

# Tuskegee Airmen: American Heroes



*Tuskegee Airmen with a fighter plane*



*War bond poster showing a Tuskegee Airman*

The Tuskegee Airmen were the first African American pilots to fly for the U.S. military. When they were formed in 1941, military rules did not allow white pilots and African American pilots to serve in the same unit. The Tuskegee Airmen were created as a separate unit, which began training at an air field in Tuskegee, Alabama. The Tuskegee Airmen were also known as “Red Tails” because they painted the tails of their planes red.

There were almost 1,000 Tuskegee Airmen. About 450 of the pilots flew in over 300 overseas missions during World War II. Many of the pilots received medals and decorations, including the Bronze Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart. Because of their bravery and skill, they helped change the rules to allow African American and white soldiers to serve together in the military.



*Tuskegee Airmen in Italy in 1945*

## Q&A

Where did the pilots begin training?

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What war did the pilots fly in?

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How many Tuskegee Airmen flew overseas?

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Why were they known as Red Tails?

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### Secret Code Phrase

Use the secret code to find a phrase about the Tuskegee Airmen. Write the letter in the blank that matches the number from the code.

18    5    4    20    1    9    12    19

#### Secret code

1 = A	8 = H	15 = O	22 = V
2 = B	9 = I	16 = P	23 = W
3 = C	10 = J	17 = Q	24 = X
4 = D	11 = K	18 = R	25 = Y
5 = E	12 = L	19 = S	26 = Z
6 = F	13 = M	20 = T	
7 = G	14 = N	21 = U	