

Tuskegee Airmen Honored in Moving Veterans Day Tribute

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respect to both the flag and the veterans.

Clements greeted the audience and again thanked the Airmen for their achievements, commenting that the men fought a war on two fronts: the Axis powers and racism.

George A. "Hank" Henry proceeded to the front of the room and began with a stunning history of the Tuskegee Airmen.

His mission, as he put it, is "to instill in [youth] all those things that the Tuskegee Airmen instilled in me."

With a brief introduction, a newsreel from 1944 entitled "Wings For This Man" was shown.

The reel, narrated by Ronald Reagan and produced by Frank Capra, was a reverent look at the bravery and courage of these men.

Henry then continued to fill in the blanks that many people had about the true story of the Tuskegee Airmen, specifically correcting the HBO film version.

One by one, the representatives from the Tuskegee Airmen

East Coast Chapter told their stories.

Hamp Johnson of Washington, D.C., was the first to speak, followed by Bob Owens, a native of Carlisle.

Both men spoke of the discrimination that faced them in the military and in society. Both men also spoke of how they overcome these obstacles.

Owens commented that "it made us stronger people."

Samuel O'Dennis, a PSU graduate, and Samuel Rhodes were the next to tell their stories. Rhodes gave a chilling testimony of a fellow pilot, "Lucky Lester." The story clearly defined the courage and the struggle of the Tuskegee Airmen.

The central focus of all the men seemed to be the youth of today. Owens stressed that "we don't have a young people's problem in this United States, we have an adult problem."

It is essential to the goals of the Tuskegee Airmen organization to arouse the young people's

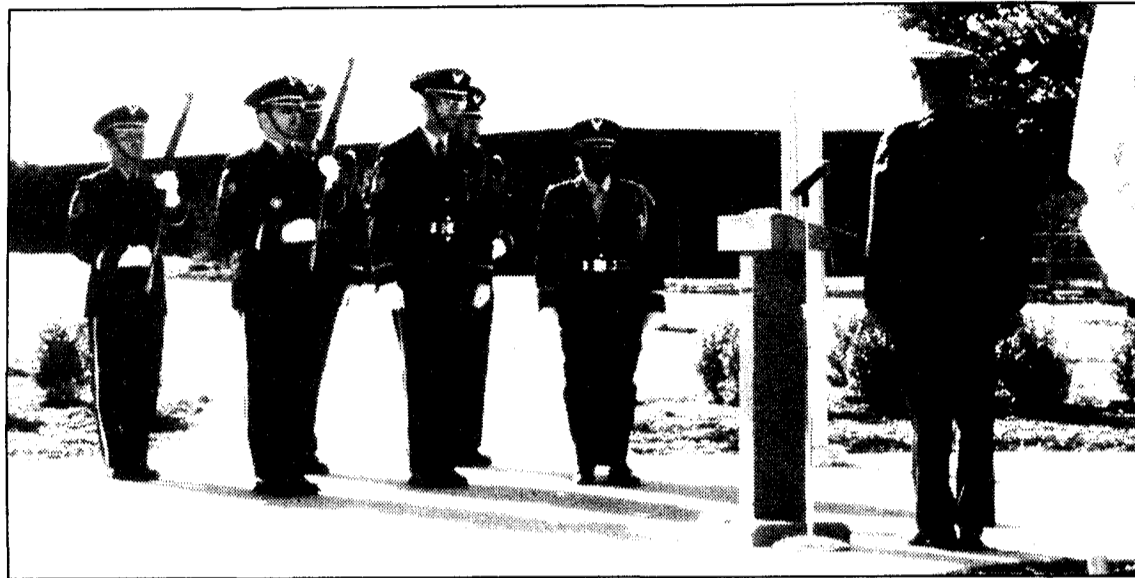


Photo by Nicole Burkholder

Pennsylvania International 193rd Special Operations Wing Honor Guard.

spirit in order to break down the barriers that are still lingering from past years.

It is necessary to "make sure that we are one country under God," said Owens.

The ceremony closed with Penn State Harrisburg interim Provost and Dean, Dr. John Leathers.

Leathers thanked the men for

coming and presented them with an honorarium as a donation to the Tuskegee Airmen East Coast Chapter.

In turn, Henry also presented the school with several handouts about the Tuskegee Airmen to be placed in the new library.

The day's events were successful. Many students commented how glad they were for attending.

The importance of Veteran's

Day was evident in the minds of all those in attendance as Henry noted. "Our purpose today is to pay homage to all veterans. It's heartwarming to know people still care."

Henry concluded by saying that "this is a day that we hope will always be on our calendar where we pay tribute to those who served, those who died, and those who are lucky to be alive."

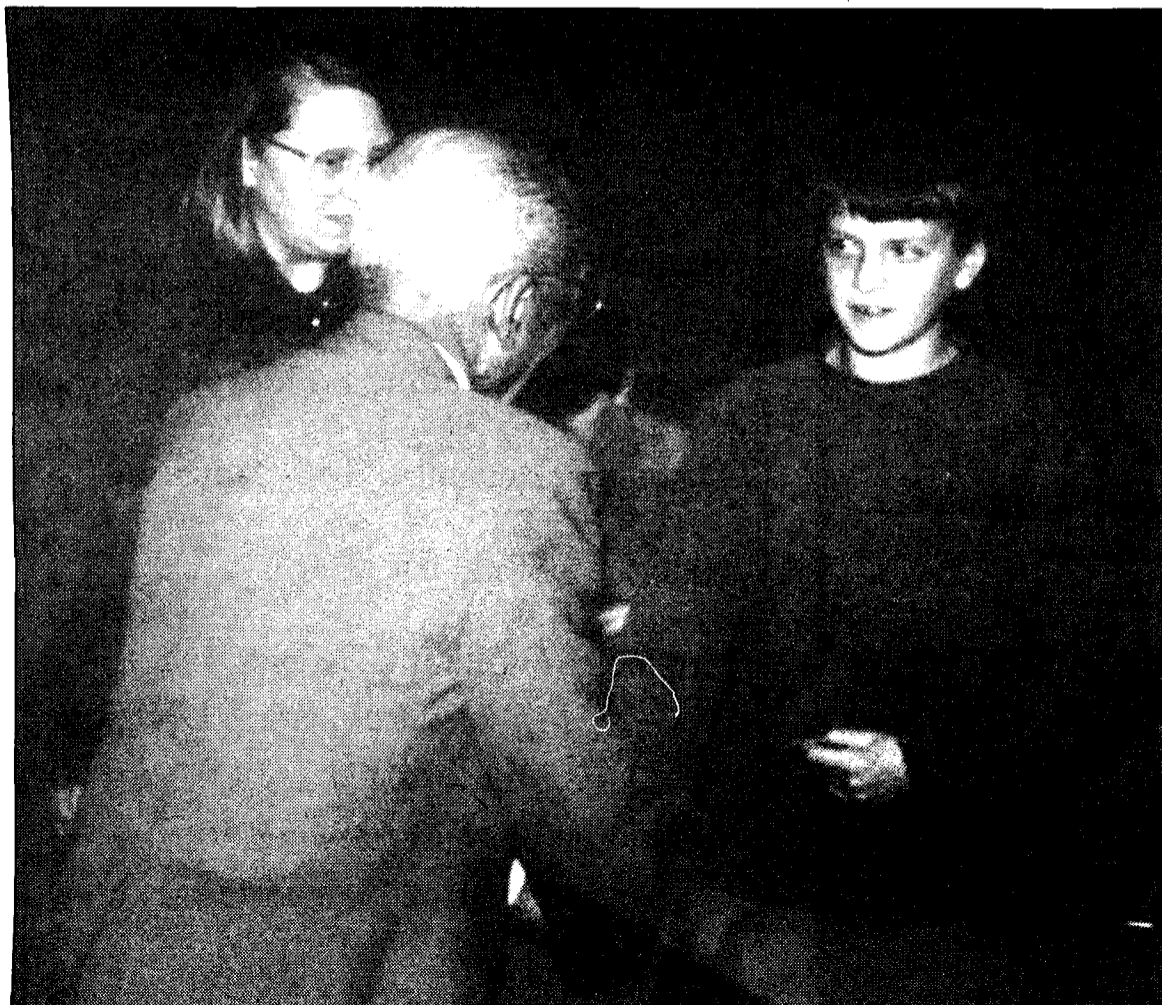


Photo by Nicole Burkholder

Hamp Johnson speaks with a young visitor.

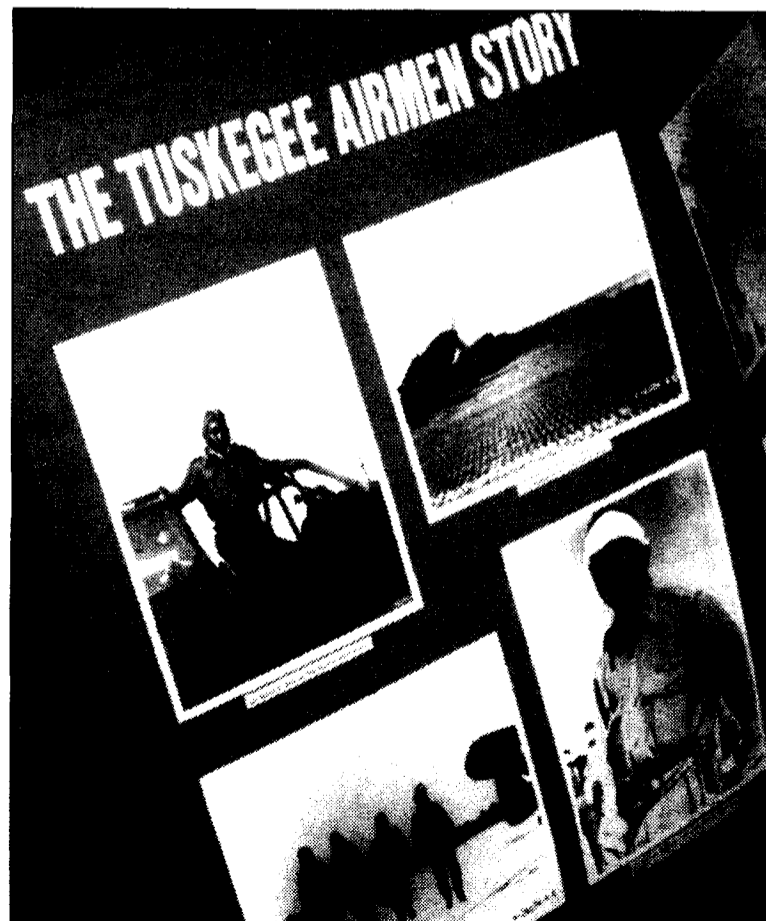


Photo by Nicole Burkholder

Informational displays about the Tuskegee Airmen in the Gallery Lounge.