



Freedom Flyers: The Tuskegee Airmen of World War II (Oxford Oral History Series)

J. Todd Moye

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In this inspiring account of the Tuskegee Airmen--the country's first African American military pilots--historian J. Todd Moye captures the challenges and triumphs of these brave aviators in their own words, drawing on more than 800 interviews recorded for the National Park Service's Tuskegee Airmen Oral History Project.

Denied the right to fully participate in the U.S. war effort alongside whites at the beginning of World War II, African Americans--spurred on by black newspapers and civil rights organizations such as the NAACP--compelled the prestigious Army Air Corps to open its training programs to black pilots, despite the objections of its top generals. Thousands of young men came from every part of the country to Tuskegee, Alabama, in the heart of the segregated South, to enter the program, which expanded in 1943 to train multi-engine bomber pilots in addition to fighter pilots. By the end of the war, Tuskegee Airfield had become a small city populated by black mechanics, parachute packers, doctors, and nurses. Together, they helped prove that racial segregation of the fighting forces was so inefficient as to be counterproductive to the nation's defense.

Freedom Flyers brings to life the legacy of a determined, visionary cadre of African American airmen who proved their capabilities and patriotism beyond question, transformed the armed forces--formerly the nation's most racially polarized institution--and jump-started the modern struggle for racial equality.

Freedom Flyers: The Tuskegee Airmen of World War II (Oxford Oral History Series) Details

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From Reader Review Freedom Flyers: The Tuskegee Airmen of World War II (Oxford Oral History Series) for online ebook

Patrick Davis says

This book was very informative, but dry and disorganized. I was constantly amazed by the struggle these men went through, how people with two majors and two minors in college would still be thought of as "subhuman" and were prohibited from going places on base to which German prisoners of war were allowed to go. It is quite an enlightening experience getting into the heads of people who put their lives on the line for this country, fighting Germans in the air or just by stepping foot into a whites only officers club. I have nothing but amazed respect for these men, who fought to go to war, fought during the war, then were told as they marched off the ship they sailed home on, "whites to the right, negroes to the left." this book introduced me to some truly amazing people, but the facts and timeline were so scattered that I had a rough time following it. Moyer would talk about something from January 1942, then May, and something from 43, 44 then back to 42. If it wasn't for the disjointed nest, the repeating of facts, and the book feeling like a bunch of academic papers being pieced together, this would have been a truly great read.

Jon says

well written and researched. if you are looking for a book that is written more like an easy read story this is not your book. my biggest problem with the book is in its 180+ pages there are like 6 chapters. it would take forever to from once to another with the writing style of the author.

Antonios Tsompanidis says

Freedom Flyers: The Tuskegee Airmen of World War II is a great book - very factual and very informative about a period of time in which racism even affected war. Throughout the book, the author provides lots of stories from the lives of the airmen before and during the war. It is fascinating to hear what they believed was right and wrong during this time period, and the author does a great job describing the events in their lifetime.

I find it scary that during times of war air pilots were divided because of racism when their country was at risk. Just because of the skin color of a group of men could have caused America to be in a state of devastation.

The author does a great job of explaining the airmen and how the war affected their lives through different aspects... it is quite interesting to learn how exposure affects a human's thoughts...

The book is extremely clear and the author also does a great job laying out his facts in an order that makes sense and flows. They all have to do with each other, and some new facts are introduced when facts previously introduced have been explained.

The book did get a bit confusing, and there could be some irrelevant facts at times, but otherwise, a great read for Black History Month! Kids thirteen or above would understand the facts the best, but the book could be read by children under 13 as well...

Merryn Pinch says

Excellent book, used it for one of my tutoring sessions

Scott L. says

I am more than halfway done reading the book, and I concur with some of the reviews previous: it is very well-researched. Unfortunately, it is not very well written - it seems very disjointed and seems to want to hit the reader with a sledgehammer that the Tuskegee Airmen were discriminated against because of their race. This is something I already knew. I read this book expecting to read more about their accomplishments in the war, and I have not even reached that point yet. I don't think that I would be recommending this book, except to people who might want to learn about the background of how the TAAF was formed. This is a very academically written and unexciting book. Update more at the finish....

Scottnshana says

Having spent a few years in Montgomery, Alabama, I recognized a lot of the places described in this book; being a Midwestern transplant, there were a lot of things I just did not understand when I lived there, and this book clarified quite a few of them. Dr. Moyer has interviewed Tuskegee Airmen and combed through the official records to produce an amazing book on the society which these pioneers stepped forward to defend and the big-picture politics that influenced where the "experiment" (as some called it) would take place, who would administer it, and ultimately how its airmen would be employed in the Second World War. The author also makes it clear--there were a lot of people who did NOT want to see it succeed, but he also argues that its success was the first big event in the Civil Rights movement. The Second World War took the elite of Black society--not just college graduates, but airplane enthusiasts and super-smart Type-A personalities--and trained that elite to be the technicians, administrators, and leaders necessary to run combat flying squadrons. I have read a lot about the Second World War, but this book held a lot of new and interesting information. I liked the unbiased examination of political influence on President Truman to finally de-segregate the armed forces and the effects of that decision. I enjoyed the fact that Dr. Moyer also discussed the racial tension in Detroit--this is not a book that singles out the South in its treatment of the attitudes and resistance toward bringing Black pilots fully into the Army Air Corps. I would put this book next to Michael Eric Dyson's work on Martin Luther King as a good primer on the history of the Civil Rights movement in America, but I would also recommend it to anyone interested in American civil-military relations.

David says

This is not a gripping tale of combat, in fact, the combat takes up a very small part of the overall book. It tells the larger story of the African Americans in the World War II Army Air Corps, and does a good job. The author also speaks to the impact of the movie *The Tuskegee Airman* on the collective memory. I hadn't realize that the AAC was forming a Colored Medium Bombardment Group, which had a very different history and outcome than the 332nd Fighter Group. It was also interesting to learn about the colorful history

of some of the alumni of these Colored squadrons. Overall a fine book, and well worth my time.

Karen says

I would rate this 3 1/2 stars if I could. It's very well researched and I learned a lot, but it ended up feeling a little too academic and disjointed because there were so many stories, none of which felt very in-depth. I remember thinking that I might prefer to read a memoir from one of the Tuskegee Airmen and I also thought that it would make a great movie. Lo and behold, I have discovered that there WAS an HBO movie made so I definitely plan to try to get my hands on that.

Overall I would recommend this for history buffs but less for the casual reader.

Rebecca Wilson says

This isn't a history of individuals, technology or military exploits, but rather of bureaucracy—which I guess is the boring truth of how things get accomplished in America. It's really well researched! But not quite what I had in mind. This is the sixteenth book I've read about WW2 in the past two years, and I love reading about aviation and technology as well. I wish there had been more of all of these things. Almost no time is spent in cockpits or on actual missions, so it feels like this book ultimately missed the forest for the trees. Obviously the trees are important, and it was interesting and infuriating to learn about the ways racists and entrenched racism made it hard/impossible for the Tuskegee Airmen to do their jobs. This shouldn't have been omitted, but I am much more interested in the airmen (and even the airplanes) than the bureaucrats. To me, the best parts were rushed through toward the end of the book: first, Truman's order to integrate the armed forces; and then the discussion of the interesting and accomplished lives that many of the airmen went on to lead after the war.

Reid says

An excellent account of the Tuskegee program. I found it all interesting, but particularly enjoyed the background and events leading up to the formation, from "The Use Of Negro Manpower In War" report from 1925 up to their deployment in North Africa and Europe, it's quite an arc.

I thought this was a good concise summary, not terribly long or difficult to read, but while covering the pertinent information.

Valzebub says

Very educational read, especially about the integration of the Air Force and armed forces. I was hoping for something more along the lines of a Stephen Ambrose memoir with lots of tales of combat. Instead this is a much more textbook like read on desegregation of the armed forces. There are some short chapters going into combat, but most of the action seems to take place in the US.

It's a short read and worthwhile for any WWII buffs.

Drew says

Don't let my rating fool you. The only reason for this is that pace wise this book is a little slow but that is because of the information crammed into it. You learn every hurdle that these brave aviators faced in getting to serve their country. I encourage anyone interested in WWII books or the Civil Rights Movement to pick up Mr. Moye's book on the Red Tails.
