



58th Squadron  
Maine Wing

# Black Sheep Bulletin

Winter 2007

## Sheered Sheep Corner

Welcome to the first winter edition of the Black Sheep Bulletin! The newsletter is changing to a quarterly format to better accommodate the needs of the Squadron. This change will allow our PAO 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Doug Bennett to fill the publication with relevant material and after action reports. I would encourage members to submit articles and/or photographs to Lt. Bennett for publication. And not to worry! If there is a deluge of material, a "special edition" will be put out to meet the need.

The New Year has already seen us meet and overcome our first big challenge. On February 17th, "The Fighting 58<sup>th</sup>" hosted Maine Wing for the pre EVAL SAREX. The day went relatively smoothly with excellent training for all of us. It was a real opportunity for the Wing to sharpen its skills and be prepared for the EVAL next month in Bangor. And lunch was an option! I would like to thank all of our members who pitched in and provided an outstanding buffet that was enjoyed by all.

Another terrific event was the special appearance at Squadron Headquarters of Jim Sheppard, our local Tuskegee Airman. He spoke for two hours about his WWII Army Air Corps unit and his experiences during the war. It was a fascinating talk followed by a lively Q&A session. For me the highlight was making Mr. Sheppard an Honorary Member of the Squadron.

For those of you who might be wondering, the moniker "The Fighting 58<sup>th</sup>" is something that I cannot take credit for. Our very own ESO 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Jim Savage came up with it during the 11JAN07 meeting when Col. Hayden stopped by to announce the changes to Squadron names. Based on the thunderous cheers that ensued, the name stuck. As "The Fighting 58<sup>th</sup>", we will "fight" to do it right! I look forward to standing shoulder to shoulder with all of you as we do our best to get it right over the coming year!

Cheers,

1st Lt. Robert S. Baker  
Commander  
58<sup>th</sup> Squadron  
Maine Wing  
USAF AUX  
"The Fighting 58<sup>th</sup>"



## 58th Squadron Upcoming Events

8MAR07 Airport Security

15MAR07 Aircraft Fire  
Fighting

22MAR07 Prep for EVAL

24MAR07 EVAL at BGR

29MAR07 First Aid Chal-  
lenge

31MAR07 First Aid  
Course

# Tuskegee Airman visits with 58th Squadron

Officers and Cadets from the 58th Squadron received an invaluable history lesson when a member of the Tuskegee Airmen, Master Sgt. (retired) Jim Sheppard stopped by to talk about the distinction of serving as one of our country's first black airmen.

The Tuskegee Airmen were named after Tuskegee Army-Airfield in Alabama, where the first black military airmen were trained. "At the time, the Armed Services were entirely segregated and until 1939, there were no black pilots in the Air Force or Navy. Black mechanics couldn't even share tools with their white counterparts." says Mr. Sheppard. The War department created the formation of a training facility at the Tuskegee airfield, which became the only facility out of 200 in operation that allowed training for black pilots, although black navigators, bombardiers and gunnery crews were trained at selected military bases elsewhere in the United States. Approximately 14,000 troops from 1941 to 1947 were trained at the airfield; anyone of them, including pilots, aircraft and engine mechanics, armament specialists, parachute riggers, control tower operators & administrative clerks, has the distinction of calling themselves a Tuskegee Airman.

450 of the 994 pilots who received their training at Tuskegee served overseas in either the 99<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron or the 332<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group. Mr. Sheppard was assigned as an Aviation Maintenance Crew Chief with the 99<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, serving most of his overseas tour in Italy during WWII. "I remember living in tents for 18 months, working around the clock to support the air effort. All of the airfields in Italy were cow pastures, with steel grates serving as the runways. We had many accidents, especially when the runway was wet."

During Bomber Escorts, the Tuskegee aircraft were identified with a painted red empennage, adopting the name, 'Red Tail'. "A Red Tail on an aircraft was used let the Allied Bomber pilots know that they had black pilots escorting their mission." says Mr. Sheppard. "It's amazing to think that segregation still mattered during a real combat mission." Mr. Sheppard estimates that there were just over a 100 Tuskegee pilots lost in either combat or from strafing. His experience includes working on P-39 (engine behind the pilot), P-40 Warhawk (inline engine), P-47 Thunderbolt (air-cooled radial engine in front of the pilot) and the P-51 aircraft.

Mr. Sheppard was born and raised in New York City, and had started his pilot training a day after World War II had started. While at Tuskegee Army-Air Field, he received his training as a Maintenance Crew Chief and also became a Parachute Rigger. While his background includes training as a pilot, he never served in that capacity during his enlistment.

The significance of Tuskegee Airmen's historic role did not evolve until after the war had ended. Flying over 15,000 sorties in 1500 plus missions, they compiled an outstanding combat record. As bomber escorts, the Tuskegee Airmen never lost a bomber to enemy fighters; a record no other fighter group achieved. In 1948, President Truman had ended segregation in the Armed Services, well before the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's.

Mr. Jim Sheppard has continued to stay active with other Tuskegee Airmen and has recently traveled overseas to share his stories with the troops serving in Iraq.

Web Sources: [tuskegeearmen.org](http://tuskegeearmen.org)  
[redtail.org](http://redtail.org)



*Commander Baker & 1LT Turgeon bestow honorary membership to Mr. Sheppard.*



*Jim Sheppard discussing the WWII aircraft he maintained*



*Fielding questions from Capt. Dan Gagnon*

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# Recent Promotions



C/ Thibeault to Chief Master Sgt.



C/ Woodman to Senior Airman



C/ Madore to Chief Master Sgt.



C/ Belcher to Chief Master Sgt.



C/ Richards to Cadet Commander

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# Recent Promotions



C/Clukey to Sr. Master Sgt.



C/Smith to Senior Airman



C/Hassett receiving Lindbergh Award



C/ Drouin to Airman



C/St. John to Tech. Sgt.



C/Prior to Airman

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PO Box 1655  
Portland, ME 04104-1655

Douglas Bennett, 2LT/PA  
58th Squadron  
Maine Wing  
Civil Air Patrol

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## REMINDERS

? *Daylight Savings Time Springs Forward:*  
When daylight savings time goes into effect March 11—three weeks earlier than usual—don't forget that the conversion between Zulu and local time will change. After March 11th, converting from eastern standard to Zulu will be + 4 hours. The earlier time change also means more evening daylight hours and more time for daytime flying!

? On Thursday, March 8th, Linda Nieves from the Jetport Security office will stop by the 58th Squadron to brief us on the latest airport security measures. All are encouraged to attend.

## PILOT SAFETY TIP: Snow, Ice & Airports

From AOPA E-pilot Flight Training:

There's nothing like snow season to change the daily routine at a familiar airport. Whether your planned flight is local or a cross-country trip, once snow hits the surface, pilots must stay on the alert for so-called contaminated runways, taxiways, and ramps. After a storm, plowing and clean-up operations could continue

for a long time. Check NOTAMS and monitor ATIS broadcasts for closures and delays coded

PPR: Prior permission required. Snowdrifts created by plowing may be waiting to snag a wing tip; use care especially when maneuvering in confined areas such as on the ramp or while turning at intersections of runways and taxiways. Residual surface ice and refrozen melted snow is a concern even during stretches of good weather.



The Sea Ice Runway at McMurdo Air Station, Antarctica