



Roll Call Number

Agenda Item Number

56

Date: August 24, 2009

**PUBLIC HEARING FOR CONSIDERING RENAMING THE DES MOINES
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

WHEREAS, the City of Des Moines owns and operates an airport known as Des Moines International Airport (hereinafter called the "Airport"), located in Des Moines, Polk County, Iowa; and

WHEREAS, on June 22, 2009, by Roll Call No. 09-1153, the Des Moines City Council referred a request to the Airport Board from Dr. K. L. Hebron of Indianola to rename the Des Moines International Airport to the "Luther Smith International Airport"; and

WHEREAS, on July 13, 2009, by Roll Call No. 09-1263, the Des Moines City Council referred a second request to the Airport Board from John and Kay Jones of Des Moines to rename the Des Moines International Airport to the "Arthur E. Thomas International Airport"; and

WHEREAS, on August 4, 2009, the Airport Board conducted a public hearing as required by the Des Moines City Council's Naming Policy; and

WHEREAS, the Airport Board, by Resolution No. A09-147, recommended to the Des Moines City Council that the Airport name remain "Des Moines International Airport"; and

WHEREAS, the information contained in Attachments 1 & 2 was received by the Airport Board and is provided to the Council for their consideration;



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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA:

That the City Council hereby accepts the Airport Board's recommendation to retain the current name as Des Moines International Airport

Moved by _____ to adopt.

Approved as to form:

(Council Communication No. 09-607)

David A. Ferree
Assistant City Attorney

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
COWNIE				
COLEMAN				
HENSLEY				
KIERNAN				
MAHAFFEY				
MEYER				
VLASSIS				
TOTAL				
MOTION CARRIED			APPROVED	

CERTIFICATE


I, DIANE RAUH, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

Mayor

City Clerk

OFFICE OF THE AVIATION DIRECTOR
Des Moines, Iowa**Airport Board Communication 09-0807**
August 4, 2009

Subject: Public Hearing on Requests from Dr. K.L. Hebron, Indianola, IA, and John and Kay Jones, Des Moines, IA., to Consider Renaming the Des Moines International Airport	Action Required: • Receive/File • Recommendation to Council • Approval	Submitted By:  Craig S. Smith, A.A.E. Aviation Director
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BACKGROUND:

On June 22, 2009, by Roll Call No. 09-1153, the Des Moines City Council referred to the Board a request to rename the Des Moines International Airport. The proposal from Dr. K. L. Hebron of Indianola is to rename the facility "Luther Smith International Airport". Attachment No. 1 is a copy of this request.

On July 13, 2009, by Roll Call No. 09-1263, the Council referred a second request. The proposal from John and Kay Jones of Des Moines is to rename the facility "Arthur E. Thomas International Airport". Attachment No. 2 is a copy of this request.

The Council has a formal policy in place to address matters concerning the naming of its streets, facilities, and park land. The policy can be summarized as follows:

- The Council retains the exclusive right to name and rename streets, facilities, park land, and park facilities.
- Because a public citizen has requested the name change, the Council may either deny the request or refer the item to the appropriate Board/Commission for further review and recommendation.
- Within thirty days of Council referral, staff from the applicable department will research and verify all information submitted in the request.
- Staff must also request a review from the following City departments and commissions: Legal, Police, Fire, Information Technology, Engineering, and the Historic Commission.
- Within ninety days of Council referral, the applicable Board/Commission will consider staff findings and the extent of public support for, and public opposition to, the proposed name.
- The appropriate Board/Commission will then present its recommendation to the City Council via the Council Agenda at a regularly scheduled Council meeting for final Council consideration and approval or denial of the request.
- Public notice will be given and a public hearing will be held on the request.

August 4, 2009

Page 2

- If the request is approved, the cost of producing, installing, maintaining and replacing City signs with the new name may be required to be paid for by the person or organization requesting the name change.
- The naming or renaming of City streets, facilities, park land, and park facilities may be, but is not limited to, in honor of individuals, living or deceased, who have made significant and outstanding contributions of services, land, funds, or goods to the City, State, nation or world.
- When evaluating naming or renaming requests, consideration should be given to the following criteria:
 1. Overall benefit to the City of Des Moines.
 2. Positive reflection on the City.
 3. Purpose and Mission of the City.
 4. The proposed name is well known to all citizens and/or acknowledged by other national, state or local community organizations for lasting significance.
 5. Citizen input and support for name change/commemoration.
 6. No duplication of names or repeated recognition of a specific person or group.
- Preference will be given to naming City streets, facilities, park land, and park facilities that have not been previously named to honor a specific person or event.

Attachment No. 3 contains the full policy, which was adopted on May 4, 2009, through Roll Call No. 09-802.

It appears that the impetus for the renaming began with a Des Moines Register article written by Marc Hansen, dated May 21, 2009. The article provides a summary of Luther Smith's life, first as a young child learning to fly aircraft at the Des Moines Airport and then his subsequent accomplishments as a World War II pilot and prisoner of war. The article is Attachment No. 4.

It is apparent that the article prompted the request by Dr Hebron, as it is referenced in his narrative.

In accordance with the City naming policy, Aviation Department staff requested a review by the City's Legal, Police, Fire, Information Technology, and Engineering Departments, as well as the Historic Preservation Commission.

The responses from the Police, Fire, and Information Technology Departments indicate that there will be no impact on these departments. The Engineering Department's response provides some cost data concerning potential changes needed to street and highway signs, which have been summarized in the Fiscal Impact section of this communication. The Legal Department response refers to the numerous places in the City Code and the Airport Board Regulations that refer to the Des Moines International Airport. Changes to those documents would occur by amendment.

August 4, 2009

Page 3

Staff has not received a formal response from the Historic Preservation Commission, but did receive comments from one of its members, Mr. Denny Marchand. His response follows:

The Tuskegee Airmen were by far the most unwanted group of pilots in WWII. Although highly qualified, and skilled, it took Eleanor Roosevelt's special touch to help get them in combat where they could risk their lives in service of their country. Luther Smith is an Iowan War Hero. His accomplishments through life serve as a reminder that anyone can overcome great odds and make a difference. I would strongly advocate re-naming Des Moines International Airport to Luther Smith International Airport as a tremendous way to honor Luther Smith's past, and a part of history that the citizens of Des Moines will always be proud of.

In accordance with the naming policy, staff has gathered a significant amount of information which is summarized as follows:

General Comments Concerning Both Proposals:

Aviation Department staff offers the following comments using the criteria established by the naming policy:

1. Overall Benefit to the City of Des Moines

Determining the overall benefit to the City of Des Moines is, at best, difficult. If there are any tangible benefits, this can only be realized over time. There are no known immediate financial benefits to the City or the Airport.

Airports located in large populated cities with multiple airports have, out of necessity, adopted other names to avoid confusion. Over time, the public has become familiar with many of the names of these major airports (LaGuardia Airport, etc.), but they do not represent a valid comparison to Des Moines.

For those airports in U.S. cities similar to Des Moines, there are cases where airports have been named for other than the primary city in which they are located. Examples are as follows:

Airports named after individuals:

T.F. Green Int'l Airport
Austin Straubel Int'l Airport
Bishop International Airport
Hector International Airport
Norman Y. Mineta Airport
Eugene Bradley International
Will Rogers World Airport
Gerald R. Ford Airport
General Mitchell Int'l Airport

Airports named for other geographic regions:

Capital City Airport
Tri-Cities Airport
Eastern Iowa Airport
Southwest Florida Airport
Valley International Airport

As is evident, these airports are not identifiable to the general public. It is clear to staff that to the average traveler, the location of these airports is obscured because of the chosen name. From a marketing and branding perspective, staff believes that any renaming will be detrimental. People from around the world seeking air travel to Des Moines may experience difficulty identifying the best or closest airport. The Iowa Caucuses, along with a number of other events, give Des Moines an international position.

Over the course of the past five years the Airport has spent a considerable amount of time, effort, and dollars to market and brand the Airport. The Board established a committee in 2004 for the purpose of developing an identifying logo. The Airport spent many hours and over \$5,000.00 on this project.

Additionally, the Board has authorized and expended over \$500,000 on marketing and advertising efforts during the past five years. We have used the logo exclusively in all our marketing materials along with television and print advertising. Changing the name of the Airport will require development of a new logo and staff will also need to create a successful marketing campaign.

2. Positive Reflection on the City

It is difficult for staff to evaluate if either proposed change will be a positive reflection on the City. This is very subjective and can only be determined over time. In the case of Luther Smith, because he is still living, this perspective could change in the future as well.

3. Purpose and Mission of the City

The City's Vision Statement is -- We aspire to be the city of choice for ourselves and future generations - beautiful, clean and safe. We will achieve our vision through a healthy economy, strong businesses, vital neighborhoods, excellent schools, a vibrant downtown, and extensive recreational and cultural opportunities. We will preserve our City's friendly, hometown atmosphere and celebrate the diversity of its people. We require innovative governance that is accessible, accountable, and efficient with a system of funding that is fair, affordable, and stable.

The City's Mission Statement is -- To provide and maintain essential services that meet the collective basic needs of the citizens of Des Moines and to identify and seize opportunities for a higher quality of life.

It is not immediately clear whether either naming proposal would significantly deter from, or support, the Vision Statement or Mission Statement of the City.

August 4, 2009

Page 5

Comments Specific to the Luther Smith Proposal:

Very briefly, Mr. Luther Smith was born and raised in Des Moines, graduated from Roosevelt High School, and received two engineering degrees from the University of Iowa. He learned how to fly aircraft at Des Moines Airport under the instruction of Howard Gregory before joining the military and becoming a Tuskegee Airman.

Mr. Smith is a World War II veteran and was wounded in combat when he bailed out of his P-51 fighter plane over Yugoslavia on his 133rd combat mission. He was captured and spent several months as a prisoner of war.

In 2007, President Bush honored Mr. Smith and 200 other airmen with the Congressional Gold Medal. Mr. Smith has also received the Daughters of the American Revolution Medal of Honor.

4. **The proposed name is well known to all citizens and/or acknowledged by other national, state or local community organizations for lasting significance.**

It is unknown and difficult to determine how many people in the community recognize the name Luther Smith. Staff is confident that there are several people supportive of this proposal. This is evident by the information that was received and included in this communication.

5. **Citizen input and support for name change/commemoration.**

The City has received the following letters of support and additional documentation related to the Luther Smith request:

Attachment No. 5	Letter from Dr. Sally Mason, President, University of Iowa
Attachment No. 6	Letter from Mr. Robert D. Ray, former Governor of Iowa
Attachment No. 7	Packet of information provided by Mr. James Bowman
Attachment No. 8	Packet of information provided by Ms. Judith McNamara
Attachment No. 14	Additional letters of support and opposition

It is anticipated that other support, both for and against, changing the name of the Airport will be provided to the Board and Council during the public hearing process. It should also be noted that comments associated with the newspaper articles surrounding the renaming of the Airport are largely opposed to any renaming.

6. **No duplication of names or repeated recognition of a specific person or group.**

No other airport has been named in honor of Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith has previously been honored in Des Moines at two different locations. First, Mr. Smith is included in the recognition of the Tuskegee Airmen at the Fort Des Moines Museum. Additionally, in honor of the Tuskegee Airmen, there is a replica P-51 aircraft located at the entrance to the Iowa Air National Guard Base. The Tuskegee Airman Memorial was dedicated on November 9, 2002 and sponsored by the Fort Des Moines Park and Education Center. The display features the names of Tuskegee Airmen on a plaque mounted on the base of the replica aircraft. Mr. Smith's name also appears on the side of the aircraft. Attachments 9 through 11 are pictures of the replica P-51 aircraft, the plaque, and the side of the aircraft depicting Mr. Smith's name.

Comments Specific to the Arthur Thomas Proposal:

Very briefly, Mr. Arthur Thomas was the Airport Manager for Des Moines Airport from 1932 until he retired in 1965. It is clear that Mr. Thomas had significant influence on the planning and design of the Airport from its inception and is generally credited with much of its the early growth and development.

Attachment No. 12 provides a summary of Mr. Thomas's accomplishments. This information was provided by individuals who support the proposal.

4. **The proposed name is well known to all citizens and/or acknowledged by other national, state or local community organizations for lasting significance.**

It is unknown and difficult to determine how many people in the community recognize the name of Arthur Thomas. Staff is confident that there are several people supportive of this proposal. This is evident by the information that was sent to be included in this communication.

5. **Citizen input and support for name change/commemoration.**

It is anticipated that other support, both for and against, for changing the name of the Airport will be provided to the Board and Council during the public hearing process.

Attachment No. 14 provides additional letters of support and opposition to changing the name of the Airport. It should also be noted that comments associated with the newspaper articles surrounding the renaming of the Airport are largely opposed to any renaming.

6. **No duplication of names or repeated recognition of a specific person or group.**

There are no other airports named for Mr. Thomas.

He has been honored by the City of Des Moines with a plaque currently located in the Terminal Lobby. Attachment13 is a picture of the plaque displayed in the Terminal Lobby.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Staff has gathered estimates for costs associated with either proposal. A preliminary list of items to be changed along with an estimate of costs:

Stationary	\$	615.00
Business Cards		1,721.00
New Airport Logo		10,000.00
Vehicle Markings		1,000.00
Front Entrance Sign		12,000.00
Street signs		2,045.00
Iowa DOT Signs		32,000.00
New clothing w/logo		1,275.00
Staff time (estimated)*		25,000.00
Estimated total		\$85,780.00

In addition to the direct cost to the Airport, there are many tenants on the Airport that will incur costs associated with changing the Airport name.

*Staff time includes changes to the Airport website and various legal changes. It should be noted that neither proposer has suggested a financial contribution towards deferring associated costs. Also, the Airport has not budgeted for any of these potential costs.

RECOMMENDATION:

Although each individual is deserving of recognition for their accomplishments, staff believes it is in the best interest of the City of Des Moines that the current name of the Des Moines International Airport be retained.



Resolution Number

Agenda Item Number

Date August 4, 2009

WHEREAS, on June 22, 2009, by Roll Call No. 09-1153, the Des Moines City Council referred to the Airport Board a request to rename the Des Moines International Airport. The request from Dr. K. L. Hebron, of Indianola, IA, proposes to change the name of the Airport to "The Luther Smith International"; and

WHEREAS, on July 13, 2009, by Roll Call No. 09-1263, the Des Moines City Council referred to the Airport Board a request to rename the Des Moines International Airport. The request from John and Kay Jones, of Des Moines, IA, proposes to change the name of the Airport to "The Arthur E. Thomas International" and

WHEREAS, the Airport Board has held a public hearing and reviewed and considered all available information concerning renaming the Airport.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Airport Board of the City of Des Moines, Iowa, hereby recommends to the Des Moines City Council that the name of the Des Moines International Airport remain unchanged.

(Board Communication No. 09-0807 is attached)

Moved by _____ to adopt.

Approved as to Form:

David A. Ferree
Assistant City Attorney

Board Action	Yeas	Nays	Pass	Absent	Certificate
Brooks					<p>I, LORNA L. DAVROS, Board Clerk of said Des Moines International Airport Board, hereby certify that at a meeting of the Board, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.</p> <p>IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.</p>
Cupp					
Erickson					
Gentry					
Hansell					
Ross					
Ward					
TOTAL					
MOTION CARRIED		APPROVED			
				Chairperson	Board Clerk

U.S. WISCONSIN
BB-64

U.S.S. MISSOURI
BB-63

U.S.S. NEW JERSEY
BB-62

U.S.S. IOWA BB-61

FIRST
BUILT

LAST BATTLESHIP
BUILT

*Five sailed on all these great ships,
except the Missouri.*

RECEIVED

A Quartet of Great Ladies

MAY 26 2010

The Four Battleships

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

On June 7, 1964, off Norfolk, Virginia, the four Iowa Class Battleships were steaming side by side for the first time ever in order to have aerial photos taken of them. The photos were taken by a Naval photographer in a helicopter. As soon as the photos were taken the battleships were ordered to spread out and wait for further orders.

814R

The city of Des Moines:

You should name the Des Moines

*Airport: THE LUTHER SMITH
INTERNATIONAL!*

No other DM hero deserves it,

more than him! REFER TO HIS

WRITE UP in D.M. Register MAY 21.



KEN HEBRON
IOWA

Lt. KEN HEBRON, U.S. NAVY

SIGNAL OFFICER ON the

U.S.S. ORISKANY, the

carrier Senator John McCAIN

flew off of & got shot down. The ORISKANY

LOST MORE PILOTS THAN ANY OTHER CARRIER Ken Hebron, U.S.



John D. Jones
119 S.W. Miller
Des Moines, IA 50315
(515) 243-4631

June 26, 2009

To the members of the Des Moines City Council:

On November 17, 1931 my great grandfather, Truman Jones, sold his 160-acre farm located at S.W. 21st Street and Army Post Road to the City of Des Moines for the location of the new Des Moines Airport.

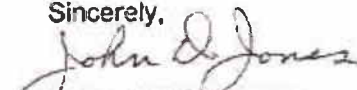
Arthur Thomas, who had managed the airport at the Altoona, Iowa location from 1925 to 1931, was put in charge of the planning and supervision of the present airport location. In 1932, when operations got underway, Arthur Thomas was Airport Manager. He held this position for 28 years, and in 1940 the airport field was voted one of the four best in the nation. He was also voted Outstanding Airport Manager of the Year in 1960 (there were 500 manager entrants).

If ever there is consideration of a name change of the Des Moines International Airport, we can think of no one more deserving than Arthur E. Thomas.

Please see the attached article, which further explains Arthur Thomas's true dedication and commitment in the development of the Des Moines International Airport.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



John D. & Kay Jones

cc: Airport Board

POLICY FOR NAMING OF STREETS, FACILITIES AND PARK LAND IN THE CITY OF DES MOINES

I. GENERAL

The Des Moines City Council retains the exclusive right to name and rename City streets, facilities, park land and park facilities within the City of Des Moines, in accordance with this policy.

II. PROCEDURE

Consideration of a proposal for the naming or renaming of a City street, facility, park land or park facility shall be submitted and reviewed as follows:

a. Public-Initiated Requests: Letter of Request (and/or Petition)

A letter of request (and/or petition) must first be submitted to the City Council. The letter of request (and/or petition) shall state the reason for the request and supply specific information regarding the proposed name(s), site location, and other relevant information. The letter of request (and/or petition) shall include a brief explanation or biography of the person(s) or event to be honored and a justification of why the City street, facility, park land or park facility is being recommended for specific naming or renaming. Upon receipt of the letter of request (and/or petition) the matter will be placed on the subsequent Council agenda, in accordance with Rule 16 of the Procedural Rules of the Des Moines City Council, in order for Council to initially consider the request and either deny the request, or refer the request to the City Manager's Office or to the appropriate Board/Commission for further review and recommendation, or set a date for public hearing and final consideration and approval or denial of the request for the next scheduled Council meeting.

b. Council-Initiated Requests

The Mayor, Council Member or Council as a whole may place or sponsor a request for naming or renaming on the Council agenda, in accordance with the Procedural Rules of the Des Moines City Council, in order for Council to consider the request and either deny the request, or refer the request to the City Manager's Office or to the appropriate Board/Commission for further review and recommendation, or set a date for public hearing and final consideration and approval or denial of the request for the next scheduled Council meeting. Referrals shall supply specific information regarding the proposed name(s), site location, and other relevant information, and shall include a brief explanation or

biography of the person(s) or event to be honored and a justification of why the City street, facility, park land or park facility is being recommended for specific naming or renaming.

c. Staff Verification and Review

Within thirty (30) days of Council referral, staff from the applicable department, as designated by City Council or by the City Manager, will research and verify all information submitted in the request in accordance with the naming considerations and criteria set forth below in Section III. Staff will also request a review by: Legal, Police, Fire, IT, Engineering, and the Historic Commission; and in addition, for City street requests, by the local utility service providers and the post office. City staff will then forward their findings and recommendation to the appropriate Board/Commission.

d. City Boards/Commissions Evaluation and Council Review

Within ninety (90) days of Council referral, the applicable Board/Commission will consider staff findings and the extent of public support for, and public opposition to, the proposed name, and will make a recommendation regarding the request. The appropriate Board/Commission will then present its recommendation to the City Council via the Council agenda at a regularly scheduled Council meeting for final Council consideration and approval or denial of the request.

e. Public Participation

Public notice will be given and a public hearing will be held on the naming or renaming proposal at the scheduled Board/Commission meeting and Council meeting. Notice of said hearings will be provided a minimum of ten (10) days prior to each hearing to affected parties by the method deemed appropriate by the Board/Commission or by Council, respectively. In the event of renaming an existing City facility or park facility, notice of the public hearing shall also be posted in a conspicuous place on or within the facility. In the event of renaming (rather than honorary designation of) a City street, notice of the public hearing shall also be provided via regular mail to all property owners potentially affected by approval of the name change.

f. Approval; Installing or Replacing Signage.

If the naming or renaming request is approved, the cost of producing, installing, maintaining and replacing City signs with the

new name may be required to be paid for by the person or organization requesting the name change prior to such work being undertaken by the City. If required, the maintenance funding shall be provided by donation to the City of a maintenance fund in an amount established by appropriate City staff to be necessary for maintaining said sign for at least 10 years. All signage is subject to City Council approval.

III. NAMING OPTIONS; CONSIDERATIONS AND CRITERIA FOR NAMING

The naming or renaming of City streets, facilities, park lands or park facilities may be, but is not limited to, in honor of individuals, living or deceased, who have made significant and outstanding contributions of services, land, funds, or goods to the City, State, nation or world; neighborhoods, geographic or common usage identifications; and persons, places, or events of historical or cultural significance. Naming recognition is subject to future change/reconsideration by the City in the event that the recognition becomes damaging to the City's reputation, or contradictory to applicable law, as determined by the City. When evaluating naming or renaming requests, consideration should be given to the following criteria:

1. Overall benefit to the City of Des Moines
2. Positive reflection on the City
3. Purpose and Mission of the City
4. Proposed name is well known to all citizens and/or acknowledged by other national, state or local community organizations for lasting significance
5. Citizen input and support for name change/commemoration
6. No duplication of names or repeated recognition of a specific person or group

In addition, in the event of naming or renaming requests related to significant donations of funds, services or land, a written gift and naming agreement shall be entered into between the City and honored donor, or person or entity providing the donation, prior to or upon approval of the naming request. Such agreement shall state that naming recognition is subject to future change/reconsideration by the City in the event that the recognition becomes damaging to the City's reputation, or contradictory to applicable law, as determined by the City. The written agreement may also include an appropriate time limitation on the honorary donor naming, and may set minimum contribution amount guidelines for naming purposes.

IV. EXCEPTIONS

- a. Exceptions to the procedure set forth in Section II of this policy may be made by City Council or by recommendation to the City Council

by City staff and/or Boards/Commissions, upon finding appropriate circumstances to consider or expedite the naming or renaming of a City street, facility, park land or park facility. Specifically, City Council may take action to approve a name change without staff or Board/Commission review and recommendation, and/or without the public hearing process, if deemed appropriate by Council.

- b. City streets, facilities, park lands or park facilities shall not be named or renamed in honor of any City employee, Mayor, or Council, Commission or Board Member until at least two years following the end of their term/employment with the City.
- c. This policy of naming or renaming City streets, facilities, park land and park facilities shall not preclude the appropriate acknowledgment of assistance, financial or otherwise, from organizations or individuals in the construction, operation, or maintenance of City streets, facilities, park lands and park facilities, such as placing plaques or signs identifying the organization or individual who made a donation to the project or naming a minor component of a structure, for example, one room of a facility, or a non-fixtured component of a facility, for example, a bench, tree, or playground slide, etc..
- d. City Streets: Streets being named as part of an annexation, subdivision or platting procedure are not subject to this policy. In addition, due to the confusion, expense and inconvenience to the public, street renaming should be avoided unless needed to eliminate duplication or reflect new street patterns, and preference will be given to commemorative or honorary designation of a current street or portion of a current street. Any such request shall follow the procedures set forth herein. If the request for commemorative designation is approved, the street or portion of the street affected shall retain its original name and shall also have an additional sign reflecting the commemoration, with the cost of producing, installing, maintaining and replacing such commemorative sign to be paid for by the person or organization requesting the commemoration prior to such work being undertaken by the City if so required by the City. If required, the maintenance funding shall be provided by donation to the City of a maintenance fund in an amount established by appropriate City staff to be necessary for maintaining said sign for at least 10 years. All signage is subject to City Council approval.
- f. Criteria for Renaming: Preference will be given to naming of City streets, facilities, park land and park facilities that have not previously been named to honor a specific person or event.

June 16, 2009

Hansen: Renaming airport for Smith? That'll fly

By **MARC HANSEN**
mahansen@dmreg.com

A lot of people like the idea of renaming Des Moines International Airport after Luther Smith. Preferably, while he's still around.

I'm not sure they're the right people. The ones who count most are members of the City Council and the airport commission, and they aren't exactly waving their boarding passes in excitement.

Yet the public response to the suggestion seems highly favorable. Why not?

The more you hear about the 88-year-old former Tuskegee Airman, the more reasonable it seems. He's an American hero, a role model whose story is also the story of Des Moines. The story of Iowa.

Graham Gillette, a Des Moines public affairs consultant, wants to make this happen. He's joining forces with Jim Bowman, the Tuskegee Airman who thought of it first.

They're putting together a group of supporters, a cross section of Iowa, to make the case. Now.

In World War II, Smith flew 133 missions for the all-black unit, destroying 20 enemy aircraft. The military was segregated then. But in response to a pilot shortage, the government created the Airmen, who escorted American bombers on 200 missions throughout Europe - without losing a single one to enemy aircraft.

The president of Smith's alma mater, the University of Iowa, is going to bat for him, too.

In a letter to airport board Chairman James Erickson, Sally Mason talked about Smith's contribution to racial equality and how the move would inspire fellow Iowans to make a difference.

"Captain Smith stands tall with other military heroes who have received similar recognition of their sacrifices and accomplishments."

As an example, she singles out O'Hare International in Chicago, which was renamed after World War II flying ace Edward O'Hare.

"How fitting," Mason said, "would it be for another important Midwest airport to wear the name of a notable military hero?"

In 1938, Smith enrolled at Iowa to study engineering. A year later, the war began. When it was over, Smith returned to Iowa City, earned his degree and became an aerospace engineer with General Electric.

I didn't poll the entire City Council, but I wouldn't be surprised if Christine Hensley's viewpoint reflects the majority opinion.

She said a name change would be confusing. In 1993, Washington National Airport was changed to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, and many of the slower passengers aren't up to speed. Some still think Washington National and Reagan National are two different airports.

It's hard to see this happening in a one-airport kind of town like Des Moines.

Gillette: "I'm not satisfied with the answer it might be confusing."

Hensley agrees that Smith is absolutely worthy of recognition, but in some other form.

And if you're talking about changing the name, she said, you'd better consider some other local icons. Hensley mentioned John Fitzgibbon, a decorated World War II veteran and longtime chairman of the airport board.

Others lean toward Mike Cowles, the late newspaper editor and publisher who looked into Des Moines' future, noticed it had wings, bought land on the south side and held it for the city.

What makes Smith different from the other candidates is his umbilical-cord connection to this airport. Fascinated with flight as a kid, Smith hitched rides there to see the planes. Before long, he was flying them.

The Archie Brooks factor could be a roadblock. The city hung the former council member's name on a community center, and look what happened. CIETC happened, Brooks went to prison, and they're talking about changing the name back.

The Brooks fiasco forced the city to change its policy regarding name changes.

"The difference," Hensley said, "is that nothing can be done at the last minute without a public hearing."

Good. The public seems receptive to changing the name to Luther Smith Airport or some extended variation. Luther Smith/Des Moines International?

Smith is no embarrassment. On his final mission, when he found himself flying through a ball of fire, he bailed out, was severely injured in the fall and spent months in a German prisoner-of-war camp.

Smith recently had both legs amputated, but his son, Gordon Smith, a banker in New York, said his father has been staging a comeback.

He overcame kidney failure. His speech is coming back. His comprehension is excellent.

Smith is still having trouble communicating, but Gordon Smith told me his father was honored by the good friends and perfect strangers who want to change the name of the airport.



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

101 Jessup Hall
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-3316
319-335-3549
Fax 319-335-0807

June 4, 2009

Mr. James Erickson
Board Chairman
Des Moines International Airport Commission
5800 Fleur Drive
Des Moines, Iowa 50321

REC'D JUN 11 2009

Dear Mr. Erickson:

I was very pleased to read Marc Hansen's May 21 *Des Moines Register* column suggesting that the Des Moines International Airport be renamed the Luther Smith International Airport. We here at Captain Smith's *alma mater* greatly support such a renaming, which would honor a remarkable Iowan. Captain Smith has contributed significantly to the achievement of racial equality in the U.S. and the world, and he helped change the face of the U.S. military. The airport renaming would not only recognize his accomplishments, but also inspire fellow Iowans to follow his lead in making an important difference in our society.

In 1938, Captain Smith enrolled at The University of Iowa to study engineering, hoping to join the ranks of the country's military pilots. Two years into his studies, World War II began. Rather than integrate troops, the government formed all-black military units, including the much-lauded Tuskegee Airmen, which Captain Smith joined in 1942.

After his historic service during the war, Captain Smith returned to the UI and completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1950, going on, despite continuing racism, to a long and successful career as an aerospace engineer with General Electric. In the years until his retirement in 1988, he published numerous papers, was awarded two patents, and was frequently called upon by the Department of Defense and defense-related agencies – including the U.S. Air Force, NASA, and U.S. Navy Submarine Command – for special assignments. He earned a Master of Engineering degree from The Pennsylvania State University in 1977.

Captain Smith served on the Architect-Engineer Evaluation Jury that chose the design for the World War II Memorial, and he has worked tirelessly to gain recognition for the contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen. In June 2004, he headed the 60th anniversary celebration of the Tuskegee Airmen's greatest


World War II achievement: escorting American heavy strategic bombers on 200 missions throughout Europe without the loss of a single bomber to enemy aircraft. He also represented the U.S. Army Air Corps as one of seven WWII veterans selected by President Clinton to attend the 50th anniversary V-E celebration trip to the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, and Russia.

Captain Smith has been honored with numerous awards. He received the Society of Automotive Engineers, Aerospace International, and Franklin W. Kolk Aerospace Industry Awards. In 2005, he was inducted into the University of Iowa College of Engineering's Distinguished Engineering Alumni Academy. In February 2006, he received an honorary doctorate degree in public service from Tuskegee University. In June 2006, Captain Smith was awarded the UI Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award for Achievement, and in October 2006 he was inducted into the Iowa Aviation Hall of Fame. In March 2007, he was presented the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award bestowed by the U.S. Congress.

Captain Smith stands tall with other military heroes who have received similar recognition of their sacrifices and accomplishments. For example, sixty years ago, Chicago's Orchard Field Airport was renamed O'Hare International Airport, honoring the late Lieutenant Commander Edward "Butch" O'Hare, USN, a World War II flying ace, who was awarded the Medal of Honor. How fitting it would be for another important Midwest airport to wear the name of a notable military hero.

We encourage the Des Moines Airport Commission to seriously consider giving the airport a new and fitting name – the Luther Smith International Airport. Your action would provide our state and the world with an inspiring recognition of this great American and the major achievements of Iowans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sally Mason", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Sally Mason
President

ROBERT D. RAY

July 21, 2009

Mr. James Erickson, Board Chair
Des Moines International Airport Commission
5800 Fleur Drive
Des Moines, Iowa 50321

Dear Jim:

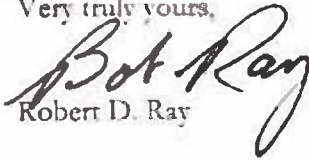
I am writing in support of the effort to honor one of the outstanding members of the Greatest Generation by renaming the Des Moines International Airport the Luther Smith International Airport. Those of us who have had the opportunity and responsibility for public service know the value of unique and dedicated citizens such as Luther was during his lifetime. He changed for the better the lives of those around him as well as those who never met him but nevertheless benefit from his personal and professional dedication on behalf of human rights and a safer world.

The Des Moines airport is the center of aviation in our state just as aviation was the center of Captain Smith's life. His accomplishments have been well documented by others, so I will not attempt to repeat them.

It is an appropriate custom to recognize those who, by the exemplary nature of their military and public service, serve as role models for emulation by later generations. Such is Luther Smith's legacy. I join with others to urge your thoughtful consideration of naming the airport on his behalf.

Thank you and best regards.

Very truly yours,


Robert D. Ray

6-15-09

Luther Smith

Luther Smith is a World War II hero and was seriously wounded in combat which resulted from exiting his disabled P-51 fighter plane over Yugoslavia on his 133rd combat mission. He was captured and spent months as a prisoner of war with inadequate treatment for his injuries which left him with one leg shorter than the other by seven inches.

Due to illness recently Luther has had both legs amputated and will be 89 years old in August. He now lives in Villanova, Pennsylvania.

Luther was born and raised in Des Moines, graduating from Roosevelt High School and received two engineering degrees from the University of Iowa. He has had a career with General Electric as an aerospace engineer and has been honored as an outstanding alumnus by the University of Iowa and was given a special citation by the College of Engineering at University of Iowa.

Luther's trek to greatness started when he was a child who walked or hitch hiked to the Des Moines Airport regularly until they finally hired him at age 13. In the June 14, 1934 Des Moines Register he was referred to as a "grease ball" the term used for those who serviced aircraft at that time.

He learned to fly at the airport under the tutelage of Howard Gregory before joining the military and becoming a Tuskegee Airman.

Those with whom I've discussed Luther agree that he is a great American military hero. It would speak volumes about Iowa to America and beyond to name the Des Moines International Airport the Luther Smith Des Moines International Airport.

The Flight of a Red-Tailed Angel

BY MAUREEN HARMON

As one of the Tuskegee Airmen, Luther Smith fought racial discrimination in both military and civilian life.

On Luther Smith's coffee table sits a model airplane with a red tail. The nose of the P-51 Mustang is perpetually pointed at the ceiling as if it's about to lift off the wooden surface and fly about the

room. When Smith tells war stories, he points to the plane. It's the same kind he crashed in World War II. The same kind of plane in which he almost died. It's the same kind of plane he and some 400 other black aviators flew while escorting American bombers to and from their targets.

Smith talks about the bomber pilots—all of them white—and how they called their black escorts Red-Tailed Angels because they offered impenetrable protection. Never once in their 200 escort bomber missions did the Red-Tailed Angels lose a bomber to enemy fire. It's their claim to fame. That, and the fact that they were the first black aviators in the U.S. Air Force. It was later that they came to be known as the Tuskegee Airmen, named after the base in Alabama where they trained.

But it was years earlier that Smith knew he'd fly one day. He knew it all the way back in second grade in Des Moines, Iowa, when he drew a picture of an airplane for class. He showed his drawing to his teacher and told her he would someday fly his family to Africa in that plane. "The only thing on my mind," says Smith, "was that I wanted to be an aviator like Charles Lindbergh."

When Smith was 13, he started hanging around the Des Moines airport to watch the planes. Airport employees took a liking to the curious boy and offered him a job picking up popcorn bags and other garbage that visitors left behind. Soon, he impressed the mechanics, too, and they allowed him to help wipe down the fuselages, clean off the windshields, refuel the tanks, and carry out minor repairs. He even snagged the attention of the local press. In the summer of 1934, the *Des Moines Register Tribune* published a photo of the youngster working on the engine of a plane. The headline proclaimed Smith "America's Youngest Grease Ball."

But Smith didn't want to be a mechanic, and he didn't yearn simply to fly planes; he wanted to become a military aviator. "The only caveat," he says, "was that there were no black aviators in the 1930s, so I kept it a secret."

Smith headed to the University of Iowa in 1938 to study engineering, although he had no intention of becoming an engineer. To qualify for military aviation training, a candidate was required to have at least two years of college education. With engineering, Smith figured, he'd get the technical training he would need if the military ever did decide to accept blacks in its air force.

"At least I'll be prepared," Smith thought. "I won't fall flat because I don't know anything about the technical hurdles."

By the time Smith left the university in 1940, the military was not any closer to accepting blacks in its ranks, so Smith enrolled in a Civilian Pilot Training Course, a program established by the government to train pilots in the case of a national emergency.

That emergency came on December 7, 1941.

It was a Sunday, and Smith was in the air when an

Captain Luther Smith at age 26, prior to his military retirement from combat injuries.

urgent message came over the radio: "All aircraft return to their airports immediately." When he landed, Smith learned that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. The United States was about to enter World War II, and Smith had a feeling that the military would need all the pilots it could get—including black men.

He was right. That same year, under political pressure from black leaders and organizations, the U.S. Air Force began to train black aviators at Alabama's Tuskegee Army Air Field and at Tuskegee Institute, a black college in Alabama founded by Booker T. Washington.

Since he'd been one of the first black people in America to become a licensed pilot, Smith figured earning his military wings would be simple. "I thought they were going to give me my wings, since I could fly," Smith says. "I was never so wrong. I didn't know anything." He learned quickly that military flying is different from the civilian flying he knew. "It's precision personified—the difference between driving a

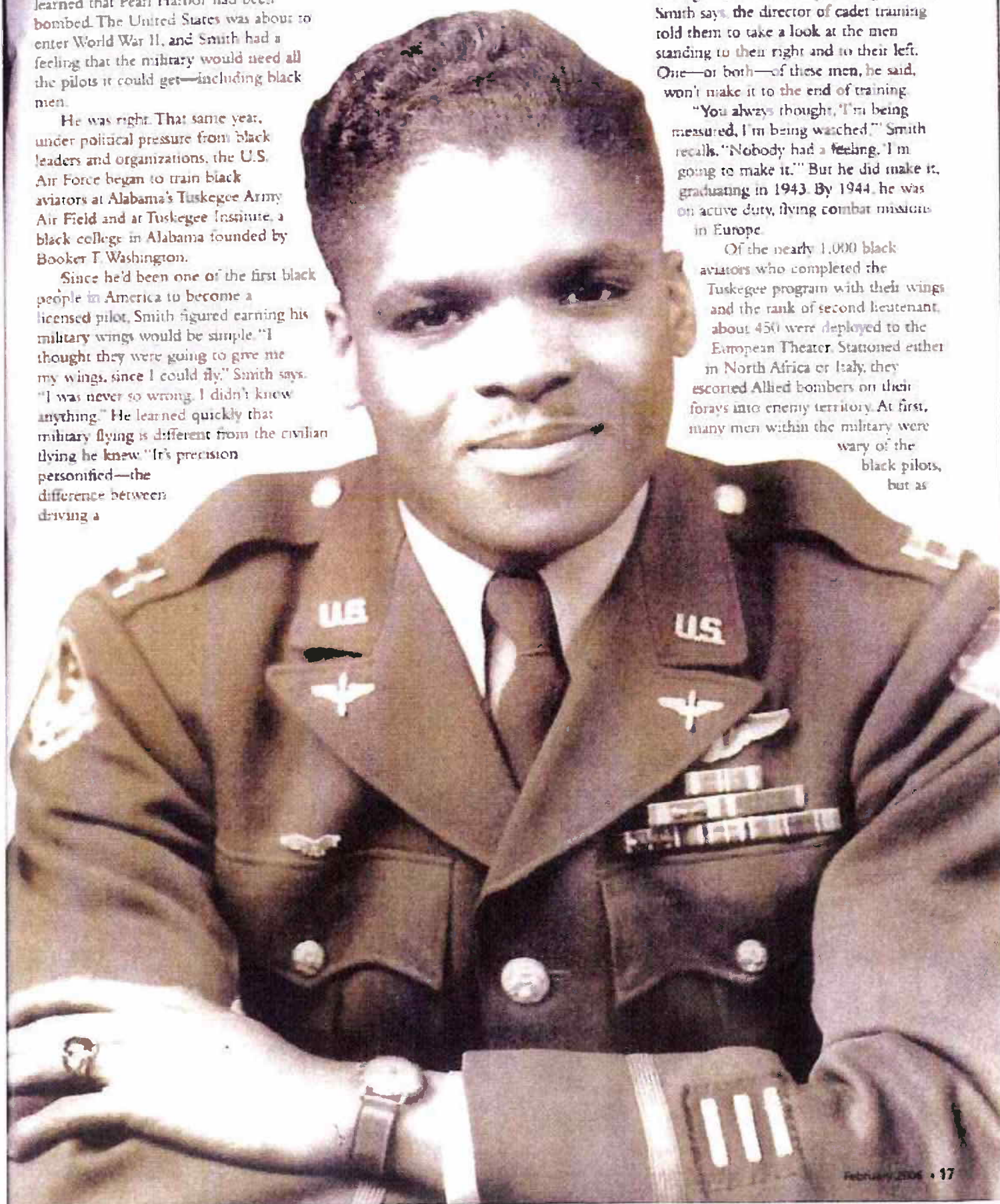
Volkswagen and an 18-wheel tractor trailer," he says.

The cadets at Tuskegee had a lot to

prove but they were determined to succeed at this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. When the men lined up during one of their early training sessions, Smith says, the director of cadet training told them to take a look at the men standing to their right and to their left. One—or both—of these men, he said, won't make it to the end of training.

"You always thought, 'I'm being measured, I'm being watched,'" Smith recalls. "Nobody had a feeling, 'I'm going to make it.'" But he did make it, graduating in 1943. By 1944, he was on active duty, flying combat missions in Europe.

Of the nearly 1,000 black aviators who completed the Tuskegee program with their wings and the rank of second lieutenant, about 450 were deployed to the European Theater. Stationed either in North Africa or Italy, they escorted Allied bombers on their forays into enemy territory. At first, many men within the military were wary of the black pilots, but as



"The Tuskegee Airmen and, namely, Luther Smith made it possible for my son to earn his living today as an aviator. They softened that hard road to being an aviator and made entry into the profession easier and more inviting for my son and others like him. Even today, a black pilot draws smiles; a black fighter pilot draws stares and smiles. Thank you, Tuskegee Airmen, and a very special thank you to Captain Smith."

—Lila Abron, ?2PhD, president of Peer Consultants, an environmental firm in Washington, DC, and the first black woman in the nation to earn a Ph.D. in chemical engineering

"Luther Smith has contributed significantly to the achievement of racial equality in the U.S. and the world and helped change the face of the U.S. military in a remarkably short period of time."

—P. Barry Butler, UI College of Engineering dean

"Captain Smith never appeared bitter and even questioned why what he did was such a big deal. Yet, I realized that, given all of the difficulties in our lives today, much of our efforts pale in comparison to the life of Captain Smith. Without his efforts, ours would be considerably more difficult."

—Victor G.J. Rodgers, former UI professor of chemical and biochemical engineering and Ethnic Inclusion Effort for Iowa Engineering director



more and more pilots returned to base safely thanks to the protection they received, the white aviators began to request that a Red-Tail be their escort.

Within eight months of his deployment, Smith had logged 132 missions. His final assignment of World War II—No. 133—was scheduled for Friday, October 13, 1944.

Luther Smith isn't superstitious, but climbing into the cockpit on Friday the 13th was a little unnerving, even though his mission was routine: to escort bombers from their target in Germany to the Danube River near Budapest. Yet, all went well. Encountering no enemy fire, when they reached the river the bombers continued on to their base in Italy, while Smith and the other escort planes attacked enemy airbases and other ground targets before resuming their flight home.

As they passed a freight yard outside Budapest, two of the four escort pilots peeled away to continue strafing the enemy below, but Smith was reluctant, since moments earlier he'd taken fire after destroying two German bombers parked at the edge of a field at the Budapest airport. Eventually, though, he, too, dipped down to offer his wingman protection and to take a few shots with his machine gun. He hit a freight car here, a building there.

Then he fired a shot that would end his military career.

"I hit something. I thought it was an ammunition dump—I don't know what it was, but there was a huge explosion and it blew up in my face."

As the plane flew through the fireball, the glass of Smith's cockpit shattered. The wings buckled. Part of the Mustang's red-tipped tail was blown off. His wingman sent him an urgent message: "Smith, you're leaking fuel."

"Just as I reached down to switch to the full tank," Smith recalls, "I thought the airplane hit something. It practically stopped in the sky. The cockpit immediately filled with smoke." Smith's plane wasn't leaking fuel at all. It was leaking engine coolant.

He had to get out of the plane, but he couldn't jump out without hitting the wing, so Smith unfastened his safety belt and began to turn the plane upside down. In that position, he figured his body could fall free from the plane. But the Mustang

headed into a tailspin. In the turbulence, Smith's right foot wedged between the plane's steering controls that ran along the floorboard. The top half of his body hung outside the cockpit as the plane spiraled uncontrollably. The wind tore the oxygen mask off his face and Smith passed out.

When he woke, he was floating through the air tethered to his parachute. He must have managed to pull the ripcord of the parachute, which, by some miracle, had opened outside the cockpit and pulled Smith free—snapping his right hip into two pieces. When Smith looked up, though, he saw a hole in the chute and realized he was falling too quickly. Looking down, he saw that his right foot was twisted around backward. He pained out again.

Smith came to in the branches of a tree, a target for enemy soldiers firing at him from the ground. Once they realized he wasn't a threat, the Germans took him captive. For the next seven months, Smith was a prisoner of war, making do with what little food and heat the Germans supplied to their prison camps, but also spending a lot of time in hospitals, where he was treated for dysentery, bone infections, and injuries sustained from his final flight.

In 1945, when Allied soldiers liberated the prison camps, Smith weighed 70 pounds. He spent the next two years in and out of hospitals in the United States, but his injuries proved so severe that the U.S. Air Force granted him early retirement. Smith's military career was over at the age of 27.

Although Smith's lifelong dream had been to serve as a military aviator, that option was no longer open to him. Where could he turn to create a new future for himself? Smith fell back on his education. With two years of schooling in engineering and the promise of the GI Bill, Smith returned to the University of Iowa to complete his mechanical engineering studies. It turned out that earning his degree was the easy part.

After graduating in 1950, he tried for more than a year to land a job, but nobody wanted a black engineer. He applied for a position at General Electric (GE) and was turned down. Surprisingly, though, a few months later he received a letter from company officials asking him

In August 1944, Luther Smith, then a first lieutenant, poses in the cockpit of his P-51 Mustang fighter aircraft at an airbase in Italy. Kneeling on the wing is his brother, Howard W. Smith, a master sergeant in the Corps of Army Engineers.

to contact them. They would do all they could to find him a position with GE. (It was years later that Smith learned why that letter arrived in his mailbox. His wife, Lois, had contacted GE and reprimanded the company for dismissing her husband because of race.)

Regardless, GE made a good choice and Luther Smith made the most of his backup plan. During his 37 years with the company, Smith used his knowledge of

out of the vessel, the ship wouldn't need bilge pumps to get rid of the water that seeped in through the propeller shaft. Thanks to the GE project, U.S. Navy submarines became quieter and much more difficult for the enemy to detect.

These are the kinds of assignments Smith can talk about. Details of other GE projects—including developing the capability to send missiles to Russia during the Cold War—remain classified.

Smith had to face the harsh realities of life before the civil rights movement.

• flying and his engineering education to file for six patents. The government patent office awarded him two.

It was the early 1950s and aerospace engineering was just getting off the ground. Planes were flying faster, farther, and higher. They had to be made of materials that were stronger and lighter and yet able to withstand higher pressures and temperatures than they ever had before. It was up to Smith and the other engineers at GE to help develop these technologies.

Early in his career, Smith was assigned to work as a consultant to Wernher Von Braun, the German scientist in charge of rocket development for NASA. Smith perfected a means of sealing fuel containers and propellants against leaks for the German scientist. The result was a tandem seal with a rubber-like ring offering the first line of protection against leaks, and a second seal, made of steel, providing backup.

Smith employed similar technology to help the government create silent

submarines. If a sub were equipped with stronger seals to keep water

Despite his many professional successes, Luther Smith felt the effects of discrimination, even following his military service and after being hired by GE. Often he had to travel south from his home in New York or Pennsylvania for business. It was there, in places like Alabama and Florida, that Smith had to face the harsh realities of life before the civil rights movement.

On a business trip to Huntsville, Alabama, Smith had to drop off his peers at a white hotel and then drive across town to another hotel willing to accept blacks.

In Florida, Smith could stay in the hotels, but he wasn't allowed to eat in the dining rooms. A business dinner in his hotel room didn't sound very professional, so he called the hotel president and told him about his dilemma. Later, one of the men traveling with Smith received a call from the hotel manager. "The dining room and all other amenities," the manager said, "are available to Mr. Smith as long as he is a guest here."

As his career progressed, Smith was able to take larger steps toward fighting racism. When he headed part of a defense contract, Smith was responsible for choosing the company he'd work with to bring the project to fruition. He was eyeing a firm in Texas, but he was wary of race relations in the South, so he faced his concern and visited the

company. "Your company is at the top of my list," he told officials there, "but I'm black." If he would have to face discrimination while working with them, Smith went on, he'd go elsewhere. The company agreed to his terms. "It was the pressure of economics," Smith says.

Today, Luther Smith and his wife, Lois, live in a modest home near Pennsylvania's Villanova University. With a right leg that's about seven inches shorter than his left due to the plane crash and later bone infections he suffered, he moves slowly with the help of two black canes. In his cluttered home office, he keeps several medals he received for serving his country: his Purple Heart, Distinguished Flying Cross, his Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters, his Mediterranean Theater Campaign Ribbons, and his Prisoner of War Medal. Though the war continues to take a toll on his body, Smith talks about his service in the military with a smile on his face. He can't help but be proud of his fellow Red-Tailed Angels.

Smith also continues to work to get the recognition he believes the Tuskegee Airmen deserve. In 1995, he and several other veterans accompanied President Bill Clinton to Europe for the 50th anniversary of VE-Day. On the flight home, he managed to convince Togo West, then secretary of the U.S. Army and head of the U.S. 50th anniversary celebration commemorating the end of World War II, that the Tuskegee Airmen deserved their own memorial.

West agreed, suggesting a memorial at Arlington National Cemetery to be funded by the Tuskegee Airmen and supported by the government. The deal was made. On November 10, 1995, Smith and some of the other Tuskegee Airmen gathered just around the corner from the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to stand before their own memorial—a tree and a commemorative plaque—at its dedication ceremony.

A decade later, Smith is one of only about 200 Tuskegee Airmen still living. Although he's 85 years old, he's committed to educating people about the Tuskegee Airmen and is writing a book to document his experience as a black man in a white military. He revels in the role of storyteller. After all, says Smith: "Racial equality in America started in the skies over Europe."

Maureen Harmon is a senior editor at Penn State magazine and a freelance writer based in central Pennsylvania.



Luther Smith

THE FLIGHT OF A TRUE HERO



DES MOINES, IO

NEWELL FLAYS ECONOMY PLAN

Speaker Likens NRA to Gangster Rule.

The "imposed economy" of the new deal was verbally flayed from the pulpit Wednesday night by Dr. William R. Newell, featured speaker of the annual convention of the Des Moines Christian Fundamentals Association at First Evangelical church.



DR. NEWELL.

Declaring that there is widespread misuse of power under the present administration, the speaker likened the NRA to gangster rule in its demands for ransom from private individuals.

Calling Roosevelt "Experimentor,"

He characterized President Roosevelt as an "experimentor" and Johnson as "rough, blustering and profane." The blue eagle of NRA was referred to as the "blue buzzard."

Speaking on the rhetorical question, "where are we?" he pictured the current trend as decadent and leading toward inevitable destruction unless policies are changed.

Drought Divine Disapproval.

He cited the drought, insect pests and dust storms as evidences of divine disapproval. The present trend in Washington, D. C. is toward absorption of the individual by the state, which is in effect, communism, he concluded.

Presents Lecture Series.

Dr. Newell, who is from Ireland, Fla., is presenting a series of five lectures at the three-day conference.

The annual business session will be held this afternoon, when officers for the coming year will be elected.

DANCE GROUP TO MEET SOON

Expected to Nominate Mrs. Clinton, Mrs. Spry.

meeting with the two leaders of the city dance hall.

Youngest "Grease Ball" Lifts Hopes to Skyways

Luther Smith, 13, Has Ambition to Become Pilot Some Day.

"Smitty's" big brown eyes look upward—in the skyways. Some day he'll be a pilot. He has promised himself that, and municipal airport pilots and workers believe he'll keep his promise. He works with them, as probably the country's youngest "grease ball," or airport mechanic, helper.

"Smitty" is Luther Smith, 13, Negro, of 211 Twenty-third st., ninth grade student at Callahan Junior High school, a track star, Boy Scout and H. Y. member.

Receives Page To Fly.

It was in the H. Y. organization that he received the urge to be a flyer. "And I'm going to work from the ground up and make it," said the smiling, soft-spoken youngster Wednesday.

P. C. Anderson, pilot, talked to the H. Y. club about flying. Luther had been interested in magazines at school and had helped at the airport popcorn stand.

Hitch-hiked To Airport.

The thrill of the air entered his heart as Anderson talked. He hitch-hiked to the airport, Oleville Haines, another pilot, formed an alliance with the bright youngster.

"Oleville" Haines, as "Smitty" calls him, offered the lad work cleaning out the ships used on passenger flights over the city.

"He's one of the best workers, and the most willing that ever put on a pair of coveralls," airport workers said.

Offered Commission on Hides.

So Haines offered his new-found assistant a commission on sale of hides to visitors at the airport. It's a small commission, but "Smitty" made enough in one day to pay his Scout dues.

"And if I can learn fast enough, I'll work up to regular helper and earn enough for a ground course," said the youngster. One pilot has already offered the polite offer.



Realizes Great Ambition.

first new airport worker his set of books to aid him through the ground course.

Wants Secondhand Ship.

"Then if I can learn to fly I'll get a secondhand ship or get one in partnership with somebody else, and I can get a transport license and make enough to support the family," said Smitty. "I had planned to go to work as soon as I am out of high school and support the family," he added gravely. Smith, whose father is unemployed, has five sisters and three brothers, one of whom is working.

"Fly." Sure, I've been up nine or ten times," he said. "It was thrilling, but not as thrilling as it will be when I know enough to handle a ship myself."

MANY GARDENS ARE REPAIRED

Seeds Distr 61,000 Iowa

Iowans on relief planting many of vegetables destroyed drought. It was reported by S. W. Edwards of substance garden.

Seeds of 13 varieties for 61,000 lbs. costing \$25,000 have been used this season, he said.

Many Vegetables

A recent statewide Mr. Edgerton showed plantings of radishes, beets, carrots and peas, usually ruined that year. Corn and beans have grown and are doing well, and that cabbage and plants have become established.

In general the garden in the western section of the state and in scattered points are almost normal in appearance.

Replanting Underway

Replanting of corn and many sections is now under way. Planting of small seeds, radish, lettuce, beets, turnips as late as July 15 was recommended.

Polish and onion seeds furnished to families on relief in county relief administration. radish, lettuce, beets, beans, peas and two varieties of sweet corn seeds.

Work Relief Labor.

In many localities garden being furthered with work labor, according to Mr. Edgerton.

The Des Moines garden of a Mr. Edgerton, center Granger, Ia., is progressing factually, he reported.

Y. M. Camp at B Opens Season

The summer season at the Y. M. Camp at B, Moines, Ia., will open this week through Sept. 3. Of the 12 different games will attend.

TWO RELIGIOUS

meeting and banquet at Hotel Fort.

Dr. Edgerton, Ia., will attend.

Harbig Garabedian, Manager, RESO Relations
Ed Mercer, Manager, Communication Programs
Fred Troilo, Photographer

Your comments, critiques and suggestions...
RESO REPORTER, c/o GE, 3188 Chestnut St., Philadel-
1000; or phone Ed Mercer DIAL COMM 8-246-2792 or 215-623-4444

Attachment No. 7

THE LEGEND OF LUTHER SMITH

This 37-year GE veteran has created Black History of his own through the years with an adventurous life

He once faced death head-on four times in one day during World War II.

He pioneered in resolving advanced aerospace flight control design requirements and in solving special design problems related to hydraulic flight control systems.

He flew 40,000 miles in 1987 alone to chair technical society meetings, including chairing a session of the International Pacific Air and Space Technology Conference in Melbourne, Australia, and to attend the Air Force re-activation of his World War II fighter squadron.

Luther Henry Smith, a 37-year GE employee currently serving as Re-entry Systems Department's Motivation Programs manager, has had a rich full life, filled with achievement against formidable obstacles, accomplished — not the least of which was, together with his wife, Lois, putting two sons through Princeton University.

His colleague: "Luther hasn't lived through history — he's gone out there and lived it."

Photographer can select's

lights — and not a few lowlights — so any biographer must be careful not to miss anything.

"I admit it," Smith says with a smile. "It's not easy to track the kind of life I've led."

HIS EARLY YEARS

Born in Des Moines, Iowa, September 27, 1920, Luther had the thrill of his young life at age 13, when sitting on the pilot's lap, he flew a Ford Trimotor Transport and a Stinson Trimotor, he recalls. "That started me on a lifelong love of flying that has lasted to this moment."

Graduating from Theodore Roosevelt High School, he attended the State University of Iowa, Iowa City, working his way through, earning some of his school money hunting small game to sell to fraternities and sororities on the campus, and working meal jobs. He stopped his education in his sophomore year to enter military service. After the service, he returned to the University of Iowa and earned his BS in Mechanical Engineering in 1950, did graduate work at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, majoring in Mechanical Engineering. He received his MS in Engineering from the State University in

cadet in the U.S. Army Air Corps in August of 1942, and commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Army Air Corps at Tuskegee, Alabama, in May of 1943.

Fighter pilot Smith was in the thick of the war, escorting heavy bombers, flying in the 332nd Fighter Group of the 100th Fighter Wing in the Fifth Air Force, a group which was awarded a Presidential Citation by President Truman for never losing a heavy bomber to enemy fighter aircraft.

Young Luther, at 23, racked up an impressive record, with the reputation as a good pilot with an outstanding combat record of 133 missions — and enemy aircraft destroyed (1 in air-to-air combat and at least 10 in ground destruction).

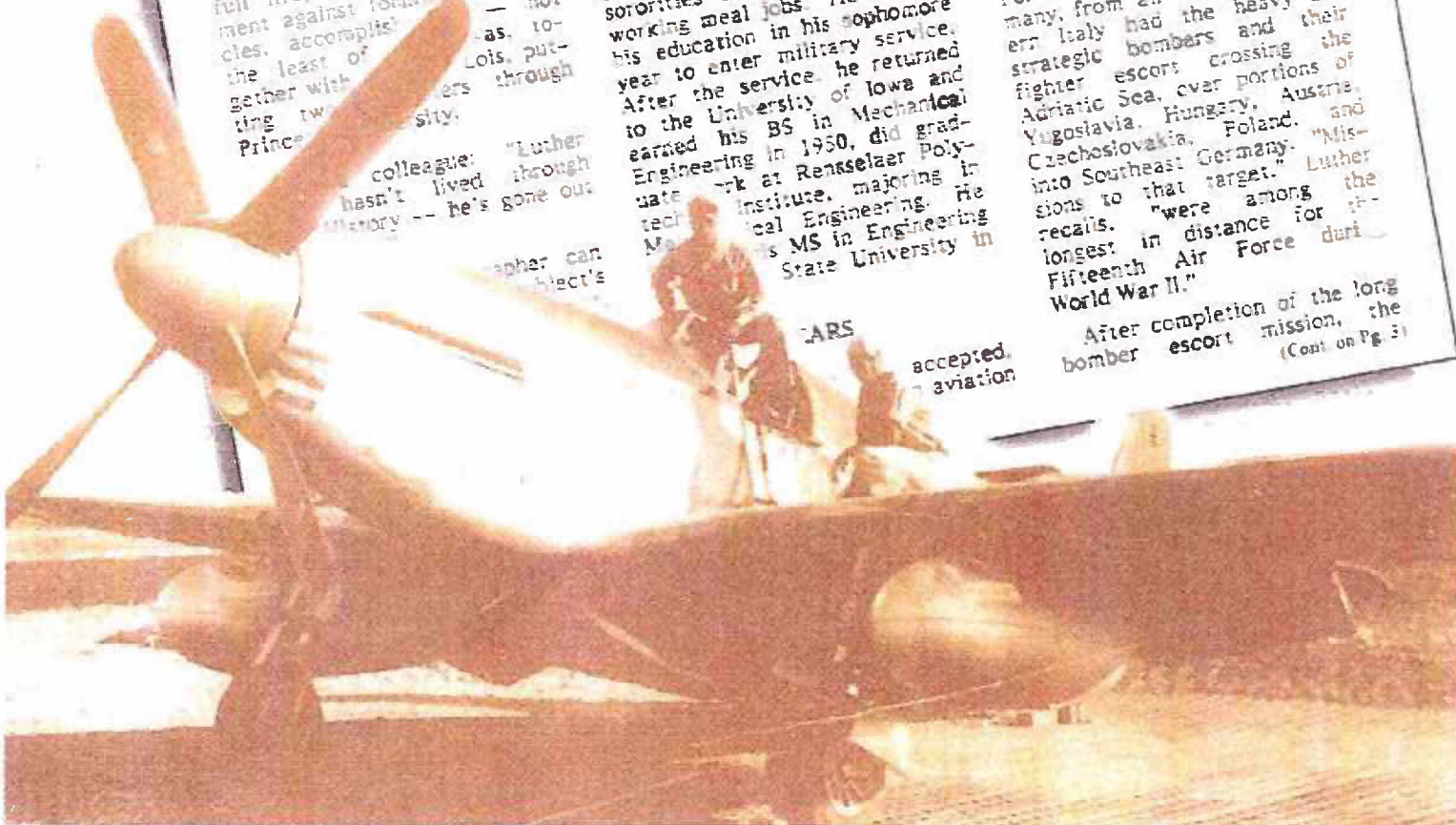
Then came his last mission, on a Friday the Thirteenth, as luck would have it, and the day he faced death four times: October 13, 1944.

HIS FINAL MISSION

A maximum effort bomb mission by the Fifteenth Air Force on Blechhammer, Germany, from air bases in southern Italy had the heavy and strategic bombers and their fighter escort crossing the Adriatic Sea, over portions of Yugoslavia, Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and into Southeast Germany. "Missions to that target," Luther recalls, "were among the longest in distance for the Fifteenth Air Force during World War II."

After completion of the long bomber escort mission, the

(Cont. on Pg. 3)



(Cont from Pg. 2)
group selected the Budapest, Hungary airport to strafe.

Flying a P51 Mustang fighter, Luther spotted two German Heinkel-III bombers parked side-by-side at the edge of the Budapest airbase. Destroying both with machine gun fire, he dove his low-flying plane closer to ground level and spotted enemy tracer bullets from ground fire moving toward him. Entering the smoke from burning aircraft on the airfield, he narrowly avoided being hit, experiencing his first brush with death.

Moments later, he saw his flight leader head for a freight yard containing several rows of oil-tank cars and zoom down to strafe them, setting off a number of fires. As deputy-flight leader, Luther suddenly saw his wingsman descend to strafe the rail cars also. He followed to protect his companion and did some strafing of his own. Thereupon a massive explosion and ball of fire from his strafing suddenly erupted directly in front of Luther's low-flying aircraft — and he was committed to fly through it. Brush with death No. 2.

The aircraft was severely damaged from the explosion, but Luther was able to fly approximately five minutes before it crashed. He was able to escape the flames.

1st Lt. Luther Smith in the cockpit of his P-51 Mustang Fighter Plane with his brother, Master Sergeant Howard Smith, at Rametelli Airfield, Italy, August, 1944.

burning plane, and saved his life. Brush No. 3.

Crashing through the trees, his parachute canopy caught in the tree tops and he brought his body to rest on a tree branch. Freeing his leg from the chute harness, Luther Smith realized his hip was fractured and he couldn't move. But the tree landing saved his life. Brush No. 4 — four brushes with death in less than an hour.

PRISONER-OF-WAR YEARS

Luther Smith was taken to a small military hospital in a village not far from Zagreb, Yugoslavia, by German soldiers who managed to free him from the tree tops. He eventually was placed in a German prisoner-of-war camp in Austria. When he was released from prison camp at the end of the war, Luther was a result of his experiences as a prisoner of war.

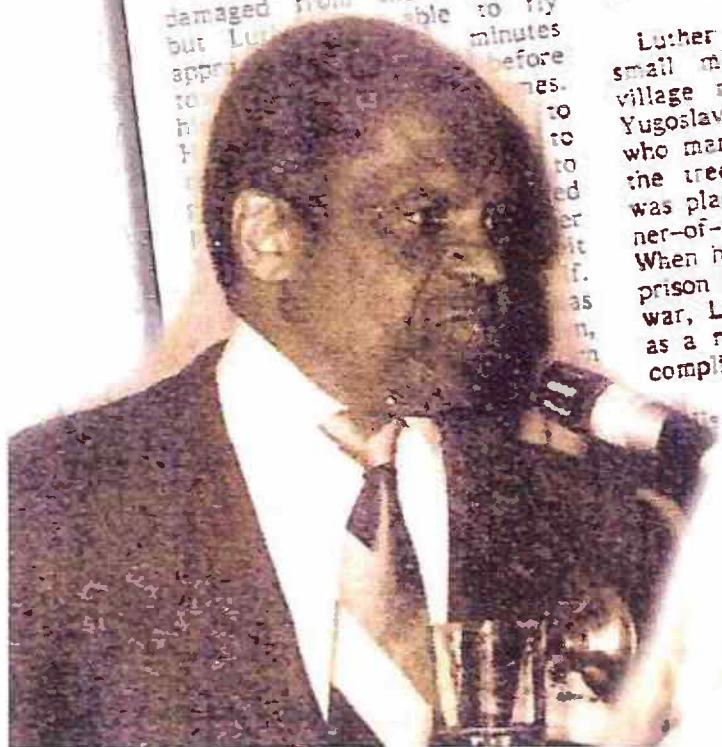
Attachment No. 7
eventually in Allied and American hospitals.

He was retired from active military service in 1947 at the age of 26 with a physical disability that was to change the course of his life. "It made me take a long look at my life up to then," Luther explains. "During my hospitalization, I learned that America had lost over 400,000 lives during the war. My life had been spared. I had to conclude that God had spared my life for a purpose, perhaps an unfulfilled mission. I took my pledge that I would make the remainder of my life be as meaningful as I could possibly make it."

Luther Smith received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters, as well as the Purple Heart, before he was retired with the rank of Captain from active service. But the most valuable award, he recalls, may have been the self-esteem he gleaned from having a good combat record and the traumatic experience that took place on that luckless (or lucky) Friday the Thirteenth.

AFTER THE WAR

Returning to college at the State University of Iowa after his retirement from military service, Luther managed to finance himself and two sisters through college. "My sisters made it clear that they really wanted to go to college, and I was the only one who could do it."



navics and Ordnance Systems Department, where he successfully pioneered in advanced aerospace flight control work mentioned at the outset of this story. His work resulted in his submission of six patents, two of which were awarded outright.

Luther Smith married Lois Gordon, whom he met on the campus of State University of Iowa, in 1950. They had two children, Deborah Lois and Gordon Luther. Debbie is a 1975 Princeton graduate with a degree in Foreign Affairs from the Woodrow Wilson School of International Diplomacy and Public Affairs. She's currently a vice president of Chemical Bank in New York City. Gordon graduated from Princeton with a degree in History in 1980, and is a second vice president at Chase Manhattan Bank in New York.

All the Smith's are achievers. Lois with a Liberal Arts degree from Cleveland's Western Reserve University, is with the English Department of Marple-Newtown High School, located in Newtown Square.

LUTHER'S 26 RE-ENTRY YEARS

Joining the Missile and Space Division at Re-entry as a Program Test engineer, in December of 1961, Luther Smith served as Engineering supervisor and Subsystem engineer for the Actuation System on maneuvering Ballistic Re-entry vehicle program from 1961 to 1968. In 1968, he worked on the

manager, Business Planning and Support Services in the Manufacturing Department. In 1978, he returned to Engineering as first a Project, then a Systems engineer until 1983, when he transferred to Finance to take his present position, creating Motivation/Recognition programs, and administering both Cos: Improvements and Suggestion program activities.

ACTIVITIES: PROFESSIONAL, COMMUNITY

Whatever he does, Luther Smith throws himself into it. He has been an active member of the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) for 35 years. He also spent five years (1955-60) with the American Society of Testing Materials.

Last year he journeyed to Australia for SAE as a session chairman on International Standardization during the International Pacific Air and Space Technology Conference in Melbourne, November 14-19, 1987.

It was quite a year for travel. He flew to Long Beach, CA, to chair the SAE Aerospace General Projects Division annual meeting and also participated in two SAE Aerospace technical committee meetings; one in May in Florida, and another in San Francisco during October.

Then there was the reactivation by the Air Force of the fighter squadron that Luther flew with in World War II, which occurred on October 24 at Luke Air Force Base, Phoenix, AZ. As an original member of the 302nd Fighter Squadron, Luther was invited to participate in the reactivation of the 16 fighter

"It was a very special occasion," says Smith, "seeing members of my former squadron for the first time since the day I flew my final combat mission: October of 1944. About 25 of the original 36 pilots were present for the reactivation ceremonies."

ADVICE FOR NEWCOMERS

With almost four decades of GE experience, Luther doesn't hesitate a second to offer what he'd advise newcomers: "I would advise them to give strong consideration to continuing their formal education. There's a beneficial purpose in pursuing advanced education while working. The education has more meaning because you're able to apply it directly to your work. Further, I would urge them to focus on those skills that offer the best opportunity to advance their working careers."

"Then," continues Luther, "I would urge each new employee to make it his or her personal responsibility to think through his or her career objectives and work with management to obtain assignments that will lead to career goals. This advice is not always easy to follow, but it should be in the game plan of every new employee."

"Finally, I would urge new employees to make dedication to your job, excellence in your work performance and a thoroughly professional attitude be as much a part of you -- as your name."

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES STRONG

Luther, who lives with his wife, Lois, in Villanova, PA, has been very active in community service. Currently, he has two major ones.

He serves as

(Cont from Pg. 4)

and has been a member for 20 years. He has been a Trustee of the Delaware County Community College since 1970, joining just three years after the college opened its doors.

"There was a lot of work during the early years at the college, building an excellent educational institution," Luther recalls. "Now DCCC is considered one of the finest community colleges in the region."

LEARNED FROM GE PEOPLE

One of Smith's best memories with GE has been the association he has enjoyed with company employees. "It's been a tremendous inspiration to be working with so many technically outstanding managers and employees," he says. "I think I've learned a great deal from GE people, not the least of which is great dedication, professionalism and superior job performance. This has prevailed at GE for over 100 years."

The Savings and Security Program is Luther's favorite GE benefit. "It was really the GE benefit," he recalls, "enabling Lois and me to put our two children through Princeton — two high inflation periods — 1971 to 1975 for Debbie, to 1980 for Gordon."

Without doubt that Luther believes in education. Alone, the In-House Program he led at resulted in nearly 500 employees completing courses — achievement that was remarkable considering the many influences, pressures and demands. "They deserve growth and advancement," he says. "This is the way to give it to them."

estimates that, in that time, he may have missed not more than 30 days.

"The very process of living with a physical disability brings out a desire to excel," Smith observes. "Because of my disability, I've been forced to exercise rigorously daily, a discipline that has enhanced both my physical and mental well-being. I do calisthenics, weight exercises, and cardiovascular rowing machine workouts, which I alternate daily. But I always get in one or the other on a daily basis."

"I'd say physical and mental strength, together with a positive outlook on life — they're all important for survival and growth. If there's anything unique about me, it was the ability to overcome an unfortunate physical incident that happened during World War II."

NO MISTAKES AS A PILOT

"I had the good fortune," concludes Luther Smith, "of training as a military pilot, flying combat missions on a daily basis and wanting to be good at it. I used my capabilities to the fullest in a highly precise, discipline-oriented activity. When you're a combat pilot, you never forget: Make a mistake and you're dead."

"In addition, with those repeated close brushes with death, the appreciation and awareness of life is taken from you."

Every day I ask myself questions: Am I the person capable of being? Have I set personal goals and character standards that are the best that I can achieve? Do I relate to God, my family, friends and associates as I should? And finally, what more can I do, not for myself, but for others?

Last year, in an address to hundreds of Valley Forge Military Academy cadets, Luther Smith challenged the cadets to "make each day count for something that is important to you ... set goals to live by ... make realistic plans daily to meet your goals ... discipline your lives with moral and spiritual integrity and never miss an opportunity for personal evaluation by asking yourself: 'Am I the person I know I am capable of being?'"

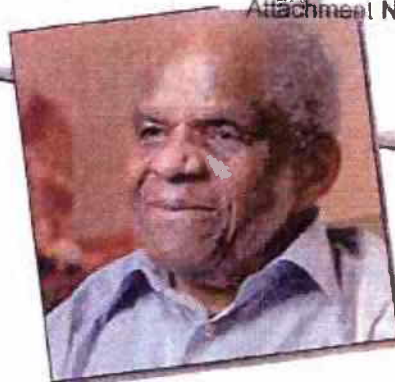
Luther Smith, ex-pilot, pioneer, achiever, might well answer that question with a resounding "Yes."

But he personally wouldn't. "I'm not," declares Luther Smith, "through contributing yet."



PATRIOT PILOT ENGINEERING

Alumnus Follows Inspiration to Fulfill His Dreams
Reproduced from *Iowa Engineer* magazine, 1999, No. 2
Story by Jean C. Florman



When *Iowa Engineer* recently asked Luther Smith for an interview appointment, he politely declined.

"I'm afraid I'll have to say 'no,'" Smith said, adding, "I'm going to the White House that day."

A veteran World War II aviator, Smith was invited to Washington to represent the United States Army Air Force (which became the U.S. Air Force in 1949) in the Clinton Administration's Veterans Day celebration. The invitation was the latest in a long series of honors for the University of Iowa alumnus, who earned his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering in 1950.

As a young boy growing up in Des Moines, Iowa, Smith longed to fly the planes he saw landing at the municipal airport. By the time he was a teenager, he was regularly walking and hitchhiking to the airport to "hang around" and help the mechanics as they serviced and refueled aircraft.

"The pilots and mechanics at the Des Moines airport took a liking to this 13-year-old kid who was so interested in planes," Smith recalls. "I just became part of the airport community."

Six years later, Charles Lindbergh had flown across the Atlantic. He was young, handsome, and daring. Millions of others, Lucky Lindy epitomized everything about being an American.

In the mid-1930s, another turn of events made a lasting impression on Smith. Airline companies had been in new service -- air mail -- but they didn't get much money for it.

"So the pilots went on strike, and the government turned to military pilots to keep the mail running," Smith says that for him and in the days before advanced navigation systems, flying was risky business, and many military pilots had to conduct a night or in bad weather.

"But they were my heroes," he says. "A pilot would be on his way to a cup of coffee."

"It didn't be on his way to a cup of coffee."





Luther H. Smith of Villanova, PA, is a retired U.S. Air Force captain who flew 133 combat missions in World War II, and is a retired General Electric Co. engineer with 37 years service and two U.S. patents. A native of Des Moines, IA, Captain Smith is an original member of the famed Tuskegee Airmen. He flew 133 missions and is credited with destroying two German enemy aircraft in aerial combat and 10 German aircraft in ground strafing missions. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart, eight European and Mediterranean Theaters Campaign Ribbons, and the Prisoner of War Medal after being permanently injured on his final combat mission, parachuting while unconscious from his burning P-51 Mustang aircraft, and held as a prisoner for seven months until the war ended.

After earning his B.S. degree at The University of Iowa, Captain Smith worked for GE's Missile and Space Operations in Philadelphia until his retirement in 1988. He holds two U.S. patents, has published numerous technical documents and publications, and has worked on special assignments with the U.S. Air Force, NASA, and U.S. Navy Submarine Command. Captain Smith is a recipient of the Society of Automotive Engineers, Aerospace International, Franklin W. Kolk Aerospace Industry Award. He has served on the Architect-Engineer Evaluation Jury that chose the design for the World War II Memorial, and has worked tirelessly to gain recognition for the contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen. In June 2004, he headed the 60th anniversary celebration of the Tuskegee Airmen's greatest World War II achievement, escorting American heavy strategic bombers on 200 missions throughout Europe with the loss of a single bomber to enemy aircraft.

Moreover, he has contributed significantly to the achievement of racial equality in the U.S. and the world and helped change the face of the U.S. military in a remarkably short period of time.



Luther Smith and three of his fellow advanced aviation cadets at Tuskegee Army Air Field in 1943 (clockwise from left): Maurice Esters, of Webster City, Iowa, who died in World War II combat over Yugoslavia; Joseph Gomer, of Iowa Falls, Iowa; Smith; and John Briggs, of St. Louis, Mo. (seated in cockpit)

times January 2, 2006

AIRWAY HISTORY

Striving to honor true pioneers

WHAT'S UP: The campaign to honor the storied Tuskegee Airmen with the Congressional Gold Medal has received an important endorsement. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said the heroic and historic efforts of the elite group of black airmen who flew in the Army Air Corps during World War II should be recognized.

"In my view, this recognition is well deserved," Rumsfeld wrote in a letter to Rep. Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., who has championed the cause since introducing legislation on Capitol Hill in March. "This group of American heroes significantly contributed to the victory in Europe during World War II and helped break down racial barriers in our armed forces," Rumsfeld wrote.

WHAT'S NEXT: The Senate has passed a version of the

bill that would allow surviving airmen to receive the medal, the highest award granted by Congress. The House presents a bit more difficulty since that chamber's rules require at least 280 cosponsors for the legislation to pass. However, Rumsfeld's endorsement could help. "I don't agree with the secretary on too many things," said Rangel, who has proposed reinstating the draft for the war in Iraq. "But as regards the Tuskegee Airmen, we stand shoulder to shoulder."

Future members of the Tuskegee Airmen stand ready for inspection in Alabama in January 1942. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld endorses awarding the airmen the Congressional Gold Medal.

The Legend of Luther Smith



TOM HARKIN
IOWA

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1522

April 4, 2006

Mike Earley, President
Bankers Trust
453 - 7th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Dear Mike:

This is a short note to let you know that I could not be more enthusiastic about your efforts to designate a portion of Des Moines International Airport in honor of Luther Smith.

As a former Navy pilot, I can appreciate Luther Smith's remarkable record as an aviator. As you know, after training with the Tuskegee Army, he flew more combat missions during World War II than any other pilot - and he lived to tell the tale. That is an amazing accomplishment. But the Luther Smith story doesn't stop there. He came home from the war to take a leadership role in breaking down barriers of racism and discrimination. He has always done Iowa proud as a man of duty, honor, and achievement - and it is high time that we recognized this appropriately. As we approach Luther's 85th birthday, I wish you success in identifying a site at the airport worthy of bearing the name of this great Iowan.

Sincerely,

Tom

Tom Harkin
United States Senator



"...man of duty, honor, and achievement — and it is high time that we recognized this appropriately."

807th STREET
DES MOINES, IOWA 50319
TEL: 515-281-1000

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1503

June 11, 2007

Judith D. McNamara, Regent
Jean Marie Cardiwell Chapter of DAR
1907 - 55th Street
Des Moines, IA 50310

Dear Ms. McNamara:

It is a pleasure to offer my support in the nomination of Iowa native Luther Smith for the Daughters of the American Revolution Medal of Honor. Luther's record as a military aviator exemplifies many of the guiding principles of this country - patriotism, a strong work ethic, perseverance, accomplishment and bravery.

As a captain in the U.S. Air Force, Luther Smith flew 133 combat missions in WWII, and was an original member of the legendary Tuskegee Airmen. His last mission resulted in his spending the remainder of the war as a POW. Following the war, Luther retired from active service with the rank of Captain, receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters, as well as the Purple Heart.

Not only did Luther Smith put his country before his life, he also served as a pioneer in the fight for racial equality, both in his military life and as a civilian. His actions serve as an inspiration to us all. He would be a deserving recipient of the DAR Medal of Honor.

Thank you in advance for your favorable consideration.

Sincerely,



Leonard L. Boswell
Member of Congress

L B:dlc

135 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1501
(202) 224-3144
TTY: (202) 224-4676
e-Mail: CHUCK_Grassley@GRASSLEY.SERVICE.DC

721 FEDERAL BUILDING
210 WALNUT STREET
DES MOINES, IA 50305-2145
(515) 281-1145

205 FEDERAL BUILDING
101 1ST STREET SE
CEDAR RAPIDS, IA 52401-1221
(319) 362-0432

United States Senate

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1501

100 FEDERAL COURTHOUSE BUILDING
520 2ND STREET
Attachment No. 8
(712) 233-1888

210 WATERLOO BUILDING
530 COMMERCIAL STREET
WATERLOO, IA 50701-5457
(319) 232-6657

131 WEST 2ND STREET
SUITE 180
DAVENPORT, IA 52801-1419
(563) 322-4337

307 FEDERAL BUILDING
8 SOUTH 1ST STREET
COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA 51501-4204
(712) 322-7103

June 8, 2007

Letter of Recommendation on behalf of Luther Smith

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to write this letter of recommendation on behalf of Mr. Luther Smith for the DAR Medal of Honor.

Mr. Smith served his country with honor, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters and the Purple Heart. Mr. Smith flew 133 combat missions before being captured by the Germans in 1944. Mr. Smith survived several months of captivity as a prisoner of war before being released and sent back to the United States. Upon his discharge from the military Mr. Smith went on to become an accomplished Aerospace Engineer with General Electric.

I hope that you will give this Iowa native the consideration that he deserves for the DAR Medal of Honor. I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator

CEG/pb

RANKING MEMBER,
FINANCE

Committee Assignments

BUDGET
JUDICIARY
AGRICULTURE

CO-CHAIRMAN,
INTERNATIONAL NARCOTIC
CONTROL CAUCUS



CHESTER J. CULVER
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

PATTY JUDGE
LT. GOVERNOR

July 9, 2007

To Whom It May Concern,

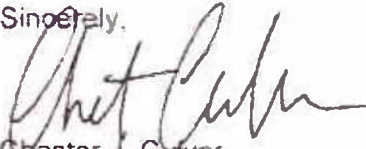
On behalf of the State of Iowa, we would like to nominate Luther Smith for the Daughters of the American Revolution Medal of Honor.

As the most prestigious honor awarded by the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Medal of Honor is only given to an individual who has shown extraordinary leadership, trustworthiness, service and patriotism in addition to making a lasting contribution to our American heritage. We feel that Mr. Smith embodies each of these characteristics and is an ideal choice for this tremendous honor.

An original member of the Tuskegee Airmen, Mr. Smith served his country bravely and proudly. In addition to his military service, he also received two patents while working as an engineer for General Electric and continued to break racial barriers while paving the way for others who came after him.

As one of the first African-American aviators in the U.S. Air Force, Mr. Smith has already been awarded numerous honors, including the Congressional Gold Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart, eight European and Mediterranean Theaters Campaign Ribbons and the Prisoner of War Medal. We feel that it is only fitting that this American hero also be awarded the DAR Medal of Honor.

Sincerely,


Chester J. Culver
Governor


Patty Judge
Lieutenant Governor

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1502

May 23, 2007

Judith D. McNamara, Regent
Jean Marie Cardinell Chapter, DAR
1907 55th Street
Des Moines, IA 50310

Dear Ms. McNamara:

I am writing to you to recommend wholeheartedly that Luther Smith be recognized with the Medal of Honor of the Daughters of the American Revolution. As a former Navy pilot, I have a keen appreciation for Luther's extraordinary record as a combat aviator. After training with the Tuskegee Airmen, he flew more combat missions - 133 in all - during World War II than any other U.S. pilot. And he lived to tell the tale.

Bear in mind that, prior to World War II, African-Americans were barred from service as U.S. military pilots. But, in 1941, Congress forced the Army Air Corps to form an all-black combat aviation unit. They were an elite group. They trained in Tuskegee, Alabama, and saw combat in North Africa and Europe, where they were renowned for their fighting skills. In truth, the Tuskegee Airmen fought *two* wars: One against the Nazi Luftwaffe, and one against the racism they confronted at home and within the military. Let the record show that the Tuskegee Airmen won *both* of those wars.

However, the Luther Smith story doesn't stop there. He came home from the war, after having been held as a prisoner of war for several months, to take a leadership role in breaking down barriers of racism and discrimination. He earned a degree in mechanical engineering studies from the University of Iowa, and was hired by General Electric, where he worked for 37 years as an aerospace engineer. Luther's work included such activities as consulting with Wernher Von Braun, who was in charge of rocket development for NASA, and helping the government to create silent submarines.

Lamar Smith's accomplishments, and his service to our nation, have been nothing short of amazing. He is a shining example of an American who lives and breathes the principles of duty, honor, and country. I cannot imagine anyone more worthy of being honored by the DAR with the prestigious Medal of Honor.

56
Attachment No. 8

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Tom Harkin", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tom Harkin
United States Senator



JOINT FORCES HEADQUARTERS - IOWA

Office of the Adjutant General

Camp Dodge

7105 NW 70th Avenue

Johnston, Iowa 50131-1824

Attachment No. 8

2 June 2007

National Society Daughters of the American Revolution
1776 D St NW
Washington D.C. 20006

DAR Medal of Honor Selection Committee,

I wholeheartedly support the recommendation of Luther Smith for the Daughters' of the American Revolution Medal of Honor. I am writing this letter to express my total support of Luther and his worthiness of being the recipient of the prestigious DAR Medal of Honor. I have known Luther for several years and am totally impressed with the professionalism and compassion that he has demonstrated in all avenues of his life.

As a fellow fighter pilot, I am particularly impressed with the superb results that the Tuskegee Airmen had as they flew over 200 escort missions during World War II without the loss of a single bomber — a record unmatched by any other fighter group. The 332nd Fighter Group, to which Luther belonged, was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for its longest bomber escort to Berlin, Germany, March 24, 1945. They destroyed three German ME-262 jet fighters and damaged five additional jet fighters. The tenacious bomber escort cover provided by the 332nd "Red Tail" fighters often discouraged enemy fighter pilots from attacking the bombers that they escorted. Luther, himself, shot down two German fighter planes and destroyed 10 German aircraft on the ground.

The Tuskegee Airmen were dedicated, determined young men who volunteered to become America's first Black military airmen. Luther Smith epitomized this kind of commitment throughout his life. After the war, he went to college, earned his degree as an engineer and then worked for General Electric for 37 years. This validates his commitment to organizational goals and values that made him successful in all phases of his life. From the handling of a serious in-flight emergency during the war when his aircraft was severely damaged due to having two of six filed patents approved when he worked for General Electric, Luther Smith has demonstrated over and over again that he is a "hero".

These are but a few examples of the successes of Luther Smith. I, therefore, strongly recommend him for the selection for the DAR Medal of Honor. Luther is definitely one of America's heroes and is most deserving of this recognition.

RON DARDIS

Major General, Iowa National Guard

The Adjutant General

1524 Highway 169
Winterset, IA 50273
June 7, 2007

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I would like to take this opportunity to express my personal support for the Jean Marie Cardinell Chapter nomination of Luther H. Smith to receive the DAR Medal of Honor. I'm proud to call Luther Smith an Iowan and a patriot. His military and civilian careers have both been exceptional by any measure.

Luther Smith was a member of the Tuskegee Airmen, the highly trained bomber escort pilots. They were famous for how well they performed their mission to safely escort bombers to and from their targets and protect them from enemy fighter planes. Luther Smith flew 133 missions, destroyed aircraft in the air and on the ground, and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with 6 Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart, and the Prisoner of War Medal after spending seven months in a German POW camp.

Luther Smith earned a B.S. in mechanical engineering at the University of Iowa in 1950 and a master's degree in engineering from Pennsylvania State University in 1977. He went to work for General Electric Company in 1951, and he worked for GE's Missile and Space Operations as an aerospace engineer until his retirement in 1988. During his time as an engineer, Luther had many documents published, and he holds two patents. He was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award for Achievement from the University of Iowa Alumni Association in October 2006 and was inducted into the Iowa Aviation Hall of Fame in 1994. In March 2007, Luther Smith was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal by the United States Congress.

Luther Smith certainly exemplifies the qualities required of a DAR Medal of Honor recipient: unusual and lasting contributions to his community, state, country, and fellow man. Luther Smith's life has been dedicated to service, and he is a shining example of a real American patriot.

As a member of the De Shon Chapter DAR (Boone, Iowa) and a Brigadier General in the Iowa Army National Guard, I'm proud to add my personal support to the nomination of Luther Smith for the DAR Medal of Honor.


Jodi S. Tymeson

Luther H. Smith. A Major part of the SAE A-6 Committee

The SAE (Society of Engineers) is an International organization primarily devoted to preparing standards for the transportation industry. This includes; Autos, Trucks, Trains, Airplanes, etc. These standards are available world wide to assure there is adequate design and test parameters established on vehicles before they are used for transportation. The SAE, A-6 Committee (Aerospace Actuation, Control & Fluid Power Systems) is responsible for setting the standards for the Aerospace Fluid Powered Flight Controls used on the worlds civil as well as the military aircraft. Engineers from that particular industry are responsible for identifying the need, developing the test and qualification procedures and preparing the documents for all facets of aircraft & missile flight controls. The A-6 Committee was founded in 1941.

Luther Smith became associated with the SAE, A-6 Committee in April of 1956 and took a great interest in putting his "aerospace" experience to use. He became a participant in the bi-annual meetings throughout the USA and took a special interest in promoting technical symposiums at each meeting. In October 1963 he was placed in charge of A-6 Symposiums, assuring that meaningful technical experiences and advances were presented at each meeting. He held this position until October 1975, when he was selected to be the Chairman of the A-6 Committee. As Chairman, he provided a cohesive leadership position assuring that meetings were productive and well organized until May of 1987. Having served as Chairman for 12 years, he "retired" to a staff position in the A-6 Committee as the Chairman of Academia. In this position he took on the responsibility of contacting Universities near meeting sites that had Engineering programs akin to Aerospace and inviting the students to attend the A-6 meetings to see "Engineers at Work". This responsibility prevailed until October 2001 when he was hospitalized and could not attend the meetings. Feeling left out of the participation, he volunteered to compile a History of A-6 for the 60th Anniversary meeting in October 2001. The final drafts of this 150 page book were proofed from his hospital bed.

I personally got to know Luther in 1968 at my first A-6 meeting. I found him to have a good perspective in the goals of the committee and a special gift of communication and getting engineers to be effective in their various functions in the committee. As we say in the hydraulic pump industry, "old pumper's never die, they just loose their prime".

Bruce Fuhrman
SAE A-6 Steering Council Member



U.S. Army 92nd Division
171st Provisional
Airborne Brigade, 1947-1948



Women's Army
Corps
1943-1945

Fort Des Moines

171st Provisional Airborne Brigade

Fort Des Moines

Fort Des Moines

Fort Des Moines

Fort Des Moines

Attachment No. 8

Museum and Education Center

America's Greatest Memorial To Black And Female Soldiers

Judith D. McNamara

May 18, 2007

Regent

Jean Marie Cardinell Chapter, DAR

1907 55th Street

Des Moines, IA 50310

Dear Regent McNamara

It is with great pleasure that I recommend Luther H. Smith for the DAR Medal of Honor.

Des Moines native Captain Luther Smith flew 133 combat missions. During this period Captain Smith had two enemy aircraft kills and destroyed ten enemy aircraft on the ground. He also became a prisoner of war on his final flight over Yugoslavia in October 1944. Badly injured in the crash, he survived months of captivity and stateside hospitalization to later become a prominent Aerospace Engineer with General Electric.

In May 1995, he was selected by President William Clinton as one of seven veterans to accompany him to Europe for the 50th Anniversary of World War Two. Captain Smith was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters and the Purple Heart during his time in the service to his country.

As a person who has served his country and distinguished himself as an American, I strongly recommend Luther H. Smith.

Sincerely,

W. Caesar Smith, Sr.

Co-Director

Fort Des Moines Museum and Education Center

75-E, Army Post Road, Des Moines, IA 50317

tel: 515-281-8000 fax: 515-281-8078 e-mail: info@fortdesmoines.com

JUDY

From: "Gordon L Smith" <gordon.l.smith@chase.com>
To: "jdmcnamara" <jdmcnamara@mchsi.com>
Cc: "Hansen, Marc" <mahansen@desmoine.gannett.com>
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2009 2:57 PM
Subject: Dad's Iowa Roots

Judy,

I have sent a letter to Suzanne Swain-Program Coordinator at the Pennsylvania Veterans Museum (Media, Pennsylvania 610-566-0788) and asked her to send you 9 copies of the DVD prior to the July 7 Airport Commission meeting.

I see that Bruce Fuhrman one of the leaders in the Society of Automotive Engineers will be sending you information regarding Dad's engineering accomplishments.

As you prepare information for the Airport Commission members I am not sure if you are aware of all of Dad's Iowa roots. Dad's father (Luther H. Smith Sr.) was one of the developers/leaders that moved Burns United Methodist Church to its present location in Des Moines in 1912. Dad's father in law (Delbert V. Gordon) was a graduate of Iowa State University (I think the Class of 1914). Dad as you know was born in Des Moines in 1920. Dad is a graduate of the University of Iowa (Class of 1950) as are 2 of his sisters (Idah and Nancy). Dad was inducted into the University of Iowa School of Engineering Hall of Fame and received the University of Iowa Distinguished Alumni Award (University of Iowa's equivalent of the Hall of Fame). Dad was inducted into the Theodore Roosevelt High School (Des Moines) Hall of Fame. Dad was also inducted into the Iowa Aviation Hall of Fame.

I hope this helps. If you need anything else just let me know.

Again thank you so much!

Gordon

From: jdmcnamara [mailto:jdmcnamara@mchsi.com]
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2009 5:07 PM
To: Gordon L Smith
Subject: Re: Hi

Gordon, There are 9 that sits on the airport board. Could you send enough for each? Also the article from GE. I can make copies here. How about another DVD and I will send it to Sally Mason up @ University of Iowa who I am trying to contact for help. The board meets July 7th, not meaning to put too much pressure on you. All the letters I sent DC for the DAR Medal of Honor I still have those and will copy them for each of the board members.

Judy

— Original Message —

From: Gordon L Smith
To: jdmcnamara
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2009 9:59 AM
Subject: RE: Hi

6/29/2009

JUNE 20, 2007

Attachment No. 8

Judith D. McNamara, Chapter Regent
DAUGHTERS OF THE
AMERICAN REVOLUTION
1907 55th Street
Des Moines, IA 50310

Dear Ms. McNamara:

I wish to lend my very strong support to the nomination of Luther H. Smith for the DAR Gold Medal.

Luther Smith, a World War II Fighter Pilot in the 332nd Fighter Group (Tuskegee Army Airfield) flew 133 missions in combat. He was wounded by an exploding bomb on his last mission. Severely wounded, Luther was a war prisoner for some seven months. His injuries left one leg shorter than the other. He has had many surgeries to allow him to be somewhat mobile and was discharged from the military because of his injuries.

Luther later went on to become an Aerospace Engineer for General Electric. He had a seven year career with GE while getting at least 2 patents for the company.

Mr. Smith suffered much discrimination but was able to have a brilliant and productive career while overcoming many obstacles.

Sincerely,



James R. Bowman

MRS. JUDY MCNAMARA, REGENT
JEAN MARIE CARDINELL, CHAPTER D-42
1907 35TH STREET
DES MOINES, IOWA 50310

RE: MR. LUTHER SMITH

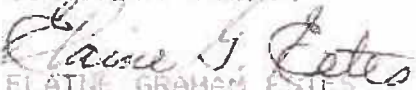
YEAR 2000

THIS LETTER STRONGLY ENCOURAGES THE JEAN MARIE
CARDINELL CHAPTER OF DAR TO NOMINATE LUTHER SMITH FOR THE
D.A.R. METAL OF HONOR. MR. SMITH IS OUTSTANDING AS A MILITARY
AND CIVILIAN PERSON. IN HIS MILITARY CAREER HE HAD TO
OVERCOME ODDITIES TO BECOME A PILOT FLY DANGEROUS MISSION
AND THEN SURVIVE AS A PRISONER OF WAR. HIS PHYSICAL
HEALTH PROBLEMS AS A RESULT OF HIS DISTINGUISHED MILITARY
SERVICE DID NOT PRECLUDE HIM FROM BEING SUCCESSFUL
ENGINEERING IN THE CORPORATE WORLD.

MR. SMITH'S FAMILY ARE UPRIGHT CITIZENS. HIS CHILDREN
REFLECT VALUES HE AND HIS WIFE (A SECOND GENERATION TEACHER
EXPECTED OF THEIR SON AND DAUGHTER. THEY HAVE SUCCESSFUL
CAREERS.

LUTHER'S PERSISTENCE COMES NATURAL BECAUSE HE IS
GENERALLY A RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN WHO BELIEVE IN DOING RIGHT
FOR FRIENDS, FAMILY AND CITIZENS OF HIS COUNTRY. HE HAS BEEN
VERY GENEROUS WITH HIS TIME TO SPEAK AND RECORD HISTORY. HE
HAS RECEIVED A NUMBER OF AWARDS INCLUDING ROOSEVELT HIGH
SCHOOL, SPECIAL ALUMNI HONOR UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, AND IN 2000
PRESIDENT BUSH'S, METAL OF ORDER. CERTAINLY THE D.A.R.
SHOULD ACCORD HIM YOUR HIGHEST HONOR.

SINCERELY YOURS,



ELAINE GRAHAM ESTES
RETIRED PUBLIC LIBRARY DIRECTOR
944-9TH STREET
DES MOINES, IOWA 50309-1204

MRS. JUDY McNAMARA, REGENT
JEAN MARIE CARDINELL CHAPTER D. A. W.
1907 - 55TH STREET
DES MOINES, IOWA 50310

OF MR. LUTHER SMITH

DEAR MRS. McNAMARA:

I HAVE KNOWN LUTHER SMITH, HIS PARENTS AND SISTERS MOST
OF MY LIFE. THEIR FATHER WAS A RESPECTED UNITED METHODIST
MINISTER. HIS MOTHER WAS THE LEADER IN THE CHURCH. HIS
SISTERS HAD DISTINGUISHED CAREERS AND HIS BROTHERS
SERVED IN THE UNITED STATES MILITARY.

HE IS AMICABLE AND ALWAYS WILLING TO DO HIS BEST TO
CHOOSE THAT MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE.

YOU HAVE THE BIOGRAPHICAL FACTS TO SUPPORT THE MOST
SPECIAL RECOGNITION THAT THE D. A. W. CAN AWARD.

THIS IS A PERSONAL TESTAMENT OF CHARACTER.

SINCERELY YOURS,

John M. Ester, Jr.
JOHN M. ESTER, JR.
RETIRED FUNERAL DIRECTOR
944-9TH STREET
DES MOINES, IOWA 50309-1208

Judy - additional info
on Luther
from Main Line IGS

Partly cloudy 79°

5 Day Forecast



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Thursday 12 July 2007

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Nation is grateful for Villanova resident

By Ryan Richards

03/29/2007

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Luther H. Smith can now finally complete his book.

The Villanova resident and member of the famed Tuskegee Airmen is penning the final chapter of "Accepting the Challenge: A Tuskegee Airman's Story." The last chapter will be titled, "A Grateful Nation Remembers."

Advertisement

On March 29 at 1 p.m., in the august rotunda of the nation's Capitol, he and about 300 of his surviving World War II colleagues will be awarded the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor, the highest honor awarded to a civilian by Congress.

"It's going to be quite awesome," he said during an interview this week. "I'm definitely looking forward to it. I am truly honored to be recognized by the government of the United States after 62 years, since World War II."

Smith, still articulate and spry at 86, and his fellow airmen will join the ranks of such prestigious medal recipients as George Washington (the first recipient), the Wright brothers, Winston Churchill and Rosa Parks.

The Tuskegee Airmen broke the color barrier as the first African-American fighter pilots in the American military. They trained as aviators in the Army Air Corps, the precursor of the Air Force, at the Tuskegee Army Airfield in Tuskegee, Ala.

The African-American pilots, who trained at segregated facilities, endured bigotry on the ground in America while encountering enemy fire in the air in Europe. Despite these obstacles, the pilots achieved a stellar flying record: 1,578 combat missions, destroying or damaging 409 enemy aircraft and logging 200 successful strategic bomber escort missions over Europe.

Smith, who as a child growing up in Des Moines, Iowa, listened with awe the radio news reports of Charles Lindbergh's famed solo flight across the Atlantic, dreamed of

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news reports of Charles Lindbergh's famed solo flight across the Atlantic, dreamed of becoming an aviator. His dream became reality when he served two tours of duty in Europe for a total of 133 combat missions.

It was during his 133rd mission, on Oct. 13, 1944, while strafing a freight yard near Lake Balaton, Hungary, that his P-51 Mustang was hit by debris from exploding fuel tankers. His plane disabled and engulfed in flames, he was forced to eject, and he lost consciousness as he parachuted, landing in a tree near Zagreb, Yugoslavia. Seriously injured, he was captured by the Germans.

He was transported to prison camp Stalag 18-A and held for seven months, including in a hospital, until the end of the war.

After facing the bigotry and rigors of becoming one of the first African-American military aviators, facing the perils of hostile skies over Europe mission after mission for a year and a half, and surviving ejection from his disabled aircraft and then being imprisoned by the Nazis with a fractured hip, followed by years of hospital treatment for his injuries, he considers himself quite a fortunate man and is proud to have served his country. He said of the 992 African-Americans who were trained as military aviators in the war he was one of the 450 assigned to overseas combat missions. Of these, 66 were killed in action and 32 became prisoners of war.

"I'm very pleased and privileged to be here to talk about it," he said.

Smith retired from the military in 1947 as a captain. His injuries sustained in his final mission excluded him from pursuing a career as a civilian aviator, but he went on to complete his engineering studies at the University of Iowa and then worked as an aerospace engineer with General Electric Co. for 37 years.

Today, his inspiring story is told in an exhibit at the new Pennsylvania Veterans Museum in Media. His dedication as a fighter pilot earned him such prestigious medals as the Air Medal, Purple Heart and Distinguished Flying Cross. And now he can add the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor.

President Bush will confer the medal during the rotunda ceremony. Other speakers will include former Secretary of State Colin Powell and former Secretary of Defense William Cohen.

Smith, who will travel to Washington with his son, Gordon, said the presentation is a group honor, but each airman will be eligible to obtain a replica of the medal.

Smith looks forward not only to the medal ceremony but rejoining comrade-in-arms not seen in more than 60 years.

"We did serve together a long time ago," explained Smith, "and there was a very strong bond that held us in close unity to serve our country, and know that we were not particularly wanted but we wanted to serve... We felt over time that we were doing a good job. It's just a privilege to be here and have the experience to be honored by America, by the government of the United States."

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MORRIS AND MORRIS
Attorneys at Law

William S. Morris
James B. Morris III

1223 Center Street, Suite 24
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Tele: (515) 883-3201
Fax: (515) 883-3203

May 18, 2007

Ms. Judy McNamara, Regent
Daughters of the American Revolution
Jean Marie Cardinell Chapter
1907-55th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50310

RE: Luther Smith, DAR Medal of Honor

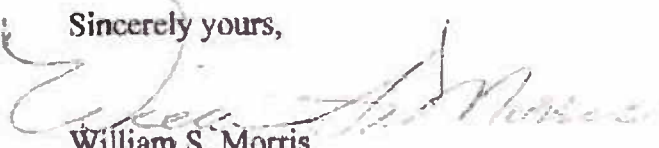
Dear Ms. McNamara:

This correspondence is in support of your organizations goal of awarding the DAR Medal of Honor to Mr. Luther Smith, formerly of Des Moines.

I have known Luther Smith since my boyhood in the 1960's; he was an inspiration to many young black men and boys during the post World War II period, inspiring many to become interested in learning to fly and in aerospace engineering. Both my brothers became avid flight enthusiasts, the youngest Robert, obtaining his private pilot single engine license at age 17 in 1975. My older brother Brad joined the Air Force ROTC in 1967 and was trained as a navigator on an A-7 attack aircraft during the Vietnam conflict. Luther Smith overcame physical disability and racism to become the first African-American hired by General Electric Company (GE) in 1950 as an aerospace engineer.

I cannot advocate too strongly for this man, he has been an inspiration by example for two generations of black men and women in Iowa and across the nation. His status as a combat pilot in the legendary Tuskegee Airmen during World War II only adds to his distinguished background. Mr. Smith is definitely worthy of consideration for the DAR Medal of Honor.

Sincerely yours,



William S. Morris
WSM:mgr



National Society Daughters of the American Revolution

Attachment No. 8

Linda Gist Calvin, President General

AMERICANISM COMMITTEE - Laura McNitts Kessler, *National Chairman*
P.O. Box 1018, Newport, NH 03773-1018 E-mail

Phone: (603) 863-7883

October 18, 2007

Ms. Valerie Holmes
NSDAR Office of Committees
1776 D Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: LUTHER HENRY SMITH MEDAL OF HONOR 2007-08 #17

Dear Valerie:

This letter authorizes approval of the DAR Medal of Honor to be awarded to **Luther Henry Smith**, of Villanova, Pennsylvania. The Jean Marie Cardinell Chapter, of Des Moines, Iowa, is sponsoring Mr. Smith and the presentation will be on July 11, 2008, at National Defense Night at the 117th Continental Congress.

Mr. Smith was born on September 27, 1920, in Des Moines, Iowa to Luther Henry and Ida Green Smith, both of whom were very active in the United Methodist Church where Luther's father worked as a minister. Smith's interest in aviation began at a very early age when he drew a picture of an airplane for his second grade class. "The only thing on my mind," says Smith "was that I wanted to be an aviator like Charles Lindbergh." His wish was to become a military aviator, even though, due to racism there were no black aviators in the 1930's.

He kept his dream a secret and quietly prepared academically by enrolling in the University of Iowa in 1938 to study engineering. By the time Smith left the university in 1940, the military was not any closer to accepting blacks in its ranks, so Smith enrolled in the Civilian Pilot Training Course, a program established by the government to train pilots in the case of a national emergency. That emergency came on December 7, 1941.

While in the air, Smith heard the urgent radio message "All aircraft return to their airports immediately." Upon landing, he learned that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. That same year, the U.S. Air Force began to train black aviators at Alabama's Tuskegee Army Air Field and at Tuskegee Institute, a black college in Alabama. Earning the distinction as one of the first black people in America to become a licensed pilot, Smith made the transition as a cadet to the U.S. Air Force's training facility in Alabama. He graduated as a second lieutenant in 1943, beginning his military career flying P-51 Mustangs, which escorted American bombers to and from their targets.

As a member of the 332nd Tuskegee Airmen, Second Lieutenant Smith was deployed to the European Theater. Within eight months of his deployment he logged 132 missions. His final assignment of World War II - No. 133, was scheduled for Friday, October 13, 1944. Parachuting while unconscious out of his burning P-51 Mustang aircraft, Smith came to rest in a tree, where German soldiers took him captive, imprisoning him for seven months. When Allied soldiers liberated the prison camps, Smith weighed 70 pounds. He spent the next two years in and out of hospitals in the United States. His injuries proved so severe that the US Air Force granted him early retirement at the age of 27.

Captain Smith's military awards include: the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters, the Purple Heart, eight European and Mediterranean Theatre Campaign Ribbons and the Prisoner of War Medal. The 332nd Fighter Group, to which Captain Smith belonged, was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for its longest bomber escort to Berlin, Germany, March 24, 1945. They destroyed three German ME-262 jet fighters and damaged five additional jet fighters.

As Smith could no longer fulfill his lifelong dream of serving as a military aviator, he returned to the University of Iowa, where with the promise of the GI Bill, he earned a B.S. degree in mechanical engineering. General Electric hired him in 1951, where he became the first African-American aerospace engineer to work for their Missile and Space Operations in Philadelphia; a position he retained for 37 years. Captain Smith's work included such activities such as consulting with scientist Werner Von Braun, who was in charge of rocket development for NASA, and helping the government create silent submarines. He also holds two U.S. patents.

Upon his retirement from General Electric in 1988, Captain Smith remained committed to educating people about the Tuskegee Airmen. He is in the process of writing a book to document his experience as a black man in a white military where he believed: "Racial equality in America started in the skies over Europe."

Congressman Leonard Boswell of Iowa relays "Not only did Luther Smith put his country before his life, he also served as a pioneer in the fight for racial equality, both in his military life and as a civilian. His actions serve as an inspiration to us all."

President Clinton selected Captain Smith as one of seven veterans, to accompany him to Europe for the 50th Anniversary of World War II in 1995. He also served on the Architect-Engineer Jury that chose the design for the World War II Memorial, and worked tirelessly to gain recognition for the contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen. In June 2004 he headed the 60th anniversary celebration of the Tuskegee Airmen's achievement: escorting American heavy strategic bombers on 200 missions throughout Europe without the loss of a single bomber to enemy aircraft.

Captain Smith received the Society of Automotive Engineers, Aerospace International, Franklin W. Kolk Aerospace Industry Award. In 2006 he received an honorary doctorate degree in public service from Tuskegee University, a University of Iowa Distinguished Alumni Award for Achievement and was inducted into the Iowa Aviation Hall of Fame. In March of 2007 he was presented the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award bestowed by the U.S. Congress.

U.S. Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa says of Smith "Luther Smith's accomplishments and his service to our nation have been nothing short of amazing. He is a shining example of an American who lives and breathes the principles of duty, honor, and country. I cannot imagine anyone more worthy of being honored by the DAR with the prestigious Medal of Honor."

We recognize Captain Luther Henry Smith as an outstanding American citizen who has served his country and his community with distinction. We commend him for his leadership, trustworthiness, and patriotism and we salute him for his outstanding service to the United States. Recognizing his exemplary military accomplishments and his outstanding efforts of educating current and future generations about the Tuskegee Airmen, we, therefore salute him with our highest award, the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Medal of Honor.

A letter of authorization has been sent to J. E. Caldwell Co. along with a check in the amount of \$39.

Please send the certificate to:

The Office of the President General, NSDAR
Attn: Martha Lawrence
1776 D Street NW
Washington, DC 20006-5303

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter and please contact me if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

Laura McCrillis Kessler

cc: Judith D. McNamara, Chapter Regent
Donna Ragner, State Americanism Chairman
DiAnne B. Lerud-Chubb, Iowa State Regent

JUDY

From: "Mike Rowley" <mjr1825@gmail.com>
To: <chunter@dmreg.com>, <lfandel@dmreg.com>, <letters@dmreg.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 05, 2009 2:39 PM
Subject: Please consider for a letter to the editor or as an opinion/editorial

Please consider for letter to the editor or op/ed article

Like many of my fellow Iowans, I celebrated the 4th of July by attending and participating in Independence Day Parades. Those I attended were in Urbandale and Corydon, Iowa.

While marching in Color Guard uniforms with one of my Central Iowa Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution compatriots; a 20 years old University of Iowa student. I was struck by his comment in the first 5 minutes of the walk. "That is the most respect a police officer has ever shown me," he said. As my young compatriot had passed the Urbandale police officer, the officer had come to attention and offered a salute.

I suspect the police officer was showing his respect for the uniform and what it represented, that being the sacrifices that were made by all who wore it during our country's fight for liberty.

We all have cheered for our favorite teams as we recognize them take the field in their uniforms. We often listen a bit more closely to those in the "uniforms" of doctors, nurses, clergy and others who represent a group worthy of respect.

I have often wondered if it is the greatness of "the group" that raises individuals to accomplish great things or the other way around. Is it the greatness of individuals that elevates the group?

We often honor individuals not only because they represent "the best" of the group but also because by honoring the individuals we are honoring the group they were a part of.

It is for this reason that I heartily endorse the effort to re-name the Des Moines International Airport after Captain Luther Smith. Many are aware that Luther (a member of the Tuskegee airmen) was born and raised in Des Moines and learned how to fly at our airport, that he was a highly decorated pilot and was shot down in 1944 and became a POW. Sadly many others are not. By honoring this great citizen of our city, state and country we will allow generations to come to the opportunity to continue to be elevated to greatness by the example he and his group set for us.

7/6/2009

Thanks,
Mike Rowley
1825 NW 129th Street
Clive, Iowa 50325

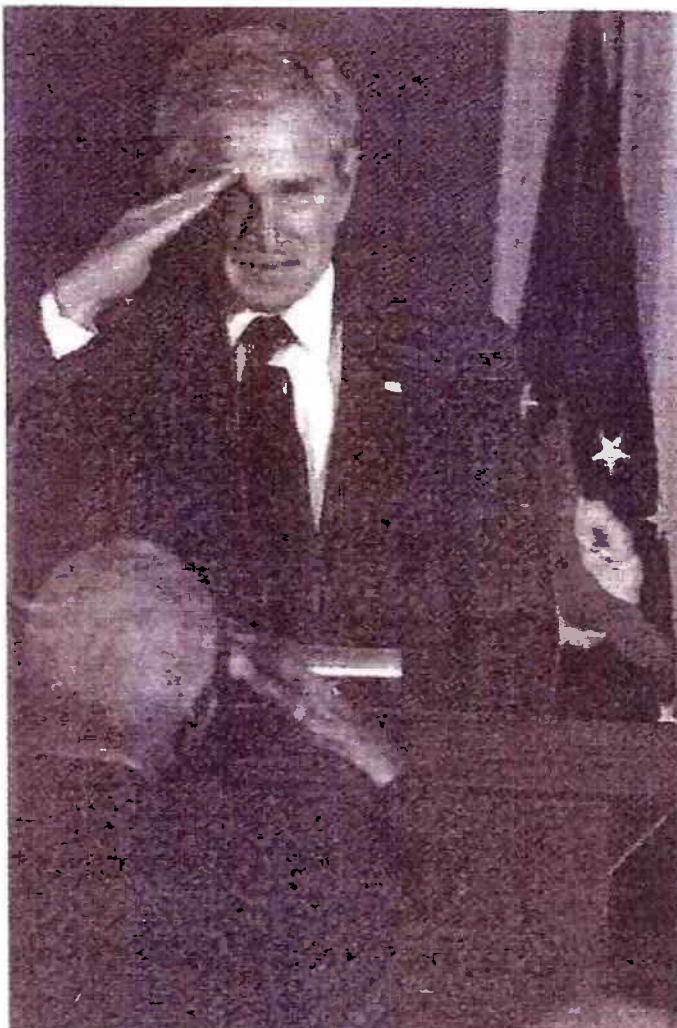
515-975-0498 MJR1825@gmail.com

Past President Iowa Society of the Sons of the American Revolution
Member of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War
Member Iowa Mayflower Society
Member Iowa Rifles Color Guard
Member General Society of the War of 1812

ians, it's our great country that's saying thank you."

— Rep. Charles Rangel, D-N.Y.

rates WWII's black fliers



DERWIS COOK/ASSOCIATED PRESS

at Bush salutes a
medal ceremony Th

member of the Tuskegee Airmen during the Congressional
day in the Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C.

ds, whose late father
Collins II, was a
Tuskegee Airmen
ished his father has
see the day. "One
few things that coul
to my father's eye
ride he had in bei
ee Airmen, and wh
it," Collins said.
called how his ow

father served as a pilot in
World War II and flew with a
group of young men who made
many sacrifices to defend their
country.

"Yet for all they sacrificed,
and all they lost, in a way they
were very fortunate because
they never had the burden of
having their every mission,
their every success, their

every failure viewed through
the color of their skin," he
said. "Nobody expected them
to bear the daily humiliations
while wearing the uniform of
their country."

Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Ia.,
said that the Iowans "blazed
a new trail for African-Ameri-
cans both in the military and
throughout America," and that

Tuskegee Airmen from Iowa

William V. Bibb* (Ottumwa);
James E. Bowman (Des
Moines); Russell L. Collins
(Davenport); Maurice V.
Esters* (Webster City); Joseph
P. Gomer (Iowa Falls); Thurman
E. Spriggs (Des Moines);
Robert L. Martin (Dubuque);
George R. Miller (Des Moines);
Clarence A. Oliphant* (Council
Bluffs); Robert M. Parkey*
(Des Moines); Luther H. Smith
(Des Moines); Robert W.
Williams* (Ottumwa).

* Deceased
Source: Iowa governor's office

their accomplishments in the
sides "initiated slow but steady
changes to deplorable segre-
gation policies here at home."

Gov. Chet Culver also con-
gratulated the Iowa airmen.
"These American heroes
bravely defended our country
despite being discriminated
against because of their race.
They defended the United
States during WWII with hon-
or and courage, even as their
fellow Americans subjected
them to bigotry and hate."

Bowman recalled how, dur-
ing his time as an airman, he
once took the train from Chi-
cago to his post in Louisville,
Ky. He arrived with \$100 in
his pocket, late at night and
hungry.

But as a black man in a seg-
regated Southern city, there
was nowhere he could eat
dinner. The only restaurants
open were for whites only.

"I was a hotshot pilot," he
said. "I thought I was some-
body — until I got ready to eat
a hamburger."

Register Staff Writer Tom Barton
contributed to this article.

Reporter Jane Norman can be
reached at (202) 906-8137 or at
jnorman@dmreg.com

'It's not people, it's not polit

Congress deco

A Des Moines veteran chokes up as he receives his long-overdue medal.

By JANE NORMAN

REGISTER WASHINGTON BUREAU

Washington, D.C. — Six decades after the Tuskegee Airmen overcame slurs and prejudice to become the first black airmen in the U.S. military, their nation honored them Thursday with the Congressional Gold Medal.

More than 200 airmen who served in World War II gathered at the U.S. Capitol for presentation of the medals, the highest civilian honor bestowed by Congress. Not only congressional leaders but also President Bush came to pay tribute.



For James Bowman, 84, of Des Moines, an airman at Tuskegee, it was a highly emotional moment. "There's so much wrapped up in it," Bowman said afterward, so choked up he could hardly speak. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime thing."

The former Des Moines schools associate superintendent dreamed "about how one day people will recognize you as just an American, and that's all you want."

The presence of the president at the ceremony meant that "we can't go any higher to share with these great heroes the fact that it's not people, it's not politicians, it's our great country that's saying thank you," said Rep. Charles Rangel, D-N.Y.

The airmen, now in their 80s or older, filed slowly into the Capitol rotunda for the ceremony, some in wheelchairs

and others with walkers or oxygen tanks. One proudly wore his old military uniform.

A wave of applause and cheers crashed down on them from hundreds of relatives, friends and onlookers in the standing-room-only crowd packed into the vast stone chamber.

It was 1941 when President Franklin Roosevelt created an all-black flight program at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, shortly after a lawsuit was filed by the NAACP to force the military to accept blacks as pilots.

Eventually, the airmen flew more than 15,000 combat sorties. According to the Iowa Tuskegee Airmen Memorial, Iowa had 12 graduate airmen, as well as others who "were washed out for often unjust reasons."

Bowman said that also at Thursday's ceremony were four of the other Iowans who served as Tuskegee Airmen: Luther Smith, Joseph Gomer, Robert Martin and Thurman Spriggs.

Bowman said he is leading a drive to have the Des Moines airport named for Smith, who flew 133 combat missions against the Nazis before becoming a German prisoner of war on his final flight over Yugoslavia in 1944. He was injured but survived captivity.

Such daring came even though blacks were assumed by many Americans at the time to lack the intelligence or drive to become pilots. "Nobody," Rangel told the airmen, "can understand how God has given you so much courage, from a nation that has rejected you because of your color, said you couldn't fight, said you couldn't fly, said you just weren't worthy."

Prescott E. Collins III of Co



Presk Gold

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that m
Ruck

Remarks at the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the World War II Memorial - Transcript

Continued from page 1.

With this memorial, we secure the memory of 16 million Americans, men and women who took up arms in the greatest struggle humanity has ever known. We hallow the ground for more than 400,000 who never came home. We acknowledge a debt that can never be repaid.

We acknowledge, as well, the men and women and children of the homefront, who tended the factories and nourished the faith that made victory possible; remember those who fought faithfully and bravely for freedom, even as their own full humanity was under assault, African-Americans who had to fight for the right to fight for our country, Japanese-Americans who served bravely under a cloud of unjust suspicion, Native American code talkers who helped to win the war in the Pacific, women who took on new roles in the military and at home--remember how, in the heat of battle, and the necessity of the moment, all of these folks moved closer to being simply Americans.

And we remember how, after World War II, those who won the war on foreign battlefields dug deep and gave even more to win the peace here at home, to give us a new era of prosperity, to lay the foundation for a new global society and economy by turning old adversaries into new allies, by launching a movement for social justice that still lifts millions of Americans into dignity and opportunity.

Advertisement

I would like to say once more before I go to the veterans here today what I said in Normandy in 1994. "Because of you, my generation and those who have followed live in a time of unequalled peace and prosperity. We are the children of your sacrifice, and we thank you forever."

But now, as then, progress is not inevitable; it requires eternal vigilance and sacrifice. Earlier today, at the Veterans Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, we paid tribute to the fallen heroes of the United States Ship Cole, three of whom have recently been buried at Arlington. The captain of the ship and 20 of the crewmembers were there today. We honor them.

Next week I will go to Vietnam to honor the men and women America lost there, to stand with those still seeking a full accounting of the missing. But at the same time, I want to give support to Vietnamese and Americans who are working together to build a better

future in Vietnam, under the leadership of former Congressman and former Vietnam POW Pete Peterson, who has reminded us that we can do nothing about the past, but we can always change the future. That's what all of you did after the war with Germans, Italians, and Japanese. You built the world we love and enjoy today.

Attachment No. 8

The wisdom this monument will give us is to learn from the past and look to the future. May the light of freedom that will stand at the center of this memorial inspire every person who sees it to keep the flame of freedom forever burning in the eyes of our children and to keep the memory of the greatest generation warm in the hearts of every new generation of Americans.

Thank you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:22 p.m. on The National Mall. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Fred F. Woerner, USA, (Ret.), Chairman, and Ambassador Haydn Williams, Commissioner, American Battle Monuments Commission, retired Archbishop Philip Hannan of New Orleans, a chaplain in the 82d Airborne Division, USA, during World War II; Capt. Luther Smith, USAF, (Ret.), member of the Tuskegee Airmen, an African-American bomber escort squadron in World War II; Frederick W. Smith, national cochairman, actor Tom Hanks, national spokesperson, and former Senator Bob Dole, national chairman, National World War II Memorial Campaign; and Senator Dole's wife, Elizabeth.

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the German scientist in charge of rocket development for NASA. Smith perfected a means of sealing fuel containers and propellants against leaks for the German scientist. The result was a tandem seal with a rubber-like ring offering the first line of protection against leaks, and a second seal, made of steel, providing backup.

Smith employed similar technology to help the government create silent submarines. If a sub were equipped with stronger seals to keep water out of the vessel, the ship wouldn't need bilge pumps to get rid of the water that seeped in through the propeller shaft. Thanks to the GE project, U.S. Navy submarines became quieter and much more difficult for the enemy to detect.

These are the kinds of assignments Smith can talk about. Details of other GE projects—including developing the capability to send missiles to Russia during the Cold War—remain classified.

Despite his many professional successes, Luther Smith felt the effects of discrimination, even following his military service and after being hired by GE. Often he had to travel south from his home in New York or Pennsylvania for business. It was there, in places like Alabama and Florida, that Smith had to face the harsh realities of life before the civil rights movement.

On a business trip to Huntsville, Alabama, Smith had to drop off his peers at a white hotel and then drive across town to another hotel willing to accept blacks.

In Florida, Smith could stay in the hotels, but he wasn't allowed to eat in the dining rooms. A business dinner in his hotel room didn't sound very professional, so he called the hotel president and told him about his dilemma. Later, one of the men traveling with Smith received a call from the hotel manager. "The dining room and all other amenities," the manager said, "are available to Mr. Smith as long as he is a guest here."

As his career progressed, Smith was able to take larger steps toward fighting racism. When he headed part of a defense contract, Smith was responsible for choosing the company he'd work with to bring the project to fruition. He was eyeing a firm in Texas, but he was wary of race relations in the South, so he faced his concern and visited the company. "Your company is at the top of my list," he told officials there, "but I'm black." If he would have to face discrimination while working with them, Smith went on, he'd go elsewhere. The company agreed to his terms. "It was the pressure of economics," Smith says.

Today, Luther Smith and his wife, Lois, live in a modest home near Pennsylvania's Villanova University. With a right leg that's about seven inches shorter than his left due to the plane crash and later bone infections he suffered, he moves slowly with the help of two black canes. In his cluttered home office, he keeps several medals he received for serving his country: his Purple Heart, Distinguished Flying Cross, his Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters, his Mediterranean Theater Campaign Ribbons, and his Prisoner of War Medal. Though the war continues to take a toll on his body, Smith talks about his



When he woke, he was floating through the air tethered to his parachute. He must have managed to pull the ripcord of the parachute, which, by some miracle, had opened outside the cockpit and pulled Smith free—snapping his right hip into two pieces. When Smith looked up, though, he saw a hole in the chute and realized he was falling too quickly. Looking down, he saw that his right foot was twisted around backward. He passed out again.

Attachment No. 8

Smith came to in the branches of a tree, a target for enemy soldiers firing at him from the ground. Once they realized he wasn't a threat, the Germans took him captive. For the next seven months, Smith was a prisoner of war, making do with what little food and heat the Germans supplied to their prison camps, but also spending a lot of time in hospitals, where he was treated for dysentery, bone infections, and injuries sustained from his final flight.

In 1945, when Allied soldiers liberated the prison camps, Smith weighed 70 pounds. He spent the next two years in and out of hospitals in the United States, but his injuries proved so severe that the U.S. Air Force granted him early retirement. Smith's military career was over at the age of 27.

Although Smith's lifelong dream had been to serve as a military aviator, that option was no longer open to him. Where could he turn to create a new future for himself? Smith fell back on his education. With two years of schooling in engineering and the promise of the GI Bill, Smith returned to the University of Iowa to complete his mechanical engineering studies. It turned out that earning his degree was the easy part.

After graduating in 1950, he tried for more than a year to land a job, but nobody wanted a black engineer. He applied for a position at General Electric (GE) and was turned down. Surprisingly, though, a few months later he received a letter from company officials asking him to contact them. They would do all they could to find him a position with GE. (It was years later that Smith learned why that letter arrived in his mailbox. His wife, Lois, had contacted GE and reprimanded the company for dismissing her husband because of race.)

Regardless, GE made a good choice and Luther Smith made the most of his backup plan. During his 37 years with the company, Smith used his knowledge of flying and his engineering education to file for six patents. The government patent office awarded him two.

It was the early 1950s and aerospace engineering was just getting off the ground. Planes were flying faster, farther, and higher. They had to be made of materials that were stronger and lighter and yet able to withstand higher pressures and temperatures than they ever had before. It was up to Smith and the other engineers at GE to help develop these technologies.

Early in his career, Smith was assigned to work as a consultant to Wernher Von Braun,

service in the military with a smile on his face. He can't help but be proud of his fellow Red-Tailed Angels.

Smith also continues to work to get the recognition he believes the Tuskegee Airmen deserve. In 1995, he and several other veterans accompanied President Bill Clinton to Europe for the 50th anniversary of VE-Day. On the flight home, he managed to convince Togo West, then secretary of the U.S. Army and head of the U.S. 50th anniversary celebration commemorating the end of World War II, that the Tuskegee Airmen deserved their own memorial.

West agreed, suggesting a memorial at Arlington National Cemetery to be funded by the Tuskegee Airmen and supported by the government. The deal was made. On November 10, 1995, Smith and some of the other Tuskegee Airmen gathered just around the corner from the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to stand before their own memorial—a tree and a commemorative plaque—at its dedication ceremony.

A decade later, Smith is one of only about 200 Tuskegee Airmen still living. Although he's 85 years old, he's committed to educating people about the Tuskegee Airmen and is writing a book to document his experience as a black man in a white military. He revels in the role of storyteller. After all, says Smith, "Racial equality in America started in the skies over Europe."

Maureen Harmon is a senior editor at Penn State magazine and a freelance writer based in central Pennsylvania.

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iowa
ALUMNI MAGAZINE



Of the nearly 1,000 black aviators who completed the Tuskegee program with their wings and the rank of second lieutenant, about 450 were deployed to the European Theater. Stationed either in North Africa or Italy, they escorted Allied bombers on their forays into enemy territory. At first, many men within the military were wary of the black pilots but as more and more pilots returned to base safely thanks to the protection they received the white aviators began to request that a Red-Tail be their escort.

Within eight months of his deployment, Smith had logged 132 missions. His final assignment of World War II-No. 133-was scheduled for Friday, October 13, 1944.

Luther Smith isn't superstitious, but climbing into the cockpit on Friday the 13th was a little unnerving, even though his mission was routine: to escort bombers from their target in Germany to the Danube River near Budapest. Yet, all went well. Encountering no enemy fire, when they reached the river the bombers continued on to their base in Italy, while Smith and the other escort planes attacked enemy airbases and other ground targets before resuming their flight home.

As they passed a freight yard outside Budapest, two of the four escort pilots peeled away to continue strafing the enemy below, but Smith was reluctant, since moments earlier he'd taken fire after destroying two German bombers parked at the edge of a field at the Budapest airport. Eventually, though, he, too, dipped down to offer his wingman protection and to take a few shots with his machine gun. He hit a freight car here, a building there.

Then he fired a shot that would end his military career.

"I hit something. I thought it was an ammunition dump-I don't know what it was, but there was a huge explosion and it blew up in my face."

As the plane flew through the fireball, the glass of Smith's cockpit shattered. The wings buckled. Part of the Mustang's red-tipped tail was blown off. His wingman sent him an urgent message: "Smith, you're leaking fuel."

"Just as I reached down to switch to the full tank," Smith recalls, "I thought the airplane hit something. It practically stopped in the sky. The cockpit immediately filled with smoke." Smith's plane wasn't leaking fuel at all. It was leaking engine coolant.

He had to get out of the plane, but he couldn't jump out without hitting the wing, so Smith unfastened his safety belt and began to turn the plane upside down. In that position, he figured his body could fall free from the plane. But the Mustang headed into a tailspin. In the turbulence, Smith's right foot wedged between the plane's steering controls that ran along the floorboard. The top half of his body hung outside the cockpit as the plane spiraled uncontrollably. The wind tore the oxygen mask off his face and Smith passed out.

At least I'll be prepared," Smith thought. "I won't fall flat because I don't know anything about the technical hurdles."

By the time Smith left the university in 1940, the military was not any closer to accepting blacks in its ranks, so Smith enrolled in a Civilian Pilot Training Course, a program established by the government to train pilots in the case of a national emergency.

That emergency came on December 7, 1941.

It was a Sunday, and Smith was in the air when an urgent message came over the radio. "All aircraft return to their airports immediately." When he landed, Smith learned that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. The United States was about to enter World War II, and Smith had a feeling that the military would need all the pilots it could get—including black men.

He was right. That same year, under political pressure from black leaders and organizations, the U.S. Air Force began to train black aviators at Alabama's Tuskegee Army Air Field and at Tuskegee Institute, a black college in Alabama founded by Booker T. Washington.

Since he'd been one of the first black people in America to become a licensed pilot, Smith figured earning his military wings would be simple. "I thought they were going to give me my wings, since I could fly," Smith says. "I was never so wrong. I didn't know anything." He learned quickly that military flying is different from the civilian flying he knew. "It's precision personified—the difference between driving a Volkswagen and an 18-wheel tractor trailer," he says.

The cadets at Tuskegee had a lot to prove but they were determined to succeed at this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. When the men lined up during one of their early training sessions, Smith says, the director of cadet training told them to take a look at the men standing to their right and to their left. One—or both—of these men, he said, won't make it to the end of training.

"You always thought, 'I'm being measured, I'm being watched,'" Smith recalls. "Nobody had a feeling, 'I'm going to make it.'" But he did make it, graduating in 1943. By 1944, he

"Captain Smith never appeared bitter and even questioned why what he did was such a big deal. Yet, I realized that given all of the difficulties in our lives today, much of our efforts pale in comparison to the life of Captain Smith. Without his efforts, ours would be considerably more difficult."

Victor G.J. Rodgers, former UI professor of chemical and biochemical engineering and Ethnic Inclusion Effort for Low Engineering director

"It should be remembered that Luther Smith served in a segregated armed services with the likelihood of success being very slim. His commendable acts of heroism certainly added to the success of the war effort. Because of men like him who paved the way, I, along with many others, was able to serve in an integrated Air Force."

Thomas Moore, Executive Director of the African American Historical Museum and Cultural Center of Iowa in Cedar Rapids

black aviators in the 1950s, so I kept it a secret."

56
Attachment No. 8

Smith headed to the University of Iowa in 1938 to study engineering, although he had no intention of becoming an engineer. To qualify for military aviation training, a candidate was required to have at least two years of college education. With engineering, Smith figured, he'd get the technical training he would need if the military ever did decide to accept blacks in its air force.



"The Tuskegee Airmen and, namely, Luther Smith made it possible for my son to earn his living today as an aviator. They softened that hard road to being an aviator and made entry into the profession easier and more inviting for my son and others like him. Even today, a black pilot draws smiles; a black fighter pilot draws stares and smiles. Thank you, Tuskegee Airmen, and a very special thank you to Captain Smith."

Lilia Abron, 72PhD, president of Peer Consultants, an environmental firm in Washington, DC, and the first black woman in the nation to earn a Ph.D. in chemical engineering

"Luther Smith has contributed significantly to the achievement of racial equality in the U.S. and the world and helped change the face of the U.S. military in a remarkably short period of time."

P. Barry Butler, UI College of Engineering dean

The Flight of Red-Tailed Angel

by Walter D. Jones

On Luther Smith's coffee table sits a model airplane with a red tail. The nose of the P-51 Mustang is perpetually pointed at the ceiling as if it's about to lift off the wooden surface and fly about the room. When Smith tells war stories, he points to the plane. It's the same kind he crashed in World War II. The same kind of plane in which he almost died. It's the same kind of plane he and some 400 other black aviators flew while escorting American bombers to and from their targets.

Smith talks about the bomber pilots—all of them white—and how they called their black escorts Red-Tailed Angels because they offered impenetrable protection. Never once in their 200 escort bomber missions did the Red-Tailed Angels lose a bomber to enemy fire. It's their claim to fame. That, and the fact that they were the first black aviators in the U.S. Air Force. It was later that they came to be known as the Tuskegee Airmen, named after the base in Alabama where they trained.

But it was years earlier that Smith knew he'd fly one day. He knew it all the way back in second grade in Des Moines, Iowa, when he drew a picture of an airplane for class. He showed his drawing to his teacher and told her he would someday fly his family to Africa in that plane. "The only thing on my mind," says Smith, "was that I wanted to be an aviator like Charles Lindbergh."

When Smith was 13, he started hanging around the Des Moines airport to watch the planes. Airport employees took a liking to the curious boy and offered him a job picking up popcorn bags and other garbage that visitors left behind. Soon, he impressed the mechanics, too, and they allowed him to help wipe down the fuselages, clean off the windshields, refuel the tanks, and carry out minor repairs. He even snagged the attention of the local press. In the summer of 1934, the *Des Moines Register Tribune* published a photo of the youngster working on the engine of a plane. The headline proclaimed Smith "America's Youngest Grease Ball."

But Smith didn't want to be a mechanic, and he didn't yearn simply to fly planes; he wanted to become a military aviator. "The only caveat," he says, "was that there were no

For the University of Iowa, the Purple Heart, European and Mediterranean Theater Campaign Ribbons, a Prisoner of War Medal, the Franklin W. Kulk Aerospace Industry Award from the Society of Automotive Engineers, and election to the UI Distinguished Engineering Alumni Academy.

Now, the University of Iowa is proud to add another medal to that collection. This Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes Luther Smith's courageous wartime service, his outstanding career, and his significant contributions to racial equality in this country.

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distinguished alumni award

Luther H. Smith

Achievement 2006

Luther H. Smith, 50BSME, has fought for racial equality in the skies of war-torn Europe and in his peacetime career in America.

As a young boy, Smith dreamed of becoming a pilot—at a time when few blacks had managed to breach the color barrier and enter the field of aviation. So, in 1936, Smith enrolled at the University of Iowa to study engineering, hoping to join the ranks of the country's military pilots. Two years into his studies, World War II began. Rather than integrate troops, the government formed all-black military units, including the much-lauded Tuskegee Airmen, which Smith joined in 1942.

Between July 1944 and May 1945, the famed troop flew 200 escort missions over nine European countries without the loss of a single bomber to enemy aircraft—a feat that remains an astonishing achievement.

Based in Italy, Captain Smith flew 133 missions and is credited with destroying two enemy aircraft. On his final mission in October 1944, his plane was hit over Yugoslavia. Against all odds, Smith managed to free himself from his burning aircraft and open his parachute—although he sustained severe injuries to his hip and foot.

Smith was captured by German soldiers and endured two years in hospital and prison camps. By the time Allied soldiers liberated him in May 1945, he weighed just 70 pounds. Back in the U.S., he spent another two years in the hospital before being released; his injured leg seven inches shorter than his flying career over. Smith retired at the age of 27 as a captain and a war hero.

Smith then returned to the UI and completed a degree in mechanical engineering in 1950, going on, despite continuing racism, to a long and successful career as an aerospace engineer with General Electric. In the 1980s, he published numerous papers, was awarded two patents, and was frequently called by the Department of Defense and defense-related agencies for special assignments. He earned an M.E. from Pennsylvania State University in 1977.

Smith represented the U.S. Army Air Corps as one of seven WWII veterans selected by President Clinton for the 50th anniversary V-E celebration trip to the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, and Russia. He also was on the evaluation board that selected the WWII memorial on the Mall in Washington, DC, and was instrumental in the establishment of a memorial to the Tuskegee Airmen.

A member of the Iowa Aviation Hall of Fame, Smith has received countless honors for his service to his country and for his success in the field of engineering: the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters, the Purple Heart, European and Mediterranean Theaters Campaign Ribbons, a Prisoner of War Medal, the Frank B. Rowland Aerospace Industry Award from the Society of Automotive Engineers, and election to the UI Distinguished Alumni Academy.

Now, the University of Iowa is proud to add another medal to that collection. This Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes Luther Smith's courageous wartime service, his outstanding career, and his significant contribution to racial equality in this country.

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Luther H. Smith
Achievement 2006



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Luther H. Smith
B.S. 1950 in Mechanical Engineering

*Life 2013 -
Gordon son
Della daughter*



Luther H. Smith of Villanova, PA, is a retired U.S. Air Force captain who flew 133 combat missions in World War II, and is a retired General Electric Co. engineer with 37 years service and two U.S. patents. A native of Des Moines, IA, Captain Smith is an original member of the famed Tuskegee Airmen. He flew 133 missions and is credited with destroying two German enemy aircraft in aerial combat and 10 German aircraft in ground strafing missions. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart, eight European and Mediterranean Theaters Campaign Ribbons, and the Prisoner of War Medal after being permanently injured on his final combat mission, parachuting while unconscious from his burning P-51 Mustang aircraft, and held as a prisoner for seven months until the war ended.

After earning his B.S. degree at The University of Iowa, Captain Smith worked for GE's Missile and Space Operations in Philadelphia until his retirement in 1988. He holds two U.S. patents, has published numerous technical documents and publications, and has worked on special assignments with the U.S. Air Force, NASA, and U.S. Navy Submarine Command. Captain Smith is a recipient of the Society of Automotive Engineers, Aerospace International, Franklin W. Kolk Aerospace Industry Award. He has served on the Architect-Engineer Evaluation Jury that chose the design for the World War II Memorial, and has worked tirelessly to gain recognition for the contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen. In June 2004, he headed the 60th anniversary celebration of the Tuskegee Airmen's greatest World War II achievement, escorting American heavy strategic bombers on 200 missions throughout Europe with the loss of a single bomber to enemy aircraft.

Moreover, he has contributed significantly to the achievement of racial equality in the U.S. and the world and helped change the face of the U.S. military in a remarkably short period of time. In February 2006, Smith received an honorary doctorate degree in public service from Tuskegee University. In June 2006, he was awarded the UI Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award for Achievement and in October 2006 he was inducted into the Iowa Aviation Hall of Fame. In March 2007, Smith was presented the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award bestowed by the U.S. Congress.

[Click here](#) to view an Iowa Public Television "Iowa Pathways" video feature on Smith.

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IOWA TUSKEGEE ARMEN MEMORIAL

World War II Red Tail Angel

P-51D Mustang

Dedicated 9 November 2002

William V. Bibb

Ottumwa

James E. Bowman

Des Moines

Russell L. Collins

Cedar Rapids

Maurice V. Eaters

Webster City

Joseph P. Gomer

Iowa Falls

Robert L. Martin

Dubuque

George H. Miller

Des Moines

Clarence A. Oliphant

Grinnell Falls

Robert M. Parkey

Des Moines

Luther H. Smith

Des Moines

Thurman E. Spriggs

Des Moines

Robert W. Williams

Ottumwa

Sponsored by the

Fort Des Moines Memorial Park

And Education Center





Photo copyright 1981 Des Moines Register and Tribune Company

ARTHUR E. THOMAS

Airport Manager

August 5, 1925 - December 10, 1965

No one person has influenced Des Moines aviation more than Art Thomas. And no one person is remembered more fondly on the Des Moines Airport's 50th Anniversary.

Through the vision of this man, aviation in Des Moines is what it is today — a successful part of the economy and landscape of Iowa's capitol city.

When Des Moines built Iowa's first Municipal airport near Altoona, Art Thomas supervised the construction. That was 1925. When the current airport was founded, it was Art Thomas who was in charge of planning and supervision of work. And Art Thomas was the airport manager on duty when operations got underway in December, 1932.

But Thomas was more than a supervisor — a planner — a manager. He was a pioneer! At the time Art Thomas first entered airport management, there were no federal regula-

tions and no civilian standards — not even any generally accepted rules for landings and take offs. It was Art Thomas who wrote to airports in London, Paris, Berlin and Amsterdam asking about their plans and governmental regulations. What Thomas learned he put to work in Des Moines, making our airport one of the outstanding operations in America ... just as Art Thomas was one of the outstanding airport managers in America. In 1960, he received the American Association of Airport Executives Presidents Award.

Des Moines and its aviation industry owe a great debt to Art Thomas. It is in recognition of this indebtedness — and in fondness for one of this country's most courageous aviation pioneers, that this official program of the Des Moines Airport's 50th Anniversary Celebration is dedicated to the memory of Arthur E. Thomas.

56

MASON CITY HOSTS ADMINISTRATOR "PETE" QUESADA AND BLUE ANGELS

Mason City's 1960 Aviation Days is expected to top 100,000 in attendance it was announced by Stan T. Reynolds, Chairman. Featured in the program on July 10th at Mason City Municipal Airport will be General "Pete" Elwood Quesada, Administrator of the Federal Aviation Agency, together with the Blue Angels precision jet team.

Reynolds went on to say that, "The day will be crammed with aviation activities and events," We are expecting all types of military missiles and equipment, together with Air Force aircraft, choppers, and the Strategic Air Command Band and Drill Team, Reynolds continued. This should be the most complete Air Show in the midwest stated Reynolds, and certainly one of the largest.

MANAGER OF THE YEAR



Mr. Arthur E. (Art) Thomas, manager of the Des Moines Municipal Airport, has been named the outstanding airport manager of the year by the American Association of Airport Executives.

This singular honor is justly due a man who has served in this capacity for the last 34 years and has developed the Des Moines Airport from a cornfield to a 1,030 acre facility which is valued at between 11 and 12 million dollars, and is still being expanded.

We add our congratulations to Mr. Thomas for his outstanding contribution to aviation in the State of Iowa, and wish him many more years of successful management.

DO YOU KNOW?

that according to forecasts general aviation planes will be flying 16 million hours annually by 1965, a gain of 33 percent over the current rate.

that the photo on page three is of the Perry Municipal Airport.

that general aviation aircraft last year flew 1 1/2 billion miles -- the equivalent of 3,500 round trips to the moon.

that the use of agricultural planes for spraying insecticides on crops adds \$3 billion to our farm income annually.

Council Buys 160-Acre Jones Sit

**\$80,000 IS PRICE
IN SETTLEMENT**

Crouch Takes Steps for Payment.

(Continued from Page 1)

...confirmed last week that the only way to get the city out of the hands of the city and the present time is the Joint Bank.

Mayor Crouch announced after the vote on the agreement had been taken that the would propose to the county purchase of \$150,000 of the \$250,000 in bonds authorized by the vote for purchase and construction of an airport of the last session.

Mayor Crouch announced

Blaine, *Times* editorial.

Of this sum \$20,000 will be made available to the employees of the firm out of work to move the danger zone from the present airport to the new one off Highway No. 13 east of Blaine and to build temporary runways and to build permanent runways because the ground becomes too hard to work on the summer said.

"We expect to furnish aid for the unemployed by making this money available as soon as pos-

"Please," said the
woman, "I am
in need of your help."

The mayor has been asked to quantify the construction of highways and information free. Pallas Communications President Frank Malibu that the present firm might be so tired as whether that place would be valuable in case here.


Board Almost Lost.

City officials have feared for two years that the government might discontinue the Marine as an armal stop if appropriate facilities were not provided for winter landing.

The settlement signed by the mayor and Jones provides that the city shall pay \$40,000 in cash for the ship, and \$100,000 in bonds to be due on or before Feb. 1, 1912.

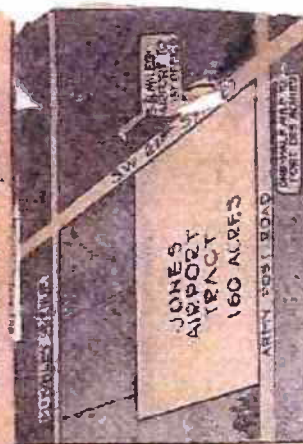
Charles of the court actions with a brief for both parties. It was a brief, a Justice's opinion will amount to the equivalent of \$4,000.

4 "Pictures of Jones Farm Purchased for Airport



Location of Airport Site

These photographs of the Young farm at South West Twenty-eighth st. and Army Post road show the land purchased by the city council Tuesday for Des Moines' "outback airport." Little grading will be necessary. The firm is on a virtually level, as our picture shows.



This map shows the location of the airport site. It is a short distance south of Yakima city as the paved highway leads away from the downtown in 1942.

the end of the Fort. Two minutes after the explosion, the Japanese were seen to be running away. The Japanese were seen to be running away. The Japanese were seen to be running away.

Municipal Airport After Compromise

[illegible]

Xukon Flow Stilled
by Subzero Chlorate
DAMON, YUKON TERRITORY ON — The great Tule-

active life, free from pain. The prescription was then made by a number of soldiers who were afflicted with ailments resulting from exposure to the elements.

Stomachache, Headache, Lumbago, Rheumatism, Neuralgia, Neuritis, Myositis and Joint Pain, etc., and they too, found amazing relief.

Yesterday, with the temperature at 73°—

section in voting unanimously in favor of the proposition to buy the steam tract for the city's parkway, street, etc. His committee had his hands very much full of business matters has come to the conclusion that the joint venture to the city which would be satisfactory from every angle. The decision will be in a position to make their real program in a matter of days.

W. W. Warnock—The essential two-sided quality of Warnock's character is shown in his attitude toward the city's parkway, street, etc. His committee had his hands very much full of business matters has come to the conclusion that the joint venture to the city which would be satisfactory from every angle. The decision will be in a position to make their real program in a matter of days.

road show the land purchase necessary. The firm

Thomas Had Little Money—

He 'Chiseled' Way to an Airport

—But 'Borrowed' Things for City

By Howard Dobson.

If Des Moines ever erects a monument to Art Thomas, the airport superintendent, it undoubtedly will be in the shape of a big chisel—that is, if the people who know him best have anything to do with the project.

Oh, somebody might build a monument to tell the story of a young man who wanted to be an airport superintendent, and became one by writing letters, asking questions, and keeping his eyes and ears open.

Or they might build one to show how Thomas broke into the business by masquerading as a field man who was trustworthy and wouldn't drink, and how in the time of a \$2,500,000, nine-acre field that is one of the four best in the nation.

And they might even build one out showing the home town boy who married his neighborhood sweetheart, is raising two children, works hard at his job, and believes in Des Moines.

But without the big chisel, the monument wouldn't be the true Art Thomas.

✱ ✱ ✱

When the city decided in 1932 to build its airport, then and a nation park near Altoona in northern Iowa county, to its present site at a W. Twenty-first and Army Post road it had about \$200,000 to spend.

By the time the new land was purchased, business men had been repaid some \$27,000, and some other incidental expenses met, there was around \$200,000 left to make the old hanger, grade and drain the new field—in short, to get an airport in operation.

"Then I showed up the chisel," Thomas says.

That Thomas and the chisel operated effectively is attested by the fact that the civil engineering authority rated the Des Moines airport A-1 when it was completed.

That Thomas and the chisel still are operating effectively is attested by the airport's present CAA rating.

But there were days when Thomas had to keep the country side begging answers to keep the wheels down, begging money and tools to hold things together, and another story came of equipment he might need.

"Let me use that," Thomas would say, pointing to what he wanted. "I don't know what I can get it back to you, but the city has a tag against it. There isn't a tag against it, there isn't a tag against it."

At one time the city was so busy to spend on its airport, and Art Thomas believed in that airport, he was determined that it should operate—whether he had to steal, beg or steal.

But there is more in the story than chiseling.

Arthur Edward Thomas is 40



Airport Superintendent Art Thomas.
One Christmas He Got a Nice, Shiny Chisel...

years old, was born in Des Moines, graduated from West High school, has been married 15 years to the girl who lives across the alley, and has two boys and a daughter, all in Lincoln High school. He has worked for the city 30 years.

A Draftsman.

He had tinkered with automobiles while he was in high school, and soon after graduation went to work for the Ford Motor Co. as a machine draftsman.

Then came the world war, and Thomas enlisted in the air arm of the navy—then called the United States Naval Reserve Force. After ground school at the Great Lakes, Ill., training station, he went to Pensacola, Fla., as an instructor.

Thomas was only 18, and you had to be at least 21 to get a commission, but he passed an officers' training course examination, so was rated as a first class instructor and detailed as an instructor.

"Then we had a little quarrel (the army) man," Thomas says, "and that helped us get a few more extra dollars here and there."

Thomas went to the navy with the boy from across the alley, Homer (Pat) Wells, now with the Des Moines Union Railway. He later married Pat's sister, Gertrude.

Back from the navy, Thomas went to work again for the Ford Motor Co. One word to work for the city as a draftsman in the engineering department in January, 1932.

New Airport.

In 1932 the federal government chose the old city field for the new airport. Legat & Power, Inc., the local architect of the city, and two Moines had to find money to build the new airport. If it wasn't the money, it was the money.

Thomas prepared the plans for grading and draining the selected site, and the city eventually saw the work. He stayed on as manager until the field was leased to

Yellow Cab Airways, Inc., then went back to his drafting board.

"At the time and there at Altoona, I felt sure that wasn't going to be the Des Moines' airport," Thomas says. "It wasn't a good location and I knew Tom Moines was going to have to have a better field."

Thomas decided, then, that he wanted to be an airport superintendent—wanted to manage the biggest airport Des Moines ever would have. He looked things over, recognized that he didn't know much about the business, and resolved that he would learn.

"I wrote letters to every airport in the world that I could think of," he says. "I would just slip a dollar bill in the envelope and ask them to send me all the literature they had."

From Europe.

Those letters came both from Le Bourget field in Paris, France; Weppahoff in Berlin, Germany; Croydon in London, England; and others all over Europe. They came a few native languages of the country, and Thomas had each one translated then studied the information.

In 1932, the city decided to move to the present airport site. Airport experts submitted estimates asking for \$12,000 to \$18,000 to design the new airport.

Since he had left the Altoona field, Thomas had been busy in the basement of the city hall doing a new airport along with his other work. The probable site was known for a long time and he had the plans in his top shape when the time came.

He went to Parker Crouch and saw that report.

"Mr. Mayer," he said, "I have seen you draw you the picture of an airport you ever saw, but the city can't build a one of them for the \$100,000 it has to spend."

And the city eventually saw it. Thomas was. Fritz Walsh, then parks commissioner, appointed

him airport superintendent and Thomas went to work to build the city's new field.

The first year, his appropriation was \$2,500. Out of that had to come his own salary of \$7,100, which he took from \$1,000 to \$1,500 a year, and to keep the budget, money to keep the runway clear of snow, and everything else.

Now and Then.

Thomas would call his brother-in-law, and say, "Pat, I have to have a few more and better and some better pins. Can you kindly fix me up a little inside and drop it off the next time you're near my house?"

Pat would do it, and some pieces of machinery would go on another few months.

"Any time I was around the city hall and saw anything I needed," Thomas says, "if it was snow, if nobody was looking, and if I could carry it, I had it."

One night Fritz Walsh called Thomas. "Art," he said, "I know where there is some pipe." Thomas needed some pipe.

So Walsh and Thomas backed up a truck that night and relieved the streets department of some pipe it had left lying around.

"I think Fritz had asked them if they wanted the pipe," Thomas says, "and I guess they told him they did. But we knew they didn't."

One Christmas, Thomas got a long flat package from Pat Wells. He opened it, and there was a beautiful, shiny, nickel-plated chisel.

But then got a little better as the years went on. Yes, yes, the chisel was not on successful money earnings, and the annual appropriations grew gradually. For this year it is \$22,500.

Thomas was still getting the letters from Europe when war broke out. For the last two years, they had been coming in English, which made things easier.

He discovered that European airports was much for boundary lighting. It is more important and fully so than.

But the CAA insists on white boundary lights and all the new lighting produced in this country has a slight circular tag. Thomas had to try it, though, and he put in a tube two years ago at his own expense—and used it all winter.

"Due to the frost," he says, "the light could hardly be seen at dusk. At night it was all right, but not at dusk. I had to find out for myself, though."

Thomas' youngsters, Bob, 17, and Mary Ellen, 15, have made numerous car trips and jobs in order to get into the party as well as through the academy at Altoona—but neither of them has ever ridden on a train.

FROM 11 STATES—

6,736 Tour Mile-Square D.M. Airport

**WPA WORKERS
ACT AS GUIDES**

Slow Paved Runways
at Open House.

More than 6,000 persons from 53 Iowa counties and 11 states visited Des Moines' disabled mile-square airport Sunday during a seven-hour open house."

open house.

▲ Total of 1,487 automobiles (passing) through the entrance from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 4,720 per cent attended. Lee Kestel, chairman.

WPA Guides
Through construction of the
each projects administered.
guide was supplied for each
troop throughout the day. The
troop was over most of the moun-
tain area, which included the
highest ridges of the four which
eventually will be saved.

eventually will be paved.
When the project is completed, the 146-acre dam will be the first Chaco airport in the nation. It is the highest reaching airport in the civil aviation service and is granted only in quantity which have 4,500 feet runways extending in eight directions.

The old airport of 18th avenue was found inadequate for huge shipments to and from Los Angeles. After Jan. 1, United Air Lines planes will make all regular stops directly, compared to the four now made. The schedule will include two west-bound flights, Los Angeles-Salt Lake City, and one 10-passenger plane to Salt Lake City.

At 11 o'clock, municipal surgeon superintendent gave this ear of violator a first-hand picture of the subject's appearance during "open house." Left to right: Thompson, Mrs. E. J. Bergberry, 1349 West 12th street, Mrs. J. J. Bergberry, 1349 West 12th street, Mrs. J. J. Bergberry, 1349 West 12th street, Mrs. J. J. Bergberry, 1349 West 12th street.

Dec 1937

Study Airport Plans



Robert Schmidt, airport engineer, the United Air Lines flight, is shown studying plans for the new airport. He is standing next to the airport engineer, who is looking at the plans.

Study Airport Plans



Mr. Schmidt, left, airport engineer for the Chicago, Ill., office of the United States Weather Bureau, looks over plans of a new airport. The plans show the location of the new airport, the location of the new airport, and the location of the new airport.

Dec. 1, 1948

Jury Starts Probe of Value of Airport Site



Dec. 1, 1948



Arthur E. Thomas

Born Des Moines May 13 1900

Manager Des Moines Municipal Airport

Since August 5, 1925

Presented September 1951 by a group of citizens in recognition of his more than twenty-five years devoted to the construction and operation of Des Moines Airports and his contribution to local, state and national aviation.



Architectural Strategies

William Dikis, FAIA
Architect

July 28, 2009

Board of Directors
Des Moines International Airport
Des Moines, Iowa

Re: Proposal for change of airport name

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I oppose changing the name of the airport. I believe that the message implicit in the name, Des Moines International Airport, would be diluted if changed.

1. I am very proud of being an Iowan and from the Des Moines Metropolitan Area.
2. The name of the airport being the same as the central city reinforces its prominence and keeps the importance of central Iowa on the map.
3. The notion of being an "International" airport conveys a higher level of importance.

If it is desired to honor certain persons by naming something after them, perhaps it could be the terminal or parking ramp or runway or some other part of the airport without changing the overall common name of the airport.

Or perhaps a plaque, similar to the one for John Fitzgibbon, could be installed for certain persons of considerable importance to central Iowa. But of course, then the problem would become, who gets honored and where does it stop? Somehow, the "Bill Konkol IDF Room" or the "William Dikis Stern" doesn't do it for me.

Sincerely,

William M. Dikis, FAIA

Cc: Des Moines City Council



INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 25126 DES MOINES, IA 50315-0302
Telephone (515) 256-5300 FAX (515) 256-5329
www.dmfis.com

July 24, 2009

Mr. James Erickson
Chairman
Des Moines International Airport Board
Terminal Building
5800 Fleur Drive
Des Moines, Iowa 50321

Dear Mr. Erickson:

As the Board is considering a name change or modification for the Des Moines International Airport, I would like to voice an opinion.

Art Thomas was the first manager of the airport, having transferred from the Parks Department. He served until 1965 and was very involved in the development of the airport. As a tenant, I knew him from 1939 throughout his tenure.

I would like to express my support in naming the airport as a tribute to his service and influence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "H. V. Gregory", written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

Howard V. Gregory

June 26, 2009

Dear Board Members,

It is an admirable endeavor to honor our Iowa, Tuskegee serviceman. These were exceptional men serving in exceptional times under dire circumstances. They all deserve special recognition. I think it would be more appropriate to give honor by naming a park, road, or building after such a hero.

To alter the name of the Des Moines International Airport would cause tremendous confusion after all these years. The airport does not serve Iowa alone; it serves the entire country as well as international travelers. I am not in favor of a name change.

Thank you for your kind attention and consideration.



Linda Kemble
2525 SW Countyline Rd., #376
Des Moines, Iowa 50321

6/26/09

Attachment No. 14

56

Jerry Boyd - 4107 2nd Ave, 243-3260

He has lived in DM since 1960.

"Do not change name of airport. Only way to consider name change is if they [people requesting the change] put up the money. The cost + confusion must be considered." Mr. Boyd works at American Republic Insurance.

3 August 2009

Dear Members of the Des Moines Airport Board:

As active members of our community and state, we wish to express our support for renaming the Des Moines International Airport after WWII war hero and Tuskegee Airman Luther Smith.

There is no one more fitting than Luther, who grew up in Des Moines and spent his childhood around the airplanes at the Des Moines airport. Later, as a Tuskegee Airman, he flew over 100 missions, was captured and held as a prisoner of war and later released but suffered injuries which ended his lifelong dream of flying. Luther spent most of his life in Iowa in and around aviation as a young man and as a professional. It would be an honor for our state and a badge of honor to rename the Des Moines International Airport after Luther Smith.

The citizens below all agree. While this issue has just recently reached the public, we expect to gather many, many more supporters.

We respectfully request that you recommend that the Des Moines City Council rename the airport in honor of Luther Smith.

Sincerely,

Art and Esther Hessburg
Des Moines

Andrea and Dan McGuire
Des Moines

Jean Hessburg and Ron Parker
Des Moines

Betty and Rep. Bruce Hunter
Des Moines

Carl Wiederaenders and Melissa Watson
Des Moines

Dusky Terry
Earlham

Mark and Tonya Swanda
Des Moines

Sandy Flahive
Des Moines

Tammy Gentry
Des Moines

Paulee Lipsman
Des Moines

Rich and Jo Scholl
Des Moines

Julle Stauch
West Des Moines

Brad and Becky Hudson
Ankeny

Jill and Joe Crees
Des Moines

Lynn and Jan Reinicke
Des Moines

Mark Lambert & Debra Fincham
Polk City

Xenda Lindel
Des Moines

R+F-2

I'M SAM KALAINOV OF 3131 FLEUR DRIVE, DES MOINES. I SERVED ON THE AIRPORT BOARD FOR 25 YEARS AND RETIRED FROM IT OVER TWO YEARS YEARS AGO.

OVER THE YEARS THERE HAVE BEEN INQUIRIES FOR A NAME CHANGE OF THE AIRPORT, AND WHILE WELL-MEANING, FAILED TO FURTHER IDENTIFY THE FACILITY AS THE GATEWAY TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITHIN AND SURROUNDING DES MOINES.

ANY SUGGESTION FOR CHANGE SHOULD EXHIBIT A MAGNITUDE BEYOND ELEVATING ANYONE HERETOFORE BEING RELATIVELY UNKNOWN.

THE SUGGESTION TO RECOGNIZE A WORLD WAR 11 AVIATOR WHO UNDER - WENT INITIAL FLIGHT INSTRUCTION IN DES MOINES FAILS TO ESTABLISH A WIDELY KNOWN AND RECOGNIZED NAME AND EVENT OF UNIVERSAL AWARENESS.

WHILE NOT DENYING THE VALUE OF HIS SERVICE AND THE HORRIFIC NATURE OF HIS COMBAT EXPERIENCES, SUCH RECOGNITION BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS SHORT-LIVED.

THE HEROIC EPISODES IN THE LIFE OF CAPTAIN LUTHER SMITH ARE BEST ACKNOWLEDGED WITH THE STATIC DISPLAY OF THE P-51 MUSTANG FIGHTER SIMILAR TO THE TYPE FLOWN BY HIM AND OTHER TUSKEGEE AIRMEN. IT IS LOCATED NEAR THE ENTRANCE TO THE AIR NATIONAL GUARD INSTALLATION AT THE NORTH END OF THE AIRPORT. THE COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE LISTS LUTHER SMITH ALONG WITH SEVERAL OTHER TUSKEGEE AIRMEN FROM DES MOINES AND IOWA.

THE DES MOINES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT OVER THE YEARS HAS DEVELOPED INTO A TOP RATED FACILITY AND ITS SEASONED DESIGNATION IS UNIVERSALLY RECOGNIZED. ANY OTHER DESIGNATION WOULD LESSON ITS VISIBILITY.

I APPRECIATE AND APPLAUD THE EFFORTS OF THOSE PROMOTING A DIFFERENT DESIGNATION, BUT I DO NOT BELIEVE IT TO BE IN THE BEST

Monday, July 27, 2009 AOL: LKalainov

INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE TRAVELING PUBLIC.

DESIGNATION AND DESTINATION SHOULD BE REFLECTIVE OF EACH
OTHER.

THANK YOU

Judy McNamara

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

Hello. My name is Judy McNamara. I am a Daughter of the American Revolution. Last year the Daughters of the American Revolution awarded Captain Luther Smith our Highest award "The Prestigious National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Medal of Honor." We commended him for this leadership, trustworthiness and patriotism and saluted him for his outstanding services to the United States of America.

My husband and I had Luther over for dinner one night. I noticed how he looks you Right in the eyes when he is talking to you. When you ask Luther a question, he always Says "now Judy that is a good question." I found him to be very warm and very humble.

He learned to fly at our Des Moines airport. Even now after he has endured so much in his life and had worked so hard on his dream, he never gave up. He has so much grit! What an example he set for all of us.

I would be proud to have our Des Moines airport named after Luther Smith.

Thank you for your time.

Judy McNamara

6-15-09

Luther Smith

Luther Smith is a World War II hero and was seriously wounded in combat which resulted from exiting his disabled P-51 fighter plane over Yugoslavia on his 133rd combat mission. He was captured and spent months as a prisoner of war with inadequate treatment for his injuries which left him with one leg shorter than the other by seven inches.

Due to illness recently Luther has had both legs amputated and will be 89 years old in August. He now lives in Villanova, Pennsylvania.

Luther was born and raised in Des Moines, graduating from Roosevelt High School and received two engineering degrees from the University of Iowa. He has had a career with General Electric as an aerospace engineer and has been honored as an outstanding alumnus by the University of Iowa and was given a special citation by the College of Engineering at University of Iowa.

Luther's trek to greatness started when he was a child who walked or hitch hiked to the Des Moines Airport regularly until they finally hired him at age 13. In the June 14, 1934 Des Moines Register he was referred to as a "grease ball" the term used for those who serviced aircraft at that time.

He learned to fly at the airport under the tutelage of Howard Gregory before joining the military and becoming a Tuskegee Airman.

Those with whom I've discussed Luther agree that he is a great American military hero. It would speak volumes about Iowa to America and beyond to name the Des Moines International Airport the Luther Smith Des Moines International Airport.

Youngest Grease Ball Lifts Hopes to Skyways

(July)

Luther Smith, 13, Has Ambition to Become Pilot Some Day.

"Smitty" is a brown-eyed boy who looks upward—to the skyways. Some day he'll be a pilot. He has promised himself that and municipal airport pilots and workers believe he'll keep his promise. He works with them, as probably the country's youngest "grease ball" or airport mechanic helper.

"Smitty" is Luther Smith, 13, Negro, of 923 Twenty-third st., ninth grade student at Callahan Junior High school, a track star, Boy Scout and Hi Y member.

Resolves 'Gee To Fly.

It was in the Hi Y organization that he received the urge to be a flyer. "And I'm going to work from the ground up and make it," said the smiling, soft-spoken youngster Wednesday.

F. C. Anderson, pilot, talked to the Hi-Y club about flying. Luther had been interested before, had read aeronautical magazines at school and had helped at the airport popcorn stand.

Hitch-hiked To Airport.

The thrill of the air entered his heart as Anderson talked. He hitch-hiked to the airport. Orville Haines, another pilot, formed an alliance with the bright youngster.

"Cap'n" Haines, as "Smitty" calls him, offered the lad work cleaning out the ships used on passenger flights over the city.

"He's one of the best workers, and the most willing that ever put on a pair of coveralls," airport workers said.

Offered Commission on Rides.

So Haines offered his new-found assistant a commission on sale of rides to visitors at the airport. It's a small commission, but Smitty made enough in one day to pay his Scout dues.

"And if I can learn fast enough, I'll work up to regular helper and earn enough for ground course," said the youngster. One pilot has already offered the police, air-



Reveals Great Ambition.

craft new airport worker has set of books to aid him through the ground course.

Wants Secondhand Ship.

"Then if I can learn to fly I'll get a secondhand ship or get one in partnership with somebody else, and I can get a transport license and make enough to support the family," said Smitty. "I had planned to go to work as soon as I am out of high school and support the family," he added gravely. Smith, whose father is unemployed, has five sisters and three brothers, one of whom is working.

"Why? Sure, I've been up nine or ten times," he said. "It was thrilling, but not as thrilling as it will be when I know enough to handle a ship myself."

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 22, 2009

**Mr. Luther H. Smith, Jr.
137 Sproul Road
Villanova, Pennsylvania 19085**

Dear Luther:

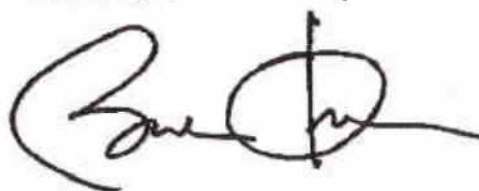
Your sister, Nancy, was kind enough to share your story with me, and I send my best wishes and sincere thanks for your service and for the sacrifices you have made for our Nation.

Although I understand that the trip to Washington was not easy, I am glad that you were able to attend the Inauguration. Your determination and tenacity reflect the true spirit of a Tuskegee Airman.

As an Airman and veteran of World War II, you were part of great milestones in our Nation's history, and your story is an important piece of the American narrative. History will remember the Tuskegee Airmen as patriots who overcame tremendous obstacles to serve our country, and I am one of the humble many who stand on their shoulders.

May you continue to see the promise in each of life's moments, and may God bless and protect you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Barack Obama", written in a cursive style.



UNITED STATES SENATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

TOM HARKIN
Iowa

March 24, 2009

Dear Mr. Smith:

I recently learned of your illness, and I just wanted to let you know that my thoughts and prayers are very much with you and your family at this difficult time.

I am confident that I speak for all Iowans in telling you how much we respect and honor your history-making service during the Second World War. Of the 994 Tuskegee Airmen, you were one of only 12 from Iowa. One-hundred and fifty of them lost their lives in training or combat. All were renowned for the courage and fighting skills, and none more so than Captain Luther Smith. With 133 combat missions and two enemy aircraft kills to your credit, you richly earned the Distinguished Flying Cross.

In truth, you and your fellow Tuskegee Airmen fought two wars: One against the German Luftwaffe, and one against the racism you confronted at home and within the military. History will record that you and your comrades won both of those wars. This is something about which you and your family should be enormously proud.

I thank you for your service to our nation, and also salute your postwar success and accomplishments as an aerospace engineer with General Electric. You are one of those special people who make our Iowa family very proud.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom".

Tom Harkin
United States Senator

Luther Smith
137 Sproul Road
Villanova, PA 19085



*Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.
Des Moines Alumni Chapter*

July 7, 2009

Judy McNamara
1907 55th Street
Des Moines, IA 50310

Mrs. McNamara:

My Name is Charles Woods and I am President of the Des Moines Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

I am writing you today to ask that you would consider writing a letter of support to name Des Moines International Airport after our Native Son Captain Luther Smith, Jr.

It is the opinion of our organization that his resume confirms why he is deserving of such an honor.

His accolades are as follows:

- Member of the famed 332nd (Redwing) Fighter Squadron
- Flew 133 combat missions. Credited with 2 enemy kills and 10 aircraft on the ground in strafing missions before being held as a prisoner of war for seven months.
- Recipient of the Purple Heart; Distinguished Flying Cross; Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters; Eight European and Mediterranean Theatures Campaign Ribbons and Prisoner of War Medal.

After his service to our country, Captain Smith worked for General Electric Company as an Engineer where he:

- Received the Congressional Gold Medal
- Held two US Patents
- Worked on special assignments with the U.S. Air Force, NASA, and the U.S. Navy Submarine Command.
- Recipient of the Society of Automotive Engineers, Aerospace International, Franklin W. Kolk Aerospace Industry Award.

Serving the community of Greater Des Moines since 1950

- 56
- Member of the Distinguished College of Engineering Alumni Award. University of Iowa.
 - Recipient University of Iowa Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award for Achievement.
 - Awarded an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Public Service from Tuskegee University.
 - Inducted into the Iowa Aviation Hall of fame in October of 2006.

I could go on in specific detail as to why Captain Smith is worthy of this honor however, I believe his selection by our 42nd President of the United States, Bill Clinton to participate in the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the end of WWII, is in our view another shining example of why Des Moines International Airport should be named after this fine Iowan Aviator.

We are hopeful that you can assist in this endeavor.

Sincerely,



Charles B. Woods
President
Des Moines Alumni Chapter
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

WISCONSIN
BB-64
1ST BATTLESHIP
BUILT

U.S.S. MISSOURI
BB-63

U.S.S. NEW JERSEY
BB-62

U.S.S. IOWA BB-61

FIRST
BUILT

56

*Five sailed on all these great ships,
except the Missouri. H*

A Quartet of Great Ladies

The Four Battleships

In June 7, 1954, off Norfolk, Virginia, the four Iowa Class Battleships were steaming side by side for the first ever in order to have aerial photos taken of them. The photos were taken by a Naval photographer in a helicopter. As soon as the photos were taken the battleships were ordered to spread out and wait for further orders.

81 YRS

COUNCIL MEMBERS

The city of All Moines:

You should name the All Moines

*Airport: THE LUTHER SMITH
INTERNATIONAL!*

*No other DM hero deserves it
more than him! REFER TO HIS*

*WRITE UP in D.M. Register MAY 21.
very respectfully,*

Aug 3

Lt. KEN HEBRON, US NAVY

SIGNAL OFFICER ON the

U.S.S. ORISKANY, the

carrier Senator John McCAIN

*flew off of & got shot down. The ORISKANY
LOST MORE PILOTS THAN ANY other CARRIER*

Ken Hebron, O.D.

August 4, '09

K. G. Hebron, O.D. 81



KEN HEBRON
IOWA

