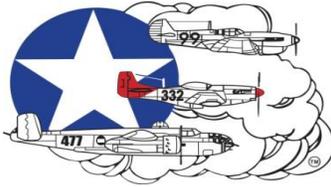


# TUSKEGEE AIRMEN, INC.

## National Office



### President

Brig. Gen. Leon Johnson, USAF (Ret.)

### 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

Brig Gen Randolph Scott, USAF (Ret.)

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

Vacant

### Immediate Past President

Vacant

### Executive Recording Secretary

Maj. Yolanda Wood, USAF (Ret.)

### Financial Secretary

Ms. Michiko Williams

### Treasurer

Mr. Cedric Flounory

### Parliamentarian

SMSgt M. Tyrelle Felder

### Public Relations

Vacant

### Historian

Dr. Ruth M. Jackson Ph.D

### Central Region President

MSgt. Marv K. Abrams, USAF (Ret.)

### Central Region Representatives

Maurice Ripley, Jr.

William Burnett

Chauncey Spencer

Vacant

### Eastern Region President

CMSgt. Quincy Magwood, USAF (Ret.)

### Eastern Region Representatives

T. J. Spann

John M. Gay

Patt Terrelongue

Virginia Hardy

### Western Region President

Rodney Gillead

### Western Region Representative

Ronald D. Hilliard

Clyde B. Jones, Sr.

Charles Hill

Karen Robinson

01/05/2016

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Happy New Year! I want to update you on our organization. 2016 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the beginning of the Tuskegee Airmen Experience. On March 22, 1941 the 99<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Squadron, later to be called the 99<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, was activated. To commemorate the occasion, the Tuskegee Airmen Foundation (TAF) will be hosting two events on March 22<sup>nd</sup>: a Press Conference at Moton Field featuring several of our Documented Original Tuskegee Airmen (DOTA) and a Gala in Montgomery, AL. TAF is a separate IRS 501 (c) 3 whose purpose is to raise funds to support TAI and its chapters.

In 2015 the TAI Board of Directors approved the creation of the Tuskegee Airmen Youth Aerospace and STEM Academy as a way of honoring the heritage and legacy of the DOTA's and asked TAF to raise the necessary funds. The events at Moton Field and Montgomery, AL on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March will be the first activities by TAF to gain awareness on a national scale and fundraise for the creation of the Academy.

This Academy has the goal to simulate the efforts made beginning in 1941 that resulted in over 16,000 individuals participating in the Tuskegee Experience which proved that blacks could take on any and all aspects related to the field of aviation. The academy would be comprised of expanded Aviation Career Education Academies (ACE), a series of Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Academies, and a flight training program. To facilitate these year-round activities will be a speaker's bureau, staffing and the necessary resources to support all the functions of the Academy. Fully funded this program has the potential to reach over 10,000 youth in the first five years. We need to do this to overcome the fact that too few youth, especially those in at risk communities aspire to pursue careers in aviation, aerospace, transportation, technology and the sciences.

While the events on March 22<sup>nd</sup> will be a commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the "Grand Celebration" of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary will be at our National Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana July 13 through July 16, 2016. We encourage all TAI members to attend and participate in this upcoming convention as we will be celebrating a significant milestone for our DOTA's. We have commitments from key supporters to join us in Indianapolis; Herb Kelleher, President Emeritus of Southwest Airlines and General (Ret) Larry Spencer, President of the Air Force Association. Information about the convention is on our website and registration is now open. Our goal is to have every chapter represented and to financially support the attendance of as many DOTA's as possible. I ask each chapter to take the initiative to sponsor one DOTA or original widow to the 2016 Convention.

P.O. Box 830060

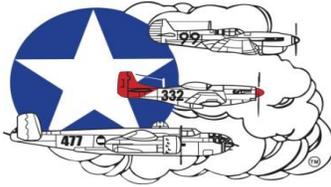
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# TUSKEGEE AIRMEN, INC.

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2016 will feature many opportunities for chapters to join in the commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This provides chapters a means to increase awareness about TAI and your chapter in your communities, recruit new members and fundraise for chapter programs.

- The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt flying with Chief Alfred Anderson
- The activation of other Tuskegee Airmen flying and support units
  - These are excellent opportunities for chapters with DOTAs who were members of those units
- The 71<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the return of the 332<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group to the United States
- Black History month presentations and celebrations
- Other organizations also celebrating 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries who could be partnered with locally are
  - Jeep
  - Civil Air Patrol
  - USO

Dr. Dan Haulman of the US Air Force Historical Research Agency is a member of the Tuskegee Chapter. He created and updates a “Chronology” of the activities of the Tuskegee Airmen and the units. This information can be found on our website under the ‘Explore TAI’ banner and the ‘A Brief History’ tab. You can also find details on all the recorded activities of the Tuskegee Airmen and the units by date.

In 2016 the National Membership Committee will be initiating a membership drive. They will be working with chapters on ways to gain new members, retain current members and return lapse members to TAI chapters. Membership is the life of our organization. We can use the synergy of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to reinvigorate our membership efforts. New members bring fresh ideas and energy to the organization and more hands to assist with our programs and activities.

2016 is a national election year. In the past the Nomination Committee has struggled to have competitive slates for all the national and regional positions. I ask all members to consider running themselves or find members with an interest and the necessary skillset to ensure competition for these critical positions. Historically we’ve found the skillset of the candidates was not part of the consideration when nominations were made. It will take all members’ involvement to change that in 2016.

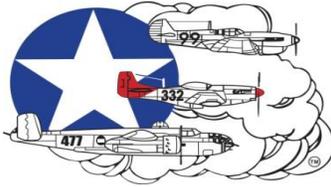
Black History month will see a lot of requests for participation by chapters and DOTA’s in events. There is a lot of information in our TAI Media Kit and in ‘A Brief History’ section on our website that answer many questions that frequently come up at these events. Lucasfilm created a 15 minute version of the documentary “Double Victory” which tells the Tuskegee Airmen story in their own words with historical footage. For events with a longer program there is also a 90 minute version of “Double Victory”. The 15-minute version can be found on DVD disc of the movie “Red Tails” and the 90-minute version can be found on the “Red Tails” Blu-Ray disc. Both can be shown using a DVD player.

As a follow up to the revision to the TAI Bylaws approved by the Body in 2014, a revised version of the Procedures Manual will be distributed later this month. The Procedures Manual is a living document and will continue to be updated as new material is completed and approved by the Board.

I get asked a lot about where TAI is headed financially. Let me give you a little background. TAI has a trademark on our logo and the name of our organization. We have trademark agreements with a number of organizations to use our logo on merchandise and pay a royalty to TAI. At the same time, we sell merchandise on Amazon.com that can be found by searching Tuskegee Airmen Inc. on the Amazon website. If shoppers go to Smile.Amazon.com and register to support Tuskegee Airmen Inc., Amazon will donate a portion of all purchases by that person to our organization. Sale of TAI

# TUSKEGEE AIRMEN, INC.

## National Office



merchandise to members also brings in revenue. We have the TAI-USAA credit card program that provides revenues to us based on purchases made using the card. Our convention, a business meeting for the Body, also provides a source of revenue. We have some of our money invested, however the markets have been down more than up lately. Our investment advisors have been aggressive in adjusting our portfolio to compensate for the market trends. National membership dues are an important source of funding. Donations to our organization from corporations, individuals and groups are also vital sources of support. Many individuals are unaware or don't take advantage of corporate gift matching programs that their employer has that matches donations to qualified nonprofit organizations like TAI. In summary here are the ways that TAI is funded:

- Trademark agreements
- Sale of TAI merchandise on Amazon and to members
- Shoppers using Smile.Amazon.com
- TAI-USAA credit card program
- TAI National Convention
- Investment of funds
- Membership dues
- Donations from individuals, organizations and corporations

A "Wings of Pride" Donor Recognition Program was created in 2015 to acknowledge donors who support TAI. If you hover on the 'Support Us' tab on our website you will find two tabs. One gives details of the "Wings of Pride" program including the various recognition levels for the program. The other tab goes to the virtual 'Wall of Honor' that has the names and level attained by corporations, organizations and individuals who support TAI. Each donation level in the program has a lapel pin that is mailed out with a letter from me thanking the corporation, organization or individual.

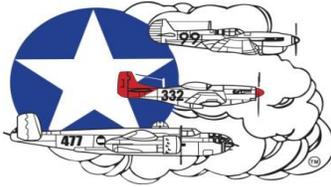
In my visits to various Chapters, I'm often asked about my vision and goals for TAI. I believe the vision and goals identified in my letters to TAI members dated 16 May 2011 and 1 December 2013 are as applicable today as they were when I first took office:

### Short Term (0 to 3 years)

- *Transition TAI from spending in arrears to a funded budget based organization*
  - In 2016 we have moved to this process
- *Create a line of TAI branded merchandise (TAI Logo and Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.) that we, TAI, market to the public*
  - *Allow Chapters to participate in this branding by mirroring the National merchandise plan using their chapter logos*
  - *Expand the National sales of the TAI Logo merchandise to new partners like Tuskegee University, Army Air Force Exchange Service, National Park Service, the original Tuskegee Airmen units in the Air Force today (332nd Wing, 477th Group, 99th, 100th, 301st, and 302nd Squadrons) etc.*
    - The Merchandise Ad Hoc Committee is working to execute the expansion in the revenue stream to achieve its full potential

# TUSKEGEE AIRMEN, INC.

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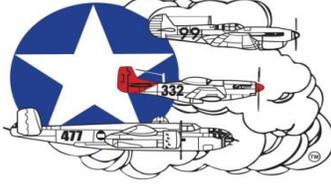
- *Establish economic relationships with companies like USAA that will provide revenues to TAI*
  - The USAA credit card program continues to grow and provide revenue to TAI
  - USAA has become a strong corporate partner in many of our efforts
- *Transition TAI National Office to a permanent location*
  - After 3 moves in two years I think we have found a home in the Gray Law Office Building in Tuskegee, AL
- *Expand the Youth Programs at both the National and Chapter levels within the funding available*
  - This area still needs a lot of work, we are constrained until we increase our funds available for our youth programs
- *Establish a repeatable National Convention footprint*
  - The convention planning team revises our footprint based on member input each year. This input has resulted in reducing our footprint and increasing time for social interaction while still getting business done
- *Revitalize the role of Heritage Members within TAI*
  - Our new Heritage Committee Chair is working to revitalize the role of the Heritage members in TAI
- *Make the necessary changes to the TAI Bylaws to add corporate members to the Board of Directors*
  - Done, but we have not appointed individuals to these positions
- *Revitalize the 3 way partnership with the National Park Service and Tuskegee University to assure timely completion of the Tuskegee Airmen National Park*
  - TAI has taken the lead in this area to make sure these critical meetings occur
- *Simplify the TAI membership processes*
  - The recent revision to the Procedures Manual has accomplished this
- *Establishment of an At Large Chapter*
  - An area that still needs to be addressed

### Long Term (3 to 5 years)

- *Grow TAI membership to over 4000 in 5 years*
  - The 2016 membership drive is a first step to accomplish this
- *Establish a \$10 million endowment*
  - No progress at TAI but this is a mission that should be accomplished by the TAF
- *Establishment of TAI Youth Aviation, Aerospace, Transportation and STEM Academy*
  - The Board has authorize the creation of the Academy

# TUSKEGEE AIRMEN, INC.

## National Office



- *Staff the National office to properly support TAI activities*
  - Our 1.5 employees meet our current needs
- *Change the TAI Bylaws to allow the “Body” to vote on Resolutions outside of the convention*
  - This has been done
- *Change the TAI Bylaws to allow for vote on Resolutions that are presented at convention by the “Body” who are not in attendance at the annual convention*
  - This has been done

This is the big picture as I see it for the short and long term. The long term is hard to gauge since so much is dependent on us getting our financial house in order in the short term to have the necessary base to support the long term.

Since I wrote the above, the Board has updated our Strategic Plan. Here is what the executive summary says about our focus areas:

### **TAI's 2015 – 2018 Strategic Focus Areas**

Based on our findings, the TAI 2015 – 2018 strategic plan identifies four strategic focus areas to serve as our core goals for the next three years: (1) engaging members; (2) fund/friend raising; (3) branding & marketing TAI; and (4) development of a strong National, Regional and Chapter Infrastructure.

If you have not reviewed the TAI Strategic Plan, I encourage each of you to do so, as it should help to answer questions about the direction our organization has selected. An electronic version will be sent to each chapter via the Region Presidents and will also be posted our website later this month.

We are in need of volunteers for consideration for the open positions of Fundraising Committee Chair and Public Relations Officer. If you have skills in these areas, TAI needs you!

The celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Tuskegee Airmen Experience during 2016 will make it an exciting year to be a member of Tuskegee Airmen Incorporated. Please join me and your fellow members in making it a year that our DOTAs will always remember.

Sincerely,

Leon A. Johnson  
National President  
Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.