

Distinguished members, my name is Edward Harbison. I served honorably in the United States Air Force, retiring in December of 2000 after over 23 years. In my 12th year of service—at 30 years of age, I learned of a travesty that was rectified after over 30 years—that the first Army Air Corps Ariel Gunnery Competition—now known as Top Gun; was won by an all Black unit – Members of the Tuskegee Experience, called Tuskegee Airmen. These men and women, black and white, a part of our Greatest Generation, sacrificed and persevered; opened doors so others like myself could serve this great nation, equally! Not only did they perform their duties and tasks, they achieved objectives when situations were created intentionally so that they would fail. These great Americans need to be recognized for their unsung effect on the United States of America. Let's not diminish their accomplishments like the 1st place trophy; won by an all-African American unit in 1949, hidden and hoped to be forgotten! Maryland needs to make the 4th Thursday in March, Tuskegee Airmen Commemoration Day! After fighting oppression abroad; they returned home to fight racism, bigotry and prejudice practices inside their, our, home borders. Still becoming doctors, teachers, pharmacists, lawyers, politicians, and great model citizens. If not now, when? If not you, who? You have the power to pass this legislation. Now is the time. You are the right persons. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Edward Harbison
Master Sergeant, United State Air Force, Retired
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