



SPONSOR: Sen. Sokola & Rep. Dorsey Walker  
Sens. Brown, Buckson, Gay, Hansen, Hocker, Hoffner,  
Huxtable, Lawson, Lockman, Mantzavinos, S. McBride,  
Paradee, Pettyjohn, Pinkney, Poore, Richardson,  
Sturgeon, Townsend, Walsh, Wilson; Reps. Baumbach,  
Bolden, Bush, Carson, Collins, Cooke, Heffernan,  
Hilovsky, K. Johnson, Osienski, Romer, Spiegelman,  
Yearick

DELAWARE STATE SENATE  
152nd GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 140

HONORING THE HISTORY OF WORLD WAR II'S TUSKEGEE AIRMEN AND THE DELAWAREANS WHO  
SERVED THEREIN.

1 WHEREAS, the Tuskegee Airmen are a group of African American military pilots, who served in both fighter and  
2 bomber units and supporting units during World War II, some of whom served overseas; and

3 WHEREAS, the units included the 332nd Fighter Group and the 477th Bombardment Group (Medium) of the  
4 United States Army Air Forces (USAAF), and included not only military pilots but navigators, bombardiers, mechanics,  
5 instructors, crew chiefs, nurses, cooks, and other support personnel; and

6 WHEREAS, over the nearly 80 years since the end of World War II, the units comprising the Tuskegee airmen  
7 have been widely praised for their excellent combat record earned while protecting American bombers from enemy  
8 fighters, including receiving three Distinguished Unit Citations; and

9 WHEREAS, all the Black military pilots trained at Griel Field, Kennedy Field, Moton Field, Shorter Field, and the  
10 Tuskegee Army Air Fields, came to Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) at Tuskegee, Alabama from numerous  
11 colleges and universities around the country to undergo initial preflight training on basic aeronautical subjects such as  
12 Physics, Principles of Flight, Navigation, and Meteorology; and

13 WHEREAS, support personnel such as mechanics, clerks, meteorologists, and others trained at various bases  
14 throughout the U.S. along with their white counterparts, they were usually kept in separate barracks and utilized other  
15 separate facilities such as mess halls; and

16 WHEREAS, among the units making up the Tuskegee Airmen were the 99th Pursuit Squadron, later named the  
17 99th Fighter Squadron, the first Black flying squadron to deploy overseas, to North Africa, Sicily and Italy; the 332nd  
18 Fighter Group, deployed to Italy in early 1944; and the 477th Bombardment Group; and

19 WHEREAS, the 477th trained with North American B-25 15 Mitchell bombers and were preparing to be assigned  
20 to the Pacific to take part in the invasion of Japan, only to have the war end before they were called on to serve in combat;  
21 and

22 WHEREAS, when the pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group painted the tails of their P-47 aircraft red, the nickname  
23 “Red Tails” came into being; and

24 WHEREAS, the red markings that distinguished the Tuskegee Airmen also included red bands on the noses of P-  
25 51s, as well as a red tail assembly, and other aircraft used by the units flew with similar color schemes; and

26 WHEREAS, the Tuskegee Airmen were the first African American military aviators in the U.S. Armed Forces at a  
27 time when Black Americans in many U.S. states were still subject to the harsh indignities of the racist “Jim Crow Laws,”  
28 and the American military was racially segregated, as were most of state and federal government civilian agencies; and

29 WHEREAS, the Tuskegee Airmen and other Black men and women who served in the U.S. military and naval  
30 services during World War II were subjected to racial discrimination, both inside and outside the military; and

31 WHEREAS, one result of this discrimination was that those who were chosen to serve in elite units like the  
32 Tuskegee Airmen had to be the best they could be, having essentially to fight two wars, the first against America’s foes in  
33 the war and the second against the harsh racist strictures that had been imposed upon them and other persons of color  
34 throughout their lives; and

35 WHEREAS, Mr. Andre Swygert of Wilmington, Delaware, one of the most knowledgeable people in our state on  
36 the history of the Tuskegee Airmen, and himself the son of a member of the airmen, has thus far in the course of his  
37 research been able to identify 13 Delawareans who served in one or another of the units that were a part of the Tuskegee  
38 Airmen; and he believes that further research will reveal more Delawareans who were a part of the airmen; and

39 WHEREAS, according to Mr. Swygert’s research, those Delawareans known thus far to have served with the  
40 Tuskegee Airmen include the following: John H. Porter, Pilot, 44-C-SE; Fred T. Johnson, Navigator, 45-12A; Clayo T.  
41 Rice, Pilot, 45-A-SE; James O. Handy, Mechanic, 99th Fighter Squadron; Littleton P. Mitchell, Simulator Instructor; James  
42 E. Talton, Flight Officer, 45-F-TE; Donald S. Jamison, Flight Officer, 45-F-TE; Louis R. Purnell, Pilot, 45-B-SE; Dr. Luna  
43 I. Mishoe, Intelligence Officer, 477th Bomb Group; Artishia Stephens, Special Order Clerk; Henry Smith, Armorer;  
44 Maxwell Honemond, Liaison Pilot, US Army; Nathan Thomas, Information/Education Specialist; John E. Brown, Jr., 617th  
45 BS, 477th Bomb Group; David L. Dempsey, 617th BS, 477th Bomb Group; Saralie Draper, Squadron A, 118th AAFBU;  
46 George A. Laws, 590th Mat’l Squadron; and James H. Money, 66th AAFSTD Medical Detachment; and

47 WHEREAS, Mr. Swygert has noted that “the database of all participants in the ‘Tuskegee Experience’ consists of  
48 approximately 14,000 names” and that “further research may uncover additional personnel from Delaware;” and

49 WHEREAS, another important note is that many of these men and women - those from Delaware and elsewhere -  
50 went on to have very distinguished careers in many fields in civilian life after the war; and

51 WHEREAS, to give just a few examples as it applied to the Delawareans who served, are the careers of Dr. Luna  
52 Isaac Mishoe, longtime professor and president of Delaware State College (later Delaware State University); and Mr.  
53 Littleton P. Mitchell, who served with the Tuskegee Airmen as an instructor of future pilots in the art of instrument flying,  
54 and became in civilian life perhaps Delaware's leading crusader for civil rights during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s; and

55 WHEREAS, the experience of the Tuskegee Airmen and of those Delawareans who were a part of that experience  
56 is an important part of the military and social history of the First State, Delaware, and of the rest of the United States and  
57 should never be forgotten;

58 NOW, THEREFORE:

59 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the 152nd General Assembly, the House of Representatives concurring  
60 therein, that the members do hereby honor the memories of all those who served with the Tuskegee Airmen, and of those  
61 Delawareans, both known and unknown, who served with them, and herald their leadership in paving the way for future  
62 generations of Americans to serve their state and their nation.

63 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that suitable copies of this resolution be made available to the families of those  
64 who served and to historical institutions who serve as repositories for the history of Delaware and its people.

#### SYNOPSIS

This Senate Concurrent Resolution seeks to preserve the history of the famed World War II Black aviation units making up the Tuskegee Airmen. It also honors the Airmen as a group and names 13 Delawareans who have been identified thus far as having been members of the component units making up the Tuskegee Airmen.

Author: Senator Sokola