



## HOW DO I KNOW I'M TALKING TO A REAL TUSKEGEE AIRMEN?

**Below you will find the protocol for vetting a Tuskegee Airmen as depicted in the Harry A. Sheppard Research Committee Procedures Manual (p.46)**

The Harry A. Sheppard Research Committee (HASRC) will consist of not less than seven (7) members, to include a chairperson, two (2) appointed representatives from each Region, and the Executive Director. The Committee will conduct research, clarification and guidance in regards to historical accuracy of events relating to the Tuskegee Experience.

The Harry A. Sheppard Research Committee will coordinate the identification, collection and preservation of significant materials and information on the Tuskegee Experience, including an active oral history program and a strategy to identify issues and events that should be documented and preserved for the future.

The Committee will serve as the only entity within TAI for confirmation of Documented Original Tuskegee Airman (DOTA) status through obtaining and securing from individual(s), family member(s) or agent(s) claiming DOTA status no less than two (2) official documents (WD AGO Form 53-55 or DD Form 214) that substantiate (military or civilian) assignment to a unit assigned to the Tuskegee Institute Army Air Corps Program, a unit at Tuskegee Army Air Field, or a unit growing out of the Tuskegee Experience during the period from March 1941 through November 5, 1949; or at least two (2) written confirmations or affidavits from previously confirmed DOTAs; and or confirmation of DOTA status by inclusion in the Ted Johnson database; and will inform individual(s), family member(s) or agent(s), as applicable, as well as appropriate Chapter and Regional officials of TAI of confirmation or denial of DOTA status.

As prospective DOTA's and family members of DOTA's come forward seeking confirmation of their status as a DOTA, often times they are lacking the documents that are required by the HASRC to confirm and vet them as a DOTA. In an effort to be as clear as possible, what the Harry A. Sheppard Research Committee needs in order to prove an individual is a DOTA:

**Individual Name:** The HASRC needs the full name (First/Middle or Middle Initial/Jr./Sr./II/III/etc.).

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**Documents:** You must produce are the following Forms/Documents: (WD AGO Form 53-55 or DD Form 214). Exceptions to the WD AGO or the DD Form 214 may be made only with the approval of the HASRC that the substitute evidence is conclusive. The individual will also need a set of orders that show he or she was permanently assigned to one of the all-Black US Army Air Corp Units between March 1941 – November 1949 and not TDY (this applies to Civilians or Military Personnel). Photographs that meet strict criteria may also be used – see below. Military records may be obtained by calling or applying:

### **National Personnel Records Center - Military**

#### **Personnel Records**

#### **1 Archives Drive**

**St Louis, MO 63138-1022**

**Phone: (314) 801-0850**

**Fax; (314) 801-0608**

**Website: [www.archives.gov/veterans](http://www.archives.gov/veterans)**

**Note:** The fastest way to obtain a copy of records is via the website. Expect a two to three week wait to receive the requested records if available.

**Photographs:** The Harry A. Sheppard Research Committee in collaboration with one of its advisors has devised a method that allows for certain types of Tuskegee Airmen photographs to be used in conjunction with and or in lieu of the required documents for the purpose of vetting an individual as a DOTA. It is well known with today's technology it has become much easier to manipulate photographs and documents for the explicit purpose of being deceitful and it has also become seemingly impossible to detect the manipulation of official original documents and photographs. Members of the HASRC will not need a technical background and or any specific training to provide a standard of irrefutable and or conclusive vetting as all submitted photographs will be compared and matched with the exact identical original yearbook and or individual class photograph currently maintained in and supplied from the Craig Huntly Tuskegee Airmen Photographic Archive which is readily accessible to the HASRC at no cost to TAI or the HASRC. The following photographs or sources that contain photographs are the only types of photographs which are deemed appropriate for the purpose of vetting.

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## **Acceptable Photographs for Vetting:**

- TAAF Individual Class photos from Class 43H to Class 46C which contain the original stenciling identifying the name of the individual, S/N, Unit, Date, and Class designation.
- TAAF Individual Class photos of Liaison Pilot classes CL-43-1, CL-43-2, and CL-43-3 which contain the original stenciling identifying the name of the individual, S/N, Unit, Date, and Class designation.
- All named photographs in the 1943 Tuskegee Army Air Field Yearbook. Note: A scan of the front cover of the yearbook must be submitted with a scan of the entire page which contains the individuals name, photograph, and unit the individual was assigned to.
- All named photographs in the Tuskegee Army Air Field Class 44C thru Class 44F yearbook. Note: A scan of the front cover of the yearbook must be submitted with a scan of the entire page which contains the individuals name, photograph, and unit the individual was assigned to.
- All named photographs in the 1945 Godman Field Yearbook which includes the entire 477th Composite Group and the 387th Headquarters & Service Squadron. Note: A scan of the front cover of the yearbook must be submitted with a scan of the entire page which contains the individuals name, photograph, and unit the individual was assigned to.

## **Unacceptable Photographs for Vetting:**

- Any official or unofficial photograph that does not meet the criteria listed above will not be considered for vetting confirmation.

## **Photograph Vetting Process:**

Photographs that meet the criteria for consideration and vetting shall be submitted in JPEG format with a resolution of 300 DPI or higher to the Chairman of the HASRC. The chairman of the HASRC shall request the exact identical unaltered comparison TAAF yearbook photo and or individual class photo from the Craig Huntly Tuskegee Airmen Photographic Archive at no cost to TAI or the HASRC.

The submitted yearbook photo and or individual class photo will be compared to the exact identical original yearbook or individual class photograph supplied by the Craig Huntly Tuskegee Airmen photographic archive to the Chairman of the HASRC for review, confirmation, and vetting by the HASRC.

Both the submitted yearbook photo and or individual class photo accompanied with the exact identical comparison original yearbook and or individual class photograph will make vetting confirmation irrefutable and conclusive.