



Welcome to AeroStar News!

Black History Month and Our Aviation Story



Dear AeroStar Family and Friends,

In this month's special Black History Month issue, Team AeroStar celebrates and honors Black Aviation Excellence (BAE). This moment of reflection offers a panoramic, 30,000-foot-view of the past, present, and future of the industry and our significant place within it. African American pioneers laid the foundation for AeroStar's efforts today: to diversify the aviation workforce and prepare the next generation of young professionals for careers in the industry.

During the early days of flight, it took many African American pioneers to break the sound barriers of discrimination and segregation. A courageous young manicurist from Chicago,

Bessie Coleman, led the way.

Coleman was the first woman in the world to obtain an international pilot's license, and the first American of African and Native American descent to earn her pilot's license. She once said, "The air is the only place free from prejudices." The challenge was achieving lift-off. During the early 20th century, flying schools were closed to African Americans. Undeterred, Coleman went to France, thanks to local Chicago business men, and enrolled at the Federation Aeronautique Internationale. She received her pilot's license from there on June 15, 1921. Her fame in America was widely reported via one source, the *Chicago Defender* periodical.

BAE in Chicago

According to the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, Chicago and Los Angeles were hubs of African American aviation activity during the Great Depression. In 1931, Cornelius Coffey, a skilled auto mechanic, brought together a group of black air enthusiasts to study at the Curtiss-Wright Aeronautical School. He helped organize the Challengers Air Pilots' Association to expand flying opportunities for African Americans in Chicago. Excluded from local aviation institutions, they set up their own in Robbins, Illinois. Coffey helped establish training classes, and his School of Aeronautics received a franchise from the Civilian Pilot Training Program (CPTP). His training program became

the pre-cursor to a military-sponsored aviation training program for Blacks, later established at Chanute Air Force Base in Southern Illinois. That program was subsequently moved to Moton Field in Tuskegee, Alabama... And the rest is history! (Source: [Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum](#))

BAE Today

At AeroStar, we are building an ambitious pipeline, connecting underrepresented communities directly to the aviation workspace. Since our beginning, we have made a positive impact on more than 10,000 students, some of whom have gone on to study aviation in college, receive assignments in the military, and land dream careers in the aviation industry. In this issue, we're proud to feature two AeroStar alums, Twawnasia Brooks and Mya Coley.

We have come this far because of the struggles and sacrifices of those who went before us. We take this moment to honor and appreciate them. They will never be forgotten!

Giving Wings to Dreams!

Tammera L. Holmes

President & CEO, AeroStar Consulting Corporation
Founder & CEO, AeroStar Avion Institute NFP

#wingstodreams



**BLACK
AVIATION
EXCELLENCE**

#BAE DAY CELEBRATION

FEB 26, 2021
9:30AM - 11:30AM

FREE VIRTUAL EVENT FOR STUDENTS
AND TEACHERS

PERSONAL STORIES, PANEL
DISCUSSION, KEYNOTE SPEAKER &
MORE

FOR MORE INFO & TO REGISTER YOUR STUDENTS, VISIT www.aqiaaeroverse.com
Email: programs@avioninstitute.org | Website: www.avioninstitute.org



**It's Black History Month, and we're celebrating
African American excellence in aviation!**

Join us for a FREE...

**Virtual Salute to
Black Aviation Excellence (BAE)
Friday, February 26, 2021**

Middle school and high school students are invited. To register, click [HERE](#).

BAE Hall of Fame

Black Aviation Excellence (BAE) began with a dream to steer impossible flying machines through the heavens. At AeroStar, we give our all to training and mentoring students in AeroSTEM subjects, but ultimately, it is up to them to pursue their dreams, no matter how "impossible" or "far out" they may seem to others. The early African American pioneers believed in their innate intelligence and right to fly. Their achievements paved the way for our African American, Latino, and female students to succeed.

In this special Black History Month issue of AeroStar News, we're highlighting the best of the best in African American aviation. Let the insights and experiences of these BAE pioneers and next-generation leaders educate, inspire, and motivate you to dream big and fly high!



“I decided Blacks should not have to experience the difficulties I had faced, so I decided to open a flying school and teach other Black women to fly.”

—Bessie Coleman, first woman and African American to earn a pilot’s license

Tuskegee Airmen Congressional Gold Medal



On March 29, 2007, the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award presented by the U.S. Congress, was presented to the Tuskegee Airmen, African American pilots flying for the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II. The award also includes

bombardiers, navigators, mechanics, and other military or civilian men and women who performed ground support duties. The medal recognized their "unique military record that inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces."

Sources:

Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum

Little known BAE fact...

Ten of the original Tuskegee Airmen hailed from Robbins, Illinois!



EUGENE BULLARD

Nickname: "The Black Sparrow of Death"

Born October 9, 1895, in Columbus, Georgia, Eugene Bullard was the first African American to receive a pilot's license. During World War I, Bullard joined the 3rd marching regiment of the French Foreign Legion. On May 5, 1917, he received his pilot's license from the Aéro-Club de France.

Bullard received many awards for his service in both World War I and II. In August 1994, he was posthumously commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force.



WILLIAM J. POWELL

**"Fill the air with black wings!"
—Powell**

During the 1920s, Los Angeles became an important center for African American aviation. In 1929, inspired by Bessie Coleman's legacy, Pilot William J. Powell formed the Bessie Coleman Aero Club, and in 1931, the club sponsored the first African American air show in the U.S. In his 1934 book, *Black Wings*, Powell urged African American men and women "to fill the air with black wings." He encouraged African American youth to take control of their destinies and become pilots, aircraft designers, and business leaders in aviation.



JOHN C. ROBINSON

Nickname: "Brown Condor"

John C. Robinson was a co-founder of the first airport built, owned, and operated by African Americans. Built in 1933, the airport was located in Robbins, Illinois.

Inspired to fly by Bessie Coleman, Robinson applied to Curtiss-Wright Aeronautical University in Chicago, but was denied because of his race. He got a job there as a janitor, and learned by eavesdropping on classes. He and a friend, Cornelius R. Coffey, ultimately were allowed to take segregated night classes. After graduation, they taught other African Americans to fly.

Robinson founded the Challenger Air Pilots Association, Chicago's first African American flying club.

Sources:

[Robbins Illinois History Museum](#)
[Chicago Tribune](#)



WILLA BROWN

Job titles: "Aviatrix" and "Activist"

Willa Brown was the first African American woman to earn a pilot license (1938) and a commercial license (1939) in the U.S.

Brown served as president of the National Airmen's Association of America. She successfully lobbied for federal funds in 1939 to support the NAA pilot training program. Located in Chicago, this was the first privately-run training school for black pilots in the country. Her students included several future Tuskegee Airmen.

Sources:

[National Air and Space Museum](#),
[Smithsonian Institution](#)
[IndyStar](#)

Little known BAE facts...

Mayor Samuel Nichols approved the building of the first African American airport in Robbins, Illinois.

His daughter, Nichelle Nichols, later starred as Lt. Uhura in Star Trek!

JANET HARMON BRAGG

**"That little plane ... would talk to you."
 —Bragg**

In 1933, Janet Harmon Bragg, a nurse from Chicago, enrolled in the Curtiss-Wright Aeronautical University, where she was the only woman in an aircraft mechanics class of 24 black men. Working various jobs, she saved up enough money



to buy a plane for \$500.

“That little plane...It just seemed like you could talk to it, or it would talk to you. You merge right into the plane, it’s the feeling you get. I knew that little old plane was doing everything for me.”—

Janet Bragg, oral history interview with the National Air and Space Museum, 1989

Photo: Smithsonian Insider

BAE: The Future



Twawnasia Brooks

TWAWNASIA BROOKS

I was in AeroStars' program in 2018, and today, I fly a Cessna 172. Coming from Chicago, I never knew I'd be here at Quincy University, going through flight training and hoping to be an airline pilot.

Tammera Holmes, AeroStar's founder and CEO, is a strong African American woman in the aviation field who has inspired me in so many ways! As I prepare for my stage checks, solo flights, and FAA knowledge test to get my Private Pilots License, I wanted to show some appreciation and gratitude for what a significant impact she made on me. So thank you, Ms. Tammera, and thank you, AeroStar!

MYA COLEY

- AeroStar Alum
- AeroStar Instructor
- Instrument rated, January 2021
- Lewis University Grad, Spring 2021
- Exelon Flight Ops Intern, Summer 2021



Mya Coley



“Never be limited by other people’s limited imaginations.”

—Dr. Mae Jemison, first African American female astronaut

Photo: [NASA](https://www.nasa.gov)

AeroStar Training: Your Ticket to Fly! Registration for Spring Programs Now Open!

SPRING K-12 PROGRAMS START 2/13!

K-4 Students: AeroSparks

Node 1: Introduction to Aviation

This course meets live every other Saturday, 2/13–4/17. Students will receive a certificate at the end of the course.

Session 1: Intro to Aviation

Session 2: History of Aviation

Session 3: Aircraft Anatomy

Session 4: Flight Theory

Session 5: Airport Basics

5th-8th Grade | Middle School Students

Node 1: Introduction to Aviation

The first of two in our Spring 5th-8th Grade Program, this five-week course, 2/13–3/13, meets live online for two hours each Saturday. This course is for 5th-8th grade students who are new to AeroStar programs.

Session 1: Intro to Aviation and Aerospace

Session 2: History of Aviation

Session 3: Aircraft Anatomy



FREE
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TO REGISTER

TODAY!



Node 2: Intermediate Aviation Exploration

Node 2 is the final of two courses in our Spring 5th-8th Grade Program. This five-week course, 3/20-4/24, meets live online for two hours each Saturday. 5th-8th grade students who have previously taken AeroStar programs may start with this course.

Session 1: Aircraft Maintenance
Session 2: Intro to AeroSpace Engineering
Session 3: Basic Components of Space
Session 4: Weather Basics
Session 5: Private Pilot Certification Requirements

9th-12th Grade | High School Students

Node 1: Introduction to Aviation

Node 1 is the first of three in our Spring 9th-12th Grade Program. This five-week course, 2/13-3/13, meets live online on Saturdays from 1:30pm-2:30pm. This course is for 9th-12th grade students who are new to AeroStar programs.

Session 1: Intro to Aviation and Aerospace
Session 2: History of Aviation
Session 3: Aircraft Anatomy
Session 4: Flight Theory
Session 5: Airport Basics

Node 2: Intermediate Aviation Exploration

Node 2 is the second of three in our Spring 9th-12th Grade Program. This five-week course, 3/13-4/24, meets live online Saturdays from 1:30pm-2:30pm. 9th-12th grade students who have previously taken AeroStar programs may start with this course.

Session 1: Aircraft Maintenance
Session 2: Intro to AeroSpace Engineering
Session 3: Basic Components of Space
Session 4: Weather Basics
Session 5: Private Pilot Certification Requirements

Node 3: Advanced Aviation Concepts

Node 3 is the final of three in our Spring 9th-12th Grade Program. This two-day intensive, 5/1 and 5/8, meets live online on Saturdays, 1:30pm-2:30pm. 9th-12th grade students may register now but must complete Node 2 before starting the course.

Module 1: Airport Operations
Module 2: Intro to UAS-UAVs
Module 3: Air Traffic Control
Module 4: Airspace
Module 5: Aviation Safety
Module 6: Ground Handling

*****Prices May Vary*****

(click [here](#) for details)



Are you serious about pursuing an aviation career? Take your training to the next level with our Specialty Courses Program. You'll be on track to pursue the career of your dreams! Click **HERE** to register today!

1. Intro to Drone
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3. Intro to Helicopters
4. Drone Licensing
5. Intro to Rocketry
6. Private Pilot Ground School

**Launch Your Aviation Career at
the AeroVerse E-Learning Academy!**
(click [here](#) for details)



"We have learned to fly the air like birds ... but we have not learned the simple art of living together as brothers. Our abundance has brought us neither peace of mind nor serenity of spirit."

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Book Teaches Kids to Fly Through Fear

What if you were afraid to fly? Authors Kenyatta Scott and Tamera L. Holmes join forces to show girls and boys how to face their fears!



Tamera Holmes Teaches Violet How to Fly Through Fear!

Follow along as ***Violet Takes Flight*** for the first time! Daddy teaches her and her brother Derek the true meaning of "doing it afraid." Follow along as Pilot Holmes makes her literary debut as Violet's flight teacher!

30% of all book sales support AeroStar Avion Institute, NFP, a female, minority owned NFP that teaches underrepresented youth in underserved neighborhoods about aviation STEM careers.

Buy your copy of ***Violet Takes Flight*** **HERE** today!

Make A Tax Deductible Gift Today!

One person *can* make a difference. Your generosity will help the AeroStar Avion Institute train and prepare students—K-12, college, and beyond—to pursue the aviation and aerospace careers of their dreams!

AeroStar is building the fastest growing talent pipeline connecting students in underrepresented communities to lucrative careers in aviation and aerospace. From our training and mentoring programs, we have launched corporate and military careers, and we've sent students to college on scholarship.

Please donate!

Our goals for 2021 are our boldest yet. In addition to our virtual and in-class training programs, we will launch apprenticeships in Aircraft Maintenance and Flight, moving students one step closer to careers in the industry. Apprenticeships will enable deserving students to learn and master an aviation trade on the job. This is a game changer for students in underrepresented communities.

We're fired up about our mission to train and employ youth in this exciting industry, and we need your help more than ever before. To give, click **HERE**. Your donation is tax deductible, and 100% of your gift goes toward training the next generation of aviation and aerospace professionals.

Invest in the passion ... the mission ... DONATE NOW!

Give Wings to Dreams!

ON THE RADAR



The Birmingham Airport Authority is celebrating Black History Month at Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport (BHM) with a photo wall of African American aviators and pioneers throughout history.

Source: [aviationpros](#)

Publisher: Team AeroStar
Editor: Donna M. Williams
Marketing: Jessica E. Crenshaw
Consultant: Kristy Farrakhan

