

# Tuskegee Airman visits unit

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When Roscoe Brown Jr. commanded the 100th Fighter Squadron during World War II, things were a little different.

On Wednesday, the Tuskegee Airman visited Dannelly Field in Montgomery to see the fighter squadron that in September was redesignated the 100th to honor the famed squadron.

In his day, Brown flew the P-51 Mustang, a long-range, single-seat fighter aircraft.

Now, the squadron flies the F-16 Fighting Falcon, a single-engine, multi-role fighter used primarily for air-to-ground operations, such as bombing runs.

"Some stuff hasn't changed much," Lt. Col. Scott Patten said. "We're still looking out for each other, and we're still checking our six."

Patten is the director of operations for the squadron, which is part of the 187th Fighter Wing of the Alabama Air National Guard. Patten gave Brown a tour of their facility.

With all the latest gadgets and technological advances, Brown had a simple question.

"How do you identify your target," asked Brown, a New York resident who completed 68 combat missions in the P-51 in Europe during WWII.

"With our targeting pod," Patten said.

"That's a computer game," Brown said, causing laughter among the pilots.

Patten and the airmen showed Brown the survival vest pilots wear now, which is far more extensive than Brown and his squad mates ever had. But it's heavy, too.

"You wouldn't fit in the P-51 with all that," Brown told the airmen who had donned the vest to demonstrate how the multiple pieces fit together.

Walking into a flight briefing room, not much was familiar to Brown. The maps and briefing slides were all electronic on a touch screen.

"I feel like the Wright Brothers coming and saying how is the P-51 flying? It's so far removed," said Brown.

Patten gave Brown a special treat and put him in the F-16 flight simulator. At first, the decorated pilot was a little rusty. After getting the hang of it, Patten adds some more elements.

"I'm going to put two MiGs on your nose," he told Brown.

"Okay, then what I do," Brown asked, laughing.

"We're going to shoot them down," Patten said.

When he stepped out of the simulator, Brown had a few quick words.

"That was quite an experience," he told Patten. "Oh boy, oh boy."