

## *Certificate of Authenticity*

### The Tuskegee Airmen by Larry Selman

The Tuskegee Airmen were dedicated, determined young men who enlisted to become America's first black military airmen, at a time when there were many people who thought that black men lacked intelligence, skill, courage and patriotism. They came from every section of the country, with large numbers coming from New York City, Washington, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia and Detroit. Each one possessed a strong personal desire to serve the United States of America at the best of his ability.

Those who possessed the physical and mental qualifications were accepted as aviation cadets to be trained initially as single-engine pilots and later to be either twin-engine pilots, navigators or bombardiers. Most were college graduates or undergraduates. Others demonstrated their academic qualifications through comprehensive entrance examinations.

The black airmen who became single-engine or multi-engine pilots were trained at Tuskegee Army Air Field (TAAF) in Tuskegee Alabama. The first aviation cadet class began in July 1941 and completed training nine months later in March 1942. Thirteen started in the first class. Five successfully completed the training, one of them being Captain Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., a West Point Academy graduate. The other four were commissioned second lieutenants, and all five received Army Air Corps silver pilot wings.

The outstanding record of black airmen in World War II was accomplished by men whose names will forever live in hallowed memory. Each one accepted the challenge, proudly displayed his skill and determination while suppressing internal rage from humiliation and indignation caused by frequent experiences of racism and bigotry, at home and overseas. These airmen fought two wars - one against a military force overseas and the other against racism at home and abroad.

By the end of the war, 992 men had graduated from pilot training at Tuskegee, 450 of whom were sent overseas for combat assignment. During the same period, approximately 150 lost their lives while in training or on combat flights.

**Larry Selman Artist:** A South-Central Pennsylvania native raised in a military family his father a 26 year veteran SGM He enroll at The York Academy of Art and earn a commercial art degree in 1982. Following graduation, built a successful career with paperback novel illustration. He collaborates with top art directors and major publishers from all over the country. Expanding his business to include Fine Art & Gallery representation. His latest release in "The Point" the Rangers at Point Du Hoc. The Tuskegee Airmen painting was selected by ASAA to be one of 60 paintings celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of flight.

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