

Hi, I'm
Harriet.



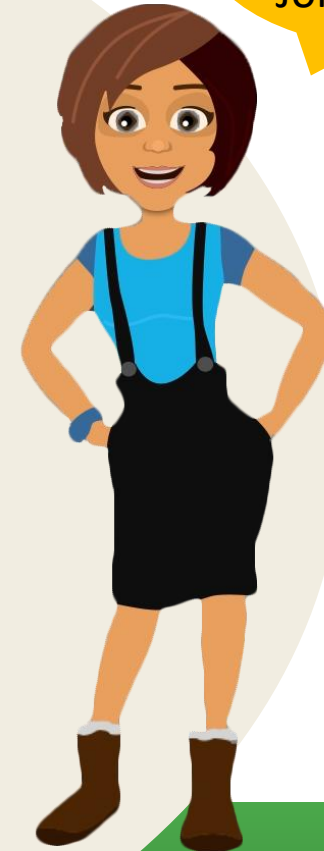
TALKING HISTORY

with

Harriet & Roxanne™

The Tuskegee Airmen

And I'm
Roxanne.
Join us for...



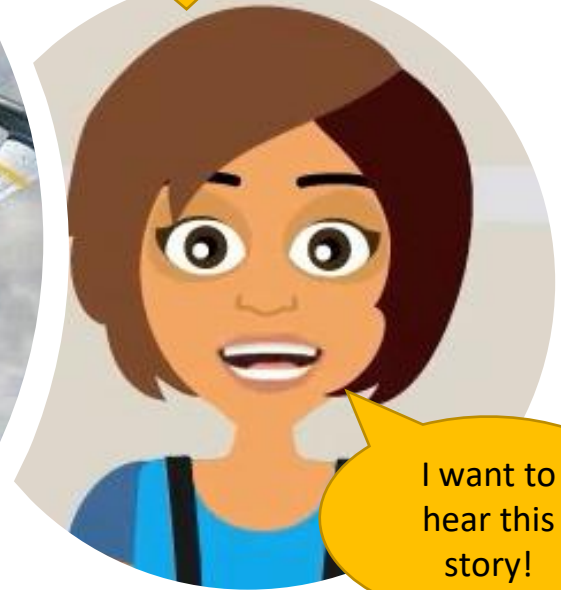
Roxanne, today, I am going to share the history of some of the best pilots in World War II.



The Tuskegee Airmen.



Who were they?



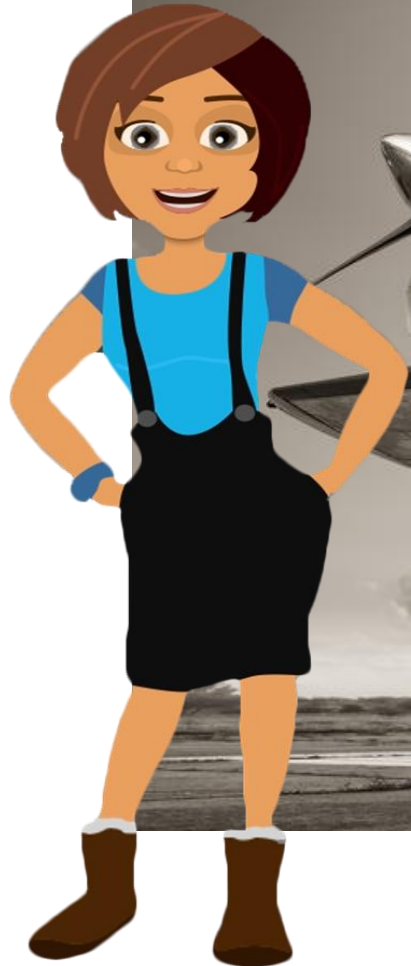
I want to hear this story!



Before the Tuskegee Airmen, the first Black pilots had childhood dreams of flying. They had courage and determination and were the role models for those who followed. **Bessie Colman** was the daughter of sharecroppers and the first Black woman to earn her pilot's license in France in 1921. However, no flight school would accept her in America because of her race and gender. **Eugene Bullard** was the son of a former slave. He became a member of the Lafayette Flying Corp during World War I in France, earning his pilot license in 1917. Unfortunately, Eugene could not get his pilot's license in America either.



So, if the early pilots couldn't get into flight school here, or get a pilot's license, how did the Tuskegee Airmen succeed?



Let's look at this history to find those answers.



President Roosevelt expanded the civilian pilot training program with the Army Expansion Act of 1939. Some people thought this would open the training to Black pilots.



Not so fast, Roxanne, there's more!



FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT

End of story?






Many in the military, particularly in the South, thought that Blacks were inferior and not capable of flying a complicated airplane. Yancy Williams wanted to get into the civil pilot training program and the NAACP helped him bring a lawsuit against the government to allow Blacks in flight training school. The lawsuit resulted in the all-Black Tuskegee flight-training school.



Roxanne, meet **Willa Brown & Cornelius Coffey**! They started a successful flying club in Chicago for Black pilots. They received a franchise from the Civilian Pilot Training Program.

Coffey and Brown's successes led to the admission of Blacks into the Army Air Forces while providing instructors & trainees at the Tuskegee Army Airfield.






There is another event that helped the Tuskegee pilots.

What was it?

Coffey promoted the flight of Chauncey Spencer and Dale White, who flew from Chicago to Washington, D.C. in 1939, to further the cause of Black aviation. It was an effort to end racial segregation in aviation.



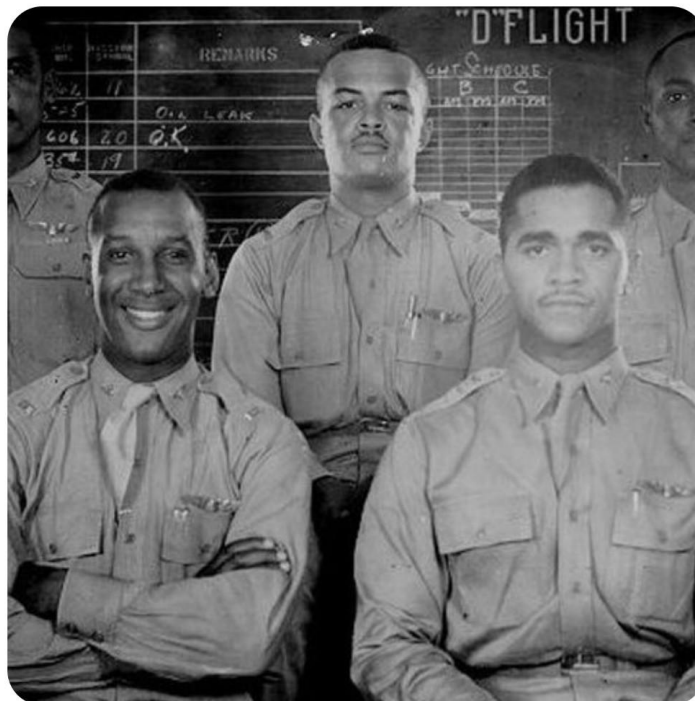
So, everything worked out well for the Tuskegee Airmen!

No, Roxanne, the road to their success wasn't always smooth. But the Tuskegee pilots overcame obstacles and racial discrimination to break color barriers.

They had lots of help too.



Who else helped the
Tuskegee Airmen?



First, Black newspapers, the Chicago Defender & the Pittsburgh Courier, argued that Blacks should be included in the Army Air Corps. Then, Eleanor Roosevelt flew with Tuskegee flight instructor Alfred “Chief” Anderson to prove the pilots’ abilities. After the first five cadets graduated in March 1942 and started flying, they were called the “Red-Tail angels.” They were the role models for all who followed.





The Tuskegee Record

996 pilots flew in World War II

66 pilots lost while downing 103 enemy planes

Awarded 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 14 bronze stars, and 8 purple hearts

Flew 15,533 individual sorties

Lost 27 bombers, half what white escorts did

Included 15,000 navigators, mechanics, nurses, instructors, and support personnel.

One of the greatest success stories of World War II

America's first Black military pilots were invaluable to the war effort's success




The Tuskegee Airmen's impressive efforts to escort bombers on missions were highly influential in the latter half of World War II. These men served through adversity and racial discrimination to proudly serve their country.



I am so proud of what these men and women did for us. Thanks for sharing, Harriet.



An illustration of two women standing in a green field with rolling hills and a blue sky with white clouds. The woman on the left is Black, wearing a green jacket, blue skirt, and green sneakers, with her arms raised. The woman on the right is white, wearing a blue shirt, black dress, and brown boots, with her hands clasped. Two yellow speech bubbles contain text.

I hope you enjoyed
our lesson today on
the Tuskegee
Airmen!

Please come back
soon for more
"Talking History
with Harriet &
Roxanne."



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