



Archer-Ragsdale AZ Chapter

Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.
Phoenix, AZ
www.aractai.org



Subject: Recap of the Tuskegee Airmen Convention 2024 “**Uniting Our Past and Our Present**”

Chapter members in attendance:

Joseph A. Olano
Richard “Dick” Toliver
Carol Gleed-Weaver
Ronald Hilliard

Monday, August 12th

General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. Golf Classic – hosted by the East Coast Chapter, Tuskegee Airmen, Inc (ECCTAI) – Norbeck Country Club, Rockville MD

Wednesday, August 16th

All the above chapter members had arrived by today. Registration was completed. Each recipient received a bag containing a copy of Alexander Jefferson (Lt. Col., USAF, RET.) book titles “Red Tail Captured, Red Tail Free Memoirs off a Tuskegee Airman and POW”, a copy of the “Tuskegee Airmen Foundation 75th Anniversary of the Tuskegee Airmen Experience” and a copy of the Archer-Ragsdale Arizona Chapter Newsletter. Later members gathered at the Welcome Reception where numerous discussion took place.

During this time Chapter members spoke Ms. Yolande Wood (President, Hugh J. White Chapter, St. Louis) and was able to gather numerous fact that could be used to advance our own youth programs.

- She spoke about her efforts as she conducted many programs (Balsa planes building, Simulator training, Navigations classes, Team Building, Charting and Drones Flying. Noting that some drones may be purchased as low as \$40.00.
- Using local agencies to assist or host some of the programs she was making available to the youth in her area. She indicated that the YMCA the

program a stipend to support some of their daytime programs. Partner with local church and schools. More information can be obtained through contact with her.

- She encouraged us to always seek out sponsors such as Southwest Airlines, Boeing, the local YMCA and any other sources available.
- For some of these programs / classes require only a dry erase board, pens, paper (school supplies), willing students and a place. Places such as Ice Rinks or Gyms spaces large enough to potentially host four drones flying at the same time.

Thursday, August 17th – HERITAGE DAY

- The DOTA Breakfast was by invitation only, but I hear that it went well and there was full attendance at the Heritage Luncheon.
- President Burton conducted the Official Opening Ceremonies by welcoming all in attendance.
- Guest speaker DOTA George Hardy delivers an uplifting speech and welcomed questions and comments.
- President Burton welcome DOTAs Brig. Gen. Enoch Woodhouse and Dr. Ivan Ware to the convention. Also, welcomed Event Sponsor Boeing who had provided support to National Convention in the amount of \$25,000.00. Additionally, they have provided support to local chapters.
- Also present was Lt Gen (Ret) Stacy Harris (Boeing corporation) who
- needed no introduction.
- President Burton highlighted the issues of failing chapter and the need work with these chapter to help them survive.
- President Burton provided highlights on the many activities, education sessions and the Annual business Meeting. During his address he spoke on upcoming planning such the Strategic plan, Finances and personnel required to run the organization.
- Col Palmer Sullins, Jr. (Ret) spoke on the “TAI Memorable Wall of Honor” proposal at Moton Field AL providing a brief overview of the initial agreements, what has been accomplished followed by what needs to be completed. He referenced Public Law 105-355 dated November 6, 1998, and the Report to Congress 2020 “Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site dated April 2002. Several members from the audience verbally support the historic site initiative. (Proposed Site Image below)



- A representative of the National Park Service also provided a brief overview on the status of Moton Field and provided the following web link [Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/tuskegee-airmen-national-historic-site) you can access additional information. Hangers 1 and 2 are open for visitors, Oral Histories can be accessed at the exhibits including information on others who were at Tuskegee and Information on the Double Victory Campaign.
- President Joseph A. Olano attended the Freeman Field, incident, 477th Bombardment and a New Highway naming presentation which provided historical information.
- Mr. Bruce Jones from the “Aviano Tuskegee Airmen Committee” which was created in 2021 located in Aviano, Italy and Mr. Marco Altobello a representative from Italy gave a brief history of Ramitelli Airfield Memorial and its erection of the Compo Marino Monument in honor of the airmen who were stationed at Ramitelli Airfield Italy. They also provided information on what the Ramitelli Airfield looked like today noting that only 2 towers remain (one old Italian and one Air Force). During the presentation it was also made note of the fact that they would like to get a TAI chapter there and a museum in future planning.
- TASF President Charles Jones provided a briefing on the TASF program, covering financial account as they are trying to be much better at financial housekeeping. Noting that forty scholarship were presented following three brief stories of success. He issued a challenge to all to donate to TASF their website is [Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation | Tuskegee Airmen Inc.](https://www.tuskegeeairmen.org/)
- Information was received and noted that there are still 22 DOTAs in the organization.
- Regional Caucuses were held separately.

Notes from the Western Region caucus follows: It was attended by over 20 plus WR members (See attachment #2 for the agenda).

1. WR President Karen Robinson attended via zoom opened and welcomed the region membership and apologize for not being able to be there (Due to taking care of her son).
 2. WR President stated that the region's membership has grown from last year to a total of 363. She challenged the region to boost the membership numbers to 400 or above for the upcoming membership drive.
 3. WR President spoke on the Life membership badges program and the requirement to get the paperwork completed.
 4. Outstanding Chapter credits (monies from National owed to chapters). WR. President asked the chapter noted address balancing these funds. ARAC still has \$15.00 to collect.
 5. Opened discussion on the release of \$20,000.00 to fund the 2025 youth programs. Request for funding should arrive to the WR President not later than 1 November 2024.
 6. Discussions on completing the IRS 990 form were discussed with the president taking an action for training on this subject. (**Action Open**)
 7. The region is still exploring ways to provide information on TAI merchandise available. (**Open**)
 8. The chapters are not forwarding changes to their Chapter Officers by completing a TAI Form 5's. This is causing problems in keeping chapters informed by either region or national representatives.
 9. For the Good of the Order: Members addressed wording in documents as we attempt to let everyone know that we are an "all-inclusive organization"
- The Tuskegee Airmen Mustang from the Detroit Red Tail organization was on display and numerous attendees took advantage of it by taking pictures.
 - The Merchandize committee reported sales of approximately \$8,000.00 during the convention, GREAT JOB!.

Friday, August 18th – MILITARY DAY

- **During the Military Luncheon**
 1. An All-Star Women's panel provided insights into some of the obstacles they faced in their career paths.

2. General Lester Lyles (USAF Ret) briefed the audience on Military Diversity. General Larry O. Spencer provided briefings on Military Leadership Development. Both were well received, and a few questions were asked. General Larry O. Spencer also signed copies of his book “Dark Horse – His Journey from the Horseshoe to the Pentagon”.
- A separate Q & A session with the two attending DOTA was held and was well attended.
- TJ Spann hosted the TAI Membership Policies & Practices workshop where he discussed the following.
 1. Reports - covering the TAI Forms 2, 2A, 5 and 7, Giving both the reason for completing each form and why the information was required.
 2. Provided information on both the Chapter Membership Committee as well as the Quarterly Membership BOD meetings.
- TJ Spann also hosted a “Member Planet” training session providing information on its history and future. TJ Spann also noted that chapter members should contact their chapter membership chair or their local region representative with any questions or request for training.

Saturday, August 19th – YOUTH DAY & Annual Business Meetings

Annual Business Meeting

- President Burton opened the session noting adjustments to the agenda.
- Under new business the Memorial Wall was added. It was also discussed that the agenda might be too big to cover. The chair noted that it would be tight, but all the agenda should be covered. President Burton also stated no later than two weeks after the close of the convention all reports posted. Additionally, he noted committees needed to make every effort to get reports to the convention by posted deadlines.
- President Burton also addressed the agreements with TAI that are current in place (CAP, USAA, American Airlines and a Merchandise company.
- President Burton advised that the BOD has been served with litigation. No farther discussion was conducted.
- A brief discussion on the outlook of future conventions, possibly the reconfiguration of content, seriously evaluate the use of virtual, members must support and attend

Annual Youth Day Luncheon:



During this time the highlight of Youth Day was seeing ten students making live contact with the International Space Station (ISS) where they posed questions to the ISS that were answered by Astronaut **Jeanette Epps** on board. The session was completed when the ISS passed out of range. The students were both nervous and excited.

Meeting session 2

- Election Results were announced, during the session and the President said that they will be sent to all by email.

- Gala and Dinner

Notable events included:

1. The Local Honor Guard posted the colors, followed by the singing of the National Anthem performed by Lt Col (Ret) Ivan Thompson.
2. Honoring the MIA/POWs and detailing the reason for the empty table. Followed by the Honoring of all the DOTAs that have transferred to the Lonely Eagles Chapter” detailing the reason for their empty table.
3. Awards were presented to Military awardees, and it was noted that there were 594 applications reviewed to select the winners.
4. Dr. Sharon Williams spoke of the TAI Awards program noting the awards that are available at each convention. Followed by the President Burton presenting the TAI National and Regional Awards. The Noel Parrish Award was presented by a member of the Parrish family.
5. The Hubert L. “HOOKS” Jones chapter captured two awards.

Sunday, August 20th

Departure Day

In conclusion:

- The ARAC Newsletter generated discussions and praise for a job well done with its information and presentation.
- Several individuals stated that they will be looking out for the publication of “Black Wings Over Arizona” with great interest.

- The ARAC members met and spoke with numerous individual during the convention spreading the good news about our chapter and its continuing efforts to serve the youth of our community.

Respectfully

Prepared by:

Ronald D. Hilliard
ARAC Recording Secretary
rhilliard.tai@gmail.com
720-987-9149 (cell)

Attachment #1

2024 TAI BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

1. Call to Order.
 - a. Roll Call
 - b. Verification of quorum
3. Moment of Silence / Prayer
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Presentation of Meeting Minutes
6. President's Report
 - a. Summary of activities and accomplishments
 - b. Strategic vision and goals
7. Treasurer's Report
8. Finance Secretary Report
9. Region President Report
 - a. Western
 - b. Central
 - c. Eastern
10. National Park Service
11. Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation
12. Committee Reports
13. Unfinished Business
14. New Business
15. Recess

Attachment #2

WESTERN REGION CAUCUS MEETING TUSKEGEE AIRMEN, INC AUGUST 15TH, 2024 AGENDA

Call to Order

Opening Prayer and Moment of Silence for the Lonely Eagles

Approval of the agenda

Convention Updates

- You must be registered for the convention to participate in the Annual Business Meeting on Saturday, August 17th, at 6:00AM (PDT). It is free but registration is required for zoom link

Membership as of July 11th is 363 members

- Chapter growth
- Order process for Life members pocket badges or broaches
- Outstanding chapter credits: \$130
Archer-Ragsdale Arizona \$15
General Lloyd "Fig" Newton \$40
Stockton/San Joaquin Valley \$75

Region Youth Program

- \$20,000 for 2024 distribution
- Process for obtaining and validating EIN through the National Office for IRS 990 submission
- Vendor information for ordering TAI merchandise i.e. blazers, shirts, ties, etc.
- Chapters Form 5 needed with chapter officers
- For the Good of the Order

Thank you for your support

- Adjourn

Attachment #3

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