

# BIOGRAPHY

## A DOCUMENTED ORIGINAL TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN INC. PUBLIC RELATIONS, P.O. Box 830060  
TUSKEGEE, AL 36083

## Paul Adams



Paul Adams was born on August 10, 1920, in Greenville, South Carolina. He joined the Army after graduating from South Carolina State Agriculture and Mechanical College, the present-day South Carolina State University. As a boy growing up in Greenville, he dreamed of becoming a Pilot but knew he probably never would have a chance to fly because he was Black. But in 1940, with the urging of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, the US War Department instituted a program to train Black Fighter Pilots at Tuskegee Institute, Alabama.

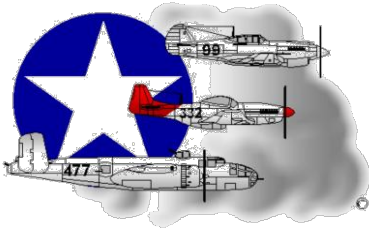
After the father of a friend saw an advertisement for the Tuskegee program and told him about it, he decided to apply for the program. The program offered him the chance to earn \$75 per month instead of the \$21 the Regular Enlisted Soldier earned. Cadet Adams graduated from the nine-month program on April 29, 1943, as a member of class 43-D Single-Engine,

After he arrived in Italy, the command of the 332<sup>nd</sup> assigned him to fly the P-39 Air Cobra patrolling the Naples Harbor. He did not fly any combat missions but served as the Intelligence Officer for his unit. As an Intelligence Officer, he compiled, analyzed, and evaluated the threat and vulnerabilities of the enemy operating in the southern theater. Also, he briefed the Fighter Pilots on what to expect during each mission. In August of 1945, Captain Adams returned to the United States and reported to Fort Shanks, New York, for Logistics duty.

Despite their wartime successes, the Army still treated Black Officers as Second-Class Citizens. At Fort Shanks, the Army segregated White and Black Officers. The Army did not allow Black Officers in the White Officer's Club and assigned them to separate dining facilities. All the Black Officers in the Army protested. In response, the Army's leaders tightened restrictions. The Army confined Blacks to parts of the base surrounded by barbed wire fences and made the German Prisoners of War guard them. The commander at Fort Shanks allowed the Germans freedom of movement on the base, and the United Service Organization treated them to nights on the town.

Captain Adams left the Army Air Force in 1945. He returned to the Army in 1946 as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and participated in the integration of the military. In 1962, Lieutenant Colonel Adams became the Deputy Commander of Lincoln Air Force Base in Lincoln, Nebraska. Despite his outstanding military career, the American Legion and many of the city's restaurants, bars, hotels, and motels would not serve him. Lt Col Adams retired from the Air Force in 1963. In 1964, he began teaching industrial arts at Lincoln High School and also started a multicultural student programs.





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In 1965, when he attempted to buy a house in East Lincoln, the neighborhood residents drew up a petition to block his purchase. They claim his presence would make the property value go down and that he could not repay his loan. His realtor stood firm and proved that Adams' military pension alone was higher than many of the petitioner's income.

Paul Adams retired from Lincoln High School in 1982 but not from teaching and serving his community. In 2008, the City of Lincoln honored his contributions by naming a newly built elementary school for him. They called the school Adams Elementary, and the school's mascot is the "Aviator." During his military career, Lt Col Paul Adams served in nine significant campaigns.

In 2007, he received the Congressional Bronze Medal for his contribution as a "Guardian Angel," a name of respect given by the White Bomber Crews whom the Tuskegee Airmen escorted over enemy airspace during the war. In that year, Doane University, in Lincoln, NE, recognized him with the President's Honor of Distinction Award. Lt Col Adams joined hundreds of other Documented Original Tuskegee Airmen at the inauguration of President Barack Obama, the first Black President of the United States of America.

At 92 years old, Lt Col Paul Adams joined the Lonely Eagles on July 8, 2013.

