat soldiers. Accordingly, the men of the 99th Fighter Squadron and the 332nd Fighter Group became one of the most respected combat units in the Air Corps program, and their achievements as a bomber escort fighter group are unprecedented.

In this respect, the military accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen as well as their initial training at Moton Field are nationally significant since this was the first time the United States Army recruited African Americans into the Army Air Corps. It was, as many of the Tuskegee Airmen have passionately expressed, an opportunity to demonstrate their capability to fly and serve their country in times of war. More importantly, it was their individual devotion toward ensuring the preservation of democracy and human rights for all oppressed peoples while contending with racial injustices as military professionals and civilians that makes the Tuskegee Airmen legacy all the more extraordinary.

Yet, when placed in a broader historical context, the “Tuskegee Airmen Experience”³ serves as an excellent model to demonstrate the two-fold battle African Americans encountered in their

¹In this study, the term “Tuskegee Airmen” applies to all of the people who were involved in the so-called “Tuskegee Experiment” by the U.S. War Department to train African Americans to fly and to maintain airplanes in flying condition. This “experiment” lasted from 1941 to 1946 and involved persons stationed or employed at Tuskegee Army Air Field and Moton Field in various roles, including flying officers, nonflying officers, nurses, aviation cadets, noncommissioned officers, enlisted men, and civilians.

²*Night Fighters*, written and produced by Jeremy Bugler, 55 min., A Fulmar TV & Film Production, 1984.

³The term “Tuskegee Airmen Experience” refers to the discriminatory policies and conditions that African-American men and women (both military and civilian personnel) endured while serving in the Army Air Corps (Air Forces). For further information, see the “Introduction” of the Historical Overview section of this report.

push to serve in the United States armed forces. In every war this nation has taken part in, African Americans have willingly sacrificed their lives in the country's defense while having to first engage in a struggle to overcome quotas, exclusion, and racial discrimination. As part of this continuum, the "Tuskegee Airmen Experience" clearly illustrates the African-American community's effort to eradicate military racism and their desire to eliminate social racial discrimination altogether.

The appearance of the Tuskegee Airmen in the Army Air Corps symbolizes the intense demands the African-American community placed on the War Department, who eventually redesigned its procedures regarding African-American troops. In many ways, this tremendous deed was extremely significant in that it not only reshaped military views of African-American soldiers, but also was an incredible attempt to eradicate racial discrimination entirely. While social and political injustice remained, the military marked a step toward racial progress on July 26, 1948, when President Harry S Truman issued Executive Order 9981 calling for the complete integration of the military. Although this directive was a monumental achievement for the African-American community, it also represented an extraordinary stride toward creating the framework for the modern civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s.

Other Findings

The Moton Field site has a high degree of integrity as a historic resource when both the overall airfield site *and* the remaining historic structures are considered. In terms of the site, little change has occurred to the historic scene that existed in the early- and mid-1940s. Although a fire consumed Hangar Number Two and a portion of the control tower, original structures such as Hangar Number One, the Locker Building, All Ranks Club, sheds, entrance gate and the historic landscape remain very much intact. Clearly these remaining buildings, despite their fragile condition, along with the surrounding historic landscape, allow Moton Field to retain its visual character as an airfield as well as its strong "sense of place."

Moton Field was the only primary flight training facility for African-American pilot candidates in the Army Air Corps. The facility symbolizes the entrance of African Americans into the Army Air Corps on a segregated basis. In addition, the men earmarked for the first training as aviation cadets at the nearby Tuskegee Army Air Field began their pilot instruction at Moton Field.

Nearly all of the remaining structures at Moton Field are in imminent danger of being destroyed through deterioration. A relatively modest investment in the stabilization of these buildings could halt this trend and help preserve these structures.

The site has very high potential for preservation and visitor use.

A variety of partnership approaches would enhance the protection and interpretation of the Moton Field/Tuskegee Airmen story. These partnerships could include the federal, state, and local governments along with a variety of private sector involvement.

Various museums throughout the country interpret only a small portion of the Tuskegee Airmen story. Permanent exhibitions found in museums at Warner Robbins and Savannah, Georgia, and Detroit, Michigan, however, do not clearly relate the “Tuskegee Airmen Experience” to the participation of African Americans in military service and their struggle to overcome racial discrimination within the United States armed forces. In addition, these displays are general in nature and do not provide an in-depth explanation on the selection and training of the Tuskegee Airmen, the bases where they were stationed, and their military exploits.

MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

Several alternatives have been developed for preserving, interpreting, and commemorating resources associated with the extraordinary story of the Tuskegee Airmen and Moton Field. Information from extensive historical research as well as input from the Tuskegee Airmen and public and private organizations were used to develop the following concepts. Management alternatives range from no federal action to the creation of a new national park system unit that would include a state-of-the art, multi-media Tuskegee Airmen National Center. All of these alternatives, with the exception of no-action, are intended to enhance public understanding and appreciation of Moton Field and the Tuskegee Airmen legacy and to preserve its remaining resources. A no-action option is included to provide a base for comparing existing conditions with the other alternatives. It is important to note that while each alternative could stand on its own, certain elements could be combined to better serve resource protection and interpretation objectives. The study does not include a recommendation for a preferred alternative.

Alternatives B, C, and D include the establishment of Moton Field as a unit of the National Park System, either as a new and separate unit, or as an addition to the existing Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site.

Furthermore, it is significant to point out that Alternatives C and D include a partnership between the NPS and Tuskegee University whereby the university’s proposed Charles Alfred Anderson Department of Aviation Science would be located at Moton Field. School activities would be combined with facilities housing museum exhibits (See Alternative C and Alternative D). Each alternative is briefly described below and in Appendix A.

Alternative A--Commemoration/Information: Moton Field

Under this alternative, Moton Field would *not* become a unit of the National Park System. The

site would be managed as an enhanced highway rest area. Passive information-oriented outdoor exhibits would present data on Moton Field's role in the training of the Tuskegee Airmen. Interpretation of the full story of the Tuskegee Airmen would rely heavily on publications sold at the Carver Museum of Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site, located approximately 3 miles from Moton Field. Tuskegee University and the City of Tuskegee would cooperate in the construction of a visitor parking area and an unmanned structure to provide visitor contact, information-orientation, dispensing of brochures and public restrooms. Within the historic complex, extant historic structures would be stabilized and preserved using private funds, but significant rehabilitation work would not be performed.

Alternative B--Commemoration/Information: Tuskegee Airmen & Moton Field

This alternative focuses on an informal interpretation of a larger portion of the Tuskegee Airmen story through facilities and resources at Moton Field. Interpretation of the remaining aspects of the Tuskegee Airmen legacy would be provided at the Chappie James Museum on the campus of Tuskegee University. In this alternative, Moton Field would become a unit of the National Park System and a place of heightened expectation for visitors. The site would be managed, operated and maintained, and its facilities developed by the NPS. As with Alternative A, the role of each structure in the complex would be interpreted through wayside exhibits. Hangar Number One would be rehabilitated as a visitor contact facility and contain exhibits, including replicas of training aircraft used by the Tuskegee Airmen such as the Piper Cub and Stearman. The exterior of the control tower would be restored including the replacement of the building's roof and windows. In addition, the "ghosting" (erecting a three-dimensional framework) of several non-extant historic structures, including Hangar Number Two, would help re-establish more of the feeling of the complex of structures. Rehabilitation of the historic landscape would focus on the area immediately adjacent to the structures including historic pathways, paved areas, and the aircraft taxiway, as in Alternative A.

Alternative C--Living History: The Tuskegee Airmen Experience

This alternative envisions a unit of the National Park System with a rehabilitated overall cultural landscape including the historic complex and broad historic setting. Building on the visitor experience described in Alternative B, additional space for exhibits would provide opportunities at Moton Field for formal interpretation of broader themes associated with the entire experience of the Tuskegee Airmen. A more fully outfitted Hangar Number One and furnished historic landscape, including aircraft, vehicles, signs, etc. from the historic period, would further enhance the living history theme of this alternative. A new structure built on the site of Hangar Number Two would consist of a visitor center/museum. The exterior of the building would closely resemble the original hangar, while the control tower would be rehabilitated. The new hangar structure would contain exhibits focusing on the Tuskegee Airmen experience beyond Moton Field. Preservation efforts would also involve the rehabilitation of the All Ranks Club and Locker Building as well as the stabilization of three small sheds. A "ghost" framework

would be provided on the sites of four former historic buildings. Restoration of the entrance would include the construction of a guard booth to depict the former historic structure.

Visitor and exhibit use previously described would be combined with programs and student activities for a proposed aviation school to be located at Moton Field. Tuskegee University's Charles Alfred Anderson Department of Aviation Science would be combined with facilities housing museum exhibits. With a pre-collegiate and collegiate-level curriculum focusing on mathematics, science, and aviation, the school would prepare students to meet the challenges for success in the tradition of the Tuskegee Airmen.

Visitor/museum and school curriculum activities would share use of Hangar Number Two, which would resemble a conventional museum. Displayed artifacts and exhibits would serve a dual purpose: interpretation and education. Exhibit design and layout would be based on project learning space requirements for students as well as visitor/interpretive needs. Student use of the facility would emphasize training and education in the tradition of the Tuskegee Airmen. While a small portion of Hangar Number Two would be devoted to classrooms, the majority of interior area would be used for exhibits.

Under this alternative, the NPS would be responsible for the restoration of Hangar Number One and the production of all exhibits for the structure. The construction, interior finish, and cost of Hangar Number Two could involve a sharing of responsibility between the NPS and Tuskegee University. A cooperative agreement covering the sharing of the facilities, construction cost, maintenance and other aspects of the partnership would be negotiated between the NPS and Tuskegee University.

Alternative D--Legacy: Tuskegee Airmen National Center, A Historical Continuum

This alternative involves a unit of the National Park System focusing on the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen. In the form of a historical continuum, the story of the Tuskegee Airmen would emphasize the past, present and future of military aviation and training. Building on the "living history" and other exhibits in the historic Moton Field complex as described in Alternative C, a Tuskegee Airmen National Center (the Center), a full-scale military museum, would be built on a separate portion of the site. The Center would serve as a visitor contact point providing information and orientation and would allow the story of the Tuskegee Airmen to be presented in the context of African-American participation in the United States military during a broad span of history.

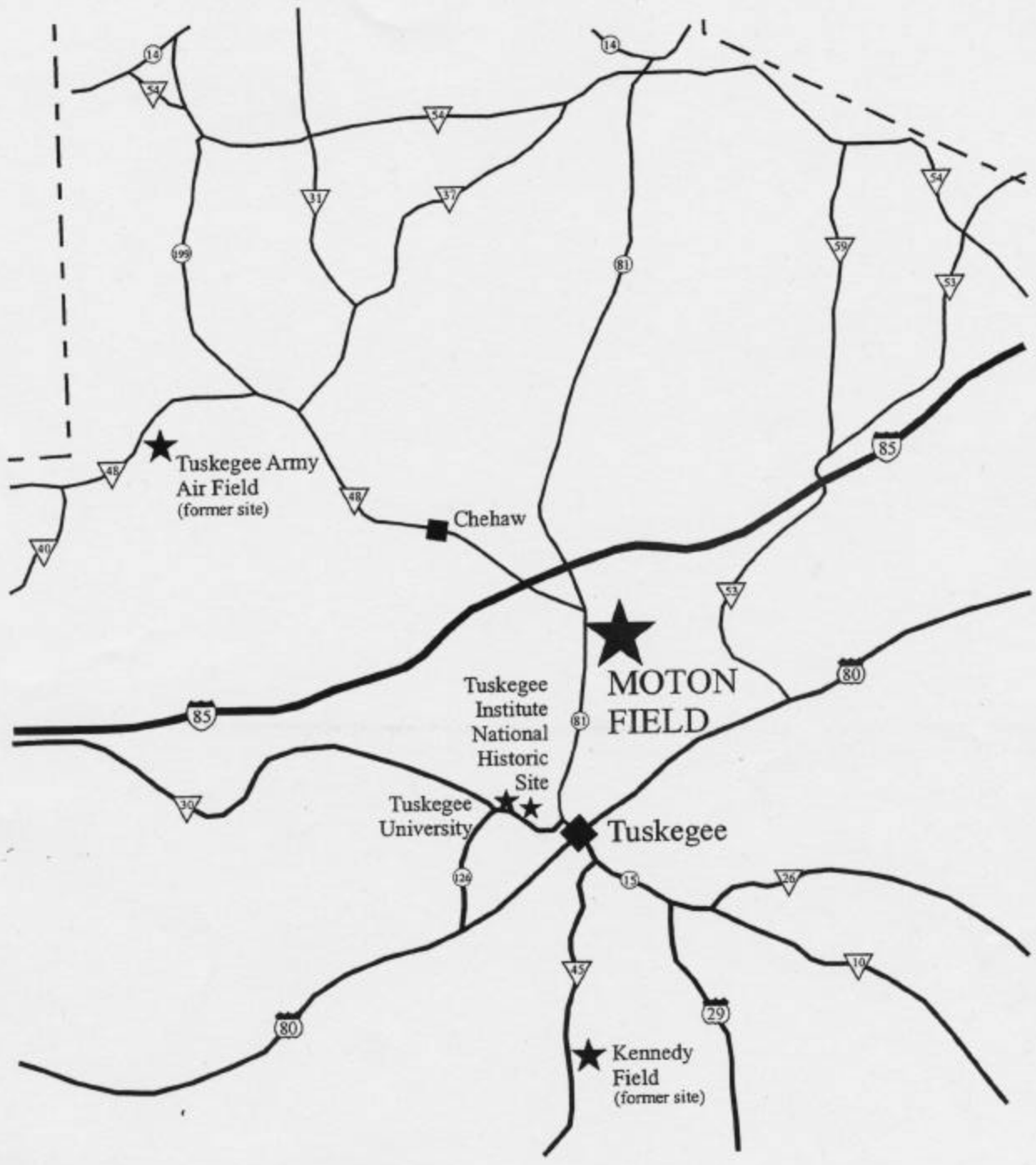
Major attractions of the Center would include interactive exhibits, replicas, and simulators allowing visitors and students a "hands-on" interpretive experience. Period military aircraft and equipment used by the Tuskegee Airmen would be displayed and a major audiovisual presentation provided.

Housed within the Center would be the Charles Alfred Anderson Department of Aviation Science. A considerably larger school than the one envisioned in Alternative C, curriculum would emphasize math, science, contemporary aviation and aeronautics training.

Construction of the Tuskegee Airmen National Center would be financed largely with private monies raised through a national fund-raising campaign. Preservation and development in the historic complex and pedestrian walkways would be the responsibility of the NPS as in Alternative C.

No Action Alternative

A continuation of existing conditions and trends including ownership and management of the historic complex by Tuskegee University would occur with this alternative. No action would be taken at the federal level to acquire property, protect historic resources, construct facilities, or provide for visitor use. Considering the current deteriorating condition of the remaining Moton Field structures, it is probable that most will be lost within the next several years. At this point, the site could be utilized for expansion of the municipal airport or for commercial development.



MOTON FIELD / TUSKEGEE AIRMEN
Special Resource Study
Vicinity Map

National Park Service / Southeast Regional Office
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OVERVIEW: HISTORY OF THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

Discipline, the ability to make rational decisions, perseverance, self-confidence, all of which were part of my training as a Tuskegee Airmen, were woven into my being. . . .

Anonymous pilot

Tuskegee Airman, Class of 1944

INTRODUCTION

African-American men and women have traditionally played a significant role in the United States armed forces. Though their heroism and fortitude in the various theaters of war is partly unknown, African Americans have sacrificed their lives for the nation's defense, and more importantly, for the preservation of individual freedom and civil liberty. In every war African Americans have participated, from colonial skirmishes to the Korean War, entry into the United States military was often controversial. Only when the federal government sought additional manpower and/or the African-American community demanded to participate did the armed forces recruit their services. This battle began with overcoming obstacles and breaking down barriers that included quotas, exclusion, and racial discrimination, which often served as culprits that hindered African-American men and women from entering into the military. Such actions provided African Americans, particularly civil rights activists, an immediate platform to contend for improved political, social, and economic conditions. Consequently, their fight for victory was always twofold: to fight for freedom, equality, and respect for the race as well as fight in defense of the nation.

The “double victory” concept, popularized during World War II, served as a rallying cry for African Americans. When the United States entered the world conflict in 1941, African Americans eagerly demonstrated their patriotism and commitment toward ensuring democracy and human rights for all oppressed peoples by enlisting into military service. For the most part, the war provided African Americans with the hope that they would finally be recognized as first class citizens in their homeland. Civil rights proponents thus took advantage of the democratic rhetoric espoused by American supporters and urged the nation to reconsider its position toward African-American people. Preliminary plans called for a complete desegregation of the United States armed forces starting with the Army Air Corps (Army Air Forces). The African-American news media, spearheaded by the Pittsburgh *Courier* and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), used coercion, political demands, and legal

action to force the Army Air Corps to accept qualified African-American draftees into its branch. The actions of civil rights groups (with strong support from the black community) thus resulted in the creation of the first African-American fighter squadron, the Tuskegee Airmen.

The exemplary exploits of the Tuskegee Airmen characterize the notable contributions of African-American servicemen and women during World War II. Equally significant, however, is the bitter struggle these men endured in their bid to enter the Army Air Corps as well as the segregated training, maltreatment and discriminatory actions they encountered while stationed in Tuskegee, Alabama. It was at Moton Field, located in Tuskegee, where African-American air cadets received primary flight training. Moreover, it was the intense instruction these black pilots received through programs conducted by Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) and the United States Army that eventually led to the airmen's participation in North African and European theaters of war. Indeed, the extraordinary experience of the Tuskegee Airmen in the United States armed forces during World War II is of national importance because it marks the initial entry of African Americans into the Army Air Corps (Army Air Forces). The exceptional combat performance of the fighter pilots as well as the perseverance demonstrated by black servicemen and women who courageously battled military racism make the Tuskegee Airmen all the more important. Prior to 1940, the United States War Department simply banned African Americans from the aviation division, alleging blacks were racially and intellectually inferior to learn such a highly specialized field. Determined to disprove such senseless notions, the Tuskegee Airmen, commanded by Colonel Benjamin O. Davis Jr., distinguished themselves in battle, flying more than 15,500 sorties, completing 1578 missions, destroying over 260 enemy aircraft, sinking an enemy destroyer, and knocking out numerous enemy ground installations. By the end of the war, the United States Army Air Forces awarded the Tuskegee Airmen numerous high honors including the Distinguished Flying Cross, Legion of Merit, Silver Star, and Purple Heart.

Though the notoriety of the Tuskegee Airmen emanates from the extraordinary feats of the African-American fighter pilots of the 99th Fighter Squadron and the 332nd Fighter Group, their success was largely made possible by the thousands of men and women who served in military and civilian support groups. Recognized as the "Tuskegee Experiment,"⁴ the Army Air Corps approved a policy in 1941 that admitted African-American men and women in various fields of aviation and military instruction. For the first time, the United States Army trained blacks as

⁴The War Department referred to the pilot training program for African Americans as the "Tuskegee Experiment." This reference, however, should not be confused with the syphilis experiment conducted in the 1930s. In February 1998, the study team held a public workshop with the Tuskegee Airmen at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, Georgia. It was at this meeting that the airmen requested that the term "Tuskegee Airmen Experience" be used to describe the discriminatory policies and conditions African-American men and women (both military and civilian personnel) endured while serving in the Army Air Corps. In response to their request, the term "Tuskegee Airmen Experience" from hereon will replace the original term.

flight instructors, officers, fighter pilots, bombardiers, navigators, radio technicians, mechanics, air traffic controllers, instrument and weather forecasters, aircraft armorers, gunnery specialists, parachute riggers, electrical and communication specialists. Hundreds of African Americans received instruction in other highly skilled and technical positions while additional recruits acted as supply, fire fighting, and transportation personnel. Moreover, the Army Air Corps employed medical professionals, laboratory assistants, cooks, musicians, and administrative clerks to complete the “Tuskegee Experiment.” More than 10,000 African-American men and women took part in the “Tuskegee Airmen Experience” that offered an opportunity for blacks to display their military capabilities as reliable Army Air Corps personnel. The tremendous will, tenacity and professionalism of these African-American men and women thus was instrumental in ensuring its success.

Nonetheless, the “Tuskegee Airmen Experience” extends beyond the extraordinary achievements of the military and civilian personnel. The appearance of the Tuskegee Airmen in the Army Air Corps helped create a framework for civil rights proponents to campaign for complete integration of the United States military. Recognizing that the War Department shaped its segregation policy to conform with the views of the nation, civil rights groups and the African-American news media were able to pressure the armed forces and federal officials into redesigning military procedures that ensured equal treatment for African-American recruits and officers.

The desegregation of the United States armed forces was officially recognized on July 26, 1948, when President Harry S Truman issued Executive Order 9981. For the most part, the directive was significant in that it not only integrated the military but it also called for fair and equal treatment of African-American military defense workers. It was not until the Korean War that the War Department began to enforce its integration policy allowing for African-American men and women to pursue military careers. The enactment of Executive Order 9981 was monumental for civil rights advocates who viewed the directive as a step toward breaking down racial barriers in the armed forces. Consequently, the success of the “Tuskegee Experiment” was significant in setting the stage for civil rights activities that took place during the decades following the war.

Introduction and Chapter I, “Setting the Stage,” by Barbara Tagger.

Chapter II, “African Americans in Aviation,” Chapter III, “The Tuskegee Airmen Experience,” and the conclusion by Christine Trebellas.

I. SETTING THE STAGE: AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE MILITARY

Early Colonial Wars and the War for Independence

Throughout American history, African Americans have contributed greatly to the nation's defense. Traditionally, black participation in the armed forces usually occurred only out of military necessity, and once accepted, African Americans had to prove their abilities under discriminatory conditions. African-American military activity originated during the colonial period when both European and later American armed forces employed free and enslaved blacks as laborers, servants, and soldiers during expeditions and conquests of the New World. In British North America, however, colonial officials simply refused to enlist African Americans into military service, professing their subordinate status readily excluded them from active duty. Beginning with the Virginia General Assembly in 1639, the American colonial legislatures' fear of slave revolts led to establishing laws that forbade liberated and bonded African Americans from bearing arms. When intense conflicts with aggressive Native Americans and other European invaders demanded additional manpower, colonial militias waived such restrictions and permitted free blacks to enlist in the army. Prohibited from carrying weapons, African-American soldiers served in menial positions. In the Southern colonies where a large slave population existed, colonial governments continued to ban enslaved African Americans from military service except for emergency situations. The urgency for extra soldiers and seamen during the Yamasee War (1715) and French and Indian War (1754-63) compelled Southern officials to enroll enslaved blacks into service as scouts, laborers, servants, soldiers, and privateers in exchange for compensation or personal liberation.⁵ In their quest to gain liberation, runaway slaves often became crewmen on fishing vessels, freighters, and pirate ships. Though the majority of enslaved black servicemen and seamen distinguished themselves in combat, the status for most of these slave-soldiers remained unchanged once the conflicts ceased.

When the political climate within British America compelled some colonies to sever ties with the British crown, the call for complete autonomy eloquently articulated in the Declaration of Independence served as a rallying cry for enslaved African Americans and for supporters of the anti-slavery movement. While white American colonists adopted these ideals to gain independence from Great Britain, the desire to acquire full human rights provided an impetus for African Americans to eagerly participate in the fight for freedom. Captivated by the revolutionary ideology, the commitment of African Americans to gain full liberation was clearly demonstrated when Crispus Attucks, a runaway slave, became the first American to

⁵Jack D. Foner, *Blacks and the Military in American History: A New Perspective* (New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1974), 3-5; Jeffrey C. Stewart, *1001 Things Everyone Should Know About African American History* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 183-4; Michael Lee Lanning, *The African-American Soldier: From Crispus Attucks to Colin Powell* (Secaucus, New Jersey: Birch Lane Press, Carol Publishing Group, 1997), 3-7.

sacrifice his life for the cause during the Boston Massacre on March 5, 1770. As the spirit of the revolution heightened throughout the colonies, hundreds of enslaved and free blacks enthusiastically attempted to join northern colonial militias and the federal army as early as 1775. The Continental Congress simply banned African Americans from military service, fearing the possibility of slave rebellions while claiming blacks were incapable of being reliable combat soldiers due to their racial inferiority. Though most colonies took a similar view and actively barred blacks from service, Massachusetts allowed African-American minutemen to join its militia. Black volunteers, including Peter Salem, Prince Easterbrooks, Salem Poor and Lemuel Haynes, eagerly enlisted into combat service, fighting heroically in such key battles as Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill, and Fort Ticonderoga. Still, the heroic deeds performed by these African-American soldiers did little to change the views of the Continental Congress and especially the commander of the Continental army, General George Washington, who emphatically refused to enlist African Americans into service.⁶

By 1777, the increasing demand for additional troops soon changed the sentiment of white legislators and military officials toward recruiting African Americans. Individual states (except for South Carolina and Georgia) gradually reconsidered existing exclusion policies and permitted black enlistees to enter the army. Similarly, the pressing demand for extra troops, coupled with protests from the African-American community, compelled the Continental army in 1778 to finally accept African-American recruits into its ranks. Although American officials employed both enslaved and free blacks in the infantry, the bulk of African-American recruits were usually assigned to labor battalions while others served as cooks, spies, musicians, scouts, and guides. The navy, unlike the army, actively recruited African Americans into its ranks. As a result, black sailors arduously participated in almost every naval battle during the war. Most state naval units (including the southern states) eagerly recruited African-American seamen and assigned them as privateers and sea pilots. In contrast to the navy and army, the marines did little to enlist African Americans; thus only a total of thirteen blacks served in the corps during the war.⁷ By the end of the conflict, nearly 5000 African Americans had joined the integrated Continental army and navy. Nonetheless, thousands of enslaved blacks, most of them escapees, abandoned the revolutionary cause in pursuit of personal freedom and fought for the British forces.⁸ The support of African-American troops in virtually every battle of the War for Independence helped secure complete liberation for thirteen British colonies in North America.

⁶Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1961); 7-13; Foner, 5-7; Berry and Blassingame, 296-7; Lanning, 8-9.

⁷Lanning, 14-5.

⁸Quarles, ix, 9-13, 119; Stewart, 186-8; Berry and Blassingame, 296-7; Foner, 8.

War of 1812-Seminole Wars

During the post-war years, the ideals spurred by the American Revolution somewhat improved the situation of African Americans as provisions in northern state constitutions either granted gradual emancipation to enslaved blacks or abolished slavery entirely. In the South, however, the majority of the African-American population remained in bondage despite the fact that a few states in the upper South, such as Virginia and Maryland, created laws that provided manumissions to slave-soldiers. Even enslaved runaways who joined the British forces were not guaranteed liberation once fighting ceased.⁹ In many ways, the increase in the free black population that resulted from the war still placed African Americans in a precarious position. Liberated African Americans, as historian John Hope Franklin suggests, discovered that their “quasi-free” status oftentimes made them vulnerable to social, political, and economic discrimination.¹⁰

African-American involvement in the military was uncertain during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as states reorganized their militias to resemble social and military organizations which accepted white males only. Except in Louisiana, such practices became common as state militias claimed that the lack of having federal citizenship willfully prohibited free African Americans from entering the military.¹¹ Congress applied a similar practice with the passage of the Federal Militia Act of 1792. The decree completely excluded both free and enslaved African Americans from serving in the federal army. When federal law in 1798 authorized the formal organization of the Marine Corps, the edict purposely discouraged the recruitment of blacks, Native Americans, and mulattos into the division. For African Americans, the policy remained effective until the War Department lifted the ban during World War II.¹² When the armed forces fell short of troops, state authorities welcomed African-American volunteers into the militias while the United States military limited black enlistment to the navy only. In June 1812, war broke out between the United States and Great Britain, and the army and navy refused to enroll black servicemen, although navy recruiters, in dire need of crewmen, overlooked the policy and employed African Americans into their ranks. In 1813, the navy officially drafted African-American sailors into service when Congress issued a bill authorizing the United States armed forces to recruit volunteers regardless of race or color. As a result, a vast number of African Americans immediately enrolled in the naval forces and eventually became instrumental in securing major battles at sea for the United States. Though confirmed figures of the total number of black sailors are unknown, scholars estimate that African Americans comprised 10% to 20% of the

⁹Foner, 17-19; Stewart, 189-90.

¹⁰John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, 7th edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc, 1994), 148-167; Foner, 19.

¹¹Berry and Blassingame, 298.

¹²Lanning, 19.

entire naval operations.¹³

The regular army, unlike the navy, refused to enlist African-American volunteers during the initial years of the war although the state militias readily accepted them. In 1814, the New York militia, for instance, actively inducted more than 2000 African-American soldiers and assigned them to labor and servile positions. Yet when British forces burned the Capitol Building during their invasion of Washington, D.C., American military officials, desperate for extra soldiers, enrolled black recruits into the infantry. The regular army generally assigned African-American servicemen to menial roles and placed them into integrated units, where they received the same treatment as their white counterparts. The war provided an ideal means for escaped slaves, particularly those who lived on nearby plantations, to seek refuge with British and Canadian forces. Thus, hundreds of enslaved blacks made their way to British lines and served as spies, messengers, guides, stewards, pioneers, and laborers in exchange for personal liberation.¹⁴

Though African-American activity during the War of 1812 remains virtually unknown, their most gallant effort is primarily celebrated in the Battle of New Orleans. The presence of black servicemen in the federal army, however, was made certain only after the military fell short of soldiers and when General Andrew Jackson announced in September 1814 that the army wanted their assistance. *"Through a mistaken policy,"* he proclaimed, *"you have heretofore been deprived of a participation in the glorious struggle for national rights in which our country is engaged."* Jackson went on to say that the black soldiers would be handsomely compensated with land and money in return for their service. With great enthusiasm, hundreds of African-American draftees responded to the call by signing up for the army and were placed into segregated units. Meanwhile, free African Americans in Louisiana organized an all-black regiment called the "Free Men of Color." In December 1814 the unit joined forces with another African-American regiment led by Joseph Savary, a black Santo Domingan, and soon became known as the "Free Negro Battalion." Their assistance, along with that of an additional 500 African-American soldiers, helped Andrew Jackson triumph at the Battle of New Orleans in 1815.¹⁵

Measures to exclude African Americans from military service resumed at the conclusion of the War of 1812. During peacetime, northern states, in particular, legally restricted African Americans from joining the militia. In February 1820, Congress ordered the expulsion of blacks from the army, and one-year later military officials produced a regulation declaring

¹³Gerald T. Altoff, "African-American History at War of 1812 Sites," *CRM*, United States Department of Interior, National Park Service, Volume 20, Number 2, 1997: 29-30; Foner, 20-22.

¹⁴Altoff, 29; Foner, 23; Lanning, 21; Berry and Blassingame, 298.

¹⁵Stewart, 191-92; Foner, 23-25, Franklin and Moss, 109-10.

that African Americans and mulatto recruits would not be accepted into the service. Though such actions prevented African Americans from participating in combat duty, the armed forces employed black volunteers--mainly as cooks, laborers, and servants. The navy, in contrast, openly conscripted free and enslaved African-American enlistees as well as trained and quartered them with white sailors. Naval policies regarding African-American seamen soon changed when southern legislators, disgruntled with the overwhelming number of African Americans enlisting into the branch, insisted that the Secretary of the Navy curtail the total of black recruits. Thus by 1839, the navy established a quota system that permitted only five percent of all African-American enlistees to sign up for service.¹⁶ In addition to the five-percent quota, a proposed bill came before the U. S. Congress in 1842 calling for the restriction of African-American seamen to menial positions. Although the legislative act failed to pass both houses of Congress, white America's perception of African-American sailors and enlisted men remained unchanged as policies continued to ban blacks from entering military service.

Despite actions created by federal and state governments limiting African-American participation in the military, blacks played an active role in the Seminole Wars. The initial conflict occurred when large numbers of enslaved African Americans escaped from plantations in South Carolina and Georgia and took refuge with the Seminole Indians in the Florida territory. Both blacks and Native Americans resided in a peaceful community. In 1816, the two groups joined forces in an attempt to prevent federal troops from invading their homeland and returning absconding slaves to their white owners. Three years later, the United States purchased Florida, and in 1835, a second war ensued as government officials ordered federal troops to remove the Seminole Indians from the area and re-enslave all black runaways.¹⁷

The warfare proficiency of African-Americans combatants won the respect of most white military leaders. However, during the years prior to the Civil War, white Americans remained convinced that blacks lacked courage and thus readily disregarded their fighting capabilities. The intrepid efforts demonstrated by the 1,000 African-American sailors who took part in the Mexican War of 1846-48 did very little to change public opinion of black servicemen.¹⁸ As a result, few or no military records recognized African-American contributions during this conflict. Thus, such distorted views woefully overshadowed the fortitude and heroism African Americans clearly demonstrated in all previous conflicts. Consequently, when war broke out between the states in 1861, African Americans once again prepared for a two-fold battle: the right to enter the military and the right to fight for freedom

¹⁶ Foner, 26-7.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁸ Lanning, 29.

and equality.

The Civil War

The notion of recruiting African Americans into the armed forces remained a controversial issue among federal and state military officials before and throughout the Civil War. The attack on Fort Sumter in April 1861 by southern troops forged the nation into a four-year internal conflict costing the lives of 600,000 Americans. The aggressive act, coupled with the conservative political views demonstrated by southern secessionists, initially indicated to northern whites that the struggle was not so much to resolve the slavery controversy, but to preserve the Union. African Americans perceived the war differently, of course. For the nearly four million enslaved African Americans, the war indeed presented the ideal opportunity to abolish legal bondage completely. Those half-million or so blacks that maintained “quasi-free” status, moreover, not only desired the termination of slavery, but also sought to gain full citizenship rights for African-American people.

Once again, the opportunity to acquire complete freedom and equality was made available for African Americans, for the war provided them with the chance to gain liberty and recognition as full American citizens. Consequently, when the War Between the States was officially declared, hundreds of free northern blacks quickly swarmed the Union recruiting posts hoping to enlist into service. To their dismay, the War Department, with the approval of President Abraham Lincoln, rejected African-American volunteers and claimed that blacks lacked the skills, capability, and fortitude to become reliable soldiers and officers. Northern whites further emphatically proclaimed that “this was a white man’s war,” and the arming of African-American troops would surely present a potential risk of slave insurrections. Though many white Americans shared this sentiment, racism was the major reason the War Department failed to enlist blacks into the military. Most white soldiers simply refused to train, quarter, and fight with African Americans. Perhaps whites were troubled by the belief that once African Americans proved to be worthy combatants, they would soon demand full equality.¹⁹

The effort to join the military was increasingly strenuous for free blacks in the South since most whites generally viewed them as the “*least trustworthy and most unessential segment of [s]outhern society.*” Such opinions oftentimes placed southern blacks in a serious dilemma, forcing them to choose the side that best offered the possibility of advancing the position of African-American people. Consequently, hundreds of free African Americans tried

¹⁹ Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 65-6; Joseph T. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle: Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and Officers* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 2; Foner, 33.

desperately to enter the ranks of both the Confederate and Union forces in hope of attaining full civil rights for the entire race. The majority of African Americans believed that it was imperative for them to participate in the battle for liberty. Still, there were others who felt that the fight to enter the armed forces was not worth enduring the racial insults and negative opinions offered by white military officials and the general public. Those African Americans who harbored this view were convinced that if they could not enter the armed forces on an equal basis, then the struggle to attain civil liberties would be fruitless.²⁰ In spite of these opinions, free blacks remained relentless in the fight to participate in the war effort. Some continued to visit recruiting posts, eager to sign up for service, while others took the initiative and formed military clubs in which they drilled regularly until local white authorities banned them from doing so. Meanwhile, African-American spokespersons such as Frederick Douglass and Martin Delaney, through speeches and writings, condemned the policies of the military and implored President Lincoln to reconsider employing black soldiers.²¹

Lawfully barred from military service, African-American participation in the Civil War initially began when thousands of enslaved blacks escaped from nearby plantations and took refuge within Union lines and aboard naval vessels. Most runaways, like former slave Solomon Bradley of South Carolina, saw the urgency of the war as a means to attain self-liberation. *“In secesh (sic) times I used to pray to the Lord”* he recalled, *“for this opportunity to be released from bondage and to fight for my liberty, and I could not feel right so long as I was not in the regiment.”*²² Recognized as “contraband of war,” Union officials refused to convert runaways into combat soldiers and sailors. During the first year of the war, federal officials established a policy to return all escaped slaves to their owners. Northern abolitionists, however, vehemently opposed the plan, thereby causing the War Department to reverse such practices. Orders issued by Union army officials soon relegated black “contraband” to non-combatant positions, where the bulk of African-American servicemen performed as laborers, cooks, servants, orderlies, guides and spies, while the navy took on black runaways as apprentice seamen.²³ Not to be outdone, the Confederate army impressed enslaved African Americans into service and placed them into menial roles. Confederates reluctantly allowed blacks to enlist as soldiers when Tennessee passed an act in June 1861 permitting free blacks to join the service, but only as military laborers.²⁴

²⁰ Arvarh E. Strickland and Jerome R. Reich, *The Black American Experience: From Slavery through Reconstruction* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1974), 192-3.

²¹ Strickland and Reich, 192; Franklin and Moss, 199.

²² John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 372.

²³ Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1989; repr., Boston: Little, Brown, 1953), xiii; Foner, 33; Litwack, 68.

²⁴ Stewart, 196.

Anxious to engage in combat, African Americans continued their attempt to enlist in the armed forces. The navy provided blacks the greatest chance of entering the military due to its passive policy and great demand for seamen. The army, on the other hand, retained its ban on African-American recruits until 1862 when President Lincoln, under intense pressure to increase the numbers of volunteers, authorized military officials to draft African-American soldiers. In August 1862, General Benjamin Butler, while stationed in Louisiana, took advantage of the new order and recruited more than 2000 black volunteers into the army. Prior to the Union invasion, free African Americans took the initiative to form volunteer regiments known as the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Louisiana Native Guards, and became part of the Confederate militia. The lack of recognition by the Confederate government caused the Native Guards to abandon their position and join the Union forces under the command of General Butler and later, General Nathan P. Banks. On September 28, 1862, the Louisiana Native Guards became part of the Union forces and mustered into service as the 73rd and 75th United States Colored Troops (USCT). Thus, the Louisiana Native Guards (*Corps d'Afrique*) have the distinct honor of being the first all-black battalion to serve in the Civil War.²⁵

Meanwhile, the 1st Kansas Colored Regiment, the first African-American unit organized in a free state, joined the Union army with Colonel James Williams as its commanding officer. Later, the regiment engaged in its first battle at Island Mound, Missouri, on October 28, 1862. The 1st South Carolina Volunteers shortly thereafter became the first regiment composed of black contraband to join the United States Army, first under the command of General David C. Hunter, and later under General Rufus Saxton. Saxton, after officially liberating all enrolled soldiers and their families, established a command post in Port Royal, South Carolina, and then ordered Thomas Wentworth Higginson of Boston to oversee the newly formed unit. Within a week, the all-black division, led by Lieutenant Colonel Oliver T. Beard and Sergeant Trowbridge, went into action at St. Helena Island and other areas along the Georgia coast.²⁶

Though these earlier engagements clearly demonstrate African Americans' enthusiasm and willingness to participate in the war effort, the regular army remained relentless against mustering black soldiers. Public sentiment toward African-American recruitment soon changed as Confederates forces continued to hammer Union troops, wounding and killing thousands of soldiers in key campaigns along southern areas of Pennsylvania and at Gettysburg. Desperate for additional troops, Lincoln reluctantly issued the Emancipation Proclamation liberating all enslaved blacks in the South, and in March 1863, Congress passed the Draft Act permitting blacks to participate in the military. Acting as recruiting agents,

²⁵ Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War*, 117; Foner, 35.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 112-115; 117, 119-20; Stewart, 196-7; Strickland and Reich, 195-6; Lanning, 37.

African-American leaders such as Frederick Douglass, Henry Highland Garnett, and Martin Delany traveled throughout the North, eagerly appealing to their fellows to partake in the fight for freedom. By December 1863, more than 50,000 African-Americans enlisted into the regular army alone. The number of black volunteers increased steadily after the White House allowed slaves in the Border States to join federal forces. Northern state militias quickly reacted to the Draft Act and aggressively recruited African-American soldiers, forming such all-black units as the 54th Massachusetts Regiment.²⁷

The courage and valor demonstrated by the 54th Massachusetts at the Fort Wagner assault as well as the heroism displayed by the Louisiana Native Guards during the battles at Milliken's Bend and Port Hudson in the Vicksburg area proved that African Americans were competent, if not fearless, combat soldiers. Such actions won the respect of military officials, including General Ulysses Grant, who later insisted that the army conscript blacks into the service. Thousands of African-American recruits soon thereafter anxiously signed up for the army and navy.

Despite the heroism and courage black soldiers displayed in combat, African Americans certainly could not escape the blatant racism and discriminatory acts of the military. White army officers and soldiers often mistreated and disrespected black servicemen while the War Department made it a standard policy to assign African Americans to segregated units that distinguished them as the United States Colored Troops (USCT) and the *Corps d'Afrique*. Generally, the Union army relegated African-American regiments to labor duty, although blacks were eventually assigned to the cavalry, infantry, and light and heavy artillery divisions as the war progressed. Combat training came slowly for most black fighters since the army seldom provided adequate combat equipment. Still, African Americans performed their duties as soldiers well. Along with the services provided by black troops, ex-slaves also contributed greatly to Union victory over the Confederates. African-American volunteers such as former slave and Underground Railroad conductor Harriet Tubman, Lucy Carter, Sojourner Truth, and Susie King Taylor were indeed valuable as nurses, laundresses, scouts, and spies for the Union forces.²⁸

In all, more than 186,000 African Americans enlisted in the United States Army, and of that number approximately 38,000 blacks died during the war, with the majority of the soldiers perishing from diseases. Historian Jack Foner notes that these figures for African-American combatants do not include the thousands of African Americans that served in non-combat roles. Those black servicemen that saw action participated in 449 battles, served in 120 infantry regiments, twelve heavy artillery regiments, seven cavalry regiments and five

²⁷ Strickland and Reich, 197.; Lanning, 40; Quarles, 8-9.

²⁸ Quarles, 198-199; 205-06; 220-29; Stewart, 198-201; Franklin and Moss, 214-15; Foner, 46; Lanning, 59-60.

regiments of engineers. At least sixteen African Americans received the Congressional Medal of Honor for their heroics.²⁹ In addition, tens of thousands of enslaved African Americans labored for the Confederate forces. Near the close of the war, General Robert Lee, desperate for additional manpower, hopelessly tried to convince Confederate officials to conscript enslaved African Americans into the army in exchange for liberation. After several intense debates, on March 13, 1865, the Confederate Congress finally consented to recruiting between 200,000 and 300,000 African-American soldiers, but the war ended before the act went into effect.³⁰

The enlistment of African Americans into the Union navy began as early as 1861; however, compared to the army the number of enrollees was considerably smaller. Scholars estimate that between 10,000 to 30,000 African Americans served in the United States Navy, which, unlike the army, opened its ranks on an integrated basis. This policy did not eliminate African Americans from enduring racial discrimination, although such treatment was minimal. Naval policy deliberately placed black sailors in menial positions that offered no opportunity for advancement, and compensations were far less than for white seamen. Military scholar Michael E. Lanning asserts that recent figures indicate African-American seamen represented about 8% of the entire naval forces and were found on every Union naval ship. The overwhelming majority of black sailors served as cooks, stewards, coal heavers, landsmen, and gunners while others took part in sea battles. According to naval sources, approximately 800 African-American seamen were wounded or killed in action. Another 2000 or so suffered from diseases.³¹

The racism that imbued the United States military provided African-American servicemen with few or no opportunities to advance into leadership roles. The navy was no exception. Naval officials remained firm in preventing African Americans from receiving commissions and becoming officers. This policy remained in effect until World War II.

The heroics demonstrated by African-American seamen during the Civil War are unquestionable when one considers, for example, the gallant actions of ex-slave Robert Smalls of South Carolina, who secretly piloted the CSS *Planter* and surrendered her to Union naval forces stationed near Charleston. Nonetheless, only four African-American seamen, Joachim Pease, John Lawson, Robert Blake, and Aaron Anderson, were recognized for displaying exceptional courage during combat and received the Navy Medal Honor.³²

²⁹ Foner, 45; Lanning, 55; Franklin and Moss, 214, 217.

³⁰ Paul S. Boyer, et. al., *The Enduring Vision: A History of the American People* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1995), 324; Franklin and Moss, 212-13.

³¹ Quarles, 282.

³² *Ibid.*, 71-4, 231-2; Foner, 47-48; Lanning, 57.

The gallant efforts of African-American troops helped Union forces defeat the Confederates in April 1865. The Civil War marked a significant achievement for African Americans. For the first time, African Americans and their allies had engaged in a struggle in which tens of thousands of soldiers of freedom helped liberate more than four million people held in bondage. Certainly, the war was fought to preserve the Union, and African Americans were very much a part of that struggle. By the end of the conflict, however, African Americans were coming to grips on how vital their role was in transforming the nation into a true democratic society. Congress promptly added the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution ensuring the complete abolition of human bondage and providing full citizenship rights to all African-American people. Yet the struggle to enjoy these privileges and to actively participate in the United States military continued to be an on-going battle which African Americans would fight for generations to come.

The Buffalo Soldier (Post-Civil War)

The permanent establishment of African Americans in the United States military was soon realized immediately following the Civil War. Unlike previous conflicts, the federal government and the War Department did not stipulate any regulations that explicitly restricted the presence of African Americans in service. White military officers who were impressed with the courage and bravery African-American fighters demonstrated during combat offered their support in securing black participation in the regular army. In March 1866, Radical Republicans proposed a bill authorizing the conscription of African-American soldiers into the United States military. After heated debates and compromises, Congress finally authorized the creation of sixty-seven regiments: five artilleries, twelve cavalry, and fifty infantries. Of this number, Congress consented to the formation of four black units, the 38th, 39th, 40th, and 41st Infantries, and the 9th and 10th Cavalries. However, post-war budgetary concerns soon forced Congress to reduce the number of combat soldiers from one million to 277,000 in 1869. Although African Americans comprised 36% of the entire regular army, congressional actions called for four black units to be reorganized as the 24th and 25th Infantries while the 9th and 10th Cavalry remained intact.³³

Appointed to the “colored” division of the regular army, the all-black units were initially assigned to act as federal law enforcement in the occupied South. During their tour of duty, African-American soldiers stationed in urban centers and towns were, like most black civilians, constant victims of racism, discrimination, and segregation. Whites reacted to the presence of black troops with great hostility and demanded that the government remove these

³³ Lanning, 64; Foner, 52-3; Anthony L. Powell, ed., “The Post-Civil War Army and the Black Soldier, 1866-1898,” *Portraits in Black: The Samuel N. Walker Memorial Museum WEB Site to the Buffalo Soldier*, <http://www.con2.com/~blacstar/portraits/philmenu.htm>. (August 12, 1998): 1-5.

soldiers from their posts. Shunned by southern and northern whites, ridiculed by the national press, and discriminated against by the military, African-American troops were eventually assigned to patrol the western frontier. Typically, their responsibilities included protecting white settlers from threatening Native American groups, providing the pioneers with food supplies, guarding the postal service, delivering goods to distant areas and camps, opening new roads, protecting the railroads, and suppressing conflicts between cattle ranchers and farmers.³⁴

The regular army's primary reason for ordering the black troops to the West, however, was to help restrain belligerent Native Americans. Respectfully called "Buffalo Soldiers" by the Kiowa, Apache, Cheyenne, Comanches, and Arapahos tribes, African-American soldiers (which included the Seminole Indian Negro Scouts), were instrumental in securing several major battles for the United States during the Indian Wars (1867-1889).³⁵ Their ability to perform as professional soldiers and protectors was clearly demonstrated when the 10th Cavalry captured the infamous Geronimo of the Apaches.³⁶

Though African-American soldiers found their military tasks demanding at times, their most difficult battle was to overcome the racism that existed within the military. A great struggle for many black soldiers was dealing with the inimical views and actions of white officers who generally held the belief that African Americans lacked the necessary skills and qualifications needed for command positions. Indeed, the hostile behavior which white officials demonstrated toward black troops had a considerable effect on the advancement of qualified African-American soldiers. As a result, white officers were usually assigned to oversee all-black regiments, regardless of whether or not they were capable of holding a command position. In most instances, white commanders refused to supervise Buffalo Soldiers for racist reasons, and those who were forced to accept the assignment often abused and mistreated the black troops. At best, some white officers adopted a paternal attitude towards African-American soldiers, characterizing them as "child-like" or not having the ability to think for themselves.³⁷

Despite these and other indignities, the Buffalo Soldiers rendered their duties with true professionalism and pride. Unlike their white counterparts, the morale ran high among African-American troops which, more often than not, translated into a low desertion rate.

³⁴Berry and Blassingame, 302-3; Foner, 54; Lanning, 72.

³⁵Stewart, *1001 Things Everyone Should Know About African American History*, 203-4; Lanning, 70; Foner, 54; Franklin and Moss, 299.

³⁶Lanning, 72-77; Stewart, 205.

³⁷Foner, 61-2; Powell, ed., "White Officer Attitudes toward Black Soldiers: The Post Civil War Army and the Black Soldier, 1866-1898," *Portraits in Black: The Samuel N. Walker Memorial Museum WEB Site to the Buffalo Soldier and Sailor* <<http://www.con2.com/~blacstar/portraits/postcw8.htm>> (August 12, 1998): 1-4.

Within the African-American community, the Buffalo Soldiers served as a symbol of promise for the race, and more importantly, their stature as military personnel provided a sense of self-respect and hope as blacks struggled to assimilate into the American mainstream. The outstanding performances and heroic deeds of the Buffalo Soldiers certainly did not go unnoticed by the military. The army bestowed the Medal of Honor to at least fifteen members of the 24th Infantry and the 9th and 10th Cavalries, and four members of the Seminole Negro Indian Scouts. To show appreciation of the “gallant and meritorious conduct” demonstrated by eleven members of the 24th Infantry and the 9th and 10th Calvaries, the military awarded these courageous soldiers the Certificate of Merit.³⁸ In addition to earning these commendations, perhaps what was most memorable to the Buffalo Soldiers was the admiration they received from white Americans, Native Americans, and government officials. After a twenty-year stint in the western frontier, military officials in Washington further recognized the loyalty and faithful service of black troops by reassigning them to various posts throughout the West. In 1891, the K troop of the 9th Cavalry received special recognition from Secretary of War Redfield Proctor, who transferred the unit to Fort Meyer-- located in the outskirts of Washington, D.C. The reassignment was the first time the War Department posted African-American troops east of the Mississippi River. In addition, African-American recruits received equal salaries for their performance. Yet, despite these small gains, the achievements of the Buffalo Soldiers did little to change the attitude and policies of the regular army, which refused to desegregate the troops and promote qualified black veterans to command positions.³⁹

The odds of African Americans securing first-line officer positions were virtually impossible. To achieve such a rank required either an official promotion or appointment, and neither of these opportunities were readily available to African-American soldiers. Thus, entry into the United States Military Academy at West Point acted as the best possibility for blacks to be inducted into leadership positions. Since racism was a part of the military order, African Americans found it extremely difficult to enter the academy. In 1870, Michael Howard of Mississippi and James Webster Smith of South Carolina became the first black cadets accepted into West Point, but neither Howard nor Smith were able to overcome the extreme racist actions of their fellow cadets and never graduated. In 1873, Henry Ossian Flipper, a native of Georgia, entered West Point, and four years later became its first black graduate. As the army’s only African-American officer, Flipper was assigned to command the 10th Cavalry, where he served in this capacity until 1881. A year later, the army falsely accused Flipper of embezzlement and misconduct, and subsequently court-martialed and dismissed

³⁸ Lanning, 64-6; Foner, 53, 56-7; Powell, ed., “Overview, The Good and Bad: The Post Civil War Army and the Black Soldier, 1866-1898,” *Portraits in Black: The Samuel N. Walker Memorial Museum WEB Site to the Buffalo Soldier and Sailor* (August 1998): 1-6.

³⁹ Lanning, 77-9.

him from service. By the late 1880s, West Point admitted Johnson Whitaker (1880), John Hanks Alexander (1887) and Charles D. Young (1889) as well as twelve other candidates into the officer program. Of the black candidates that entered West Point, only Flipper, Alexander, and Young graduated from the academy as commissioned officers.⁴⁰ (West Point would not graduate another black cadet until 1936.)

By the start of the Spanish-American War in 1898, Charles Young served as the sole first-line black officer in the entire regular army. Though the army remained adamant about African American's leadership capabilities, state militias did not readily harbor such views. In fact, African-American soldiers who served in volunteer regiments, particularly in all-black units, were likely to receive commissions after demonstrating courage and valor in significant battles. Nonetheless, African-American officers who displayed leadership capabilities did little to change the opinion of the United States Army, and for that matter, the general public, who refused to accept African Americans as military leaders.⁴¹ These attitudes reflected the sentiment of the country, where racism was an integral part of society. In the United States Army, such views appeared no different. Thus, the African-American soldier remained in a precarious status. On the other hand, his military situation provided (to some extent) a few advantages such as an adequate education, equal wages, and facilities. Indeed, such advances were not readily available to most African Americans. However, despite these advances, African-American soldiers, like black civilians, were not immune to blatant racism and segregation.⁴² Being placed in such an unfavorable position must have caused many black servicemen to reevaluate their loyalty in defending a country that denied basic civil liberties to all its citizens.

Similarly, African-American mariners suffered indignities and discriminatory actions, though their situation was less restrictive. The number of African-American sailors decreased considerably during the post-Civil War period although the navy readily accepted new recruits. Sources indicate that of the 5,000 to 6,000 men enlisted in the navy, only 500 to 800 African Americans mustered into service. Traditionally, the navy had followed a policy where all seamen--black and white--lived and worked together. This remained customary until the late nineteenth century. But these integration practices quickly ceased as African-American seafarers were increasingly placed in menial positions since most white naval officers were of the opinion that blacks did not possess the intelligence and skills to operate complex equipment and weaponry. Naval officials, furthermore, presumed that African-Americans were not mentally fit to command combat vessels and refused to elevate African Americans to officer positions. This same sentiment was most apparent at the United States

⁴⁰ Stewart, 206-8; Lanning, 66-7; Foner, 64-5.

⁴¹ Franklin and Moss, 299.

⁴² Lanning, 78-9.

Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. No African Americans were readily admitted into its program until 1872, when John Conyers, a native of South Carolina, became the first African-American cadet at the U.S. Naval Academy. He was then followed by Alonzo McClennan in 1873 and Henry E. Butler Jr. in 1874. Victimized by racist insults and humiliated by extremist actions, the three cadets resigned from the program. Another African-American cadet would not enter the U.S. Naval Academy until 1936, and the first African-American commissioned officer graduated in 1949.⁴³

Nevertheless, African-American seamen executed their assignments professionally and with bravery. During the decades prior to the Spanish-American War, the United States Navy primarily patrolled the oceans and even engaged in a brief battle with Korea. African Americans played a key role in each of these activities, but their best heroic feats were performed during rescue acts. In recognition of these courageous deeds, the navy awarded seven African-American sailors, including Joseph B. Noil and Robert Sweeney, the Medal of Honor.⁴⁴

The induction of the 9th and 10th Cavalries and 24th and 25th Infantries during the post-Civil War and Reconstruction eras secured an African-American presence in the army. At the same time, the navy continued to recruit hundreds of black sailors who also demonstrated their capability of becoming efficient crewmen. In spite of the fact that African Americans served the country bravely and courageously, their heroic deeds did little to change the overall perceptions whites had toward blacks or, more importantly, the actions of the armed forces and their conduct regarding African-American soldiers. As racial separatism and overt discrimination set the tone for American society at the close of the nineteenth century, black servicemen suffered similar indignities. The War Department did virtually nothing to improve the situation of its African-American troops. Since military opinion of African Americans essentially reflected the sentiment of the country, black veterans were often provided inferior training and equipment while qualified candidates found it extremely difficult to advance in rank. But like generations before them, African Americans were willing to take a stand and fight for the right to participate fully in the armed forces. By the turn of the twentieth century, however, their eagerness to join the military took on a greater meaning as the nation began to exert itself as a global power. The meaning of democracy grew increasingly significant, especially for those African Americans who hoped that the extension of human rights abroad would eventually lead to the eradication of racism and inhumanity that openly existed within the United States.

⁴³ Lanning, 80-1.

⁴⁴ Powell, ed., "The Post-Civil War Navy, 1866-1897," *Portraits in Black: The Samuel N. Walker Memorial WEB Museum Site to the Buffalo Soldier and Sailor* <http://www.con2.com/~blacstar/portraits/navy.htm> (August 12, 1998): 1-2; Lanning, 79.

The Spanish-American-Cuban-Filipino War

As the nineteenth-century drew to a close, American officials began plans for the new millennium by expanding the nation's borders beyond the western frontier. With the acquisition of Alaska and Hawaii territories in 1867 and 1898 respectively, the United States was fast becoming a dominant world power. Leading the charge in empire-building were the press, financial moguls, and politicians. In a convincing manner, they proclaimed that the obtainment of colonies in the Pacific, Caribbean, and Latin American areas would start the United States' quest in building a global empire.⁴⁵ Such desire for world dominance called for military aggression and, eventually, the protection of future territories. While the War Department focused on increasing the military manpower, administrators searched for ways to finally eliminate African Americans from service. By the late 1890s, the regular army removed African-American regiments in the western frontier to forts located near urban areas where black soldiers were often harassed and badgered by local whites. At the same time, the enlistment of black sailors declined considerably as the navy focused on enrolling white recruits.⁴⁶ The presence of black troops in predominately white communities often led to increased racism and discriminatory actions in which many African-American soldiers believed their position as the country's official protectors was ridiculed by white civilians and servicemen. Such racist views extended to American foreign policy as the country aggressively seized territories in the Caribbean and the Philippines. The need to exert white superiority, according to historian John Offner, prompted Americans, in part, to assertively obtain territories, particularly those occupied by people of color. Professor Thomas G. Paterson also claimed that it was white America's obligation to "civilize" those segments of the world that they believed did not have the capability and aptitude to create a progressive society.⁴⁷ On the home front, social and political racism escalated to new heights as the United States Supreme Court rendered a verdict that had a tremendous influence on the growth of legalized segregation in the landmark case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). This legal milestone had a great effect on race relations as national, state, and local measures were introduced to rescind the political and social rights African Americans had achieved during the post-Civil War years. While black Americans struggled to retain citizenship privileges, the community maintained a watchful eye on the United States' intentions toward people of color in other nations, particularly in Cuba and Puerto Rico. The Cuban effort to attain independence from Spain was of great interest to African Americans, especially since the

⁴⁵ Thomas G. Paterson, "U.S. Intervention in Cuba, 1898: Interpreting the Spanish-American-Cuban-Filipino War," *Organization of American Historians Magazine of History*, Volume 12, Number 3 (Spring 1998): 5-8.

⁴⁶ Powell, ed., "Black Participation in the Spanish-American War, 1898: An Overview," *Portraits in Black: The Samuel N. Walker Memorial Museum WEB Site to the Buffalo Soldier and Sailor* <http://www.con2.com/~blacstar/portraits/spanam1.htm> (August 12, 1998); Lanning, 52.

⁴⁷ John Offner, "Why Did the United States Fight Spain in 1898?" *Organization of American Historians Magazine of History* Volume 12, Number 3 (Spring 1998): 19; Paterson, 8.

overwhelming majority of the island's inhabitants were of African descent.

White America offered to support the Cuban revolutionary effort. U.S. involvement in the internal conflict eventually led to a nine-month battle with Spain. Suspicious of a Spanish undertaking, American hostility toward Spain increased dramatically with the sinking of the U.S.S. *Maine* on February 15, 1898, in which 266 crew members perished in an explosion. At least twenty-two of the thirty black sailors aboard the ship lost their lives and four African Americans were injured while laboring as firemen, oilers, mess attendants, landers, and petty officers.⁴⁸ As a result of this incident, most African Americans responded to the United States' declaration of war with great enthusiasm and pledged their loyalty to the campaign. Their reasons for engaging in battle, however, were somewhat different. Most black Americans saw the war as an opportunity to prove their worthiness of attaining full citizenship rights, obtain respect for the race, and help liberate black Cubans from Spanish autocracy. Nonetheless, other African Americans, like Bishop Henry McNeal Turner of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and news editor Charles Baylor of the *Richmond Planet*, remained skeptical of America's motives for aiding Cubans in the war with Spain. Outspoken black dissidents contended that American imperialism would only bring increased racism and discrimination to all peoples of color. Support for the war, Bishop Turner believed, would not improve the conditions of African Americans at home. Perhaps even more frightening for black Americans was the belief that the imperialistic concept would help advance white supremacy under the guise of manifest destiny and place peoples of color in a more precarious predicament.⁴⁹

At the start of the war, the regular army maintained between 26,000 and 28,000 troops and 2,000 officers.⁵⁰ Though only four black regiments existed in the entire army, African Americans eagerly answered the call to service, only to be turned away by army recruiters. Although the marines remained adamant against enrolling African Americans into the corps, the navy increased the number of African-American seamen to 2000 during the war. Once the conflict ceased, only 500 black seamen remained aboard naval ships.⁵¹ Increased pressure from key black advocates such as Booker T. Washington, the black press, and the black community finally forced United States officials to re-examine their views on employing African Americans in the military and placing qualified black servicemen in command positions. The desire for additional manpower, coupled with African-American demands,

⁴⁸ Rebecca Livingston, "Sailors, Soldiers, and Marines of the Spanish American War: The Legacy of the USS *Maine*" *Prologue* Volume 30, Number 1 (Spring 1998): 65; Offner, 21.

⁴⁹ Foner, 72-3; Berry and Blassingame, 305.

⁵⁰ Powell, ed., "The Philippine-American War: The Unholy War, 1898-1902," *Portraits in Black: The Samuel N. Walker Memorial Museum WEB Site to the Buffalo Soldier and Sailor* <http://www.con2com/~blacstar/portraits/unholy2.htm> (August 12, 1998): 3; Franklin and Moss, 298.

⁵¹ Foner, 83; Berry and Blassingame, 307.

brought about an immediate reaction from the White House. In response to these requests, President William McKinley ordered the states to organize black volunteer units. Alabama, Ohio, and Massachusetts quickly consented to the president's provision. Other states, such as Indiana, North Carolina, Virginia, and Illinois, followed suit only after McKinley required state governors to establish the much needed African-American regiments. Approximately 8,000 to 10,000 African Americans enlisted in all-black volunteer units and the War Department subsequently assigned the new recruits to the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th United States Volunteer Infantry (USVI). The creation of these additional black battalions were significant in that it afforded African Americans an opportunity to participate in the war effort and rendered skilled African-American soldiers the chance to secure leadership status. In North Carolina, for instance, Colonel James H. Young and three other black officers commanded the 3rd Infantry while Major Charles Young and Colonel John R. Marshall supervised the 9th Ohio and 8th Illinois, respectively. In addition to these appointments, at least one hundred African Americans who held non-commissioned rank finally received command positions as a reward for their bravery and valor during battle. Only two African-American ministers, Reverend C. T. Walker of Georgia and Reverend Richard Carroll of South Carolina, received chaplain appointments.⁵²

Nevertheless, the nine-month conflict between Spain and the United States afforded most American troops little or no combat action. Of the 200,000 African-American soldiers employed by the War Department, only 35,000 of them were actually sent abroad to fight. In fact, only one volunteer unit, Company L of the Sixth Massachusetts (USVI), actually participated in a brief, but bloodless battle while stationed in Puerto Rico. The first African-American volunteers, the 9th USVI, the 8th Illinois, and the 23rd Kansas, left for Cuba in August 1898 to perform menial tasks. Shortly thereafter, military administrators ordered the more experienced African-American combatants of the 9th and 10th Cavalries and 24th and 25th Infantry to help crush the Spanish forces in Cuba. Respectfully called "Smoked Yankees" by the Spaniards, the black fighters of the 9th and 10th Cavalries demonstrated exceptional fighting skills while rescuing Colonel Theodore Roosevelt and his "Rough Riders" from annihilation at Las Guasimas. In a subsequent skirmish, the 24th Infantry joined forces with the 9th and 10th Cavalries and assisted the "Rough Riders" triumph over Spanish battalions at the Battles of El Caney and San Juan Hill. Within weeks after winning these major assaults, the United States officially claimed victory over Spain on July 17, 1898. The War Department recognized the bravery and chivalry of five African-American soldiers by presenting them with the Medal of Honor, and another twenty-six combatants received the Certificate of Merit.⁵³

⁵²Lanning, 85; Franklin and Moss, 299-300.

⁵³Stewart, 205; Lanning, 87-91; Foner, 86-7; Berry and Blassingame, 306.

The success of black soldiers during the Spanish-American conflict offered a new sense of inspiration to the African-American community. As far as most African Americans were concerned, the heroism demonstrated by black servicemen certainly proved their ability to fight and their allegiance to the country. Surely, such patriotism would ultimately lead to a new respect for the race and citizenship recognition. Yet, all the accolades that African-American fighters garnered while in service did little to change the opinions of white America. What little appreciation African-American soldiers received for their efforts was only temporary as white Americans quickly reminded blacks of their second-class status. White America had conveniently forgotten the heroic deeds and sacrifices African-American soldiers made while serving the country. In place of parades and fanfare, the white community greeted African-American servicemen with hostility and resentment. The national press had initially praised the achievements of black troops. But once African-American troops returned home, news editors filled their publications with stories that seriously questioned the role of black soldiers in the war. Acting on this school of thought, eminent officials and intellectuals raised doubts about the combat contributions of African-American soldiers at the Battles of Las Guasimas and San Juan Hill. To add to the controversy, Teddy Roosevelt sided with public opinion by denouncing the heroic deeds of the 9th and 10th Cavalries during these key campaigns.

For African-American soldiers, the public animosity and controversy surrounding their combat expertise certainly came as no surprise; while stationed in southern towns during the war, black troops had to endure segregated facilities and defend themselves from hostile white mobs. In many respects, white Americans treated war criminals better than African-American troops. The War Department generally did little or nothing to protect its black soldiers from such harassment and violence. In most cases, the actions of the military often reflected the sentiment of country. This placed a great strain on African-American soldiers. Black troops had to contend not only with public abuse, but defend themselves against the narrow-minded views and racist actions of white military commanders and soldiers as well.⁵⁴ Yet despite white America's mistreatment, African Americans continued to trust in American ideals with the hope that society would reconsider its views on the race issue and thus extend blacks full civil rights. Rather than deal with such important domestic issues, federal officials turned their attention to spreading "democracy" throughout the world while at the same time expanding the country's empire. Such an effort called for an increase of troops in the military. When the War Department requested volunteers, African Americans were among those who responded. Although some African Americans were reluctant to join the war effort, it served as another opportunity to show patriotism and, more importantly, to gain respect for the race.

⁵⁴ Berry and Blassingame, 306; Lanning, 92-4.

The swift defeat of Spain and subsequent acquisitions of Cuba and Puerto Rico provided the United States all the more reason to expand its possessions in the Pacific. In an attempt to occupy the Philippine islands, in February 1899 the U.S. Congress agreed to assist Filipino rebel leader Emilio Aguinaldo in expelling the governing forces that ruled the island. At the same time, federal authorities issued a decree summoning the enlistment of volunteers. Most black Americans responded to the call out of loyalty to the country. Many African-American leaders, however, were exceedingly apprehensive about the United States imposing democracy on other countries and using the military to carry out the effort. Booker T. Washington, a prominent black leader, boisterously asserted that American officials should be more concerned with extending human rights and civil liberties to all citizens before making the effort to protect the rights of people abroad. Other African-American anti-imperialists echoed this sentiment, but further maintained that the Filipinos, like the Cubans and Puerto Ricans, would also fall victim to American exploitation and racism. Despite these arguments, most African Americans were willing to take part in liberating the Filipino people with the thought that their full participation in this effort would eventually lead to full citizenship rights.⁵⁵

In February 1899, Congress officially proclaimed the Philippines an American territory after Filipino dissidents led by Emilio Aguinaldo attempted to drive out American forces from the island. Shortly thereafter the War Department, with the approval of Congress, mustered 35,000 volunteers into service to act as reinforcements for the regular army. Military officials were initially hesitant to enlist black volunteers due to the increase in anti-imperialist sentiment that pervaded within the African-American community, but finally agreed to organize only two black volunteer regiments, the 48th and 49th Volunteer Infantries.⁵⁶

In 1900, the army shipped the 48th and 49th Volunteer Infantry and black regular army regiments to Manila Bay to help overthrow the Filipino rebels. During their tour of duty, African-American volunteers primarily performed labor and guard duty, escorted supplies, and acted as law enforcement in occupied towns and villages. Although the army restricted black troops to labor detail, the contributions of African-American soldiers to the war effort did not go completely unnoticed. More than 6000 black soldiers engaged in at least ninety-six skirmishes with the Filipino revolutionary forces. In fact, military historian Anthony L. Powell claims that between 1899 and 1902, at least fourteen African-American servicemen received the Certificate of Merit for their heroic deeds. Such meritorious awards, however,

⁵⁵ Powell, ed., "The Philippine American War: The Unholy War, 1898-1902," *Portraits in Black: The Samuel N. Walker Memorial Museum WEB Site to the Buffalo Soldier and Sailor* <<http://www.con2com/~blacstar/portraits/unholy2.htm>> (August 12, 1998): 1; Lanning, 96; Franklin and Moss, 303-8.

⁵⁶ Lanning, 96-7; Powell, ed., "The Philippine-American War: The Unholy War, 1899-1902, Part 2," *Portraits in Black: The Samuel N. Walker Memorial Museum WEB Site to the Buffalo Soldier and Sailor* <<http://www.con2.com/~blacstar/portraits/unholy.htm>> (August 12, 1998): 3.

were seldom acknowledged by the military and the American public due to the nature of the responsibilities assigned to African-American troops.⁵⁷

By 1901, Filipino rebel uprisings began to subside and the War Department thus began issuing orders for the return of American troops to the mainland. The 48th and 49th Volunteer Regiments were among the first to receive official discharges. Although many of the black volunteers were anxious to return home, at least 1200 veterans who refused to return to a racist American society chose to permanently stay in the islands. The black troops of the regular army, however, remained in active service, and many of these soldiers rotated their tour of duty between the Philippines and patrolling the Mexican-American border.⁵⁸

Along with the deployment of American soldiers in the Pacific, the War Department issued a decree on February 2, 1901, that called for a reorganization of the army. Under this new policy, the regular army created ten new white regiments and opened more than 1100 officer positions to skilled soldiers. Since the new military policy was primarily geared to banning African Americans from the armed forces, black enrollment dropped considerably since it was virtually impossible for African Americans to enter the service. African-American veterans who remained in the service found it extremely difficult to receive promotions until the black community pressured the War Department to place qualified nominees in these positions. The army finally named three African-American candidates, Captain John R. Lynch, Sergeant Benjamin O. Davis, and Corporal John E. Green, to ranked positions. For African Americans, appointments such as these were rare indeed, and in the years to come, black Americans would find it not only extremely difficult to enter the military, but even more demanding to advance through its ranks.⁵⁹

The Brownsville Affair

During the early decades of the twentieth century, military attitudes toward African-American servicemen remained unchanged. The army and navy, in general, continued to view African-American soldiers as inferiors and incompetent fighters, which provided a reason for excluding blacks from service. As a rule, the military reserved menial tasks for African-American soldiers, claiming that blacks lacked the intelligence and skills needed to handle complex artillery equipment. Meanwhile, the decline in race relations in America had a profound affect on how the armed forces treated African-American troops. Military

⁵⁷Powell, ed., "The Philippine-American War: The Unholy War, 1898-1902, Parts 1 and 2," *Portraits in Black: The Samuel N. Walker Memorial Museum WEB Site to the Buffalo Soldier and Sailor* <<http://www.con2.com/~blacstar/portraits/unholy.htm>> (August 12, 1998): 1-2.

⁵⁸ Powell, "The Philippine-American War: The Unholy War, 1898-1902, Part 3," 2; Lanning, 99-100.

⁵⁹ Foner, 93-4; Lanning, 101-3.

procedures often emulated the actions and attitudes of American society which, in turn, meant that African-American servicemen not only had to endure racist indignities from white officers and soldiers, but they also had to suffer similar hostile acts imposed by white civilians. In most cases, the military offered little or no protection of its black troops from such behavior. Segregation policies, which were the rule in the army, soon became more conspicuous, especially in the navy. The marine corps and newly formed National Guard simply refused to accept African Americans into their ranks.⁶⁰ Such drastic measures imposed by the military ultimately led to a sharp decline in African-American recruits. With great concern, black leaders immediately turned to President Theodore Roosevelt for protection, but found that he displayed no real interest in this matter.

The Roosevelt Administration's lack of concern for African-American affairs was clearly demonstrated in August 1906 when three companies of the all-black 25th Regiment became involved in a race riot in Brownsville, Texas. The Brownsville incident occurred after African-American troops protested against the discriminatory and insulting actions of local white citizens. Tension heightened when rumors of an African-American soldier's attempt to rape a white woman ran rampant. As a result, a riot ensued where one person was killed and two were injured. The disturbance forced military and government officials to conduct an official investigation that ultimately accused the 25th Regiment of "shooting up the town." The black troops were immediately reassigned to the Oklahoma Territory while the investigation continued. At its conclusion, the report recommended that twelve of the soldiers be charged with murder and conspiracy.

President Theodore Roosevelt then ordered a second investigation, and the report concluded that the men of the 25th Regiment presumably took "a code of silence," which made it difficult to determine the real culprit. Furthermore, the report recommended that the entire battalion be dishonorably dismissed from service since no one took responsibility for inciting the shooting. Acting on its recommendation, Roosevelt officially discharged 167 members of the 25th Regiment. The dishonorable discharge was devastating to the black veterans. At least six of the soldiers were recipients of the Medal of Honor, and thirteen had received Certificates of Merit. Roosevelt's reprimand prevented the black soldiers from receiving all military benefits and pensions, including back pay. More significantly, the dishonorable discharge excluded the African-American veterans from reenlistment and civil service employment.⁶¹

The African-American community was outraged by the outcome of the investigations, and even more so with Roosevelt's final action. Booker T. Washington and other African-

⁶⁰ Foner, 94-5; Lanning, 101-3.

⁶¹ Foner, 95-96; Lanning, 105-9.

American supporters of the President spoke of their disappointment in his decision while the black press called the verdict an injustice, and set out to launch a vigorous campaign in hope of overturning Roosevelt's order. Congressman Joseph B. Foraker of Ohio initiated the fight to reinstate the falsely accused black soldiers by introducing a legislative act that ordered the War Department to reinvestigate the incident. The report once again found the men guilty. Foraker, not satisfied with the results, submitted a petition to Congress in 1909 requesting that the army at least allow the dismissed soldiers to be eligible for reenlistment. As a result, fourteen soldiers were qualified to rejoin the military with full benefits. It would take another sixty-six years before the United States Army found the soldiers not guilty of the accused crimes and changed their dismissals to honorable discharge.⁶²

The Brownsville incident was perhaps significant insofar as African Americans were concerned in several ways. First, the Texas riot was one of several racial incidents that occurred throughout the country during the early 1900s. Increased racial violence often resulted from white America's desire to keep African Americans in a subordinate position. The Brownsville riot, moreover, did little to advance the status of black Americans in the armed forces. In fact, military racial policy further declined as the army continued to prevent African Americans from enrolling. Between 1912 and 1916 several bills were introduced in Congress restricting the organization of African-American regiments as well as preventing qualified black veterans from acting as commissioned and non-commissioned officer ranks in the army and navy. These legislative acts, nonetheless, either never came to vote or were defeated.⁶³

Still, the status of black servicemen remained a controversial issue within the military and the federal government. Civil rights groups such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Urban League (NUL) established in 1909 and 1911 respectively, set their priority on eliminating military racism as part of the struggle to gain civil and political rights for African Americans. Thus by 1917, the United States could no longer isolate itself from European affairs as the country prepared to mobilize for war. As in the past, the military created ways to prevent black enlistment. But with increased pressure from the African-American community, coupled with the shortage of military manpower, the army found itself once again compelled to organize African-American battalions to meet the needs of the war effort. And as always, African Americans were ready and willing to meet the challenge.

⁶² Foner, 99-102; Berry and Blassingame, 312; Franklin and Moss, 314-15.

⁶³ Berry and Blassingame, 313.

World War I

When the United States declared war on Germany in April 1917, President Woodrow Wilson pledged to the American people and European allies that the United States would help “make the world safe for democracy.” The democratic rhetoric proposed by the Wilson Administration appealed greatly to the American public, including African Americans. Wilson was able to win the support of African Americans during the 1912 presidential campaign when he assured black voters that he would lead the fight to end racial discrimination and to “advance the interest” of African Americans. As president, however, Wilson failed to live up to his promises. During his initial administration, Wilson approved bills favoring the segregation of government facilities, the termination of African immigration, and more significantly, the exemption of blacks from receiving commissioned appointments in the armed forces. In addition, the War Department remained adamant about not providing highly technical combat training to black troops and advancing blacks to officer positions.⁶⁴ Hence, such measures issued by the Executive Office and armed forces provided African Americans with very little chance to enter the military. With so few opportunities to participate in the armed forces, African Americans began to express their displeasure with the Wilson administration. The NAACP, under the direction of W.E.B. DuBois, a Harvard graduate and professor of sociology at Atlanta University, quickly launched a campaign to change public opinion about African American’s loyalty to the war effort. As editor of *The Crisis*, DuBois eloquently articulated in several articles why it was necessary for African Americans to show support for the war, and if possible, to participate in the military mobilization. In his view, DuBois strongly believed that highly educated blacks or the “talented tenth” must take the lead in carrying out this effort. A cooperative undertaking such as this, he rationalized, would ultimately lead to full citizenship, and help improve race relations.⁶⁵ Indeed, DuBois’ plea for black support for the war effort did not go without controversy. Asa Philip Randolph, labor activist and editor of the *Messenger*, and law student Chandler Owens openly expressed their opposition to the war. Both Randolph and Owens openly argued that African-American participation in the war provided no guarantee that America would grant full rights and privileges to its black citizens. They further asserted that risking the lives of African Americans for America’s cause would by no means end racism in the country.⁶⁶

The arguments of black anti-war supporters did little to curtail the sentiment of the African American people who, for the most part, responded to the draft with enthusiasm. As pre-war mobilization began, the War Department had only 20,000 African American veterans who comprised only 2% of the total of men serving in the armed forces. Of this total, 10,000

⁶⁴ Franklin and Moss, 324.

⁶⁵ Lanning, 129-30; Berry and Blassingame, 314.

⁶⁶ Foner, 109-10.

African-American males served in the regular army, and another 10,000 were part of the National Guard. The 9th and 10th Cavalries and the 24th and 25th Infantries were the only four regiments still in active service, and just three African Americans, Colonel Charles Young and First Lieutenants Benjamin O. Davis and John E. Green, acted as commissioned officers in the regular army. Recruitment of African American enlistees began slowly because the military maintained the view that African Americans were incapable of serving as combat soldiers and officers. Consequently, the War Department used a variety of measures to ban African Americans from the draft whenever possible.⁶⁷

In 1917, Congress issued the Selective Service Act requiring the War Department to enlist all males between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-one into service without racial discrimination. As a result, more than 2,000,000 African American males answered the call for the draft. Although the army managed to employ 650,000 white volunteers, the demand for additional soldiers eventually compelled the military to enroll blacks into service. Racism, of course, played a significant role in determining the army's quota of recruitment of only 400,000 black soldiers. According to military scholar Jack Foner, this represented about 34% of the total number of combat soldiers. With few options available, African-American volunteers found the navy's segregation policies would only allow them to serve as mess men, coal passers, gunner's mates, electricians, and cooks. Meanwhile, the marines refused black recruits and claimed that they did not meet the necessary qualifications for combat duty.⁶⁸

The racism that prevailed within the army was made more conspicuous after a race riot involving several African-American soldiers and white civilians broke out in Houston, Texas.⁶⁹ Although the army needed additional volunteers, Secretary of War Newton D. Baker decided to reduce the initial number of new all-black regiments from sixteen to four. As a result, the army created the 365th, 366th, 367th and the 368th Infantries. Of the four African-American regiments, the 92nd and the 93rd were the only units to serve in combat

⁶⁷ Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Making of America* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1969), 180; Franklin and Moss, 320, 325-6; Berry and Blassingame, 314.

⁶⁸ Foner, 111; Kenneth Estell, *African America: Portrait of People* (Detroit: Visible Ink Press, 1994), 736; Berry and Blassingame, 315.

⁶⁹ On August 23, 1917, a riot erupted in Houston, Texas, in which two black soldiers were assaulted by local police while defending a black civilian. Infuriated by the incident, more than 150 black soldiers of the 24th Infantry stormed into the city, killing ten white citizens, four police officers, and wounding twelve people. At least five black servicemen died during the incident, including one soldier who committed suicide. After conducting several extensive official investigations, the War Department jailed sixty-seven of the black soldiers, court-martialed sixty-three, and convicted and executed nineteen of them. The Houston incident demonstrated the military's insensitivity to the racial abuse and segregated conditions African-American troops encountered while stationed in southern towns and cities. Moreover, the riot had a tremendous influence on the War Department's decision in establishing quotas on black enlistment, especially in the organization of four new black volunteer regiments at the start of World War I. Lanning, 121-8; Stewart, 208-9.

duty throughout the war.⁷⁰

As the fighting in Europe escalated, American officials increased U.S. support by sending millions of combat troops to assist the Allied forces. The army hesitated in assigning black troops to fight on the front line. Instead, the military relegated African-American regiments to labor duty at training bases in the United States and the territories. Black troops, for the most part, received no specialized artillery and combat training. The lack of proper fighting instruction usually left African-American combatants ill-prepared for such an assignment. This gave military administrators all the more reason not to permit black battalions to engage in battle. Frustrated with the War Department's policy, black troops, with the help of the African-American community and civil rights groups, insisted that the army revise its policies by providing specialized training and positions to qualified black military personnel. Such unwavering demands ultimately led to the placement of African Americans in the cavalry, infantry, signal corps, medical corps, the hospital and ambulance corps, stevedore units, veterinary corps, and labor regiments. Moreover, employment opportunities were made available in other specialized and professional fields in which blacks acted as clerks, chemists, surveyors, draftsmen, auto mechanics, motor truck operators, and judge advocates. The army also lifted the ban on the artillery divisions, which for the first time provided African-American servicemen with the opportunity to receive highly technical combat training. Although the army agreed to accept blacks into these skilled positions, the Army Air Corps continued to exclude them from the aviation program.⁷¹

Entry into the armed forces was an accomplishment in itself for many African Americans. As the country continued to search for ways to solve the race problem, African Americans, with hopes of securing complete social and political equality, set their plans on desegregating the armed forces. The desire to participate in the war effort provided the NAACP and the African-American press a platform to coerce the War Department and the federal government into giving black Americans a fair chance to prove themselves as combat soldiers and officers.

NAACP representatives asserted that the War Department had unjustly denied blacks command positions and urged the army to promote Lt. Col. Charles Young to full colonel, thereby placing him in direct line for the brigadier general position. In response to the demand, the army refused Young the promotion due to medical reasons, and subsequently forced him to retire from the military. Young protested the decision, and with the support of

⁷⁰ The 93rd Infantry was originally the 15th New York Regiment. The army reorganized the 92nd and 93rd Infantry as the 369th and 370th Infantry. Lanning, 133; Foner, 116-7.

⁷¹ Morris J. MacGregor, Jr., *Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940-1965* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1981), 7; Foner, 116-7; Franklin and Moss, 328.

the African-American community, demonstrated his fitness by riding horseback from Ohio to Washington, D.C. The army retirement board, after giving in to public pressure, promoted Young a full colonel position but held steadfast on its decision regarding his retirement from active duty.⁷²

Despite this setback, the NAACP and the black press continued its bid to get the armed forces to change its policy regarding the training and promotion of black military officers. Joining in the protest were African-American students from Tuskegee Institute (now known as Tuskegee University), Fisk, Atlanta and Howard Universities who insisted that the army devise an officer-training program for eligible black candidates. In May 1917, the Central Committee of Negro College Men, an organization created at Howard University, collected the names of over 1,500 men who were interested in military officer training and sent them to Congress for consideration. After careful deliberation, Congress authorized Secretary Baker to develop a separate officer training school for qualified African-American candidates. Finally, on June 15, 1917, an officers' training camp was established at Fort Dodge in Des Moines, Iowa. Although African-American leaders insisted that the facility be made available on an integrated basis, the army, unwilling to compromise, retained a segregated policy for the training program.⁷³

Though not entirely pleased about forming an all-black officers program, army officials reluctantly accepted 1,250 African-American recruits into the officers-training program. At the conclusion of the training, approximately 1,200 black candidates had received their commissions, which included 639 captains and lieutenants. Only a few African Americans achieved the status of major.⁷⁴ The number of officers was incredibly low when compared to the thousands of African Americans that enlisted into service. African-American officers discovered that their rank did not shield them from military racism. In fact, their maltreatment from fellow white officers increased as they became victims of insults and discriminatory actions. African-American commanders received no respect from white soldiers and officials which, in turn, led the War Department to issue a policy that placed black officers in command of African-American units only. Black officers were often reprimanded for the slightest infractions. This usually resulted in a white commander taking charge of their units. In many instances, black officers endured segregated officers' clubs and living quarters, and fellow white commanders refused to socialize with them. Overt racism played an important role in where African-American officers were assigned and what units they commanded. White military administrators purposely placed them in charge of all-black

⁷² Foner, 113; Lanning, 132-3, Franklin and Moss, 326.

⁷³ Franklin and Moss, 326; Foner, 117-8.

⁷⁴ Quarles, *The Negro in the Making of America*, 182-3; Franklin and Moss, 327; Foner, 118.

regiments, fearing that command assignments to white battalions would bring turmoil.⁷⁵

To utilize African-American officers and regiments, the U.S. Army reorganized and attached several units to the French army. The 369th, 370th and 371st Infantry Regiments demonstrated African-American fighting capabilities as their resiliency afforded the Allied Forces several key victories against the Germans. The 369th Infantry Regiment, while attached to the French 4th Army, served more than six months in the trenches, and according to one source, "never lost a foot of ground to the Germans."⁷⁶ Because of their remarkable combat record, the French called the 369th the "Men of Bronze," and the Germans honored the unit with the title of "Hell Fighters." Without a doubt, the 369th Infantry was recognized as the best fighting battalion in the entire U.S. Army. Similarly, the 370th, known as the "Red Hand," and the 371st Infantry Regiments had their share of heroes who served courageously on the frontline. To show appreciation for their service, the French military awarded the "Harlem Hell Fighters" the distinguished *Croix de Guerre* and numerous individual medals. By the end of World War I, more than 400,000 African-American soldiers had served in the military. Of that number, only 42,000 black soldiers participated in combat duty, while the majority of these men acted in menial positions. Those who did not serve in battalions that were attached to the French army suffered mistreatment by white officers and were subjected to segregated facilities. The U.S. Army took extreme measures to maintain racial separatism within the ranks which, at times, extended into recreational facilities and canteens.⁷⁷

Post-World War I

The gallantry and courage African-American soldiers displayed during World War I was primarily recognized by the French army, who bestowed numerous honors upon them. For African-American troops who had served with honor and pride, the most rewarding wartime experience was the humane treatment they received from the French. African-American servicemen stationed in France enjoyed complete liberation and respect from the people. This new found freedom was something they had never experienced as American citizens. Such a warm welcome and reverence did not await black troops as they returned to the United States. White America feared that black servicemen would return home expecting similar treatment. Instead of parades and fanfare, whites greeted African-American soldiers with insults and abuse. The increase in Jim Crow laws coupled with disfranchisement served as an awful reminder for returning black soldiers that America was not willing to extend the same dignity and respect to those who helped defend the principles of democracy.

⁷⁵ Foner, 118.

⁷⁶ Estell, *African America: Portrait of a People*, 736-7.

⁷⁷ Lanning, 138-9; Franklin and Moss, 330-36; Quarles, 184-5.

Physical persecution ran rampant, particularly in the South, as white vigilante groups targeted African-American soldiers for lynching, murder, and burning. In one instance, at least ten black soldiers, some still in uniform, were publicly hanged and burned by white mobs. Racial tension increased dramatically as riots became part of the American landscape during the "Red Summer" of 1919. Scholars estimate that at least twenty-five racial disturbances occurred in cities such as Chicago, Illinois, Knoxville, Tennessee, and Omaha, Nebraska, leaving hundreds of African Americans killed and injured while thousands were left homeless.⁷⁸

Similarly, the United States War Department displayed a biased disposition toward African-American soldiers. High ranked army officials attempted to initiate new policies that discouraged re-enlistment while insisting that African-American recruitment be banned completely. There were some military administrators who went as far as announcing the elimination of all existing black units. Racism within the military escalated when the War Department requested a study on the combat and leadership performance of African-American soldiers. In 1925, the Army War College released a report stating that African Americans believed they were "*by nature subservient and . . . inferior to the white man.*" Moreover, the report claimed that because of their intellectual inferiority, African-American soldiers were incapable of performing at the same level of white soldiers during combat. In "*past wars,*" the report continued, "*the [N]egro has made a fair laborer, but an inferior technician. As a fighter he has been inferior to the white man even when led by white officers.*" To remedy this situation, the report recommended that "*[N]egro soldiers as individuals should not be assigned to white units*" and "*[N]egro officers should not be placed over white officers, noncommissioned officers and soldiers.*" As far as leadership positions, the War College Study alleged that African Americans were incapable of assuming such a highly responsible role, and at best, could be placed in the lieutenant rank and command African-American troops only. Overall, African Americans would not qualify for superior ranks because "*they showed the lack of mental capacity to command*" and "*the lack of courage*" during combat. African-American troops, the report further contended, "*lacked confidence in his colored officer.*" All and all, "*the [N]egro officer was still a [N]egro, with all the faults and weaknesses of character inherent in the [N]egro race, exaggerated by the fact that he wore an officer's uniform.*" The report thus highly recommended to place strict limitations on the number of African-American volunteers while maintaining segregated units for those still in service. These servicemen, the report advocated, should not be placed in combat duty, but restricted to labor detail.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Franklin and Moss, 350-54; Quarles, 92-3; Lanning, 150-2; Foner, 125-6.

⁷⁹ "Performance of Negro in Past Wars," and "The Negro Officer," in the Army War College Report, United States War Department, 1925; Berry and Blassingame, 318; Lanning, 152-3.

The release of the Army War College Study afforded the War Department a justification to limit the number of black volunteers. Various policies designed by the department thus set out to minimize African-American presence in the military, and in some instances, to discourage black recruitment altogether. Of the 230,000 servicemen in the United States armed forces, only 3,640 were African American. The National Defense Act of 1920, however, required the army to maintain at least four African-American regiments, the 24th and 25th Infantries and the 9th and 10th Cavalries. Little or no effort was made to establish additional units, and those blacks that remained in service were reduced from combat training to performing menial duty. Since specialized training was rarely offered to blacks, the military primarily placed African-American recruits in the cavalry and infantry. In fact, the army commissioned only five African-American officers. Three of these officers served as chaplains, and Colonel Benjamin O. Davis Sr. and his son Lieutenant Benjamin O. Davis Jr., a West Point graduate, acted as the only African-American front line officers in the armed forces. The Army Air Corps and the marines remained closed to African-American draftees, while the Coast Guard only admitted blacks into low-level positions. For most black recruits, entrance into the navy was virtually impossible as administrators devised tactics that openly barred African Americans from joining the branch.⁸⁰

World War II

As racism increased in the military during the decades prior to World War II, civil rights groups and influential black news publications centered their agendas on breaking racial barriers that prevented African-American entry into the armed forces. The federal government and the War Department, in particular, made little effort to encourage black participation. The lukewarm reaction from the White House and War Department caused most African Americans to seriously question their loyalty and patriotism as the nation mobilized for a Second World War. Meanwhile, African Americans prepared for battle on the home front as black activists called for an end to racial discrimination in the military. As early as 1938, civil rights proponents and the Pittsburgh *Courier* launched an attack on military racist policy by forming the Committee for Negro Participation in the National Defense Program. Under the leadership of Howard University history professor Rayford W. Logan, the committee focused its attention on persuading President Franklin D. Roosevelt to open the armed forces to the recruitment of African Americans.⁸¹ Their greatest accomplishment to ameliorate race relations came when Congress passed the Selective Service Act in 1940. The bill called for the recruitment of 800,000 men without racial discrimination. Although black leaders worked diligently to eliminate racism from the military draft, the bill did nothing about eradicating segregation, which was openly practiced

⁸⁰ Lanning, 154-55; Berry and Blassingame 318-9.

⁸¹ Stewart, 211; Berry and Blassingame, 321.

in the armed forces.⁸² Civil rights proponents voiced their disappointment with the Selective Service Act, claiming that the measure made no attempt to integrate the military overall.

Persistent complaints from civil rights activists and black news editors appeared ineffective as the White House and Congress showed no interest in modifying military racial policies. In September 1940, representatives from the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), the National Urban League, and the NAACP met with President Roosevelt and presented a seven-point program they believed would ensure complete black participation in the war effort. Their proposal outlined several demands, including specialized and officer training for African-American military personnel, the complete integration of the military, and the employment of black nurses in the American Red Cross. Along with these provisions, the black delegation insisted that the Army Air Corps open the pilot training program to all qualified African-American candidates (see page 68 for additional information).⁸³

Roosevelt gave little consideration to these demands, asserting that any actions on his part would jeopardize the nation's defense. He reluctantly assured the delegation that black volunteers could enter the armed forces, although their numbers would be limited based upon their proportion of the U.S. population. Civil rights advocates expressed a deep sense of disappointment in the White House reactions as the War Department maintained its segregation policies. Complaints from the African-American community and white liberals soon forced the White House to make several conciliatory decisions that resulted in the promotion of Colonel Benjamin O. Davis Sr. to brigadier general in October 1940. In addition, the Roosevelt administration appointed Judge William H. Hastie, dean of the Howard University School of Law, as Civilian Aide to the Secretary of War, and Colonel Campbell Johnson as executive assistant to the director of Selective Service. The federal government furthered African-American participation in the military with the establishment of ROTC programs at Prairie View State College, North Carolina A&T, Tuskegee Institute, West Virginia State College and Hampton Institute. Moreover, plans to create a pilot training program for African Americans went into effect. In 1942, the Executive Office commanded the War Department to accept African-American draftees into the Marine Corps and other branches of the navy, although they were placed in segregated units and assigned menial duties.⁸⁴

Despite these efforts, racial discrimination in the armed forces persisted as the Roosevelt Administration refused to exercise any authority to end such practices. Civil rights

⁸² Lanning, 163-4.

⁸³ Franklin and Moss, 435; Lanning, 163-4; Foner, 136.

⁸⁴ Karin Chenoweth, "Taking Jim Crow Out of Uniform: A. Philip Randolph and the Desegregation of the U.S. Military," *Black Issues In Higher Education* (August 21, 1997): 31; Franklin and Moss, 435-6; Foner, 136; Lanning, 165.

organizations and the black press also made it known to the president that African-American civilians experienced similar treatment in the defense industry. Unless the government guaranteed fair hiring policies for all citizens, African Americans would have no choice but to formally petition the White House until these demands were met. In light of A. Philip Randolph's threat to bring between 50,000 and 100,000 African Americans to march on the nation's capital, on June 25, 1941, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 prohibiting unfair employment practices in government defense industries. In addition, the directive created the Federal Employment Practices Committee (FEPC), an investigative committee that ensured all federal-contracted plants would comply with the law.⁸⁵

The desegregation of the war industries was a tremendous victory for African Americans, and the March on Washington Movement, as one authority claims, was indeed, "*a significant milestone in the services' racial history.*"⁸⁶ Nonetheless, most African Americans remained discontented with government officials who refused to establish regulations outlawing legal discrimination entirely. They were especially disillusioned with the War Department's reluctance to create measures that would openly employ African Americans in the military on an integrated basis. Army officials remained determined not to reform the military's racial policy, and claimed that the role of the armed forces was to defend the country and not act as a laboratory for social change. Top military administrators contended that the armed forces reflected the racial views and customs of the nation; thus under no circumstances should the military divert from the Jim Crow conditions accepted by American society.

By the early 1940s, the African-American populace displayed mixed emotions about the war. Those who maintained a pessimistic view claimed that although the war may save democracy abroad, racism would prevail in America. The hypocrisy of fighting for a nation that did not provide civil liberties for all its citizens compelled many African Americans to seriously question their loyalty to the cause. Opposition to the war caused some black Americans who refused to be subjected to a segregated military to reject the draft. Others like Elijah Muhammed, founder of the Nation of Islam, deliberately resisted military conscription on religious grounds and were subsequently imprisoned for draft evasion.⁸⁷

The federal government's refusal to desegregate the armed forces did little to dampen the patriotic spirit of most black Americans, especially after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941. After the formal announcement of the United States' entry into World War II, African Americans eagerly volunteered their services. Their entry into the armed forces, however, placed the African-American community in a dilemma in which black leadership

⁸⁵ Estell, 740; Foner, 141; Lanning, 168-9; Franklin and Moss, 436-7.

⁸⁶ MacGregor, *Integration of the Armed Forces*, 16.

⁸⁷ Stewart, 215; Estell, 740; Foner, 145-6.

saw the war as a prime opportunity to agitate for civil liberties at home while pledging to defend democracy abroad. In 1942, the Pittsburgh *Courier*, along with other leading black publications, launched the “Double V” campaign calling for the end of fascism and Nazism in Europe and racism in America. As African-American news editors and the black community embraced the “Double V” concept, the NAACP, NUL, and other civil rights groups promptly began working toward ending racial discrimination throughout the nation and gave special attention to terminating segregation within the armed forces. In their weekly columns, black publishers initiated an attack on desegregating the United States Army and the Army Air Corps by blasting federal officials for taking a nonchalant approach to ending military racism.⁸⁸ Pittsburgh *Courier* editor Robert L. Vann was especially critical of the War Department for placing African-American Army Air Corps cadets in a segregated training program and for allowing Air Corps officials to mistreat blacks without any repercussions. To bring attention to these injustices, African-American newspapers and journals saturated their front page sections and editorial columns with countless stories of the assaults, brutality, and segregated conditions African-American service men and women endured while stationed at training bases in the South.

Segregated blood banks endorsed by the armed services also fell under attack of the black press and the NAACP. Although Red Cross officials could give no clear justification for not accepting blood plasma from African-American donors, the Surgeon General, undaunted by the pressure from the African-American community, authorized blood banks to remain segregated. General sentiment among top military administrators was that blood transfusions for black and white soldiers should derive from their respective groups. Civil rights leaders, outraged by the actions of the United States Army, bitterly criticized the segregation policy of the Red Cross. Even the noted African-American physician Dr. Charles Drew, pioneer researcher of the blood plasma procedure, protested the military’s segregation rule by resigning his position as director of the Red Cross Blood Bank program.⁸⁹

Protest activities advanced by civil rights groups, coupled with the immediate need for additional troops, forced the War Department to reconsider its racial policies. Between 1941 and 1943, the army increased the number of African-American recruits from about 98,000 to 504,000. Military officials assigned the majority of these soldiers to labor battalions. However, when heavy fighting erupted in Europe in 1944, the United States Army immediately authorized more than 500,000 African-American troops to take part in combat duty. In the European theatre, thousands of African-American soldiers demonstrated their fighting skills in several important campaigns, including the Battle of the Bulge. Military officials gave high praise to the men of the 761st Tank Battalion for their courageous efforts

⁸⁸ MacGregor, 9; Berry and Blassingame, 320-1; Stewart, 213; Lanning, 170.

⁸⁹ Foner, 140; Lanning, 169.

during the attack. African-American combatants of the 92nd Infantry Division also received their share of accolades after American forces overwhelmingly defeated German and Italian troops in November 1944. The 92nd Division, which included at least four infantry regiments and four artillery battalions, was awarded more than 12,000 honors for its excellent combat performance.⁹⁰

The exceptional fighting skills demonstrated by African-American soldiers soon received the attention of top military commanders stationed in Europe. In 1944, General George Patton and General Dwight D. Eisenhower, commanders of the Allied Forces, eagerly sought the services of African-American fighters. The increased demand for extra soldiers caused both generals to announce that they were willing to accept African-American troops into their units on an integrated basis. This announcement pleased civil rights advocates and African-American servicemen alike, who recognized that the creation of integrated fighting units was one step toward defeating military racism. Anxious to engage in battle, more than 5000 African-American recruits volunteered for combat duty, although the War Department accepted only 2500 men. The newly trained troops were subsequently assigned to integrated divisions where black and white soldiers fought together.⁹¹

African-American participation in the Pacific theatre was equally significant. During the early course of the war, the United States Army stationed approximately 10,000 African-American troops in the Pacific and Asia. Black combat battalions of the 92nd and the 24th Infantry Divisions played a significant role in assisting the Allied Forces in securing several key islands, including the Georgia Islands and the Philippines.⁹²

Meanwhile, the navy outfitted 78,000 African-American seamen. Approximately 40,000 of these black sailors were trained in highly technical positions for the first time, while the other 38,000 recruits were placed on mess duty. Naval administrators, in response to coercion from the War Department and the black community, finally saw fit to improve the conditions of enlisted black seamen. Unlike those who served in the previous war, African-American sailors were now given the opportunity to act as radiomen, yeomen, gunner's mates, and storekeepers. In 1944, the navy issued special orders that allowed African-American seamen to participate in combat duty. Shortly thereafter, all-black crews appeared aboard the destroyer escort the USS *Mason* and the PC 1264, a patrol craft in which white officers were placed in command. Of the 165,000 African-American seamen enrolled in the navy, none were placed in commissioned positions; thus, in 1944, the navy inducted sixteen African-American servicemen into its officer-training program. Although all sixteen of the black

⁹⁰ Franklin and Moss, 438-43; Stewart, 217.

⁹¹ Stewart, 217-8; Foner, 162.

⁹² Franklin and Moss, 444.

candidates completed the program, the navy chose to promote only twelve of the graduates to ensigns' positions. None of the black naval officers received a command assignment outside of the country.⁹³ The Marine Corps, however, conscripted African Americans into its ranks as early as 1942. Of the 17,000 African Americans who served in the branch, at least 12,000 of them were stationed in the Pacific, where they primarily unloaded ammunition.

Despite the discriminatory practices of the armed services, African Americans served in every branch of the military during World War II. Their record of service was outstanding, and although black servicemen and women had to overcome many obstacles, their valor and courage helped dispel the myth that African Americans were incapable of performing at the highest level. Military records indicate that more than one million African Americans participated in World War II. Of that number, approximately 702,000 black soldiers served in the United States Army, including 4,000 African-American women in the Women's Army Corps (WACS). The navy recruited 165,000 African-American seamen, while the Coast Guard permitted 5,000 black Americans to join its ranks. Although approximately 17,000 African Americans joined the Marine Corps, none served as officers. More than 900 black pilots trained at Tuskegee Army Air Field, and approximately 600 of them earned their wings by the end of the war. The merchant marines conscripted 24,000 African-American sailors, and even named four of its ships for African-American seamen lost in combat.⁹⁴

At the conclusion of the war, the United States claimed victory over Nazism and fascism, and African Americans felt proud in taking part in preserving and protecting human rights for those abroad. The bid to gain these same rights in the United States came as a great disappointment for many black Americans as fellow servicemen and women returned home from the war to find a Jim Crow society waiting to greet them. The battle to gain full civil liberties, therefore, remained a continuous struggle for black America in the decades that followed.

⁹³ Lanning, 201-7; Foner, 169-71; Stewart, 218.

⁹⁴ Foner, 173-5.



Figure 2. Recruitment poster urging African Americans to join the Union army (National Park Service, *Underground Railroad*, 65)



Figure 3. African-American crewmen aboard a Union ship (*Ebony Pictorial History of Black America*, vol. 1, 282)



Figure 4. African-American artillery unit in the Union army (*Ebony Pictorial History of Black America*, vol. 1, 274)



Figure 5. African-American troops at Las Guasimas, Cuba (*Ebony Pictorial History of Black American*, vol. 2, 86)

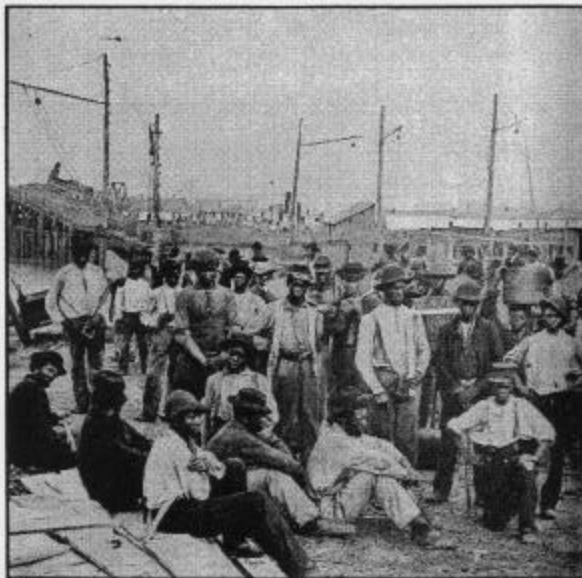


Figure 6. African-American longshoremen, mostly former slaves, along the James River (*Ebony Pictorial History of Black America*, vol. 1, 256)

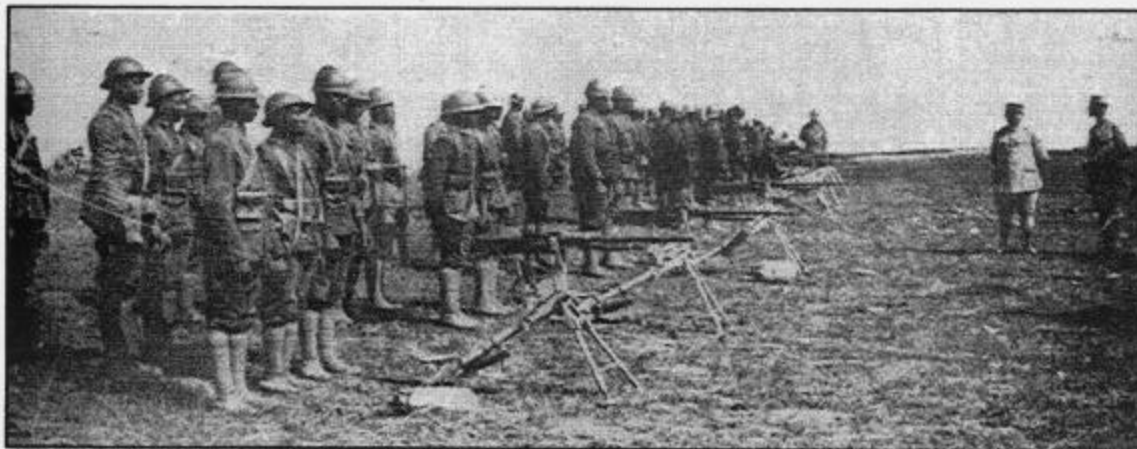


Figure 7. African-American soldiers in World War I attached to French units (*Ebony Pictorial History of Black America*, vol. 2, 137)



Figure 8. African-American World War I Veteran (*Ebony Pictorial History of Black America*, vol. 2, 142)



Figure 9. Brig. Gen. Benjamin O. Davis Sr. watches a Signal Corps crew erecting poles in World War II France, August 1944 (National Archives, Pictures of African Americans During World War II, 217)



Figure 10. All-black crew operates an M-8 armored car in World War II Europe (*Ebony Pictorial History of Black America*, vol. 2, 267)



Figure 11. African-American MP's during World War II in Columbus, GA (*Ebony Pictorial History of Black America*, vol. 2, 270)



Figure 12. Crew members of the USS *Mason*, the first destroyer manned predominately by African Americans, World War II Boston (*Ebony Pictorial History of Black America*, vol. 2, 276)



Figure 13. African-American WACs in World War II England (*Ebony Pictorial History of Black America*, vol. 2, 275)

II. AFRICAN AMERICANS IN AVIATION, C. 1915-1941

The discrimination that African Americans encountered in the military was only an extension of the treatment they faced in American society as a whole. African Americans had to suffer prejudice, racial slurs, discrimination, segregation, and attacks by white supremacist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. Many white Americans believed that blacks were inferior and lacked the mental capabilities, intelligence, and leadership skills to receive full citizenship rights in American society. This belief continued well into the first half of the twentieth century, where, despite their skills and resources, African Americans were banned from new technological fields such as aviation. Most flying schools refused to admit African Americans, and the Army Air Corps continued to exclude them. Nonetheless, pressure from black leaders, civil rights groups, and African-American aviators eventually forced politicians to support government-sponsored aviation training for African Americans, albeit on a segregated basis. This chapter examines that struggle and the participation of key figures such as Judge William Hastie, Charles Alfred “Chief” Anderson, and members of the Roosevelt administration, as well as the role of Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama.

“In the Footsteps of Orville and Wilbur Wright: African Americans and their Quest to Fly”

The historic flight of Orville and Wilbur Wright in 1903 sparked a popular interest in aviation. Racial discrimination, however, hindered African Americans from fully participating in this growing field. In the early twentieth century, the notion that African Americans lacked the mental capability, aptitude, and reflexes to fly was widely held, and many blacks were excluded from flight instruction. The few African Americans that learned to fly during these early years, such as Eugene Bullard or Bessie Coleman, stood out as exceptions and obtained their training abroad.⁹⁵ Eugene Jacques Bullard, for example, learned to fly as a military pilot with the French in World War I.⁹⁶ Bessie Coleman, the first licensed black pilot in the United

⁹⁵Von Hardesty and Dominick Pisano, *Black Wings, The American Black in Aviation* (Washington, DC: National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institute, 1983), 5.

⁹⁶Robert J. Jakeman, *The Divided Skies, Establishing Segregated Flight Training at Tuskegee, Alabama, 1934-1942* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1992), 56.

Born in Columbus, Georgia, in 1894, Bullard traveled to Europe and joined the French Foreign Legion shortly before World War I began. He served as infantryman on the Western Front and earned the *Croix de guerre* before he transferred to the French Flying Service in November 1916. After completing training, Bullard became an enlisted pursuit pilot in August 1917. His career as a fighter pilot ended after an altercation with an officer, and he spent the rest of the war in the infantry. After World War I, Bullard managed a night club in Paris until Hitler invaded France in 1940. Although his exploits were largely forgotten in the United States, France continued to honor him. In 1954 Bullard was one of three men who lit the Flame of the Unknown Soldier in France, and General Charles de Gaulle presented Bullard with the Legion of Honor in 1959.

See also Charles E. Francis, *The Tuskegee Airmen, The Men Who Changed A Nation* (Boston: Braden Publishing

States, also received her pilot training in France.⁹⁷ Although Coleman died in a plane crash in April 1926, her fame continued to grow, symbolizing the hopes and dreams of many African Americans interested in aviation.⁹⁸

By the late twenties, only a few African Americans had pursued careers in aviation due to racial discrimination. In 1927, however, Charles Lindbergh's flight captured the attention and imagination of all Americans, and African Americans became interested in aviation in increasing numbers. Black aviation clubs began to appear and sponsor air shows and long-distance flights, while cities such as Los Angeles and Chicago became centers of African-American aviation.⁹⁹

Los Angeles and Chicago: Centers of African-American Aviation

One important African-American aviation enthusiast and organizer of black aviation clubs was William J. Powell. Influenced by Lindbergh's flight and summarily rejected by the Army Air Corps and civilian aviation schools in the Midwest, Powell moved to Los Angeles and enrolled in a local flying school. He then gathered a group of like-minded African Americans and established the Bessie Coleman Aero Clubs to promote aviation, especially among black youths. The group first received national attention when African-American congressman Oscar De Priest visited Los Angeles and flew with members of the air club in a plane named in his honor.¹⁰⁰ Two years later, on Labor Day, the flying club sponsored the first all-black air show in the United States, which attracted approximately 15,000 spectators.¹⁰¹ The Los Angeles African-American aviation community sponsored another air show in December 1931 with Hubert Julian, one of the first black licensed pilots.¹⁰² In 1932 African-American aviation in Los Angeles reached its high point with the transcontinental flight of James Herman Banning and Thomas C. Allen. Banning, a pilot, and Allen, a mechanic, obtained a used biplane and flew from Los Angeles to Long Island in October 1932. Nicknamed the "Flying Hobos," they completed the flight in 41 hours, 27 minutes, with less than \$100 for

Company, 4th Edition, 1997), 27-8, and John B. Holway, *Red Tails Black Wings, The Men of America's Black Air Force* (Las Cruces, NM: Yucca Tree Press, 1997), 19-23.

⁹⁷Jakeman, 58; Hardesty and Pisano, 6.

After several flying schools in the United States refused to admit her, Bessie Coleman went to France to receive flying lessons. She returned to the United States with a license from Federation Aeronautique Internationale and pursued a career as a barnstormer. In 1922 she became the first licensed black pilot in America and made her debut as an exhibition flier in an air show at Chicago's Checkerboard Field.

⁹⁸Jakeman, 58.

⁹⁹Hardesty and Pisano, 5-12.

¹⁰⁰Jakeman, 63.

¹⁰¹Hardesty and Pisano, 7.

¹⁰²Hardesty and Pisano, 8. Julian had a rather controversial career as a showman and promoter of black aviation.

expenses.¹⁰³

The black aviation community in Los Angeles and the Bessie Coleman Clubs had received much attention, and Powell continued to promote aviation. In 1934 he published *Black Wings*, dedicated to Bessie Coleman. This idealistic work encouraged African-American men and women to enter the field of aviation and become pilots, mechanics, aircraft designers, and business leaders, and establish a transportation system free from racial discrimination.¹⁰⁴

Following in the footsteps of Banning and Allen, Charles Alfred "Chief" Anderson and Dr. Albert E. Forsythe became the first African Americans to complete a round-trip transcontinental flight in 1933. Several months later the team made a round-trip flight from Montreal to Atlantic City, becoming the first African Americans to plan and execute a flight across international borders.¹⁰⁵ Like Powell, Coleman, and other African-American aviators, Anderson developed a fascination with airplanes and a strong desire to fly while growing up in Virginia and Pennsylvania. Unable to obtain flying lessons due to racial prejudices, Anderson borrowed money, bought an airplane, and successfully taught himself to fly. By 1929 he had received his private pilot license from the Civil Aeronautics Administration. With the help of a World War I German pilot named Ernst Buehl, Anderson trained for his air transport examination. In 1932 he received his transport pilot license from the Department of Commerce, the first African American to do so. The following year he met with Forsythe, taught him to fly, and joined him on several flights.¹⁰⁶

Unlike Anderson, Forsythe developed an interest in aviation later in life. Born in Nassau in 1897, Forsythe came to the United States to attend Tuskegee Institute and the University of Illinois. He then received his medical degree from McGill University in Montreal and established his medical practice in Atlantic City in 1932.¹⁰⁷ His interest in aviation began at this time, for in 1933 Forsythe organized an aeronautical society which hoped to use aviation accomplishments to break racial barriers and promote goodwill. The group also wanted to

¹⁰³Hardesty and Pisano, 8. Born and raised in Oklahoma, John Herman Banning moved to Chicago in the early 1920s to learn to fly. Because no school would accept him (despite his education and aptitude), he went to Des Moines, Iowa, where an army officer, Lt. Raymond Fischer, taught him to fly. Banning relocated to the West Coast in the late 1920s and was one of the few black pilots licensed by the Department of Commerce. He died in a plane crash in 1933. See Francis, 30.

¹⁰⁴Hardesty and Pisano, 7. See William J. Powell, *Black Wings*, 1934; reissued as *Black Aviator: The Story of William J. Powell*, with an introduction by Von Hardesty (Washington, DC: The Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994).

¹⁰⁵Jakeman, 7; Hardesty and Pisano, 16.

¹⁰⁶Jakeman, 8; Jo Officer and Spann Watson, "He Reached the Other Side of the Mountain," *FAA World* (February 1989, vol. 19, no. 2): 1, 10.

¹⁰⁷Jakeman, 7-8.

gain recognition for African-American economic and scientific contributions in aeronautics.¹⁰⁸ While in Atlantic City, Forsythe heard of Anderson's accomplishments from reports in the black press, approached him for flying lessons, and began their association. Forsythe's medical practice gave the partnership the financial resources to pursue many of their aviation endeavors, while Anderson's flying experience continued to grow. With Forsythe's backing and additional support from the Atlantic City mayor and Chamber of Commerce, the team was able to complete their round-trip transcontinental flight to Los Angeles in 1933.¹⁰⁹

The following year, Anderson and Forsythe planned their third and most ambitious flight, the Pan-American Goodwill Flight to promote interracial goodwill. Sponsored by an Atlantic City group known as the Interracial Goodwill Aviation Committee (IGAC), Anderson and Forsythe devised a month-long, 12,000-mile circuit to more than twenty countries in Central and South America and the Caribbean. In September 1934, Robert Russa Moton, president of Tuskegee Institute, gave the institute's support to the project by arranging for their airplane to be christened the *Booker T. Washington* in a ceremony on Tuskegee's campus.¹¹⁰ Although Tuskegee's role in the publicity campaign for the flight came almost as an afterthought, the school did form a fund-raising committee to help with the operation's expenses.¹¹¹

On November 8, 1934, the *Booker T. Washington* took off from Atlantic City as planned. Despite a few mechanical problems, the flight proceeded as scheduled for several weeks. Anderson and Forsythe went along their planned route from Miami to Nassau to Havana, Cuba, to the Antilles, the first trans-Caribbean flight in a land plane.¹¹² As the team flew south along the string of islands that compose the Lesser Antilles, they found no airfields and landed wherever they found an adequate clearing. Their luck in finding appropriate areas eventually ran out, and their Pan-American Goodwill Flight ended in failure when their plane crashed outside of Port-of-Spain in Trinidad. Although Anderson and Forsythe were unhurt, the *Booker T. Washington* was damaged beyond repair and the team returned quietly to the United States.¹¹³ The loss of the *Booker T. Washington* ended Forsythe's active involvement in aviation, and no other organizations provided leadership or financial backing for subsequent goodwill flights.¹¹⁴ Anderson, on the other hand, continued to participate in

¹⁰⁸Officer and Watson, 10.

¹⁰⁹Officer and Watson, 10; Jakeman, 8.

¹¹⁰John C. Robinson, a Tuskegee alumni interested in aviation, flew to his ten-year class reunion at Tuskegee Institute in May 1934, and urged the school to develop an aviation program. Although his visit had little influence, the school did support Anderson and Forsythe's Pan-American Goodwill Flight. Jakeman, 1-6.

¹¹¹Jakeman, 7-14.

¹¹²Jakeman, 17; Officer and Watson, 10.

¹¹³Jakeman, 18; Officer and Watson, 10.

¹¹⁴Jakeman, 20.

cross-country flights and eventually taught at several flight training schools in northern Virginia and Washington, D.C.¹¹⁵

Although the Pan-American Goodwill Flight did not proceed as planned, the flight was not a complete failure. Black interest in aviation continued to grow, even though the country was in the middle of an economic depression. With the exploits of Banning, Allen, Anderson, and Forsythe, this interest spread to Chicago, which began to compete with Los Angeles as the center of African-American aviation. In 1931 the Curtiss-Wright Aeronautical School in Chicago had its first all-black aircraft mechanics class. John C. Robinson, a Tuskegee alumni and graduate of this program, went on to organize the Brown Eagle Aero Club, Chicago's first African-American flying club.¹¹⁶ Later reorganized as the Challenger Air Pilot's Association, the club built its own airstrip in the town of Robbins, Illinois, in 1933. After a severe windstorm destroyed the hangar at Robbins Airport, the Challenger group moved its flight operations to Harlem Airport outside of Chicago.¹¹⁷

Another graduate of the Curtiss-Wright school, Cornelius Coffey--with the help of Willa Brown and Enoch P. Waters--played a key role in the emergence of Chicago as the center of African-American aviation in the mid-1930s. Coffey, a former auto mechanic, became interested in aviation when John C. Robinson convinced him to take a mechanics course from the Curtiss-Wright school in 1931. Coffey and Robinson then trained a number of African-American pilots, mechanics, navigators, and parachute jumpers who formed the core of Chicago's black aviation group.¹¹⁸ When Robinson left Chicago in 1935, Coffey and Willa

¹¹⁵Officer and Watson, 10-11; Francis, 30-1.

¹¹⁶Although John C. Robinson is recognized for his work in the field of aviation in Chicago, he is perhaps best known for his service in Emperor Hailie Selassie's air force in Ethiopia. The coronation of Hailie Selassie in 1930 reawakened the interest of many African Americans in the African kingdom. This concern was strengthened by the Italian threat along the Ethiopian-Italian Somalialand border. With the Italian invasion of Ethiopia imminent, many African Americans responded by raising funds and establishing organizations such as the International Council of Friends of Ethiopia. Robinson offered his services as a pilot to the Ethiopian air force, and in 1935 Claude Barnett, director of the Associated Negro Press (ANP) introduced Robinson to Malaku E. Bayen, a member of the Ethiopian royal family attending medical school at Howard University. In April 1935, after Robinson provided satisfactory references and credentials, Hailie Selassie offered Robinson a commission in his imperial army. By August, Robinson was commissioned as a colonel and given command of the small Ethiopian Air Force. His duties consisted of flying courier missions between the front and the capital, and serving as the emperor's personal pilot. By spring 1936, Italy was winning the war, and Robinson left Ethiopia shortly before the country was annexed by Italy in May 1936. Jakeman, 21-25.

¹¹⁷Hardesty and Pisano, 12-3.

¹¹⁸Jakeman, 66. Two important members of this group were Willa Beatrice Brown and Janet Waterford Bragg. Willa Brown first became interested in flying while pursuing a Master's degree at Northwestern University. In 1936 she allied herself with Coffey and assumed a lead role as a promoter of black aviation activities in Chicago. Three years later, she earned her pilot's certificate from the Aeronautical University of Chicago, located in the South Loop. Brown also helped organize the National Airmen's Association of America (NAAA), one of the first African-American aviation associations. See Francis, 29; and Charlie and Ann Cooper, *Tuskegee's Heroes, Featuring the Aviation Art of Roy LaGrone* (By the Author, 1996), 18-9.

Brown became the leaders of Chicago's African-American aviators and went on to teach flight training at the Coffey School of Aeronautics, the first flight school owned and operated by African Americans.¹¹⁹ Willa Brown first met with Enoch Waters, the city editor of the *Chicago Defender* (a leading black newspaper), to seek publicity for an air show organized by Chicago's African-American pilots. The paper sponsored the show, which became an annual event. In addition, Waters became an avid aviation enthusiast and urged Coffey and Brown to broaden their base of support. By 1937, Coffey, Brown, Waters, and several other local African Americans organized the National Airmen's Association of America. Although the *Chicago Defender* offices contained the organization's headquarters, Brown and Waters helped establish chapters in several Midwest cities.¹²⁰

Franklin D. Roosevelt's Administration and Gains in African-American Aviation

Even with aviation clubs, air shows, and black flying schools, employment opportunities for African Americans in aviation remained limited as long as military aviation, mail carrying, and commercial flying were restricted to white pilots. Nonetheless, in the late 1930s the role of blacks in aviation began to change, largely the result of earlier gains in civil rights during Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration. A variety of sources pushed the administration into positions more favorable to African Americans and provided them with more economic opportunities and greater political power. One important factor was the pressure applied by organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Urban League (NUL), two of the largest, most influential groups working for the betterment of blacks in the 1930s.¹²¹ Another consideration was the development of black voting power in the North, which began to influence national politics after the 1932 election. Many interracial groups, labor unions, and political parties, such as the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters or the Southern Conference of Human Welfare, also forced the Roosevelt administration to recognize the problems of African Americans.¹²² In addition, a great amount of pressure came from within the Roosevelt administration to

An educated woman like Brown, Bragg studied at Spelman College and continued her education at the Cook County Hospital and Loyola University in Chicago. In 1933 she enrolled in flight theory and ground courses at the Aeronautical University in Chicago. After completing her flying instruction, she flew with members of the Challenger Air Pilots Association at Robbins Airport. Bragg was not only instrumental in the formation of the Challenger group (she had purchased the group's first aircraft), but she also played a major role in developing the first college preparatory Training Flying Program for African Americans to provide primary flight training for the military. See Cooper and Cooper, 27-9.

¹¹⁹Cooper and Cooper, 19.

¹²⁰Jakeman, 66-7.

¹²¹Jakeman, 74-5. The NAACP was founded in 1909 by an interracial group of racial "progressives" and focused on legal action, propaganda, and educational issues. Founded in 1910 with the support of Booker T. Washington, the NUL assisted southern blacks who migrated north by helping them find work and adjust to urban life. During the 1920s, both groups reorganized and became important, influential groups working towards improving conditions for African Americans.

¹²²Jakeman, 74-6.

change its policies towards African Americans. After his inauguration in 1933, Roosevelt appointed several officials who supported racial justice and civil rights, such as Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes (former president of the Chicago branch of the NAACP). First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was also an outspoken and influential advocate of civil rights and made it one of her major concerns during her husband's administration. Moreover, many federal agencies appointed African-American advisors to deal with racial issues, known collectively as the "Black Cabinet."¹²³

With these forces at work, many African Americans eventually felt that the federal government had finally acknowledged some of their problems and was beginning to try and solve them. Black leaders then began to press for more opportunities in aviation, such as admission into the Army Air Corps. In 1936 the federal government first indicated that it might support opportunities for African Americans in aviation when William J. Powell applied for and offered aviation classes under the Emergency Education Program. Although the federal government showed no further support for African-American aviation, by 1937 approximately 250 students (mostly black) had received flight training under this program.¹²⁴ The following year the Pittsburgh *Courier* began a campaign for equal opportunity in the armed forces, which would allow African Americans to enter the Air Corps. Much of their initiative took advantage of the changes in F.D.R.'s administration and the growing strength of the civil rights movement. Although the newspaper failed to achieve any tangible results the first year of this campaign, it did focus the attention of the black public on the issue of African Americans in the military.¹²⁵

The Civilian Pilot Training Act of 1939

In fall 1938, with the growing tensions in Europe, Asia, and North Africa, many Americans supported an expansion of the nation's air power. President Roosevelt also had many concerns regarding the affairs in Europe and Asia, and included a 1.3 billion-dollar increase in defense spending in his fiscal year 1940 budget proposal (submitted January 5, 1939). On January 12, 1939, he requested an additional \$525 million for an emergency national defense program, with half of these funds allotted to the Air Corps and a new aviation program to be administered by the Civil Aeronautics Authority (CAA). The United States Congress responded to Roosevelt's request with two acts which authorized the expansion of the Air Corps and established the Civilian Pilot Training Program to promote aviation training among young Americans. Although neither bill originally contained provisions for African-American pilot training, with political pressure from black aviators and supportive legislators, the bills

¹²³Jakeman, 76.

¹²⁴Jakeman, 79-80.

¹²⁵Jakeman, 76-86.

were amended to include African Americans in the new pilot training programs.¹²⁶

Congress eventually approved legislation which contained some of these provisions, and on April 3, 1939, President Roosevelt signed the bill, known as Public Law (P.L.) 18. The new law substantially increased the maximum Air Corps strength to 6,000 airplanes. It also authorized the expansion of the pilot training program by permitting the Air Corps to contract with civilian flying schools for the primary phase of its flight training curriculum.¹²⁷ More importantly, the bill contained a provision that one of the Air Corps' civilian primary schools be designated as a training site for African-American pilots.¹²⁸

As far as the Air Corps was concerned, however, the law merely required the CAA to designate one of the civilian primary schools as a site for training African-American pilots; it did not order the Air Corps to accept black pilots. At the end of May 1939, Robert Hinckley (chairman of the CAA) learned of the Air Corps' interpretation of this bill and designated the North Suburban Flying Corporation at the Curtiss Airport in Glenview, Illinois, as the school for training African-American pilots under the provisions of P.L. 18. As far as the Air Corps was concerned, this fulfilled their obligations under the law.¹²⁹ Black leaders, organizations, and lobbyists, however, had a different interpretation of P.L. 18 and felt that it did indeed authorize the training of African Americans as Army Air Corps pilots. Through their efforts, the Dirksen amendment was included in the Civilian Pilot Training Act of 1939, which passed on June 27, 1939. The approved amendment provided an opportunity for African-American youths to learn to fly at government expense and led to the establishment of Civil Pilot Training (CPT) programs at several black colleges.¹³⁰

The government's decision to include African Americans in the Civilian Pilot Training program may have been influenced by the Spencer-White flight to Washington, D.C., in May 1939. With help from the National Airmen's Association of America (NAAA) and the *Chicago Defender*, Chauncey E. Spencer and Dale L. White planned a cross-country flight to appeal through publicity to the U.S. government to include African Americans in government-financed aviation training programs. Enoch Waters (one of the NAAA's founders and editor at the *Chicago Defender*) suggested that they fly to Washington, D.C., and put them in contact with Edgar Brown, who agreed to serve as the organization's representative at the capital.¹³¹ The two pilots then rented an old Lincoln biplane and set off

¹²⁶Jakeman, 89-90.

¹²⁷Jakeman, 91-102.

¹²⁸Robert A. Rose, *Lonely Eagles, The Story of America's Black Air Force in World War II* (Los Angeles: Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., 1976, 2nd printing, 1980), 11.

¹²⁹Jakeman, 103; Rose, 11-2.

¹³⁰Jakeman, 108-110.

¹³¹Rose, 9; Jakeman, 109-10.

from Harlem Airport in Oaklawn, Illinois, on May 9, 1939. After several difficulties (including a broken crankshaft), Spencer and White arrived in Washington, D.C., and met with Edgar Brown, who in turn introduced them to Harry S Truman, then a senator from Missouri. Truman was surprised to learn that African Americans were not included in the government's proposed training program and were not allowed to enlist in the Air Corps. After spending some time with Spencer and White at the airport, Truman offered them his support. He then directed his efforts toward President Roosevelt, Secretary of War Robert H. Hinckley, and Congressmen Arthur W. Mitchell, J. Hamilton Lewis, and Everett M. Dirksen.¹³² The extent of Truman's influence is unclear, but one month later, the Civilian Pilot Training Act of 1939 with the Dirksen amendment passed.

The Civilian Pilot Training Act authorized certain colleges and universities to establish CPT programs to provide flight training. The CPT programs, administered by the Civil Aeronautics Association (CAA), were created to provide a pool of civilian pilots for a national emergency. Although only eight African-American pilots held commercial licenses when the act passed, the future of black aviation looked brighter because the program included African Americans as well as women.¹³³ Several schools applied and the CAA selected six black colleges, Howard University, Delaware State College, Hampton Institute, North Carolina A & T, West Virginia State College, and Tuskegee Institute, to participate in the CPT program. Since all of these educational institutions were located in the South, two black non-college facilities in the Chicago area were selected to allow northern candidates a greater opportunity to participate. One of these facilities, the Coffey School of Aeronautics, was owned and operated by Willa B. Brown and her husband, Cornelius Coffey.¹³⁴

The CPT Programs at Tuskegee Institute

Like the Coffey School of Aeronautics, Tuskegee Institute also had a great influence on the future of African-American aviation and black participation in the Air Corps. The CAA approved Tuskegee Institute for participation in the CPT program for the 1939-1940 year with an initial quota of twenty students. Nevertheless, the institute had to resolve many administrative details before actual training could begin. They needed a budget, transportation arrangements to a local CAA-approved flying field, and funds for scholarships for students who lacked the resources to participate in the program. In addition, the school also had to select students, administer physical exams, and schedule ground school courses. G. L. Washington, Director of the Department of Mechanical Industries at Tuskegee

¹³²Rose, 9-10.

¹³³Hardesty and Pisano, 19-21.

¹³⁴Rose, 10-11; Hardesty and Pisano, 21. The Coffey School offered the full range of CPT courses and, after 1941, War Training Services (WTS) courses, which replaced the CPT program after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The school also became the center of Negro Civil Air Patrol activity when the program was initiated in 1941.

Institute, handled many of these details and established the school's CPT program.¹³⁵

The extracurricular CPT program at Tuskegee included seventy-two hours of class room instruction (ground school) taught during the fall and winter academic quarters. Ground school training concentrated on four areas, Theory of Flight and Aircraft, Civil Air Regulations, Practical Air Navigation, and Meteorology. Students took additional course work in Aircraft Power Plants and Instruments and History of Aviation. Actual flight instruction began approximately three weeks after the ground school courses and included a total of thirty-five to fifty hours, beginning with three, thirty-minute lessons per week for the first eight weeks and expanding to two, one-hour lessons per week thereafter. The federal government would pay the expense for ground and flight school instruction, which amounted to approximately \$300 per student. Prospective students had to be U.S. citizens between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four, and have completed at least one year of college. Those candidates who could not pass the physical exam, could not obtain parental permission, or had previous solo flight experience were ineligible. Students also had to pay a \$40 fee to cover miscellaneous expenses such as medical examinations, insurance, and transportation, which created a hardship for some applicants.¹³⁶

Although G. L. Washington created a scholarship fund to help students cover the expenses, a great obstacle in recruiting students remained--obtaining parental permission. Some parents were concerned about safety, while others thought that participating in the CPT program meant that their children would have to serve in the military in the event of a war. Nonetheless, the student newspaper at Tuskegee fully supported the CPT program, and by late October 1939, sixty students had applied, including three women.¹³⁷

Once Washington had recruited a student body for the CPT program, he then had to provide physical examinations, instructors, and transportation to a CAA-approved air field.¹³⁸ Because the CAA had designated John W. Chenault, a physician at Tuskegee Institute's hospital, as an official CAA medical examiner, there was no difficulty in obtaining physical examinations for the applicants. Securing instructors and transportation, however, proved more difficult. G. L. Washington turned to two professors who conducted the ground school courses at Alabama Polytechnic Institute (API) in neighboring Auburn, Alabama, to offer these classes at Tuskegee Institute. The two API professors, Robert G. Pitts and Bloomfield M. Cornell, agreed to teach the four principal units of the course at the same rate that other

¹³⁵Jakeman, 122.

¹³⁶Jakeman, 122-3.

¹³⁷Jakeman, 123.

¹³⁸Jakeman, 125.

Tuskegee instructors were paid.¹³⁹ For a qualified flight instructor, Washington obtained the services of Joseph Wren Allen, a licensed aviator as well as owner and operator of the Alabama Air Service in Montgomery. Allen conducted flying lessons in the afternoon so students could attend ground classes in the morning before making the one-hour trip to Montgomery.¹⁴⁰ The initial flight training classes, which began in late December/early January, had only ten students due to the lack of flight instructors. The CAA required a 10-1 student-teacher ratio and Allen had yet to hire additional instructors.¹⁴¹

By late January, the problems in transporting the CPT students to the municipal air field in Montgomery became acute. Consequently, G. L. Washington began to investigate the possibility of using nearby Kennedy Field for flight training. Three local white fliers, Forrest Shelton, Stanley Kennedy, and Joe Wright Wilkerson, had built Kennedy Field for their personal use. Since it was not a CAA-approved flying field, federally sponsored flight training could not be conducted there until it was upgraded and CAA inspectors gave it their approval. In addition, Tuskegee Institute had to obtain permission from the owner of the field, John Connor, as well as the lessee, Kennedy, before they could use it for training. Although Washington quickly secured Kennedy's consent to use the field (Kennedy continued to keep his plane there and use the field for his private flying activities), improving the field for CAA approval took some time. Following the self-help model established by Booker T. Washington, Tuskegee aviation students volunteered their labor to bring the field up to CAA standards. Under the supervision of Royal B. Dunham, a Tuskegee instructor, they improved the grass landing area by cutting trees, filling holes, grading high spots, and erecting runway markers. Tuskegee Institute also built a wooden hangar that could accommodate up to three airplanes as well as a lavatory, fuel depot, and post-flight briefing shack.¹⁴²

By March 1940, the CPT students had completed the ground school courses and a CAA inspector arrived at Tuskegee Institute to administer the ground school examination. The future of the CPT program at Tuskegee depended upon the success of the first class of students and their CAA test scores. Nonetheless, all of the students passed the exam by a wide margin, the lowest grade being 78%. The CAA flight evaluations almost equaled the

¹³⁹Jakeman, 124-5. Both Pitts and Cornell were extremely well-qualified to teach the ground school classes. Robert Pitts, an Alabama native, had recently completed his Master's degree in Aeronautical Engineering from the California Institute of Technology. He also completed primary flight training as a Marine Corps aviator and was a certified aviation mechanic. Bloomfield Cornell was a graduate of the Naval Academy and served as a naval aviator until medically retired in the 1930s..

¹⁴⁰According to some sources (Col. Roosevelt Lewis), the initial flight training was conducted at an airfield in Auburn, not Montgomery.

¹⁴¹Jakeman, 118-9, 125-6.

¹⁴²Jakeman. 126-8.

pass rate on the ground school examinations. By the end of May, the first class of CPT students at Tuskegee Institute had finished the flying phases of the course, and all but one passed the flight exam and received their private pilot's license.¹⁴³ With the success of the first class of CPT students, Tuskegee Institute began to emerge as the center of African-American aviation in the South.

Capitalizing on the success of the first class, G. L. Washington focused on establishing a permanent flight training program, one that did not rely on sub-leased airfields, flight training contracts with private operators, and borrowed ground school instructors. Washington also sought to expand the CPT program to include more students and advanced courses. Although Washington submitted a request for an enlarged CPT elementary course in May, the CAA did not notify the school that the quota for the 1940-1941 primary class had been raised from twenty to thirty students until September.¹⁴⁴ In early July 1940, however, the CAA accepted Tuskegee Institute's proposal for advanced CPT training and authorized the school to begin on July 15 with a class of ten secondary students. This gave Washington very little time to find and hire qualified flight instructors, purchase an airplane, and organize a ground school for the advanced courses. Because the CAA required a 5-1 student-to-instructor ratio for secondary training, the school need two additional pilots. Washington contacted and subsequently hired two pilots, Charles Alfred "Chief" Anderson (a well-known African-American pilot who taught elementary CPT courses at Howard University in Washington, D.C.) and Lewis A. Jackson (a African-American commercial pilot who taught elementary CPT courses at the Coffey School of Aeronautics in Chicago), to conduct these flying courses. The school then purchased a Waco airplane, which Anderson flew to Tuskegee in August after completing a refresher course in acrobatic flying at the Chicago School of Aeronautics. Jackson also obtained additional flight training from the Coffey School of Aeronautics and joined Anderson in Tuskegee several months later. Pitts and Cornell, the two Aeronautical Engineering professors from API who taught the elementary ground school course, agreed to take on the secondary classes with the help of William Curtis, a Tuskegee faculty member in the School of Mechanical Industries.¹⁴⁵

With the faculty complete, Washington now needed to find a flying field and recruit secondary students. He spoke to Cornell, who looked into using API's air field in Auburn. After obtaining the consent of his student pilots, API president L. N. Duncan allowed Tuskegee Institute to use the air field on a temporary basis. CAA headquarters in

¹⁴³Jakeman, 128-130. Tuskegee Institute's CPT students had some of the highest test scores when compared with other students in the South. These Tuskegee students passed the ground school exam by a wide margin (the average score was 88%), and no other college in the seven southern states had a record of 100% passing the first examination (Jakeman, 129).

¹⁴⁴Jakeman, 133-41.

¹⁴⁵Jakeman, 143-9.

Washington, D.C., then selected ten students from the five black colleges which had elementary flight training during the 1939-1940 academic year. On July 22, 1940, these young African-American men reported to Tuskegee Institute, the school's first class of secondary CPT students. By October, they had completed ground and flight training, and all ten students passed the CAA-administered examinations.¹⁴⁶ Tuskegee Institute then made plans to expand its advanced CPT operations. In early January 1941, the CAA approved Kennedy Field for advanced CPT flying, and Tuskegee could now transfer all of its flight operations to the field. At the same time, the CAA increased the secondary class quota from ten to thirty students.¹⁴⁷

With the successful completion of its first elementary and secondary CPT classes, Tuskegee Institute began to challenge Chicago as the center of African-American aviation, a rivalry which would continue for several years. Moreover, the success of the CPT programs at the black schools demonstrated to CAA officials that flying skills had nothing to do with skin color. Nonetheless, most white Americans, no doubt, dismissed the idea that African Americans had the aptitude to fly in combat and deserved an equal opportunity to serve as pilots in the Army Air Corps. Although now eligible for government-sponsored aviation training, African Americans still fought to join the Army Air Corps and become combat pilots during World War II.

The Struggle for African-American Participation in the Army Air Corps

On September 16, 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Burke-Wadsworth Bill. Otherwise known as the Selective Service Act, the bill prohibited racial discrimination on voluntary enlistments in any branch of the armed forces, including aviation units.¹⁴⁸ The passage of the act, however, did not immediately open the Air Corps to African Americans, and it was unclear exactly when the military would comply with the provisions of the law. Concerned with the plight of African Americans, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt arranged for Walter White (executive secretary of the NAACP), A. Philip Randolph (president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters), and T. Arnold Hill (a National Youth Administration official and acting head of the NUL) to meet with the president on September 27, 1940, to discuss the issue of African Americans in the military. Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox and Assistant Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson also attended. The meeting seemed to progress, and at its conclusion, the three black spokesmen presented a memorandum outlining several important points. Overall, they were concerned with the position of African Americans in the Air Corps and recommended:

¹⁴⁶Jakeman, 146-9.

¹⁴⁷Jakeman, 241.

¹⁴⁸Jakeman, 183-4; Rose, 12.

*Immediate designation of centers where Negroes may be trained for work in all branches of the aviation corps. It is not enough to train pilots alone, but in addition navigators, bombers, gunners, radio-men, and mechanics must be trained in order to facilitate full Negro participation in the Air Service.*¹⁴⁹

Two weeks later, President Roosevelt approved the War Department policy statement regarding the use of African-American personnel. The policy, which became standard throughout World War II, called for proportional representation in all branches of the army, but on a segregated basis. Clearly, the September meeting had little effect on War Department's segregation policy. White, Hill, and Randolph immediately denounced the statement since they never approved of the armed forces segregation policy.¹⁵⁰ Many black leaders also questioned whether or not the Army Air Corps was indeed training African-American pilots, mechanics, and other personnel, even on a segregated basis as the army claimed. After continual criticism from the black press, the army finally began detailed plans to establish an all-black flying unit.¹⁵¹

The Formation of the 99th Pursuit Squadron

By November 1940, General Davenport Johnson, chief of the Training and Operations Division, Army Air Corps, had approved a preliminary proposal for the training and establishment of a separate, all-black pursuit squadron based in the vicinity of Tuskegee, Alabama. A few days later, Johnson wrote General Walter Weaver, commander of the Southeast Air Corps Training Center at Maxwell Field in Montgomery, Alabama, and asked him to submit a plan for the formation of the pursuit squadron. Johnson also discussed with Weaver the development of the unit, which consisted of three phases. In the first phase, enlisted technicians would be trained at Chanute Field in Illinois while the facilities at Tuskegee were being built. In the pilot training phase (second phase), the Air Corps would train some thirty-three African-American pursuit pilots at Tuskegee, supported by the black mechanics from Chanute Field. When both phases were complete, the Air Corps would establish a permanent tactical unit, consisting of approximately 500 African-American enlisted men and officers permanently stationed in Tuskegee.¹⁵²

Based on Johnson's preliminary proposal, Weaver forwarded Maxwell Field's plan for the Tuskegee-based black pursuit squadron to Washington, D.C., on December 6, 1940, and noted that Tuskegee Institute fully supported the plans. A few days later, Air Corps staff in Washington, D.C., adopted the plans submitted by Maxwell Field and developed a separate

¹⁴⁹Quoted in Jakeman, 187.

¹⁵⁰Jakeman, 187-8.

¹⁵¹Jakeman, 189-197.

¹⁵²Jakeman, 197-8.

plan for conducting the technical training of the support personnel at Chanute Field. On December 18, 1940, the Air Corps sent these plans to the adjutant general for final approval by the General Staff and the War Department. In their statement, the Air Corps stressed its decision to base the new air field in Tuskegee and emphasized that the flight instruction would begin with the second phase of instruction, basic flight training, since the African-American cadets would have already completed advanced CPT courses. The Air Corps's decision to chose Tuskegee over Chicago was simple; Tuskegee provided advanced CPT courses as well as cheaper land, less air traffic, and a more favorable climate for year-round flight training.¹⁵³

For several weeks, the civilian and military leadership of the War Department debated the recommendations of the Air Corps. Assistant Secretary of War Patterson reviewed the proposal and forwarded it to William Hastie, civilian aide to the Secretary of War, for comments. Hastie, however, was very critical of the segregated training proposed in the plan and warned that the black public might object. He noted:

*Whatever the attitude of Tuskegee may be, there would unquestionably be very great public protest if the proposed plan should be adopted. In addition to objections on principle, charges of different and inferior training for Negroes would be widespread. The fact that other arms and services do not have separate schools for the training of Negroes, would increase public objection to the Air Corps plan.*¹⁵⁴

Nonetheless, Hastie's objections did little to affect Air Corps leadership. Major General Henry "Hap" Arnold, chief of the Air Corps, convinced the Assistant Secretary of War of Air, Robert A. Lovett, that the Tuskegee plan was the only practical and feasible solution to establishing a black pursuit squadron. Arnold explained:

Tuskegee was selected because it would be possible at that place to start a Negro training school in the shortest possible space of time. The majority of the facilities are available and there is no question of air congestion at Tuskegee. The school would be under the direct supervision of the Commanding General, Maxwell Field Training Center. Thus it affords a means of starting the school with a minimum delay, avoids air congestion and is close enough for control and supervision by Commanding General,

¹⁵³Jakeman, 200-12; Joseph W. Hensley, "History of 66th AAF Flying Training Detachment, Moton Field, Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, Initiation to 7 December 1941." USAF Collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency [AFHRA], Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Alabama [Iris Number 00151182], 5, 14-15.

¹⁵⁴Quoted in Jakeman, 213-4.

*Maxwell Field.*¹⁵⁵

Implicit in the decision to choose Tuskegee was the fact that the Air Corps could more easily maintain a segregated air base in the Jim-Crow South than in the North or Midwest.

In the end, Hastie refused to endorse the Tuskegee plan, but agreed to withhold his objections. Upon learning this, Major General Henry "Hap" Arnold, chief of the Air Corps, ordered that the plans to establish the 99th Pursuit Squadron be implemented without delay. On January 9, 1941, the plan received the formal approval of the secretary of war.¹⁵⁶ Seven days later, the War Department made a public announcement regarding the formation of the 99th Pursuit Squadron.

The War Department's decision to announce its plans for the segregated pursuit squadron in January 1941 may have been influenced by Yancy Williams' suit against the federal government. Although in the fall of 1940 the Army Air Corps began plans for African-American flight training, the corps still rejected African-American applicants on the basis of race. By the end of November 1940, the Air Corps sent a few black applicants letters indicating that their applications had been referred to the appropriate personnel unit and filed until trained personnel were available. An even smaller number of applicants were allowed to take the Air Corps written entrance exam and physical examination. However, some of the African-American applicants who had been rejected by the Air Corps on the basis of race contemplated suing the War Department and the Air Corps with the help of the NAACP, especially since the Selective Service Act prohibited racial discrimination on voluntary enlistments.¹⁵⁷ The NAACP was looking for a test case, and Professor Richman of Howard University contacted two of his Mechanical Engineering students, Yancy Williams and Spann Watson. Both of these men had completed primary CPT courses at Howard University, and Richman encouraged them to sue the War Department, the army, and the Air Corps over their discriminatory admissions policy. Yancy Williams, who had completed advanced CPT course work and obtained a pilot instructor's rating, had received a rejection letter from the War Department and agreed to file the suit. Spann Watson, who also received a rejection letter from the War Department, would serve as an alternate.¹⁵⁸ The NAACP assigned Special Counsel Thurgood Marshall, W. Robert Ming Jr., and Leon Ransom of the National Legal Committee to assist Williams' attorney, Wendell L. McConnel, in the preparation of the case.¹⁵⁹ Although news of the court case was prematurely released in early January,

¹⁵⁵Quoted in Jakeman, 215.

¹⁵⁶Jakeman, 214-5.

¹⁵⁷Lawrence P. Scott and William M. Womack Sr., *Double V, The Civil Rights Struggle of the Tuskegee Airmen* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 139.

¹⁵⁸Scott and Womack, 139-40.

¹⁵⁹Scott and Womack, 148.

McConnel still filed the suit in the Washington, D.C., district court on behalf of Williams and other qualified African Americans. This occurred on the same day that the War Department announced its plans to establish a segregated pursuit squadron. While early disclosure to the press lessened the effect of the Williams case, it may have forced the War Department to accelerate its plans for the segregated squadron and announce the unit's formation earlier than it intended.¹⁶⁰

Tuskegee Institute and the Birth of the 99th Pursuit Squadron

One month after the War Department approved the plan to establish the black pursuit squadron, the Air Corps decided to drop the idea of substituting advanced CPT instruction for primary training and awarded the contract for primary flight training to Tuskegee Institute.¹⁶¹ It is unclear what exactly influenced this decision. Some scholars suggest that this may have been an effort to equalize the training for African-American youths and better prepare them for army basic training.¹⁶² At any rate, on February 15, 1941, G. L. Washington, Director of Mechanical Industries at Tuskegee Institute, met with Major L. S. Smith, director of training at Maxwell Field, to arrange for the establishment of the contract primary flying school at Tuskegee Institute. Smith outlined the details of the plan for the contract school, including class size and arrangement. The classes, which would contain thirty students, would overlap so a new group of cadets would enter every five weeks. The Air Corps would provide the aircraft (one for three cadets) and furnish the cadets with textbooks, flying clothes, helmets, goggles, parachutes, and mechanics suits. Tuskegee Institute, the civilian contractor, would receive \$1,050 for each cadet who successfully completed the ten weeks of basic training and \$17.50 per flying hour for those who did not graduate. The Air Corps also assigned three officers to supervise the operation and ensure that the training met Air Corps standards. The contractor, Tuskegee Institute, provided full facilities for the aircraft and personnel, including quarters and a mess for the cadets, hangars and maintenance shops, and offices for Air Corps personnel, flying instructors, ground school instructors, and mechanics. In addition, Tuskegee had to provide one civilian flight instructor per five cadets in training. Furthermore, the school was required to carry adequate insurance, perform routine maintenance on the army aircraft (major overhauls were the responsibility of the Air Corps), and provide cadets with transportation to the flying field if they were housed over one mile from the field.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰Jakeman, 219-24.

¹⁶¹As early as May 1939, the Army Air Corps selected nine schools to provide primary flight training. By August 1940 nine more civilian contract schools were in operation, and by October 1941, twenty-six contract schools had been added, including Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Tuskegee Institute was the **only** facility to provide primary flight training for African Americans. Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, eds., *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, vol. 6, *Men and Planes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 456-7.

¹⁶²Jakeman, 228-30; Hensley, 14-5.

¹⁶³Jakeman, 242-3; Craven and Cate, 457-8.

Because the first class of cadets was scheduled to arrive in July, G. L. Washington had only a few months to obtain financing and plan and construct suitable facilities for the flight school. Smith urged Washington to develop the primary flying field on a site that allowed for expansion and suggested he contact the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) for funding. Before seeking financing, however, Washington first needed help in developing plans for the school and a budget. He then visited Darr Aero Tech, a flight school under construction in Albany, Georgia, and examined the plans for the school, visited with key personnel, and obtained a general idea of the type of facility Tuskegee should construct. With the results of the field visit, Washington estimated that the institute needed between \$300,000 and \$400,000 to develop a first-class field with the capacity for future expansion, and only \$150,000 to build a smaller facility.¹⁶⁴

Shortly after the trip to Albany, Patterson (President of Tuskegee Institute) and Washington traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet with the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and obtain funding for the project. Although the RFC agreed to loan the money, the terms were not favorable. Patterson and Washington then flew to New York City to confer with the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees of Tuskegee Institute to seek other alternatives. During the meeting, Washington discovered that the Air Corps planned to reduce the first class quota to fifteen. Although Washington did not bring this new information to the attention of the Trustees, they decided to adjourn and meet after Washington and Patterson learned more about the contract school from the Air Corps. The Trustees eventually endorsed the new project, but made no commitment to borrowing the necessary funds. Consequently, Patterson still had to seek outside financing for the project.¹⁶⁵

By March 1941, Patterson had almost exhausted every possible source for financing the contract school. Both the General Education Board and the Carnegie Corporation were unwilling to support the construction of the flight school. The Julius Rosenwald Fund, however, considered the project. At the end of March, the Board of Trustees of the Rosenwald Fund held its annual meeting at Tuskegee Institute, and G. L. Washington planned a special air show for their benefit.¹⁶⁶ Eleanor Roosevelt, one of the trustees of the fund, visited Kennedy Field and attended the air show. Determined to personally disprove the popular white belief that blacks could not fly, she decided to have Alfred "Chief" Anderson, Tuskegee Institute's chief instructor pilot, fly her around the Tuskegee countryside. The First Lady described the event in her newspaper column "My Day:"

Finally we went out to the aviation field, where a Civil Aeronautics unit for

¹⁶⁴Hensley, 2; Jakeman, 243-4.

¹⁶⁵Hensley, 27-8.

¹⁶⁶Hensley, 29; Jakeman, 249.

*the teaching of colored pilots is in full swing. They have advanced training here, and some of the students went up and did acrobatic flying for us. These boys are good pilots. I had the fun of going up in one of the tiny training planes with the head instructor, and seeing this interesting countryside from the air.*¹⁶⁷

With this act, Eleanor Roosevelt not only showed the black public that she fully supported their aviation efforts, but she also proved to the American public that African Americans had both the aptitude and capabilities to fly. The extent of her influence is unclear, but shortly thereafter, the Rosenwald Fund loaned Tuskegee Institute \$175,000 to finance the flying field.¹⁶⁸

While working on financing the air field, President Patterson contacted Archie A. Alexander, an African-American engineer and contractor in Des Moines, Iowa, concerning the construction of the facilities. Alexander then came to Tuskegee, and visited the primary flight schools in Camden, South Carolina, and Americus, Georgia, with G. L. Washington. Together they tentatively planned the necessary buildings and their cost.¹⁶⁹

Searching for the Site of Moton Field

With both the financing and construction plans complete, Washington and Alexander then began to search for a suitable site for the field. The first site they chose, located twenty-five miles away in Hardaway, Alabama, received the approval of Major Smith and Maxwell Field. Although little money was needed to improve the Hardaway site and place the air field there, the soil was unsuitable for a landing field. The institute also needed a landing field closer to its base of operations, and the site was delegated for use as an auxiliary field for the contract flying school.¹⁷⁰ Tuskegee Institute then renewed the search for a suitable landing field. After looking into a site to the northeast of Kennedy Field, Tuskegee Institute considered the Eich property, located approximately three miles to the northeast of their campus. S. M. Eich, the property owner, agreed to sell 650 acres of land for the flying field at a cost of \$50.00 per acre. The proposed area was bounded on the north and east by the Chowocole and Uphappe Creeks, on the south by the Tuskegee Railroad and the Veteran's Administration property, and on the west by Alabama State Highway 81. The slightly rolling terrain composed of fields and wooded sections, the vicinity to Tuskegee campus, and the

¹⁶⁷Quoted in Jakeman, 245-6.

¹⁶⁸Jakeman, 246-8; Hensley, 29-30.

¹⁶⁹Hensley, 29; Jakeman, 248. Archie A. Alexander received his engineering degree from the University of Iowa in 1912. He then established the contracting firm of Alexander and Repass with a white classmate, M. A. Repass. By the mid-1920s, Alexander was recognized as one of the most successful black businessmen in the country.

¹⁷⁰Hensley, 2.

favorable climate all made this an ideal site for the proposed air field, which later became known as Moton Field. Maxwell Field then surveyed and approved the piece of land, but made no decision as to the number of trees to be removed or other necessary improvements to make a suitable and safe air field.¹⁷¹

While looking for an acceptable air field site and working on the construction plans, Washington received official notification that the army had reduced the quota of the incoming class to fifteen. Instead of the initial plans for 150 pilots, the Air Corps wanted only forty-five trained African-American pilots per year, requiring only one class of thirty cadets every fifteen weeks. The two initial classes at Tuskegee would contain only fifteen students to accommodate the men who had entered Tuskegee's advanced CPT course in January before the contract for the flight school was adopted.¹⁷² Although this decision severely limited Tuskegee's plans, the army also decided to add a five-week preliminary course at Tuskegee as a prerequisite to primary training. This course, pre-flight training, provided preliminary processing, classification, and initial military indoctrination for new cadets before primary flight training began. Although there were three pre-flight schools at regional training centers in the Southeast, Gulf Coast, and West Coast, the army made other accommodations for its African-American cadets to maintain strict segregation in its training of black and white pilots. Consequently, although Tuskegee had to prepare for fewer cadets, it had to teach an additional course mandated by the army's strict segregation practices. This moved the initial start date of Tuskegee's program forward by a month, which gave the school even less time to prepare its facilities.¹⁷³

In March 1941, the army called for volunteers for the 99th Pursuit Squadron, which was to now consist of approximately thirty-five pilots and a ground crew of 278 men. Preference was given to pilots who had CAA training, and pilot applicants had to have completed at least two years of college. (The maintenance crew were required to have at least a high school education.)¹⁷⁴ By the end of April 1941, the army had once again reduced the quota of the first aviation class to ten cadets every fifteen weeks. With the new quota, Tuskegee Institute felt it was unwise to continue with the initial plans to construct housing, dining, medical, and class room facilities at the primary flying field. Instead, Washington and Patterson offered to use the recreational and educational facilities on Tuskegee's campus to

¹⁷¹Hensley, 2-3, 5.

¹⁷²Hensley, 3-4; Jakeman, 249-50. The number of cadets in primary flight training classes at the other contract schools for white pilots was substantially larger. The size of each entering class was 396 until May 18, 1940, when the number was increased to 466. By November 1940, this number had jumped to 1,292 (Craven and Cate, 458-9).

¹⁷³Jakeman, 250-1.

¹⁷⁴Benjamin O. Davis Jr., *Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., American: An Autobiography* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 83.

house, feed, and instruct the cadets, and provide transportation to the air field. The Air Corps permitted this, and Washington drafted the final set of plans for the air field. On May 7, 1941, Washington submitted the final construction plans to Maxwell Field for approval. The pared-down air field, later known as Moton Field, contained the essential facilities for housing and maintaining the planes and only minimal accommodations for the students and officers, such as a waiting room and office.¹⁷⁵

Tuskegee Institute and the Construction of Moton Field Facilities

A few weeks later, the War Department approved Tuskegee Institute as the primary flying school operator and began drafting the official contract.¹⁷⁶ With little time before the first class began in mid-July, Washington and Alexander quickly worked out the specifications for the air field. Although the official contract had not yet been signed, on June 1, 1941, Alexander began construction on the primary flight school facilities. His work included the renovation of a building on Tuskegee's campus (the Boy's Bath House) for barracks, the renovation of two rooms in Phelps Hall as class rooms, the construction of a combination hangar-office building at the air field (later known as Moton Field), the clearing and grading of the landing area, providing sewer, water, and other utilities, and furnishing all class rooms, barracks, shops, hangars, and offices with equipment.¹⁷⁷ The contract for the primary flight school was executed shortly thereafter, and Washington contacted Maxwell Field concerning the details of the school and its activation. They could offer little assistance until Captain Noel Parrish, the school's Air Corps supervisor, arrived.

The only Army Air Corps officer who had experience with African-American aviators as assistant supervisor of a civilian contract primary flight school in Chicago, Parrish was the ideal choice for this assignment.¹⁷⁸ As Parrish remembered:

Since I was the only person who knew anything about this whole affair and the only Air Force officer who had any direct contact with blacks, it made some sense, I suppose, when the Chicago school closed--when the Navy took it over, our regular flying school there was closed--just to move me down and send me over to start as the Air Force supervisor at the black primary flying school at Tuskegee.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵Hensley, 3-4; Jakeman, 251-2.

¹⁷⁶Jakeman 253.

¹⁷⁷Hensley, 8-9.

¹⁷⁸Jakeman, 255. Parrish began his career in the military in the early 1930s as an enlisted cavalryman. He later received an appointment as an aviation cadet and earned a regular army commission in 1939. Before coming to Tuskegee Institute, he was an assistant supervisor at the Chicago School of Aeronautics, the CPT school designated by the CAA for training black pilots in compliance with P.L. 18.

¹⁷⁹Quoted in Jakeman, 255.

Parrish arrived at Maxwell Field in mid-June and made several trips to Tuskegee Institute to advise Washington on the final preparations for the school. On July 19, 1941, he reported to Tuskegee and assumed command of the primary flight training school. On the same day, the first class of African-American Air Corps cadets reported for duty,¹⁸⁰ and the pilots of the 99th Pursuit Squadron began their training.

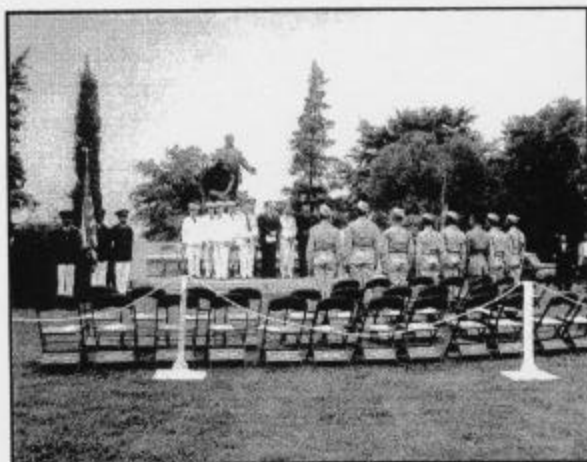


Figure 14. Ceremony welcoming Air Corps cadets, Tuskegee Institute, August 1941 (National Archives, Pictures of African Americans During World War II, 165)

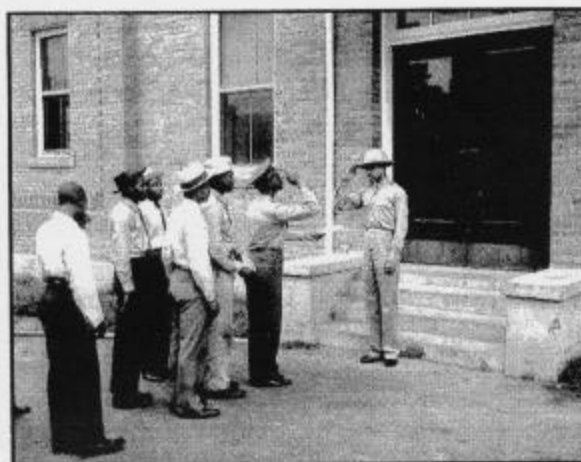


Figure 15. Cadets reporting to Capt. B. O. Davis Jr., Tuskegee, 1941 (National Archives, Pictures of African Americans During World War II, 166)



Figure 16. "Chief" Anderson and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, March 1941 (AFHRA, 234.821 v.4)



Figure 17. "Chief" Anderson and pilot cadet (Air Force Historical Research Agency [AFHRA], 289.28-100)

¹⁸⁰Jakeman, 255; Hensley, 9.



Figure 18. Judge William H. Hastie, dean of Howard University Law School & Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Interior, ca. 1941 (National Archives, Pictures of African Americans During World War II, 229)

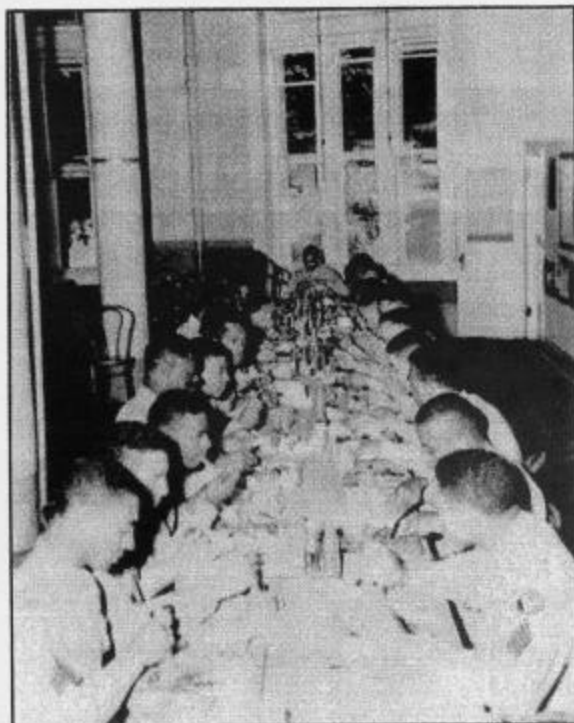


Figure 19. Cadet Mess, Tompkins Hall, Tuskegee Institute, 1944 (AFHRA, 234.821, Feb.-Dec. 1944)



Figure 20. World War II recruitment poster for the Army Air Corps



Figure 21. Tompkins Hall (Dining Hall), Tuskegee Institute, ca. 1943-1944 (AFHRA, 234.821 v. 4)

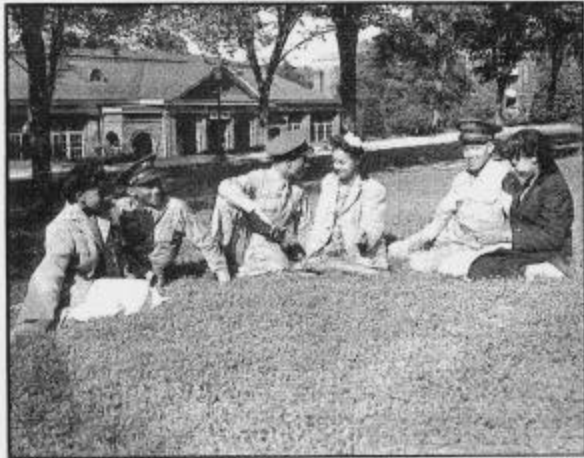


Figure 22. Cadets by Carver Museum, Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site, NPS)

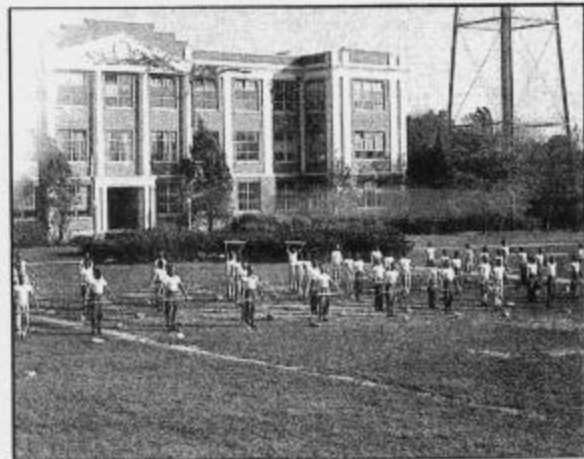


Figure 23. Cadets training at Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site, NPS)



Figure 24. Buses transporting cadets from Tuskegee Institute to Moton Field (Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University)



Figure 25. Buses transporting cadets from Moton Field to Tuskegee Institute (Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University)

III. THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN EXPERIENCE, 1941-1946

Although African Americans won a key victory and were finally accepted into the Army Air Corps, this opportunity was on a limited, segregated basis known as the “Tuskegee Experiment.” This “experiment” had to be tested, and African Americans in the Air Corps needed to demonstrate that they had the skills and knowledge to become successful military aviators. Many Air Corps leaders questioned their leadership abilities and performance in combat, and the Tuskegee Airmen had to prove that they could lead men and form effective combat units, for the future of African Americans in aviation depended upon them. Their success in combat, however, would rely on their leadership, their individual resolve, and their training. Key figures such as Benjamin O. Davis Jr., the commanding officer of the 99th Pursuit Squadron, and Noel F. Parrish, director of training for the African-American aviation cadets, as well as supportive Americans, both military and civilian, helped make the experiment a success. This chapter, the “Tuskegee Airmen Experience,” describes the struggle of the men and women who worked together to prove beyond a doubt that African Americans could fly and maintain combat planes and units, and that they deserved equal rights in the military and in American society.

The First Class of Aviation Cadets at Tuskegee Institute

On July 19, 1941, twelve aviation cadets and one student officer, known as class 42-C, reported to the 66th Army Air Forces Flying Training Detachment at Tuskegee Institute to begin pre-flight training.¹⁸¹ Although the course was taught at Tuskegee Institute, its role in the training was limited to providing the aviation cadets with living quarters, meals, class rooms, physical training facilities, and medical quarters. Washington arranged for the cadets to have their meals through the institute’s cafeteria and use the recreational and other facilities on campus. Responsibility for the pre-flight training class fell to the army, which utilized the experience of student officer Captain Benjamin O. Davis Jr. The fourth African-American graduate from West Point (class of 1936), Davis wanted a commission in the Army Air Corps, but was denied entry due to his race. He then accepted an infantry commission

¹⁸¹Hensley, 11. On June 20, 1941, the War Department created the Army Air Forces as its aviation element. General Henry H. Arnold became the Chief of the U.S. Army Air Forces, which consisted of two elements, the Air Corps and the Combat Command. The Air Corps continued to perform administrative and other support duties. On March 1942, the War Department was reorganized and the Army Ground Forces, Services of Supply (Army Service Forces), and Army Air Forces were created as three autonomous army commands. This reorganization dissolved the Office of the Chief of the Air Corps and the Air Force Combat Command, and merged all their elements into the Army Air Forces (AAF). For more information on the history and organization of the U.S. Air Force, see Charles A. Ravenstein, *The Organization and Lineage of the United States Air Force* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, United States Air Force, 1986) or Bernard C. Nalty, *Winged Shield, Winged Sword: A History of the United States Air Force*, Volume I, 1907-1950 (Washington, DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, United States Air Force, 1977).

and was stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia, before transferring to Tuskegee Institute as the ROTC instructor. Although Davis was later moved to Fort Riley, Kansas, to serve as his father's (Brigadier General Benjamin O. Davis Sr.) aide,¹⁸² Tuskegee Institute President Patterson urged the army to return Davis to Tuskegee for flight training after the contract flying school plans were finalized. As a regular army officer, Davis did not need to attend the pre-flight classes, and the army appointed him commandant of cadets to teach the military indoctrination courses to the first class of aviation cadets.¹⁸³ As Davis recalls in his autobiography:

*Late in July, 1941, I and 12 aviation cadets, the first of many classes to be trained at TAAF [Tuskegee Army Air Field], started ground training in a barrack at Tuskegee Institute. I was appointed commandant of cadets, but that job was easy because my fellow students were so willing and eager. We had no discipline problems of any kind.*¹⁸⁴

This first class of black Army Air Forces (AAF) cadets marked the entry of African Americans into United States military aviation as pilots. Realizing the historical importance of the event, G. L. Washington arranged for Tuskegee Institute to hold an inaugural celebration on July 19, 1941. He scheduled several speakers from Maxwell Field, Fort Benning, and the CAA, and held the event on campus next to the Booker T. Washington monument, the institute's traditional site for such ceremonies. G. L. Washington served as master of the ceremonies, and distinguished guests included Major James A. Ellison (the white officer designated as commander of Tuskegee Army Air Field), Captain Noel Parrish, Captain Benjamin O. Davis Jr., and Hillyard R. Robinson (the architect of TAAF).¹⁸⁵ The president of Tuskegee Institute, Patterson, gave the opening remarks and noted:

*The splendid showing which has been made under Director Washington with the CAA programs demonstrates positively that Negro youths can fly. Our record in the armed forces of this nation is meritorious and of long standing. We go forward, therefore, with confidence and with consecration of purpose to the end that we shall contribute to the aerial defense of this nation and that the Negro people may add to that evidence now mounting in abundance which justifies the full extension of all the privileges inherent in the concept of American Democracy.*¹⁸⁶

¹⁸²Davis, 67.

¹⁸³Jakeman, 256.

¹⁸⁴Davis, 83-4.

¹⁸⁵Jakeman, 258; Hensley, 18.

¹⁸⁶Quoted in Jakeman, 259.

G. L. Washington also invited Major General Walter R. Weaver, commander of the Southeast Air Corps Training Center, Maxwell Field, who gave the keynote address and reminded the aviation cadets that the future of African-American military aviation depended upon their success.¹⁸⁷

When the first class of aviation cadets arrived on July 19, 1941, Tuskegee Institute had not yet built all of the structures at the primary flying field (later named Moton Field in honor of former Tuskegee Institute President Robert Russa Moton). Because the cadets first had to attend approximately five weeks of pre-flight training, they were not scheduled to begin flight training until August 23. This gave Washington a few weeks to finish Moton Field. Heavy summer rains, however, caused unanticipated building delays that required additional help to complete the field. The carpentry shop in the Mechanical Industries department at Tuskegee Institute had to process some of the lumber, especially the components of the 100-foot span trusses of the hangar. Tuskegee Institute also supplied student labor and skilled workers to assist with the welding and machine work, the masonry, the sheet metal work, and the painting. Washington and Alexander also received help from J. H. LaMar, a local white subcontractor who specialized in heavy construction work. LaMar completed the grading of the flying field and helped with the road work, well digging, and the sewer and storm water lines. Nonetheless, even with all the additional help, they were unable to complete the field by August 23 and had to begin the flight training course at Kennedy Field. Although the landing strip was finished two days later and some of the flight operations were transferred to Moton Field, the contractor did not complete the hangar until September. In the interim, Tuskegee continued to use the storage and maintenance facilities at Kennedy Field and fly the planes to Moton Field for flight training. Kennedy Field was also used as a “back-up” field, especially during the first few months of operation when Moton Field had drainage problems.¹⁸⁸

In addition to building Moton Field, Tuskegee Institute was also responsible for staffing most of the flying school under the terms of the Air Corps contract. By the middle of 1941, Tuskegee Institute had a staff of three black Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) flight instructors (Lewis A. Jackson, George W. Allen, and Charles Alfred “Chief” Anderson) and four white CPT instructors (Joseph T. Camilleri, Dominick J. Guido, Frank Rosenberg, and Forrest Shelton). Although white commissioned Army Air Corps officers taught the first class of cadets at Moton Field,¹⁸⁹ G. L. Washington later shifted three of the CPT instructors (Anderson, Shelton, and Jackson) to the contract primary flight school and made Anderson

¹⁸⁷Jakeman, 259-60.

¹⁸⁸Jakeman, 266-7; Hensley, 19.

¹⁸⁹Davis, 84.

the chief instructor.¹⁹⁰ Austin H. Humbles, an instructor in the aeromechanics training program at Tuskegee, served as chief of maintenance. For the ground school staff, Washington again turned to neighboring Alabama Polytechnic Institute (API) and hired Warren G. Darby [Darty] as chief instructor.¹⁹¹ It should be noted that the primary flight school's mechanics and auxiliary staff, as well as many of its instructors, were all civilians, including a young black woman, Marjorie Cheatham, who was a licensed and certified aviation mechanic.¹⁹² By August 21, 1941, two days before the first class of cadets was to report to the primary flight school, Tuskegee had completed all of the necessary arrangements: the instructors and mechanics had been selected and trained, the army primary instructors had arrived, and the cadets had completed their pre-flight training.¹⁹³

Flight Training Begins at Moton Field

The first class of aviation cadets at Moton Field began their flight training in late August. Capt. B. O. Davis Jr. remembered his initial flight training at Moton Field and noted:

*In August we started flying. Primary training took place under white commissioned Army Air Corps officers. Chief Anderson and his corps of black flying instructors took over primary training for all succeeding classes, after my class had moved on to TAAF for basic and advanced training. Then as now, most washouts in military flying training occurred in primary. All over the nation, flying schools like Moton operated under contract with the Air Corps and eliminated students who demonstrated less than the desired potential.*¹⁹⁴

The life of an aviation cadet at Tuskegee Institute consisted of military indoctrination, ground school courses, and flight instruction. The future cadets usually arrived by train to Chehaw, a small railroad depot, and then boarded a station wagon or small bus to Tuskegee Institute.¹⁹⁵ The cadets initially stayed at the renovated Boy's Bath House on Tuskegee Institute campus; the facility was a former swimming pool which had been refurbished to serve as a cadet barracks. As Lt. Charles W. Dryden, class of 42-D, described their quarters:

The building was known on campus as "the bathhouse." It had once housed

¹⁹⁰To maintain the CPT operations, Washington promoted three apprentice instructors, Charles R. Foxx and Milton P. Crenshaw (alumni of Tuskegee's first CPT class) and Robert A. Dawson, to fill the CPT duties.

¹⁹¹Jakeman, 264-5; Hensley, 13.

¹⁹²Rose, 14.

¹⁹³Jakeman, 266.

¹⁹⁴Davis, 84.

¹⁹⁵Lt. Col. Charles W. Dryden (USAF, Ret.), *A-Train: Memoirs of a Tuskegee Airmen* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1997), 35.

an indoor swimming pool. Now, with the pool area covered over by a floor, the building housed the aviation cadets of the "Tuskegee Experiment." On the floor about twenty double-decked bunks had been set up, aligned in two rows. In place at both ends of each double-decker were footlockers, one each for the occupants on the top and lower bunks.

Just inside the entrance was a small office that served as an administrative office of sorts. At the far end of the large open area a wall separated the living/sleeping area from an open shower room in which were a dozen showers, with drain boards, on one side of the lavatory area and a half dozen commodes on the other. On the bunkroom side of the wall about a dozen face basins with mirrors were installed.¹⁹⁶

The cadets ate their meals at Tuskegee Institute's dining facility in Tompkins Hall, although several partitions separated the cadets from the rest of the student body. After briefly becoming familiar with their new surroundings, the cadets began their four-week pre-flight processing and military indoctrination. The first day was full of activities that had little to do with flying, but part of the routine life of a soldier. The day began with reveille at 0500 hours, physical training (calisthenics), close-order drill, manual of arms training with rifles, inspection of self and barracks, and the memorization of "Dodo" verses (practiced phrases repeated at the request of the upperclass cadets), and ended with taps at 2200 hours.¹⁹⁷ The second day of training included a series of physical exams to test blood pressure, body temperature, chest sounds, muscle reflexes, hearing acuity, and eye activity. The aviation cadets also underwent X-rays, immunization shots, and depth perception tests.¹⁹⁸ After four weeks of pre-flight classes, the cadets began primary flight training, which consisted of ground school courses and actual flight instruction. The subjects taught in ground school, theory of flight, aircraft engines, meteorology, fundamentals of navigation, and army regulations, resembled those studied in the CAA-administered CPT programs. Flight training was conducted in a Stearman PT-17 "Kaydet" (an open cockpit, two-seater monoplane) at Moton Field, "*a large, open-meadow grass strip located about ten miles from the Tuskegee Institute campus.*"¹⁹⁹

Like all primary flight training programs, the Tuskegee program determined which cadets had the aptitude and ability to fly. The program consisted of sixty-five hours of flight time, conducted over ten weeks and divided into four phases. The first phase, pre-solo, introduced the cadets to the fundamentals of flying a light aircraft where they learned how to handle

¹⁹⁶Dryden, 37.

¹⁹⁷Dryden, 39-40.

¹⁹⁸Dryden, 41-2.

¹⁹⁹Dryden, 43-5.

forced landings, stalls, and spins. During the first few flights, the instructor occupied the back seat and controlled the primary trainer, a PT-17. As the cadets gained experience, they would complete the maneuvers that their instructor demonstrated.²⁰⁰ In the second stage, intermediate, the cadets developed additional skills in maneuvering the aircraft and managed their first solo flight. The third phase, accuracy, emphasized mastering a wide variety of approaches and landings. In the final level, acrobatics, the cadets were required to perform standard maneuvers such as loops, slow rolls, and Immelmann turns.²⁰¹

By the end of September, the first aviation cadets had flown the required number of hours in primary and completed all of the training maneuvers. In early November 1941, ten months after the Air Corps announced its plans to establish a black pursuit squadron, this first group of black student pilots officially completed primary training and was transferred to Tuskegee Army Air Field (TAAF) to complete their instruction under the Army Air Forces. Only six cadets, Captain Benjamin O. Davis Jr., Lemuel R. Custis, Charles H. DeBow Jr., Frederick H. Moore Jr., George S. Roberts, and Mac Ross, had demonstrated the necessary skills and passed the training course.²⁰²

Tuskegee Army Air Field (TAAF), Tuskegee, Alabama

The contract flight school at Tuskegee Institute was only one component in the army's plan to train the members of the 99th Pursuit Squadron. The army's original intention was to train the technicians at Chanute Field in Illinois and to establish an army base in Tuskegee to house the black unit. With the help of Tuskegee Institute, the Air Corps spent several months in early 1941 looking for a suitable location for the air field. When Air Corps officials began inspecting land near the town of Tuskegee, many white citizens became alarmed and complained to their congressional representatives in Washington, D.C. Almost 100 white citizens of the town of Tuskegee signed a petition urging Alabama Senators John H. Bankhead and Lister Hill to take action against locating the African-American airfield on the eastern or southeastern boundaries of Tuskegee so they could maintain their segregated community. Many white citizens feared that the town's traditional pattern of segregation would be threatened if the black air field was placed in the eastern, predominantly white section of town.²⁰³ According to Davis:

As soon as rumors reached Tuskegee's white citizens that a black-manned air field was to be created in the vicinity, a detailed letter of protest and petition, signed by a lifelong and influential resident, Judge William Varner, and

²⁰⁰Davis, 84-5; Dryden, 45-6.

²⁰¹Jakeman, 267-9; Dryden, 45-7.

²⁰²Jakeman, 269; Hensley, Appendix XIII; Davis, 85.

²⁰³Jakeman, 273.

more than 100 other white Tuskegeesans was dispatched to Alabama Senators John Bankhead and Lister Hill. Complaining about the placement of a “colored aviation camp” on the boundary of Tuskegee, Senator Hill asked General Brett to look into the matter. The letter complained that the field would block “the only direction for white people to expand,” but upon investigation, General Brett discovered that it was to be built a full 6 ½ miles northwest of Tuskegee and would not interfere with the town’s expansion.²⁰⁴

Although Maxwell Field had surveyed and considered several possible locations near the town of Tuskegee, they rejected them in favor of a site near Chehaw, approximately seven miles northwest of the town. By the end of May, officials within the Air Corps had approved the site and directed the quartermaster general to obtain the title to the property. The land acquisition took only a few weeks. By the end of June, the condemnation proceedings on approximately 1,650 acres of land (involving eight property owners) were complete and the government was scheduled to take possession of the property by the end of July.²⁰⁵

Despite some concerns and much maneuvering, the War Department awarded the contract for the construction of the air base to the firm of McKissack and McKissack of Nashville, Tennessee. The firm had recently completed Tuskegee Institute’s Infantile Paralysis Hospital and received the full support of the school. The War Department, however, had never previously awarded a major contract to an African-American company and had some concerns regarding the reaction of the white community. Their fears were well grounded, for the McKissacks met some local resistance despite Tuskegee Institute’s endorsement. President Patterson, nevertheless, continued to promote the construction firm. He wrote to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt as well as officials within the War Department and reminded them that the War Department had established a policy of using qualified black professionals in projects undertaken for the benefit of African Americans, such as the Veteran’s Hospital in Tuskegee.²⁰⁶ His arguments must have been persuasive, for the War Department not only awarded the construction contract to McKissack and McKissack, but they also hired African-American architect Hillyard Robinson of Washington, D.C., to design the facility.

Even though the War Department hired an African-American architect and contractors, it still held a strict segregation policy in the training of Army Air Corps pilots and planned to build segregated quarters on the new air base. Judge William Hastie, civilian aide to the Secretary of War, learned that the Army Air Corps intended to include separate barracks and dining

²⁰⁴Davis, 73.

²⁰⁵Jakeman, 277.

²⁰⁶Jakeman, 278-80.

halls for both officers and enlisted men at the new air field, and objected to the project. According to the Building and Grounds Division's plan, the proposed air field had a projected population of 596, including twenty-six white officers and enlisted men. The white instructors were to eat their meals in their barracks while black cadets were to mess with the black officers. The issue of segregated facilities remained unresolved during the early years of the base's existence. The first base commander, Major Ellison, followed the Air Corps' policy and maintained separate quarters and dining accommodations, while the second (Colonel Frederick von Kimble) even broadened it to include toilet facilities.²⁰⁷

While Hastie and civil rights groups such as the NAACP (which staged protests against discrimination in the defense program) criticized the military's separation of black and white troops, the use of white officers for black troops, the assignment of black units to noncombat duty, and delays in its program to obtain its 10% quota of black troops, the army continued its segregation policy. Consequently, racial problems plagued Tuskegee Army Air Field throughout its existence.²⁰⁸ Capt. B. O. Davis Jr. experienced this situation first-hand and noted "*The antagonistic black-white relationships, official segregation practices, and the hateful racism that prevailed in the Deep South at the time plagued our everyday lives and could easily have sabotaged our mission.*"²⁰⁹ By virtually confining African-American Air Corps personnel to TAAF under these racist conditions, the army created the equivalent of a "prison camp" for these black servicemen and their families. Many African Americans had mixed attitudes towards TAAF and its segregated facilities; while some criticized the practice, others felt that a segregated opportunity was better than no opportunity.²¹⁰ Davis maintained this optimistic viewpoint and stated:

*My own opinion was that blacks could best overcome racist attitudes through their achievements, even though those achievements had to take place within the hateful environment of segregation. I believed that TAAF should move ahead and rapidly and prove for all to see, especially within the Army Air Corps, that we were a military asset....And although we might be confronted with problems on the ground by racists who would seek to divert us from our primary mission, I was confident that we could meet all the challenges.*²¹¹

(No attempt was made to relax these strict segregation practices at TAAF until December 1943, when Colonel Noel Parrish assumed command of the air field and attempted to

²⁰⁷Jakeman, 275-7.

²⁰⁸Davis, 71.

²⁰⁹Davis, 74.

²¹⁰Davis, 74.

²¹¹Davis, 75.

integrate areas of the base.²¹²⁾

The Construction of TAAF

By June 1941, the Army Corps of Engineers had selected Hillyard Robinson as the project architect and engineer. Robinson was interested in housing and already had experience working on government projects; in 1935 he designed the Langston Terrace Public Housing in Washington, D.C.²¹³ President Patterson placed the resources of Tuskegee Institute at his disposal, and the architect used many students and graduates in the project. On July 12, 1941, logging crews began clearing the land, and by the end of July, property owners had vacated the site. The contractor began grading the area on July 22, and construction commenced shortly thereafter.²¹⁴ Major Ellison, who took command of the air field on July 23, 1941, attempted to push the station's construction as much as possible so that flight training could begin as scheduled in November.²¹⁵

By September 1941, however, construction was well behind schedule because of delays in selecting the air field site. Work had only recently begun on nine of the forty-five buildings, and grading operations were only 50% complete. Moreover, only one of the four runways planned for the field was expected to be complete by November, when the first class of cadets was scheduled to arrive.²¹⁶ Concerned about the building delays, the Army Air Corps authorized an additional expenditure of \$3,000 on October 3 to build a temporary tent camp at TAAF to house the cadets until the base was complete. At the same time, budget concerns troubled the construction project. Because the clearing, grading, and drainage costs were higher than estimated, War Department planners considered curtailing the project to stay within budget. By the middle of October, President Patterson learned the full extent of the building and budget problems when he received a letter from McKissack, who estimated that the project needed an additional \$1.2 million so that it could continue without interruption. The War Department was determined to see the enterprise finished and assured Patterson that it would complete the project properly. It eventually increased the funds allocated to the

²¹²Jakeman, 275-7.

²¹³Hillyard Robinson first became interested in architecture when he was stationed in Europe during World War I. Upon returning to the United States, he enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania and worked for the African-American architect Verner Tandy during his summer vacations. Robinson later transferred to Columbia University. After graduation, he joined Howard Mackey and Albert Cassell and taught at the Howard University School of Architecture. He eventually left Washington, D.C., to study in Europe during the Bauhaus Movement. Conversation with and information from Vincent DeForest, Special Assistant to the Director, National Capital Region, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

²¹⁴Jakeman, 285.

²¹⁵Colonel Noel F. Parrish and Major Edward C. Ambler Jr., "History of Tuskegee Army Air Field, Tuskegee, Alabama, From Conception to December 6, 1941," United States Air Force Collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency [AFHRA], Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Alabama [IRIS No. 00179144], 33.

²¹⁶Jakeman, 285-6.

TAAF project from \$1.8 million to almost \$2.4 million to complete the air field without further delays.²¹⁷

In Support of Tuskegee Army Air Field: Chanute Field, Rantoul, Illinois

While the army completed its plans to establish a contract primary flight school at Tuskegee Institute and build Tuskegee Army Air Field, it began training members of the 99th Pursuit Squadron at the Air Corps Technical School at Chanute Field. As in the selection of the pilot cadets, the Army Air Corps turned to major black colleges such as Tuskegee Institute, Hampton Institute, Virginia State College, North Carolina A & T, Morehouse College, and Fisk University to recruit these trainees. The Army Air Corps notified students at these African-American institutions that they planned to form a segregated squadron and were looking for applicants. McGary Edwards, a Mechanical Engineering student at Tuskegee Institute, applied for this duty and recalled:

It was amazing to me to see the caliber of men being selected for induction. It must be remembered that none of these men were being selected for pilot training, yet their educational level, achievement exam scores, and general qualifications should have rendered them all as officer candidates. Many had already been refused pilot training, and hoped this avenue would later open the door to their real dream. This was not to be however, and some of the men had a very difficult time adjusting to their white supervisors, instructors, and officers, most of whom weren't nearly as qualified to teach, nor direct, as were the students.²¹⁸

Capt. B. O. Davis Jr. was equally impressed with the qualifications of the non-flying officers and enlisted men and noted:

the Air Corps set and maintained high qualification requirements for the 99th. The corps made a conscious effort to select the best black aircraft maintenance, armament, communications, and supply people that the basic training centers could produce....The cream of the crop of black enlisted personnel was available at the time, and from personal experience I can attest that the people assigned to the squadron were highly qualified.²¹⁹

²¹⁷Jakeman, 289-90.

²¹⁸Quoted in Rose, 16.

²¹⁹Davis, 83.

On March 22, 1941, the 99th Pursuit Squadron was officially activated²²⁰ and the first group of African-American recruits arrived at Chanute Field, near Rantoul, Illinois, to begin their technical training as mechanics and ground crew specialists for the new segregated squadron. By May, some 250 black recruits were training at the Air Corps Technical School at Chanute Field. A few weeks later, on June 9, 1941, the Army Air Corps began training non-flying officers, such as communications, weather, armament, and engineering officers, at Chanute Field as well.²²¹ Tuskegee Institute President Patterson and G. L. Washington closely monitored the recruitment and training of the enlisted black ground crews and non-flying African-American officers. For example, a few weeks after the Army Air Corps announced its plans to form the 99th Pursuit Squadron, Washington submitted to Maxwell Field the names and qualifications of almost 100 men interested in non-flying duty with the segregated squadron. A few months later, Washington provided information on another thirty-five men who were interested in ground crew duty, and in mid-June, Washington and Paterson even visited Chanute Field to observe the progress of the young African-American recruits.²²²

McGary Edwards, a young African American at Chanute Field, remembered the confusion that surrounded the initial training. Class organization and instructor selection needed improvement, and the new recruits had much free time in the first few weeks. The black recruits became rather skilled at marching and precision drills, and it was rumored that they would represent Chanute Field in the annual army precision drill competition.²²³ Upon finishing their training, the African-American ground crews and non-flying officers from Chanute Field were sent to Maxwell Field to await the completion of their facilities at Tuskegee Army Air Field. By fall 1941, the ground crew detachment had arrived at TAAF to prepare for the first class of aviation cadets.²²⁴

Training Begins at Tuskegee Army Air Field

On November 8, 1941, the first class of African-American aviation cadets began basic flight training at Tuskegee Army Air Field. At this time, only one of the four runways, the north-south runway, was completed, and it had not yet been paved. Four tents at the end of the runway served as a parachute room, a communications center, a cadet ready room, and a supply and maintenance facility. Two miles from the runway, the Air Corps erected a “tent camp” to provide classrooms, an office for the school secretary, and quarters for the enlisted

²²⁰Maurer Maurer, *Combat Squadrons of the Air Force in World War II, History and Insignia* (Washington, DC: Zenger Publishing Co., 1981), 329.

²²¹Jakeman 282.

²²²Jakeman, 280-4.

²²³Rose, 16. According to Rose, some Air Corps officers did not think the army was serious about training African-American aviation mechanics and skilled technicians. This might have caused the delays in their initial training at Chanute Field.

²²⁴Rose, 18-9.

men and aviation cadets.²²⁵ These four-man pyramidal tents consisted of a square wood platform, wood walls and door, and a canvas tarpaulin over four wood beams for a roof. A wood-burning stove in the center of the tent surrounded by a sand box provided heat.²²⁶ In addition to these tents, there was also a “Hawaiian-type” mess hall, where food was prepared under field conditions for the cadets. Meanwhile, all officer personnel ate at the Post Restaurant and found living accommodations in Tuskegee and the surrounding area.²²⁷ Because of the mud and the construction, the aviation cadets were driven from the “tent city” to the air field for training the morning and afternoon of each flight day.²²⁸ Lt. Charles Dryden, a graduate of class 42-D, described the “tent city” in his memoirs:

*We lived in Tent City for about a month. The streets in our area, and all over the base, were rivers of mud with deep ruts cut into the ooze by earth-mover “Turn-a-Pulls” rolling on six-feet-tall tires, caterpillar tread bulldozers, six-by-six GI trucks and jeeps. Tent City was located on a slope rising gently, gradually above the flight line, on a site where the various permanent buildings were taking shape: base headquarters, base hospital, base theater, officers quarters, NCO’s and enlisted men’s barracks, and aviation cadet barracks. We could hardly wait for the cadet barracks and paved streets to be completed.*²²⁹

Aviation Training at TAAF

The life of a cadet at Tuskegee Army Air Field consisted of flying, ground school, calisthenics, inspections, and marching on rutted, muddy streets while dodging vehicles. After their training exercises and dinner in the cadet mess hall, the aviation students had approximately three hours for studying, writing letters, and relaxing (which could include going to the base theater) before taps sounded. In addition to formal flight and ground school instruction, the upperclassman-lowerclassman relationship that existed between aviation cadets offered the upperclassmen opportunities to learn about leadership and to test the abilities of the lowerclassman.²³⁰

Basic flight training at TAAF utilized the BT-13, a low-wing monoplane with a 450 horsepower engine and a sliding canopy over the cockpit. When compared to the PT-17 used in primary training, the BT-13 had additional controls and equipment for the wing flaps, trim tabs, fuel mixture, and variable pitch propeller. It also had radios for ground-to-air

²²⁵Jakeman, 289; Parrish and Ambler, 30-31.

²²⁶Dryden, 49.

²²⁷Jakeman, 289; Parrish and Ambler, 30-31.

²²⁸Rose, 18-9.

²²⁹Dryden, 50.

²³⁰Dryden, 54-5.

communication and an intercom between the instructor in the rear and the student in the front. Although the plane was heated, the cadets still needed to wear the bulky, fleece-lined leather winter flying jackets, pants, and boots.²³¹ The flight lessons in basic training were similar to those in primary, and the cadets practiced take-offs and landings, forced (emergency) landings, and acrobatics. In addition, the cadets were introduced to formation flying and night flying, and learned Morse code and link trainer (a flight simulator to learn radio navigation for take-offs and landings in poor weather) exercises in ground school. Other subjects in ground school were similar to those in primary, such as aerodynamics and theory of flight, power plants and propellers, meteorology, and navigation. The cross-country navigation flights gave the aviation cadets the opportunity to apply what they had learned in ground and flight school about dead reckoning and radio navigation.²³²

For advanced flight training, the cadets learned to fly the North American AT-6 “Texan.” Although similar to the BT-13, the plane included additional features such as a gun sight, a trigger on the control stick, and controls to raise and lower the landing gear. The cadets continued practicing acrobatics and formation flying, and would use the auxiliary air field (Shorter Field) to takeoff and land in formation. Night flying was another skill fine-tuned in advanced training. Since TAAF did not have the facilities for night flying, the cadets would travel to neighboring Maxwell Field in Montgomery.²³³ Towards the end of advanced training, the cadets practiced ground and aerial gunnery and flew bombing missions at Dale Mabry Field in Tallahassee, Florida, or at Eglin Field near Valparaiso, Florida.²³⁴

By December 1941, on the eve of Pearl Harbor, the contractors had only partially completed Tuskegee Army Air Field and its future was uncertain. Most of the maintenance crews were at Maxwell Field awaiting completion of the barracks and other facilities at the base. No cadets had earned their wings, and many feared that after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States’ entry into World War II, the African-American aviation program would be sacrificed for the war effort. The U.S. government, however, not only continued the project, but expanded it to include more squadrons.²³⁵ In November 1941, the Air Staff began to organize and activate another black pursuit squadron based in Tuskegee. Although the plan was approved in late December, the War Department did not release any information

²³¹Dryden, 50-1.

²³²Dryden, 52-3.

²³³Dryden 56-7.

²³⁴Dryden, 56-8; Davis, 85-6. The welcome Davis and his fellow cadets received at Dale Mabry Field was somewhat cold. Davis recalls that “*We had not been expecting much in the way of hospitality at Dale Mabry, but it sent a chill through us to learn we were to stay in a building that had been used as a guardhouse for black prisoners (page 86).*”

²³⁵Jakeman, 270-1.

regarding the new squadron, known as the 100th Pursuit Squadron,²³⁶ until January 1942. The following month, the Army Air Forces raised the quota of students entering primary training at Tuskegee from ten to twenty per class to obtain enough trained pilots to man the second African-American squadron.²³⁷ At the same time, the cadet barracks at TAAF were finally completed. Two cadets were assigned to each room in these new barracks, which included indoor showers and latrines and central heat. For the cadet's convenience, these quarters were located next to the cadet mess, a half a block from the post theater, and across the street from the PX (post exchange).²³⁸

Controversy Surrounding TAAF

After some complaints from the local white population, Colonel Frederick von Kimble replaced Major Ellison as commander of Tuskegee Army Air Field.²³⁹ While Ellison was responsible for establishing the air field, TAAF became a functioning unit through Kimble's efforts. Under constant public scrutiny, the War Department was making an effort to establish a token program to train African-American military aviators and support staff. Because it was a new program, many of the early commanders and instructors, such as Captain Gabe C. Hawkins (Director of Basic Training), Captain Robert M. Long (Director of Advanced Training), or Major Donald G. McPherson (Director of Fighter Training), all of whom volunteered for duty at TAAF, had few military guidelines to follow. Nevertheless, they were ultimately responsible for the success or failure of the young African-American cadets and the "Tuskegee Experiment."²⁴⁰

Col. Frederick V. Kimble's tenure as base commander, however, was plagued by controversy and received much adverse local and national publicity. Although Kimble set out to strengthen the command administration at TAAF, he made many unpopular decisions regarding the air field's African-American personnel. For example, Kimble created segregated sections in the base mess hall for commissioned officers, established separate wash room facilities, cooperated with the townspeople for curfew laws for black soldiers, and barred white officers from the officer's club and post theater. In addition, Kimble did not

²³⁶Maurer, 1981, 332. The 100th Pursuit Squadron was established on December 27, 1941 and activated on February 19, 1942. It was redesignated the 100th Fighter Squadron on May 15, 1942, along with the 99th.

²³⁷Jakeman, 301-3.

²³⁸Dryden, 54-5.

²³⁹Davis, 75. Davis witnessed this event and recalled:

With my limited knowledge of the administrative situation, I thought Major Ellison made good progress in his difficult and complicated mission of developing TAAF. After operations began, the townspeople of Tuskegee continued to watch all action at TAAF with considerable apprehension. Apparently, it was not so much the existence of the base that disturbed them as the large number of blacks stationed there. In the fall Major Ellison was transferred, reportedly because he was not administering TAAF in a way that took into consideration the concerns of the local white population (page 75).

²⁴⁰Rose, 19-20.

promote any African-American officers above the rank of captain and refused to assign high-ranking African-American officers to jobs for which they were qualified.²⁴¹ He also allowed the black military police (MPs) from TAAF to be harassed by the white police of Tuskegee. The town sheriff complained that African-American MPs were allowed to drive through Tuskegee with their side arms, and even refused to follow standard procedure and release a black airman arrested in Tuskegee to the base MPs. After this incident, Col. Kimble acquiesced to the sheriff's wishes, and MPs from TAAF could not carry weapons in Tuskegee or anywhere else in Macon County. To further add to the unrest, the basic and advanced flight instructors at TAAF were all white, and racial conflicts caused by these restrictions had considerable adverse effects on the aviation cadets.²⁴²

Members of the black press (including Claude Barnett, head of the Associated Negro Press) learned of these racial incidents while black newspapers such as the Pittsburgh *Courier* and the Chicago *Defender* informed the African-American public of the segregated conditions and discriminatory practices at Tuskegee Army Air Field. Col. Kimble eventually became "a casualty of the controversy" surrounding conditions at TAAF and was replaced by Lt. Col. Noel F. Parrish, who previously served as director of training at the air field.²⁴³ Parrish (who took command of TAAF in December 1943) tried to understand the problems these African-American men and women faced and treat them fairly. He even asked black personnel what effect the racial tensions at TAAF were having upon them as individuals, and consequently gained the respect of many of the black soldiers. According to Davis:

*Parrish's professional attitude toward the training of black pilots and his application of reason to the problem--his ability to overcome any prejudices he may have brought to Tuskegee by recognizing the abilities of black pilots--enabled him to support black military aviation at a time when its future hung in the balance. As director of training, he was in an influential position to advise those above him whether blacks could be trained to fly to Air Corps standards, so his goodwill was of major importance. Just as significant, his personality and his willingness to talk to blacks softened their reaction to the continued segregation and the complete control of all activities by white officers, from the commander down to the flying instructors.*²⁴⁴

Although the basic problems at TAAF under Kimble did not change when Parrish assumed

²⁴¹Davis, 75-6.

²⁴²Davis, 76-7.

²⁴³Davis, 82.

²⁴⁴Davis, 76.

command, his fair treatment of the airmen and their families helped make a difference,²⁴⁵ and contributed to the success of the Tuskegee Airmen. As Lt. Charles Dryden (class of 42-D) noted, Parrish “used his position as best he could to make sure that we succeeded in spite of the Jim Crow policies of the Army Air Forces and racist practices in the surrounding community.”²⁴⁶

First Class of African-American Pilots Graduates

On March 7, 1942, the first class of aviation cadets graduated from Tuskegee Army Air Field and became the nation’s first African-American military pilots. Although both Eugene Jacques Bullard and John C. Robinson had experience as military aviators, they fought for foreign countries, and not as airmen with the United States Army Air Forces. Of the twelve cadets who began training in July 1941, only five graduated and earned their pilot’s wings. Four aviation cadets, Lemuel R. Custis, Charles H. DeBow Jr., George S. Roberts, and Mac Ross, received commissions as second lieutenants in the Air Forces Reserve, while Captain Benjamin O. Davis Jr. was transferred to the AAF upon graduation and became the first African American to hold a regular commission in the Army Air Forces.²⁴⁷ At this point, Davis pondered the future of the 99th:

*Of course, all doubts concerning the ability of blacks to fly airplanes remained; we needed a great deal more proof to convince the Army Air Forces (AAF) that blacks could fly as well as whites....We needed to prove that the 99th could go to war and demonstrate proficiency in an active combat theater.*²⁴⁸

Nonetheless, the significance of this event should not be overlooked; after years of struggle, African Americans were finally accepted and commissioned as pilots and officers in the United States Army Air Forces. But the battle was not over. The Army Air Forces had trained these African-American pilots, but would they be used in combat beside white aviators to defend the country in World War II?

With the successful training of the first African-American pilot cadets at Tuskegee for the 99th Pursuit Squadron, the AAF realized that replacement pilots would eventually be needed, as well as additional staff members and other African-American units. In February 1942, the AAF activated a second segregated squadron, the 100th Pursuit Squadron. A few months later, both the 99th and the 100th were redesignated as the 99th Fighter Squadron and the

²⁴⁵Davis, 82.

²⁴⁶Dryden, 95.

²⁴⁷Jakeman, 303-4.

²⁴⁸Davis, 86-7.

100th Fighter Squadron (May 15, 1942), and the Army Air Forces considered moving the 99th to new quarters. The 100th remained at Tuskegee to complete its training and become the first squadron of the contemplated 332nd Fighter Group. The AAF also began plans for a segregated medium bombardment group known as the 477th Bombardment Group.²⁴⁹

The 99th Fighter Squadron Prepares for Combat

In July 1942, the 99th reached its full strength with twenty-eight pilots.²⁵⁰ Once complete, the squadron flew almost every day to practice defensive patrol techniques and dogfight tactics. The unit's daily flying activities also included cross-country navigation missions to various southern bases such as Meridian, Mississippi, Birmingham, Alabama, and Tallahassee, Florida. These trips usually lasted only one day, for few bases welcomed the African-American airmen. As Lt. Charles Dryden remembered:

For us to remain overnight would have required us to occupy billets in the BOQ [Bachelor Officer's Quarters], and on all such bases Jim Crow was very much in command, regardless of what the base commander's name might be. It was bad enough when we landed in daytime and taxied in to the ramp to park our planes. Many a flight line mechanic blanched several shades paler than normal when we unsnapped our oxygen masks and jumped off the wings of our fighter planes to walk into base operations. And in the flight line snack bars we were amused at first, as the attendants were amazed to see us clad in flying gear. Of course our amusement changed to anger quickly as their amazement turned to hostility when we demanded to be served. Often we flew back to base starving rather than submit to Jim Crow.

One consolation on such flights to other bases was the smiles and the thumb-to-index finger OK signal flashed at us by the Negro workers in the cafeteria kitchens and by ditch diggers and truck drivers wherever we passed by. Returning the greeting I felt a bond impossible to describe. It was almost as though we were declaring, long before I ever heard the words of the civil rights movement spiritual, "We shall overcome!" They were proud of us and we were fiercely determined to make them proud of us.²⁵¹

By September 1942, the 99th had completed its training and was placed on alert for deployment overseas. The squadron's support groups, the 83rd Fighter Control Squadron and the 689th Signal Air Warning Company, also awaited assignment. The War Department

²⁴⁹Rose, 25. The Flight Surgeons for this group received their aviation medicine training at Randolph Field, Texas.

²⁵⁰Davis, 89; Dryden, 85.

²⁵¹Dryden, 90-1.

announced that it would soon send the squadron overseas for duty, but this was not the first time that the men had been alerted for possible combat action with no results.²⁵² Tuskegee Army Air Field had grown beyond its planned capacity and had approximately 217 officers and 3,000 enlisted men. The army made no arrangements to qualify able and competent African Americans for positions of leadership or responsibility as it had agreed, and it seemed unlikely that TAAF would become an all-black base (as stated in the original plans). In addition, the facilities at the field could not keep up with the enlargement of the program, especially since trained units were not being sent overseas for duty. To try to relieve some of these problems, the army decided to use Buckley Field, Lowry Field, Fort Logan, and Grand Rapids as bases for training various technical specialties and had Tuskegee and Lincoln, Nebraska, concentrate on training mechanics.²⁵³

Judge William H. Hastie had constantly objected to the training of existing African-American units on a segregated basis and now addressed the War Department's use of African-American troops, such as the 99th squadron. He expressed great concern over the failure of the army to expand African-American units at the rate originally scheduled by the War Department and its failure to place qualified African-American officers as department heads, even when of higher rank than their white contemporaries who held the positions. Since Hastie felt that his objections did little to change War Department policy on these manners, he resigned, effective January 31, 1943.²⁵⁴

His resignation, however, did have some effect upon the War Department; shortly thereafter the 99th Fighter Squadron began preparing for overseas duty in North Africa. The pilots and ground crews received additional training in combat tactics in P-40s. Captain Benjamin O. Davis Jr. was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and became the commanding officer of the squadron. Secretary of War Stimson even visited Tuskegee in February 1943 to observe this training and reported favorably. In the spring, the AAF finally decided to move the 99th to North Africa as a separate squadron in the Mediterranean theater. The pilots then practiced additional drills in aerial combat, formation flying, and night flying, as well as in bivouac and air base maintenance procedures. The squadron quickly completed its preparations, and on April 2, 1943, it boarded troop trains at Chehaw for Camp Shanks, New York, to prepare for its overseas voyage.²⁵⁵ According to Lt. Col. B. O. Davis Jr., the men were ready and eager to leave the racial turmoil at TAAF behind and join the war effort in the Mediterranean:

Every airman and government worker who served at TAAF could tell many

²⁵²Rose, 23-4.

²⁵³Rose 24-5.

²⁵⁴Rose, 24.

²⁵⁵Davis, 91.

*stories about the unfairness, demeaning insults, and raw discrimination that were inflicted upon them, even though they were doing their best to contribute to the war effort and prove that they were patriotic Americans who deserved to be treated as such. Some good, fair white people had been with us at TAAF, but the Army's segregation policies and unfriendly attitudes had set the stage for the unhappy tension that had been played out there. As we said our goodbyes, we pushed back and away the ugliness that we had endured....We did not regret leaving TAAF. We knew there were many decent human beings elsewhere in the world, and we looked forward to associating with them.*²⁵⁶

The 99th and its support groups stayed at Camp Shanks for eleven days for inoculations and to process paperwork for their journey overseas. On April 15, 1943, the men finally received the order to board the USS *Mariposa*, a former luxury liner pressed into troop transport service, and traveled to North Africa. Lt. Col. Benjamin O. Davis Jr. was selected as executive officer of the troop ship and its 4,000 man contingent. Other officers of the 99th served as ship adjutant, provost marshal, and police officer. Over three-quarters of the men under Davis's command were white, which was unprecedented in U.S. Army history.²⁵⁷

According to Davis:

*This appointment, contrasted with the anonymity and facelessness of the segregated treatment we had endured at TAAF, caused the members of the squadron to feel that, for the first time, we were being recognized as an important cog in the vast U.S. war machine....As we left the shores of the United States on the morning of 15 April, we felt as if we were separating ourselves, at least for the moment, from the evils of racial discrimination. Perhaps in combat overseas, we would have more freedom and respect than we had experienced at home.*²⁵⁸

The 99th in North Africa

On April 24, 1943, the 99th Fighter Squadron and its support group, a total force of almost 400 men, landed in North Africa and traveled to their assigned airfield in Oued N'ja, French Morocco, which they would share with the 27th Fighter Bomber Group. Shortly after their arrival, Lieutenant General Carl Spaatz, commander of the Northwest African Air Forces, Brigadier General John K. Cannon, commanding the Northwest African Training Command,

²⁵⁶Davis, 91-2.

²⁵⁷Rose, 25-6, 55; Stanley Sander, *Segregated Skies, All-Black Combat Squadrons of World War II* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 43.

²⁵⁸Davis, 94.

and Air Vice Marshal J. M. Robb of the Royal Air Force greeted them. As Lt. Col. Davis remembered their stay in North Africa:

*The duty here was probably the most pleasant we were to enjoy during our overseas tour. Cordial relations existed between members of the 99th and the fighter bomber group nearby....The pilots of the two groups engaged in impromptu dogfights to determine the relative superiority of the P-40 and the North American A-36. The enlisted men engaged in athletic competition, and the nearby town of Fez was found to be one of the most delightful that any of us had ever visited. For over a month, not one unpleasant incident arose between my men and those of the other groups frequenting the town.*²⁵⁹

For the first time, the 99th had top-quality planes and equipment, including twenty-seven brand-new P-40s which the group ferried from Casablanca and Oran. (The BT-13s and P-40s that the group flew in training exercises from TAAF were usually older aircraft not suitable for combat.²⁶⁰) To further complete the 99th's training for combat, three veteran fighters, Major Keyes (previously stationed in England), Major Fachler (veteran of the African campaign), and Colonel Phillip Cochran, provided specialized training in air combat techniques. The additional training furnished some compensation for the complete lack of combat experience among the pilots of the 99th. Although the squadron had some of the highest flight hours, none of the members of the squadron had combat experience.²⁶¹

After almost one month in North Africa, the squadron was transferred to Fardjouna, Tunisia, to continue their training with the 33rd Fighter Group under the leadership of Colonel William "Spike" Momyer. A few days later, the 99th received orders for its first combat sorties, to serve as wingmen for the 33rd on a strafing mission against the fortified island of Pantelleria.²⁶² Lt. Col. Davis recalled the squadron's first combat experiences and noted:

While no AAF unit had gone into combat better trained or equipped than the 99th Fighter Squadron, we lacked actual combat experience. So as we approached our missions, my own inexperience and that of my flight commanders was a major source of concern. On the other hand, we averaged about 250 hours per man in a P-40 (quite a lot for pilots who had not yet flown their first missions), and we possessed an unusually strong

²⁵⁹Quoted in Rose, 55-6.

²⁶⁰Rose, 56; Davis, 88-89.

²⁶¹Rose, 56; Dryden, 117-120; Davis, 96-7.

²⁶²Rose, 57; Davis, 98.

*sense of purpose and solidarity.*²⁶³

The pilots averaged two strafing missions a day and would dive-bomb gun positions that military intelligence had located along Pantelleria's coast. In addition to these strafing missions, the 99th also began to fly bomber escort missions. Although the pilots and ground crews gained experience, they saw no enemy planes during the first week of combat. Finally, on June 9, 1943, the 99th spotted the enemy over Pantelleria while escorting twelve American A-20s on a bombing mission. Although the squadron did not score any victories, it was able to complete the mission without any losses. American B-25s, B-26s, B-17s and B-24s, as well as A-20s, bombed Pantelleria, and after several days, the island surrendered on June 11, 1943.²⁶⁴

On June 18, 1943, the 99th Fighter Squadron encountered enemy aircraft again. While patrolling over the island of Pantelleria, the 99th ran into twelve German bombers and twenty-two escort fighters. The 99th broke formation, and in the following fight successfully fired upon and damaged two of the enemy aircraft. Although the 99th did not shoot down any of the German planes, the unit did prove that it could handle itself against enemy aircraft and learned from the experience.²⁶⁵

After the fall of Pantelleria, the AAF transferred the 99th Fighter Squadron to El Haouria, on the Cape Bon Peninsula, to serve with the 324th Fighter Group under the command of Colonel Leonard C. Lydon. Instead of strafing attacks, the 99th's new duty with this group consisted of escorting medium dive bombers to the western section of Sicily. The squadron flew their first mission on July 1, 1943, and one day later, on July 2, 1943, it shot down its first enemy aircraft. Lt. Col. B. O. Davis Jr. lead a twelve-plane escort of twelve B-25s to Castelvetrano Air Field in southwest Sicily when they encountered two German FW-190s and four German Me-109s. Although the 99th suffered its first pilot losses on this mission (Lts. Sherman White and James McCullin), it also scored its first victory. Second Lieutenant Charles B. Hall successfully shot down one of the enemy's FW-190s and became the first African-American Army Air Forces pilot to do so.²⁶⁶ Realizing the significance of this event, General Dwight D. Eisenhower personally congratulated Hall and praised the performance of the squadron.²⁶⁷ Lieutenant General Carl Spaatz and Major General James Doolittle visited the 99th and extended their compliments as well. News of this victory also reached the United States; in Alabama the *Birmingham News* reported:

²⁶³Davis, 98.

²⁶⁴Rose, 57-8; Davis, 98-9. This surrender was the first time in history that air power alone destroyed enemy resistance.

²⁶⁵Sandler, 45; Davis, 99.

²⁶⁶Rose, 58; Davis, 100.

²⁶⁷Rose, 58; Dryden, 139.

*When the screaming P-40 Warhawks, piloted by the first Negro fighter squadron in the history of the world, roared through the Mediterranean skies to aid an allied offensive concentrated on the Italian island of Pantelleria, the Tuskegee trained pilots faced their acid test and came through with flying colors to prove that they had the necessary mettle to fly successfully in combat.*²⁶⁸

The 99th remained with the 324th Fighter Group for eleven days, and in this time period the men flew 175 sorties, had one confirmed victory, and two probable victories.²⁶⁹

Eight days after Hall's victory, on July 10, 1943, the Allied invasion of Sicily commenced. During the campaign, the 99th squadron provided air support for General Montgomery's Eighth Army. In addition to their dive-bombing and strafing missions, the squadron also escorted a number of medium bombers of the Twelfth Tactical Air Force. After serving eight days in this capacity, the 99th resumed operations with the 33rd Fighter Group on July 19, 1943, in Licata, Sicily.²⁷⁰ Three days later, the 99th flew its first thirteen missions from its new base. On July 28, the 99th was officially transferred to Licata, Sicily, and was joined by its ground echelon the following day. The unit continued to perform fighter sweeps, strafing, patrol, and escort missions through July and most of August until the end of the Sicilian campaign.²⁷¹

In September 1943, Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin O. Davis Jr. returned to the United States to assume command of the 332nd Fighter Group, in training at Selfridge Field, Michigan. Davis was to prepare the group, which had been activated on October 13, 1942, for combat. Captain George Roberts remained in Europe and became the commanding officer of the 99th Fighter Squadron. About this time, several negative reports concerning the squadron's abilities surfaced, and many military leaders questioned the squadron's value. As Roberts noted when General H. H. Arnold visited the base shortly after he assumed command of the 99th:

I never felt so bad in all my life. It was extremely difficult for me as he [General Arnold] stood there discrediting, and maligning the men who were doing their best under the circumstances. Whether right or wrong in his assessment of the unit, his manner was not what should be expected from the

²⁶⁸Quoted in Sandler, 46.

²⁶⁹Rose, 59.

²⁷⁰Rose, 59.

²⁷¹Maurer 1981, 329; Davis, 102.

*Chief of the Air Corps.*²⁷²

Reports from other military leaders and newspapers were just as negative. Many members of the 99th flew missions without sighting an enemy aircraft; some even completed their tour and returned to the United States without ever firing against an enemy aircraft. This lack of experience and aerial victories led many military leaders and the press to question the aggressiveness and success of the squadron.²⁷³ Colonel Momyer, commander of the 33rd Fighter Group, seemed to support the findings of the 1925 War College Study concerning the combat capabilities of African Americans and felt that the 99th lacked courage and fighting skills when compared to other squadrons in his command. His report stated:

*The ground discipline in accomplishing and executing orders is excellent. Air discipline has not been completely satisfactory. The ability to work and fight as a team has not yet been acquired. Their formation flying has been excellent until attacked by the enemy, when the squadron seems to disintegrate. On numerous instances when assigned to dive bomb a specified target, though anti-aircraft fire was light or inaccurate, they chose a secondary target which was undefended. On one specified occasion, the 99th turned back before reaching the target because of the weather. The other squadron went on to the target and pressed home to attack....Based on the performance of the 99th Fighter Squadron to date, it is my opinion that they are not of the fighting caliber of any squadron of this group.*²⁷⁴

General House, commander of the Twelfth Air Support Command, also reflected the opinion of the 1925 War College Study and commented that *“In the opinion of the officers in all professions, including medical, the Negro type has not the proper reflexes to make a first-class fighter pilot.”*²⁷⁵ House went on to recommend that the AAF either assign the 99th to coastal patrol so other, white fighter squadrons could use their P-40s for combat in Europe, or use the 99th in the United States for defense duties to release a white fighter group for combat overseas.²⁷⁶

Major General John Cannon, commanding officer of the Northwest African Tactical Air Forces, endorsed House’s opinion completely, and sent his report to various AAF officials until it reached General Carl Spaatz, commander of the Northwest African Air Force. Spaatz

²⁷²Quoted in Rose, 60-1.

²⁷³Rose, 60.

²⁷⁴Quoted in Rose, 61.

²⁷⁵Quoted in Rose, 61.

²⁷⁶Rose, 61-2; Sandler, 48-9.

read House's and Cannon's criticisms and noted that 99th squadron had excellent ground discipline and conduct, as well as training, and that the unit had been introduced to combat very carefully. He then transmitted the Momyer-House-Cannon critique along with his own comments to General Henry H. Arnold, commanding general of the Army Air Forces in Washington, D.C. Arnold, however, had already written to Spaatz concerning his views toward African-American pilots:

*We have received from very unofficial sources second-hand tales of the fact that the Negro pilot tires easily and that he loses his will to fight after five or six missions...I am sure that you also realize the urgency required for the information, in view of the fact that we contemplate building additional Negro units at once.*²⁷⁷

Like many top Army Air Forces officials, Arnold, who had been against the segregated flight program from its inception, apparently wanted the 99th, as well as the three other African-American fighter squadrons in training, removed to a rear defense area, and the plans for the African-American bomber group (the 477th) disbanded.²⁷⁸

With the controversy surrounding the training and performance of the 99th squadron, Lt. Col. Benjamin O. Davis Jr. (who had just returned to the United States to assume command of the 332nd Fighter Group) was ordered to report to the Pentagon on October 16, 1943, to meet with the War Department Committee on Special Troop Policies and comment on the 99th's performance. Otherwise known as the McCloy Committee, the panel was headed by Assistant Secretary of State John J. McCloy and included Truman Gibson (Judge Hastie's replacement as civilian aide on African-American affairs), Brig. Gen. B. O. Davis Sr., Gen. Ray Porter of the Operations Division of the War Department, and a member of the Office of the Inspector General. While rebutting Colonel Momyer's statements, Davis stressed that the 99th had performed as well as any new fighter squadron, black or white, could be expected to perform under the circumstances. Because no members of the 99th had combat experience, the unit initially had difficulties in displaying confidence and fighting as a group in aerial combat. The 99th may not have displayed the same stamina as other units, but the squadron had only twenty-six pilots, while most other units had thirty to thirty-five experienced pilots. In addition, the 99th operated for two months without receiving eight replacement pilots as scheduled. Consequently, the squadron had fewer men flying more missions than average, which added to their combat fatigue.²⁷⁹ Lt. Col. Davis also raised the point that the men of the 99th realized the importance of their missions and the need for a reputable combat

²⁷⁷Quoted in Sandler, 49.

²⁷⁸Rose, 62.

²⁷⁹Davis, 105; Rose 62-3; Sandler, 49-50.

record--the future of African Americans in the AAF depended upon their performance. Moreover, Davis questioned the AAF's strict segregation policy for training facilities, especially if black and white soldiers can work and fight against a common enemy on the battlefield.²⁸⁰

After Davis's testimony, the issue of reassigning the 99th to coastal patrol was also addressed. Through a spokesman, General Arnold's office stated that these reports had no basis in fact, and that the office stood behind Davis's statements in defense of the performance of the squadron.²⁸¹ Nonetheless, despite Davis's testimony and his official endorsement, General Arnold was still determined to end the combat career of the Tuskegee Airmen. He had drafted a memorandum to President Roosevelt which stated "*It is my considered opinion that our experience with the unit can lead only to the conclusion that the Negro is incapable of profitable employment as a fighter pilot in a forward combat zone*" and recommended the transfer of the 99th Fighter Squadron to a rear defense area.²⁸² Before a final decision was made concerning the future of the Tuskegee Airmen, General George C. Marshall directed that the army conduct a G-3 (operations office) study analyzing the entire African-American program, including both ground and air units.

The G-3 report, entitled "Operations of the 99th Fighter Squadron Compared with Other P-40 Squadrons in the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations," studied the 99th's combat experience from July 1943 through February 1944 and evaluated the unit's readiness, squadron missions, friendly losses versus enemy losses, and sorties dispatched. According to the statistics in the report, the 99th's performance for these eight months was as good as or better than the average P-40 squadron. Although some may have questioned the periods when the 99th had few combat victories, they failed to understand the nature of these assignments--dive bombing and support of ground troops--where contact with enemy aircraft was practically nonexistent. The G-3 report clearly exonerated the 99th's performance in its opening remarks and stated "*An examination of the record of the 99th Fighter Squadron reveals no significant general difference between this squadron and the balance of the P-40 squadrons in the Mediterranean Theatre Operations.*"²⁸³ Based on the study's findings, the Army Air Forces continued its plans to establish an African-American medium bomber group (the 477th) and send the 332nd Fighter Group to the Mediterranean to test their combat skills.²⁸⁴

²⁸⁰Davis, 106.

²⁸¹Davis, 106.

²⁸²Quoted in Sandler, 50.

²⁸³Quoted in Davis, 107.

²⁸⁴Rose, 63; Sandler, 50-1.

The 99th Gains Combat Experience

While the McCloy Committee studied the performance of the 99th Fighter Squadron, the unit joined the 79th Fighter Group in Foggia, Italy, in October 1943. One month later, on November 22, 1943, the squadron officially moved with the 79th to Madna,²⁸⁵ where it received a great amount of combat experience. Colonel Earl E. Bates, commanding officer of the 79th Fighter Group, completely mixed the squadrons on missions, and the four squadrons under his command assumed identical duties. Members of the 99th were treated as part of the whole group, and reports that the two races could not successfully work together proved groundless. The fighter group now flew between thirty-six and forty-eight sorties a day, and by November 30, 1943, the 79th had flown twenty-six missions, a new record. The 99th squadron gained a great amount of experience and confidence from their association with the 79th and learned a lot through the adoption of flight tactics, takeoff system, and formations of the older, more experienced fighter group.²⁸⁶ By the end of the year, the 99th Fighter Squadron totaled 255 missions and 1,385 sorties, but with only one victory. The shortage of kills, however, was not due to the pilots' lack of skill or courage; from October 1943 to the middle of January 1944 the unit flew patrol and ground attack missions along the east coast of Italy and had not encountered any enemy aircraft.²⁸⁷

On January 22, 1944, Allied forces landed at Anzio to further their assault on the mainland of Italy. The Twelfth Air Force was responsible for isolating the battle area to prevent enemy forces from bringing the reinforcements and supplies necessary for a successful counterattack. Twelfth Air Force command directed the 79th Fighter Group to support the ground troops by dive bombing and strafing railroad yards, troop concentrations, highways, bridges, ports, and supply centers. Five days into this new assignment, the 99th Fighter Squadron scored a series of victories and changed public opinion concerning their aggressiveness. On January 27, 1944, members of the 99th spotted a group of enemy fighters over the Anzio beachhead and engaged them. Although the 99th was outnumbered by almost two to one, in less than four minutes the squadron had damaged five enemy aircraft. Later that afternoon, the squadron destroyed three more enemy planes and suffered one loss, Lieutenant Samuel Bruce.²⁸⁸ The following day, the members of the 99th scored four more victories. By February 10, 1943, the 99th Fighter Squadron had seventeen confirmed kills, four probable victories, and six damaged enemy aircraft, and had flown 390 missions, 2,528 sorties, with several members of the unit flying more than eighty missions.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁵Maurer 1981, 329.

²⁸⁶Rose, 63; Sandler, 53-5.

²⁸⁷Sandler, 55-6.

²⁸⁸Sandler, 56-7.

²⁸⁹Rose, 63-5.

As news of the 99th Fighter Squadron's success over Anzio reached military leadership, criticism began to turn to praise. General Arnold, for example, congratulated the squadron and wrote "*The results of the 99th Fighter Squadron during the past two weeks, particularly since the Anzio landing, are very commendable. My best wishes for their continued success.*"²⁹⁰ General John K. Cannon of the Twelfth Air Force even visited the squadron at their base to personally compliment the unit and its commanding officer, Major George S. Roberts, on their success. Lt. Col. Benjamin O. Davis Jr. heard of the accomplishments of his former squadron and noted:

*All those who wished to denigrate the quality of the 99th's operations were silenced once and for all by its aerial victories over Anzio on two successive days in January 1944....There would be no more talk of lack of aggressiveness, absence of teamwork, or disintegrating under fire. The 99th was finally achieving recognition as a superb tactical fighter unit, an expert in putting bombs on designated targets, and a unit with acknowledged superiority in aerial combat with the Luftwaffe.*²⁹¹

Shortly thereafter, on April 1, 1944, the squadron was reorganized when Captain Erwin B. Lawrence replaced Roberts, who returned to the United States. A day later, the 99th moved to Cercola, Italy, to escort bombers with the 324th Fighter Group.²⁹² Although the unit did not have the number of victories they scored with the 79th, military leaders still noted the success of the squadron and considered expanding their duties to include more vital assignments. On April 20, 1944, General Ira C. Eaker, commander of the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces, inspected the 99th and complimented them on their aerial combat skills:

*By the magnificent showing your fliers have made since coming to this theater, and especially in the Anzio beachhead operation, you have not only won the plaudits of the Air Force, but have earned the opportunity to apply your talent to much more advanced work than was at one time planned for you.*²⁹³

For the following months, however, the 99th's assignments were not as fulfilling as those under the 79th Fighter Group; it fought as an individual squadron rather than as part of a larger group. Nonetheless, by June 1944 (after spending a year in combat overseas) the

²⁹⁰Quoted in Rose, 65.

²⁹¹Davis, 107-8.

²⁹²Maurer 1981, 329.

²⁹³Quoted in Rose, 65.

squadron had completed 500 missions, 3,277 sorties, and downed fifteen enemy aircraft.²⁹⁴ After its short stay with the 324th Fighter Group (April 1 to June 6, 1944), it was transferred to the 86th Fighter Group, where its duties varied little. On June 17, 1944, the 99th left for Orbetello, Italy, to eventually join the 332nd Fighter Group, and in July the unit was integrated into the four-squadron group at Ramitelli, Italy.²⁹⁵

The 332nd Fighter Group

As early as December 1941, the Army Air Forces made plans to establish another African-American squadron based in Tuskegee, known as the 100th Pursuit Squadron. This new unit would allow a greater number of African-American pilots and ground crews to participate in the Army Air Forces, but still on a limited, segregated basis. The squadron, however, was not officially activated until February 19, 1942, in Tuskegee, Alabama. Under the command of Lieutenant Mac Ross, the new fighter squadron was redesignated the 100th Fighter Squadron in May 1942²⁹⁶ and formed the basis of the 332nd Fighter Group, which was formally activated on October 13, 1942, at Tuskegee Army Air Field. A few days later, on October 19, the AAF selected Lieutenant Colonel Sam Westbrook to command the group,²⁹⁷ which contained only eight officers and twelve enlisted men. As usual, the lack of trained African-American personnel, the extreme shortage of airplanes and parts, as well as the lack of supervisors and instructors further hindered the formation and training of the group. In spring 1943, when the 99th Fighter Squadron left for overseas duty, the remaining pilot force, mostly members of the 100th Fighter Squadron, and the 96th Service Group left Tuskegee Army Air Field for Selfridge Field, Michigan, for combat training. Oscoda, a sub-base approximately 200 miles north of Selfridge Field, served as a bomb and gunnery range for the unit. When the fighter group left for Michigan in March 1943, it still had many vacancies. By the end of April, however, the group received a full compliment of men, including the 301st Fighter Squadron under Lieutenant Charles DeBow and the 302nd Fighter Squadron under Lieutenant William T. Mattison. Mac Ross was then appointed the group operations officer, and Lieutenant George Knox assumed command of the 100th Fighter Squadron.²⁹⁸

As early as July 1942, the Army Air Forces considered forming a black fighter group known

²⁹⁴Sandler, 60-1.

²⁹⁵Rose, 65; Maurer 1981, 329. Although the 99th was assigned to the 332nd Fighter Group on May 1, 1944, it was attached to the 324th Fighter Group until June 6, 1944, and to the 86th Fighter Group from June 11 to 30, 1944. On June 6, 1944, the squadron was transferred to Ramitelli, Italy, and joined the 332nd Fighter Group, which had been stationed there since May 28, 1944. See also Maurer Maurer, *Air Force Combat Units of World War II* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1983), 212-213.

²⁹⁶Maurer 1981, 332.

²⁹⁷Maurer 1983, 212-3.

²⁹⁸Rose, 66.

as the 332nd Fighter Group. But when the AAF released the news that the African-American fighter group would complete their training at Selfridge Army Air Field, the local county board of supervisors objected at first. Nonetheless, local authorities and citizens, as well as African Americans from Detroit, officially welcomed the fighter group in a celebration on May 1, 1943. Intensive flight and gunnery training occupied most of the 332nd's time as the group accumulated skill, experience, and confidence. In June 1943, the AAF assigned nine officers from the 332nd to attend air intelligence school for training in combat intelligence, and these officers became the first African-American officers to be assigned to non-segregated training.²⁹⁹

Although the group received a great amount of training to prepare it for combat, it also experienced racial incidents and discrimination during this period. Colonel William Boyd, the base commander at Selfridge Field, did not allow black officers to use the officer's club. This was in direct violation of Army Regulation 210-10, which stated that no officer clubs, messes, or similar organization of officers were permitted to occupy any part of any public building unless it extends full membership rights to all officers on the post. Although it almost caused a race riot, Col. Boyd's decision was backed by the First Air Force, Selfridge's parent command, who took the position that the African-American officers would have to wait until their own club was built.³⁰⁰ In addition, the constant transfer of men to other squadrons or training facilities created morale problems and dampened the effectiveness of the unit. According to Lt. Col. Davis:

*This period was marked by a great deal of personal turbulence, with numerous transfers of officers among the three squadrons, the dispatch of officers to technical schools, and the arrival of several hundred enlisted men who had been trained by the AAF Technical Training Command--airplane mechanics from Chanute Field, radio personnel from Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, armorers from Buckley Field, Colorado, and many other technical graduates in all the specialties required by a fighter group.*³⁰¹

On May 16, 1943, Colonel Robert R. Selway took command of the 332nd Fighter Group and, according to military reports, successfully transformed the group into a functioning combat unit within a relatively short period of time. The fighter group was assigned a new plane, the P-39, and a new training schedule was established for flight and ground instruction for the pilots and ground training for the non-flyers. The bomb and gunnery detachment at Oscoda was composed of white supervisory personnel, which further polarized the unit and

²⁹⁹Sandler, 89-91.

³⁰⁰Davis, 110.

³⁰¹Davis, 111.

created moral and discipline problems.³⁰² In an attempt to overcome these difficulties, Lt. Col. Benjamin O. Davis Jr., who had just returned from Europe, replaced Selway as commanding officer of the group on October 8, 1943. The Army Air Forces also transferred several combat veterans of the 99th Fighter Squadron to serve with the 332nd so the new group could learn from their overseas experiences.³⁰³ By October 28, 1943, all training at Oscoda had been completed, and most of the pilots finished their operational training requirements the following month. In late December, the group boarded troop trains for Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, to prepare for their overseas voyage. While at Camp Patrick Henry, the 332nd discovered that it was restricted from several areas of the base, such as sections of the movie theater and certain rest rooms and clubs, based on their race. Lt. Col. Davis and the post commander settled the matter quickly and integrated the facilities, for they realized that men going to fight for their country should not be subject to discrimination. On January 3, 1944, the fighter group left Camp Patrick Henry for Europe.³⁰⁴

Between January 29 and February 3, the 332nd arrived at Taranto, Italy. Shortly thereafter, the group was assigned to harbor and coastal patrol and convoy escort missions with the 62nd Fighter Wing of the Twelfth Air Force. By February 15, 1944, all three squadrons had entered combat and were equipped with P-39Q Airacobras. Although their missions also included scrambles, point patrol, reconnaissance, and strafing, the harbor and convey protection missions were of vital importance, for large quantities of war material and supplies were shipped daily to all units in the theater.³⁰⁵ As the fighter group gained experience, it was assigned a wider variety of activities. The Army Air Forces transferred the 332nd Fighter Group to the 306th Wing of the Fifteenth Air Force and gave them the P-47Ds formerly used by the 325th Fighter Group. Apparently Gen. Eaker felt that the 332nd could help reduce the heavy losses of the B-17s and B-24s, for the command had lost 114 planes the previous month.³⁰⁶ The 332nd then painted over the former markings on the P-47s with its newly designated all-red tail surfaces and received the nickname "Red Tails." As part of the 306th Fighter Wing, the group flew its first mission on June 7, 1944.³⁰⁷

Two days later, the 332nd Fighter Group scored its first major victory when it shot down five enemy aircraft while on a bomber escort mission. Upon returning to their base at Ramitelli, Italy, one of the bombardment wing commanders congratulated the group and wrote "*Your formation flying and escort work is the best we have ever seen.*"³⁰⁸ Staff Sergeant Samuel

³⁰²Davis, 111-2.

³⁰³Rose, 66-7.

³⁰⁴Davis, 114; Sandler, 92.

³⁰⁵Davis, 115.

³⁰⁶Davis, 118. Shortly after this transfer, B. O. Davis Jr. was promoted to colonel on May 29, 1944.

³⁰⁷Rose, 67-8.

³⁰⁸Quoted in Davis, 123. Davis was later awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for leading this mission.

Jacobs, crew chief for Lieutenant Wendell O. Pruitt (one of the victorious pilots on the mission), later recalled the day's events:

We had been flying Thunderbolts for about a week. Some representatives from Republic Aviation, and some Air Corps brass had been scheduled to arrive and teach us how to fly, and crew the 47's. However, by the time they arrived, our Engineering Officers and Line Chiefs had schooled us on everything we needed to know, and we'd already flown a couple of missions. I remember this Major standing atop a munitions carrier telling us "boys" all about the "flying bathtub" and how it should never be slow rolled below a thousand feet, due to its excessive weight. No sooner had he finished his statement than "A" flight was returning from its victorious mission. Down on the deck, props cutting grass, came Lieutenants Pruitt and his wingman Lee Archer, nearly touching wings. Lieutenant Pruitt pulled up into the prettiest victory roll you'd ever see, with Archer right in his pocket, as the Major screamed, "YOU CAN'T DO THAT!!!!"³⁰⁹

For the month of June, the 332nd flew bomber escorts to Munich, Budapest, Bratislava, Bucharest, and Sofia, as well as strafing missions to Airasca-Pinerale Landing Ground (Italy) and roads in Yugoslavia and Albania. However, on June 25, 1944, the 332nd Fighter Group accomplished what no other fighter group could claim; it attacked and destroyed a German destroyer. Members of the fighter group (led by Captain Joseph Elsberry) came upon a German destroyer in Trieste Harbor. The enemy ship returned a massive barrage of anti-aircraft fire while Lieutenants Joe Lewis, Charles Dunne, Gwynne Pierson, and Wendell Pruitt dove to attack the vessel. Pruitt's shooting set the ship afire, and Pierson's fire apparently hit the ship's magazine, for the vessel soon exploded. Although the Fifteenth Air Force was rather skeptical of this accomplishment, especially since the group did not carry any bombs on this mission, the wing cameras on the aircraft clearly confirmed the victory.³¹⁰

In July the 99th Fighter Squadron joined the 332nd in Ramitelli, Italy, making it the only fighter group in the Army Air Forces with four squadrons (a group usually contained three squadrons). The base's east-west landing strip was made out of steel mat, and the fighter squadrons were stationed at each end of the landing area; the 99th and 100th squadrons were on the north and south sides of the east end of the strip, while the 301st and 302nd were on opposite sides of the west end. At the same time, the 332nd Fighter Group switched to P-51 Mustangs, which had a longer escort range and performed better at higher altitudes. The group flew its first P-51 bomber escort mission on July 6, and ten days later it destroyed two

³⁰⁹Quoted in Rose, 68.

³¹⁰Rose, 69.

Macchi 205s on a fighter sweep to Vienna. The following day was equally successful with three Me-109s destroyed. The best day of the month, however, was on July 18, when the group destroyed two FW-190s and nine Me-109s. Between July 20 and 30, the 332nd destroyed another nineteen enemy fighters, making a total of thirty-nine aerial victories in nine missions between July 12 and 30, 1944.³¹¹

Fall and winter were equally busy. The 332nd was assigned to the 15th Fighter Command, and mainly flew escort for heavy bomber missions attacking oil installations, marshaling yards, and ordnance plants in Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia. The group also provided escort for several long-range bombing missions to oil refineries in Ploesti and Bucharest, Rumania. In addition, the 332nd carried out strafing attacks against enemy airdromes, troop concentrations, railroads, highways, and river traffic in central Europe and the Balkans. The 332nd flew twenty-eight missions in August, including destroying radar stations in southern France and escorting long-range bombers to various oil refineries. The group destroyed twenty-two aircraft on the ground at enemy airdromes, and strafed the Grosswardein Airdrome and destroyed another eighty-three aircraft on the ground. Although it completed only sixteen missions in September due to poor weather, the 332nd still destroyed thirty aircraft on the ground while strafing the Ilandza Airdrome in Yugoslavia.³¹²

After these successful months, the 332nd became recognized as experts in bomber escort. Other pilots, navigators, and bomber crews praised its performance and sent the group complimentary remarks. As Col. B. O. Davis Jr. noted:

As consciousness of the job we were doing grew, crews were quick to voice their praise of the Red Tails, as we had come to be known from the painted tails of our P-51s. They appreciated our practice of sticking with them through the roughest spots over the target, where the dangers of attack were greatest, and covering them through the flak and fighters until they were able to regroup. They particularly liked our practice of detaching fighters to escort crippled bombers that were straggling because of battle damage.”³¹³

As the 332nd gained experience, Army Air Forces commanders began to have more confidence in the group and assign it more important missions. On September 10, 1944, Major General Nathan Twining (commander, Fifteenth Air Force), Brigadier General Dean C. Strother (commander, 15th Fighter Command), and Brigadier General Benjamin O. Davis Sr. visited the group and praised its accomplishments. The following month, Gen. Strother

³¹¹Rose, 69-71; Davis, 123.

³¹²Davis, 123-4; Rose, 72.

³¹³Davis, 124-5.

and Colonel Y. A. Taylor, commander of the 306th Fighter Wing, visited the group and provided further encouragement (especially since the unit had lost fifteen pilots recently). During November, the 332nd shot down two Me-109s and was again commended for its untiring work both on the ground and in the air.³¹⁴ As the 332nd finally received some recognition for its part in the war effort, it began to attract international attention, although the group was still virtually ignored by the white American press. Nonetheless, Col. Davis stressed to the members of the 332nd that their achievements had been recognized, albeit unofficially, by the Army Air Forces. In his year-end message, Davis told his men:

I cannot fail to mention the all-important fact that your achievements have been recognized. Unofficially you are known by an untold number of bomber crews as those who can be depended upon, and whose appearance means certain protection from enemy fighters. The bomber crews have told others of your accomplishments, and your good reputation has preceded you in many parts where you may think you are unknown. The Commanding General of Fifteenth Fighter Command has stated that we are doing a good job and thus, the official report of our operation is a creditable one.³¹⁵

Due to poor weather, the 332nd flew only eleven missions in January, including photo reconnaissance escort and bomber escort missions to communications and oil targets in Vienna, Munich, Prague, Stuttgart, Regensburg, and Linz. By February, the weather had improved, the group flew thirty-nine missions in twenty-eight days. On February 26, Col. Taylor even visited the group at Ramitelli and commented on its continued combat success.³¹⁶ On March 6, 1945, the AAF disbanded the 302nd Fighter Squadron, and the 332nd now had the standard number of squadrons.³¹⁷ Shortly thereafter, the fighter group completed its most memorable mission with the Fifteenth Air Force; escorting the 5th Bomb Wing's B-17s on a 1,600-mile round trip attack on Berlin (the longest mission in the Fifteenth Air Force's history). On March 24, 1945, the AAF assigned the 332nd, along with three other fighter groups, the 31st, 52nd, and 325th, to accompany Fifteenth Air Force's B-17s on their mission to Berlin. Members of the 332nd were to relieve the first fighter group at 1100 hours over Brux, and accompany the bombers to the outskirts of Berlin, where members of the 31st would assume the escort. The 31st, however, failed to reach the relief point on time, and the

³¹⁴Davis, 125, 129-31.

³¹⁵Quoted in Rose, 73.

³¹⁶Davis, 132-3.

³¹⁷Maurer 1981, 366; Davis, 133. Davis expressed sorrow over the loss of the combat squadron and noted "I suppose its inactivation was inevitable because of the limited flow of black fighter pilot replacements being trained at Tuskegee. Perhaps the segregated training system could produce only enough pilots for the 477th Bombardment Group. Obviously the segregated system was at least indirectly responsible for this loss of a combat-capable fighter squadron (page 133)."

332nd stayed with the bombers to their target. Within fifty miles of the Daimler-Benz target, thirty Me-163s and Me-262s (new German jet-propelled fighters) attacked the bombers and their escort, the 332nd. The Fifteenth Air Force had thus far scored only two victories against these aircraft, both of them by the 31st. During this mission, however, the 332nd downed three Me-262s and probably destroyed two Me-262s and one Me-163. The 31st, who joined the formation later, shot down five Me-262s. Not all of the men with the 332nd Fighter Group returned from the mission; Captain McDaniel and Lieutenant Leon Spears were shot down during this engagement and became prisoners of war. Nevertheless, for successfully escorting the bombers, and displaying aggressive combat techniques, the Army Air Forces awarded the 332nd Fighter Group the coveted Distinguished Unit Citation.³¹⁸

The following week, the 332nd Fighter Group completed another important mission. On March 31, 1945, while on a strafing mission near Linz, Austria, members of the 332nd shot down thirteen German airplanes, scored one probable victory, and damaged one enemy aircraft. This made a total of fifty missions for the month. The following day, April 1, the fighter group destroyed twelve more enemy planes in the Wels, Austria, area, bringing the two-day total to twenty-five air victories. Throughout the month, the group continued to participate in missions, and totaled fifty-four missions with seventeen enemy aircraft downed in three encounters. On April 26, 1944, the 332nd had its last victory, destroying the last four enemy aircraft in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations before the end of the war. Four days later, on April 30, 1944, the fighter group flew its last mission, the 311th mission of its fourteen-month operation. At the end of April, Col. Davis sent a party north to establish a new base at Cattolica, a former Italian air base whose headquarters resembled a villa.³¹⁹

On May 2, 1945, Berlin fell and the German forces in Italy surrendered. The war in Europe officially ceased on midnight, May 8, 1945. The 332nd celebrated a solemn but eventful V-E Day, for many felt that the end of the war in Europe was anti-climatic. The group received many distinguished visitors, including Maj. Gen. Twining, Brig. Gen. Strother, and Col. Taylor. In a letter of commendation to Col. Davis, Taylor noted that the 332nd was a fine military unit and “*had achieved the distinction of never losing a single bomber to enemy fighters on an escort mission.*”³²⁰ Less than one month later, on June 8, 1945, Col. Davis ended his service in Italy. After a brief ceremony, Davis, along with fifteen officers and twenty-five enlisted men, left for the United States to assume key positions with the 477th Bombardment Group at Godman Field, Kentucky. In his closing remarks, Col. Davis stressed the accomplishments of the 332nd and felt honored to have had the opportunity to

³¹⁸Rose, 73-4; Davis, 133.

³¹⁹Rose, 74; Davis, 133-5.

³²⁰Davis, 136-7.

serve with these fine men.³²¹

The 332nd Disbanded and Tuskegee Army Air Field (TAAF) Closed

On September 30, 1945, the three remaining squadrons of the 332nd Fighter Group boarded the U.S.S. *Levi Woodbury* and arrived in New York on October 16, 1945. The 100th and the 301st were inactivated at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, shortly after their arrival. The AAF sent the former members of these squadrons to their previous home base, Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama, or to Godman Field, Kentucky, the new home of the segregated 477th Composite Group. The 99th Fighter Squadron was assigned to Godman Field and became the fighter component of the composite group.³²² Conditions at Tuskegee Army Air Field, however, had changed little since 1943 when the majority of the trainees left for other bases. Few positions of leadership or authority were held by African Americans; most were in positions that offered little chance for promotion or advancement. During 1944 and 1945, Tuskegee became the base for most of the African-American programs in the AAF, and the increase in the number of men and variety of activities created administrative and training problems for the small base. Various areas of the field fell under the command of the Third Air Force, the Technical Training Command, the Air Service Command, and the Flying Training Command, each of whom had little knowledge of the variety of activities supervised by the other commands through the field's headquarters. In addition, TAAF provided training in almost all areas of the AAF for African Americans, including pre-aviation cadets, preflight pilots, preflight bombardiers-navigators, preflight bombardiers, basic pilots, advanced twin-engine pilots, and pilots in transitional training in P-40s after graduation. TAAF also trained field artillery liaison pilots for ground forces as well as Haitian and French colonial cadets, which further added to the confusion. Moreover, the field served as a temporary base for enlisted and officer specialists awaiting assignment. According to Robert Rose, "*It is doubtful that any more chaotic conditions, outside the war zone, ever existed at a U.S. Army Air Corps base.*"³²³

By the end of 1945, President Patterson even recommended closing TAAF due to its precarious situation. The issues of segregation caused problems, and many civilians and military personnel were unhappy with the project and the monumental expenses it involved.³²⁴ On June 21, 1945, Colonel Benjamin O. Davis Jr. assumed command of the 477th Composite Group (stationed at Godman Field), which consisted of two medium bombardment squadrons, the 617th and 618th, and the 99th Fighter Squadron.³²⁵ The returning members of

³²¹Davis, 138-9.

³²²Maurer 1981, 329, 332, 365; Maurer 1983, 349-350.

³²³Rose, 75.

³²⁴Rose, 75.

³²⁵Maurer 1981, 329-330, 686-688; Maurer 1983, 349-350.

the 332nd who stayed in the military were eventually transferred to this new group at Godman Field, Kentucky, and by the end of January, 1946, Tuskegee Army Air Field was virtually closed.³²⁶ Shortly after the closing of the air field, Col. Noel F. Parrish, the former base commander, discussed the success of the “Tuskegee Experiment” and noted:

*Our men were good enough to graduate from any flying school in the country, we made sure of that, and working together we proved it. We emphasized that a pilot or a man of whatever color, size, or shape is just as good as he proves himself to be. Men, and pilots, have to be considered as individuals. We have had some of the worst pilots in the world right here, and we have had some of the best. In the first place, they flew and fought as men. They may have been classified as Negroes. They may have had pretty good alibis for being failures if they wanted to use these alibis, or they may have been proud of their group as the only one like it in the world, as they had a right to be. But when the test came they had to fly and fight just as men, Americans against a common enemy.*³²⁷

The 477th Bombardment Group

Like the formation of the 99th Fighter Squadron, the 477th Bombardment Group (Medium) was established in response to criticisms from African-Americans leaders and groups. The unit, however, remained largely a “paper outfit” from its activation in June 1943 to January 1944. The Army Air Forces had no great expectations for the group, especially since many Air Forces officers felt that African Americans lacked the necessary technical education and background for the work.³²⁸ In addition, a bomber group required more trained crew members than a fighter group, and by 1943, there were not enough African Americans in the AAF to man a four squadron B-25 group and continue to supply replacements for the 332nd Fighter Group.³²⁹

Nonetheless, the Army Air Forces constituted the 477th as early as May 1943, and proceeded to activate the unit on June 1, 1943.³³⁰ By mid-1943, the AAF began screening African Americans to determine their relative aptitude as multi-engine pilots, bombardiers, and navigators. Approximately one half of class 43-J at Tuskegee was training in multi-engine Beechcraft AT-10s with the expectation that a bomb group program would soon develop. The Army Air Forces selected Major Clay Albright to head the new twin-engine school with

³²⁶Rose, 75

³²⁷Quoted in Rose, 130.

³²⁸Sandler, 119-20.

³²⁹Alan L. Gropman, *The Air Force Integrates 1945-1964* (Washington DC: Office of Air Force History, 1978), 14; Sandler, 120.

³³⁰Maurer 1983, 349.

Lieutenant Milton Hall, a member of class 42-K, to assist him with administrative details. The AAF's plan was to select pilots for twin-engine training from cadets who had completed the basic phase of flight training. These cadets would complete the advanced phase of training at Tuskegee in the AT-10. Bomber transition training would occur elsewhere. Instructors from Turner Field, Georgia, were attached to Tuskegee Army Air Field to familiarize the Tuskegee mechanics with the AT-10.³³¹

The presence of so many flight programs at TAAF caused problems with overcrowding and congested air traffic. The base already had excess men for whom no assignments existed, and the number was rapidly increasing. Indeed, the military continued to send African-American enlisted men to the field (from technical schools of the Air Corps and the Signal Corps) who were classified and trained for positions which did not exist at Tuskegee. To make matters worse, these men were all specialists, and in most cases, due to their rank, were not suitable for reclassification or assignment for any other jobs at the base. This practice was not only a waste of manpower and a poor personnel policy, it was also a serious imposition on Tuskegee Army Air Field. Many of these men were technical trainees for the bomber group, which had yet to be formed. To help relieve these problems at the base, the Army Air Forces finally decided to conduct a few trainee classes for African Americans at existing schools formerly used for white trainees. Many of these schools, however, were not prepared for these trainees. As Staff Sergeant William Pitts (later assigned to the 100th Fighter Squadron as a mechanic) recalled when he and seven fellow trainees arrived at the AAF school in Lincoln, Nebraska:

*We arrived by train in Lincoln, and nobody, from the commander of the school, to the other Negro GI's stationed there as orderlys, and mess attendants would believe we were to be trained as mechanics. There was never a provision for this type of training in the Air Corps manual, and no one could understand that it had come to pass. Several days went by as they isolated us off by ourselves without being sure of just what action to take. Our orders meant nothing.*³³²

These trainees, nonetheless, completed the six-month course and graduated with the highest record ever achieved at the school in Nebraska. They continued their training at the advanced training center in Buffalo, New York.³³³

In late 1942 African-American pilot eliminees at Tuskegee were finally eligible for alternative

³³¹Rose 120.

³³²Quoted in Rose, 121.

³³³Rose, 122.

careers in the Army Air Forces that had been available to white eliminees. Many of the men eliminated from the Tuskegee program were now eligible for positions with the 477th. In fall 1943, the military finally decided that the plans for the African-American bombardment group were feasible, and on October 25, 1943, the first class of navigation cadets arrived at Hondo Field, Texas, for training.³³⁴ Although their instruction was in segregated classes, class rooms, and barracks, the cadets shared the Cadet Club, the PX, the day room, Officer's Club, and Bachelor Officer's Mess with other men stationed at the field. These African-American cadets flew on extended missions and apparently received the expected services and courtesies at the various bases they visited. Bombardiers at the training school in Midland, Texas, worked under similar circumstances.³³⁵

Although these African-American men began training for the 477th Bombardment Group, the unit was still experiencing problems with its formation. Following a brief period of inactivity, the group was officially reactivated on January 14, 1944, at Selfridge Field, Michigan, under the command of Colonel Robert R. Selway. The group was to be composed of four squadrons (the 616th, 617th, 618th, and 619th) of twin-engine, five-man-crew B-25 Mitchell medium-range bombers.³³⁶ By mid-February, the 477th had grown to 200 men, including the first contingent of black enlisted technicians. In the following months the unit grew slowly, for Tuskegee Army Air Field was the only base which could train African-American pilots. By May 5, 1944, it had only 175 officers out of its authorized strength of 290. There was also an acute shortage of navigators and bombardiers.³³⁷

The strained race relations at Selfridge Field may have been responsible, in part, for the shortage in manpower for the 477th. The base already had a history of racial incidents, for the previous base commander had shot and wounded a black orderly.³³⁸ Another incident occurred on January 1, 1944, when three African-American officers attempted to enter the base officer's club and were denied admittance.³³⁹ To contribute to the already-strained relations, the commanding officer of the 477th, Col. Selway, and his senior staff were all white officers, and black airmen had few opportunities for advancement. African Americans were trained and assigned as mechanics, but could never become B-25 crew chiefs. Although the group had many combat-experienced African-American officers from Tuskegee,

³³⁴Sandler, 120; Rose, 122; Gropman, 15. According to Rose, on October 27, 1943, General Arnold decided to proceed with plans for the bomber group and directed that the unit be organized, trained, and equipped and sent to North Africa to join the 99th Fighter Squadron.

³³⁵Sandler, 121.

³³⁶Maurer 1983, 349-50; Dryden, 165.

³³⁷Gropman, 15.

³³⁸Sandler, 122; Dryden, 165. According to Dryden, the base commander was drunk when this incident occurred and shot the African-American soldier because he did not want a "Colored" chauffeur. The base commander was court-martialed and retired from military service.

³³⁹Dryden, 167-171.

Walterboro, or Italy, no black officer could occupy a position of authority that put him above a white officer. In addition, when white officers were promoted, their vacancies were filled with other white officers, making the unit a “promotion mill” for these men.³⁴⁰ Almost all black officers were denied promotion under this discriminatory system, and, as Col. Davis noted, “*the end result was a sour white-black relationship which soon had developed into outright enmity.*”³⁴¹

Because of these racial tensions, the 477th Bombardment Group was transferred to Godman Field, Kentucky, on May 5, 1944. This move, however, did not spare the unit from further discrimination or training problems. While African Americans could use all of the recreation facilities at the new base, neighboring Fort Knox had segregated facilities available for the white officers. Although the War Department required that all recreational facilities be open to all soldiers, Fort Knox circumvented this directive by having ushers seat personnel at the base theater in segregated areas.³⁴² Col. Selway still disregarded the tensions among his black and white officers and used the unit as a “promotion mill” for white officers.³⁴³ In addition, the 477th continued to have shortages in trained officers and enlisted men. The group flew repeated proficiency missions but undertook no combat crew training. By October 14, 1944, only twenty-three of the 128 authorized navigators and navigators-bombardiers had arrived and only half of the authorized pilots had been assigned. In the following months, eighty-four new bombardiers and sixty new pilots arrived, although not all of them had received formal navigator training. By the end of 1944, the 477th finally had enough qualified specialists to undertake combat crew training. While the flying performance of the group was excellent, the facilities at Godman Field were inadequate for the bomber group, and in March 1945, the unit was transferred, once again, to Freeman Field, Indiana.³⁴⁴

The Freeman Field “Mutiny”

On April 5, 1945, 100 African-American officers from the 477th arrived at Freeman Field to begin their combat training. Later that evening, four black officers attempted to enter the white officer’s club and were denied admittance. Although this designation was contrary to Army Regulation 210-10, Col. Selway, the 477th’s commanding officer, circumvented the directive by denoting certain buildings on the base for 477th personnel and others for

³⁴⁰Sandler, 121; Davis, 141-2.

³⁴¹Davis, 142. Selfridge Field was not the only air base with strained race relations. The airmen were also subjected to segregated facilities and discriminatory treatment at Walterboro Army Air Base in South Carolina. After graduating from Tuskegee Army Air Field, replacement pilots for the 332nd would go to Walterboro for aerial combat training. The African-American airmen were angered and outraged that they were banned from entering areas of the post exchange (PX) due to their race while German POWs shopped freely at the PX. See Dryden, 175-80.

³⁴²Sandler, 124.

³⁴³Sandler, 125.

³⁴⁴Gropman, 16.

supervisory personnel. This supposed segregation by unit was really an excuse for racial segregation, for a number of African-American officers not attached to the 477th were assigned to the black officer's club.³⁴⁵ The efforts of these four African-American officers, nonetheless, started a non-violent demonstration at Freeman Field. After they peacefully left the white officer's club, nineteen other African-American officers attempted to enter the club and were stopped by the Provost Marshal. Two of these officers apparently "used force" to gain access to the club, and all nineteen officers who entered the club were arrested. Shortly thereafter, three more black officers attempted to enter the club, followed by another fourteen African-American officers who gained entry and were then arrested. Incidents such as these continued until the club was closed for the evening. For the next two days, several black officers attempted to enter the club and were arrested, making a total of sixty-one African-American officers arrested for trying to use the officer's club.³⁴⁶

On April 7, 1945, the Judge Advocate advised Col. Selway to release all of the arrested officers except for the three who had forced their way into the club. Selway complied with the request and closed the officer's club to prevent further incidents. Two days later, Selway issued a new regulation designating officer's clubs for trainees and for command/supervisory/instructor personnel and ordered all soldiers to sign the new directive. Although the regulation was read and explained to all base personnel, approximately 100 African-American officers refused to sign the statement, disobeying Selway's direct orders. The following day, these men were read the 64th Article of War (the willful disobedience article) and given another opportunity to sign the regulation. 101 African-American officers still refused to sign the directive, were placed under arrest for disobeying orders, and were returned to Godman Field on April 13.³⁴⁷

Many black leaders and groups such as the NUL and NAACP learned of the events at Freeman Field and questioned the army's policies. The NAACP sent a telegram to President Roosevelt to complain that the Freeman Field situation was having a negative effect on the morale of African Americans, both military and civilian. The Chicago Urban League requested that Congressman William A. Rowan (D, IL) investigate the problems at Freeman Field.³⁴⁸ Another twelve senators and three congressmen made inquiries to the War Department.³⁴⁹ The McCloy Committee also became aware of the situation at Freeman Field and sought additional information on the incident. Due to pressure from these individuals and groups, General Marshall approved a plan to release most of the Freeman Field officers

³⁴⁵Sandler, 125-6.

³⁴⁶Gropman, 22; Davis, 142.

³⁴⁷Gropman, 23.

³⁴⁸Gropman, 24-5.

³⁴⁹Sandler, 128.

and drop the charges against them. Only the three officers arrested for using force to enter the club would be court-martialed.³⁵⁰

In early May, the McCloy Committee received a summary which outlined the Army Air Forces' position regarding the situation at Freeman Field and favored continued segregation in the service. Truman Gibson and the rest of the McCloy Committee condemned the report and argued that these policies were based primarily on race and not on practical considerations.³⁵¹ Several weeks later, on May 18, 1945, the McCloy Committee released its findings and noted that although Col. Selway had acted within his administrative powers in arresting the black officers, his other actions were in conflict with U.S. Army regulations. The committee also recommended a change in War Department policy which removed any ambiguities concerning segregation in the military. The Army Air Forces disliked these findings, and continued to try the three African-American officers for a violation of the 64th Article of War, which carried a maximum penalty of death. In light of the political inquiries and committee's findings, the case against these three men, Lts. Roger C. Terry, Marsden A. Thompson, and Shirley R. Clinton, quickly collapsed. Thompson and Clinton were found innocent while Terry was found guilty of shoving a Provost Marshall and fined \$150.00.³⁵²

Although the Freeman Field "Mutiny" case was a major event in U.S. race relations, it was not extensively reported by the black or white presses. Many of the African Americans involved in the incident wanted to bring the public's attention to the lack of advancement opportunities for members of the 477th and hoped that the refusal of a large body of military personnel to obey a direct order by a superior officer in a time of war would cause wide-spread effects.³⁵³ Nonetheless, more pressing world affairs, such as the death of President Roosevelt, the transition to the Truman administration, and the end of war in Europe, took precedent in the media.³⁵⁴

After the incident at Freeman Field, Gen. Arnold replaced all the white officers of the 477th with black officers and appointed Col. Benjamin O. Davis Jr. as commander of the unit. Plans were made to send the 477th to the Pacific; Gen. Douglas MacArthur was willing to accept the group, but his Air Forces commander, Gen George C. Kenney, was not. Nonetheless, Lt. Gen. Ira C. Eaker continued to prepare the 477th for combat. To hasten its preparations for combat, the unit was redesignated the 477th Composite Group, consisting of two bomb squadrons, the 617th and 618th, and an experienced fighter squadron, the 99th.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁰Gropman, 25-6; Sandler, 129.

³⁵¹Gropman, 27; Davis, 143.

³⁵²Davis, 143; Gropman, 29.

³⁵³Sandler, 128.

³⁵⁴Sandler, 131.

³⁵⁵Gropman, 29-30; Maurer 1981, 687-8.

The 477th Composite Group and the 332nd Fighter Wing

Col. Benjamin O. Davis Jr. arrived at Godman Field about a month after the McCloy Committee report was published to assume command of the 477th Composite Group. The case against the three officers was not yet decided, and the commotion created by the incidents at Freeman Field was still a major obstacle in achieving combat readiness. The 477th had an excellent flying safety record except for the three months following the Freeman Field affair, where five accidents resulted in eleven deaths. However, after the court-martial, capable African-American officers were placed in positions of responsibility previously denied to them, and morale among the unit began to improve.³⁵⁶

One obstacle which remained was finding appropriate housing for officers of the 477th and their families. Col. Selway's command and other supervisory officers and airmen had housing at neighboring Fort Knox, but the base denied the African-American officers of the 477th the use of the same facilities for racial reasons.³⁵⁷ (In addition, Fort Knox command would not allow the children of members of the 477th to attend the base school.) Consequently, the married couples of the 477th (approximately sixty) were housed in extremely crowded conditions in two barracks at Godman Field. The small partitions within the barracks were designed for single occupancy and provided little privacy while the dormitory-style bathroom facilities were completely inadequate for unisex use. According to Col. Davis, the commanding officer of the unit:

It was an absolutely disgraceful situation, and a terrible way to treat combat veterans who had fought one war and were soon to be on their way to fight another. I shall never forget nor forgive this shameful treatment of our veterans and their families by officers of the U. S. Army, who were fully aware of the situation and yet allowed it to continue. To add insult to injury, our palatial quarters were adjacent to barracks occupied by Italian prisoners of war under the control of the Fort Knox command.³⁵⁸

In early August 1945, Davis visited Tuskegee Army Air Field to speak at its fourth anniversary celebration and commended the people of TAAF for their important contribution to the black combat units of the AAF. After returning to Godman Field, Davis learned of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and knew that the war in the Pacific would soon be over. The 477th remained at Godman Field while Col. Davis helped discharge all eligible personnel, reorganized the unit as a composite group, and continued to train men on a peacetime basis. Davis also needed to find a suitable home base for the 477th. Although

³⁵⁶Davis, 143-4.

³⁵⁷Davis, 144-5; Gropman, 21,

³⁵⁸Davis, 144-5.

TAAF was the only air field that would willingly accept the unit, the members of the 477th considered it unsatisfactory due to the hostile Alabama environment. Army Air Forces headquarters finally convinced the Ohio congressional delegation to allow the 477th to move to Lockbourne Army Air Base, located near Columbus, Ohio. This move was a monumental step for African Americans in the military. For the first time, black officers were to administer an AAF base in the continental U. S. without the immediate supervision of white officers.³⁵⁹ In March 1946, the 477th arrived at an empty Lockbourne AAB and began converting the existing barracks into family housing.³⁶⁰

The 477th was now considered a Tactical Command Installation (TAC) whose mission was to demobilize, recruit military personnel, and maintain combat readiness. The group could participate in TAC's air indoctrination courses for students at army schools and colleges. The unit also perfected its gunnery, bombing, and rocketry at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and at Eglin Field, Florida, and flew firepower demonstrations and air shows. In July 1947, the 477th was inactivated after participating in Ninth Air Force (parent headquarters) combat exercises in Georgia. The remaining fighter units were re-organized as the 332nd Fighter Group, later renamed the 332nd Fighter Wing.³⁶¹ After the closing of TAAF in 1946, many of the pilots stationed there who wanted to remain in the Army Air Forces were reassigned to this new unit at Lockbourne, which had over 10% of all African-American airmen in the AAF and 75% of its African-American officers.³⁶²

The Air Force Integrates

After the 477th moved to Lockbourne AAB, many of the white civilian employees at the base decided to retain their positions, even though the base was now administered by African Americans. Many of these civilians welcomed the 477th and satisfactorily performed their jobs without incident, and the residents of Columbus, Ohio, both black and white, eventually considered the air base an asset. This change of opinion was also reflected in the military, for many senior white AAF officers began to realize that blacks possessed administrative abilities and leadership skills. According to Col. Davis:

In the 1940s, most whites either in or out of the military simply did not believe that blacks could perform on a par with whites in any area of endeavor. Our success at Lockbourne, which came as a surprise to many Air Force policy makers, undoubtedly contributed to the coming move toward

³⁵⁹Davis, 146-8.

³⁶⁰Davis, 148; Maurer 1983, 350.

³⁶¹Davis, 148-9; Maurer 1983, 213. The redesignation of the 332nd as a Fighter Wing reflected the wing-base organization adopted by the AAF in 1947. The new wing closely resembled the wartime group, and the names of the three squadrons, the 99th, the 100th, and the 301st, stayed the same.

³⁶²Davis, 149.

*integration.*³⁶³

Shortly after the United States Air Force (USAF) became a separate branch of the military in September 1947, Lt. Gen. Idwal Edwards, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, ordered Lt. Col. Jack Marr (a member of his staff) to study the USAF's racial policy. Edwards, a former member of the McCloy Committee, believed that the policy of racial segregation was a waste of manpower and resources. Although the study was to improve military efficiency and manpower utilization for budgetary reasons, it led to more profound social changes in the military.³⁶⁴ Two years later, on July 29, 1948, President Harry S Truman signed Executive Order 9981, which required the armed forces to provide equal treatment and opportunity for black servicemen--basically integrating the military. The President's Committee on Civil Rights, established in 1947, had already recommended the integration of the military, and it is unclear why Truman waited a year before following the committee's recommendations. By this time, however, the armed forces had independently realized the manpower inefficiencies of a segregated system and may have been more willing to accept integration. Truman also needed the African-American vote in the 1948 election.³⁶⁵ Whatever the reason, Truman's executive order effectively ended segregation in the military and created greater opportunities for minorities in the armed forces.

On May 11, 1949, the U.S. Air Force stated that "*It is the policy of the United States Air Force that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Air Force without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin,*" and announced their integration plan, based upon the study conducted by Lt. Col. Jack Marr (initiated in September 1947).³⁶⁶ The first phase of the USAF's new policy involved the reassignment of African-American personnel throughout the air force. Col. Benjamin O. Davis Jr. was appointed president of the screening board to review the qualifications of Lockbourne officers and airmen for reassignment. The board was considered vital, for the USAF wanted men who would work well in an integrated environment and of the ability to receive the respect of personnel in a new, integrated unit.³⁶⁷ The second phase of the USAF's plan dealt with the continued existence of some African-American air force units, although no quotas were established for such groups; the USAF would assign black personnel to fill any vacancy regardless of race.³⁶⁸ This was a great change compared to the AAF's personnel policy during World War II, where, with the exception of the 99th, the 332nd, and the 477th, African-American soldiers were used in service capacities and for heavy-duty work such as in

³⁶³Davis, 152.

³⁶⁴Davis, 156.

³⁶⁵Davis, 158-9.

³⁶⁶Quoted in Davis, 160.

³⁶⁷Davis, 160.

³⁶⁸Davis, 160-1.

air cargo resupply, military police, ammunition companies, air base security battalions, and medical detachments. During the war, the AAF assigned white personnel according to their ability, whereas black personnel were assigned according to race. Even if an African-American unit had too many qualified soldiers for a position, segregation prevented these men from joining a white unit who needed their services. Likewise, if an African-American unit need a specialist, the position would be left vacant until an African American could fill it.³⁶⁹ With the USAF's new personnel policy, all this would change.

The USAF's integration policy progressed further and more rapidly than that of the other services. Although most air force commanders preferred segregation and feared these changes, these men quickly realized that many of the air force's earlier manpower problems had been eliminated due to integration. In May 1949, the 332nd Fighter Wing contained 75% of all the African-American officers in the USAF. A month later (on June 30, 1949) the 332nd was inactivated and all of the black personnel at Lockbourne were integrated into the air force world-wide. By May 22, 1950, 74% of the 25,000 African Americans in the USAF were in integrated units. The USAF discovered that the abilities of African American soldiers were much greater than it previously believed, and that blacks could compete with whites and still maintain high enlistment standards. It also realized that the potential of African-American soldiers were wasted under segregation and that it could not afford to lose the services of skilled blacks under such a system. In addition, enlisted men were far more willing to accept integration than the USAF had believed, and the integration of work, school, and living quarters did not present as many difficulties as it imagined. By December 1950, 95% of black airmen were in integrated units. Shortly thereafter, all African-American units in the USAF had disappeared.³⁷⁰

With the integration of the military, that of society followed decades later. This move toward integration, however, would not have been possible without the valuable performance and sacrifices of the thousands of African-American soldiers who fought in World War II. As Gen. Benjamin O. Davis Jr. noted in his autobiography:

Without a doubt, the wartime performance of the black fighter units I had commanded and the success of Lockbourne Air Force Base both influenced the Air Force's decision to integrate. Although President Truman may have issued his order for political reasons more than for any abiding concern for the welfare of blacks, and although Secretary Symington and General Spaatz may have been deeply convinced of the moral rightness of the new policy, they could not have supported its immediate and forthright implementation

³⁶⁹Davis, 162-3.

³⁷⁰Davis, 163-5.

without the backdrop of the 332nd Fighter Group's record in the war. It became my fixed belief that the Air Forces had led the way in integrating the armed forces because of the basic professionalism in air operations that had been demonstrated by black units during World War II, moving the cause of integration forward to a much earlier date than could have been achieved otherwise.³⁷¹

Not all airmen, however, benefitted from the military's integration policy. Many African-American soldiers returned to civilian life and discovered that while things may have changed officially within the armed forces, they still suffered discrimination in society as a whole. While African-American veterans were able to continue their education and attend college, many of those who returned to the work force found the same racial hatred and discrimination they encountered before the war.³⁷² Nonetheless, the success of the Tuskegee Airmen and the integration of the military was an important step in setting the stage for the civil rights advances which occurred in the decades following the war.

³⁷¹Davis, 164-5.

³⁷²Tuskegee Airmen Questionnaire, distributed Winter 1998, Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, Atlanta, Georgia.

CONCLUSION

African Americans have continually played a significant role in the United States military. These men and women not only fought to enter the armed forces, but when finally accepted by the government, they had to endure segregated and unequal conditions and prove their abilities. The Tuskegee Airmen of World War II are part of this continual struggle by African Americans to achieve full rights in the U.S. military and society. With the growing interest of African Americans in aviation, combined with the history of African-American participation in military conflicts and the emergence of civil rights as a national political issue, many blacks began to demand equal opportunities in the military, particularly in the Army Air Corps. After much pressure from the black press, black leaders, and civil rights groups such as the NAACP, the War Department established the 99th Pursuit Squadron and created the “Tuskegee Experiment,” a segregated program for African Americans in the Army Air Corps. The army chose Tuskegee, Alabama, as the location of this “experiment” because of its ideal flying climate, its location in the rural South where segregation was enforced, and its proximity to Maxwell Field, the Southeast Air Corps Training Center. Moreover, Tuskegee had emerged as the center of African-American aviation in the South through the efforts of President Patterson and G. L. Washington of Tuskegee Institute. The school had flight facilities for its primary and advanced Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) program, and received a contract from the army to operate the only primary flight school for African-American pilot candidates in the Air Corps at Moton Field.

The Tuskegee Airmen overcame the “separate but equal” conditions sanctioned by the military to become one of the most honored and respected fighter groups of World War II. The men of the 99th Fighter Squadron and the 332nd Fighter Group completed 1,578 missions, destroyed over 260 enemy aircraft, sank one enemy destroyer, and demolished numerous enemy installations. For their efforts, these airmen received ninety-five Distinguished Flying Crosses, as well as the Legion of Merit, Silver Stars, Purple Hearts, the Croix de Guerre, and the coveted Distinguished Unit Citation. The group also had the distinction of never losing a single bomber to enemy fighters on an escort mission. This earned the Tuskegee Airmen the respect of American bomber crews as well as the German Luftwaffe. More importantly, the accomplishments of the airmen represent a peak in the struggle by African Americans to participate in the U.S. armed forces. Their combat successes proved beyond a doubt to military leaders that African Americans could become effective military leaders and combat veterans, and that they deserved equal rights in American society. The efforts of the Tuskegee Airmen, along with the valuable performance and sacrifices of the thousands of African Americans who fought in World War II, helped pave the way for the desegregation of the military, beginning with President Harry S

Truman's Executive Order 9981 in 1948. The integration of the military, as well as the nonviolent protest held by members of the 477th Bombardment Group, in turn helped set the stage for the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

However, none of these victories would have been possible without the training, leadership, and individual resolve of the Tuskegee Airmen and the support of both black and white Americans. President Patterson and G. L. Washington created a successful aviation program at Tuskegee Institute and played an important role in the establishment and training of the Tuskegee Airmen. Without the efforts of individuals such as Judge William H. Hastie, Truman Gibson, Thurgood Marshall, and Yancy Williams and Spann Watson, as well as the black press (who popularized the "Double V" concept) and civil rights groups, the War Department may have delayed its plans to allow African Americans to enter the Air Corps. Benjamin O. Davis Jr., the commanding officer of many of the Tuskegee Airmen, was also a key figure in shaping the future of African Americans in the air force. In addition to being the first black officer to lead units into combat, Davis also helped dispel the myth that African Americans lacked leadership capabilities by effectively administering an Army Air Forces base without the immediate supervision of a white officer. Many white Americans in the Roosevelt Administration, in the military, and in aviation also contributed to the success of the "Tuskegee Experiment." Eleanor Roosevelt fully supported African-American aviation and may have used her influence to help establish the contract flight school at Moton Field. Col. Noel Parrish, director of training and later commanding officer of Tuskegee Army Air Field, was concerned how the segregated training was affecting the men of the 99th and the 332nd and used his influential position to try to make the "experiment" a success. In addition, some of the white flight instructors who volunteered for duty at TAAF earned the respect of the airmen and provided valuable aviation training. Without the support, leadership, and determination of these Americans, the future of African Americans in the military and in aviation may have been different.

It is also important to remember that behind the heroic efforts of the 99th Fighter Squadron and the 332nd Fighter Group were thousands of men and women who served in military and civilian support groups in a wide variety of roles, including officers and enlisted men, flight instructors, mechanics, air traffic controllers, parachute riggers, electrical and communications specialists, military police, medical professionals, laboratory assistants, cooks, musicians, and supply, fire-fighting, and transportation personnel. Although frequently forgotten or overlooked, these men and women performed an important part in the success of the airmen. In his memoirs, Lt. Col. Charles W. Dryden perhaps best expresses the vital role these "unsung heroes" played when he notes:

I have no favorite person. First of all there are the guys I fly with who help me get through our missions and return to base in one piece. Then there are

*my crew chief who keeps A-Train II [my plane] running, my armorer who keeps my guns firing, the radioman keeps me in touch with others when danger threatens, the cooks feed me, supply guys clothe and equip me, medics keep me healthy, pay clerks pay me, and mail clerks bring me the V-mail from home that boosts my morale.*³⁷³



Figure 26. View of Moton Field, ca. 1943 (Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University)

³⁷³Dryden, 130.



Figure 27. Moton Field Hangar No. 1 during World War II (Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University)

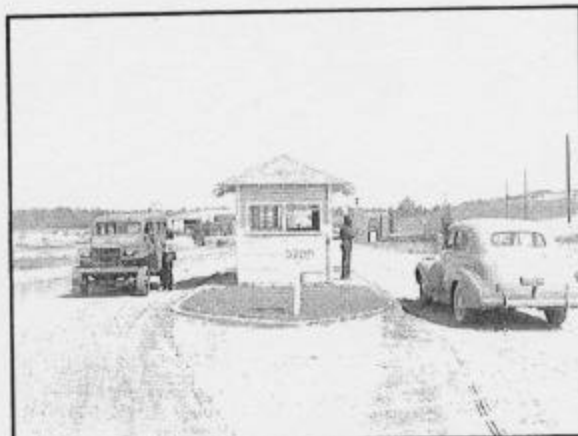


Figure 28. Entrance to Moton Field during World War II (Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site)

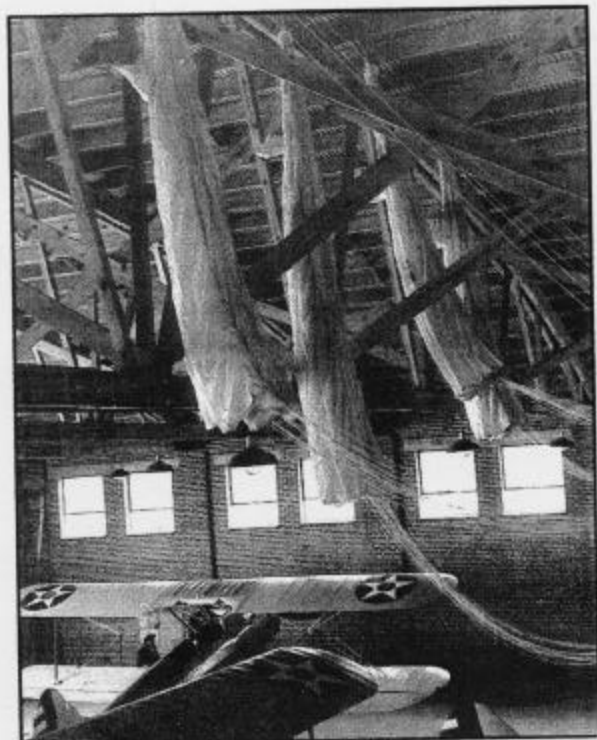


Figure 29. Parachutes drying in Moton Field hangar (Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University)



Figure 30. Aircraft and vehicles at Moton Field during World War II (Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University)

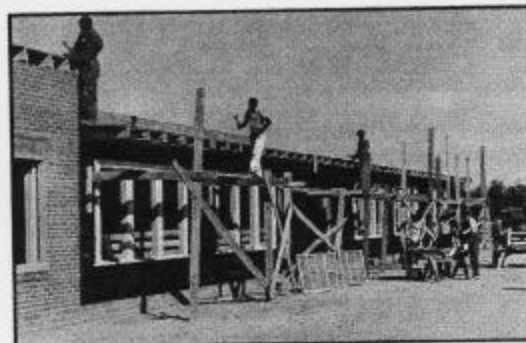


Figure 31. Construction of Moton Field hangar, ca. 1942-1943 (Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University)



Figure 32. Visiting Orientation Officer lectures in the Cadet Ready Room, Moton Field, 1944 (AFHRA, 234.821, Feb.-Dec. 1944)

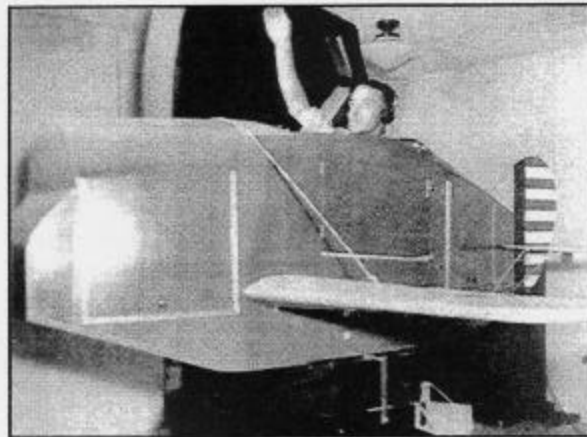


Figure 33. Link Trainer instruction (AFHRA, 289.28-100, 43 E-F)



Figure 34. Training planes on the ramp at Moton Field, 1944 (AFHRA, 234.821 v. 2)

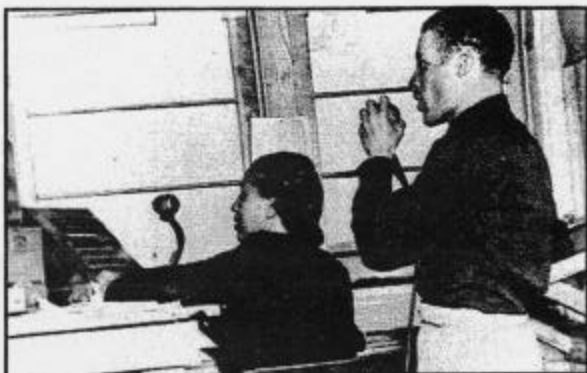


Figure 35. Dispatcher (seated) and instructor observing training exercises, Control Tower, Moton Field (AFHRA, 234.821 v.2)



Figure 36. BT-13s and PT-19s at Moton Field, 1944 (AFHRA, 234.281, Feb.-Dec. 1944)

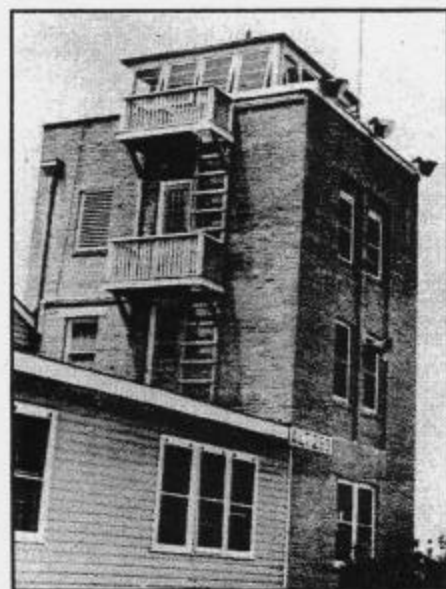


Figure 37. Control Tower, Moton Field, 1944 (AFHRA, 234.821 v. 2)



Figure 38. "Keep 'em Flying." A plane crew at work on a 100-hour inspection, 1944 (AFHRA, 234.821 v. 2)



Figure 40. Members of Tuskegee Institute's Division of Aeronautics working on aircraft (AFHRA, 289.28-100 43 E-F)

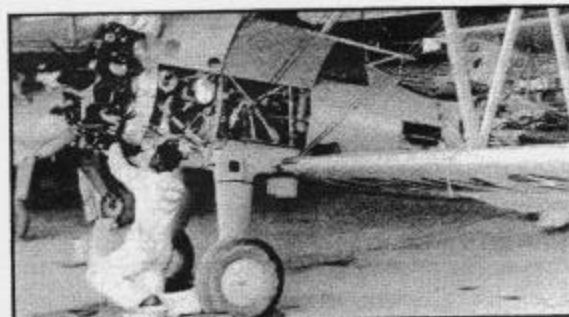


Figure 39. Maintenance work inside one of Moton Field's hangars (AFHRA, 289.28-100 43 E-F)



Figure 41. Aircraft maintenance, Moton Field (AFHRA, 289.28-100 43 E-F)



Figure 42. A corner of the lunchroom at Moton Field, 1944 (AFHRA, 234.821 v.2)



Figure 43. Head parachute rigger lectures and demonstrates to cadets on the use and care of parachutes, 1944 (AFHRA, 234.821 v. 2)



Figure 44. Officer returning salutes as he passes cadets during review, Tuskegee Army Air Field, World War II (National Archives, Pictures of African Americans During World War II, 167)



Figure 45. Capt. Benjamin O. Davis Jr. stepping into an advanced trainer, Tuskegee Army Air Field, January 1942 (National Archives, Pictures of African Americans During World War II, 218)



Figure 46. Training at Tuskegee Army Air Field during World War II (Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site)



Figure 47. Armament training, Tuskegee Army Air Field during World War II (Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site)



Figure 48. Morse code instruction, Tuskegee Army Air Field, January 1942 (National Archives, Pictures of African Americans During World War II, 168)

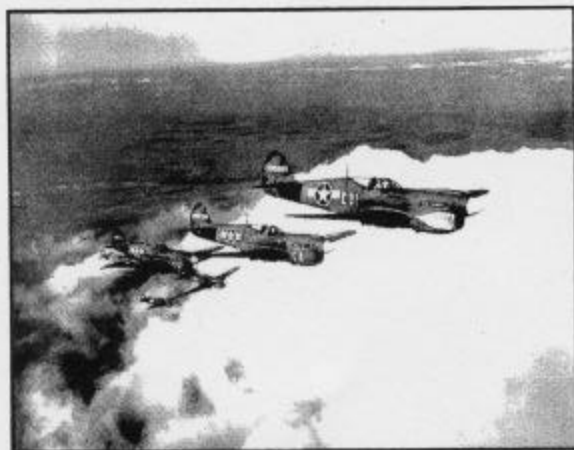


Figure 50. P-40 flight formation over Selfridge Field, MI, ca. 1943 (National Archives, Pictures of African Americans During World War II, 170)



Figure 49. Checking the parachute rigging, Tuskegee Army Air Field (Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site)



Figure 51. Fighter pilots of the 99th in Italy, February 1944 (National Archives, Pictures of African Americans During World War II, 48)

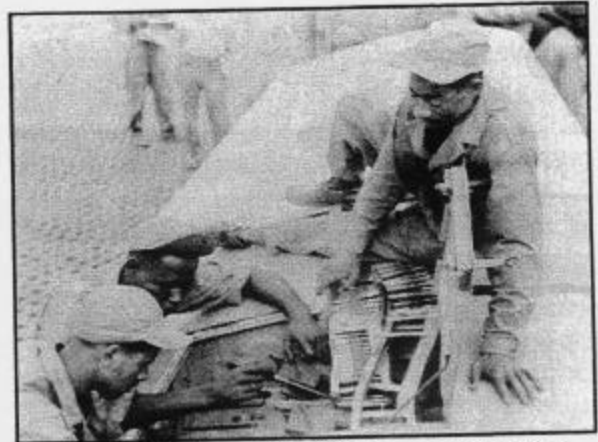


Figure 52. Members of the 99th's armament section, September 1944 (AFHRA, GP-332-Hi, Sept. 1944)



Figure 53. Brig. Gen. Benjamin O. Davis Sr. pinning the Distinguished Flying Cross on his son, Col. B. O. Davis Jr., September 1944 (AFHRA, GP-332-Hi Sept. 1944)

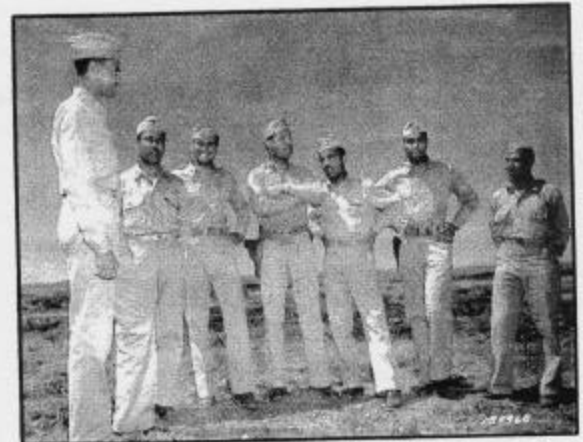


Figure 54. Lt. Col. Benjamin O. Davis Jr. with staff officers of the 99th, near Fez, French Morocco, May 12, 1943 (National Archives, Pictures of African Americans During World War II, 61)

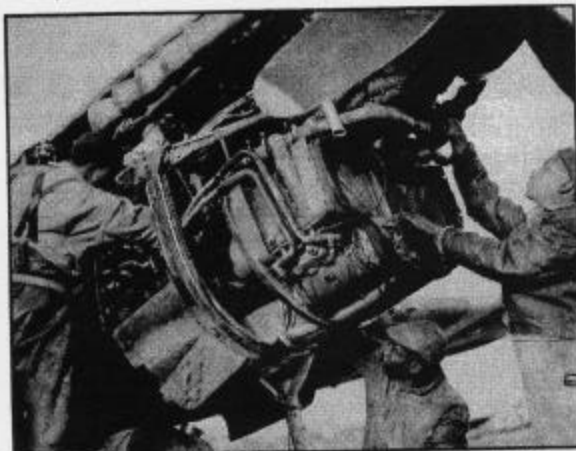


Figure 55. Mechanics of the 99th, February 1944 (National Archives, Pictures of African Americans During World War II, 57)

THE RESOURCE: MOTON FIELD

LOCATION

Moton Field is located in Macon County, Alabama, approximately two miles north of the central southeast city of Tuskegee and Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site. Interstate 85, which passes within less than one mile of Moton Field, provides major vehicle access between the City of Auburn, the State of Georgia to the east, and Montgomery, the state capital of Alabama, just thirty-five miles to the west.

CURRENT LAND USE AND OWNERSHIP

Purchased by Tuskegee Institute in 1941, the original 668-acre Moton Field site is today divided into three parcels. Two of the tracts are owned by Tuskegee University, including the portion containing historic buildings associated with the training of the Tuskegee Airmen. Tuskegee University's Veterinary School of Medicine currently uses some of these buildings for an animal quarantine facility. The third parcel bisects the center of the original site, which contained the actual air field, and was purchased by the City of Tuskegee for use as a municipal airport. The airport facility represents the only significant change in land use for the site or its surroundings from that which existed in the historic period of 1941 to 1946.

CULTURAL RESOURCE DESCRIPTION

Moton Field, Tuskegee, Alabama, (Airport Number 2 or Primary Flying Field)

Named in honor of Robert Russa Moton, the second president of Tuskegee Institute, Moton Field was built between 1940 and 1942 by Tuskegee Institute with financing from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. Because the facility was an army contract flight school, Maxwell Field in Montgomery, Alabama, provided technical assistance in selecting and mapping the site. Edward C. Miller, an architect, and G. L. Washington, an engineer who served as Director of Mechanical Industries at Tuskegee Institute, designed many of the structures at the air field. The school also selected Archie A. Alexander, an engineer and contractor, to build the air field, and Alexander began construction on the flight school facilities in June 1941. Inclement weather caused several building delays, and student laborers and skilled workers from Tuskegee Institute helped finish the field so flight training could begin on time. When Tuskegee Institute finally completed the facility, it included two hangars for aircraft, a control tower, a locker building, a club house, several wood buildings for offices and supplies, a few brick structures for storage, and an area for vehicles and their maintenance.

Although many of the original buildings still exist, deterioration poses a serious threat. Unless some form of resource protection is established, the cultural resources at Moton Field are in danger of further decay and could be lost.

Entrance Gate (Extant)

The Entrance Gate to Moton Field originally consisted of two approximately 9' x 9' wrought-metal gates flanked by two 11'-high brick pillars topped with caststone caps and decorative lanterns. An L-shaped cement walk to the right of the entrance way leads to an 8' (high) x 8' (long) brick wall containing a niche with a pedestal that once supported a bust of Robert Russa Moton, for whom the field was dedicated on April 1, 1943. The cement walk to the left of the entrance leads to another 8' x 8' brick wall with an arched opening for pedestrian traffic. Both the niche and the arched walkway are flanked by two curved, brick wing walls approximately 3' high and 22' long topped by caststone caps. Unfortunately, the wrought-metal gates, decorative lanterns, and bust of Robert Russa Moton are missing. A wood guard booth stood in the middle of the road leading to the gates as an additional security measure.

Hangar Number One (Extant)

A road from the Entrance Gate leads to Hangar Number One, the first hangar built at the air field. The structure housed the main activities at the air field, including pilot debriefings and primary maintenance. The brick and corrugated metal hangar consists of a 78' x 94' (height uncertain) open interior space surrounded by a series of one-story office, class, and storage room additions to the north, west, and south of the main structure. An approximately 11' x 57' cantilevered balcony provides a good view of the hangar interior, while a series of large, corrugated-metal, pocket doors on tracks could enclose the hangar space in inclement weather. The exterior rooms, a series of 17'- and 20'-wide additions, were used for a variety of purposes. The additions along the north side of the hangar included an office for the Director of Training and Group Commander, a general manager's office, as well as several other army offices and closets, many of which may have been converted into cadet class and briefing rooms. The west additions included several army offices, lavatories, a room for the heating equipment, and a shop area. In the southwest corner of the hangar addition, the shop area and machine room contained several large water heaters/boilers for a steam engine used to clean the aircraft at the field. The additions along the south side of the main hangar structure contained a utility closet, a lavatory for maintenance and supervisory personnel, an aircraft record room, the chief maintenance office, a supply room, and a "Tea Room," or snack area for the cadets. On the exterior of the building, in the southwest corner, a concrete reservoir or underground cistern provided water for the field.

Hangar Number Two (Non-extant)

Hangar Number Two originally stood across the paved aircraft area from Hangar Number

One. Like the first hangar, Hangar Number Two was completed ca. 1942 with the help of students and skilled laborers from Tuskegee Institute. However, a severe fire sometime in 1989 damaged most of the structure. The remaining brick rubble was removed shortly thereafter.

Hangar Number Two consisted of a brick and corrugated metal main hangar space approximately 98' x 105' x 28' high (to the middle of the arched roof) surrounded by a series of one-story brick office, training, and storage additions. Wood bowstring trusses supported the corrugated steel roof structure over the interior space, which could be enclosed by a series of corrugated metal pocket doors on tracks. (The metal tracks can still be seen, as well as the footprint of the hangar structure.) The southwest room of the addition contained an aircraft shop and dope room, presumably where aircraft were repaired. A 20' x 75' room along the south side of the main hangar probably contained several link trainers used to teach the cadets how to fly. The field surgeon may also have had a dark room in one of these areas. The southeast corner addition contained a cadet class and waiting room and was also used as the CAA (Civil Aeronautics Authority) War Training room. The rooms along the west addition to the main hangar included a boiler/heating room with a coal storage closet, a supply room which may have held the CAA War Training records, and a parachute storage and repair area. Activities in the parachute room included repairing, storing, packing, and dispensing the parachutes to the pilot cadets. The neighboring control tower was used to hang and dry the parachutes after flights. Unfortunately, the only remaining structure associated with this hangar is the control tower in the northeast corner of the building, which is described below.

Control Tower (Parachute Drying Tower) (Extant)

The Control Tower is a three-story, 20' x 20', brick structure attached to the northeast corner of Hangar Number Two. The building had six-over-six sash windows and many decorative brickwork features, such as a soldier course (a row of vertical stretchers), diamond work, and herringbone patterns along the parapet of the building, which was covered by cast-cement coping. The roof of the brick tower contained a wood-frame observation deck (sometimes referred to as the "fourth story") with louvered windows and a standing-seam metal roof topped by a red observation light. A fire escape on the south side of the tower led from the roof of the tower to the second floor to provide emergency access to the roof of the neighboring hangar. A parachute tower (accessed through the adjacent parachute room in the hangar) ran the entire three-story height of the southwest corner of the structure while a stairway occupied the southeast. The ground floor held the dispatcher's office while the second had a small lavatory and additional office space. The third floor also contained additional office space as well as a small stairway leading to the observation deck on top of the tower. Unfortunately, the 1989 fire destroyed much of the interior of the building, so only a three-story brick shell remains.

Fire Protection Building (Extant)

The Fire Protection Building, a one-story, 8' x 8', shed-roof, brick structure, stands to the west of Hangar Number One and, presumably, housed some of the fire-fighting equipment at the air field.

Oil Storage Building (Extant)

The Oil Storage Building consists of a one-story, 11.5' x 12', shed-roof, brick structure with small screened areas and wood planking below the roof line for ventilation.

Dope Storage Building (Extant)

The Dope Storage Building is very similar in plan and design to the Oil Storage Building. The one-story, 11' x 11', shed-roof, brick structure has a metal door and ventilated area under the roof line for the storage of dope, the coating applied to the fabric of an aircraft to produce tautness and increase its strength.

Locker Building (Administrative Building) (Extant)

The Locker Building consists of a one-story, gable-roof, wood-frame structure with a small, wood-frame shed addition to the south and a large gable-roof addition to the west. The main structure contains several six-over-six sash windows and two entries on the east gable-end covered by wood hoods. The wood-frame addition on the west also has six-over-six sash windows, an interior brick chimney, as well as a single entry on the north side. The building may have been used as an administrative building and cadet training area until it was converted into a bath house and locker room for the cadets and crews at Moton Field. The main structure contained locker rooms and toilets for the men and women stationed at the air field as well as a first aid office, while the west addition held heating equipment.

All Ranks Club (Cottage) (Extant)

The All Ranks Club is a one-story, L-shaped, gable-roof, wood-frame structure with a half basement and several shed porches and additions. The main building consists of a 83' x 25', gable-roof, frame structure containing a large open room (approx. 24' x 26'), a library-conference room, and two or three smaller rooms which may have been used as offices or bedrooms at one time. Shed-roof additions to the front and rear contain screened porches, rest rooms, a bath room, and additional rooms. A gable-roof addition along the north face has several rooms (possibly used as living and bed rooms) and a kitchen area, which enters onto a small, shed-roof porch on the west face of the addition.

Warehouse (Vehicle Storage) (Possibly extant)

According to photographs and drawings of Moton Field, the Warehouse (Vehicle Storage) was a one-story, 32' x 64', gable-roof structure which stood slightly to the southeast of

Hangar Number Two. The building probably had several double six-over-six sash windows and large openings under the east and west gable-ends to allow vehicles to enter the service and storage area. According to plans, the structure also contained sleeping quarters for four or five men as well as additional storage areas. However, it is uncertain whether the original structure is still standing. The current building located on the site of the Warehouse could be the original, although heavily altered over the years. It is also possible that the Warehouse was torn down and replaced with another structure of the same dimensions (which was subsequently altered). A historical architect or someone well versed in building technology and fabric should examine the building to determine whether it dates to the historic period (1940-1946) and, if so, how much of the original material remains.

Flight Commander's Office (Non-extant)

According to construction drawings, the Flight Commander's Office was a one-story, 22' x 49', wood-frame, gable-roof structure which stood to the north of the Fire Protection Building and the west of Hangar Number One. The office probably had several double six-over-six sash windows and was heated by a stove along the south wall. As a flight commander's office, the structure consisted of a large open area (20' x 36'), a squadron commander's office, and a lavatory. According to Moton Field plans, the building may have also been used as a cadet class and waiting room, with areas reserved for a cloak room and the flight surgeon's office. (These functions may also have been in one of the hangars at the field.) A hood probably covered the main entrance (reached by a wood stoop) on the east gable-end of the building.

Army Supply Building (Non-extant)

According to photographs and drawings of Moton Field, the Army Supply Building was a one-story, 22' x 49', wood-frame, gable-roof structure which stood to the south of the Fire Protection Building and to the west of Hangar Number One. The supply building was similar in style and design to the neighboring Flight Commander's Office, and probably had six-over-six sash windows, a wood stoop, and hooded entries on the east and west gable-ends of the building. The interior was probably divided into several smaller spaces and offices.

Water System Building (Non-extant)

The Water System Building was a small, 11' x 10' structure located along the road to the hangars near the Oil Storage Building. Little is known about its design or composition.

Physical Plant Storage Building (Non-extant)

The main portion of the Physical Plant Storage Building consisted of an approximately 12' x 44' gable-roof structure with a large storage area (11' x 21') and rooms for the Physical Plant Engineer. A 9' x 22' shed-roof storage addition was built along the south side of the building.

Vehicle and Maintenance Building (Non-extant)

According to historic photographs of Moton Field, a vehicle and maintenance area stood to the southeast of Hangar Number Two. The gable-roof structure had large, open areas along its sides to accommodate vehicles in the interior and resembled a modern car port. Neither plans of the structure nor detailed photographs have been found, and archeological investigations may provide more information concerning the building's exact location and function.

Extant Historic Landscape Features:

Reservoir (southwest corner of Hangar Number One)

Gasoline Pits and Fuel Storage Facilities

Paved Aircraft Area between Hangars

Taxiway to Air Field

Vehicle Area

Curbs and Road Beds

Other Local Sites Associated With The Tuskegee Airmen:

Kennedy Field, Alabama (Airport Number 1)

Tuskegee Army Air Field (TAAF), Tuskegee vicinity, Alabama (Airport Number 3)

Tuskegee Institute, Alabama

Chehaw, Alabama



Figure 56. Moton Field, November 1996 (Lou Thole Collection, Cincinnati, Ohio)



Figure 57. Entrance Gates, Moton Field, 1997 (Christine Trebellas, NPS)



Figure 58. Moton Field, 1997 (Christine Trebellas, NPS)



Figure 59. Hangar No. 1, Moton Field, 1997 (Christine Trebellas, NPS)



Figure 60. Moton Field, 1997 (Christine Trebellas, NPS)



Figure 61. All Ranks Club, Moton Field, 1997 (Christine Trebellas, NPS)



Figure 62. All Ranks Club, Moton Field, 1997 (Christine Trebellas, NPS)



Figure 63. Locker Building & Dope Storage, Moton Field, 1997 (Christine Trebellas, NPS)

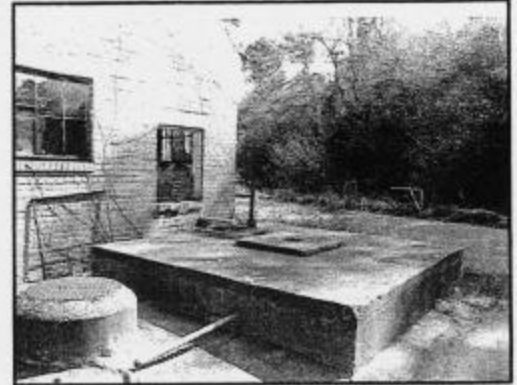


Figure 64. Reservoir, Hangar No. 1, Moton Field, 1998 (Christine Trebellas, NPS)

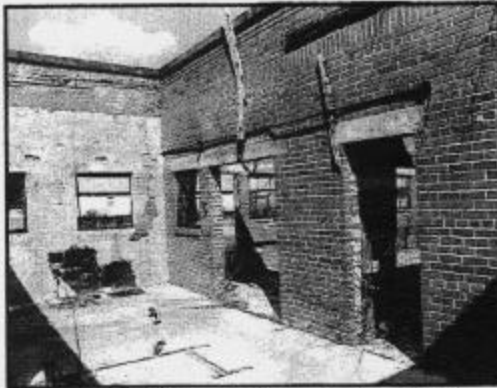


Figure 65. NW corner, Hangar No. 1, Moton Field, 1998 (Christine Trebellas, NPS)

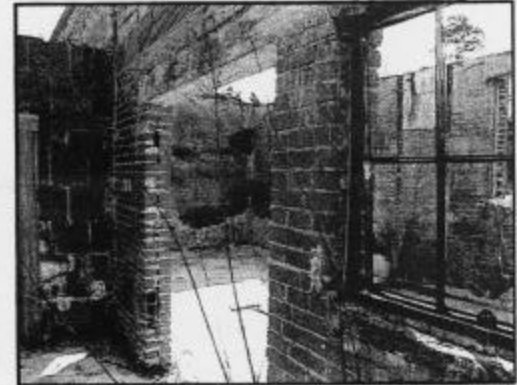


Figure 66. NW corner, Hangar No. 1, Moton Field, 1998 (Christine Trebellas, NPS)



Figure 67. Interior, Hangar No. 1, 1998 (Christine Trebellas, NPS)



Figure 68. Hangar No. 1, Moton Field, 1997 (Barbara Tagger, NPS)

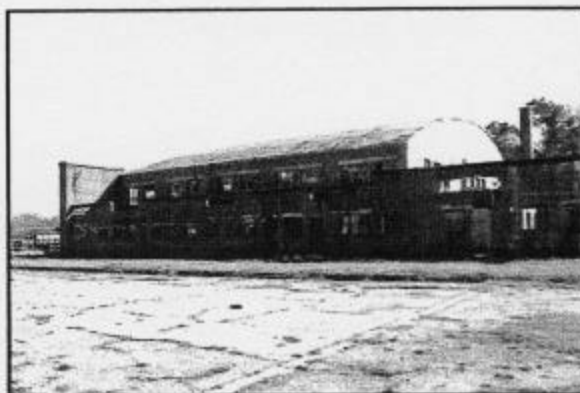


Figure 69. Hangar No. 1, Moton Field, 1997 (Barbara Tagger, NPS)

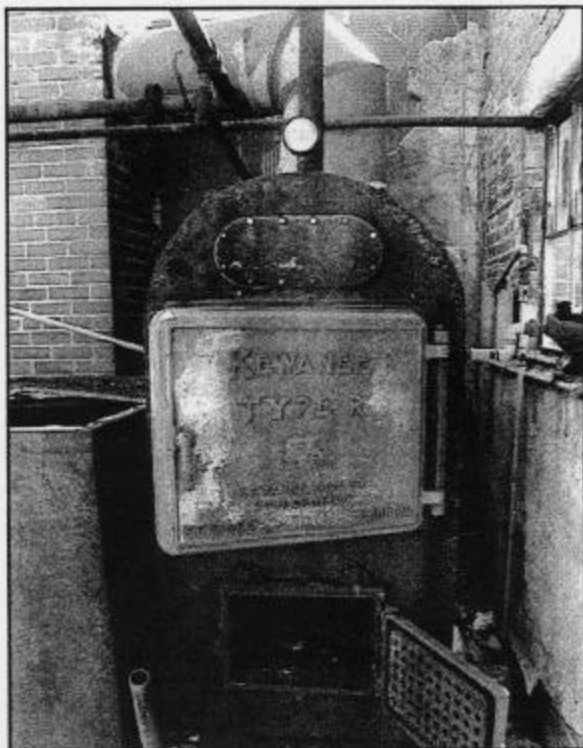


Figure 70. Boiler in Hangar No. 1, Moton Field, 1998 (Christine Trebellas, NPS)



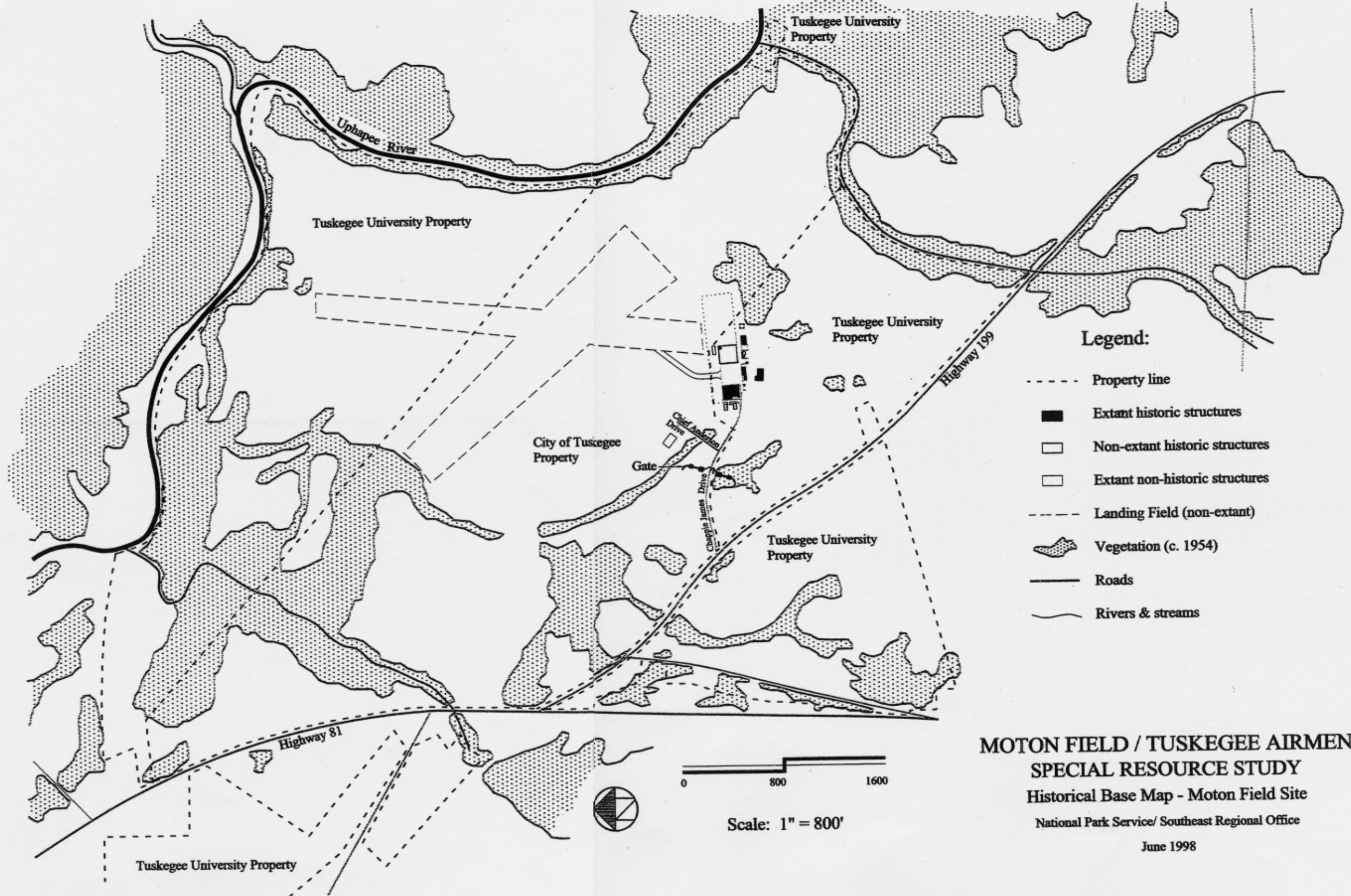
Figure 71. East face of Control Tower, Moton Field, 1997 (Christine Trebellas, NPS)



Figure 72. Remains of Tuskegee Army Air Field, 1998 (Christine Trebellas, NPS)



Figure 73. Remains of Chehaw, 1998 (Barbara Tagger, NPS)









Legend:

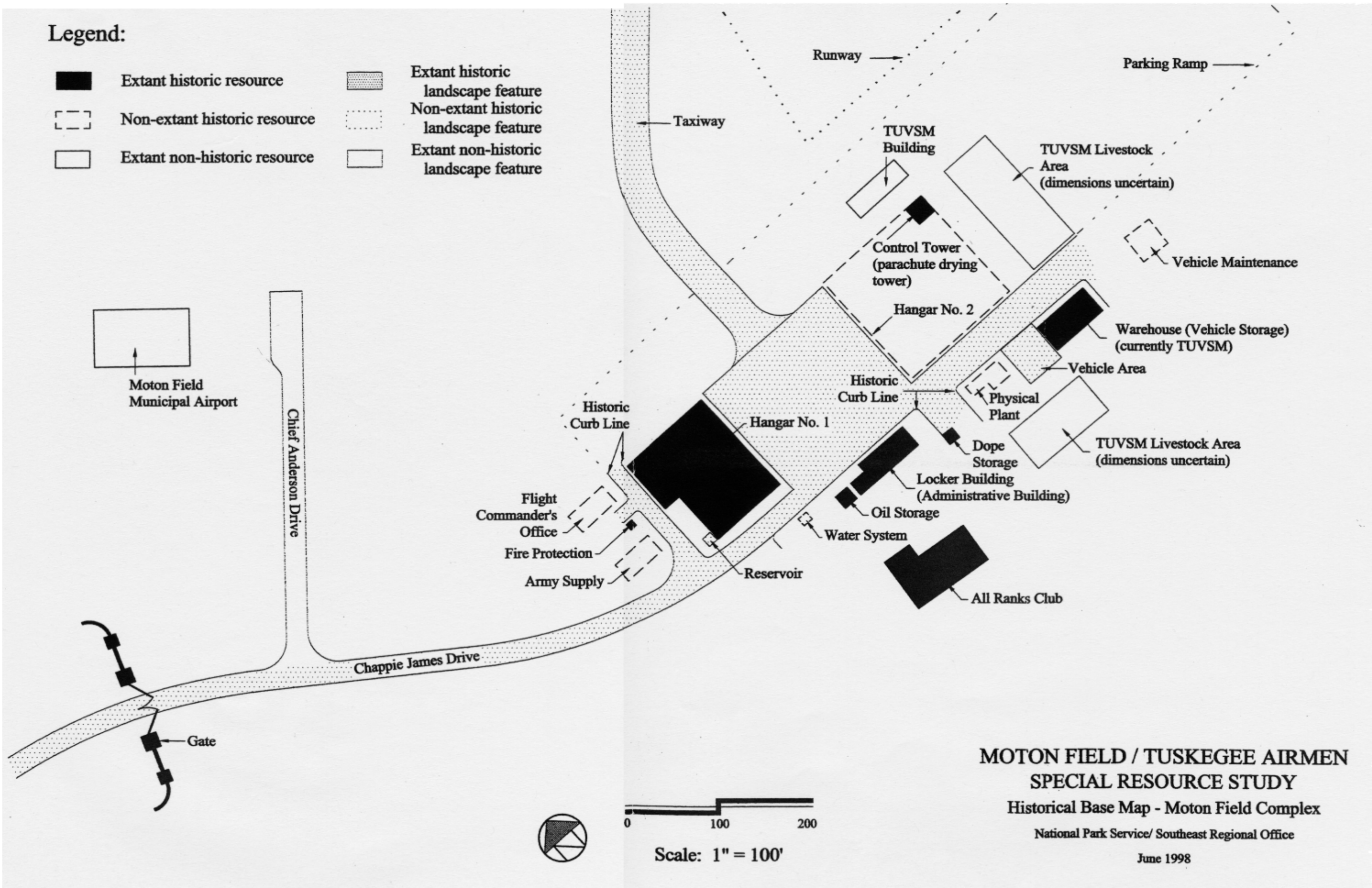
- - - - - Property line
- Extant historic structures
- Non-extant historic structures
- Extant non-historic structures
- - - - - Landing Field (non-extant)
- Vegetation (c. 1954)
- Roads
- ~ Rivers & streams

**MOTON FIELD / TUSKEGEE AIRMEN
SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY
Historical Base Map - Moton Field Site
National Park Service/ Southeast Regional Office**

June 1998

Legend:

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
|  | Extant historic resource |  | Extant historic landscape feature |
|  | Non-extant historic resource |  | Non-extant historic landscape feature |
|  | Extant non-historic resource |  | Extant non-historic landscape feature |



**MOTON FIELD / TUSKEGEE AIRMEN
SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY**

Historical Base Map - Moton Field Complex

National Park Service/ Southeast Regional Office

June 1998

RESOURCE SIGNIFICANCE

RESOURCE SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

African-American men and women have played significant roles in the United States military. Recent scholarship of United States military history reveals the valuable contributions they have made from the colonial period to the present. In every war that African Americans have participated, they have sacrificed their lives for the nation's defense, and more importantly, for the preservation of individual freedom and civil liberty. Beginning in the colonial era to the 1950s, their entry into the military usually meant overcoming exclusion, quotas, and racial discrimination. Their struggle to end racism in the military also extended into eliminating social injustice. Thus victory for the African-American community was always two-fold: to fight for freedom, equality, and respect for the race as well as fight in defense of the nation.

During World War II, the formation of the Tuskegee Airmen resulted from intense pressure put forth by civil rights organizations and the black press. The "Tuskegee Airmen Experience" serves as an excellent model to display the two-fold battle African Americans encountered in their push to serve in the United States armed forces.

The Tuskegee Airmen symbolize the overall sentiment of most African Americans who viewed the war as means to ensure the preservation of democracy and human rights for all oppressed peoples while fighting against racial injustice. The noble effort of the African-American Army Air Forces officers of the 477th Bombardment Group (Medium) who staged a non-violent demonstration to desegregate the officers club at Freeman Field, Indiana, helped set the pattern for protests popularized by civil rights activists during the 1950s and 1960s.

FINDINGS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

The struggle of African Americans for greater roles in North American military conflicts spans the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Opportunities for African-American participation in the United States military were always very limited and controversial. Quotas, exclusion, and racial discrimination were based on the prevailing attitude in the United States, particularly on the part of the U. S. military, that African Americans did not possess the intellectual capacity, aptitude, and skills to be successful fighters.

These perceptions continued within the U.S. military into the 1940s. Key leaders within the U.S. Army Air Corps did not believe that African Americans possessed the capacity to become successful military pilots. After succumbing to pressure exerted by civil rights groups and the black press, the army decided to train a small number of African-American pilot cadets under special conditions. Although prejudice and discrimination against African Americans was a national phenomenon, not just a southern trait, it was more intense in the South where it had hardened into rigidly enforced patterns of segregation. Such was the environment that the military chose to locate the training of the Tuskegee Airmen.

The military selected Tuskegee Institute (now known as Tuskegee University) as a civilian contractor for a variety of reasons. These included the school's existing facilities, engineering and technical instructors, and a climate with ideal flying conditions year round. Tuskegee Institute's strong interest in providing aeronautical training for African-American youths was also an important factor. Students from the school's civilian pilot training program had some of the best test scores when compared to other students from programs across the southeast.

In 1941 the U.S. Army Air Corps awarded a contract to Tuskegee Institute to operate a primary flight school at Moton Field. Tuskegee Institute chose an African-American contractor who designed and constructed Moton Field, with the assistance of its faculty and students, as the site for its military pilot training program. The field was named for the school's second president, Robert Russa Moton. Consequently, Tuskegee Institute was one of a very few institutions (and the only African-American institution) to own, develop, and control facilities for military flight instruction.

Moton Field, also known as the Primary Flying Field or Airport Number 2, was the only primary flight training facility for African-American pilot candidates in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. The facility symbolizes the entrance of African-American pilots into the U.S. Army Air Corps and the singular role of Tuskegee Institute to provide the economic and educational resources and to make that entry possible, although on a segregated basis.

The Tuskegee Airmen were the first African-American soldiers to complete their training successfully and to enter the U.S. Army Air Corps. Almost 1,000 aviators were trained as America's first African-American military pilots. In addition, more than 10,000 military and civilian African-American men and women served as flight instructors, officers, bombardiers, navigators, radio technicians, mechanics, air traffic controllers, parachute riggers, electrical and communications specialists, medical professionals, laboratory assistants, cooks, musicians, and supply, fire-fighting and transportation personnel.

Although military leaders were hesitant to use the Tuskegee Airmen in combat, the airmen eventually saw considerable action in North Africa and Europe. Acceptance from U.S. Army Air Forces units came slowly, but their courageous and, in many cases, heroic performance earned them increased combat opportunities and respect.

The successes of the Tuskegee Airmen proved to the American public that African Americans, when given the opportunity, could become effective military leaders and pilots. This helped pave the way for desegregation of the military, beginning with President Harry S Truman's Executive Order 9981 in 1948. The Tuskegee Airmen's success also helped set the stage for civil rights advocates to continue the struggle to end racial discrimination during the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

The story of the Tuskegee Airmen also reflects the struggle of African Americans to achieve equal rights, not only through legal attacks on the system of segregation, but also through the techniques of nonviolent direct action. The members of the 477th Bombardment Group, who staged a nonviolent demonstration to desegregate the officer's club at Freeman Field, Indiana, helped set the pattern for direct action protests popularized by civil rights activists in later decades.

REVISED NATIONAL PARK SERVICE THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

The history of Moton Field and the Tuskegee Airmen relates to several of the themes listed in the "Revision of the National Park Service's Thematic Framework, 1996." The framework is composed of eight categories or themes focusing on people, time and place. The full diversity of American history and prehistory is expressed through the framework. Serving as a guide for the National Park Service on evaluating the significance of resources and assessing how well the themes are represented in the National Park System, the framework is also useful in expanding interpretive programs at existing park units. Themes specific to Moton Field and the Tuskegee Airmen are listed under each of the following general themes from the framework.

Peopling Places

Moton Field was a place of opportunity. The Tuskegee Airmen seized that opportunity, overcame tremendous obstacles and accepted the challenge.

The Tuskegee Airmen came from across the United States to a place where they learned special skills from special people and developed camaraderie and confidence that has followed them to this day.

Creating Social and Political Movements

Tuskegee Institute and the Tuskegee Airmen aimed for excellence at Moton Field and elsewhere. This opportunity to prove that African Americans could excel was the culmination of a struggle for civil rights on the part of progressive American individuals, organizations and public officials.

The lack of opportunities among African-American bombardiers led to protests at Freeman Field, Indiana. These protests heightened changes in attitudes of key figures in the military command.

Expressing Cultural Values

Those who became Tuskegee Airmen valued education and achievement before they came to participate in the “Tuskegee Experiment.” They were the very best and determined to dispel the myth that African Americans could not fly, fight, lead and work together as a cohesive unit.

Tuskegee Institute, under the leadership of President Patterson and with the support of blacks and whites together, actively sought and laid the foundation for the Tuskegee Airmen program.

Developing the American Economy

The Tuskegee Airmen were leaders and creators. They multiplied their talents and became leaders in industry, business, organizational development and politics.

The “Tuskegee Airmen Experience” generated a wide variety of skilled men and women who carried their talents into the work force after World War II.

World War II spurred the economy, redefined national attitudes toward work and opened vast opportunities for civilian workers, including women and ethnic groups.

Shaping the Political Landscape

From the beginning of the American experience, military opportunities for African Americans, by tradition and policy, provided only very limited roles in a segregated environment. The U.S. Army Air Corps was a totally segregated experience unique in the U.S. military, and Moton Field was the only place where African Americans could become military pilots/airmen.

Expanding Science and Technology

The Tuskegee Airmen demonstrated their skills and abilities for the first time in World War II and imparted them to future generations, especially through African-American ROTC

programs.

Changing Role of The U. S. in the World Community

President Truman's support for military desegregation in 1948 set the tone for future national civil rights action and legislation.

General Benjamin O. Davis Jr. was the epitome of extraordinary leadership and individual achievement.

Executive decisions by General George Patton provided strategic opportunities for African Americans in World War II.

The American civil rights movement became a model for human rights movements throughout the world.

The great combat successes of the Tuskegee pilots earned them the highest respect of the German Luftwaffe.

Transforming the Environment

Moton Field and its story--suppressed, ignored and forgotten for almost half a century--is worthy of preservation and interpretation for future generations.

CURRENT STATUS

There are presently no nominations pending to the National Register of Historic Places for Moton Field. Preparation of a National Historic Landmark nomination was begun in 1989. This effort focused on the historic core complex. When fire destroyed Hangar Number Two and gutted the interior of the control tower, the nomination study was concluded with a recommendation that no further consideration be given due to a loss of integrity. In 1997, Dr. Payton and Congressman Riley requested that the NPS evaluate the potential of adding Moton Field to the National Park System to commemorate the Tuskegee Airmen. Consequently, the study team had to re-evaluate the integrity of Moton Field.

SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION

To qualify for consideration as a potential addition to the National Park System an area must meet each of four criteria for national significance. An area must be an *outstanding example of a type of resource, possess exceptional values for interpretation, provide superlative opportunities for public use and enjoyment, and retain integrity as a true, accurate and*

relatively unspoiled example of a type of resource. The following analysis compares Moton Field and the history of the Tuskegee Airmen with each of these criteria.

Outstanding Example of Resource Type

Moton Field is a unique and outstanding example of a resource representing World War II military and pilot training facilities, the struggle of African Americans for more significant roles in the military, and political and social change furthered by civilian and military pilot training programs as well as the accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen. It is the site where the first military training of African-American pilots for the U.S. Army Air Corps began.

Moton Field facilities have undergone little change since World War II. It is typical that U.S. military facilities eventually face adaptation or conversion for other military or nonmilitary uses. While numerous other facilities built for World War II pilot training purposes do still exist, they have, in most all cases, been extensively modified. Such modifications change not only the function but the original appearance of such facilities. Unlike the majority of military facilities, Moton Field did not undergo extensive changes for military purposes during or after World War II.

The U.S. military no longer used Moton Field as a flight training facility after the end of World War II. Since that time, the complex has not been affected by other military operations. Although some nonmilitary-related changes were made to some of the smaller outbuildings, these alterations appear to be reversible.

It is the combination of these factors that make Moton Field important among military facilities. A complex or historic district of related World War II military pilot training facilities which have not undergone extensive alterations is rare.

Possesses Exceptional Value For Interpretation

Moton Field possesses exceptional value for interpreting the history of the Tuskegee Airmen. It represents the only substantial remaining training facility for African-American military pilots from the "Tuskegee Experiment."

There is a high potential for visitors to understand Moton Field as an active training operation. While experiencing the layout of the complex of buildings and other facilities, visitors can gain an understanding of the relationship of the various training activities and how they were conducted. In addition, a portion of the site is still "active" as a small municipal airport. Understanding on a very human scale is also aided by the pedestrian-oriented size of the complex. This is in contrast with most military complexes that are so large that the way they functioned cannot be easily visualized. Information on the functions

of the buildings, including the hangars and each of their separate rooms and compartments, is also available to further help with interpretive efforts.

Moton Field possesses exceptional value in illustrating the following aspects of the history of the Tuskegee Airmen.

1. Preceding and during much of World War II, the theory that African Americans were not good fighters was a political and social idea, reflecting the two separate systems existing in the United States which kept African Americans from active roles in military efforts.
2. Pressure for change, both in the form of working within the system and attempts to alter the system, came from a variety of sources.
3. Political and military resistance to an expanded role for African Americans as fighter pilots was ultimately overcome by their strong aspirations to fly, their sheer determination to acquire highly developed skills, and the willingness to sacrifice to prove themselves and their worth in defense of their country as well as further the struggle for equal rights.
4. Moton Field is a reflection of the social conditions of the period as represented by the military and the obstacles and barriers that African Americans had to overcome.
5. The history of the Tuskegee Airmen, their training, difficult circumstances, and their success in World War II combat have significance for all Americans.
6. After World War II, changes in the U.S. to provide for advancement of African Americans in the military and equality of rights in American society were slow to come. However, the success of the Tuskegee Airmen was an influencing factor in President Truman's decision to desegregate the military in 1948, and had a significant impact on civil rights activities and advancements of the 1950s and 1960s.

Provides Superlative Opportunities For Public Use And Enjoyment

Moton Field possesses several outstanding opportunities for public use and education. Tuskegee Institute, which owned and built the flight facilities at Moton Field, also provided housing, meals, classroom space and recreational facilities for the pilot cadets. Consequently, development of the Moton Field site may offer opportunities for Tuskegee University to reestablish its aviation link with the airfield. This has implications for both visitor and educational use.

Tuskegee University's proposed Charles Alfred Anderson Department of Aviation Science would again involve the university in a new generation of achievement at Moton Field. With

a pre-college and college-level curriculum focusing on math, science, and aviation, the department would allow students from across the country to learn and grow in an atmosphere of high achievement as represented by the accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen and the university. The interface of students and visitors through the sharing of some common areas has exciting possibilities for both visitor and educational use. The aspects of pilot training could be a part of the facility, helping to make portions of Moton Field and its training atmosphere "come alive" for visitors.

Even in the absence of such a sharing of Moton Field for educational purposes, the site offers opportunities for learning about the Tuskegee Airmen. An interpretive trail running past the historic entrance gate and through the historic complex could provide visitors with an understanding of training activities. Reproductions of period aircraft, training apparatus and other equipment typical of those used by the Tuskegee Airmen could be added to further enhance the visitor experience. Trails could also be extended into the wooded areas southeast of the training complex. Here, a picnic facility may be developed near an existing creek.

Retains Integrity As A True, Accurate And Relatively Unspoiled Example Of A Type Of Resource

When considering integrity, it is necessary to view the resource as a whole. In the case of Moton Field, the resource includes the complex of buildings used for training. However, the resource also includes the rest of the airfield and its historic setting. While certain changes have occurred to the complex of historic buildings, it is necessary to view these changes in terms of how they might affect the way visitors may be able to perceive and understand Moton Field as a total resource. It is from this standpoint that the following evaluation of integrity was prepared. Factors including *location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association* are addressed.

In 1989, a fire destroyed Hangar Number Two and gutted the control tower. Two small buildings to the west side of Hangar Number One no longer exist. A small, non-historic building northeast of the site of Hangar Number Two and the control tower has been added. All remaining historic buildings retain their original location. Original design, materials and workmanship are also evident for each of the structures. Although deterioration has occurred, the remaining resources have not undergone significant alterations. This includes buildings and landscape features such as paved areas, the taxiways, curbs and roads. In addition, several points of access to underground storage facilities are intact and clearly visible in the paved area between the two hangars.

Considering that portions of the historic building complex have been lost, factors relating to setting, feeling and association assume great importance in evaluating the total picture of

integrity. The airfield itself is the primary resource, and it has changed little over the years. The historic setting of the 1940s is still evident. A portion of the eastern end of the site that was covered with trees in the 1940s has since been cleared to allow for the extension of municipal airport runways. However, this area is not visible from the historic complex. For the remainder of the site, the expanse of open area and tree line edge have changed slightly, but these differences are minor and not significant to the appearance of the historic setting from the Moton Field complex.

When approaching Moton Field from a distance or standing in the midst of the original complex of buildings and looking in all directions, few differences are apparent. The only visible change appears to be the small building and apparatus associated with current use of the land as a municipal airport for the City of Tuskegee. These airport facilities do not intrude on the historic complex. And even though the grassy field used for takeoffs and landings of military aircraft now has paved runways, these changes are not readily noticeable from the historic complex. Even Interstate 85, although less than a mile to the north, is not visible from Moton Field.

In the case of feeling, several considerations are important. First of all, is there still a strong "sense of place" at Moton Field? In other words, when viewed as a whole, does it still have the appearance of an airfield? Is the resource sufficiently intact so visitors can understand how Moton Field functioned? Is the feeling of scale still apparent? In the case of Moton Field, the answer to each of these questions is yes.

Association requires that the site can be understood by relating the historic uses of the 1940s with what still exists today. In other words, does the site still provide visitors with the opportunity to visualize how military pilot training activities were conducted during World War II? Can the relationship be seen between the various facilities and how they operated together? For example, is the route that planes used to taxi from the hangar to the take off area still apparent? Here again, the answer is yes to these questions.

Such strong feeling and association as are still evident at Moton Field do not require that every facility be extant. The original configuration of the complex is still intact. In addition, the visible footprint of Hangar Number Two and exterior structure of the control tower are more than sufficient to allow visitors to associate the location and use of the buildings to the adjacent Hangar Number One and other facilities in the Moton Field complex. The fact that the two hangars were very similar in size and design is also important to associate past uses with the current site and its facilities.

Although changes have occurred at Moton Field over the years, the site has not surrendered its overall appearance as an airfield for military pilot training. Moton Field retains a high

level of integrity so visitors to the site can clearly understand the activities and training of the Tuskegee Airmen.

SUITABILITY AND FEASIBILITY

SUITABILITY

An understanding of suitability must be based on how well the themes represented at Moton Field compare to those covered by existing areas of the National Park System. To be considered suitable for inclusion in the system, an area must represent a cultural theme or type of resource that is not already adequately represented in the system or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by another land managing entity.

For the purposes of this analysis, it is therefore useful to review earlier versions of the National Park Service's thematic framework from 1972 and 1987. These versions show park units and other cultural resources in relation to the themes. The framework during these periods was based on the "Stages of American Progress" and served to celebrate the achievements of the founding fathers and the inevitable march of democracy.

In the 1972 version, "Part One of the National Park System Plan: History," Moton Field and the Tuskegee Airmen relate to theme 4, "Major American Wars," and the sub-theme "World War II." At this time, no units of the National Park System related to this theme.

For the 1987 version, "History and Prehistory in the National Park System and the National Historic Landmark Program," the framework of themes had changed to include a theme devoted to "World War II." Related sub-themes and units of the National Park System were indicated as follows:

- A. War in Europe, Africa and the Atlantic, 1939-1945
Eisenhower National Historic Site (NHS), PA

- B. War in the Pacific 1941-1945
American Memorial Park, Saipan (Affiliated Area)
USS Arizona Memorial, HI
War in the Pacific National Historical Park, Guam

- C. The Homefront
Boston National Historical Park (Charlestown Navy Yard), MA

Today, related parks have been expanded to include Golden Gate National Recreation Area

(San Francisco Port of Embarkation), Harry S Truman NHS, Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Manzanar NHS, and Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial.

Another theme of the 1987 version relating to Moton Field and the Airmen is “Social and Humanitarian Movements.” Here, the sub-theme “Civil Rights Movement” also applies. The list of park units includes Frederick Douglass Home NHS (DC), Martin Luther King, Jr., NHS (GA), Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS (DC), Brown vs. Board of Education NHS (KS) and Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail (AL).

Of the existing parks that fit in the above categories, as well as those of the most current (1996) revision of the framework, several findings can be stated:

1. The National Park System does not include representations of World War II sites dealing with military pilot training. No existing NPS units represent World War II military training as their primary purpose.
2. Unlike the World War II NPS sites in the Pacific, those on the U.S. mainland are very limited in number and scope and deal with a variety of themes. World War II use of Charlestown Navy Yard at Boston National Historical Park was related to military ships. More recent additions to the National Park System, including Manzanar National Memorial, represent an internment camp for Japanese Americans and the site of a maritime ship explosion which killed many African Americans. World War II harbor defenses are represented at the Sandy Hook unit of Gateway National Recreation Area and at Cabrillo National Monument.
3. Of the 67 National Park Service units that directly and indirectly deal with African-American heritage, none of them interpret the history of the Tuskegee Airmen.
4. There are few NPS units which discuss the struggle by African Americans to participate in the military. Fort Davis NHS and Fort Scott NHS interpret the Buffalo Soldiers, and Richmond and Petersburg National Battlefields cover black regiments in the Civil War.

“Revision of the National Park Service’s Thematic Framework, 1996,” does not include National Historic Landmarks. Therefore, the 1987 version was consulted. While it may appear from this list that there is adequate representation of World War II, none of these sites were designated National Historic Landmarks because they related directly to the participation of African Americans in the military or the training of African-American military pilots.

Only one National Historic Landmark, the Fort Des Moines Provisional Army Officer Training School in Des Moines, Iowa, relates to training of African Americans for military duty. Created during World War I, the school marked both the U.S. Army's first recognition of its responsibility to train African-American officers as well as the establishment of a military tradition among African Americans. During World War II, Fort Des Moines served as a training center for the Women's Army Corps (WAC).

In addition, the story of the Tuskegee Airmen and Moton Field is not comparably represented or protected by any other land managing entity. Exhibits on the Tuskegee Airmen have been assembled at various locations around the country. Several examples include the USS *Alabama* in Mobile, the Museum of Aviation at Warner Robins Air Force Base near Macon, Georgia, the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum near Savannah, Georgia, and the Tuskegee Airmen National Museum near Detroit, Michigan. While these exhibits are well done, they are very limited in their treatment of the story. They cannot be considered comparable to the interpretive values that can be derived by presenting the story at Moton Field where training actually occurred.

Another issue related to suitability is the relationship of Moton Field to the existing Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site (NHS). Moton Field has a strong and direct relationship to Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) and, therefore, to the purposes for which the NHS was established. The school owned the Moton Field site, coordinated the construction of facilities, and contracted with the Army Air Corps for its operation. In addition, portions of cadet training took place on the school's campus. For these reasons, should Moton Field not be added to the National Park System as a separate unit, it would be suitable as a noncontiguous addition to the existing NHS.

FEASIBILITY

To be considered feasible as a new unit of the National Park System, an area must be of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure long-term protection of historic settings and/or natural systems and to accommodate public use. It also must have the potential for efficient administration at a reasonable cost. Factors to be considered include size and configuration, boundary, land ownership and availability, costs for acquisition and development, access, threats to the resource, and the effects of the plans of others on the site.

Size/Configuration and Boundary

The 668-acre tract of land that comprises Moton Field includes sufficient area to ensure the long-term protection of the historic resource, which includes all historic facilities and their setting. A 164-acre parcel on the south side of the site includes the historic core of Moton Field structures. Here, there is adequate land area to accommodate public use (i.e.,

interpretation, visitor parking, etc.), and administration. The remaining acreage is divided into two tracts, both of which are important for maintaining the historic setting of Moton Field to the north, east and west. The configuration of these tracts serve to surround and buffer the historic core area from development that could compromise the historic setting.

Land Ownership/Availability

Tuskegee University owns two of three parcels of land which make up the Moton Field site. The center parcel of 317 acres was sold by the university to the City of Tuskegee for use as a municipal airport. Most park use for interpretation, parking, administrative and other purposes will be confined to an 81-acre parcel on the south side of the site. The university has expressed support for considering the addition of Moton Field to the National Park System. Discussions have been held with the university and the city concerning their willingness to transfer land interests to the National Park Service, and it is anticipated that the land will be donated.

Accessibility

Highway 81, a state-maintained road, currently serves the Moton Field site between Interstate 85 and the City of Tuskegee. From Highway 81, county highway 199 leads to “Chief” Anderson St., which provides access directly to the historic core area of Moton Field facilities as well as the municipal airport. Although neither of these roads is presently of sufficient width to provide for access by large numbers of vehicles, land area exists to improve the roadways to National Park Service standards. Space is also sufficient for construction of visitor parking in proximity to the road. The road does not cross significant drainage areas or streams that would add to the cost of improvement and widening. The City of Tuskegee has recently received funds for improvement of the municipal airport. It is possible that some of this money may be used to improve the road and provide for visitor parking.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has expressed interest in constructing a new access road from Interstate 85 to Moton Field. This is contingent upon Moton Field being preserved as an attraction for tourism.

Visitation Potential

Visits to Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site (NHS) averaged approximately 500,000 per year during the period of 1993-1997. The visitation potential for a Moton Field unit of the National Park System should be considered higher than for the existing NHS. This is because of the widespread visibility and interest in the Tuskegee Airmen. Many of those visitors coming to Moton Field are likely to be different from those who normally visit the NHS. Some of the visitation to Moton Field, however, may actually increase annual use of the NHS. In a similar way, the growing number of other tourism attractions in the area may

further add to visitation at both Moton Field and the NHS. Primary among these attractions will be facilities associated with visitor use and interpretation of the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail.

Potential for Efficient Administration at Reasonable Cost

Whether Moton Field becomes a new unit of the National Park System or is treated as an addition to the nearby Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site, it can be efficiently administered at a reasonable cost. Existing maintenance, administrative and other already available equipment, services and resources at the existing NHS can be readily utilized and shared to reduce operating costs.

Development Costs

The cost of developing facilities for visitor use and administrative purposes will be addressed in the alternatives (see Appendix B).

Threats to the Resource

The primary threat to the historic resources at Moton Field stems from deterioration of historic fabric. There are no known proposals for development adjacent to the Moton Field site that would threaten the historic resources or historic setting. Underground facilities which were used for the storage of water and other materials still exist in the historic core area. While it is unlikely that these underground facilities contain hazardous materials, this still needs to be confirmed.

Current Plans of Others

As previously mentioned, the City of Tuskegee has received funds for the improvement of the municipal airport. Detailed plans for such an improvement have not yet been developed. However, it is very likely that the airport improvement will be done in a way that does not compromise the historic Moton Field site. Nonetheless, the potential exists for the improvements to have adverse effects. Further discussions between the City of Tuskegee, Tuskegee University and the National Park Service will be needed to clarify this issue.

PUBLIC INTEREST AND SUPPORT

Contacts made during the study indicate broad and extensive support for the establishment of a Moton Field Park commemorating the Tuskegee Airmen. Such support exists at the national level from hundreds of Tuskegee Airmen and U.S. Congressman Bob Riley (R-AL). The State of Alabama is highly interested in the project as well. State agencies including the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA), Alabama Department of Tourism, and Alabama Department of Transportation solidly support the project.



Figure 74. Tuskegee Airmen Workshop, Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, Savannah, Georgia, Feb. 1998 (Christine Trebellas, NPS)



Figure 75. Tuskegee Airmen Workshop, Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, Savannah, Georgia, Feb. 1998 (Barbara Tagger, NPS)



Figure 76. Tuskegee Airmen Exhibit, Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, Savannah, Georgia, Feb. 1998 (Barbara Tagger, NPS)



Figure 77. Tuskegee Airmen Exhibit, Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, Savannah, Georgia, Feb. 1998 (Barbara Tagger, NPS)



Figure 78. Alternatives Workshop, Montgomery, Alabama, Feb. 1998 (Barbara Tagger, NPS)

MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

The several alternatives described in this section involve different ways of commemorating, interpreting and preserving resources associated with the Tuskegee Airmen at Moton Field. The concepts are the result of extensive historical research as well as input from the Tuskegee Airmen, public agencies, private organizations and citizens. The basis for formulating the alternatives includes a variety of issues such as treatment of historic structures, responsibility for management, development and operation, types of visitor experience and interpretive facilities and programs.

The alternatives represent a progression toward a greater ability to tell more of the story of the Tuskegee Airmen at Moton Field. In this way, the alternatives may be considered phases toward an optimum experience for visitors. While all the NPS themes would be interpreted in each option, Alternative A, and to a somewhat lesser extent, Alternative B, would rely heavily on publications and off-site exhibits to relate substantial portions of the story to visitors. Alternatives C and D include additional facilities and programs at Moton Field for this purpose.

A preferred alternative has not been identified in this report. However, such a proposal may be derived from one or a combination of the alternatives.

For each alternative, a narrative description and drawings showing proposed use, facility development and treatment of historic structures are included.

ALTERNATIVE A--COMMEMORATION/INFORMATION: MOTON FIELD

This alternative would mark the Moton Field site and its structural remains. Passive, information-oriented outdoor exhibits would present data on Moton Field's role in the training of the Tuskegee Airmen. The sites and stabilized remains of historic structures would be marked and the use of each building briefly explained. Interpretation of the full story of the Tuskegee Airmen would rely heavily on publications sold at the Carver Museum of Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site, approximately three miles from Moton Field.

The site would be managed as an enhanced highway rest area. This combination of rest area and historic site could serve as a prototype for future innovations in rest-area planning and design. Travelers would be made aware of the site through signs located along Interstate 85

approximately thirty miles east and west of Moton Field.

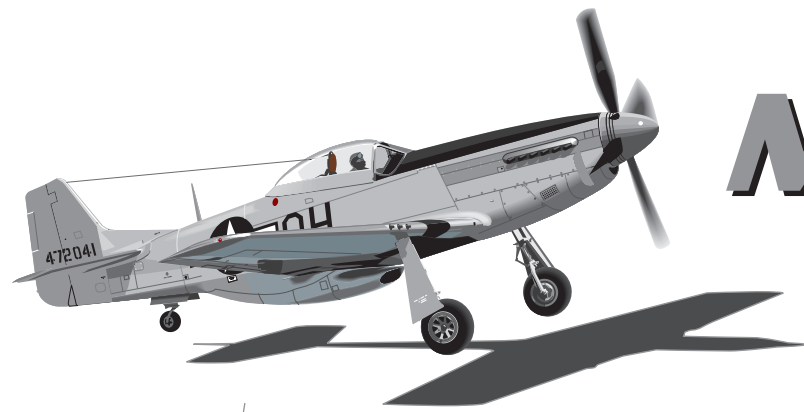
From the visitor parking area, a self-guiding brochure would lead visitors on a leisurely walk into Moton Field's past. Using "Chief" Anderson Street as a pedestrian walkway, visitors would pass through the restored historic entrance and encounter a memorial to the Tuskegee Airmen. The memorial would include a statue of "Chief" Anderson, the primary pilot instructor at Moton Field. Proceeding on to the historic building complex, the visitor would encounter stabilized historic structures while a remnant landscape would add dimension to the site. The simple footprints of missing historic buildings would provide a sense of loss, mystery and imagination. Within the complex, a series of wayside exhibits would relate the essential story of Moton Field in the words of the Tuskegee Airmen. These wayside exhibits, with ordinary men and women telling their extraordinary stories, would provide a much-needed personal touch to this self-guiding walk into history. Visitors would take with them some knowledge of the story of Moton Field and something about the Tuskegee Airmen who trained there. To learn more, a visit to the Carver Museum would be necessary.

Under this alternative, Moton Field would not become a unit of the National Park System. Primary partners in providing for management, operation, maintenance and development of minimal visitor facilities for this alternative would include the City of Tuskegee and Tuskegee University, who would continue to own the property. National Park Service (NPS) involvement would be through a cooperative agreement to allow the NPS to design and produce wayside exhibits and a self-guiding brochure for visitors. A Tuskegee Airmen Memorial would be produced with funds raised by the Tuskegee Airmen.

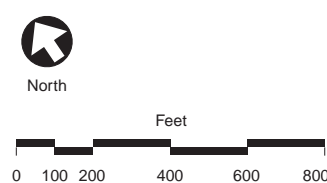
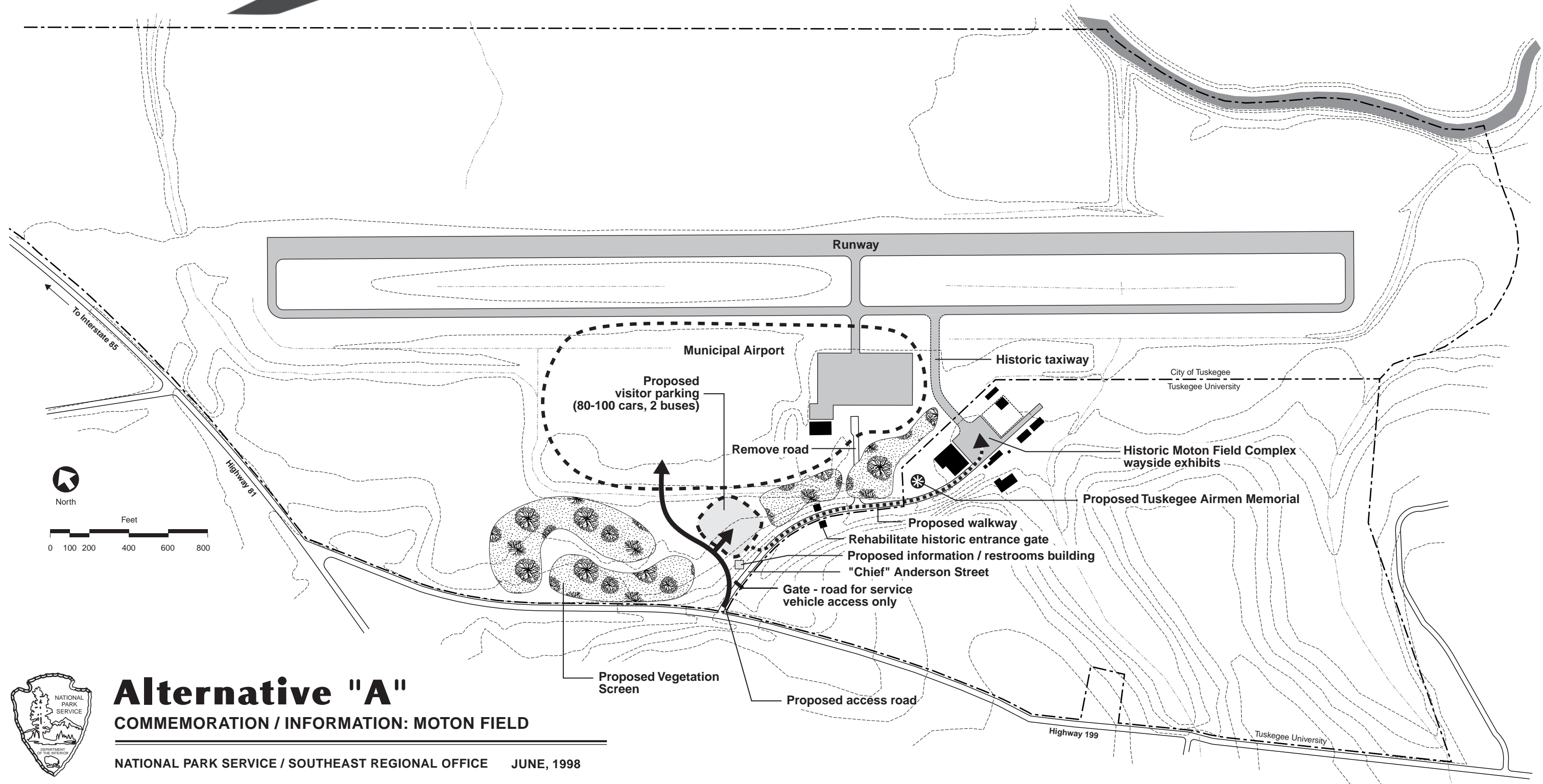
A visitor parking area and an unmanned structure would be built to provide visitor information-orientation, dispensing of brochures and public restrooms. These facilities would be built on city property near the intersection of Highway 199 and "Chief" Anderson Street.

Within the historic complex, extant historic structures would be stabilized and preserved, but significant rehabilitation work would not be performed. The sites of former historic buildings would be marked on the ground to identify their "footprints." The historic landscape immediately adjacent to the structures, including historic pathways and paved areas would be cleaned and preserved. The taxiway to the take off area would be marked to identify its former location for visitors.

The State of Alabama would work with the owners of other Tuskegee Airmen-related historic sites in the vicinity of Moton Field such as Tuskegee Army Air Field and Chehaw. Under a written agreement, historical markers, wayside exhibits, vehicle pullouts and directional signs would be provided. Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site brochures and publications would identify and explain sites and buildings on the campus of Tuskegee



Moton Field/Tuskegee Airmen Special Resource Study



Alternative "A" COMMEMORATION / INFORMATION: MOTON FIELD

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE / SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE JUNE, 1998



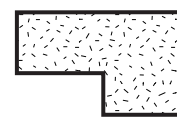
Moton Field/Tuskegee Airmen Special Resource Study

Alternative "A"

HISTORIC BUILDING TREATMENT AND USE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE / SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE

LEGEND



Stabilization/Preservation



Mark footprint



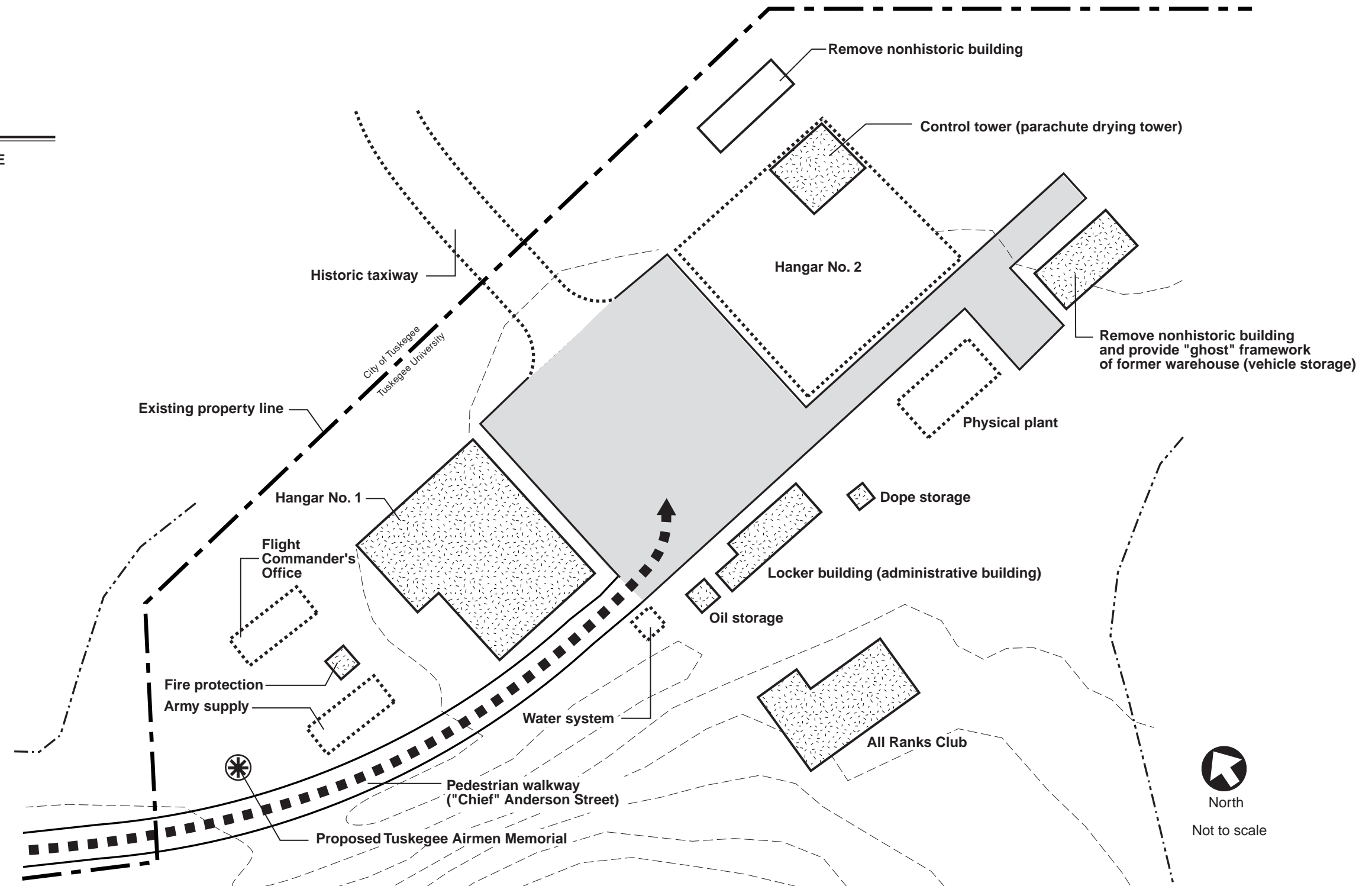
"Ghost" framework



Rehabilitation/Preservation



Reconstruction



University used by the Tuskegee Airmen.

**ALTERNATIVE B--COMMEMORATION/INTERPRETATION:
TUSKEGEE AIRMEN & MOTON FIELD**

While Alternative A includes an information-oriented approach limited to basic data about Moton Field, Alternative B focuses on an informal interpretation of a larger portion of the Tuskegee Airmen story through facilities and resources at Moton Field. In this alternative, Moton Field would become a unit of the National Park System and a place of heightened expectation for visitors. Its National Park Service (NPS) designation would attract many tourists as well as aviation and African-American history enthusiasts.

All of the emotional experiences in Alternative A would remain intact; however, the addition of space for visitor contact and indoor exhibits in a rehabilitated Hangar Number One would help visitors to better understand the training process for the Tuskegee Airmen and who they were. Exhibits would touch visitors in an even more personal way. For example, visitors would experience in-depth contact with the Tuskegee Airmen and their stories through audiovisual media. More importantly, a uniformed staff would provide the most flexible and potentially informative medium for delivering such a significant story. As with Alternative A, the role of each structure in the complex would be interpreted through wayside exhibits.

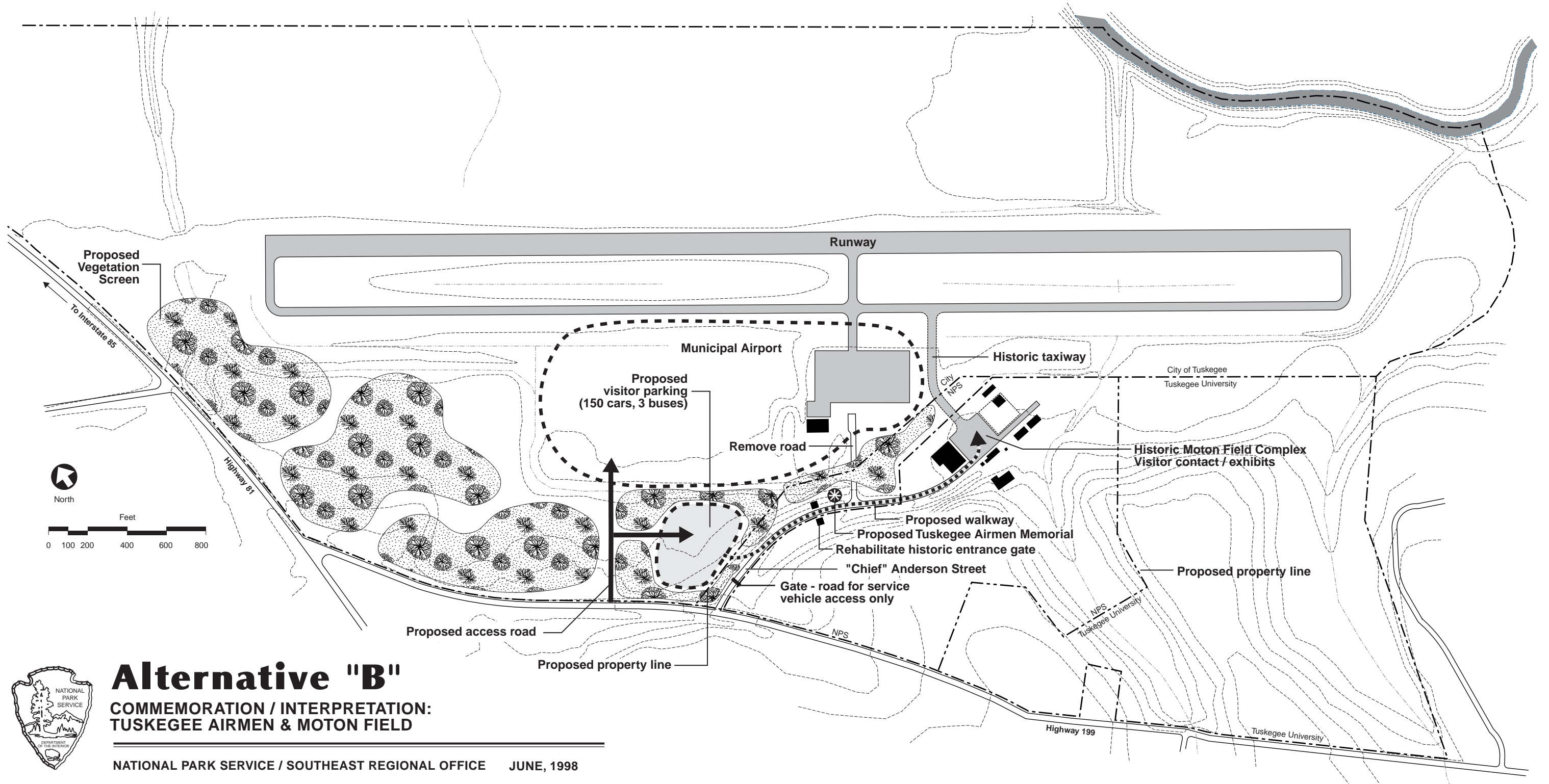
In the landscape itself, "ghost" structures outlining the three-dimensional framework of former historic buildings would provide more fuel to drive imagination, and the wide variety of touchable exhibits would heighten interest and awareness. The personalities that brought the site to life between 1941-1946 would remain at the heart of the interpretive message. Visitors would remember and respond to those memories at a Tuskegee Airmen Memorial, which would include a statue of "Chief" Anderson. This alternative would bring the many dimensions of their story to the visitor. Leaving the site, visitors would not only know about Moton Field, they could draw parallels between their lives and those of the Tuskegee Airmen at Moton Field. For an even broader treatment of the story, visitors would continue to the Chappie James Museum at Tuskegee University.

Exhibits for Hangar Number One would include replicas of training aircraft used by the Tuskegee Airmen, including a Piper Cub and a Stearman. The main hangar portion of the structure would be unconditioned space. Here, historic photographs and selected memorabilia would emphasize how the Moton Field complex worked. Additional exhibits and public restrooms would be provided in conditioned rooms around the perimeter of the hangar.

Exhibits at the Chappie James Museum on the campus of Tuskegee University would interpret the remaining aspects of the Tuskegee Airmen story. The museum, currently owned



Moton Field/Tuskegee Airmen Special Resource Study



Proposed Vegetation Screen

To Interstate 85



Feet
0 100 200 400 600 800

Highway 81

Runway

Municipal Airport

Proposed visitor parking
(150 cars, 3 buses)

Remove road

Historic taxiway

City of Tuskegee
Tuskegee University

Historic Moton Field Complex
Visitor contact / exhibits

Proposed walkway
Proposed Tuskegee Airmen Memorial
Rehabilitate historic entrance gate

"Chief" Anderson Street
Gate - road for service
vehicle access only

Proposed property line

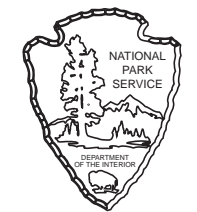
Proposed access road

Proposed property line

NPS
Tuskegee University

Highway 199

Tuskegee University



Alternative "B"

COMMEMORATION / INTERPRETATION:
TUSKEGEE AIRMEN & MOTON FIELD



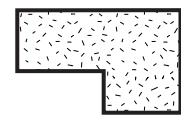
Moton Field/Tuskegee Airmen Special Resource Study

Alternative "B"

HISTORIC BUILDING TREATMENT AND USE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE / SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE

LEGEND



Stabilization/Preservation



Mark footprint



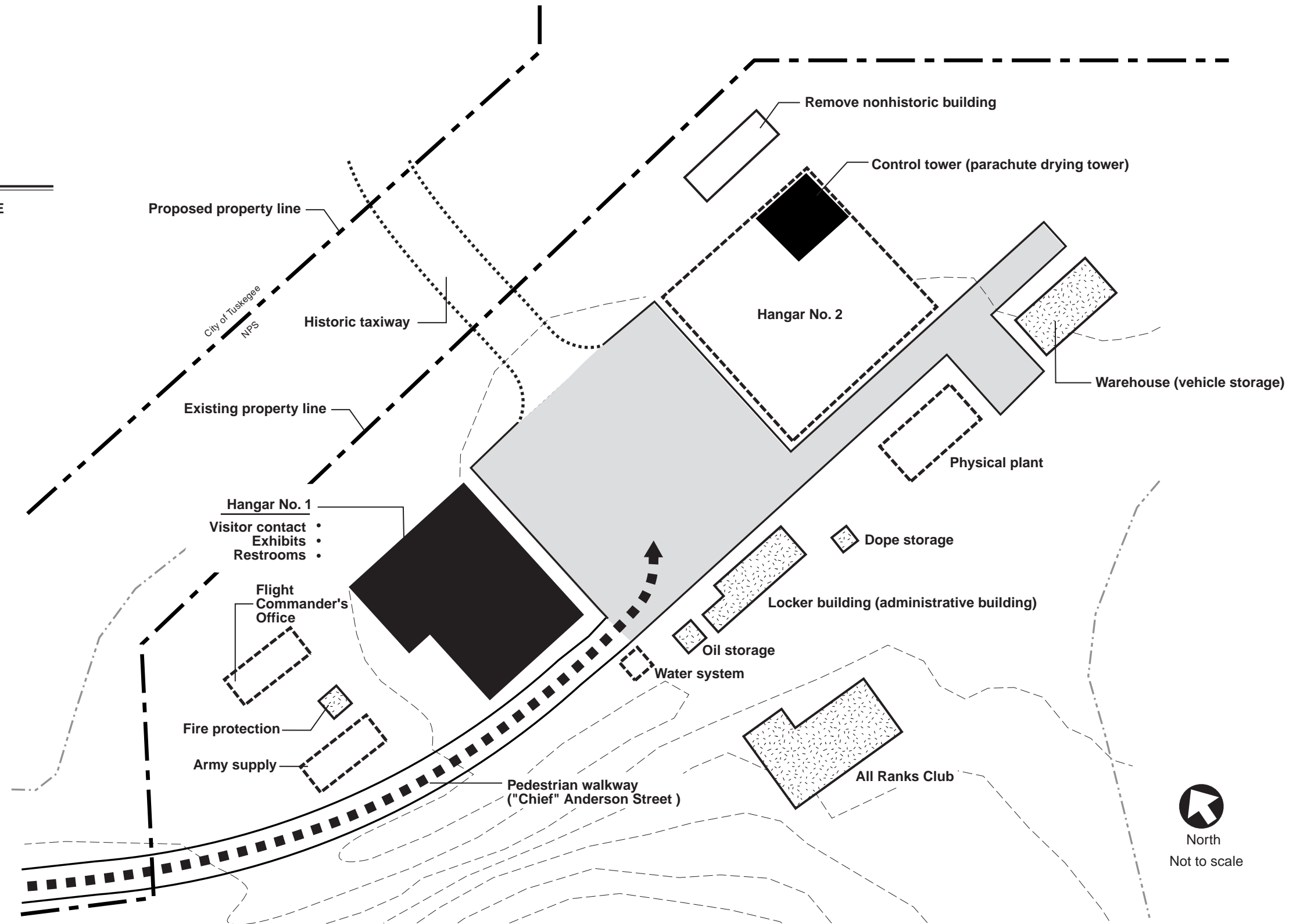
"Ghost" framework



Rehabilitation/Preservation



Reconstruction



and operated by Tuskegee University, would be acquired or leased by the NPS. Interior renovation would allow for exhibits and audiovisual programs produced by the NPS. Space would allow for exhibits consisting of photos and a limited number of artifacts to highlight key portions of the Tuskegee Airmen story other than Moton Field, including combat successes.

Under this alternative, the Moton Field site would be managed, operated, maintained, and its facilities developed by the NPS. As with Alternative A, the City of Tuskegee would construct a visitor parking area on land currently owned by the city near the intersection of Highway 199 (Chappie James Drive) and “Chief” Anderson Street. Property sufficient for access to and protection of the historic complex would be donated by Tuskegee University and the City of Tuskegee.

Pedestrian walkway access to the historic complex and rehabilitation of the historic entrance gate would be the same as in Alternative A. A separate and more extensive Tuskegee Airmen Memorial would also be provided just inside of the historic entrance gate. A statue of “Chief” Anderson would be part of the memorial.

Other preservation work within the historic complex would also add to a more realistic historic feeling. The exterior of the control tower would be restored, including the replacement of the building's roof and windows. In addition, the "ghosting" of several non-extant historic structures, including Hangar Number Two, would help reestablish the feeling of the complete complex. This would involve erecting a three-dimensional framework or outline to depict the shape and size of the buildings. Other existing historic structures would be stabilized and preserved. Rehabilitation of the historic landscape would focus on the area immediately adjacent to the structures, including historic pathways, paved area and taxiway as in Alternative A.

Other related historic sites, including Tuskegee Army Air Field and Chehaw, would be marked by the State of Alabama through written agreements with property owners as in Alternative A. In the case of Chehaw, the site of the former railroad depot building would receive treatment through cleaning of the site, stabilization and marking of the building foundation. The state would also provide for the installation of directional signs for both sites. Sites and buildings used by the Tuskegee Airmen on the campus of Tuskegee University would be interpreted at the Chappie James Museum.

NPS administrative and maintenance functions for Moton Field would be based at Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site. Maintenance equipment would be housed at the municipal airport through an agreement with the City of Tuskegee.

ALTERNATIVE C--LIVING HISTORY: TUSKEGEE AIRMEN EXPERIENCE

This alternative builds on the visitor experience described in Alternative B. Alternative C envisions a unit of the National Park System with a rehabilitated cultural landscape including the historic complex and broad historic setting. Additional space for exhibits would provide opportunities at Moton Field for formal interpretation of broader themes associated with the entire experience of the Tuskegee Airmen. Visitors would receive an in-depth exposure to an important thread that is woven into the American experience.

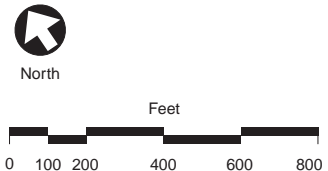
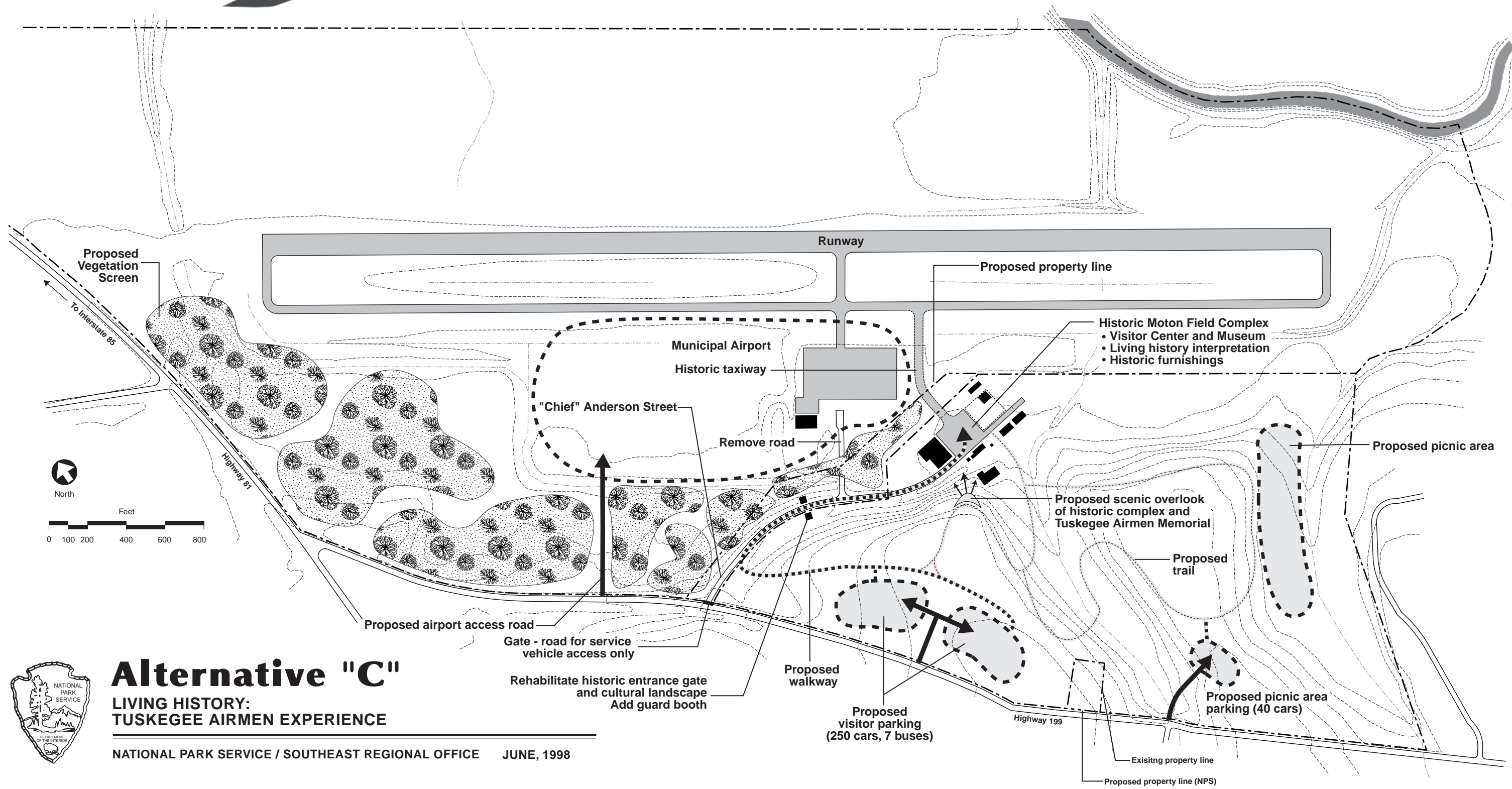
The rehabilitation of Hangar Number One and the construction of a new building on the site of Hangar Number Two would also be provided. The interior of both structures would be utilized as exhibit space. Work on Hangar Number Two would involve the reconstruction of the building's exterior. Detailed drawings are available to allow an accurate reconstruction. (Although reconstructions are generally discouraged by the NPS, in this instance it is considered essential to the public's understanding of the historic Moton Field complex.) The All Ranks Club and Locker Building would be rehabilitated, three small sheds would be stabilized and a "ghost" framework provided on the sites of four other former historic buildings. Along with the placement of historic objects such as period aircraft, vehicles, signs, fuel pumps, etc, in the outdoor areas of the complex, these facilities would provide a strong sense of "stepping back into time" for visitors. Wayside exhibits, containing historic building photos and more interpretive content than those in Alternatives A and B, would be placed throughout the historic complex.

The "living history" theme of Alternative C would be further enhanced by a more fully outfitted Hangar Number One. Exhibits in the hangar would include period equipment used in training the Tuskegee Airmen along with other artifacts and memorabilia. Through both formal and informal interpretation, visitors would understand what training activities were like for the Tuskegee Airmen. NPS staff and volunteers in period dress would conduct programs and demonstrations focusing on the use of training equipment such as the link trainer. Scheduled presentations, tours, photos and audiovisual programs and displays of period aircraft would all be utilized in the conditioned space of Hangar Number One. The living history/costumed interpretation experience would appeal to all age groups, especially children.

The use of the interior of Hangar Number Two would include a visitor center/museum. Primary visitor information-orientation and public restrooms would be provided. The structure would also include exhibits focusing on the Tuskegee Airmen experience beyond Moton Field. The use of audiovisual media would be emphasized and a small theater would show an orientation video and other special audiovisual presentations. While a few exhibits would utilize artifacts and memorabilia related to the airmen, most would involve a variety of other media.



Moton Field/Tuskegee Airmen Special Resource Study



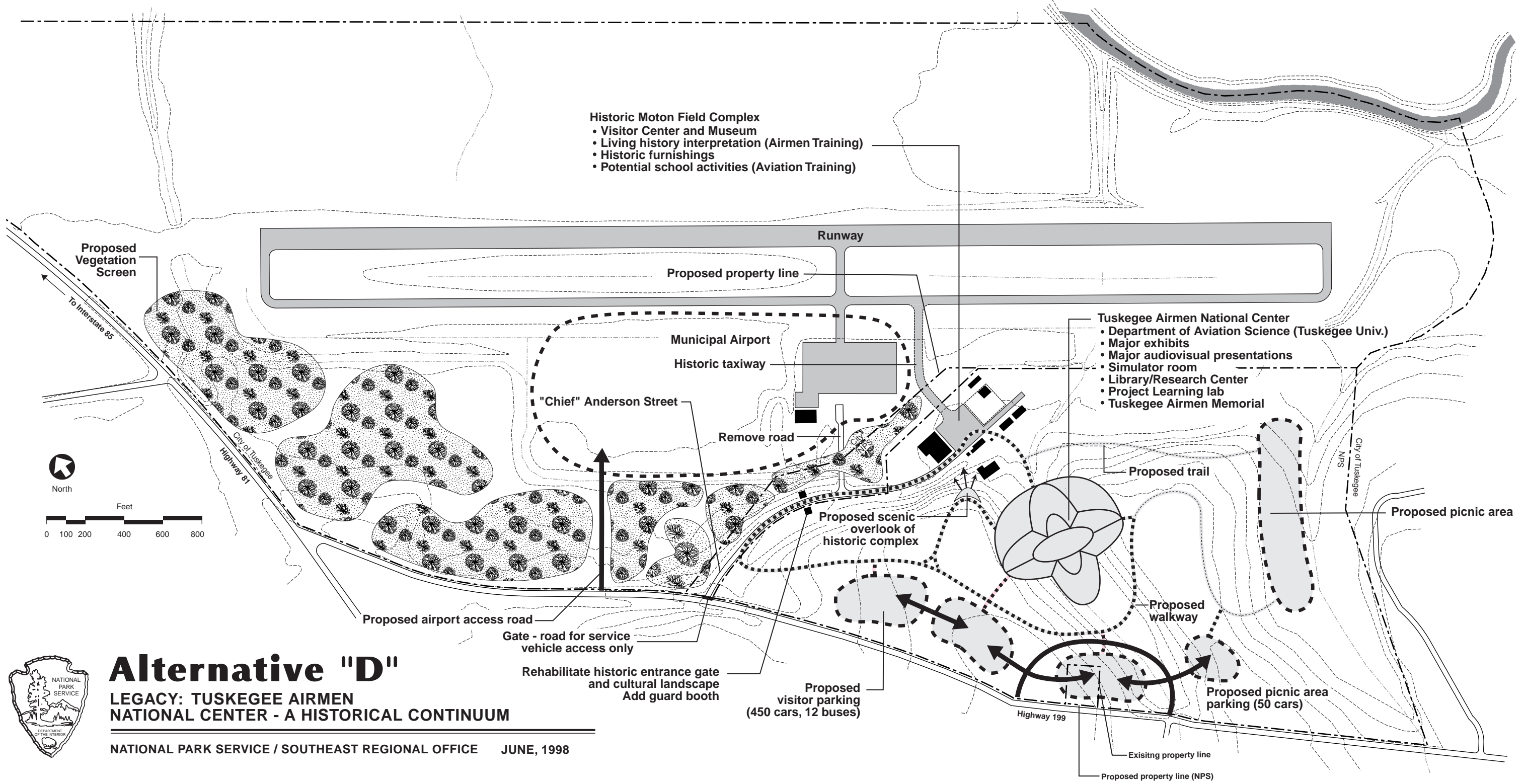
Alternative "C"

LIVING HISTORY: TUSKEGEE AIRMEN EXPERIENCE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE / SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE JUNE, 1998

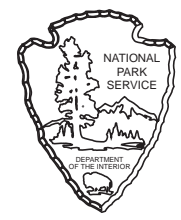


Moton Field/Tuskegee Airmen Special Resource Study



Alternative "D"

**LEGACY: TUSKEGEE AIRMEN
NATIONAL CENTER - A HISTORICAL CONTINUUM**



The history of African Americans in the military would be highlighted as an introduction to the story of the Tuskegee Airmen. In addition, exhibits in Hangar Number Two would include the impacts of the airmen and World War II on the African-American community, integration of the military, and a time line illustrating what was occurring in the United States in this period. Combat aircraft used by the Tuskegee Airmen, including the P-51, P-47 and P-40, would also be displayed. A combination of full-size replicas or restored aircraft, scale models and photos would be exhibited in Hangar Number Two.

Work on Hangar Number Two would also include the rehabilitation of the control tower. Both the interior and exterior of the tower would be renovated to allow visitors to better understand the use of the structure. An elevator would be added within a portion of the building formerly used to transport parachutes to the top level of the tower. From the top level, a panoramic view of the entire Moton Field site would allow visitors to better understand the layout of the facility and how it functioned.

Land area needed for this alternative includes a total of approximately 88 acres. Of this amount, 81 acres are currently owned by Tuskegee University and 6.7 acres by the City of Tuskegee. It is anticipated that this property would be donated to allow NPS to manage, operate and develop facilities for visitor use, as well as protect the historic complex and provide visitor access and maintenance for the area.

Visitor parking would be located on land currently owned by Tuskegee University, with vehicle access from Chappie James Drive. As in Alternatives A and B, a walkway would be provided from the parking area to “Chief” Anderson Street, which would serve as the pedestrian access route from the historic entrance to the complex. Rehabilitation of the entrance gate would include the construction of a guard booth to depict the former historic structure.

Visitors would have the choice of returning to their vehicles along the same route they entered or using a walkway from the south side of the historic complex to a proposed overlook. The clearing of vegetation at the overlook would allow a dramatic view of the Moton Field facilities from 30 feet above the historic area. In addition, a Tuskegee Airmen Memorial, including a statue of “Chief” Anderson would be constructed at this site. The design of the memorial should be determined by a competition sponsored by Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. A suggested theme for the memorial could be a depiction of the variety of jobs assumed by those who trained as airmen such as a mechanic, doctor, nurse, pilot, navigator, etc.

Other historic sites important to telling the story of the Tuskegee Airmen, including Tuskegee Army Air Field and Chehaw, would be marked by the NPS through a written agreement with

the property owners. For Chehaw, the agreement would allow the NPS to clean the site, erect a "ghost" framework of the former depot building, produce and install a wayside exhibit, and provide a vehicle pullout. At Tuskegee Army Air Field, the agreement would provide for the production and installation of a facsimile of the historic entrance gate by the NPS as well as a wayside exhibit and vehicle pullout.

Interfaces of the Tuskegee Airmen with the community of Tuskegee and Tuskegee Institute would be interpreted through an exhibit at the Moton Field visitor center (former site of Hangar Number Two) as well as a self-guiding campus tour brochure.

NPS administrative and maintenance functions would be based at Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site. At Moton Field, a rehabilitated warehouse would house maintenance equipment while the Locker Building would contain the administrative functions.

The interior spaces of the rehabilitated All Ranks Club would be adaptively used. Photo exhibits and reproduction of furnishings would be provided to illustrate how the structure was used. Push-button audiovisual exhibits would include Tuskegee Airmen talking about their experiences associated with the building. The All Ranks Club would also house a concession providing food service and a bookstore/gift shop.

Visitor and exhibit use for Hangar Number Two would be combined with a proposed Tuskegee University Charles Alfred Anderson Department of Aviation Science. The department's curriculum would focus on math, science, and aviation and train pilots in the tradition of the Tuskegee Airmen. Visitor/museum and school curriculum activities would share the use of the hangar. Displayed artifacts and exhibits would serve a dual purpose: interpretation and education. Exhibit design and layout would be based on project learning space requirements for the students as well as visitor/interpretive needs.

Interaction between students and visitors would be an integral part of the experience for both. The added dimension of watching students work and learn, and listening to others describe their work during formal tours, would bring a sense of innovation, completion and continuum to the site. More than fifty years ago at Moton Field, pilot trainees learned specialized skills that shaped their futures. Programs and exhibits would honor the Tuskegee Airmen and preserve their tradition of learning.

In addition, student use of Hangar Number Two would emphasize training and education in the tradition of the Tuskegee Airmen. For special programs, students and teachers would assist with interpretive programs and living history demonstrations to help visitors better understand how the Tuskegee Airmen were trained. Hangar Number Two would be a traditional museum, and while a small portion of the space would be devoted to classrooms,

the large majority of the interior would be used for exhibits. How visitors and students use the facility and where and how they interact would differ, and would be the subject of detailed designs of curriculum and exhibits.

Alternative C could involve a sharing of construction activity and costs. The NPS would be responsible for the rehabilitation of Hangar Number One as well as the production of all exhibits for the structure. For Hangar Number Two, the NPS would prepare drawings and specifications for the reconstruction of the exterior shell (based on available detailed drawings of original structure). A cooperative agreement covering sharing of facilities, maintenance and other aspects of the partnership would be negotiated between the NPS and Tuskegee University.

ALTERNATIVE D--LEGACY: TUSKEGEE AIRMEN NATIONAL CENTER, A HISTORICAL CONTINUUM

Alternative D involves a unit of the National Park System focusing on the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen. In the form of a historical continuum, the story of the Tuskegee Airmen would emphasize the past, present and future of military aviation and training. Building on the "living history" concept and other exhibits in the historic Moton Field complex as described in Alternative C, a Tuskegee Airmen National Center (the Center) would be constructed on a separate portion of the site. Facilities and programs associated with the Center, a full-scale military museum, would allow for the broadest interpretation of the story of the Tuskegee Airmen.

The Center would include major exhibits with period military aircraft and equipment similar to those used by the Tuskegee Airmen in World War II. The facility would also provide major audiovisual presentations (possibly an IMAX theater) and interactive exhibits and programs involving visitors and students. Combined with living history and other exhibits in the historic complex, the resulting park could very likely become an important and heavily-used tourist attraction.

The story of the Tuskegee Airmen would be presented in the context of African-American participation in the U.S. military from the nineteenth century to the present. Exhibits would describe the struggle by African Americans for greater roles in defending their country, as well as the significance of the successes of the Tuskegee Airmen in leading to desegregation of the U.S. military shortly after World War II. The impact of Tuskegee Airmen accomplishments on subsequent civil rights advancements of the 1950s and 1960s would also be emphasized.

Housed within the Center would be Tuskegee University's Charles Alfred Anderson Department of Aviation Science. A considerably larger school than that envisioned in

Alternative C, the pre-college and college-level curriculum would include math, science, contemporary aviation and aeronautics training--a continuation of the heroic achievements of the Tuskegee Airmen into the present and future.

The Tuskegee University component of the center would provide:

A highly competitive aviation-training center offering pilot training and education in airport management and safety, meteorology, air traffic control, maintenance and other technical specialties for people in the Tuskegee University region.

An educational and training center for aviation research. A national repository with high-tech computers and world-wide computer access. Enhancement of Tuskegee University's existing program in aerospace engineering.

Expansion of Tuskegee University's Continuing Education programs including Aviation Youth Camps, lecture series by Tuskegee Airmen and biannual flight reviews for licensed pilots. Adult outreach to provide knowledge and skills to obtain airframe and power plant license approved by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Increased utilization of the Kellogg Center and other facilities on Tuskegee University campus, including the Chappie James Museum, which would be renovated to provide for the interpretation of campus sites and buildings linked with the Tuskegee Airmen Experience.

From a visitor parking area located east of "Chief" Anderson Street for large volumes of cars and tour buses, visitors would first proceed to the Center, which would provide visitor contact and information-orientation for the entire site. From the Center, visitors would access the historic complex by means of a walkway. Return to their vehicles would either be by means of "Chief" Anderson Street and the historic entrance gate, or back through the Center.

The lobby of the Tuskegee Airmen National Center would serve as a visitor contact point providing information and orientation and would contain a Tuskegee Airmen Memorial in the form of a Wall of Honor. The memorial, a primary attraction for visitors, would include a list of the names of all Tuskegee Airmen as well as a statue of "Chief" Anderson.

An important aspect of the visitor experience within the Center and a portion of Hangars Number One and Two would be interactive exhibits providing visitors and students with

"hands-on" interpretive and educational opportunities. Replicas and simulators would allow visitors to experience some of the same training received by the Airmen. Center facilities would also include project learning labs, a research center/library and space for visitor/student interface programs. An auditorium would provide suitable spaces for seminars, lectures and other audiovisual presentations, perhaps on a rotating basis.

Land area needed would total approximately eighty-eight acres (same as in Alternative C) and would be donated by Tuskegee University and the City of Tuskegee.

Development of visitor facilities would be shared among the various stakeholders through a written cooperative agreement. The NPS would play the lead role in preserving and developing the historic complex. This work includes the rehabilitation of Hangar Number One and the construction of a new building on the site of Hangar Number Two. Visitor parking construction would be shared by the NPS, other public agencies, and Tuskegee University.

A public/private partnership on a national level will be needed to raise funds and to construct and operate the Tuskegee Airmen National Center. A national fund-raising campaign would involve the Tuskegee Airmen, Tuskegee University, retired and active military personnel, private corporations (especially the aircraft industry), private foundations and others. Development and operation of the facility would involve one or more federal agencies. These federal partners may include the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Education, Federal Aviation Administration, NASA, NPS and other agencies. Operation of the Center could also include a private non-profit organization under the auspices of Tuskegee University and working with the above federal agencies. NPS involvement would emphasize the agency's primary responsibility of telling the story of the Tuskegee Airmen. This could include the production of a portion of the exhibits for the Center.

A subsequent phase of development may include the development of a transportation system to enhance tourism in the Tuskegee area. The Moton Field parking area could become a staging facility providing visitors with access to key historic attractions in the Tuskegee/Macon County area. Historic sites in the City of Tuskegee, at Tuskegee University, Tuskegee Army Air Field, Chehaw and other tourist-related resources could be included as part of scheduled tours.



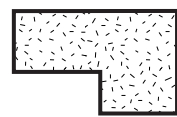
Moton Field/Tuskegee Airmen Special Resource Study

Alternatives "C" and "D"

HISTORIC BUILDING TREATMENT AND USE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE / SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE

LEGEND



Stabilization/Preservation



Mark footprint



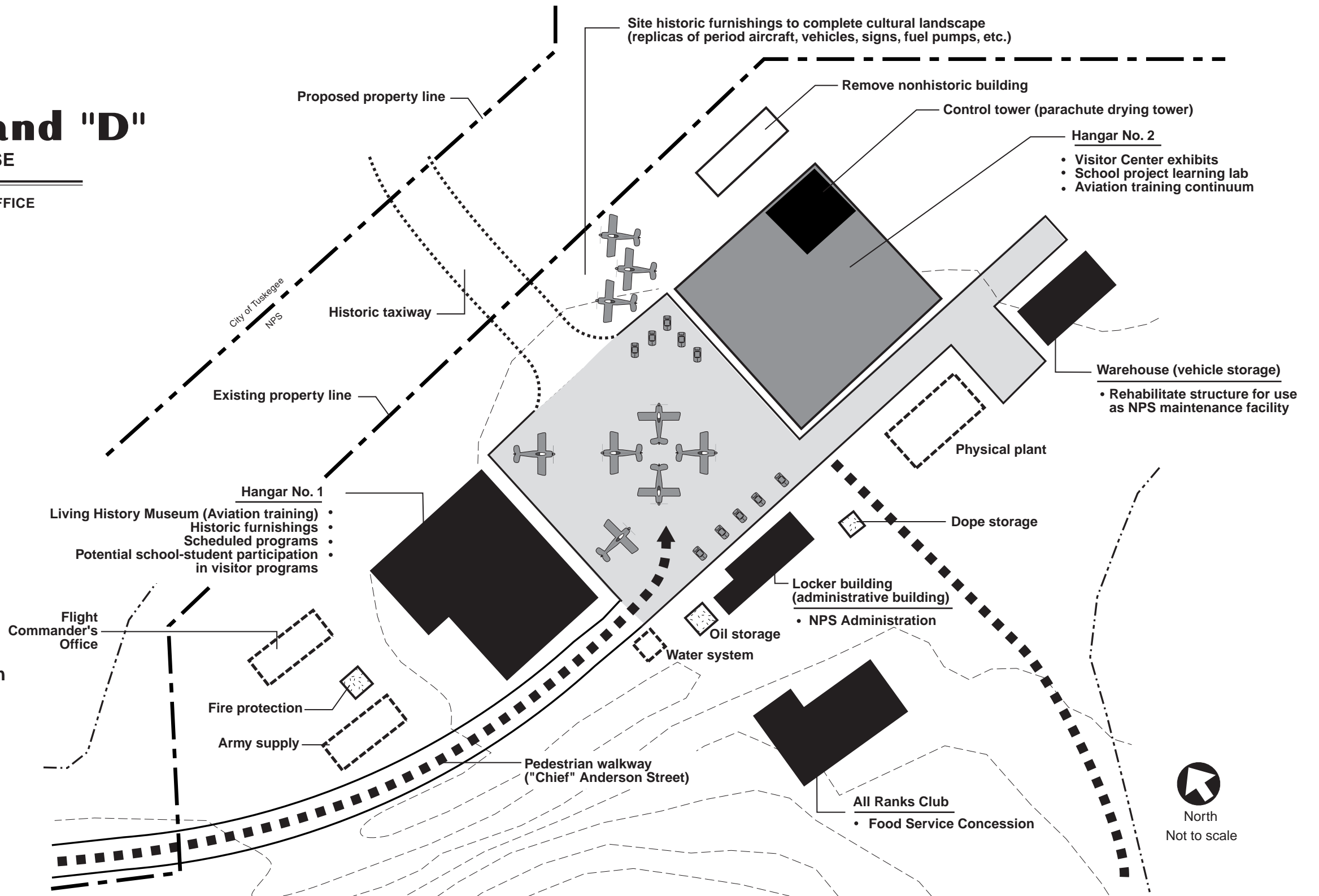
"Ghost" framework



Rehabilitation/Preservation



Reconstruction



North
Not to scale

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT:

TUSKEGEE AND MACON COUNTY, ALABAMA

Population

Tuskegee, the county seat and largest city in Macon County, contains a little over half (50.6%) of the county's population. According to the 1996 demographic report, 12,185 residents live in the City of Tuskegee while the total population of Macon County is 24,047. Although the population of the county has fallen between 1980 and 1990 by 7.1%, this decrease slowed to only 3.9% between 1990 and 1995. The migration of people out of Macon County is responsible, in part, for this decline in population. Between 1980 and 1990, 12% of the population (3,225 inhabitants) moved out of the county, and 6% (1,497 people) departed between 1990 and 1995. However, projections from the 1997 Alabama County Data Book predict that the county's population will rise steadily in the early twenty-first century until it is almost doubled by the year 2050 with approximately 51,074 inhabitants.

Ethnic Composition

Macon County has the highest non-white population of any county in Alabama. According to the 1997 Alabama County Data Book, approximately 85% (22,795 people) of the county's residents in 1980 were non-white. Although the number of non-whites declined to 21,485 in 1990, they still constituted 86.2% of the county's population. According to the 1990 census, the population of Macon County was composed of 3,443 Whites, 21,340 Blacks (85.6% of the total population), 24 Native Americans, 99 Asians (or Pacific Islanders), and 22 people of other racial backgrounds. In the City of Tuskegee alone, African-Americans composed almost 96.5% of the population in 1996. The 1990 census also showed 103 county residents of Hispanic origin, with 1.3% of the population speaking Spanish at home. Nonetheless, the majority of the inhabitants of the county speak English, and only 3.5% of the people speak other languages as their native tongue.

Age Distribution

In 1980, 29.4 % of the population was under 18 years of age while 57% was between 18 and 64, and 13.5 % was over 65 years of age. By 1990, these figures had changed slightly to 26.6% under 18, 58% between 18 and 64, and 15.4% over 65. Undoubtedly, the presence of Tuskegee University in Macon County greatly contributes to the number of people over 18 and under 65 years of age. As the university grows and expands in the coming years, one can expect the number of young and middle-age people in the county to increase as well. In

addition, the establishment of the Veterans Administration Hospital in Macon County probably contributes, in part, to the number of senior citizens and to the sizable number of veterans in the county. According to the 1999 census, the county had 2,446 veterans, approximately 24% from the Vietnam-era. (Neighboring Montgomery County, with the presence of Maxwell AFB and Gunter Field, had 23,109 veterans in 1990.)

Population Density/Distribution

According to the 1997 Alabama County Data Book, the average population density in Macon County in 1995 was 39.2 people per square mile land area. Due to the decline in the county's population between 1980 and 1995, this figure dropped as well. This population, however, is almost equally divided between rural and urban areas. In 1990, 12,257 (49.2%) residents lived in urban centers while 12,671 (50.8%) dwelled in rural areas.

Land Use

Macon County is composed of 611 squares miles of land area and 2.7 square miles of water. While the county's population is almost equally divided between rural and urban areas, only 2.8% of the population, or 691 people, live on farms. In 1987, the number of farms in the county was only 370, and this number declined noticeably (by 31%) between 1982 and 1987. The average size of a farm in Macon County in this time period was between 50 and 500 acres (only 19.2% contain less than 50 acres and only 19.5% have over 500 acres). According to the 1992 agriculture census, the number of farms in the county fell to 311 and composed only 138,437 acres of the county. Major agricultural products from the county include cattle and calves, and small amounts of other livestock and crops. As the number of farms decreased, the cash receipts from these agricultural products also declined (by 68% from 1989 to 1994).

Housing and Ownership

The majority of the 9,818 housing units in Macon County are single-family detached dwellings (67.7%). 16% of the population live in mobile homes or trailers, and another 6.3% reside in multiple-family dwellings (complexes with more than 5 units). In 1990, 5,679 of the dwellings (66.9%) were owner-occupied, while the other 2,804 were rented at an average of \$285 per month. Since Tuskegee University and the Veterans Administration Hospital are both located in Macon County, a total of 2,317 people lived in "group quarters," such as homes, hospitals, or university dormitories (1,573 students).

Current Recreational Resources

Macon County has a small number of recreational facilities. There are a few golf courses, tennis courts, swimming pools, ball fields, and parks in the Tuskegee area. VictoryLand Greyhound Park, a new dog track, is located in the western section of the county. However, there are no movie theaters or health clubs, and a very limited number of restaurants and

hotels/motels in the county. Macon County residents can use Lake Tuskegee, a public lake approximately one mile from Tuskegee, or the nearest state park (Chewacla--approximately ten miles from Tuskegee in adjacent Lee County) for recreational purposes. The county also has a few federal facilities, such as Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site and Tuskegee National Forest. Nonetheless, there are a large number of recreational and cultural attractions in neighboring Montgomery County, including the Montgomery Zoo, the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, the Civil Rights Memorial, and the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts.

Economy

With Tuskegee University and the Veterans Administration Hospital, Macon County's economy largely depends on the service industry as well as its government labor force. According to the 1997 Alabama County Data Book, the total work force in Macon County in 1995 consisted of 7,470 workers, 7,150 of whom earned a standard wage or salary. Of these wage-earners, only 200 were employed in manufacturing, 140 in mining and construction, 90 in transportation and public utilities, and 150 in finance and real estate. Although a substantial number of people, 880 men and women, worked in the wholesale and retail trade, retail sales in Macon County in 1995 accounted for only 0.2% of the state's total. The service industry and the government employ the greatest number of workers, 2,920 and 2,770 people, respectively. Tuskegee University and the Veterans Administration Hospital account for a large portion of this labor force. In the City of Tuskegee alone, approximately 1000 men and women worked for Tuskegee University in 1997, while the Veterans Administration Hospital employed approximately 1,300 people. In addition, according to economic predictions, the number of employees in the service industry will continue to grow so that by the year 2050, it will employ some 7,039 workers.

The lack of industry in Macon County is even more evident when one considers the number of businesses in the county and the number of workers who leave the county to find employment. According to the Alabama Industrial Directory for 1993-1994, Macon County had only ten small companies who together employed between 165 and 235 men and women. In 1990, 2,405 workers commuted to neighboring counties for employment, which was approximately 30.9% of the work force. Statistics show that this figure rose substantially over the 1970s and 1980s, and will probably climb in the future unless other job opportunities are brought to Macon County. The lack of opportunity in Macon County may explain, in part, the county's unemployment rate, which was 9% in 1995. Unemployment figures for the City of Tuskegee were only slightly lower at 8.3%.

Tourism

In the future, the travel/tourism industry may provide numerous employment opportunities for residents of Macon County. Based on Auburn University's Center for Government and Public Affairs' analysis, the travel industry was one of the fastest growing sub-sectors in the

Alabama economy in 1996. Travel expenditures in Alabama increased by 6%, out-pacing the general growth in the Alabama economy and the service sector by almost two to one. Food services accounted for 28% of all the travel and tourism expenditures in the state, and transportation, lodging, and general retail trade were the next largest spending items in 1996. In addition, in 1996 approximately 83,000 jobs in Alabama were directly related to the tourism industry, with eating and drinking establishments accounting for 52% of all the travel-related jobs. These direct jobs then lead to the creation of approximately 42,000 additional, or indirect, jobs in the state. The total impact of tourism on Alabama's earning power is estimated at \$2.0 billion for 1996, including direct earnings of \$1.1 billion and an indirect impact of \$0.9 billion. Consequently, travel was responsible for approximately 3% of the total earnings in the State of Alabama in 1996. Moreover, this means that for every \$1 in travel-related expenditures, the state directly and indirectly retains \$0.41 in Alabama in the forms of earnings for its citizens. Although the travel industry employed only 90 Macon County residents in 1995, this figure jumped to 269 people in 1996. Overall, between 1995 and 1996, the tourism industry in Macon County grew by 197%, by far the largest increase in the state. If this growth continues, the travel industry may account for a substantial portion of the job market in Macon County in the future.

Education and Income

Due to its limited population, Macon County has a small school system and few educational opportunities beyond the secondary level besides Tuskegee University. The county only has two elementary schools with slightly over 1200 pupils, one middle school, and one small high school. Even with the limited educational opportunities in the county, only 6.7% of the school-age children between kindergarten and 8th grade attend private schools. Moreover, according to the 1990 census, only 61.9% of the county's population graduated from high school. Nonetheless, in 1997, 137 students graduated from the Macon County high school out of a class of approximately 150. With the presence of Tuskegee University, the county also has a large number of college graduates (18.0%) when compared to the state average (15.7%). Besides Tuskegee University, the nearest post-secondary educational institutions are Auburn University, Opelika State Technical College, and Southern Union Community College (Opelika) in adjacent Lee County.

The lack of educational and employment opportunities beyond Tuskegee University may explain the limited family incomes in the county. According to the 1990 census, the median family income in Macon County was \$20,096. A sizable portion (28.1%) of the population lived at or below the poverty level, and of these households, 49.2% consisted of single women and their families. While most households (48.2%) earned less than \$15,000, this was balanced by 20% of the population who netted between \$15,000 and \$24,999. Only 5.8% of the households had an income between \$50,000 and \$74,999, while even fewer (2.3%) earned over \$75,000.

ETHNOGRAPHIC RESOURCES

Moton Field is at least three stories. It is the celebrated national story of the nearly 1000 African-American military pilots who trained there and distinguished themselves in World War II. Moton Field is also the story of the more than 10,000 support personnel and their families who made the training of the Tuskegee Airmen possible. Finally, Moton Field is an account of the impact of the training of the airmen on the local community and region. Many of the Tuskegee Airmen were from the north, and given the nature of the racial climate of the times and the situation of bringing so many highly educated African-American men into a traditional southern scene, close attention to the ethnography is especially significant. The culture shock that the airmen might have felt and the local community's response to them are ethnographic resources that should be documented while many of those individuals are still living.

Although the events at Moton Field had important consequences for all Americans, the aviation training the Tuskegee Airmen received had and still has special meaning for a variety of traditionally associated groups. The airmen and their national organization, Tuskegee Airmen Incorporated (formed during the early 1970s), are the most visible of those associated groups. Furthermore, Tuskegee Institute (now known as Tuskegee University) is itself a prominent part of American history, and its connection with the Tuskegee Airmen and Moton Field is a significant ethnographic resource. The various churches, businesses, and social organizations of the City of Tuskegee most likely experienced changes as a result of the "Tuskegee Airmen Experience." Beyond the local scene, civil rights groups such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Urban League (NUL), as well as African-American newspapers, were special stakeholders in the outcome of the training experience at Moton Field.

Ethnographic resources include, but are not limited to, properties that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and properties which contain sites, structures, objects, landscapes, oral traditions, human communities, behavioral patterns and important places without surviving structures. In addition to places and objects identified in surveys and oral histories by the Tuskegee Airmen, the ethnographic resources entail the memories and recollections of people who worked as support personnel, university faculty, and students.

Although analysis of ethnographic resources associated with the Tuskegee Airmen is beyond the scope of this special resource study, such research is needed. Efforts should be made to seek out those in the associated communities who have memories of the training of the Tuskegee Airmen. These should not be limited to those who had direct connection with the airmen but should include a variety of university and local people who were indirectly affected by the training effort. Not to be overlooked either are the various types of

individuals who were informally affiliated with the airmen, including their families and friends in Tuskegee and elsewhere. A systematic screening of various archives locally and nationally should be undertaken that could fill out the mundane yet vital ethnographic details for telling the full human story of Moton Field.

Further attention should be given to a variety of townspeople, including both elected officials and service workers. Other potential resources might consist of newspaper accounts, college yearbooks, campus and airfield newspapers, newsletters, photographs, church bulletins, and memorabilia owned by individuals who interacted with the airmen in different social contexts.

Through a careful assessment of ethnographic resources using both interviews and archival collections, information can be assembled to interpret the meaning of Moton Field and the changes that occurred in American culture during the dramatic events of World War II. If full attention is given to the ethnographic resources at Moton Field, the public can more fully understand the lasting effects of the airfield on Tuskegee University, the City of Tuskegee, the African-American community, the South, and on all Americans. These resources are found in the concrete and bricks of Moton Field, as well as in the memories, tales, and stories of those who lived through the experience. An additional assessment of these ethnographic resources is needed to highlight the humble documents of everyday life that survive in Tuskegee.

COMPLIANCE WITH PRESERVATION & ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

National Historic Preservation Act

Numerous laws affect the manner in which an agency carries out its mission. Of particular importance to this study is the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended, especially Sections 106 and 110(f) of the Act. Section 106 requires all federal agencies to take into account the effect of their actions on historic properties and to afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment on those actions and their effects. Section 110(f) mandates a higher standard of consideration than Section 106 for undertakings that may affect National Historic Landmarks directly and adversely.

Executive Order 11988 “Floodplain Management”

All federal agencies are required to avoid building in a 100-year floodplain unless no other practical alternative exists. The NPS has adopted guidelines pursuant to E.O. 11998 (Special Directive 93-4) stating that it is NPS policy to restore and preserve natural floodplain values and avoid environmental impacts associated with the occupation and modification of floodplains. It goes on to require that, where practicable alternatives exist, Class 1 actions be avoided within a 100-year floodplain. Class 1 actions include the location or construction of administrative, residential, warehouse and maintenance buildings, non-expected parking lots

or other man-made features that by their nature entice or require individuals to occupy the site. Class 2 actions are defined as those which would create an added disastrous dimension to a flood event. These include the location or construction of schools, hospitals, fuel storage facilities, museums, and archeological artifact storage. Excepted actions include those which are functionally dependent on their proximity to water and those relating to park functions that are often located near water for the enjoyment of visitors but do not involve overnight occupation.

A preliminary review of Floodway and Flood Insurance maps indicates that a small portion of the area proposed for development may fall within a 100 or 500-year floodplain. This could include some of the former site of Hangar Number Two. These preliminary conclusions are based on copies of the aforementioned maps. A full set has been ordered that, when received, should allow for a more definitive floodplain determination. However, based on the level of detail shown on the maps, it is not possible to determine the exact relationship of the floodplain to the area proposed for development. A detailed site survey may be necessary before any final determination can be made.

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service for Macon County, there are no published soil maps for the study area. Soils in upland areas are sand, loam, and clays. The uplands are UcD and MnB series. The soils in the floodplain area are of the Eunola (EuA) and Myatt (MyA), generally consisting of fine sandy loams and loams, respectively. Both are rarely flooded, but, because of their physical properties (soil strength, subgrade, composition, shrink-swell potential) and high water table, are considered undesirable for most construction or road development.

Executive Order 11990 “Protection of Wetlands”

This order requires all Federal agencies to avoid, where possible, impacts on wetlands. Updated NPS Guidelines relating to E.O. 11990 are currently in draft form; however, they basically state that, where there is a practicable alternative, parks must avoid actions with the potential for adversely affecting wetlands. In the absence of such alternatives, parks must modify actions to preserve and enhance wetland values and minimize degradation. For new actions where impacts to wetlands can not be avoided, proposals must include plans for compensatory mitigation that restores wetlands on NPS lands where possible at a minimum acreage ratio of 1:1.

The NPS defines wetlands as vegetated areas that are flooded or saturated for a duration sufficient to allow development of at least one of the three wetland indicators described in the 1987 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual - wetland hydrology, hydric soils, or hydrophytic vegetation. This definition is more restrictive than that used by the Corps of Engineers to delineate jurisdictional wetlands, which requires the presence of all

three wetland indicators. Generally speaking, the majority of the low-lying areas at the project site exhibit at least one, if not all three, of the wetland indicators. This includes the area northwest of the Moton Field access road indicated in some project alternatives as a potential site for road construction and parking lot development. It is strongly suggested that, prior to further development of project plans, a comprehensive wetland delineation be conducted in areas proposed for development. Should the preferred project alternative necessitate wetland impacts, plans for appropriate compensatory mitigation should be developed as soon as possible.

Impacts on Prime and Unique Agricultural Land in Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (45 FR 59189)

Federal agencies are required to analyze the impacts of federal actions on agricultural lands in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. Information provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service indicates that there are no prime or unique agricultural lands in the proposal area.

Clean Air Act, as amended (42 USC 7401 ET SEQ.)

The Clean Air Act requires all federal agencies to comply with existing federal, state, and local air pollution control laws and regulations. All in-park activities would be in compliance with state air quality implementation plans. Pending final plan development, it is foreseen that no actions proposed in this study would require compliance.

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as Amended (16 USC 1531 ET SEQ)

Section 7 requires all federal agencies to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that any federal action does not adversely affect the continued existence of listed species or critical habitat. Consultation with Fish and Wildlife Service has revealed that there are five (5) federally listed threatened or endangered species (two birds and three mollusks) known to occur in Macon County, Alabama. They are the red-cockaded woodpecker, wood stork, southern clamshell, ovate clubshell, and fine-lined pocketbook. The areas proposed for development have been heavily disturbed and probably do not provide a suitable habitat for maintaining populations of these species. Therefore, none of the alternatives identified in the study would jeopardize any listed species or critical habitat. Further consultation would be carried out after final plan development and before construction to ensure that no existing or newly listed species have been found on any of the sites and that none of the sites support populations of a protected species.

Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (42 UC 4151 ET SEQ); and, as appropriate, Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336, 104 Stat. 327)

These acts require all facilities and programs developed to be accessible to disabled visitors. Any construction would meet the established guidelines.

IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVES

The analysis of impacts is based on several issues including visitor experience, cultural resources and natural resources. Visitor experience involves the effectiveness of the alternative in conveying an understanding of the interpretive themes through varying levels of facilities and programs in each alternative. Impacts of the alternatives on cultural resources involve how construction and visitor use would affect historic structures, landscapes, archeological and ethnographic resources. Natural resource impacts include effects of facility construction activity and visitor use on water and air quality, plant and animal life and soil conditions. Impacts on the socioeconomic environment result from the local and regional economy, including likely changes in employment, educational and recreational activities.

Common Impacts of Alternatives

All alternatives include similar types of development and use, and may have impacts on natural and cultural resources, visitation, and the socioeconomic environment. The larger alternatives (Alternatives C and D) involve a greater development and use of the site which will result in impacts of greater magnitude on the resource (Moton Field).

Some impacts are common to each alternative except no action. These include impacts from development of facilities and visitor use as well as the potential for added protection of cultural resources. Park facilities that are common for each alternative include construction of an information station or visitor center/museum, parking, access roads, pedestrian walkways/trails and a variety of outdoor and indoor exhibits. The proposed access road may be situated in a potential wetland area. A comprehensive wetland delineation is needed. If found to be in a wetland area, appropriate mitigation measures will be developed.

Impacts resulting from visitor use would involve compaction of soils and trampling of vegetation. In addition, varying levels of facility construction proposed in the alternatives could result in temporary pollution of waters and air.

All alternatives except no action would provide increased protection for the site's cultural resources. However, the amount of protection in Alternative A would be very limited. In each alternative, the historic scene would be protected by adding vegetation to screen the airport from view of the historic Moton Field complex.

Unless efforts by the local government are made to control unsympathetic commercial and residential development on land adjacent to the Moton Field site and the surrounding community (particularly along Highway 81), adverse effects on the natural environment as well as a loss in the integrity of the historic setting could occur. This is especially true for Alternatives C and D as well as "no action."

A small portion of the historic building complex could lie within a 100 or 500 year floodplain. However, further examination of Floodway and Flood Insurance Maps and possibly a detailed site survey will be needed to determine the specific location.

Interpretive treatment of Tuskegee Airmen related sites other than Moton Field (Chehaw, Tuskegee Army Air Field and Tuskegee University campus sites) would broaden visitor understanding of the Tuskegee Airmen Experience.

Littering and refuse would increase due to the rise in visitor use.

Alternative A--Commemoration/Information: Moton Field

Impacts on Visitor Experience

- Passive experience with non-personal services and an information-oriented approach to telling the story of the Tuskegee Airmen.
- Limited presentation of historical context (heavy reliance on publications).
- Limited impression and interpretation of existing and former structures forces the visitor to rely on imagination and contemplation for visitor appreciation.
- Total outdoor experience affected by the weather.
- Highly directed (focused) visitor experience.
- Narrow visitor appeal.
- Has a high level of historic presence (feeling) as a stabilized ruin.
- Minimal commemoration of the Tuskegee Airmen.

Impacts on Natural Resources

- Impacts on natural resources negligible with Alternative A.
- Construction would disturb soils and remove vegetation on 2.0 acres in and around construction sites.
- 11.5 acres of previously disturbed areas would be revegetated.
- Temporary decrease in water quality could result from runoff of disturbed soil--erosion and sedimentation.
- Minor, localized short-term decrease in air quality could occur during construction.
- Storm runoff slightly increased due to additional impervious surface of 1.6 acres. Amount of runoff small relative to extent of floodplain and drainage basin.
- Proposed visitor parking, information building and access road may affect a wetland.

Impacts on Cultural Resources

- Federal efforts at resource protection would be limited to technical assistance, and responsibility for protection would lie with local citizens, organizations, and state and local governments.
- Minimal level of preservation of historic structures would be limited to stabilization from

further deterioration.

- Private or local ownership of site would mean little protection for cultural resources from future development. However, if the project involves the use of federal funds, it would require compliance with Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which provides a certain level of protection for cultural resources.
- Addition of new structures (information building) would have little impact on historic resources due to careful siting and screening.
- Small increase in the number of visitors would increase stress on historic resources.
- Little attention given to ethnographic resources.
- Possibility of archeological investigations by Tuskegee University.
- Limited management and resource protection could cause damage to identified and unidentified cultural resources through inappropriate use, development, or vandalism

Impacts on the Socioeconomic Environment

- Construction benefits would include short-term increase in employment in area with construction funds augmenting the local economy. Development costs may indirectly result in \$5.8 to \$8.7 million in the local economy.
- Minor increase in visitors to the area would add some additional tourist dollars to the local economy.
- Limited development of Moton Field site would result in little or no change in land use in the surrounding area.
- Limited development of Moton Field site may result in few changes to local infrastructure such as roads, utilities, housing, etc.
- No property ownership changes, therefore no changes in property tax revenue.
- Few long-term changes in local employment since site would require few staff members.
- Site would have little impact on the educational opportunities in the county beyond a field trip destination.
- Site will probably have a limited impact on recreational activities in the county by the addition of a local park.

Alternative B--Commemoration/Information: Tuskegee Airmen and Moton Field

Impacts on Visitor Experience

- Minimal interpretation and personal services.
- Passive experience relying on contemplation/imagination.
- Limited presentation of historical context (rely on publications and exhibits at Chappie James Museum).
- Total outdoor experience affected by the weather (similar to Alternative A).
- Less historic authenticity than Alternative A due to adaptive re-use of Hangar Number One.
- Slightly wider visitor appeal than Alternative A due to NPS designation.

- Directed experience (similar to Alternative A).
- Minimal commemoration (similar to Alternative A).
- Limited diversity/variety of recreational opportunities (static interpretation).

Impacts on Natural Resources

- Amount of construction related to the disturbance of soils and existing vegetation would increase to 2.7 acres.
- 16 acres of previously disturbed areas would be revegetated.
- Similar to Alternative A; minor short-term decreases in water and air quality could occur during construction.
- Increase in impervious surface of 2.1 acres would increase runoff.
- Proposed visitor parking and access road may affect a wetland.

Impacts on Cultural Resources

- Federal government (NPS) responsible for preservation of site, which would ensure use of the Secretary of Interior's standards in preservation (high standards).
- Stabilization of some structures would prevent them from further deterioration.
- Rehabilitation of Hangar Number One would ensure a higher level of preservation.
- Adaptive use of Hangar Number One for use incompatible with original (visitor contact facility) would result in loss of original material, authenticity, and place additional stress on the structure.
- NPS's "ghosting" of structures would require archeological investigations of these building sites before construction, provide additional information, and help visitors better visualize the Moton Field complex.
- Federal ownership of site could provide an additional measure of protection.
- Changes to Hangar Number One to provide for adaptive reuse could damage original materials, grounds, or other cultural resources.
- Increased visitation places stress on historic structures and grounds and could damage these cultural resources.
- Some attention given to ethnographic resources, but limited ability to interpret them.
- Few archeological investigations limited to cataloging and storing data.

Impacts on the Socioeconomic Environment

- Construction benefits may include a short-term increase in employment in the area with construction funds adding to the local economy. Development costs would indirectly add \$15 to \$22.5 million to the local and state economy.
- Moderate increase in visitors to the area would bring tourist dollars to the local economy.
- Development of the Moton Field site may change land use patterns in the surrounding area with some private development such as lodgings, restaurants, or service stations.
- Limited development of the Moton Field site would result in some changes to local

- infrastructure such as widened roads, expanded utilities, etc.
- No property ownership changes, therefore no changes in property tax revenue.
- Some long-term changes in local employment since site would require some staff members (approximately 12).
- Site may have little impact on the educational opportunities in the county beyond a field trip destination and a possible source of information for research projects.
- Site may have a small impact on recreational activities in the county due to designation as a NPS site.

Alternative C--Living History: The Tuskegee Airmen Experience

Impacts on Visitor Experience

- Heightened enjoyment through sensory experiences including:
- Formal interpretation emphasizing historic artifacts and furnishings, including period aircraft.
- Active experience--interactive and diverse.
- Special event living history programs--emphasis on personal services in interpretive programs.
- Use of additional media to tell story.
- Visually complete Moton Field complex resulting from rehabilitation and ghosting of each historic structure.
- Broad presentation of historical context. Understanding of issues but not their complexity.
- Provides a memorial rather than commemorative treatment.
- Use of Moton Field to tell **why** as well as **what** happened (Tuskegee Airmen Experience)-
- increase understanding of story.
- Historic feeling--greatly enhanced historic complex treatment including buildings and furnishings.
- Individual effort and achievement--deal with in interpretive programs--provide feeling for personalities involved in airmen story.
- Broad appeal for a wide range of visitors--children and families.
- Dispersed experience--uses entire site.
- Provocative--challenge to think about history and their (the visitor's) place in history and society as to why events occurred.
- Combination of indoor/outdoor facilities less dependent on weather than Alternatives A and B. Greater continuity of visitor use affected less by seasonal variations in climate.

Impacts on Natural Resources

- Disturbance of soils and existing vegetation due to construction would increase to 4.7 acres.
- 17.2 acres of previously disturbed areas would be revegetated.
- Short-term decreases in water and air quality during construction could be somewhat

higher due to increased level of disturbed area.

- Increased runoff would result from new impervious surface totaling 3.7 acres.
- Increased annual visitor use in Alternative C could result in additional trampling of vegetation and compaction of soil.

Impacts on Cultural Resources

- Federal government (NPS) responsible for preservation of site, which would ensure use of the Secretary of Interior's standards in preservation (high standards). (Same applies to Alternatives B and D.)
- Rehabilitation of Hangar Number One would ensure a higher level of preservation. (Same applies to Alternatives B and D.)
- Adaptive use of Hangar Number One for use incompatible with original would result in loss of original material, authenticity, and place additional stress on the structure. (Same applies to Alternatives B and D.)
- NPS's "ghosting" of structures would require archeological investigations of these building sites before construction, provide additional information, and help visitors better visualize the Moton Field complex. (Same applies to Alternatives B and D.)
- Federal ownership of site could provide an additional measure of protection. (Same applies to Alternatives B and D.)
- The construction of a visitor center on site of Hangar Number Two could damage original materials, grounds, or other cultural resources.
- Greater visitation would place additional stress on historic structures and grounds and could damage cultural resources.
- Added attention given to ethnographic resources with possible efforts to identify and observe oral traditions, documents, artifacts, historic linkages, and values associated with the Tuskegee Airmen and their connection with the Tuskegee community. Oral interviews with airmen and locals conducted by university students, in addition to professionally prepared ethnographic studies, could expand the understanding of cultural significance.
- Archeological investigations would be conducted to locate additional cultural resources at the site. The data collected could be interpreted and displayed to increase visitor understanding.

Impacts on the Socioeconomic Environment

- Construction benefits may include a short-term increase in employment in the area with construction funds greatly adding to the local economy. Development costs would indirectly add \$35 to \$52.5 million to the local, state, and regional economy.
- Large increase in visitors to the area may bring many tourist dollars to the local and state economy.
- Development of the historic site may change land use patterns in the surrounding area with

- a great amount of private development such as lodgings, restaurants, or service stations, and could change the small-town, rural character of the area as well as bring additional consumer services not currently available.
- The development of the site may affect the local infrastructure and additional utilities, housing, and roads would probably be needed.
- Property ownership changes would result in a small change in property tax revenue. A small tract of approximately one acre would no longer be taxed.
- Staffing of the site would produce long-term changes in local employment (approximately 20 NPS personnel) and directly and indirectly benefit the local economy.
- Site would impact educational opportunities in the county. Some students will benefit from its resources, which would be a source of information for research projects.
- Site may significantly increase recreational opportunities in the county, especially with its park-like atmosphere, picnic areas, and trails.

Alternative D--Legacy: Tuskegee Airmen National Center, A Historical Continuum

Impacts on Visitor Experience

Same as Alternative C, except for:

- Expanded memorial to individual airmen (Wall of Honor) and African Americans in the United States military--promote inspiration, pride, healing and unity--a cleansing experience.
- Significantly expanded space for exhibits and audiovisual programs allows a more thorough presentation of the historical context and an opportunity for greater understanding and appreciation by visitors.
- National Center--broader appeal as a visitor destination--armed forces veterans and others. Will attract more visitors and broader public/interest groups.
- A different type of military museum dealing with complex social issues as well as military operations. An emphasis not on military hardware and strategies, but on the military as an extension of society would broaden visitor understanding and knowledge of history and society.
- Future phase transportation system to facilitate visitor use of Tuskegee Airmen related sites like Chehaw. Greater opportunities for visitor use of other attractions in surrounding community.

Impacts on Natural Resources

- Soils and vegetation disturbed by construction activities would total 11.3 acres.
- 18.4 acres of previously disturbed areas would be revegetated.
- Temporary decreases in water and air quality due to construction would be the highest of any alternative.
- Approximately 9 acres of new impervious surfaces would increase runoff.
- With the highest potential visitor use of any alternative, additional trampling of vegetation

and compaction of soil is likely to occur.

Impacts on Cultural Resources

- Federal government (NPS) responsible for preservation of site, which would ensure use of the Secretary of Interior's standards in preservation (high standards). (Same applies to Alternatives C and B.)
- Rehabilitation of Hangar Number One would ensure a higher level of preservation. (Same applies to Alternatives C and B.)
- Adaptive use of Hangar Number One for use incompatible with original would result in loss of original material, authenticity, and place additional stress on the structure. (Same applies to Alternatives C and B.)
- NPS's "ghosting" of structures would require archeological investigations of these building sites before construction, provide additional information, and help visitors better visualize the Moton Field complex. (Same applies to Alternatives C and B.)
- Federal ownership of site could provide an additional measure of protection. (Same applies to Alternatives C and B.)
- The construction of museum on the site of Hangar Number Two could damage original materials, grounds, or other resources. However, with the careful siting and screening of the Tuskegee Airmen National Center, the new building would have little impact on the historic area.
- High level of visitation would place greater stress on historic structures and grounds and could damage cultural resources.
- Attention to ethnographic resources similar to Alternative C, but with possible oral interviews conducted by students, volunteers, or NPS staff, which could document traditions and historical data before older generations die.
- Extensive archeological investigations would be conducted to locate additional cultural resources at the site. The data collected could be interpreted and displayed to increase visitor understanding.

Impacts on the Socioeconomic Environment

- Construction benefits may include short-term increase in employment in area with construction funds greatly adding to the local economy. Development costs would indirectly add \$40 to \$105 million to the economy and affect it on local, state, and regional levels.
- Large increase in visitors to the area would bring many tourist dollars to the state.
- Development of the historic site would greatly change land use patterns in the surrounding area, particularly along Highway 81 between Interstate 85 and Moton Field, with a substantial amount of private development such as lodgings, restaurants, and service stations, and would definitely change the small-town, rural character of the area. It could also negatively affect (and possibly damage) other cultural resources in the area unless

- some zoning or local ordinances are in place.
- The development of the site would greatly affect the local infrastructure and additional utilities, housing, and roads would be needed.
- Property ownership changes would result in a small change in property tax revenue. A small tract of approximately one acre would no longer be taxed.
- Staffing of the site (NPS) would produce long-term changes in local employment (24 NPS staff) and directly and indirectly improve the local economy.
- Educational opportunities would be similar to Alternative C, except with a greater impact. Some students would be eligible to attend the school, while others may benefit from its resources as well as those of the Tuskegee Airmen National Center/NPS site, which would be a national source of information on the Tuskegee Airmen as well as African-American men and women in the military and in aviation.
- Recreational opportunities in the county would be similar to Alternative C, except that it may also stimulate growth in this area in terms of additional parks, movie theaters, malls, etc. for visitors to the area.

No Action Alternative

Impacts on Visitor Experience

Continuation of existing uses and trends:

- Tuskegee University use of portions of site for purposes incompatible with historic character may detract from historic feeling.
- No on-site visitor facilities or interpretation.
- Limited and incidental visitor use in unsafe environment/hazards due to ruins/deteriorating conditions.
- Uncontrolled use/no protection for historic resources.
- Only contemplative/imaginative experience available for visitors.
- History of site known by informed visitors and Tuskegee Airmen only.
- Commemoration limited to a small monument at airport and special events.
- Opportunities for appreciation and understanding extremely limited

Impacts on Natural Resources

- No new construction and therefore no disturbance of soils and vegetation or temporary decreases in water and air quality.
- Without revegetation of previously disturbed areas some erosion and sedimentation could be expected. Limited management and resource protection could cause additional degradation of the natural environment.

Impacts on Cultural Resources

- Historic resources at site would continue to deteriorate and eventually need to be demolished (demolition by neglect). Loss of remaining structures would destroy the most

tangible physical remains relating to the Tuskegee Airmen and severely diminish any future efforts to commemorate them.

- Continued private and city ownership and management of site means little protection from vandalism as well as from future development unless federal funds are involved.
- Possible future development of site for purposes other than preservation and commemoration of the Tuskegee Airmen could result in a loss of cultural resources associated with Moton Field.
- Continued low level of visitation would limit the stress on cultural resources.
- No attention given to ethnographic resources.
- No attention given to archeological resources.

Impacts on the Socioeconomic Environment

- No construction benefits to stimulate the economy
- No increase in visitation, therefore no added tourist dollars to economy.
- No effect on land use in the surrounding area.
- No changes to local infrastructure.
- No property ownership changes, therefore no changes in property tax revenue.
- No additional staff required, therefore no changes in local employment
- No impact on educational opportunities in the county.
- No impact on recreational activities in the county.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

This *special resource study* was completed in cooperation with the Tuskegee Airmen Inc., Tuskegee University, United States Representative Bob Riley, 3rd District, Alabama, the State of Alabama, and various officials and interest groups from the City of Tuskegee. Furthermore, this report has been prepared on the basis of extensive historical research as well as input from the Tuskegee Airmen, state and local governments, Tuskegee University, Auburn University, and public and private organizations and interested citizens.

The study team conducted a public workshop with the Tuskegee Airmen at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, Georgia. Through a survey designed specifically for the Tuskegee Airmen, the NPS study team was able to collect additional data regarding the airmen's experiences in the Army Air Corps and descriptions of their respective careers after the completion of military service. More importantly, study team members provided the Tuskegee Airmen an opportunity to offer suggestions on how best to commemorate Moton Field. With assistance from the Tuskegee Airmen Inc. national office, approximately 600 surveys were distributed to the airmen nationwide. So far, approximately 80 airmen have returned the questionnaire, and a summary of this valuable information is incorporated in this report. (See Appendix E)

Similarly, a public workshop was conducted with representatives from Tuskegee University, Auburn University, state and local governments and the community. Suggestions that resulted from this meeting were considered as part of the preparation of this report. Study team members additionally consulted with the Alabama Historical Commission, whose recommendations will be included in the final report. Information garnered from historical research and recommendations offered by the Tuskegee Airmen, state and local governments, and interest groups has been instrumental in the development of the management alternatives.

Various museums throughout the country now pay special tribute to the contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II. To examine the extent of these commemorations, the study team journeyed to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, Georgia, the Museum of Aviation in Warner Robbins, Georgia, and the Tuskegee Airmen National Museum in Detroit, Michigan. A special visit to the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, afforded the study team an opportunity to consult with representatives from the Henry Ford Academy and Museum regarding the operation of a school within a museum. The information gathered from these trips was important in generating the management alternatives for the report.



Figure 79. Tuskegee Airmen National Museum, Detroit, Michigan, March 1998
(Barbara Tagger, NPS)

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APPENDIX A

MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

The several alternatives described below involve different ways of commemorating, interpreting and preserving resources associated with the Tuskegee Airmen at Moton Field. The concepts are the result of extensive historical research as well as input from the Tuskegee Airmen, public agencies, private organizations, Tuskegee University and individual citizens. The alternatives represent a progression toward a greater ability to tell more of the story of the Tuskegee Airmen at Moton Field

Actions Common to Each Alternative

1. "Chief" Anderson Street would be used as a pedestrian walkway for visitors and service vehicle access to the historic building complex.
2. Historic entrance gate would be rehabilitated to its original appearance.
3. Existing airport access road would be removed by the City of Tuskegee and a new road built by the city on city property.
4. Screening of the municipal airport from the historic complex would be provided through planting of trees and other vegetation. Alternatives C and D involve greater protection for the broad historic landscape/setting.
5. A monument to the Tuskegee Airmen would be provided in each alternative but in different locations and configurations. The design of the monument(s) could include statuary to commemorate the Airmen as a group as well as the important roles played by individuals such as Benjamin O. Davis Jr., "Chief" Anderson, primary pilot instructor at Moton Field, and others could be commemorated as a part of the memorial.
6. In the historic complex, varying degrees of preservation treatment for historic resources would be provided. Actions would range from marking "footprints" of former historic buildings on the ground to stabilization or complete rehabilitation of existing historic structures. Historic taxiway, pathways and paved areas would be preserved. Wayside exhibits would also be located at each building site to provide information on the use of each structure.
7. Other sites related to the history of the Tuskegee Airmen, including Chehaw and Tuskegee Army Air Field, would be interpreted. In Alternatives A and B, this would be

handled by the State of Alabama through written agreements with the current property owners. The National Park Service would assume this role in Alternatives C and D.

8. Tuskegee University campus sites and buildings related to the Tuskegee Airmen would be interpreted by NPS.

9. For Alternatives B, C and D, Moton Field would become a unit of the National Park System. The NPS unit envisioned in Alternative D would include a Tuskegee Airmen National Center. In each case, National Park Service operation and management would be based at the existing Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site.

10. Costs for construction of facilities are shown for each alternative based on NPS guidelines for total gross costs (including net construction, advance planning, construction supervision and contingencies). It is anticipated that a partnership arrangement for the sharing of these costs will be developed. In addition to NPS, other federal, state, local agencies and private organizations may provide portions of these costs. In these cases, the actual cost of construction for various facilities may be less than the estimates presented in this report.

Alternative A—Commemoration/Information: Moton Field

Visitor Experience

- * Enhanced highway rest area; not a unit of the National Park System.
- * Passive commemoration: marking of site as remnant landscape.
- * Little interpretation of Tuskegee Airmen history.

Interpretive Emphasis -- Focus on basic data / information on Moton Field as training site.

Historic Building Complex

- * Stabilization of existing historic buildings.
- * Mark footprints of former historic structures.

Interpretive Facilities / Tools

- * Small information-orientation structure near visitor parking.
- * Self-guiding brochure and wayside exhibits.
- * Written publications (available at Carver Museum / Tuskegee Institute NHS).

Portion of Tuskegee Airmen Story Told Through Moton Field Resources and Facilities

- * 10-15 percent.
- * Visitor understanding of rest of story would rely heavily on reading of publications.

Management / Operation

- * Tuskegee University

Construction of Facilities

- * Visitor parking (City of Tuskegee and Tuskegee University).
- * Information - orientation building (Tuskegee University, public and private funds).
- * Other development and stabilization of historic buildings (Private).

Land Ownership

- * Tuskegee University and City of Tuskegee.

Cost of Facility Construction

Total \$ 4,658,160

Alternative B—Commemoration/Interpretation: Tuskegee Airmen & Moton FieldVisitor Experience

- * Passive commemoration
- * Informal interpretation

Interpretive Emphasis - Focus on training process for Tuskegee Airmen at Moton Field.

Historic Building Complex

- * Rehabilitation of Hangar # 1 and Control Tower.
- * Stabilization of historic bldgs. (6).
- * "Ghost" framework for sites of former historic bldgs. (4).

Interpretive Facilities / Tools

- * Hangar # 1 - visitor contact and exhibits with historic photos, replicas of training aircraft.
- * Self-guiding brochure, other publications and wayside exhibits.
- * Chappie James Museum - exhibits on broader story of Tuskegee Airmen.

Portion of Tuskegee Airmen Story Told Through Moton Field Resources and Facilities

- * 20-30 percent.
- * Visitor understanding of rest of story dependent on written publications and limited exhibits at rehabilitated Chappie James Museum (Tuskegee University).

Management / Operation - National Park ServiceConstruction of Facilities

- * Visitor parking (City of Tuskegee and Tuskegee University).
- * Other facilities and preservation of historic resources (NPS).

Land Ownership - National Park Service acquire via donation:

- * 5 acres from City of Tuskegee.
- * 33 acres from Tuskegee University.

Cost of Facility Construction

Total \$ 11,641,071

*Alternative C—Living History: Tuskegee Airmen Experience*Visitor Experience

- * Formal interpretation
- * Active - diverse media, exhibits, NPS staff personal services

Interpretive Emphasis - Focus on broad story of Tuskegee Airmen in addition to Moton Field including:

- * Introduction to story highlighting history of African Americans in the U.S. military.
- * The training process for the Tuskegee Airmen and the strategic role of Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) in that training.
- * Impacts of Tuskegee Airmen during World War II.
- * Integration of the military.
- * Time line showing other events in U.S. during same time period.

Historic Building Complex

- * Rehabilitation of Hangar # 1, Control Tower, Warehouse/Vehicle Storage Building (proposed NPS maintenance facility), Locker Building (proposed NPS administrative functions), All Ranks Club (proposed food service concession).
- * Stabilization - 3 sheds
- * "Ghost" framework - sites of 4 former historic bldgs.
- * Reconstruct Hangar # 2 - New structure with exterior closely resembling original.

Interpretive Facilities / Tools

- * Hangar # 1 -- Living history exhibits and programs focusing on Airmen training and equipment (i.e., link trainer), period furnishings including aircraft.
- * Hangar # 2 -- Visitor center / museum, exhibits on Tuskegee Airmen Experience

beyond Moton Field, variety of media.

- * "Furnished" cultural landscape -- Objects from historic period such as combat aircraft, vehicles, signs, etc., added to outdoor areas of historic complex to enhance sense of "stepping back in time" for visitors.

- * Wayside exhibits and publications.

Tuskegee University Component: Opportunity to establish a *Charles Alfred Anderson Department of Aviation Science* within the historic building complex. More than 50 years ago, pilot trainees learned specialized skills at Moton Field. The educational program would provide an added dimension to the visitor experience, allowing visitors to see students learning in the tradition of the Tuskegee Airmen. Pre-college and college level curriculum would be provided, focusing on aviation, math, science and aeronautics (see Alternative D for additional details).

- * Visitor / museum and school program activities would share use of Hangar #2.

- * Displayed artifacts and exhibits serve a dual purpose: interpretation and education.

- * Hangar #2 - Rooms around perimeter of hangar devoted to classroom and project learning space. Main portion of hangar used for exhibits.

- * Students and teachers assist with special interpretive and living history programs as part of curriculum activities.

- * Interaction between visitors and students would be an integral part of the experience for both.

- * See Alternative D for additional details.

Portion of Tuskegee Airmen Story Told Through Moton Field Resources, Facilities & Programs

- * 60-70 percent.

Management / Operation

- * Historic building complex (NPS)

- * Department of Aviation Science (Tuskegee University)

Construction of Facilities

- * Visitor parking (NPS, Tuskegee University, private and public funds).

- * Historic building complex (National Park Service)

Land Ownership -- National Park Service acquire via donation:

- * 6.7 acres (City of Tuskegee)

- * 81 acres (Tuskegee University)

Cost of Facility Construction

Total \$ 23,671,136

Alternative D—Tuskegee Airmen National Center, A Historical Continuum

Same as Alternative C, except for the following:

Interpretive Emphasis - The continuing legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen would be presented in the context of African American participation in the U.S. military with broad elements of the story presented through exhibits and programs at Moton Field:

- * Past, present and future of military aviation and training.
- * African-American struggle for greater participation in the U.S. military and more significant roles in defending their country.
- * Strategic role of Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) in the training of the Tuskegee Airmen.
- * Significance of successes of the Tuskegee Airmen in leading to desegregation of the U.S. military shortly after World War II.
- * Impacts of Tuskegee Airmen accomplishments on subsequent civil rights advances of the 1950s and 1960s.

Interpretive Facilities / Tools -- *Tuskegee Airmen National Center*, a full-scale military museum built on site separate from historic complex (but within the 81 acres currently owned by Tuskegee University) with space for:

- * Tuskegee Airmen Memorial.
- * Major exhibit space with period military aircraft and equipment.
- * Major audiovisual presentation (possibly an IMAX).
- * Simulator room—Interactive, "hands-on" replicas of equipment used by Tuskegee Airmen.

Tuskegee University Component: Opportunity to establish a *Charles Alfred Anderson Department of Aviation Science within the Tuskegee Airmen National Center*. Pre-college and college level curriculum focusing on aviation, math, science and aeronautics instruction to prepare students to meet challenges for success in the 21st century in the tradition of the Tuskegee Airmen. Facilities would provide:

- * A highly competitive aviation-training center providing pilot training, and education in airport management and safety, meteorology, air traffic control, maintenance and other technical specialties for people in the Tuskegee University region.
- * Education and training center for aviation research. A national repository with high-tech computers and worldwide computer access. Enhancement of Tuskegee University's existing program in aerospace engineering.

- * Expansion of Tuskegee University's Continuing Education programs including Aviation Youth Camps, lecture series by Tuskegee Airmen and biannual flight reviews for licensed pilots. Adult outreach also to provide knowledge and skills to obtain airframe and power plant license approved by Federal Aeronautics Administration (FAA).

- * Increased utilization of Kellogg Center and other facilities on Tuskegee University campus including Chappie James Museum which would be renovated to provide for interpretation of campus sites and buildings linked with the Tuskegee Airmen Experience.

- * Potential student-visitor interface programs.

Visitor Experience -- Highly active and interactive.

Portion of Tuskegee Airmen Story Told Through Moton Field Resources, Facilities & Programs

- * 80-90 percent.

Construction of Facilities

- * Tuskegee Airmen National Center +
- * Visitor parking (NPS, other public agencies and Tuskegee University).
- * Historic building complex (NPS) .

Management / Operation

- * Historic building complex (NPS).
- * Department of Aviation Science (Tuskegee University)
- * Tuskegee Airmen National Center +

Land Ownership - National Park Service acquire via donation:

- * 6.7 acres (City of Tuskegee)
- * 81 acres (Tuskegee University)

Cost of Facility Construction

- * Tuskegee Airmen National Center -- \$ 20,000,000 - 35,000,000
- * Other Facilities -- \$ 23,671,136

+ A public / private partnership on a national level will be needed to raise funds, construct and operate the Tuskegee Airmen National Center. A national fund-raising campaign would involve the Tuskegee Airmen, Tuskegee University, retired and active military personnel, private corporations (especially the aircraft industry), private foundations and others. Development and operation of the facility would involve one or more federal agencies. These federal partners may include the U. S. Department of Defense, U. S. Department of Education, Federal Aviation Administration, NASA, NPS and other agencies. NPS involvement would emphasize the agency's primary responsibility of telling the story of the Tuskegee Airmen.

APPENDIX B

DEVELOPMENT COSTS*

ALTERNATIVE "A"

1. Visitor Parking, Access and Circulation	\$ 745,680
2. Stabilization/Preservation of Historic Structures	1,896,024
3. Interpretive (Wayside) Exhibits and Information/ Restrooms Building	326,976
4. Tuskegee Airmen Memorial (including "Chief" Anderson Statue)	1,170,000
5. Site Development	405,600
6. Chehaw and Tuskegee Army Air Field (exhibits and visitor access)	113,880
	<hr/>
Total Construction Cost for "A"	\$ 4,658,160

ALTERNATIVE "B"

1. Visitor Parking, Access and Circulation	\$ 959,868
2. Stabilization/Rehabilitation of Historic Structures	4,580,043
3. Interpretive Exhibits	3,355,560
4. Tuskegee Airmen Memorial (including "Chief" Anderson Statue)	1,716,000
5. Site Development	475,800

* Costs for construction of facilities are total gross costs (including net construction, advance planning, construction supervision and contingencies)

6. Chappie James Museum Renovation, Chehaw and Tuskegee Army Air Field (exhibits and visitor access)	553,800
Total Construction Costs for "B"	\$ 11,641,071

ALTERNATIVE "C"

1. Visitor Parking, Access and Circulation	\$ 1,327,164
2. Stabilization/Rehabilitation of Historic Structures	11,951,352
3. Interpretive Exhibits	8,198,500
4. Tuskegee Airmen Memorial (including "Chief" Anderson Statue and Scenic Overlook)	1,294,000
5. Site Development	775,320
6. Chehaw and Tuskegee Army Air Field (exhibits and visitor access)	124,800
Total Construction Costs for "C"	\$ 23,671,136

ALTERNATIVE "D"

Tuskegee Airmen National Center and expanded visitor parking	\$ 20,000,000 - 35,000,000
Other Facilities	\$ 23,671,136

APPENDIX C

NPS STAFFING ESTIMATES

Alternative "B"

<u>Staff</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Salary / Benefits*</u>	<u>Total Cost*</u>
Park Ranger, GS-0025-09	2	70.8 / 24.8	95.6
Park Guide, GS-0090-06	2	52.1 / 18.2	70.3
Curator, GS-1015-11	1	37.5 / 12.7	50.2
Budget Clerk, GS-0303-04	1	20.9 / 7.3	28.2
Clerk Typist, GS-0303-04	1	20.9 / 7.3	28.2
Maintenance Worker, WG-4749 -05	2	22.0 / 7.7	29.7
Tractor Operator, WG-5705-06	1	23.6 / 8.3	31.9
Laborer, WG-3502-03	2	37.5 / 13.1	50.6
Totals	12	285.3 / 99.4	384.7

Alternative "C"

<u>Staff</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Salary / Benefits*</u>	<u>Total Cost*</u>
Park Ranger, GS-0025-09	3	106.2 / 37.2	143.4
Park Guide, GS-0090-06	5	130.2 / 45.5	175.7
Curator, GS-1015-11	1	37.5 / 12.7	50.2
Conservator, GS-1001-11	1	37.5 / 12.7	50.2
Museum Specialist, GS-1016-07 or GS-1016-09	1	28.9 / 10.1 35.4 / 12.4	39.0 47.8
Budget Clerk, GS-0303-04	1	20.9 / 7.3	28.2
Clerk Typist, GS-0303-04	1	20.9 / 7.3	28.2
Maintenance Worker, WG-4749-05	3	33.0 / 10.5	43.5
Tractor Operator, WG-5705-06	1	23.6 / 8.3	31.9

Laborer, WG-3502-03	3	56.2 / 19.7	75.9
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Totals	20	530.3 / 183.7	670.2
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	20	536.8 / 185.9	679.0

Alternative "D"

<u>Staff</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Salary / Benefit*</u>	<u>Total Cost*</u>
Park Ranger, GS-0025-09	4	141.6 / 49.6	191.2
Park Guide, GS-0090-06	7	182.3 / 63.7	246.0
Curator, GS-1015-11	1	37.5 / 12.7	50.2
Conservator, GS-1001-11	1	37.5 / 12.7	50.2
Museum Specialist, GS-1016-07	1	28.9 / 10.1	39.0
or GS-1016-09		35.4 / 12.4	47.8
Budget Clerk, GS-0303-04	1	20.9 / 7.3	28.2
Clerk Typist, GS-0303-04	1	20.9 / 7.3	28.2
Maintenance Worker, WG-4749-05	3	33.0 / 10.5	43.5
Tractor Operator, WG-5705-06	1	23.6 / 8.3	31.9
Laborer, WG-3502-03	4	75.0 / 26.2	101.2
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Totals	24	601.2 / 208.4	813.6
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	24	607.7 / 210.7	822.4

* Staffing costs indicated in thousands of dollars

APPENDIX D

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN WORKSHOP

MOTON FIELD / TUSKEGEE AIRMEN SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY

MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE HERITAGE MUSEUM

FEBRUARY 6, 1998

YELLOW GROUP

EXERCISE # 1 : What are the most important aspects of the story of the Tuskegee Airmen?

1. Represents the opening, grudgingly, of the opportunity for African Americans to enter military aviation.
2. Provided opportunity for education and enlightenment.
3. Showed the American public that African Americans could fly and fight.
4. Moton Field represents the center of African-American military aviation in all of its aspects and potentials.
5. Opportunity to participate in the military (in a manner of) your choosing, not on a menial basis.
6. Even though in a segregated situation, an opportunity was provided to demonstrate that you could fly and display bravery, ability and success in other activities.
7. Provided the first step for African Americans to achieve careers in aviation.
8. A social learning experience providing first-hand contact with segregation.
9. Opportunity to attend all-black college as cadets.
10. Opportunity to meet experienced and influential black civilian pilots.
11. Faced higher and more rigid training standards. Black instructors taught courses.
12. The military's quota system provided only a limited number of places for a large number of qualified candidates, resulting in a higher wash-out rate for African-American pilots.

EXERCISE # 2: What are the most important resources to use in telling the story of the Tuskegee Airmen ? (At Moton Field or elsewhere)

1. Official unit and War Department records and tapes, testimonies.
2. Black instructors who were excellent pilots.

3. Airplanes used at Moton Field and elsewhere (equipment to train with).
4. Cohesion - group community feeling.
5. Use experience of pilots at Moton Field to show their influence on careers in aviation.
6. Primary flight training and ground school: show how they were conducted.
7. Moton Field represented denial of professional flying (segregated skies).
8. Entire training on a segregated basis for the pilots.
9. Moton Field as a memorial (reconstruction).
10. Seymour Field in Indiana - leads to integration.
11. Living Tuskegee Airmen (everybody !) + civilian instructors.

EXERCISE # 3 : What are the best ways of commemorating the Tuskegee Airmen at Moton Field ?

1. Reconstruction of Moton Field facilities.
2. Museum which would contain :
 - a. Airplanes
 - b. Statue of Chief Anderson
 - c. List of subjects taught at Moton Field (use audio - visual + documentary support).
 - d. Memorial to commemorate Tuskegee Airmen successes and Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee University).
 - e. Photographs of staff (instructors), Tuskegee Airmen, entertainers.
 - f. Exhibit on future of aviation.
 - g. Mannequins with flight gear of the era.
 - h. Theater
 - i. Exhibit on supportive whites, i.e., Noel Parish, Eleanor Roosevelt, etc.
 - j. A list of every Tuskegee Airmen.
 - k. Highlight instructors at Moton Field.

GREEN GROUP

EXERCISE 1: What are the most important aspects of the story of the Tuskegee Airmen?

1. Within the Army, the preponderance of the authorities did not believe blacks had the ability to lead --- (Airmen) Disproved the myth that blacks could not fly.
2. Prelude --- Existence of blacks in aviation was completely ignored.
3. Moton Field was created to train blacks how to fly. Public and military attitudes had to change.
4. Those who fought for desegregation within the nation opposed the existence of Moton

Field as a segregated facility.

5. Racial attitudes of American public were that blacks did not have the capability to become mechanics.
6. War College of 1925 stated that blacks did not have the capability of being trained for military service.
7. Tuskegee Airmen proved to the American public that blacks had the capability to be trained in military aviation.
8. Tuskegee Airmen were the most qualified aviators in the Air Corps (based on the selection process).
9. Better pilots were eliminated from aviation program.
10. Racism !!!
11. Public attitudes and military racism persisted long after the military integrated.
12. B-25 bomber pilots.
13. The original Tuskegee Airmen are the closest knit of any U. S. military group.

Why is the story important to our nation's history?

1. Opportunity --- What it means to have an opportunity to serve in American society as a citizen.
2. Egotism / Ability --- Motivating factor to enter the military (one has to be a REAL man based on the examples set by society).
3. Blacks proved their abilities in the military and civilian life.
4. Failure to use all abilities is a waste of national resource.
5. Marked the beginning of social change.
6. Encouraged other blacks to do better --- Airmen served as role models.
7. Airmen presented story for present and future generations to know and understand.
8. Black military personnel paid a PRICE to be recognized as a full American citizen.

EXERCISE 2: What are the most important resources to use in telling the story of the Tuskegee Airmen? (at Moton Field or elsewhere)

1. Walterboro, S.C. --- erected a monument to Tuskegee airmen in 1997. (Served as a segregated training facility for Airmen).
2. Tuskegee Airmen Museum in Detroit, Michigan.
3. Selfridge Field, Godman, Osceola, Freedman, Tuskegee Army Air Field (places where Airmen were trained).
4. Chanute Field (facility is closed) --- has information on Airmen.
5. Moton Field is the best place to tell the Airmen story.
6. Need to find the 332nd Fighter Group Gunnery Cup (1949 USAF Gunnery Meet).
7. P-51's are displayed in museums.

8. Personnel files should be connected with university research.
9. PT-17; PT-19; PT-13; J3 Piper Cub (primary training equipment used at Moton Field).
10. P-40; P-39; P-47; P-51 (major airplane equipment used by Airmen).
11. Archives --- film of Airmen training (Tuskegee Army Air Field) found at Air Force Archives at Maxwell Air Force Base.

EXERCISE 3: What are the best ways of commemorating the Tuskegee Airmen at Moton Field ?

1. EDUCATION:
 - a. Public Speaking
 - b. Multimedia (video, film, pictures, etc.)
 - c. Hands-on technology (simulators).
2. MUSEUMS
3. MARKERS / MONUMENTS
4. Preservation of existing buildings (show how facility was used).

BLUE GROUP

Answers to each question are ranked into three groups of importance using a focus group process. All answers were important, but the exercise required participants to rank each one. The rankings appear as positive and negative numbers. Positive numbers represent the number of participants who believed the answer to be most significant. Negative numbers indicate those participants who felt the answers were of lesser significance.

EXERCISE 1: What are the most important aspects of the story of the Tuskegee Airmen? (Why is the story important in our nation's history ?)

Most Importance:

- if opportunity, then performance: +9
- [importance of] political action: +7
- the decision for the Tuskegee Experiment / Experience: +6 / -1
- strong Black press exerted pressure on the government [for opportunity / equality] before and after World War II (PITTSBURGH COURIER and CHICAGO DEFENDER significant, AFRO-AMERICAN less significant): +5

Moderate Importance:

- Moton Field was the answer to the need for a place to have the Experience: +3 / -2
- Tuskegee [Institute] political continuum: -2

Lesser Importance:

- those who forget history are condemned to repeat it [opportunity to preserve/ present the Airmen story in the context of long struggle for equality]: -4
- [opportunity to] master the most highly technical skill of the day: -6 / +1
- wake up call to America, if it was to remain a democracy: -7
- confidence builder [flight training opportunity]: -9 / +1

EXERCISE 2: What are the most important resources to use in telling the story of the Tuskegee Airmen?

Most Importance:

- artifacts, pictures, uniforms, documents and equipment: +11
- PT-17, AT-6 and BT-13 airplanes (others ranked in descending order include PT-19, P-40, B-25, PT-13, J3, Stinson, Fairchild, Cessna A-10 and AT-11): +10
- hangar, tower and operations office: +9
- link trainer: +9 / -1
- ready room: +7 / -1

Moderate Importance:

- classrooms: +3 / -2
- auxiliary fields: +3 / -2
- trucks and jeeps: +1 / -1
- parachute rigger area: -1
- mess hall: -1
- campus dorms: -4 / +1

Lesser Importance:

- skeet range: -4
- weather station: -4
- gymnasium: -5
- canteen [beer parlor]: -5
- hospital: -5
- parachute trainer: -6
- training lake: -7

EXERCISE 3: What are the best ways of commemorating the Tuskegee Airmen at Moton Field? (What should be done with the original buildings and other facilities at Moton Field? What should visitors be able to see when they come to Moton Field to help them understand the story of the Tuskegee Airmen ?)

Most Importance:

- general photographs, class photos and Airmen memorabilia, then and new: +7
- video of the Airmen telling their story: +6
- presentation of the training process: +5
- a museum / visitor center: +5 / -1

Moderate Importance:

- [scale] model of Moton Field from 1940: +2
- historic aircraft: +3 / -2
- replica [reproduction] of Tuskegee Airmen statue at U.S. Air Force Academy: +1
- link trainer: 0 / 0
- gun camera [combat] film on video: +1 / -1
- volunteers on site: +1 / -1
- souvenirs (sales area): -2
- lithographs (war era documents, including maps): -2

Lesser Importance:

- mannequins in uniform, with parachutes, other gear: -4 / +1
- folder on the Airmen story: -4
- Chehaw incident: -5
- fuel truck with equipment: -5
- "replica" of grass runway (restoration): -5

APPENDIX E

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN QUESTIONNAIRE COMMEMORATING THE AIRMEN AT MOTON FIELD

SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction

The following report offers a brief analysis of the questionnaire information collected from the airmen. Also included is a copy of the original survey questions, categories of responses, examples of each type of response from each question, and frequencies of types of responses are described.

As part of the Moton Field/Tuskegee Airmen Special Resource Study, the study team devised a questionnaire as a means to collect information on the Tuskegee Airmen Experience during World War II as well as solicit public opinion on how best to commemorate the Tuskegee Airmen legacy at Moton Field. During the initial stages of the report, the Chief Ethnographer in the Washington Office (WASO) requested that the study include information concerning the “stories and events” that the airmen would “want told about Moton Field and the Tuskegee Airmen.” This data, as suggested by Chief Ethnographer, would be significant in determining what aspects of the Tuskegee Airmen story should be interpreted to the public and what the visitor should learn from the airmen tradition. More importantly, the Tuskegee Airmen would play a vital role in helping the study team to decide “what resources are important to them and why.” The Chief Ethnographer moreover recommended that a similar survey should be posed to local residents in the Tuskegee area in order to determine the impact the airmen made on the community. Such information would help the study team identify local sites that may have “special meaning to the airmen” and the support staff stationed there during the World War II years. Unfortunately, time constraints and budget for the Moton Field report did not allow the study team to devise such a survey for the Tuskegee locals. A study of this sort is recommended as a future research project.

In light of these recommendations, the study team decided that portions of the information collected through the questionnaire could be used to enhance the historical overview, while other responses to the survey would be vital in shaping the management alternatives. For instance, the questionnaire asked the airmen to discuss their training and military life with the Army Air Corps, particularly at Moton Field. This question offered the airmen an opportunity to discuss their personal experiences, some of which were added to the historical overview section of the report. Responses to questions concerning the Tuskegee Airmen and their commemoration at Moton Field provided the study team guidance in developing the various planning options. (See the sample questionnaire for additional information.)

In January 1998, the study team, with the assistance of the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., distributed approximately 580 questionnaires to the airmen. The airmen were given three weeks to complete and return the questionnaire to the study team. Eighty airmen (or little less than 20%) responded to the survey. Project time did not allow for a time extension in returning the questionnaire nor did the team send out any formal reminders to the airmen. Interestingly enough, the questionnaire appeared to be extremely important to some of the airmen in that most of those responding made an obvious effort to return the survey on time. Given the fact that the surviving members of the Tuskegee Airmen are part of the senior citizen population, it is understandable that some of them may not have submitted the form on the prescribed date due to illness, sudden death, or for other reasons. In fact, two of the airmen passed away before completing and returning the survey by the specified time. It was their last request that the executors submit the questionnaire to the study team. These were counted as part of the total number responses. Since the airmen are elderly and many of them are quickly passing away, the study team believes that it is imperative that an oral history study be conducted on the Tuskegee Airmen and all others who are associated with the Tuskegee Airmen and their training during World War II. In addition, the study team strongly recommends this sort of research should be a high priority project for the Archeology and Ethnography program.

Once the Tuskegee Airmen submitted the questionnaires, the study team then solicited assistance from Dr. Anthony Paredes, Cultural Anthropologist of the SERO to analyze the responses. Mr. Nicholas Kottak, a doctoral candidate in the Anthropology Department at Emory University, developed a coding system and tabulated the questionnaire responses.

To date, a survey such as this has not been conducted with the Tuskegee Airmen. The results of this questionnaire are by no means definitive and provide only a taste of the kind of information needed to tell the full story of the Tuskegee Airmen. The study team views these questionnaire results as a mere introduction to the type of in-depth research needed on the airmen and persons associated with the Tuskegee Airmen Experience. The kind of ethnographic data foreshadowed by these preliminary questionnaire results would enhance interpretive programs, museum presentations, wayside exhibits, and publications, as well as strengthen the current historical scholarship on the Tuskegee Airmen.

Introduction by Barbara Tagger, Historian, National Park Service

Analysis and Questionnaire Report by Nicholas Kottak, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Anthropology, Emory University

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN QUESTIONNAIRE
MOTON FIELD SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY

Purpose: To offer a means for the Tuskegee Airmen to provide input to the study in terms of historical information and suggested ways of memorializing their important contributions to the United States.

Name of Airmen: _____

Title/Job Classification with Army Air Corps: _____

Questions (Please attach additional pages where more space is necessary to answer questions)

1. Why did you decide to join the Army Air Corps?
2. Why did you want to become a pilot for the Army Air Corps?
3. Please describe your most vivid memories of:
 - a.) Training and military life at Moton Field
 - b.) World War II overseas duty
 - c.) Other experiences with the Airmen
4. What should be done at Moton field to commemorate the Tuskegee Airmen?
5. Describe how you feel about the contributions you made to your country.
6. Where should the story of the Tuskegee Airmen begin (date or event)?
7. What did you personally experience in military or civilian life after World War II?
8. After World War II, how were you able to use the training that you received at Moton Field?
9. What artifacts, equipment or memorabilia do you have that you would be willing to offer as part of a museum or similar facility to commemorate the Airmen?
10. Please provide any other important information that you believe should be considered in the study.

11. What artifacts, equipment or memorabilia do you have that you would be willing to offer as part of a museum or similar facility to commemorate the Airmen?

Please mail the completed questionnaire by no later than January 20, 1998 to:

Willie C. Madison
Superintendent
Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site
Drawer 10
1212 Old Montgomery Road
Tuskegee, Alabama 30687-0010

QUESTIONNAIRE REPORT

Project Summary

This project provides a quantitative and qualitative analysis of 14 questions from 80 “Tuskegee Airmen” questionnaires. The first stage of the research involved reviewing the questions for patterns in the responses; when these patterns began to emerge, several “codes” or “categories” were developed for each question. Approximately 4 to 7 categories were created per question. The remaining set of questionnaires were then reviewed and labeled according to this established coding system. The set of codes/categories were then illustrated with those quotes that helped shape them. There are about 2-6 quotes that follow each category on all 14 questions. Principally in the form of 14 tables, which correspond to each question, a basic statistical analysis was performed correlating six different social positions identified in the questionnaire with the distribution of category responses. The report concludes with a narrative that explains some of the logistical details of the analysis and a short set of conclusions about the meaning of the data.

Social Position Distribution of Questionnaire Respondents

There were a total of 80 questionnaires received that were at least partially completed. In analyzing the questionnaire I divided the questionnaire respondents into six social positions. The primary division is Pilots vs. Non-pilots. There were 42 and 38 self-identified Pilots and Non-pilots respectively. Each of these positions was then further split along an Overseas vs. Non-Overseas divide, depending on where the airmen served during WWII. This revealed that there were 19 Pilots that experienced overseas duty (“Pilot-Overseas”) and 23 Pilots that did not go overseas during the war (Pilot-Non-Overseas”), as well as 11 Non-Pilots that experienced overseas duty (“Non-Pilot-Overseas”) and 27 Non-pilots that did not (“Non-Pilot-Non-Overseas”). I then made one final set of distinctions within only one of these four positions--the “Pilot-Overseas” position. These divisions were concerned with whether the pilots experienced combat situations while serving abroad. Among these 19 “Pilot-Overseas,” 12 did enter combat (“Pilot-Overseas-Combat”), 2 did not (“Pilot-Overseas-No Combat”), and 5 were “unknown” (i.e., unable to determine from reading the questionnaire). The table below reiterates these six social positions along with their numerical breakdown. In the later part of this narrative, I will attempt to identify patterns in how each of these positions match up with the coded responses for particular questions.

Pilot-Overseas-Combat: 12

Pilot-Overseas-No Combat: 2

Pilot-Overseas-Combat Unknown: 5

Pilot-Overseas Total: 19

Pilot-Non-Overseas: 23

Pilot Total: 42

Non-Pilot-Overseas: 11

Non-Pilot-Non-Overseas: 27

Non-Pilot Total: 38

Questionnaire Respondent Total: 80

The Categories

Once the categories/codes for each question were developed, each response on the questionnaire was assigned the most approximate code. Double-coding was allowed; that is, each individual's response could receive as many as two categories per question. Yet, if the respondent only included a response that matched up with one of the available categories then that question would only receive one code. Certain questions, however, such as #4—"Please describe your most vivid memories of a.) Training and military life with the Army Air Corps, particularly any experiences you had at Moton Field"--and #8a—"In telling the story of the Tuskegee Airmen, what are the 3 most important parts or aspects of the story that should be emphasized?"-- were intentionally designed to receive more than one response. Consequently, these questions have the highest total number of responses--96 and 102 respectively. Because there was a total of 80 coded questionnaires, this means that there were only 16 and 22 responses on each respective question that required double-coding. Thus, although the coding system allowed for the flexibility of double-coding, the vast majority of responses were only assigned one code. One will notice, for instance, that question #8b has an even 80 categories--exactly one for each questionnaire response.

Category Overlap

In analyzing the questionnaire, it became apparent that certain questions had a significant degree of overlap in response content. This was true particularly of questions #1 and #2, as well as questions #4a and #4c. Since many of the respondents repeated their answer for question #1 in answering question number #2, these two questions share the same set of categories. On the other hand, while all questionnaire recipients were intended to answer question #1-why did you decide to join the Army Air Corps? Question #2 only requested the pilot's answers. In most cases, the pilots repeated their answers to question #1, but sometimes they listed an additional reason or elaborated on their previously stated reason for joining the Army Air Corps. Because about half of the questionnaire respondents were "non-pilots," they often wrote some variation of "not applicable" for question #2. Thus, question #2 has one more category than question #1—"Not applicable." Yet, while only 9 of the 19

non-pilots that responded to question #2 plainly answered “not applicable” to this question, many of the non-pilots repeated their answer from number 1 because they may have begun the Army Air Corps with the intention of becoming a pilot, only later to be eliminated during aviation training. In fact, in question #3 12 of the non-pilots explicitly admit to having been “Unable to Complete Aviation” training.

In the attached document the categories/codes are provided for each of the questions. I extracted those quotes from the questionnaires that best reflect the character and range of those answers that had been squeezed into a code. Except question #1 and #2, as well as question #4a and #4c, each question has its own set of categories. This does not mean, however, that there was not similarity in response across the various questions. There was, for instance, considerable similarity in respondents’ interpretation of questions #5 and #12. They generally treated each question as an idea box for how to commemorate the Tuskegee Airmen at Moton Field. In fact, one category for each question is identical--“Emphasis on Instructors and Supporting Personnel.” On the other hand, the answers in question #12 are more generally oriented around the various themes in which one might frame the proposed Tuskegee Airmen project (i.e. biographical/ individual focus, Tuskegee Airmen in context of blacks and on aviation in civil rights), while question #5 addresses the institutional and material organization of the proposed commemoration (i.e., statue, hangar, photo display, etc.). On a few occasions something or someone was mentioned several times in the questionnaire, but not often enough within any one question for it to lead to the formation of a distinct category. For instance, many people specifically comment in several questionnaire answers on the critical role of Chief Andersen in the “Tuskegee Airmen Experience.” The 2-6 quotes that follow the introduction of each code/category in the attached document should help to capture some of the variation that exists within each code, as well as illustrate the resemblance of the ideas to those from other questions. For instance, those code/categories in several questions that focus on the negative experiences of the airmen often had significant parallels (e.g., “Stressful and Discriminatory” in Question 3, “Experiences of Racist Treatment” in question 4a and 4c, “Betrayed” in question #6, “Pressures of Racism and Segregation” in question 8a, and “Difficulties and Disappointment” in question #9). The responses behind many of these categories were often interchangeable in tone and content.

There was also a "residual"category, which I referred to as "Other;" it was assigned to those responses that did not even loosely fit into any of the prior categories. I attempted to keep the use of "Other" to a minimum, but its use was particularly necessary for the open-ended questions, such as question 12-- Please provide any other important information that you believe should be considered in the study. Quotes are provided for the “Other” category because they point to unique and often valuable perspectives. “Other” was present as a response code/category in all questions except #3, #5, and #6. There is, however, one category that was present in all questions—“No answer.” This should be self-explanatory--

the respondent left the question blank.

Tables

There are fourteen tables included in this document. Each of the questionnaire's 14 questions have their own table, demonstrating the precise distribution of coded responses on each question for the six social positions previously indicated. The social positions run vertically (as columns) in the attached tables of all 14 questions and the coded responses to each question intersect horizontally (as rows). The bottom row represents the total number of responses given by each of the six social positions for the given question. The last column on the right reflects the total popularity of the particular response category.

As an example, if one were to want to calculate the proportion of people that selected a given response category, they could perform the following equation on each table: move to the extreme right of the row that contains the specified category, note this number--it will be the numerator (in the vertical "Total" column); now move to the corresponding "No answer" category in this same column, subtract this number from the "TOTAL" in the bottom right hand corner of the page (still in the same extreme right-hand column)--this number is the denominator; now divide the numerator and denominator to determine the proportion of the specified category to the total number of completed responses.

An Analysis of How the Social Positions Correlate With The Responses

Because there are 6 social position and about 80 responses per question, there is not considerable data from which to make secure generalizations on the relationship between the social positions and the nature of their responses. Consequently, I will attempt to identify what seem to be some of the more prominent patterns and then provide certain suggestions about what this relationship might mean.

Perhaps a predictable relationship in question #1, which concerns the motivation of the airmen in joining the Army Air Corps, is the higher proportion of pilots that listed "Passion for Flying." 20 of the 47 Pilot responses (43%) fell into this category, while only 9 of the 38 (24%) Non-pilots responses indicated a "Passion For Flying." On the other hand, it might seem unusual that even this percentage of non-pilots (24%) would show such an interest in flying. This might be explained by the high number of airmen (i.e., at least 12--see question #3) that became "Non-pilots" only after elimination from (i.e., "washed out") aviation training.

Correspondingly, a considerably higher proportion of the Non-pilots indicated "The Draft" as their primary reason for joining the Army Air Corps (8 of the 47 Pilot responses (17%) vs. 14

of the 38 (37%) of the Non-pilot responses). In this sense, one might assume that the pilots' passion for flying increased their initial willingness to contribute to the war effort.

Although the same number of Pilots and Non-pilots (3 each) wrote in response to question #6 that they felt "Betrayed" by their country, the Pilots generally reported a more positive set of experiences in post-World II life. More specifically, the Non-Pilots were significantly more likely to characterize their post-WWII life as one of "Difficulties and Disappointments" (17 out of 39 Non-pilots responses (44%) vs. 9 of the 41 Pilot responses (22%)). Among the Pilots, the Pilot-Overseas position experienced the least "Difficulties and Disappointments" (3 of 20 Pilot-Overseas responses; 15%). The Pilots also more commonly continued with "Educational Advancement" than the Non-pilots (19 of 41 Pilot responses (46%) vs. 13 of 39 (33%) Non-pilot responses). Perhaps these two variables are related; many of the quotes reveal that those Airmen who immediately pursued work in the private sector often encountered more experiences of racism and segregation than those who moved into academic life.

The Pilots were also more likely to praise the personal benefits of their military experience. They focused on "Character Strengthening" aspects of their training more than the Non-Pilots (11 of 33 Pilot responses (33%) vs. (7 of 25 Non-pilot responses-- 28%). The Pilot-Overseas-Combat group boasted the highest proportion in this category; 4 of 8 Pilot-Overseas-Combat responses (50%) identified "Character Building" as a reward of their military training. The Non-pilot group was also less likely to have saved memorabilia from the war as reflected in their answers to question #11, concerning the items that they might have to contribute to the proposed museum. 20 of the 36 Non-pilots (56%) in contrast to the 10 of 31 Pilots (32%) answered "Nothing" on this question. One might conclude from this data that the Pilots generally felt a more intimate connection to their experiences as airmen than the Non-Pilot group.

On the other hand, the Non-pilots seemed more forthcoming in expressing their pride in serving the country during WWII. For instance, on question #6, which concerns the feelings of airmen about their contribution to the country, 22 of the 38 Non-pilot responses (58%) stated they were "Proud to Serve Country" in comparison to 17 of the 38 Pilot responses (45%). The social position that expressed the least degree of pride was the Pilot-Non-Overseas; only 7 of the 19 Pilot-Non-Overseas (37%) responses fell into the "Proud to Serve Country" category for question #6. This same social position also expressed humility by leading the "Contribution?/ Wasn't Much" category. Pilot-Non-Overseas were responsible for 4 of this category's mere 7 appearances.

Thus, the Pilots generally seem to place more emphasis than the Non-Pilots on how they gained personally from their war experience as well as downplay their contribution in the

process. The Non-pilots' answers, however, suggest that they feel that they profited less in this exchange of their services with the government; that is, their returns did not significantly exceed their investments. Perhaps the Pilots, particularly the Pilots-Non-Overseas, had expectations of heroism for themselves that they felt were never fully achieved.

Because question #3 indicates that at least 12 of the 31 Non-pilots had been eliminated from Aviation training (i.e., "washed out"), one might expect the Non-pilots to be somewhat more bitter about the training process. There was not, however, a significant trend of this nature here. 3 of the 29 Pilot responses (10%) vs. 4 out of 31 Non-pilot responses (13%) labeled the training "Stressful and Discriminating." The Non-pilots also did not stress the "Rigors of the Training and Selection Phases" more in answering question 8a. than the pilots (12 of 52 Pilot responses (23%) vs. 10 of 41 Non-pilot responses (24%).

In fact, the Overseas vs. Non-Overseas variable seems to explain more in the selection of the "Stressful and Discriminating" category as a way of describing the training process (question #3)--3 of 11 Pilot-Overseas responses (27%) vs. 0 of 16 Pilot-Non-Overseas (0%) responses were "Stressful and Discriminatory" as well as 2 of 8 Non-pilot-Overseas (25%) vs. 2 of 23 (9%) Non-pilot-Non-Overseas. Thus, one might conclude that the overseas experience or the anticipation of the experience during training contributed to the Overseas airmen's interpretation of the training process as "Stressful and Discriminatory."

In describing their more memorable experiences of training and military life with the Army Air Corps (with a particular emphasis on Moton Field), there was a greater tendency to stress friendships and social life among both the Pilots and Non-Pilots that did not serve overseas--4 of 31 Pilot-Non-overseas (13%) vs. 1 of 18 Pilot-Overseas (6%) "Friendships and Social Life" response and 1 out of 22 Pilots-Overseas (5%) and 0 of 6 Non-pilots-Overseas (0%). One might explain this difference as stemming from the more inward group focus that occurs during domestic military training.

Another interesting relationships that breaks down along the Overseas vs. Non-Overseas divide relates to question #5. In question #5, which asks what should be done at Moton Field to commemorate the Tuskegee Airmen, the Non-Overseas people were far more likely to list "Emphasis on Instructors and Supporting Personnel." Not one of the questionnaire recipients in either the Pilot-Overseas or Non-Pilot Overseas positions provided this response. Yet, 6 of 23 Pilot-Non-Overseas (26%) responses and 2 of 24 Non-Pilot-Non-Overseas responses fit into the "Emphasis on Instructors and Supporting Personnel" category for question #5.

Questionnaire Suggestions/Critique

Although the open-endedness of the 14 questionnaire questions did not facilitate the coding

process, it was probably necessary in the preliminary phases of interviewing the Tuskegee Airmen to discover some of the prominent patterns in which they conceptualize their experiences. If subsequent questionnaires are submitted to the airmen, the questions should be more specific than “describe your training” (3) or “describe your most vivid memories” (4a). For instance, one might have a list of categories under a question asking the respondent to rank them in order of importance. One should at least loosely base this category list on those identified in coding this questionnaire. Before designing the subsequent questionnaire, one should also have a sharpened sense of the survey’s principal objectives. For example, “what do we plan to do with the survey information once it’s received?” or “what information can we only receive by directly surveying the airmen?” Finally, it also seems important that questions be more specifically targeted at experiences associated with Moton Field if this is to be the site of the proposed memorial. Often the airmen would tell stories of their training experiences with no explicit indication that it occurred at Moton Field.

QUOTES ILLUSTRATING CATEGORIES

The following quotes were selected to illustrate the categories cited in the summary report. Due to time restraints, the study team was unable to obtain formal permission from each participant; thus the sample quotes do not reveal the identity of the respondents. The quotes should not be used without the permission of the author.

- 1. Why did you decide to join the Army Air Corps? (see question # below)**
- 2. If you were a pilot, why did you decide to become a pilot for the Army Air Corps?**

A.) Passion for flying.

“Made model planes since 4-5 years old.”

“The ability to soar through the air was appealing.”

“The golden opportunity of learning to fly and to better the record of Baron Von Richthofen of WW I.”

To satisfy a lifelong desire to explore the wild blue yonder.”

“I wondered how do you get to “drive one of those flying machines.” I would ask question as how to get involved in flying, no one seemed to know....”

B.) Learn Valuable Skills

“Learn to fly.”

“I was always excited about the opportunity of working on flying aircraft.”

C.) The Draft

“I was going to be drafted anyway, so I decided to take the path that I wanted.”

“volunteering in the Army Air Corp pilot training avoided my being drafted into the ground forces as a buck private.”

“drafted. My hope was that I would be assigned to Army Air Force.”

D.) Previous Aviation/Aircraft Experience

“needless to say, in order to survive in the treacherous, hostile training environment at Tuskegee, I did not reveal to any one that I already knew how to fly. Some of my best friends..and excellent pilots did reveal their flight experience..and unfortunately were ‘washed out.’”

E.) Serve Country

“an act of patriotism; reacting to the reality of world events prevailing at the time.”

“to wage war against racist Nazi air corps.”

F.) The Challenge

Because the establishment and the society was so convinced that it was a feat I could not accomplish.”

"Because I considered the training in the Army Air Corps to be superior to other branches of services."

“I joined the group to accept the challenge. The stigma was that we could not fly. I wanted to prove that this was a lie - because, I knew I could do it.”

“expectation of something beyond being a doughboy.”

G.) Other

“..change national system..”

“..I was a dance teacher at that time and didn’t want to risk losing a limb as a foot soldier..I rationalized that if I was a pilot, it would be all or nothing at all.”

H.) No answer**I.) Not applicable****3. When did you complete your training and what was your training like (daily routine, exercises, etc.)?**

Year: **1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, or 1945**

A.) Demanding Routine

“typically it would start before breakfast with rigorous exercises or a cross-country jog. Next, it was going to the flight line to learn about planes and taking training flights. The day ended with study time and a parade formation.”

“ground school and physical training in the morning and flying in the afternoon.”

“the Training Routine was like it was for any enlisted man in the army air corps; i.e., roll call in morning, breakfast, work assignment on airplane line, physical therapy, chow calls midday and in evening, etc.”

“precise emotional, physical, and mental demands.”

B.) Challenging and Rewarding

“...excellent training for an 18 year old who had no experience with the world outside of his family and his neighborhood.”

“upper classmates were not easy....Loved it all.”

“we finished A.M. school at Keesler in 80 days and P-47 Specialist School at Chanute in

30 days.”

C.) Stressful and Discriminatory (by race and military position)

“the training was segregated and racist.”

“harassment by the upperclassmen all the time like a continuation of “Hell’s Week” at a fraternity’s initiation time, with all this on top of a flying training program that had all of us worrying who was going to be the next one to ‘wash out.’”

D.) Unable to Complete Aviation Training

“I was drafted by the army shortly after being at Tuskegee.”

“washed out as a cadet then completed aircraft mechanic.”

“I did not complete the training. I ‘washed out’ during advance training at the base.”

E.) No answer

4. Please describe your most vivid memories of:

a.) Training and military life with the Army Air Corps, particularly any experiences you had at Moton Field.

c.) Other experiences with Airmen.

A.) Initial Solo Flights

“the greatest experience I had at Moton Field was my 1st solo in a PT-17 after 9 hours of instruction. My instructor was Mr. ‘Muscles’ Wright. After some basic instructions, he instructed me to stop at the Navigational ‘T’ at center field. He got out of the aircraft and waved me on stating, ‘fly the pattern and land by yourself.’ I never realized how large that airplane was until I was by myself.”

“soloing at Moton in the Stearman PT-17 was and remains to this day one of the most thrilling moments of my life.”

“when my instructor got out of the PT-17 and told me to take it up alone, I thought he was out of his mind. In my mind I was not ready. After my first solo landing my confidence ballooned and I made a number of successful landings before I was waved in.”

B.) High Quality Instruction

“I was impressed with the instructors.”

“the most vivid experiences I had was being instructed by Chief Anderson..who soled me and admonished me because of my erratic second landing during solo.”

C.) Friendships and Social Life

“I had the privilege of meeting some of the finest young men and women in the USA and I still keep in touch with some of them fifty years later.”

“My High School and College friend, who later came to TAAF to work, and is now my wife of 53 years, tops my recollection. However, the visit of Ms. Lena Horne to my Primary Class, when we were still housed in the dormitories at Tuskegee Institute, was a quite an exciting morale and pride booster for everyone.”

“I rejoined the Tuskegee Airmen after WWII in Columbus, Ohio (Lockbourne AFB)”

“really enjoyed the friendship and social association with some of the finest men I have ever met.”

“the monthly dances at the officer’s club.”

“the daily regiment of marching, singing, flying, and sometimes dying with my classmates was a true bonding experience which still remains strong.”

D.) Combat Missions

“shot down over Anzio Beachhead in a P-40 on third combat mission, German ground fire. Parachuted to safety over Anzio Beachhead.”

“I had many vivid memories but none so strong as flying cover for the bombers who went to Berlin on March 24, 1945. It was there that we were attacked by the German Messerschmidt 262 jet fighters. One dived on our flight and we turned into it to give a minimal target. It came so fast that when I finally could see it was merely a speck on the horizon. Several of my friends got shot down that day but I survived.”

“we were escorting bombers on a run over southwestern Germany. I was leading a flight of four P-51s when 8 or 10 enemy planes attempted to break through to get to the bombers. I got an ME-109 in my gun sight and opened fire causing him to smoke heavily and he headed for the ground.”

E.) Experiences of Racist Treatment

“In March, 1946 was shipped to Scott Field, Ill. due to race riot on base at Shepherd Field.”

“..every day it consisted of enduring prejudice and performing your duties nevertheless.”

“at Keesler Field we were treated poorly and totally segregated on and off post.”

“three of us (young officers) were having a talk with Dr. Paterson (President of Tuskegee Institute) when I openly criticized the way some native blacks accepted the imposed racist treatment. Dr. Patterson said, ‘My son, you have a lot to learn.’”

“White civilians stormed out of the offices and waiting room in unbelief that Black cadets were flying such a large airplane. Raised fists and abusive language were directed toward us.”

F.) Hard Work

“one of the maneuvers then that we were tested for was the rudder exercise stall..This required coordination..In my room setup my boots on the floor to simulate the rubber pedals and a broomstick to simulate the control stick. I practiced and practiced the coordination until I had it completely mastered.”

“rigorous training, discipline; simulated war training. High intensity study and hard work--much fun though.”

G.) Close-Calls/Accidents

“one of the members of my class was killed because of a spin in landing.”

“death of Cadet Davison in a T-6 crash shortly before graduation.”

“I managed/negotiated a virtual figure 8 on the ground while completely avoiding damage to the aircraft.”

“...a bad case of vertigo on a night flight, when I thought I saw a battleship in the middle of Alabama...it was the city of Sylacuga...”

“Seeing 10 trainees die in a B-17 crash at Tyndall AAF during a storm.”

H.) Sense of Pride and Purpose

“The recognition and appreciation accorded me by the black civilians, who especially liked the coveralls.”

“...Just being associated with and a part of such an intelligent and talented group.”

I.) Other

“Those ungodly cold showers at 2:00 am on nights basic or advanced were flying.”

“the squadron could only show one victory after the completion of six months of combat duty. It made them feel unappreciated and their morale was very low. Because of that the ground crew had just about lost faith in our pilot’s courage.”

“the hazing in lower preflight--It was an excellent medium to learn to keep your ‘cool.’”

J.) No answer**4b.) World War II overseas duty (if you were stationed abroad).**

(Question #4b was not analyzed in TABLE due to the small number of responses).

A.) Yes

- 1.) Combat vs. No Combat
- 2.) Unable to Infer

B.) No

5. What should be done at Moton Field to commemorate the Tuskegee Airmen?

A.) Statue/Monument/Plaque

“There should be a statue of "Chief Anderson" talking to a Primary Level Cadet wearing a parade uniform and Air Corps Cadet hat. There should be an aviation mechanic alongside of Anderson.”

“commission a statue of a civilian primary instructor complete with parachute scarf, helmet and goggles, chute over shoulders, and wool lined jacket, looking to the skies...”

“a memorial similar to the Vietnam Wall in Washington listing all who completed training there and including the instructors.”

B.) Keep Moton Field Open and Operational

“Moton field should be a tribute to the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen by maintaining it as a operational general aviation airport with fully operational facilities.”

“the runway should be updated to include a control tower to accommodate our fly-ins.”

C.) Restore Hangar

D.) Photo Display

“arrange displays, memorabilia, and photo in the year by year process from Tuskegee--Overseas--and finally at Lockbourne AFB, OH.”

E.) Historical Site/Museum/National Park System Unit

“Moton Field should be preserved and museum built to honor black fighting men and women during the period 1941-1948.”

F.) Nothing

“I believe many of the future space candidates will reach the age of fifty before they become qualified. All the active duty Tuskegee Airmen will have expired prior to the middle of the 20th century.”

“the Tuskegee Airmen included every specialty required to operate an air unit and every one did not necessarily have an affiliation with Moton Field. The money that the Government might spend at Moton Field would be better used to create a world class museum where all members might be commemorated.”

G.) Other

“see Workshop of Feb 6, 1998 at 8th AF Museum in Pooler, Georgia.”

H.) Emphasis on Instructors and Supporting Personnel

“also to the unsung heroes (i.e.) cooks, MP’s - engine mechanics - dish washers, dispatcher, etc.”

“planes were coming in torn apart...our duty was to get them ready for another flight...”

“almost all of the considerations of ‘Tuskegee Airmen’ are related to the pilots, sometimes the ground crew. There were hundreds of support personnel, like us medical personnel, who served at TAAF: What can be done to include them?”

“Moton Field is a tribute to our civilian instructor pilots. Chief Anderson, Charles Fox, William Terry. They gave us the training to accomplish our goal as Army Air Corps Pilots.”

I.) No answer**6. Describe how you feel about the contribution you made to your country.****A.) Betrayed**

“bitter and betrayed. With almost total loss of use of left leg, disability fixed at 40%...recall no benefits from having been a fighter pilot. Country’s entrenched racism only marginally diminished over 55 years.”

“we were ready and able to fight for others abroad against totalitarian countries for the same rights we did not enjoy in America.”

“as a black man I was not a man. Just a number.”

“my contributions were the best I could muster even though not appreciated today. However if requested I would repeat them.”

B.) Proud of Shattering Racist Stereotype about Inferior Black Pilots.

“to paraphrase a well known saying, it was my duty and I am proud to have become a part of the historic effort to prove that Black Americans could learn to fly and maintain combat aircraft.”

“We were aware that all eyes were on us--many hoping this program would fail; but despite the prevailing attitudes we went on with our primary task of preparing ourselves for combat and we, thus, were successful and the eventual winners.”

the only contribution I made (since I was only in training) was to demonstrate my ability to compete at the same level of competence as any other pilot trainee.”

C.) Mission Accomplished

“I completed every mission I was scheduled during my combat tour.”

“the sacrifices have been great, but I believe it made a difference.”

“I have no feelings. I did the job I was trained to do...”

“numb. I did my duty and was fortunate to have survived to tell the story.”

D.) Proud to Serve Country

“I served my country voluntarily, willing, and with honor, AND I AM PROUD.”

“It is truly gratifying to see that my country is now recognizing it and is saying ‘Thanks.’”

“I feel proud in knowing that I put my life on the line for our country at a time when it seemed important to do that but I would like it known that I think of our country as the one described by our constitution and our bill of rights and I am still committed to those ideals.”

“I am proud of the service that I gave my country and I think that patriotism should be stressed more than it is in our school systems. At national sporting events, the players, some of them, do not respect the national anthem.”

E.) “Contribution?...Wasn’t Much”

“I have done very little, save and except in political and civic endeavors.”

“I made no contributions as such, but I was willing to and able to do so.”

F.) Other

“I was one of the Tuskegee Airmen whose performance had a positive influence on President Harry Truman’s July, 1948, Executive Order that desegregated the military and impacted positively on the desegregation in the United States of America.”

G.) No answer**7. Where should the story of the Tuskegee Airmen begin (date of event)?****A.) Political Struggle Leading to Admission of blacks in Army Air Corps**

“with Mr. Yancy Williams bringing a suit against the government for refusing to allow Negroes to enter the flying training program.”

“...as early as 1940, with the tremendous efforts made by the Black news media and influential Blacks nationally, to influence Congress and the Administration (FDR) that Blacks be given the chance to fly for the United States.”

“with efforts to enlist in air corps around the country 1939-1940.”

“With the Pittsburgh Courier, NAACP, and Mrs. Roosevelt pulling for the creation of a Black Airmen.”

B.) Government’s Announcement of Tuskegee Experiment

“with Eleanor Roosevelt riding with Chief Andersen and taking the fact back to President Roosevelt that Blacks could fly.”

“From the inception and congressional approval of plan for experiment.”

“At Tuskegee Institute, 1939--when the war department announced that Negroes would be accepted into the Army Air Corp.”

C.) Selection, Arrival, and Training of Original 99th Pursuit Squadron

“when the first class was formed.”

“the Tuskegee Airmen should begin with the training of the first mechanics for the 99th Pursuit Squadron.”

D.) First Black Men in Aviation

“Eugene Jacques Bullard...flew 25 years before the 5 Afro-Americans graduated from Tuskegee Army Air Field.”

“the story should make reference to Black Aviation pioneers such as Jacques Bullard, Bessie Coleman, Chancey Spencer and others....”

E.) Other

“the story should begin in 1925 with the War College Staff Study on how Blacks could be best utilized in the armed forces. The study concluded that Blacks were subservient by nature; lacked leadership qualities thought of themselves as being inferior to whites; lacked the intelligence and muscular coordination to operate a machine as complicated as an airplane.”

“1935 with Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. as cadet in first class students to study Air Tactics course at West Point Military Academy.”

“I think the story of a flying club that was in existence prior to Chief Anderson’s visit in 1938. The airport out on Union Springs road in 1940 owned by the man who ran an ice house in Tuskegee. I used to go out to their house in Tuskegee while he and his son Forrest Shelton were building an airplane.”

“it should begin with the executive order that flying training for the military be conducted at civilian universities.”

“some of the backgrounds of different servicemen.”

8a. In telling the story of the Tuskegee Airmen, what are the 3 most important parts or aspects of the story that should be emphasized?**A.) Rigors of Training and Selection Phases**

“the wash out rate and the total number of cadets in comparison to the number that graduated.”

“training--graduating numbers and why good pilots were washed out.”

B.) Combat Missions.**C.) Pressures of Racism and Segregation**

“the Freeman Field Incident.”

“It appeared to me that the goal of the white officers was to wash-out as many cadets as they could, to try to prove that blacks couldn't be trained as pilots in the Army Air Corps.”

“how the 99th Pursuit Squadron was treated in North Africa.”

D.) Determination and Triumph of Airmen in Overcoming Obstacles

“how we never allowed near planes in general, were able to absorb the technical training and go on to establish ‘above average’ maintenance rating on planes.”

“I was always aware that the 99th Squadron had been programmed for failure. I, along with the other members of the squadron, with the outstanding leadership of then Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., worked tirelessly so that it could never be said that Blacks could not maintain military aircraft and that they could not fly military aircraft in combat.”

“the continual challenge of overcoming prejudice and discrimination compelling and omnipresent throughout the system.”

“how so may men, including myself, were willing to put their lives on the line to make the point that we were in fact equal to the task, popular opinion notwithstanding. And, of course, the fact that the point was indeed proved quite emphatically.”

E.) Other

“the Tuskegee Airmen was an (all) black air corp organization...the best flyers in the history of aviation.”

“the aspect of giving me a chance to work in the field where I wanted to be.”

“The white personnel and their view on the training of blacks.”

F.) No answer

8b. For your spouse and/or children in terms of how they were affected.

A.) Pride

“they like to tell their friends that I was a Tuskegee Airman.”

“very proud”

“I and my family are so glad that I had the opportunity to contribute in this manner. I enjoy speaking to children about the experience.”

B.) Shared Fully in Experience

“they suffered the indignity of being classified as 2nd class citizens during the early phase of integration. They weathered the storm.”

“They longed for me, but they realized that I had a job to do, and they resigned themselves to that fact.”

“my wife shared all of experiences...she was employed as a switchboard operator at the

base.”

“my family was proud...but they were morally broken during my time as a POW. The church increased their bereavement with ‘God, I wonder what those Germans are doing to him--you know they have those Death Camps--etc.,etc.,etc.’”

“I married as an airman and lived on the various bases with my family. Their experiences and treatment should be memorialized as a discrete topic.”

C.) No spouse or child at time

“at 19 years of age I had no spouse or children.”

“I was not married when I was a cadet at Tuskegee.”

D.) Other

“families who tried to visit together had to use sub-standard facilities often under humiliating circumstances.”

E.) No answer

9. What did you personally experience in military or civilian life after World War II?

A.) Military Promotion

“...Military Intelligence Analyst proficient in three languages--Italian, Arabic, and Chinese.”

“...went into the Air Force reserve, changed my area to Aircraft Maintenance Officer.”

“I went on to a full career in the military, handling all positions and command over white and blacks.”

B.) Educational Advancement

“World War II made me realize the need and value of an education and gave me the emphasis to go back and finish college.”

“I was determined to get a good education and the GI Bill of Rights gave me a wonderful opportunity. This had the greatest impact of my life.”

C.) Difficulties and Disappointments

“any benefits I received were reluctantly granted and, in my opinion, only because the U.S. Government required that wearers of the ‘ruptured duck’ be accorded certain privileges and assistance in assimilating into civilian life and education.”

“...I underestimated, however, the determination of the airline industry not to hire us for these very good positions in aviation....”

“both in civilian life and military life after WWII, racial hatred, discrimination of all kinds,

lack of acceptance, and the like, were evidenced at every turn.”

“as a civilian I found that the freedom that I dreamed about while in Alabama and North Africa, Sicily, and Italy still did not exist for me.”

“the same closed door policy toward technical employment for blacks that existed pre-WWII.”

“same old thing”

“...the fact that I, along with nearly all of WWII Airmen in our group were unable to secure commercial aviation employment is still a bitter pill to swallow.”

D.) Other.

“filed Class Action Complaint vs. Government printing office.”

E.) No answer

10. After World War II, how were you able to use the training that you received at Moton Field?

A.) Recreational Flying

“own my own plane”

“to fly small civilian aircraft as recreation.”

B.) Career in Aviation

“To a small degree--working with a Crop Duster, but left job for environmental concerns.”

“basics in operating airlines was asset for piloting of the many types of aircraft over may years; military flying of single-engine, two-engine, and four engine airplanes.”

C.) Character Strengthening

“discipline, the ability to make rational decisions, perseverance, self-confidence, all of which were part of my training as a Tuskegee Airmen, were woven into my being.”

“I discovered that race was not the determining factor in my survival in assignment around the world. It was more important to seek out those individuals with a common value system and human relationships became normal.”

“perseverance and determination which we learned there, served me well in civilian life afterward.”

D.) No use

“zero”

E.) Other

“I have been active in trying to motivate youth to strive for excellence and seek careers in the field of aviation and aerospace.”

F.) No answer**11. What artifacts, equipment or memorabilia do you have that you would be willing to offer as part of a museum or similar facility to commemorate the Airmen?****A.) Photographs****B.) Nothing**

“zip--I’m fresh out.”

“it was stolen--while waiting to be discharge.”

C.) Stories and Memories

“A copy of a book I wrote.”

“I will donate a copy of my book.”

D.) Miscellaneous Items (Uniform Accessories, Navigation Maps, etc.)**12. Please provide any other important information that you believe should be considered in the study.****A.) Emphasis on Instructors and Supporting Crew****B.) Concerns/Suggestions Over Distribution of Resources for Proposed Memorial**

“...prominent placed inscribed plaques (of status) to be at state public locations in Alabama. For example, tourist centers (Birmingham, Mobile, Montgomery), the Capitol galley, state museums, state college/university campus. This type of exposure is enticement for visits to Moton Field.”

“establish a storage bank, for copies of pictures and artifacts that might be destroyed or stolen due to vandals. Backups should be available. If we can start having every other T.A.I. national convention in Tuskegee, revenues from this could help finance activities and publication to support this historical site.”

“to use the hangar area and its utilities to store planes may not be economically marketable. The old training and war planes can be accommodated on covered revetments near the hangar as they are obtained. Once the old hangar has been restored and modified,

the open area could accommodate a two story free standing displays with ramps through the building.”

“A very competent individual with extensive experience in developing a Memorial Site at Moton Field is essential. Collaboration with the numerous TA Museums, the local chapters and the Smithsonian should be participating in developing the US Park service museum/memorial canvassing all living and families of deceased members for material.”

C.) Biographical/Individual Anecdotal Focus

“there was Col. Benjamin O. Davis at the time and his plane was name ‘By Request.’ The reason--it had armor plate behind his head instead of Bubble Glass.” (Smiles)

D.) Tuskegee Airmen in Blacks in Aviation and Civil Rights Context

“the feelings of the black people toward the Tuskegee Airmen and, to a lesser extent, the feelings of the white community toward the Tuskegee Airmen and their training site.”

“How the military services, the air force in the lead, took steps to eliminate segregation.”

“I believe that there should a section in the museum for the black media. Newspapers like the Pittsburgh Courier, the Chicago Defender and the Amsterdam News played crucial roles in breaking down barriers.”

E.) Other

“An interview with as many of the wives and children of the former Tuskegee Airmen.”

F.) No answer

1. Why did you decide to join the Army Air Corps?

Table-1

	Pilot			Non-Overseas	Non-Pilot		TOTAL
	Overseas				Overseas	Non-Overseas	
	Combat	No Combat	Unknown				
Passion For Flying	5	2	2	11	1	8	29
Learn Valuable Skills	-	-	-	7	-	7	14
The Draft	2	1	-	5	7	7	22
Previous Aviation/ Aircraft Experience	3	-	1	2	1	1	8
Serve Country	1	-	1	4	1	4	11
The Challenge	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Other	-	-	5	-	1	-	2
No answer	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
TOTAL	12	3	2	29	12	27	88

2. If you were a pilot, why did you decide to become a pilot for the Army Air Corps?

Table-2

	Pilot			Non-Pilot		TOTAL	
	Overseas			Non-Overseas	Overseas		Non-Overseas
	Combat	No Combat	Unknown				
Passion For Flying	5	1	4	13	1	4	28
Learn Valuable Skills	-	-	1	1	-	-	2
The Draft	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Previous Aviation/ Aircraft Experience	1	-	-	2	-	2	5
Serve Country	1	1	-	2	-	2	6
The Challenge	1	1	1	2	1	-	6
Other	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Not applicable	-	-	-	-	-	9	9
No answer	3	-	-	2	9	10	24
TOTAL	12	3	6	23	11	27	82

3. When did you complete your training and what was your training like (daily routine, exercises, etc.)?

Table-3

	Pilot			Non-Pilot		TOTAL	
	Overseas		Non-Overseas	Overseas	Non-Overseas		
	Combat	No Combat	Unknown				
Demanding Routine	6	-	2	11	3	5	27
Challenging and Rewarding	2	-	-	5	1	6	14
Stressful and Discriminatory	2	1	-	-	2	2	7
Unable to Complete Aviation Training	-	-	-	-	2	10	12
No answer	3	1	3	5	4	6	22
TOTAL	13	2	5	21	12	29	82

4. Please describe your most vivid memories of:

a.) Training and military life with the Army Air Corps, particularly any experiences you had at Moton Field.

Table-4a

	Pilot			Non-Pilot		TOTAL	
	Overseas		Non-Overseas	Overseas	Non-Overseas		
	Combat	No Combat	Unknown				
Initial Solo Flights	5	2	-	11	1	1	20
High Quality Instruction	3	-	-	4	-	5	12
Friendships and Social Life	1	-	-	4	-	5	10
Combat Missions	1	-	-	1	-	-	2
Experiences of Racist Treatment	2	-	-	5	2	4	13
Hard Work	1	-	-	1	1	2	5
Close-Calls/ Accidents	5	-	2	3	1	-	11
Sense of Pride and Purpose	-	-	-	2	-	1	3
Other	-	-	-	-	1	2	3
No answer	-	-	2	2	5	8	17
TOTAL	18	2	4	33	11	28	96

4. Please describe your most vivid memories of:
c.) Other experiences with Airmen.

Table-4C

	Pilot			Non-Pilot		TOTAL	
	Overseas			Non-Overseas	Overseas		Non-Overseas
	Combat	No Combat	Unknown				
Initial Solo Flights	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
High Quality Instruction	-	-	1	1	-	1	3
Friendships and Social Life	4	-	1	6	7	6	24
Combat Missions	2	-	1	1	1	-	5
Experiences of Racist Treatment	-	-	-	3	-	1	4
Hard Work	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Close-Calls/ Accidents	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Sense of Pride and Purpose	-	-	1	1	-	2	4
Other	2	1	-	1	1	3	8
No answer	4	1	1	11	3	13	32
TOTAL	12	2	5	24	12	27	82

5. What should be done at Moton Field to commemorate the Tuskegee Airmen?

Table-5

	Pilot			Non-Pilot		TOTAL	
	Overseas			Non-Overseas	Overseas		Non-Overseas
	Combat	No Combat	Unknown				
Statue/ Plaque/ Monument	4	1	1	7	1	3	17
Keep Moton Field Open and Opera- tional	3	-	1	1	1	3	9
Restore Hangar	2	-	-	3	-	4	9
Photo Display	-	-	-	1	-	1	2
Historical Site/ Museum/ National Park System Unit	3	-	1	5	5	9	23
Nothing	-	-	1	-	-	1	2
Emphasis on Instructors and Supporting Personnel	-	-	-	6	-	2	8
No answer	2	-	-	2	4	4	12
TOTAL	14	1	4	25	11	27	82

6. Describe how you feel about the contribution you made to your country.

Table-6

	Pilot			Non-Pilot		TOTAL	
	Overseas		Non-Overseas	Overseas	Non-Overseas		
	Combat	No Combat	Unknown				
Betrayed	1	-	-	2	1	2	6
Proud of Shattering Racist Stereotypes	2	1	-	4	3	5	15
Mission Accomplished	2	-	3	2	2	1	10
Proud to Serve Country	8	1	1	7	6	16	39
“Contribution?.. Wasn’t Much..”	-	-	1	4	-	2	7
No answer	-	-	-	3	1	2	6
TOTAL	13	2	5	22	13	28	83

7. Where should the story of the Tuskegee Airmen begin (date of event)?

Table-7

	Pilot			Non-Pilot			TOTAL
	Overseas			Non-Overseas	Overseas	Non-Overseas	
	Combat	No Combat	Unknown				
Political Struggle Leading to Admission of Blacks in Army Air Corps	4	2	-	9	2	2	19
Government's Announcement of Tuskegee Experiment	1	-	1	2	-	5	9
Selection, Arrival, and Training of 99 th Original Pursuit Squadron	-	-	2	5	5	6	18
First Black Men in Aviation	3	-	-	2	-	4	9
Other	2	-	1	4	3	5	15
No answer	2	-	1	1	2	5	11
TOTAL	12	2	5	23	12	27	81

8a. In telling the story of the Tuskegee Airmen, what are the 3 most important parts or aspects of the story that should be emphasized?

Table-8a

	Pilot				Non-Pilot		TOTAL
	Overseas			Non-Overseas	Overseas	Non-Overseas	
	Combat	No Combat	Unknown				
Rigors of Training and Selection Phases	4	-	1	7	3	7	22
Combat Missions	5	-	1	2	1	3	12
Pressures of Racism and Segregation	-	2	2	5	2	12	23
Determination and Triumph of Airmen in Overcoming Obstacles	5	1	3	12	5	5	31
Other	-	-	-	2	1	2	5
No answer	1	-	1	1	2	4	9
TOTAL	15	3	8	29	14	33	102

8b. For your spouse and/or children in terms of how they were affected.

Table-8b

	Pilot			Non-Pilot		TOTAL	
	Overseas			Non-Overseas	Overseas		Non-Overseas
	Combat	No Combat	Unknown				
Proud	4	2	2	8	4	7	27
Shared Fully in Experience	5	-	1	3	3	5	17
No spouse or child at time	1	-	1	6	-	6	14
Other	-	-	-	1	1	1	3
No answer	2	-	1	5	3	8	19
TOTAL	12	2	5	23	11	27	80

9. What did you personally experience in military or civilian life after World War II?

Table-9

	Pilot			Non-Pilot		TOTAL	
	Overseas		Non-Overseas	Overseas	Non-Overseas		
	Combat	No Combat	Unknown				
Military Promotion	4	1	-	6	2	7	20
Educational Advancement	6	1	3	9	3	10	32
Difficulties and Disappointments	2	-	1	6	7	10	26
Other	1	-	1	-	-	-	2
No answer	2	-	1	4	1	3	11
TOTAL	15	2	6	25	13	30	91

10. After World War II, how were you able to use the training that you received at Moton Field?

Table-10

	Pilot			Non-Pilot		TOTAL	
	Overseas			Non-Overseas	Overseas		Non-Overseas
	Combat	No Combat	Unknown				
Recreational Flying	2	-	1	5	-	-	8
Career in Aviation	2	2	-	5	3	4	16
Characters Strengthening	4	-	2	7	3	3	19
No use	-	-	-	1	3	6	10
Other	-	-	1	1	-	3	5
No answer	5	-	1	5	2	12	25
TOTAL	13	2	5	24	11	28	83

11. What artifacts, equipment or memorabilia do you have that you would be willing to offer as part of a museum or similar facility to commemorate the Airmen?

Table-11

	Pilot			Non-Overseas	Non-Pilot		TOTAL
	Overseas		Overseas		Non-Overseas		
	Combat	No Combat	Unknown				
Photographs	1	1	2	8	5	5	22
Nothing	2	-	1	7	6	14	30
Stories and Memories	1	-	-	1	1	1	4
Miscellaneous Items	4	1	-	2	1	3	11
No answer	5	-	2	5	-	6	18
TOTAL	13	2	5	23	13	29	85

12. Please provide any other important information that you believe should be considered in the study.

Table-12

	Pilot			Non-Pilot			TOTAL
	Overseas		Non-Overseas	Overseas	Non-Overseas		
	Combat	No Combat	Unknown				
Emphasis on Instructors and Supporting Crew	1	-	-	2	2	3	8
Concerns/ Suggestions Over Distribution of Project's Resources	2	-	-	2	-	4	8
Biographical/Individual Anecdotal Focus	-	1	-	2	2	1	6
Tuskegee Airmen in Context of Blacks in Aviation and Civil Rights	2	-	1	1	2	-	6
Other	-	-	-	4	1	4	9
No answer	7	1	5	13	4	15	45
TOTAL	12	2	6	24	11	27	82

APPENDIX F

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN PILOT TRAINING FIELDS

KENNEDY FIELD

AIR FIELD NO. 1

1940--Flying Field for Tuskegee Institute's Civilian Pilot Training Program

August 1941--Flight training for military cadets begun here since Moton Field not complete

Spring 1943--Civil Aeronautics Administration's War Training Service Program begins flight training as part of the 320th College Training Detachment (flight training for college students)

1944--End of use of field by College Training Detachment and used by the Primary Flying School as an auxiliary field

MOTON FIELD

PRIMARY FLYING FIELD

AIR FIELD NO. 2

July 1941--First aviation cadets arrive at the 66th AAF Flying Training Detachment at Tuskegee Institute for Pre-Flight training

Sept. 1941--Primary Flight Training begins at Moton Field

April 1943--Field dedicated Moton Field after Robert Russa Moton, second president of Tuskegee Institute

1944--66th AAF Flying Training Detachment re-named 2164th AAF Base Unit, CPS, P

Nov. 1945--Final phases of Primary Flight training for military purposes. Cadets transferred to TAAF

**TUSKEGEE ARMY AIR FIELD (TAAF)
ADVANCED FLYING FIELD**

Nov 1941-- First class of aviation cadets begins training at TAAF

March 1942--First class of aviation cadets graduates

1942--Pre-Flight Training moved to TAAF

1943--TAAF begins to train pilots on multi-engine planes for bomber group

1944--First class of aviation cadet at TAAF from the 320th CTD at Tuskegee Institute

1946--Last class of pilots graduates from TAAF

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under United States administration.

The National Park Service, Department of Interior, is an equal opportunity agency and offers all persons the benefits of participating in each of its programs and competing in all areas of employment regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap or other nonmerit factors.