


# Module 8: World War II - 1939 to 1945

## Topic 4 Content: Minority Contributions in Europe Notes

### Introduction

#### Minority Contributions in Europe

Introduction



African Americans and Japanese Americans were not allowed to fight in World War II at the start of the war. As time progressed, segregated units were trained and allowed to fight. Two African American units, the Tuskegee Airmen and Red Ball Express, served vital roles. Japanese Americans served in Nisei Regiments, which fought bravely and suffered high casualties. In this interactivity, click each panel to learn about the roles minorities played in the European theatre of World War II.

Tuskegee Airmen

Red Ball Express

Nisei Regiments

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#### Tuskegee Airmen

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Tuskegee Airmen



Red Ball Express

Nisei Regiments

Tuskegee Airmen

Tuskegee Airmen

An African American fighter airplane squadron, named the Tuskegee Airmen, fought in North Africa, Sicily, and over the Mediterranean. The squadron flew more than 15,000 sorties in about 1,500 missions. They painted the tails of their planes red and received the nickname, the "Redtails." Sixty-six of the Tuskegee airmen were killed in combat. The minority group earned many individual and unit honors, like the Distinguished Flying Cross and a Distinguished Unit Citation for outstanding performance and extraordinary heroism.

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**Red Ball Express**


**Minority Contributions in Europe**

Tuskegee Airmen

Red Ball Express

Nisei Regiments

**Red Ball Express**



One of the more famous African American support units was called the Red Ball Express. This was a truck transportation group that carried a half million tons of supplies to the American soldiers from the beaches of Normandy to the front line soldiers as they advanced through France. African American truck drivers kept the armies supplied with the vital gasoline, ammunition, and food needed for the soldiers' success.

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**Nisei Regiments**

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Tuskegee Airmen  
Red Ball Express  
Nisei Regiments

**Nisei Regiments**



As the need for soldiers increased, Japanese Americans served in the military intelligence by helping translate Japanese communications. Most Japanese Americans served in a few combat regiments called Nisei Regiments. Nisei was a term that meant someone of Japanese descent who was born outside of Japan. The Nisei regiments were not permitted to fight in the Pacific theatre; rather, they fought in Europe. The Nisei regiments fought bravely, suffered very high casualties, and earned many individual and unit awards for their contributions to the war.

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