



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## O'Mara, legislative colleagues welcome Tuskegee Airmen veterans to the Capitol ~ Senate, Assembly approve Legislative Resolution saluting 75th Anniversary

THOMAS F. O'MARA June 21, 2016

| ISSUE: **WORLD WAR II VETERANS**



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**Albany, N.Y., June 21**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) recently joined his colleagues in the Senate and Assembly to welcome and honor four New York State veterans who bravely served our nation in World War II as part of the historic and highly decorated **Tuskegee Airmen**

The veterans were at the Capitol for the Legislature's tribute to the group's 75th Anniversary. They were joined by several escorts, including Michael Joseph of Corning.

"These are true American heroes and a distinguished part of the nation's history, both abroad and at home. It was my great privilege to again have this opportunity to meet these Tuskegee Airmen veterans and thank them for their service to our nation, in times of war and peace," said O'Mara, who also co-sponsored an official Legislative Resolution saluting the 75th anniversary.

The resolution (**J6340/K1588**) reads, in part, "The Tuskegee Airmen, also known as the Red Tails, were established during World War II. America was going through a period of civil rights justice movements during the time and with a push from the NAACP, the Air Force instituted a training program for African- American pilots... The Red Tails were a group of determined, dedicated men who came from all over the country to prove their worthiness of being a part of the United States Air Force...The Tuskegee Airmen were also powerful in making strides to fight racism in America. The military was not fully integrated until 1948. World War II was over and there was enough foundation laid by the Red Tails to fully integrate the Armed Forces."

O'Mara also recalled that these same four airmen were honored at the Wings of Eagles Discovery Center (formerly the National Warplane Museum) in Chemung County in May 2014, with five of their fellow airmen.

O'Mara said, "It was great to see them again and they fondly remembered their visit to Chemung County two years ago."

The Tuskegee Airmen were established as the first African-American military aviators in the United States Armed Forces who fought in World War II. The unit included pilots, navigators, bombardiers, mechanics, instructors, crew chiefs, nurses, cooks and all the personnel who helped keep the planes in the air.

The group had flown over 1,500 missions by the end of the Second World War and was greatly recognized for their achievements, including being awarded 14 Bronze Stars, 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses and 744 Air Medals.