

Sabrina Lyons

Age: 14

Grade: 9

School: BioTECH at Richmond Heights 9-12 High School

Tuskegee Airman Essay Submission

When the world was on the cusp of the second World War, President Franklin D. Roosevelt decided to expand the pilot training program for citizens in the U.S. What this means is a pivotal point in Black history, where Black men were now able to sign up for the pilot training program. Since this took place during World War II, segregation was still in effect. Additionally, according to history.com, “But young African Americans who aspired to become pilots met with significant obstacles, starting with the widespread (racist) belief that Black people could not learn to fly or operate sophisticated aircraft” (Unknown, 2009). Nevertheless, Franklin D. Roosevelt allowed Black men to sign up for the training program, which was the birth of the Tuskegee Airmen.

The Tuskegee Airmen were, according to history.com, “The Tuskegee Airmen were the first Black military aviators in the U.S. Army Air Corps (AAC), a precursor of the U.S. Air Force. Trained at the Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama, they flew more than 15,000 individual sorties in Europe and North Africa during World War II” (Unknown, 2009). These airmen were the first Black airmen to be trained for the U.S. Army Air Corps. They were so magnificent at flying that they were given 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, which proves that they were also heroes of the sky. They proved themselves during World War II and they did so much more than just flying, they were trained to be navigators, instructors, aircraft and engine mechanics, and so many others.

Even though they had plenty of jobs to do during World War II, they became famous for two main reasons: they were the first Black group of airmen in the American military service and they did an excellent bombing mission during World War II. According to nationalww2museum.org, “The Tuskegee Airmen pilots are most remembered for flying fighters in the Mediterranean theater, first for the Twelfth Air Force, under which they flew hundreds of missions, then for the Fifteenth Air Force. While flying the latter, the 332nd Fighter Group, and its 99th, 100th, 301st, and 302nd Fighter Squadrons flew primarily bomber escort missions, and gained a reputation for excellence” (Unknown, 2020). Sources say that while the average loss for escorted bombers due to enemy fighters for the other groups was 46, the Tuskegee Airmen bombers suffered a loss of only 27.

It is said that the white and Black airmen were treated fairly and the Black airmen were trained equally as the others. This is an important group of people because this is one of the moments in Black history when Black men and women were finally being recognized. This shows that all people can change the course of history for the better, regardless of skin color. This world needs to be together and whole, not segregated and apart, and this is one of those moments where we accomplish more together. Black History Month honors the Black role models that made equality possible, which is what these men accomplished.

Sources

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