

# Tuskegee Airmen Inc.

Fall 2007

## From the President

Happy Holidays. As we close out the current year and bring in the new, I want to take this opportunity to thank each of you for making 2007 another successful year for ECCTAI. But, first, I encourage everyone to keep our Treasurer, Walter Jackson, in your prayers as he continues his recovery from a stroke. Walt is one of the cornerstones in our Chapter and we all wish him a speedy recovery.

We have a lot to be proud of and thankful for this year. We accomplished our two main objectives — continuing the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen, and assisting youth in the pursuit of their aviation career goals — through your unwavering support of events and activities throughout the year. The President Bush's presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal to the Original Tuskegee Airmen for their contributions to our nation was one of many memorable events. It took a lot of work and I thank everyone who helped make this event a huge success.

You should all visit the new Tuskegee Airmen Room in the Bolling Club. The 11<sup>th</sup> Wing did an exceptional job preparing the room that honors Tuskegee Airmen. I believe that many people will learn about Tuskegee Airmen as they visit this room. A superb ribbon-cutting ceremony provided the perfect setting for the official opening of the room. EECTAI thanked the 11<sup>th</sup> Wing for their support in a special ceremony where we presented replicas of the Congressional Gold Medal to the Wing Commander and other wing members who organized the Tuskegee Airmen Room and the opening ceremony.

We continue to be engaged with the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force. Secretary Wynne and General Mosley invited members of ECCTAI to the Pentagon for a special meeting recognizing their achievements. The Secretary and Chief also ensured that ECCTAI members were present for the official 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the Air Force. We plan to stay engaged at the highest level of the Air Force to ensure that our voice is heard on issues of concern to us.

Our Speakers Bureau and Youth in Aviation Program continues to engage many students through the local area. This year we awarded eight grants to deserving students. Through your continued financial support, we hope to expand these programs in the next year. These are just a few examples of the many wonderful things that you achieved this year.

During this time of year we also renew our member and commitment to Tuskegee Airmen and your continued support is vital to the strength of the organization. With several of our members joining the Lonely Eagle Chapter, it is imperative that we get new members to join. Everyone should accept the challenge of bringing at least one new member to the chapter this year. Additionally, your continued participation in Chapter activities is essential to our success. I'd like everyone to find at least one chapter function or event that you can contribute to.

Finally, we passed updated versions of our constitution and by-laws. These documents will now allow our chapter to operate more efficiently and provide better support to our members. These are living documents that we should all strive to continue to improve. Some of the changes incorporated were not implemented as smoothly as we hoped, thus we could not hold a timely election. Most current Chapter officers agreed to stay in office for another year to allow for a proper transition. A special election will be held for the few positions that are open. Please review the documents and continue to provide your recommendations for improvement.

Thank you again for your continued support and I look forward to working with you in the coming year.

“Enriched By Our Past — Prepared For Our Future”

# EAST COAST CHAPTER

## *Tuskegee Airmen in the News*

### **Enriching Our Lives, In Ways Big and Small**

By Marc Fisher

Sunday, November 18, 2007; C01, Washington Post

When Doc Robinson finally closes shop next month after 55 years in business, he will take with him the very notion of a pharmacist who stops by on his way home from work to deliver your prescription and maybe visit for a while.

Thanksgiving is a time to offer gratitude to a selection of people who make life a bit better, and I'm starting

this year with *Curtis C. Robinson*, 88, grandson of a slave, Tuskegee airman, veteran of 33 combat missions over Italy, who will soon lock up his little base-ment shop on Capitol Hill for the last time. You could look at this as a victory for the chain drugstores that have largely succeeded in wiping out mom and pop operations. Or you could decide instead to shake Doc's hand and think long and hard about what he offered that no chain ever will: knowledgeable advice wrapped in the kind of dedication and service that kept him out late most nights, stopping by his customers' houses with a pill vial and a heart full of friendship.

### **Survivors pay tribute to the 37 fallen**



*Tuskegee Airman Cicero Satterfield of Takoma, Park, closes his eyes Wednesday during a flag-folding ceremony in Grapeville.*

GRAPEVINE Texas --The bell rang 37 times to mark the deaths of the recently fallen Tuskegee Airmen. Eugene Richardson stood up eight times, once for each friend who had died this year.

"These were all heroes that I knew personally. We went through a heck of a lot together," the 82-year-old World War II pilot said as he fingered his bronze replica of a Congressional Gold Medal.

The ranks of the Tuskegee Airmen, like all veterans of World War II, are thinning rapidly as historians scramble to preserve their memories and solidify their legacy.

Only six Lonely Eagles - the name given to

Tuskegee airmen who have passed away - were memorialized in a similar ceremony two years ago. This year, that number increased six-fold.

Nearly 1,000 of the black fighter pilots trained in a segregated Army Air Corps unit in Tuskegee, Ala. Only about 125 are still living.

The airmen were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in March at a ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda attended by President Bush and congressional leaders. The original gold medal is at the Smithsonian in Washington. Each airman was given a bronze replica.

Robert Ashby, a retired lieutenant colonel and Tuskegee Airman who now lives in Phoenix, said he was sad that more of those pilots "who stood up when the world said sit down" weren't there in March to receive the honor or today to share memories.

"When you look at the armed forces back then, it was full of discrimination. The people around me and the guys who have passed on changed all that, to where the Air Force is as equal opportunity as any place now, if not more," he said.

Even after the black airmen were admitted to the Army, many commanders continued to believe they didn't have the intelligence, courage and patriotism to do what was being asked of them.

Not allowed to practice or fight with their white counterparts, the Tuskegee Airmen distinguished themselves by painting the tails of their airplanes red, which led to them becoming known as the "Red Tails."

# EAST COAST CHAPTER

## *Tuskegee Airmen in the News*

More than 400 airmen saw combat in Europe, the Mediterranean and North Africa. They escorted bomber aircraft on missions and protected them from enemy fighter planes. Dozens died in the fighting; others were taken prisoners of war.

One thousand World War II veterans die each day. In 2000, there were six million veterans of World War II, but only half of those remain today, said Bob Patrick, director of The Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress.

The project is geared toward recording an oral history of veterans. The task takes on more urgency with smaller groups like the Tuskegee Airmen.

"They are leaving us very

quickly and we particularly don't want to lose the very rich and interesting story they present," Patrick said.

At their annual convention in this suburb northwest of Dallas, several original pilots were lined up to sit in front of Ralph Smith's camera and tell their stories. Smith runs the Western Region Tuskegee Airmen Archive at the University of California-Riverside.

So far this year, the archive has recorded more than 100 interviews with airmen and many of the 19,000 other service members, also African Americans from the Tuskegee era, affiliated with the organization.

"This is an opportunity to record history and prevent the plague of prejudice, one airman at a time,"

Smith said.

The Tuskegee Airmen's non-profit corporation has 51 chapters across the country. They promote education initiatives, especially in aviation, among black youth.

Lt. Col. Bertha Jackson, 51, an Air Force flight nurse from New Jersey, said the Tuskegee Airmen laid the groundwork for not only minorities but women. She had watched movies and read stories about the pilots, but said being among them was still a humbling experience.

"To know what they had to go through being in harm's way, then coming home to hate I think that effort has paved the way for me," she said.

*Reprinted from AP, Aug. 22, 2007*

## *Youth in Aviation Program — Learning to Soar*



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# EAST COAST CHAPTER

## *ECCTAI in the Community*

**November 10, 2007 – American Veterans Center and World War II Veterans Committee’s Tenth Annual Conference, Panel and Banquet.** Events took place at the Renaissance Washington Hotel in Washington, DC. At the 0830 panel, Jim Pryde, Ivan Ware and Bill Fauntroy, spoke to an audience of approximately 150 about their Tuskegee experience. Jerry Burton was on hand to moderate the panel. After the panelist left to a standing ovation, they were surround in the lobby by the conference guests for more question, pictures and auto-graphs. They also received special recognition from the U.S. Army for their service.

The banquet, held later that evening, was attended by Bill and Camilla Fauntroy, Jim Pryde and Joy Branham-Pryde, Ivan Ware and Jerry Burton. In addition to the Tuskegee Airmen, who rose to another standing ovation during the banquet, other attending the banquet included several Medal of Honor winners and the lady from the famous ‘Sailor Kiss’ photo, which was taken in Times Square during a celebration marking the end World War II. One memorable highlight of the evening was when the Tuskegee Airmen stood for the singing of both the Army song and Air Force song. Now, how many military units can claim that distinction?



Ivan Ware speaks with Maj. Kim “Killer Chick” Campbell. Maj. Campbell received the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor for actions in Operation Iraqi Freedom.



William Fauntroy, Jim Pryde and Ivan Ware meeting conference guests prior to their panel appearance.



Jim Pryde, Joy Branham-Pryde, Ivan Ware, William Fauntroy and Camilla Fauntroy at the Awards Banquet.



Jim Pryde speaks with a member of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The legendary Japanese American outfit that became the most decorated unit for its size and length of service in U.S. military history.

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# EAST COAST CHAPTER

## *ECCTAI in the Community*

February 2007—MGen. and Mrs. Spooner delivered a Tuskegee Airman presentation to Widewater Elementary School in Virginia.

February 10 & 24, 2007—National Air & Space Museum downtown and at the Udvar-Hazy Center held events celebrating aviation. ECCTAI members delivered group presentations about the Tuskegee Experience and personal accounts of military and personal accomplishments during both events. Woodrow Crockett, Walter McCreary, Jim Pryde, Bill Broadwater, Cicero Satterfield, Rosemary Crockett, Ros Marchbanks-Robinson and Jerry Burton attended these events.

February 15, 2007—Alan Gropman was a speaker at the National League of Cities Diversity Program held in Wash, DC.

February 20, 2007—Bill Broadwater and Byron Morris addressed the student body at Roanoke College in Salem, VA during a Black History Month celebration.

February 21, 2007—Herb Flowers delivered a presentation to the Suitland Elementary School's Black History Month celebration.

March 17, 2007—The Girl Scouts of the National Capital held their annual career exhibit at the NASM Udvar-Hazy Center. In addition to ECCTAI members, the U.S. Marine Corp and NASA also participated in the event. Attending this event Ferman Travers, Jerry Burton, Barry Knox, and a couple of our future ECCTAI youth members.

May 28, 2007—The American Veteran's Center (AMVETS) provided TAI a float for the National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, DC. OTA's

Ivan Ware, Sam Rhodes, Bill Broadwater, William Wilson, and Jim Coles rode in the float during the parade. Jerry Burton also enjoyed riding as well.

July 4, 2007—Cicero Satterfield, riding in a convertible, participated in the Independence Day parade in Takoma Park, MD.

October 28, 2007 – Martin Luther King Jr. Library -- Tuskegee Airman Wall of Honor event was held at the Martin Luther King (MLK) Library in Washington, DC. There were several OTA's and members in attendance including Wylie Selden, Woody Crockett, Elmer Jones, Bill Broadwater, Jim Pryde, Joy Branham-Pryde, Ros Marchbanks-Robinson, Ferman Travers. The group was given a tour of the exhibit honoring the Tuskegee Airmen and invited back to the museum in February to see the addition to the project. Bill Broadwater delivered remarks.

November 5-7, 2007 (1100-1700 daily) – African Americans in Defense of America / Towson State University. Key Note Speaker was Bill Broadwater; Wing men: Bill Peterson and William DeShields. Mr DeShields also provided Towson State with items to display and copy. The Towson State Audio/Visual department has offered their services to our chapter to help capture and preserve other collectibles.

November 10, 2007 -- Office of Digital Media Production/Fairfax County Public Schools taped Tuskegee Airmen inspired history and stories. They will post the interview on an educational web site for in classroom studies and other educational purposes. Woody Crockett and Walter McCreary participated in this project at the Dept. of Information Technology, Fairfax County Public Schools. Topics covered included why they joined the military, their war experiences as well as their advice to young people.

# EAST COAST CHAPTER

## *Chapter News*

### **MEMBERSHIP DUES**

ECCTAI members will receive the TAI Form 2-Membership Data in December 2008. This form, and a \$100 membership dues payment (\$50 if you are a Life Member) for 2008 membership renewal, should be submitted prior May 31, 2008. The ECCTAI membership chair is Lt. Col. Charles Thompson. He can be reached at officers@ecctai.com.

### **Please Note:**

ECCTAI dues for 2008 are due and payable from 1 November to 31 May 2008. Therefore, 2008 dues are now due. The new 2 yr. plastic membership cards, with an expiration date of 12/31/2008, were issued to all members who paid their 2007 dues. All members must still pay dues for 2008 to keep their current Membership Card valid.

## *Upcoming Speakers Bureau Events*

**January 20, 2008**—The Sandy Spring Museum located in Sandy Spring, Maryland would like to honor the Tuskegee Airmen and cordially invites us to speak on January 20, 2008.

**January 24 or 31, 2008**—The Metro Bethesda Rotary Club would like an OTA to speak to them.

**January 2008**—Prince William County Sorority would like an OTA to help celebrate their anniversary.

**February 6, 13, or 20, 2008**—Communications-Electronics Evaluations and Testing at Fort Belvoir would like a speaker.

**February 9, 2008**—National Air and Space Museum Udvar-Hazy Center, Dulles, VA. OTA and Heritage members are needed to deliver their story as they did last year.

**February 9, 2008**—Tuskegee Airman Celebration request from the University of California Riverside Libraries.

**February 23, 2008**—National Air and Space Museum, Washington, DC. OTA and Heritage members are needed to deliver their story as they did last year.

**March 8, 2008**—Girl Scout Day at the National Air and Space Museum Udvar-Hazy Center, Dulles, VA.

**April 12, 2008**—Manassas Virginia American Legion, Post 114 is celebrating their Annual Charter Members Dinner and would like OTA to speak.

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For more information and to volunteer contact  
 Jerry Burton @ 703.753.2626  
 Email – hawknati@hotmail.com

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# EAST COAST CHAPTER

## *ECCTAI Lonely Eagles*

### **Ira James O'Neal, Jr.**

On May 1, 2007 at his home in Washington, DC. He was born in Phoenix, Arizona on June 11, 1918. He was drafted into the 1st Army Air Corps in 1942. His career positions included First Sergeant, Squadron Commander, Finance Officer, Physical Fitness Officer, Special Service Superintendent, Security NCO and Security Officer. He was an original Tuskegee Airmen. In 1948, the military was finally integrated; however, Ira recalls that only 14,000 African-American soldiers were allowed to remain in the military service. As a result of the reduction, 5 percent of all African-American pilots, officers and non-commissioned officers were discharged. Although Ira was discharged from the military, he was not deterred from serving his country and in 1949, when he was given the opportunity, he enlisted in the US Air Force and proudly served our country until he retired in 1972.

### **MAJ (ret) William H. (Buddy) Bethel, Jr.,**

On September 21, 2007 at his residence in Washington, DC. Beloved husband of L. Peggy Bethel. He is survived by one daughter K. Michelle Winters; one brother Frederick E. Bethel; one grandson Charles A. McDougald; three great-grandchildren, many nieces and nephews, and a host of other relatives and friends.

### **Mrs. Lourecka O'Neal**

On October 11, 2007. She was preceded in death by her loving husband Ira J. O'Neal, Jr. and daughter June W. Stokes. She is survived by granddaughter Alicia Stokes; grandsons, William and Anthony (Andrea) Stokes; seven great-grandchildren, Minoka and Toy McPherson, Anthony, Andre, Alonzo, Malcolm and Maliq Stokes; devoted sister, Beatrice Newsome, a host of other relatives and friends

### **Maj. Gen. Lucius Theus**

On October. 15, 2007, in Providence Hospital in Southfield. Gen. Theus was the first African-American combat support officer to be promoted to brigadier general and one of only three members of the Tuskegee Airmen, to receive that rank. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Gladys, a sister, Mattie Adams, and a sister-in-law, Dorothy Conner. In 1967, he took on the duty of chairman of the Inter-Service Task Force on Education in Race Relations at the Defense Department. The task force recommendations led to establishment of a race relations institute and an education program at the department. He retired in 1979.

## *2006-2007 Officers*

C.D. Smith	President
J. Byron Morris	1st Vice-President
Col. Taro K Jones	2nd Vice-President
Walter Jackson, III	Treasurer
Paulette Tilghman	Recording Secretary
Robin Alexander	Parliamentarian
Roslyn Marchbanks-Robinson	Financial Secretary
Oliver C. Carter	Past President
William Wilson	Business Manager

## *Directors*

William Broadwater  
James Pryde  
Charles Thompson  
Ferman Travers

The telephone numbers of all members mentioned in this newsletter can be found in the TAI National Directory.

All Executive board members can be contacted through email at [officers@ecctai.com](mailto:officers@ecctai.com)

“Enriched By Our Past — Prepared For Our Future”

East Coast Chapter  
Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.  
PO Box 62404  
Washington, DC 20029-2404

**#48566 Is Our Combined Federal  
Campaign Number.**

If you are eligible to participate, please consider designating the ECCTAI as a recipient of your donation.

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WE ARE ON THE WEB  
WWW.ECCTAI.COM

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***ECCTAI 2007-2008 Meeting Dates***

**Executive Board meetings** continue to be held at the Officers' Club at Bolling AFB at 1900 hours on the first Wednesday of each month: January 2, February 6, March 5 and April 2, May 7, June 4, and July 2, 2008.

**General Membership meetings** continue to be held at the College Park Air Museum in College Park, MD, at Noon on the 2nd Saturday of each month except August: January 12, February 9, March 8, April 12, May 10, June 14 and July 12, 2008.

This newsletter can be accessed at [www.ecctai.com](http://www.ecctai.com), click on the newsletter icon.

Electronic mail, for many of us, is the fastest and most efficient way to communicate these days. If you would like to give us your e-mail address, please send it to [members@ectai.com](mailto:members@ectai.com). Be sure to include your name and address. Your e-mail address will only be used by the ECTAI Board for Chapter business. It will not be listed in the ECCTAI membership directory without your permission.