

## Tuskegee Airmen--Breaking Flight Barriers

During World War II civil rights groups and black professional organizations pressed the government to provide training for black pilots on an equal basis with whites. Their efforts were partially successful. African American fighter pilots were trained as a part of the Army Air Force, but only at a segregated base located in Tuskegee, Alabama. Hundreds of airmen were trained and many saw action.

Toni Frissell became the first professional photographer permitted to photograph the all-black 332nd Fighter Pilot Squadron in a combat situation. She traveled to their air base in southern Italy, from where the "Tuskegee Airmen" flew sorties into southern Europe and North Africa. Best known of those Frissell photographed was Col. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., the son of the first African American general, pictured on the left, and first Lieutenant Lee Rayford.



Toni Frissell.  
*Tuskegee Airmen*, 1945.  
Silver gelatin print.  
[Prints and Photographs Division](#).  
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