



P-51C TUSKEGEE Airmen HONORS UNSUNG HEROES

Donated to the CAF in 1988, the P-51C Mustang N61429 was assigned to the Minnesota Wing for restoration. After several years and over a half million-dollar investment, the rare aircraft—christened the *Tuskegee Airmen*—flew for the first time in 2001.

Tuskegee Airmen suffered an unavoidable engine failure in May 2004 and crashed near Red Wing, Minn., destroying the aircraft and killing pilot and Red Tail Project leader Don Hinz. Although reeling from their loss, the Minnesota Wing was determined to resurrect Don Hinz's vision and vowed to restore the P-51C Mustang yet again.

Tuskegee Airmen was painstakingly restored rivet by rivet and flew again in fall 2009.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE P-51 MUSTANG

The P-51 Mustang was developed by North American Aviation as a contract for the British Royal Air Force. The original model, the P-51A, was an effective ground support aircraft, but it wasn't until it was fitted with the Merlin engine, first appearing on the B and C models, that the aircraft became an effective interceptor.

The Mustang first flew in October 1940 and went into service in July 1942 with the RAF

and later in 1942 with the U.S. Army Air Forces. The Mustang served with distinction well into the 1960s with the Dominican Republic flying them in active service until 1984.



P51C MUSTANG SPECIFICATIONS

TYPE:
Singleseat, long-range escort fighter (modified with a rear seat)

DIMENSIONS:
Length: 32 feet 3 inches
Span: 37 feet
Height: 12 feet 2 inches

ENGINE:
One Rolls-Royce (Packard) Merlin liquid-cooled 1,490 HP V-1650-7 engine

WEIGHT:
Empty: 7,635 pounds
Loaded: 12,100 pounds

ARMAMENT:
Four Colt-Browning M2 .50-inch machine guns with a total of 1,000 round capacity. External mounts up to 1,000 pounds of bombs or six High Velocity Aerial Rockets.

PERFORMANCE:
Maximum Speed: 505 miles per hour
Cruising speed: 362 miles per hour
Service Ceiling: 41,600 feet
Range: 1,000 miles

COLORS:
The colors represent the four fighter squadrons in the 332nd Group:

- The red and yellow cowling represents the 302nd Fighter Squadron
- The A on the side represents the 99th Fighter Squadron
- The yellow banding on the wings represents the 301st Fighter Squadron
- The red fins on the wings represents the 100th Fighter Squadron.



photos by PHIL MAKANNA/GHOSTS