

## **Veterans News from Near and Far**

I'm writing this from the Land of Enchantment, New Mexico. I'm on my way to our winter home in Green Valley, AZ and am staying at Truth or Consequences. As I was driving through Colorado, I saw two signs that caught my eye; Tuskegee Airmen Memorial Highway and later the Buffalo Soldiers Memorial Highway and decided that both were worthy of an article. Both groups of men were Veterans and have an interesting past.

The Buffalo Soldiers originally were members of the 10th Cavalry Regiment of the United States Army, formed on September 21, 1866, at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. This nickname was given to the "Negro Cavalry" by the Native American tribes they fought in the Indian Wars. The term eventually became synonymous with all of the African American regiments formed in 1866 including the 9th Cavalry Regiment, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 24th Infantry Regiment and the 25th Infantry Regiment. Although several African American regiments were raised during the Civil War as part of the Union Army, including the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry and the many United States Colored Troops Regiments, the Buffalo Soldiers were established by Congress as the first peacetime all-black regiments in the regular U.S. Army. On September 6, 2005, Mark Matthews, the last living Buffalo Soldier, died at the age of 111. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

From the [tuskegeeairmen.org](http://tuskegeeairmen.org), I found the following description of the group. Tuskegee Airmen refers to all who were involved in the "Tuskegee Experience," the Army Air Corps program to train African-Americans to fly and maintain combat aircraft. The Tuskegee Airmen included pilots, navigators, bombardiers, maintenance and support staff, instructors, and all the personnel who kept the planes and pilots in the air.

Tuskegee Institute, Alabama had the facilities, and engineering and technical instructors, as well as a climate for year round flying. The first class of students completed their instruction in May 1940. The Tuskegee program was then expanded and became the center for African-American aviation during World War II.

The Tuskegee Airmen overcame segregation and prejudice to become one of the most highly respected fighter groups of World War II. They proved conclusively that African Americans could fly and maintain sophisticated combat aircraft. The Tuskegee Airmen's achievements, together with the men and women who supported them, paved the way for full integration of the U.S. military. President Truman, by executive order, integrated the military in 1948.

On November 6, 1998, President Clinton approved Public Law 105-355, which established the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site at Moton Field in Tuskegee, Alabama, to commemorate and interpret the actions of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II.

About a month ago, Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Moorhead received a \$2,000 grant from the FM Area Foundation to research the American Legion Posts in Clay County. We've hire a research and are looking for information and stories about the Legion Posts. Please contact me if you are interested in this wonderful project.