

UMA Newsletter

Quarterly Newsletter for USPTO Veterans and Families

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Left: First class of Tuskegee Airmen—1941 / Right: Tuskegee Airmen Circa 1942—1943.

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

By William Goodchild

April 3, 1939, Congress passed an amendment to designate funds for the training of African-American pilots.

Until this time, no African American had been a pilot in the U.S. military. They soon became known as the Tuskegee Airmen. There were many applicant's to the Air Corps and many of them had participated in the Civilian Pilot Training Program in which the historically black Tuskegee University had participated. The Tuskegee program officially began in June 1941 with the 99th Pursuit Squadron. The Military was a segregated organization and separate units were set up for training and the formation of all black squadrons. Initial training started at Moton Field, followed by training at Tuskegee Army Air Field for basic, advanced and transition flight training.

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Tuskegee Airmen

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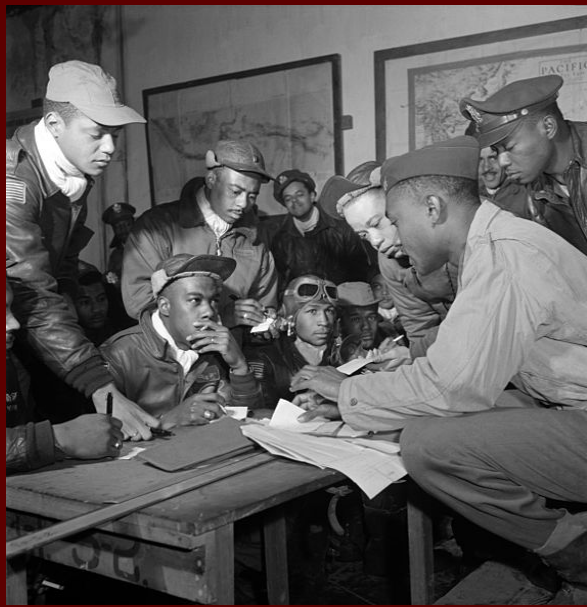
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Visit the UMA website at

<http://ptomilitaryassociation.org/>



After many hurdles, the Tuskegee Airmen of the 99th Pursuit Squadron shipped out April 1943 for North Africa to join the 33rd Fighter Group. The 99th flew its first mission on June 2, 1943 to attack a strategic island in the Mediterranean Sea to clear the sea lanes for the invasion of Sicily. The 99th moved to Sicily and received the Distinguished Unit Citation for its performance in combat. By this time, additional graduates were forming air units, the all black, 332nd Fighter Group was sent overseas with three fighter squadrons, where the 99th joined them in May of 1944. The 332nd also flew highly successful escort missions for heavy bombers. The pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group painted the tails of their P-47s and then, later, their P-51s, red, which earned them the nicknames “Red Tails” and “Red Tail Angels”.

The pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group earned 96 Distinguished Flying Crosses, flying missions over

North Africa, Italy and enemy occupied parts of central and southern Europe. In all, 992 pilots were trained in Tuskegee from 1941 to 1946. Of those, 355 were deployed overseas and 68 lost their lives in combat or accidents, 12 killed in training and 32 captured as prisoners of war.

From the pages of Wikipedia.org and for further reading, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuskegee_Airmen.

All Tuskegee photos, Courtesy of the files of the U.S. Air Force and Wikipedia.org.

Top left: Several Tuskegee Airmen at Ramitelli, Italy, March 1945.

Top right: Pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group at Ramitelli Airfield, Italy, circa August 1944.

Below: Tuskegee Airmen after a mission in the Mediterranean, Feb. 1944



UMA Fitness

Softball Team — POC Albert Gagliardi/Brent Howard

Across the Bay 10K — POC Brent Howard

Scuba Diving—POC Albert Gagliardi

Sky Diving and other exhilarating special events —POC Brent Howard

Gym Workouts, Basketball/pick up games — POC Marta Dulko /Margaret Squalls

Tough Mudder Run, Body Combat —POC Marta Dulko /Kat Wyrozewski

Game/sports watching events — Basketball, Soccer, College Football, and

Monday Night NFL football if anyone is interested. — POC Brent Howard

Fitness challenge — Gym workout team challenges— POC Marta Dulko /Kat Wyrozewski

HR Corner

Official Military Deployment/Reemployment Program (MDRP) Intranet Site Now Live

The Office of Human Resources, Compensation and Benefits Division now offers the [Military Deployment/Reemployment Program \(MDRP\) intranet site](#) as an online, one-stop shop for employees called to active duty, voluntarily and involuntarily, and those transitioning back from military service into the federal workforce.

The new MDRP site contains information regarding the responsibilities, benefits, and entitlements brought about by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) of 1994. This site also contains information about the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which can help employees and their families cope with stress and disruption associated with military duty.

If you have received active duty military orders or are planning to deploy in the upcoming months, call the Compensation and Benefits Division at 571 272 6209 to schedule an appointment to gain the benefits of this program. If you have any questions regarding military deployment and reemployment related to USERRA, email MDRP@uspto.gov.

Disabled Veteran's benefits

Worth repeating...

When living with a disability that arises out of your employment in the armed forces, life can pose many challenges. If you are a disabled veteran, here are some benefits that are available to you

Disability Compensation is a tax free monetary benefit paid to Veterans with disabilities that are the result of a disease or injury incurred or aggravated during active military service. Compensation may also be paid for post-service disabilities that are considered related or secondary to disabilities occurring in service and for disabilities presumed to be related to circumstances of military service, even though they may arise after service. Generally, the degrees of disability specified are also designed to compensate for considerable loss of working time from exacerbations or illnesses.

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is a tax free monetary benefit generally payable to a surviving spouse, child, or parent of Service members who died while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training or survivors of Veterans who died from their service-connected disabilities. [DIC for parents](#) is an income based benefit.

Continued on next page...



HR Point of Contact

HR Representative for UMA and all USPTO Veterans:

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HR

Compensation

and

Benefits

Division

571-272-6209

Disability Benefits

Special Monthly Compensation (SMC) is an additional tax-free benefit that can be paid to Veterans, their spouses, surviving spouses and parents. For Veterans, Special Monthly Compensation is a higher rate of compensation paid due to special circumstances such as the need of aid and attendance by another person or a specific disability, such as loss of use of one hand or leg. For spouses and surviving spouses, this benefit is commonly referred to as aid and attendance and is paid based on the need of aid and attendance by another person.

Student Loan Discharge: If you have been determined unemploya-

ble due to a service-connected disability, you don't have to pay back student loans acquired before you became disabled.

Property Tax Relief: Some states exempt disabled veterans from paying all or part of their property taxes. Research the [laws](#) in your state regarding property taxes and disabled veterans. Most tax assessors require you to provide a letter from the VA every year in order to qualify. Some local tax officials aren't familiar with these laws and may collect taxes you don't owe, so research the laws and speak with your tax assessor. If you believe taxes are wrongfully being collected from you, contact your state representative for assistance.

DID YOU KNOW?

Honor Flight have resumed. Please contact if you would like to participate.

And there are so many more.

Reminder:

This article does not list each and every benefit available to disabled Veterans, to learn about other benefits, visit the [eBenefits](#) portal and research available benefits in your home [state](#). Or, call the toll free numbers listed [here](#).



Armed Forces Day / Memorial Day 2014 "Walk of Thankful Recognition"



Classifieds

Looking for newsletter co-editors.

If you would like to consider writing for the UMA Newsletter, please email us at UMA@uspto.gov.

Please submit photos of you and your family with a military theme. Top 3 winners will be included in the next issue of the newsletter. If you would like to post classifieds, please write to UMA@uspto.gov.

Current Events

- Check our calendar at <http://www.ptomilitaryassociation.org/events> for the latest! We are constantly updating activities there.
- Softball is just around the corner. Have you signed up? Please join us. Give Coach Al Gagliardi a call to get on the email distribution.
- You knew about our annual Memorial Day event we put together, right? If not, or you need more information —go to <http://www.facebook.com/USPTOMilitaryAssociation> for more about this amazing event.

Career Q&A for Veterans and their families at USPTO

The Q&A session need your input to continue to be successful. If you have a topic you would like to see — please contact us .

Wounded Warrior Wards

Fortunately—the Wounded Warrior wards have had fewer and fewer Wounded Warriors in them over the last year. But, in the past, the UMA teamed up with the Yellow Ribbon Fund and **Pork Barrel BBQ** to provide meals for the Wounded Warriors' at Bethesda's National Medical Center / Walter Reed Army Medical Center. The warriors, families, caregivers and staff are appreciative of our program, volunteers and the quality of the food. When they need us again, we want to be there.

If you are interested in volunteering for future events at the Wounded Warrior wards in Bethesda or Belvoir, please contact Brent Howard. Once the program resumes, we will be in contact with you again.

Employer Support / Guard and Reserve (ESGR) External Outreach

UMA members volunteer with ESGR in organizing H2H Events that teach current Veterans how to write effective resumes and how to gain proper interview skills. For more information, please contact Lawana Hixon.

USPTO Military

Association

Newsletter

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