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Press Release

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[NYC Transit](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA NYC Transit Veterans Group Holds Tribute Ceremony for Tuskegee Airmen

Photos of Ceremony are Available at [This Link](#)

MTA New York City Transit's Veterans Employee Resource Group held a tribute today for the Tuskegee Airmen, the legendary 332nd fighter group of African American pilots who served in World War II, in celebration of Black History Month.

A ceremony was held at the Tuskegee Airmen Bus Depot in Harlem and included guest speakers Congressman Charles B. Rangel, a lifelong Harlem resident and Korean War veteran; MTA Chief Diversity Officer Michael Garner; and Patt Terrelonge, daughter of Tuskegee Airman and NYC Transit employee Victor Terrelonge. She is also the Vice President of the Tri-State Tuskegee Airmen Chapter.

"We are thrilled to honor this legendary group of national heroes, our depot namesake, for our first Black History Month event," said Manolin Tirado, Chairperson of the NYC Transit Veterans Employee Resource Group. "African American veterans and Transit employees have made critical, selfless contributions to protecting Americans and helping to move New York City, which makes today's ceremony particularly special."

The bus depot, originally the 100th Street Bus Depot, was [renamed in 2012](#) in honor of the famed 332nd Fighter Group.

Twelve of the Tuskegee veterans settled in Harlem following the war, and worked within the NYC Transit system, then called the New York City Board of Transportation (NYCBOT). Their pictures proudly hang on the Wall of Fame in the depot's lobby.

Reginald T. Brewster – Joined the NYCBOT as a clerk in 1948 while attending law school.

Victor A. Collymore – Worked for NYCBOT from 1947 to 1952.

Conrad A. DeSandies – Worked for NYC Transit in 1959 as a Maintainer's Helper.

Harry R. Dickenson – Worked for NYC Transit from 1984 to 1989 as Deputy Chief Engineer.

John R. Freeman – Retired as a Manager, Operating Authority (OA) Surface.

Noel R. Harris – Began his career at NYCBOT in 1948 as an Auditor for the Staten Island Depot.

Oscar W. Hawkins – Joined NYCBOT in 1949, holding titles of Towerman, Train Dispatcher, Train Master, Superintendent of Operations and Transportation before moving to Labor Relations in 1971. He retired from NYC Transit in 1987.

Austin D. McKenzie – Retired as an Assistant Train Dispatcher in 1970.

Maury M. Reid, Jr. – Joined NYCBOT in 1948 as a Railroad Clerk. He transferred to Rapid Transit Operations and became the Director of the RTO Training School, retiring as an Assistant Director, Office of Labor Relations.

Percy E. Sutton – Worked for NYCBOT from 1948 to 1953 as a Subway Conductor, Token Clerk, and Waiter while attending law school.

Victor W. Terrelonge – Joined NYCBOT as a Trolley Motorman out of Coney Island. He advanced through the ranks of NYC Transit, retiring in 1984 as a Safety Coordinator. From 1984 to 2003 he served as a Safety Consultant to the Legal Department.

Fred O. Wilson – Joined NYCBOT in 1945 as a Street Car Operator and retired as a Bus Operator from the Jamaica Bus Depot in 1976.

Today marked the first Black History Month event hosted by NYC Transit's Veterans Employee Resource Group, which is also celebrating its one-year anniversary. The group is one of nine affinity groups within NYC Transit's Diversity Council, and has grown exponentially in its first year, increasing their membership from its founding eight to 151 members today.

The Veterans Employee Resource Group participates in monthly outreach events, including job fairs, geared towards fellow veterans. Last December the group held a holiday collection drive for troops stationed overseas in Afghanistan and Iraq. Its goals are to empower employee veterans through career

development, promote more veterans within the MTA and instruct, inform and inspire the NYC Transit community on the historical and multicultural impact that military veterans have had on society through their proud service.