



## ***N.C. Transportation Museum News Release***

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### **Tuskegee Airmen from Salisbury to speak at N.C. Transportation Museum**

SPENCER, N.C.— When Fred Wilson enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps at the age of 19 just days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, he already had eight years of experience flying with his father – a Canadian bush pilot. Today, Wilson is known as a member of the Tuskegee Airmen, a group of volunteers who became the first black men to fly in combat in any branch of the U.S. armed forces.

“By the time I arrived at the Tuskegee Institute, I may have logged more flying hours than my instructor. But that didn’t matter,” says Wilson, as he describes his instructor’s first lesson entitled “This is an airplane.”

Wilson, along with Leonard “Hawk” Hunter of Goldsboro’s Wilson V. Eagleson chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., will tell the story of the original Tuskegee Airmen during a program at the N.C. Transportation Museum on Saturday, Feb. 17 at 11 a.m. in the Bob Julian Roundhouse.

These pioneer pilots were trained at the Tuskegee Army Air Field (TAAF) in Tuskegee, Al., and served in segregated squadrons during World War II. Between 1942 and 1946, 994 black pilots were commissioned through TAAF. About half these men served overseas in fighter squadrons during the war.

The Tuskegee Airmen Inc. is a national non-profit group dedicated to preserving the history of these pioneers, who broke racial barriers years before the Civil Rights Movement gained national momentum. The group also sponsors aviation and science-related programs for youth.

This program at the N.C. Transportation Museum reflects the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources 2007 theme “History Happens Here,” a yearlong celebration of North Carolina’s stories of struggle and freedom, memorable characters and colorful daily life. The program is free of charge and a brief question and answer session will follow.

For more information on the museum and its programs, call 704-636-2889, toll-free at 877-NCTM-FUN, or visit [www.nctrans.org](http://www.nctrans.org). To learn more about the Tuskegee Airmen, visit [www.tuskegeeairmen.org](http://www.tuskegeeairmen.org).

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The North Carolina Transportation Museum, located in historic Spencer Shops, the former Southern Railway repair facility for steam locomotives, is part of the Division of State Historic Sites, a division of the Department of Cultural Resources, [www.ncculture.com](http://www.ncculture.com).

The museum offers free admission and is conveniently located just a few minutes off I-85 in Spencer, N.C., and about an hour from Charlotte, Greensboro or Winston-Salem.