



Tuskegee Airmen Teacher's Guide

Tuskegee Airmen



Teacher's Guide



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Celebrate Freedom - Tuskegee Airmen 60th Anniversary

ETV partnered with the Celebrate Freedom Foundation to provide coverage of the Tuskegee 60th reunion events in Camden, South Carolina. Watch captured clips from this historic event for Knowitall.org.

Who are the Tuskegee Airmen?

Until the 1940s, African Americans were limited to certain roles in the military. They could not hold leadership roles and were denied skilled training in such areas as flying an aircraft. In 1941, an all African American flying squadron was established in Tuskegee, Alabama.

The purpose of this Army Air Corps program was to train African Americans to fly and maintain a combat aircraft. The people involved in this experiment acquired the name "Tuskegee Airmen." The members of this squadron were not all pilots, but some were navigators, bombardiers, maintenance and support staff, and instructors. Basically all the personnel involved in keeping the planes in the air were considered "Tuskegee Airmen."

Tuskegee Institute, founded by Booker T. Washington, was selected as the training ground for the pilots. The school had the facilities, technology and climate for training year-round with airplanes. By World War II, the Tuskegee program had expanded and become the center for African American aviation. The Tuskegee Airmen paved the way for full integration of African Americans into the U.S. military.



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South Carolina Social Studies Standards

Grade 5

Standard 5-4: The student will demonstrate an understanding of American economic challenges in the 1920s and 1930s and world conflict in the 1940s.

5-4.6 - Summarize key developments in technology, aviation, weaponry, and communication and their effects on World War II and the United States economy.

Grade 8

Standard 8-6: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the role of South Carolina in the nation in the early twentieth century.

8-6.5 - Compare the ramifications of World War II on South Carolina and the United States as a whole, including the training of the Doolittle Raiders and the Tuskegee Airmen, the building of additional military bases, the rationing and bond drives, and the return of economic prosperity.



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Video Descriptions

Note: Time duration is listed as (HH:MM:SS)

[The Tuskegee Airmen Phenomenon](#) (00:26:48)

The story of the Tuskegee Airman is even more a story about America than about a group of determined young African American men and women in the late 30's and early 40's. On this edition of CONNECTIONS you will discover more about this remarkable event. [Purchase this from the ETV Store](#)

[Tuskegee Airmen 60th Anniversary: Flight Instructor Ernest Henderson](#) (00:02:09)

In 1941, the 99th Pursuit Squadron, the first African-American air fighting unit, began training in Tuskegee, Alabama. The pilots known as the Tuskegee Airmen included Ernest Henderson of Laurens County, South Carolina. Henderson trained other flying units during World War II, including the Black Eagles, who were formed and trained in Columbia in 1949. Henderson talks about the training.

[Colonel Herbert E. Carter](#) (00:02:12)

Colonel Herbert E. Carter was one of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II. In this interview, Wood talks about his missions.

[Major Carroll S. Woods](#) (00:02:27)

Major Carroll S. Woods was one of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II. In this interview, Wood talks about his graduating class, medals received and the type of planes the Tuskegee Airmen piloted.



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[Exhibit 1: P-51C Mustang](#) (00:02:49)

During the *Celebrate Freedom - Tuskegee Airmen 60th Anniversary*, Jim Prater shares the history of the P-51C Mustang airplane.

[Exhibit 2: Air Force History](#) (00:02:04)

During the *Celebrate Freedom - Tuskegee Airmen 60th Anniversary*, Ralph Parks shares the history from *Freedom through Flight: African Americans in the United States Air Force*.

[Exhibit 3: Artifact Collector](#) (00:06:59)

During the *Celebrate Freedom - Tuskegee Airmen 60th Anniversary*, B.T. Cotner shares his vast military artifact collection.

[Tuskegee Airmen Forum](#) (00:29:46)

Hosted by ETV, *Connections* host P.A. Bennett moderates a forum during the 60th Anniversary for the Tuskegee Airmen. The members of the panel included:

- Lt. Colonel Spann Watson (1916-2010), Tuskegee Airman
- Lt. Colonel Hiram Mann (1922-2014), Tuskegee Airman
- First Lt. Leroy Bowman (1922-2014), Tuskegee Airman
- Master Sergeant William T. "Bill" Simmons (1922-2009), Tuskegee Airman
- Captain Taj Tory, F16 Pilot

[Karen Rutherford, Daughter of a Tuskegee Airman](#) (00:01:11)

Karen Rutherford is the director of Career Services at Benedict College in Columbia, SC. Karen's father and two of her uncles were all Tuskegee Airmen. In this interview, she shares the story of their heroic deaths during World War II.



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Tuskegee Airmen Quick Facts

- There were 996 original Airmen. These included pilots, bombardiers, and navigators.
- More than 10,000 black men and women served as their vital support personnel.
- There were 450 pilots who served in combat overseas in the European Theater of Operations, North Africa, and the Mediterranean.
- Of the Tuskegee aviators, **66** died in combat.
- There were **33** Tuskegee Airmen who became prisoners of war.
- They flew over **700** bomber escort missions and ended the war as the only fighter group to never lose an escorted bomber to enemy fighters.
- The flight of a combat aircraft on a mission is called a sortie. The Tuskegee Airmen flew **15,533** sorties between May 1943 and June 1945.
- White American pilots were not allowed to fly more than **52** missions, but black American pilots often flew up to **100** missions due to lack of replacements.
- They destroyed **251** enemy aircraft.
- They won more than **850** medals which included:
 - 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses
 - 8 Purple Hearts
 - 14 Bronze Stars
 - 744 Air Medals and clusters
 - 3 distinguished unit citations



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Tuskegee Airmen from South Carolina

Paul Adams (1920 -2013) of Greenville graduated from Tuskegee on April 29, 1943. He served as an intelligence officer with the 302nd Fighter Squadron. He lives in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Willie Ashley (1921 -1984) of Sumter graduated from Tuskegee on July 3, 1942, and was one of the original members of the 99th Fighter Squadron, America's first black fighter unit. He is the only black S.C. pilot credited with a kill in World War II.

Leroy Bowman (1922 -2014) of Sumter graduated March 25, 1943, and flew with the 301st Fighter Squadron. He still lives in Sumter.

Albert Manning of Hartsville graduated May 28, 1943, and flew with the 99th over Anzio, Italy. He is deceased.

Curtis C. Robinson (1919 -2009) of Orangeburg graduated from Tuskegee on April 29, 1943. He flew with the 99th Squadron over Anzio. He lives in Washington, D.C.

James Walker (1919 -2004) of Manning graduated May 28, 1943, and flew with the 332nd Fighter Group. After the war, he was an instructor at Tuskegee Army Air Field. He served for more than 21 years in the Air Force.

Spann Watson Walker (1916 -2010) of Johnston graduated in the same class as Ashley and was also an original member of the 99th Squadron. One of the two South Carolina chapters of Tuskegee Airmen Inc. is named after him. He lives in Westbury, New York.



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Lesson Plans

- [African American Leaders in the U.S. Military](#)
- [Past, Present, and Future Flying Machines](#)
- [Achievements in Aviation](#)
- [Creating a Memorial](#)
- [Considering a Career in Aviation](#)

Related Links

- [Tuskegee Airmen](#)
- [Celebrate Freedom Foundation](#)
- [The Tuskegee Airmen: Legends of Tuskegee](#)
- [Tuskegee University: Legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen](#)

Credits

Funding for Knowitall.org was provided by the S. C. General Assembly through the K-12 Technology Initiative.

Visit scetv.org/education for more educational resources.