

# BIOGRAPHY

## A DOCUMENTED ORIGINAL TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

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

## Leroy Bowman



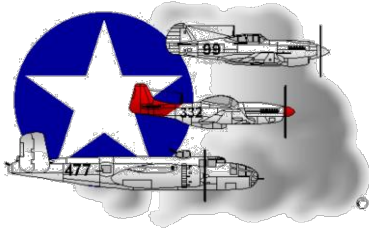
Lt. Leroy Bowman, was a native of Sumter, South Carolina. He attended the public schools in Sumter and graduated from High School in 1940. Lt. Bowman entered the United States Army in September 1941, just before the outbreak of World War II (WWII). From September 1941 to July 1942, he served at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.; Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and Fort Eustis, Virginia.

In December 1941, he joined the 76<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery Unit in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. With this unit, he traveled to Los Angeles, California, and remained there until the battery embarked for the South Pacific. After being aboard the ship for four days, he was ordered off the boat and returned to shore, where he remained on temporary assignment in Wilmington, California, until reporting for Aviation Cadet training at Tuskegee Army Air Field, Alabama. There he received flight training in the PT-17, BT-13, and the AT-6. On March 25, 1943, he graduated with Class 43-C as a Second Lieutenant and a single-engine fighter pilot in the Army Air Corps. He is one of the 994 Black Military Aviators who trained at an isolated and segregated training complex of Tuskegee, Alabama, and at Tuskegee Institute.

Lieutenant Bowman served in the 332nd Fighter Group at Selfridge Air Field, Michigan. He received additional training at Oscoda, Michigan, before embarking to the United States Army 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force in Southern Italy during WWII.

Lt. Bowman is one of the 450 Black Fighter Pilots who served with the 332<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin O. Davis Jr. As a fighter pilot, he flew the P-40, the P-47 and the P-51 fighters in aerial combat over Italy and Germany. He flew thirty-six combat missions against the Luftwaffe, escorting American bombers to and from their targets. Pilots in the 332<sup>nd</sup> became known as the “Red Tails” because of their record of safely escorting bombers to and from destinations in enemy territory.





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At the end of the war, Lt Bowman returned to Sumter and completed his college education at Morris College. Later he was recalled to military service and served at various military bases in New York before transferring to Anchorage, Alaska. While in Alaska, he began his graduate studies at the University of Alaska.

After he returned from Alaska, he entered Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York. There he completed his studies and earned a Master's Degree in Elementary Science and Administration. In 1968, he moved to Roosevelt, Long Island, New York, where he entered the field of education. He worked as a teacher, a principal, and as administrator for curriculum and attendance in the Union Free School District #9, Wyandanch Long Island, New York.

Mr. Bowman retired from the New York School System in 1986 and returned to his native home of Sumter, South Carolina. At home, he served as a Deacon in his church and was a member of the Spann Watson Chapter, Tuskegee Airman Inc. While in retirement, he spoke in Schools, Churches, and civic organizations encouraging young people to stay in school, study and work hard towards achieving their goals.

On February 23, 2006, Tuskegee University recognized Mr. Bowman's outstanding achievements by awarding him an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Public Service. On March 29, 2007, President George Bush presented the Congressional Gold Medal to the original Tuskegee Airmen. Mr. Bowman was among the 300 members to receive the award in the Capitol Rotunda, Washington, DC. On May 9, 2009, Morris College recognized Lt. Bowman's contributions to society by awarding him an Honorary Doctorate Degree of Humane Letters.

Lt. Leroy Bowman, Class 43-C Tuskegee Airman, became a member of the Lonely Eagles on February 26, 2014.

