

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 221

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 23, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman ANNETTE QUIJANO

District 20 (Union)

SYNOPSIS

Honors life of Tuskegee Airman Malcolm Nettingham.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



AR221 QUIJANO

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1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** honoring the life of Tuskegee Airman
2 Malcolm Nettingham.
3
4 **WHEREAS**, Malcolm Nettingham was a member of the famed Tuskegee
5 Airmen during World War II and a longtime resident of Scotch
6 Plains, New Jersey; and
7 **WHEREAS**, Prior to the United States' entry into World War II, Black
8 people were denied the opportunity to assist in military air operations
9 out of the belief they were not sophisticated enough to work with
10 complex aircraft; and
11 **WHEREAS**, In 1940, after lobbying by various civil rights groups,
12 President Franklin D. Roosevelt announced that the Army Air Corps
13 would begin training Black pilots at the Tuskegee Army Airfield in
14 Tuskegee, Alabama; and
15 **WHEREAS**, Many of the trainees were college graduates who went on to
16 serve as pilots, navigators, bombardiers, instructors, mechanics,
17 control tower operators, and support staff; and
18 **WHEREAS**, The "Tuskegee Airmen" as they were called, earned more
19 than 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 744 Air Medals, 14 Bronze
20 Stars, eight Purple Hearts, two Soldier Medals, one Silver Star, one
21 Legion of Merit, one Red Star of Yugoslavia, three
22 Presidential/Distinguished Unit Citations, and more than 300
23 Congressional Medals of Honor; and
24 **WHEREAS**, As a result of their brave service, the Tuskegee Airmen
25 helped pave the way for the issuance of Executive Order 9881 by
26 President Harry S. Truman which ordered the desegregation of the
27 Armed Forces in 1948; and
28 **WHEREAS**, Malcolm Nettingham was drafted into the U.S. Army in
29 1944, completed basic training, and was accepted as a candidate in
30 the Army Air Corps Flight Radio Operator division; and
31 **WHEREAS**, After successfully completing his training, he became a
32 member of a five-man crew of Black soldiers chosen as part of the
33 first integrated flight radio communications class in the U.S. Army
34 Air Corps; and
35 **WHEREAS**, Having excelled in Morse Code, Mr. Nettingham served as
36 a radio operator and gunner in the 617th Squadron, 477th Composite
37 Group on a B-52 Bomber; and
38 **WHEREAS**, Mr. Nettingham was honorably discharged in 1946, and
39 spent 32 years working for Communications Measurements
40 Laboratory as a Contract Administrator in the electronics industry,
41 and after retirement, he worked as a radio station engineer for WNJR
42 of Newark, New Jersey; and
43 **WHEREAS**, As a member of the Tuskegee Airmen, Mr. Nettingham
44 overcame discrimination and prejudice to become a member of one
45 of the most highly respected group of soldiers during World War II;
46 and
47 **WHEREAS**, In recognition of his service with the Tuskegee Airmen, Mr.
48 Nettingham was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 2007,

1 and by invitation, was present at both inaugural ceremonies for
2 President Barack Obama; and

3 **WHEREAS**, Mr. Nettingham, for more than 75 years, remained active in
4 his community, was a member of Metropolitan Baptist Church,
5 serving as a member of the choir and as a Sunday school teacher,
6 took great pleasure in encouraging young people in and out of
7 church, and was always ready to serve where needed; and

8 **WHEREAS**, Sadly, Mr. Nettingham passed away on September 14, 2020,
9 a few days before his 102nd birthday; and

10 **WHEREAS**, As we lose more members of the Greatest Generation each
11 day, it is important to recognize the accomplishments of men like Mr.
12 Nettingham who selflessly served our nation while overcoming
13 racial segregation and prejudice; now, therefore,
14

15 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the General Assembly of the State of New
16 Jersey:
17

18 1. This House proudly honors Mr. Malcolm Nettingham for his
19 lifetime of service to our nation and for his role in helping to bring
20 about the desegregation of the United States Armed Forces as a
21 member of the Tuskegee Airmen.
22

23 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
24 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the
25 President of the United States, the United States Secretary of
26 Defense, the Governor, the Adjutant General of the New Jersey
27 Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, each member of
28 Congress elected from this State, the Director of the National
29 Museum of African American History and Culture, the President of
30 the Tuskegee Airmen National Historical Museum, and to the family
31 of Mr. Malcolm Nettingham.
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34 STATEMENT

35

36 This Assembly resolution honors the life of Mr. Malcolm
37 Nettingham. Mr. Nettingham, a resident of Scotch Plains, New
38 Jersey, proudly served this nation while bringing about real, long-
39 lasting racial change. As a member of the Tuskegee Airmen, Mr.
40 Nettingham was part of an elite group of Black men who played a
41 critical role in the Allied victory during World War II and paved the
42 way for desegregation of the United States Armed Forces.

43 Mr. Nettingham was drafted into the United States Army in 1944,
44 completed basic training, and was accepted as a candidate in the
45 Army Air Corps Flight Radio Operator division. He later became a
46 member of a five-man crew of Black soldiers chosen as part of the
47 first integrated flight radio communications class in the United States
48 Army Air Corps. He excelled in Morse Code, and served as a radio

1 operator and gunner in the 617th Squadron, 477th Composite Group
2 on a B-52 Bomber.

3 Mr. Nettingham was honorably discharged in 1946, and spent 32
4 years working for Communications Measurements Laboratory as a
5 Contract Administrator in the electronics industry, and after
6 retirement, he worked as a radio station engineer for WNJR of
7 Newark, New Jersey. He remained active in his community and was
8 a member of Metropolitan Baptist Church, serving as a member of
9 the choir and as a Sunday school teacher. He took great pleasure in
10 encouraging young people in and out of church, and was always
11 ready to serve where needed.

12 As a member of the Tuskegee Airmen, Mr. Nettingham helped
13 pave the way for the full integration of the United States military and
14 in recognition of his service with the Tuskegee Airmen, Mr.
15 Nettingham was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 2007.

16 Mr. Nettingham passed away on September 14, 2020, a few days
17 before his 102nd birthday. As we lose more members of the Greatest
18 Generation each day, it is important to recognize the
19 accomplishments of men like Mr. Nettingham who selflessly served
20 our nation while overcoming racial segregation and prejudice. He is
21 a symbol of triumph over adversity and loyalty to one's country. His
22 legacy will inspire citizens of both this State and this nation for
23 decades to come.