

T O R R A N C E

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Presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal to Tuskegee Airman Walter Crenshaw

Torrance, Calif., July 9, 2012 – On Tuesday July 24th, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Torrance City Hall, Torrance resident and surviving Tuskegee Airman Walter Crenshaw, 102 years old, will be presented with a replica of the Congressional Gold Medal in commemoration for the sacrifices he and the other original Tuskegee Airmen made in defense of our great Nation during World War II.

At the beginning of World War II, a group of African American pilots and ground crew were formed by order of President Franklin Roosevelt and were trained in Tuskegee, Alabama. The group came to be known as the Tuskegee Airmen and distinguished themselves from other flight groups by painting the tails of their airplanes red, which resulted in them also becoming known as “Red Tails”. The Tuskegee Airmen distinguished themselves as formidable fighter pilots and ground crews and hundreds saw combat throughout Europe, the Mediterranean and North Africa. They escorted bombers on missions while protecting them from enemy fire. Dozens of the pilots died while fighting while still others became prisoners of war.

The Congressional Gold Medal was awarded to the Tuskegee Airmen by President George W. Bush during a ceremony that was held in Washington D.C. in 2007. The medal honors the accomplishments and highlights the history of the Tuskegee Airmen who participated in air crew, ground crew and operations support training in the Army Air Corps during WWII. The original medal presented to the Tuskegee Airmen is on permanent display at the Smithsonian Institute. Crenshaw was not able to attend the ceremony in 2007, however the City of Torrance is honored to be a small part in assuring that he is recognized for all that he did for our Nation so many years ago.

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Walter Crenshaw was inducted into the United States Army Air Corps in October of 1942 where he attained the rank of Sergeant. Crenshaw is a documented original Tuskegee Airman and was stationed at Tuskegee Alabama where he served in the Air Group's administration offices. He and the rest of the Tuskegee Airmen deserve praise for being the vanguards for racial equality in the armed forces of the United States where they fought valiantly and served proudly.

Mayor Frank Scotto and the Torrance City Council have invited representatives of the military to present the medal to Walter Crenshaw. In attendance to present the medal will be Lieutenant General Ellen Pawlikowski, Commander of Space and Missile Systems, Los Angeles Air Force Base and Brigadier General Terry Ferrell, Commanding Officer of the National Training Center, Fort Irwin. The ceremony will be narrated by Major Tiffany Rivera, US Air Force. Major Rivera is also a current member of the Tuskegee Airman's Association and is a graduate of Tuskegee University.

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