

VILLAGE GREEN

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

HIGHLIGHTS

A Monthly Publication of the VGOA

February 2021

News from the Board

Ted Lumpkin: A Point of Pride

The Village Green Board of Directors celebrates the life and legacy of our neighbor, Ted Lumpkin - a Tuskegee Airman, a patriot, a hero who helped make American history by fighting for equality for Black members of the military and against fascism.

In his later years, Ted raised thousands of dollars for the Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation. And for over 10 years, he gave countless hours to the Green's

Cultural Landscape Report and served as chair of that committee.

We extend sincere condolences to his wife, Georgia, and his family.

The board has re-instated the Memorial Bench Program. People wishing to contribute toward a memorial bench and plaque in honor of Ted can now do so. Locations will be guided by the Cultural Landscape Report.

More Approved Resolutions

- Record two liens
- Request attorney opinion on whether VG can install solar panels across the roofs of multiple garages
- Continue reimbursing owners in four buildings whose lenders were required by FEMA to buy flood insurance
- Support a second Communications Committee event on diversity, race, and community
- Clarified the requirement that clothes dryers vent into the owner's patio only, not a neighbor's patio.

Councilman's Deputy Gets Earful, Says He Will Help

The Board also welcomed guest Kimani Black, deputy of our current city councilman, Mark Ridley Thomas. Directors described four urgent concerns and asked for support:

1. **Electrical upgrade:** **VG** The DWP is lagging, and we need a senior representative to work with us.
KB Asked for a history of our transformer failures, vault fires, multiple power outages, and insufficient capacity in many buildings to install even a common appliance such as a dishwasher.
2. **Drag-Racing and Donuts:** **KB** Acknowledged the problem and said that their office is working to solve it.
3. **Baldwin Hills Elementary School's co-location with a charter school:**
KB There is a possibility the charter school may move to the Baha'i Center.
4. **Property Lines:** **VG** There is some confusion regarding our property lines and easements made decades ago. **KB** Said he will get us the necessary maps.

Mr. Black said he would propose a dedication of the corner of Cloverdale and Obama Blvds. as Ted Lumpkin Square, with the appropriate signage. □

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MANAGEMENT NEWS

Court 6 Electrical Line Repair

Despite last month's optimistic projection, the overhead electrical cables have not yet been removed from Court 6.

Removal of the damaged underground power lines was slowed because of, "extreme entanglements in tree roots, plumbing, and cable lines posing a grave fire risk," explained Maintenance Supervisor Alfonso Casanova. With trenching help from GreenCrew, Ramco finally was able to safely extricate the damaged conduit, he said.

The next step is to dig under an owner's patio to make a new path to pull the new conduit through.

When that is completed, the DWP will return to remove the lines from the remaining side of the damaged underground conduit. Once ALL the damaged lines are removed, the conduit can be repaired, and new power lines will be pulled through it. Only then will the overhead lines be removed.

Pending no new complications from complex root systems or other obstacles, and with cooperation from the weather, Alfonso looks to the end of February for completion.



Sewer Re-pipe Project

This project was also slowed in January, in this case due to COVID quarantine requirements. However, Troxler and Sons have completed the majority of the work on the main lines connecting Courts 7, 8, 9, and 10 and have also begun replacing the old clay sewage lines on the east side of the Green. Then, they will return to the west side to complete the connecting of the lateral and main lines.

Landscape Maintenance

GreenCrew reported they detailed courts 15-4 and Sycamore Ave. last month and plan to be in courts 4-8 in February. Mowing was needed only once during a six-week period, freeing time for pruning and other work orders. A 3-inch irrigation mainline broke in Court 3.

Residential Buildings Insulation, Painting, and Carpentry

Management hopes to resume this annual project, shut down last year by COVID, after the sewer project is finished. Buildings listed are 18, 27, 39, 43, 45, 49, 54, 54A, 78, and 85. The pilot Building 66 insulation/painting project will be included.

Public Security Report

Edited by Jordan Deglise Moore, Court 6

November December 8, 2020 – January 20, 2020

POSSIBLE TRESPASSER December 13, Court 15, 6:30 pm.

Security responded to a report that someone was lying in the bushes. After learning it was not a resident, but a neighbor from across the street who said they were hiding from family, the person was released to LAPD.

WELFARE CHECK January 5, Court 5, 10:00 am.

Officers found the person was fine.

BURGLARY January 6, Court 12, 9:00 am.

A resident reported their truck was burglarized and tools were stolen.

RESIDENT CALL January 13, Court 5, 6:30 pm.

A resident reported that their neighbor cursed and threw liquid at them. LAPD officers and a psychiatric emergency team arrived and restored calm.

POSSIBLE BURGLARY January 19, Court 4, time unknown.

A resident reported a suspected theft of a large check and recurring locking of doors that the resident didn't lock. □

Highlights is a volunteer project of the VG Communication Committee.

Editor: Lucy Fried

Editorial Assistance: Dagmar Buck

Photos:

Zig, Bill Chappelle and Jason Williams; and courtesy of the Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation and Rose Allison Jefferson.

Design: Kelly Wilson Samojlik

VG residents, this is your newsletter. Send letters & other submissions to: villagegreenhighlights@gmail.com

Heroic Tuskegee Airman, Lt. Col. Ted Lumpkin

December 30, 1919 – December 26, 2020

Jason H. Williams, West Circle

Theodore (Ted) George Lumpkin, Jr., was born on December 30, 1919 in Los Angeles and attended LA area public schools. He graduated from Jefferson High in 1938, earned an AA in mathematics from L.A. City College, and was a 21-year-old junior at UCLA when he was drafted into the military on July 1, 1942.

After basic training and radar training at Tuskegee Army Airfield in Tuskegee, Alabama, in October, 1942, Ted was selected for officer training at Miami Beach, Florida, Air Force Candidate School.

He graduated on January 20, 1943 as a Second Lt. with the US Army Air Force and was assigned to the 100th Fighter Squadron in Tuskegee, Alabama. He served as an Air Intelligence Officer during his WWII tour of duty in Italy and in the Western Europe Theater from 1944-1945. He was a member of the 332nd Fighter Group, which consisted of the 99th, 100th, 301st and 302nd Fighter Squadrons. By the end of WWII, Tuskegee Airmen became one of the most highly decorated units in military history.

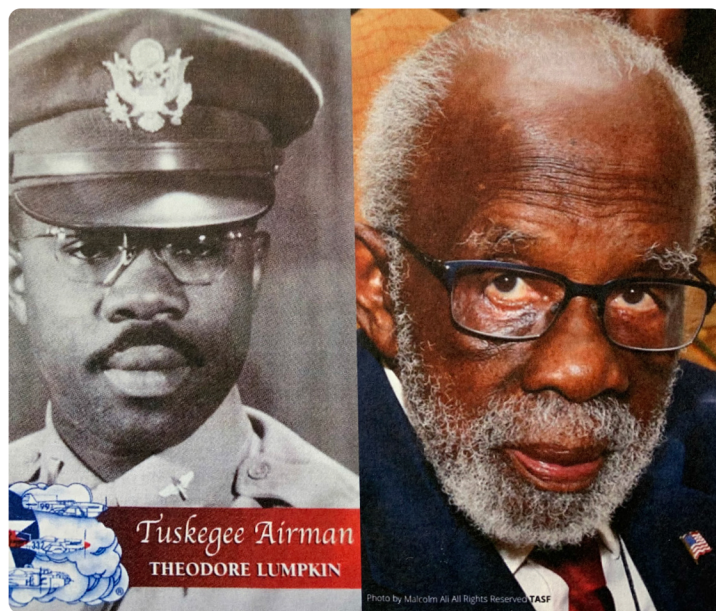
In 2007, the Tuskegee Airmen were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor available in the United States, by President George W. Bush. They were also commended by President Barack Obama, when he invited Tuskegee Airmen survivors from WWII to the White House in 2009.

Ted returned stateside as a captain in 1945. He completed his undergraduate degree at USC in 1947 and earned a master's degree in 1953, also from USC. On September 10, 1948, Ted married Georgia Louise Kelly. They had three sons and one daughter – Kelly, Theodore III, Timothy, and Ellen.

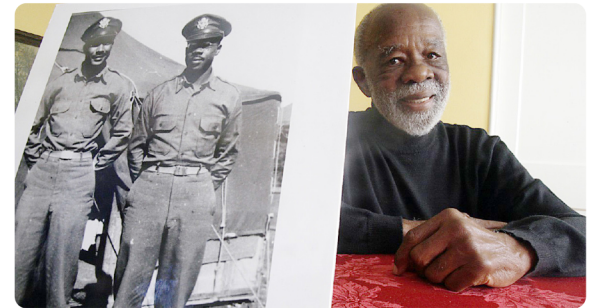
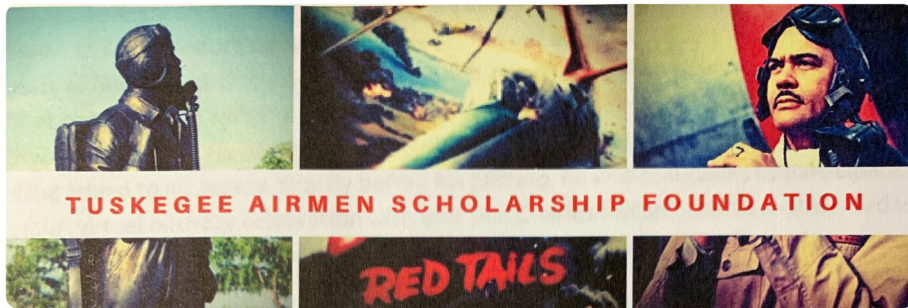
Ted continued his military service with the inactive Air Force Reserves until he retired from the active Air Force Reserves in 1979, with the rank of Lt. Colonel. That same year, he joined the Retired Employees of L.A. County (RELAC).

Ted had worked for the County for 32 years, retiring from the Department of Community Development at the management level. After his retirement, Ted started a new career in real estate, soon owned his own company, and was active in professional realtor organizations.

Ted Lumpkin died from complications of Covid-19. He is survived by Georgia (who turned 99 on January 6, 2020), 3 children, 9 grandchildren, one great grandchild and many nieces and nephews. Georgia said, "He went out with his boots on," because he did not suffer for a long period of time.



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Heroic Tuskegee Airman, Lt. Col. **Ted Lumpkin**

December 30, 1919 – December 26, 2021

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According to Ted's family, one of his lifelong ambitions was to live to the age of 100, since his father had lived to 96. Ted's remains will be cremated and his ashes dispersed at sea by his son, Theodore George Lumpkin III, a licensed pilot.

As a Documented Original Tuskegee Airman, (DOTA), Ted had over a decade of experience with Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. (TAI), the national non-profit organization, and held several leadership positions, including L.A. Chapter President. He also was a board member of the Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation (TASF) and raised thousands of dollars for scholarships, targeting financially and academically deserving underserved students.

If you wish to make a tax deductible contribution to TASF in Ted's memory, please go to www.taisf.org or mail to Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation, Bob Hope Patriotic Hall, 1816 S. Figueroa Street, Suite L-5, Los Angeles, CA 90015

Our deepest and sincere sympathies are extended to the grieving family of Theodore (Ted) George Lumpkin, Jr.



SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS/MEMORIALS:

- 1/05/21 L.A. County Board of Supervisors adjourns in memory of Ted. motion by LA Supervisor Janice Hahn, remarks by Supervisor Holly Mitchell.
- 1/08/21 **L.A. TIMES** online article, Theodore 'Ted' Lumpkin dies at 100, member of the WWII Tuskegee Airmen. 1/18/21 **L.A. Times** print edition obituary.
- 1/09/21 Channel 2 Weekend News special report about Ted.
- 1/11/21 MSNBC salute to Tuskegee Airman Ted Lumpkin.
- 1/13/21 L.A. County Dept. of Military and Veterans Affairs' Veterans Advisory Commissions in memory of Ted Lumpkin.
- 1/21/21 CNN broadcasts a nationwide salute to Ted Lumpkin.
- 1/23/21 **New York Times** article on Ted as one of the surviving Tuskegee Airmen.
- Plans are underway for a memorial flyover honoring Ted, by flying vintage planes in formation, similar to the P-51s flown by Tuskegee Airmen pilots in WWII. □



The Tuskegee Airmen: Origin and Impact

By Albert Germaine, West Circle

Recently, the story of the Tuskegee Airmen has become widely known, as movies and historical dramas have popularized their exploits. It was something of a miraculous opportunity these Black fliers took advantage of in World War II – to demonstrate the abilities of Black men to perform at the highest levels of competence as fighter pilots going up against the German Luftwaffe's desperate efforts to resist the US and its Allies' progressive destruction of the German war machine. The Tuskegee Airmen contributed their all and won fame and recognition.

But how did the Airmen come about? Why were they such an important phenomenon in the history of the US armed forces and the struggle for civil rights in America? And what is their significance for us today?

The Military and World War II

We know the depressing story of racism in the United States – slavery, followed by super-exploitation and unequal education and job opportunities persisting to this day. These "norms" have been propped up by the myth that Black people are intellectually and morally inferior to whites.

In the military, white southerners tended to dominate, and official descriptions of Black troops made clear that they were not to be relied on for any but the most menial roles ⁽²⁾. This was despite the fact that Blacks had served in combat in George Washington's army, and had fought bravely in the Civil War and virtually every conflict the US Army had been involved in. There appeared to be no way a Black man could ever have the opportunity to fly a combat aircraft - a fighter plane - as the Redtails, the Tuskegee Airmen, managed to do. The Tuskegee Airmen laid that myth to rest.

By World War II, flying had matured from its early days. It was a profession, a prestigious, romantic, and admirable aspiration. You had to be intelligent, skilled, and confident to safely fly a plane. Most whites would not easily put the words "Black pilot" together. And yet, there was a handful of Black men in the USA who had gotten pilot's licenses...

When fascist Germany launched World War II in 1939, America awakened to the urgent need to build up its military, and pilot training became a priority. There was strong pressure from the African American community to integrate the armed forces, and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt initiated pilot training programs in colleges around the country, including some Black colleges. **Then, with urging from his wife, Eleanor, and against skepticism and racist opposition, his administration established a base for the training of Black pilots at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.**

The Tuskegee Airmen

The Army did not expect much from the Tuskegee trainees and set a low goal for the number of graduates. However, so many were succeeding, the Army resorted to washing out guys for the slightest imperfections. The first graduates, including some of the men who had already acquired pilot's licenses, formed the 99th Pursuit Group, later to merge with other groups to become the 332nd Fighter Group.

It was not only pilots that were needed. The entire air base of personnel grew to 14,000 men. This included every function, every office of a military base ⁽³⁾. **Ted Lumpkin joined them as an intelligence officer and with them was shipped to the Mediterranean Theater of Operations.** From Italy, the 332nd ranged as far as Berlin, shooting down German interceptors attempting to destroy the bombers they were protecting. When they took off on their first bomber escort mission, they flew into the high, thin air of aerial combat and into the heights of military glory.

The Tuskegee Airmen disproved ugly myths about the abilities of Blacks, but they did not expunge those racist beliefs from the minds of the hide-bound racists in the Army Air Force. Blacks who were being trained at white air bases were strictly segregated and punished for complaining about or defying their bad treatment. In the war, the Airmen were at first limited from excelling by being assigned ground attack missions in inferior, obsolete planes. **It took incessant lobbying of the FDR administration by Blacks back home, like the NAACP, Black newspapers and political groups to get them better planes and more important missions.**

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The Tuskegee Airmen: Origin and Impact

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When they were finally given front-line fighters, like the P-51 Mustang, they came into their own ⁽⁵⁾. They were then assigned bomber escort duty, the most important mission for fighter planes in the air war. Their bomber loss rate was considerably lower than for most of the other fighter squadrons, and the bombers they escorted were more likely to return safely to base ^{(3), (4)}. Bomber crews noticed this and requested to be escorted by the Redtails ⁽⁵⁾.

Though the US military remained under the domination of racist commanders, and though the rank-and-file white soldier was likely racist, the performance of Blacks serving their country competently disproved, if not dispelled, racist stereotypes. Sacrificing their lives for the rights and freedoms of all Americans was a price paid that could not be denied. Ending segregation and discrimination in the US armed services was overdue. **President Truman ordered desegregation of the military in 1948. With a stroke of a pen, a great barrier and insult was outlawed.**



Albert Germaine with daughter Marie Germaine (Court 12)

80 Years Later

The gradual removal of barriers to Black people functioning in the myriad roles of society has increased the total human resource and enriched society. On January 6, 2021 we saw a lone Black Capitol Policeman divert a crowd of rioters away from the area where senators were sheltering, possibly saving lives. His instincts, his judgement and his actions were perfectly combined to save the situation. He was the right man at the right time in the right place. **At another time in history, he would not have been there because of his color.** Would someone else have done what he did as well?

We need the constructive and sometimes critical contributions of all of us doing our best. Disqualifying people for arbitrary, unjust, illogical and ugly reasons harms them and harms us all. The Tuskegee Airmen were a great example of the ability of Black men to contribute to the war effort. **They were needed for the job they did in the war and they were needed for the growth and advancement of the United States toward being a better country.**

It has taken many years of fighting racism and discrimination in the military and the society at large. Unfortunately, the job is far from finished.

Web References for This Article

- (1) [Franklin D. Roosevelt and civil rights - Wikipedia.html](#)
- (2) [myuscstory.org/portfolio/black-airmen-turn-racism-bigotry-into-opportunity/](#)
- (3) [www.history.com/news/the-tuskegee-airmen-5-fascinating-facts](#)
- (4) [www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/473251/black-airmen-turn-racism-bigotry-into-opportunity/](#)

Book

- (5) *Soaring To Glory, A Tuskegee Airman's First Hand Account Of World War II*, Philip Handleman with Lt. Col. Harry T. Stewart Jr. pgs: 49; 51-65; 109. □

NATURE ON THE GREEN

Village Green's Bird List

*Freelance photographers Dick Barth and Don Sterba have been snapping birds at the Green for decades. Fortunately, they created a **bird list**. In 2017, it contained 133 bird species that had flown into the Green and DID SOMETHING here – mated, foraged, ate, even rested on a limb... Don spotted a new one recently and sent this report.*

"On Nov. 18, I found a new species to add to the Green's bird list - a Gray Flycatcher. It was foraging mostly around the larger lawn of the East Green. This small bird hunts insects by quietly sitting on an open perch and watching carefully for insects to fly past or walk on the ground. It gives a soft, "Whit," call fairly often as it flies from perch to perch.

There are several nearly identical flycatcher species, but it's easy to identify the Grey Flycatcher because of the way it flicks its tail. Unlike most, the Gray Flycatcher starts by lowering its tail first and then raising it back up."

While it is not a super-rarity, it is a species that local experts want to keep track of. The ornithology department at the Natural History Museum of LA Co. knows about this VG record, as does the LA Audubon Society. And it is part of a permanent record in the eBird.org database at Cornell University. □



The bird list is posted on the VG website (see "Reports" under the Guidelines & Resources menu) but hasn't been updated since 2017. If you are interested in bringing and keeping our list up to date, please contact **Highlights** at villagegreenhighlights@gmail.com.

"I think that I shall never see...."

(from "**Trees**", by Joyce Kilmer, 1913)

Bill Chappelle, Court 6

Our great-grandparent ficus tree had to be cut down last December. Parts had died and were in serious danger of falling, and its roots had damaged the underground electrical cables. But to us and our neighbors, it/she/he was a giant being of great presence and aliveness - emanating a mystical sense, its long thick roots reaching, bringing rich character to our little forest.

We were awed by this giant one dark night in 2007 when we first walked onto the Green. It became yet another reason we longed to live here.

The ficus stood just outside our patio fence. Every day we treasured the feeling of being not only shaded, but watched

over, protected, embraced. Every night, its swirling towering presence welcomed us as we turned onto the walk towards home.

In a time of such great loss all around us, the removal of our ficus was a very sad event. Residents stopped, watched, lingered. Some, including my 8-year-old granddaughter and I, wept as we watched the brave tree worker climb from limb to limb, cutting each huge branch to be slowly lifted away by an enormous crane. That evening, she prepared an altar, surrounding with candles the small fallen ficus branches she had gathered.

We will greatly miss our beloved friend, tree number 369, a beautiful original member of the Village Green urban forest family. There are only a few giant ficuses left. □



COMMITTEE NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

VG's Cultural Affairs Committee invites
EVERYONE to attend this year's

BLACK HISTORY MONTH TALK

with

DR. ALISON ROSE JEFFERSON

**"Black Leaders of Leisure:
Their California Dream During the Jim Crow Era
and the Implications of Their Stories Today"**

Sunday, February 21st starting at 3:00 pm

Zoom Meeting ID: 317 169 6861

Passcode: VGBHM

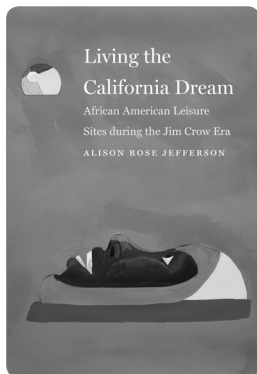


**Black beachgoers from Los Angeles at the
Bay Street Beach, 1926**, Shades of L.A. Photo
Collection / Los Angeles Public Library

Dr. Jefferson has a doctorate in history from UC Santa Barbara and a Master of Heritage Conservation from USC. She will discuss the history of African-American leisure spaces – including beaches – in California.



The core of her work is to reconstruct the stories of the African American experience which have been left out or marginalized in the telling of American history - forging them into a tool in the struggle for social justice.



Don't miss this look into a rarely-discussed piece of California history.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

HIGHLIGHTS NEEDS DESIGNERS!

People tell us they appreciate **Highlights**, and we're glad.

However, the newsletter is in a crisis and urgently needs additional design/layout volunteers to rotate this monthly task with others.

If you can work with Adobe InDesign, Microsoft Word, or Apple Pages, please consider becoming part of that team. **WE NEED YOU NOW.**

villagegreenhighlights@gmail.com



~ SAFETY COMMITTEE ~

STREET RACING BRINGS RESIDENTS TO SAFETY MEETING

20 residents showed up at the January Safety Committee meeting to talk to LAPD Senior Lead Officer Gabriel Roybal about the street racing and intersection takeovers on Obama Blvd.

The focus was on how to get a faster police response. Roybal suggested:

1. **Call 877-ASK-LAPD or 911**
2. Use these phrases: "side show takeover;" "illegal street racing;" "taking over an intersection"
3. Give specific details (e.g. red and black cars racing westbound at the corner of Obama and Hauser, doing donuts, etc.)
4. Send LAPD any info you may have, including videos, photos, descriptions of racers.
5. Request a call back from an officer if you have accurate information they may not have.

Senior Lead Officer Roybal (Southwest Division)

Cell phone: 323-387-9621; Email: **38066@lapd.online**. □

FEBRUARY ACTION TIP TO PREPARE FOR THE UNEXPECTED:

MAKE A COMMUNICATION PLAN

The Safety Committee recommends that every household member have an out-of-area (at least 100 miles away) contact card in a wallet, purse or backpack at all times.

This is the key piece of a great communications plan to let family or close friends know whether everyone is safe – especially if internet and cell phone signals are sparse after an event like a big earthquake. Quick tip: You may be able to text SMS messages on your cell phone, but keep them short. □

