



BIOGRAPHY

A DOCUMENTED ORIGINAL TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN INC. PUBLIC RELATIONS, P.O. Box 830060
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LIEUTENANT COLONEL LEE RAYFORD



Lee Rayford was born on 1 April 1918 in Cheyney, PA. He graduated from Lincoln University in PA with a Bachelor Degree in Science. In 1941, Lee was selected for the US Army Air Corp. Flight Training Program and graduated in 1942 in the 3rd Class of Tuskegee Airmen, Class 42E.

From there, 2nd LT Lee Rayford was assigned to the 99th Fighter Squadron and in 1943 deployed to Europe to join the 332d Fighter Group led by Colonel Davis. The Tuskegee Airmen of the 332d Fighter Group distinguished themselves as the famed “Redtails” flying more than 1,500 missions and some 15,000 sorties to help defeat Germany during WWII.



Captain Lee Rayford led many of these missions, flying the P-40 Warhawk, P-47 Thunder Bolt and the famed P-51 Mustang. He was one of the 150 Tuskegee Airmen awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and was also awarded a Purple Heart for an injury sustained when his aircraft was shot up while flying during one of his missions.

Capt. Rayford’s other awards included the Air Medal, American Defense Service Medal, WWII Victory Medal, French Croix de Guerre with Palm and the Order of the Partisan Star – II Class. Lee Rayford returned from Europe in 1945. After the war, he was promoted to Major and served as Commander of AFROTC at Howard University in Washington, DC. As the Professor of Military Science & Tactics, Lee trained the ROTC Cadets on Army Air Force Administration. Lee Rayford was promoted to LT Colonel and went on to serve in the reserves until his retirement.

At age 49, LT Colonel Lee Rayford died on 29 April 1967. He was buried in Arlington Cemetery along with many other honorable and well decorated military veterans.

