



PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Earnestine Lavergne
TAIDetroitSpeaker@gmail.com
TAI - #313/820-3722

(Fri, Jun. 24, 2022 / Detroit, MI) The **TUSKEGEE AIRMEN (TAI) / Detroit Chapter** announces the loss of our Documented Original Tuskegee Airman (D.O.T.A.); Prisoner of War (POW); author, and World War II veteran **100-year old Lt. Colonel Alexander Jefferson**. Col. Alexander Jefferson ascended into the “TAI Lonely Eagles Chapter” on Wednesday, June 22nd, 2022.

Lt. Col. Alexander Jefferson was born November 15th, 1921 in Detroit, Michigan. He graduated from Detroit Chadsey H.S.; received a Bachelors degree from Clark College (Atlanta) with graduate work in Chemistry from Howard University (Wash., D.C.) and received a Masters in Education from Wayne State University (Detroit).

In January 1944, he graduated from Tuskegee Army Air Field’s pilot training, followed by combat training at Selfridge Field in Michigan. He served as a P-51 fighter pilot with the 332nd Fighter Group - 301st Fighter Squadron in Ramitelli, Italy . . . later called the “**Red Tails**”. On his 19th long range escort ‘B-17/B-24’ mission on August 12th, 1944 (three days prior to the invasion of southern France); he was shot down, captured by German troops and interred for nine months: first at Stalag Luft III (80 miles east of Berlin on the Odor River) and later Stalag VIIA (Mooseburg) approximately 20 miles north of Dachau. He was liberated on April 29th, 1945 by American forces.

He was honorably discharged from active duty in 1947 and retired from the reserves in 1969 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Following the war, he was a U.S. Postal mail carrier, later becoming in a Detroit public school science teacher; retiring as an assistant principal in 1979. He was an active member of various churches, educational and alumni organizations, and one of the founders of the Detroit Chapter of the Tuskegee Airman, which started in his basement! He continued to share his experiences to educate all, through both the local chapter and the national’s Speaker’s Bureau, including appearances and countless interviews.

He was a Life Member of American Ex-Prisoner of War and a Perpetual Member of the Military Order of the World Wars. On October 14, 1995, he was enshrined into the Michigan Aviation Hall of Fame.

Lt. Col. Jefferson received numerous awards and commendations, namely the Purple Heart: the Air Force Achievement; the POW; the World War II; and National Defense Reserve Medals; the French Knight of the Legion of Honor Medal and the Bronze Star. The U.S. Congressional Gold Medal was bestowed upon him, and the Tuskegee Airmen in 2007, by President George W. Bush.

TAI Chapter President, Ken Thomas said that Col. Jefferson was a true hero, larger than life, and lived everyday making a difference. Past Chapter President, Miguel Thornton reflected on enjoying the wit and wisdom of Col. Jefferson, who explained why he did what he did - Col. Jefferson had two sayings, “somebody had to do it” and “google me”!

The Jefferson Family rejoices and celebrates his 100 years, seven months and seven days of life, love and dedication to GOD, his family, friends and the country.



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ARRANGEMENTS are as follows:

Public Viewing (at the funeral home)

James H. Cole Home for Funerals, Inc.
16100 Schaefer Hwy.
Detroit, MI 48235

on Friday, July 8th, 2022

9am – 9pm

with Personal Testimonies 6PM -8PM

**Live Streamed (on J. H. Cole Funeral Home's Website)*

Family Hour / Funeral

Hope United Methodist Church
26275 Northwest Hwy.
Southfield, MI 48076

on Saturday, July 9th, 2022

**(to be Live Streamed)*

Family Hour - 10AM

Funeral - 11AM

Interment (*TBD*)

Great Lakes National Cemetery
4200 Belford Rd.
Holly, MI 48442