

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Tuskegee Airmen

By Anita Kim Venegas

From the time English settlers arrived in North America, Black Americans have endured slavery, segregation, and discrimination. They've served in every American battle from the American Revolution to the Civil War, World War I

prepared to fight, the United States needed more pilots. On January 16, 1941, the army announced it would form and train a unit of Black pilots to become fighter pilots in Europe. The unit was called the 99th



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The United States entered World War II after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in December 1941. Even before this, Americans knew they may join the war. In order to be

years, Black airmen would escort American bomber planes over Italy and Germany. Their squadron was responsible for shooting down over one hundred German fighter planes.



**Eight Tuskegee Airmen stand in front of a P-40 fighter aircraft.**

At the end of World War II, the Tuskegee Airmen received many awards for their courage and dedication throughout the war, but they were more than war heroes. Their actions during World War II began to open doors for African Americans in the United States. While the Civil Rights Movement did not officially begin until 1954, the success of the Tuskegee Airmen in defeating Germany challenged Americans to think differently about segregation and discrimination.

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1. List three jobs mentioned in the article that Black American soldiers performed during World War I.

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4. What two countries does the article say Tuskegee Airmen helped American bomber planes fly over? \_\_\_\_\_
5. The article mentions that the Tuskegee Airmen received many awards for their actions in the war. With an adult's permission, use the internet to research what these awards were. List the names of three of them on the lines below.

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.



1. \_\_\_\_\_ endured

a. devotion



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4. \_\_\_\_\_ squadron

\_\_\_\_\_ or country

5. \_\_\_\_\_ deployed

e. went through something difficult

6. \_\_\_\_\_ territory

f. unjust treatment

7. \_\_\_\_\_ escort

g. the separation of a race, class, or other group

8. \_\_\_\_\_ dedication

h. accompany

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In the article, "Tuskegee Airmen," you learned about the 99th Fighter Squadron.

On the lines below, write about why you think this squadron was important for the people of the United States even after the war effort was over. In what ways might the presence of the 99th Fighter Squadron in World War II have changed the future of the



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These awards were. List the names of three of them on the lines below.

**Answers will vary.**

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7. h. escort

g. the separation of a race, class, or other group

8. a. dedication

h. accompany