

BIOGRAPHY

A DOCUMENTED ORIGINAL TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

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CLAUDE BENJAMIN GOVAN

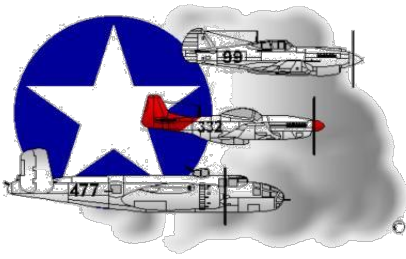


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Claude B. Govan, a native of Orangeburg, South Carolina, was raised in Newark, New Jersey. After completing Shaw University in 1939, he graduated from Tuskegee Army Flying School, Class 43B.

Resplendent with Pilot Wings of Silver and a Commission as a Second Lieutenant (2d Lt), Army Air Corps, 2d Lt Govan was assigned to the 332nd Fighter Group (FG) for combat readiness at Selfridge Field, Michigan. His Group was assigned to the 12th Air Force and became operational on February 15, 1944. Later, in the Spring of 1944, 2d Lt Govan's Squadron became part of the 15th Air Force and he sharpened his skills in flying fighter planes from P-39s to P-51s.

In the same year, 2d Lt Govan's Group was transferred Ramitelli, Italy, and he blasted an enemy ME-109 out of the sky—his first victory. Lt Govan completed 70-more missions before his promotion to Captain and return to the United States in 1944. Assigned to the 332nd Fighter Wing in 1949, Captain Govan returned to Germany. In 1952, he was discharged after his heroic service.

In 1977, Mr. Govan was inducted into the James E. Lytle Hall of Fame of Shaw University based upon his athletic prowess in football. Mr. Govan was also a member of the Tuskegee Airmen, Incorporated organization of the Greater New York Chapter. As the Greater New York Chapter no longer exists, a new Chapter, representing the Tuskegee Airmen of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut was established and named the Claude B. Govan Tri-State Chapter in Captain Govan's honor. Ida Van Smith, who was in school with Mr. Govan at Shaw University said, "I remember Govan as a fine student, a wonderful leader and a 'giant' on the football field."

For more information on Captain Claude B. Govan, other Documented Original Tuskegee Airmen, events and Youth programs, please visit the Claude B. Govan Tri-State TAI Chapter web-site at www.TuskegeeAirmen.org.

