

February 2015 Tuskegee, Alabama

"Recently, Army Lieutenant Colonel Al Niles, Jr. was an award recipient and participant during "Red Tail" Day at Tuskegee University. It involved the Air Force, Army, Navy and Marine Corps ROTC Programs on campus. The event paid homage to the legendary Tuskegee Airmen, the nation's first African American aviators. It was held at the Kellogg Conference Center on campus and was one of a series of events that the Tuskegee Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., will co-sponsor with the ROTC Programs. The program was chaired by Colonel Roosevelt J. Lewis, USAF (Ret), President, Tuskegee Chapter, TAI.

LTC Al Niles, Jr., a Tuskegee University alumnus, participated in a panel discussion with other distinguished individuals from other military services. They discussed their careers, experiences, opportunities and accomplishments. The cadets were given the opportunity to ask numerous questions regarding expectations and opportunities in life. LTC Niles was particularly eloquent as he pressed the students to create a solid educational foundation and to push themselves so that they will be satisfied with the results of their efforts in life. He challenged them to: follow their dreams; embrace the "Commitment to Excellence", espoused by the Tuskegee Airmen and not settle for mediocrity.

To solidify his beliefs and the importance for setting high educational aspirations, LTC Niles' educational accomplishments were shared with the cadets. LTC Niles holds a BS in History, Tuskegee University and three Master's degrees. He graduated with Honors from Embry-Riddle University in 2002 with dual Master's degrees, one in Aeronautical Science and a Master's in Safety and Management. The third is a Master's in Business Management, Florida Institute of Technology in 2010. LTC Niles completed Army Flight School at Ft. Rucker, Alabama and has graduated from 14 professional military courses in his Army career. Currently, he is a Department of Defense Acquisition Program Manager for Aviation Programs, at the Special Operations Research, Development, and Acquisition Center (SORDAC).

One of the highlights of the event was the awarding of a "Red Jacket" to LTC Niles by Original Tuskegee Airman, Wilbur Mason, Quartermaster Corps, Tuskegee Army Airfield, Tuskegee Alabama in 1942 and Colonel, Roosevelt J. Lewis, USAF (Ret), President of the Tuskegee Chapter. LTC Niles is a Life-Member of the Tuskegee Chapter and was challenged by Colonel Lewis, a mentor who was honored to pin on Al Niles' Lieutenant Colonel Leaves, to help carry on the values and incredible Legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen to future generations. LTC Niles promised to do just that.

LTC Al Niles, Jr. is married to the former Amy. B. Shackelford and they are both Birmingham, Alabama natives. They have two beautiful children, Amiya Niles (10) and Aydan Niles (5)."

