



### **Future Tuskegee Airman Museum at Hayward Executive Airport**

The city of Hayward has finally awarded a contract to develop property on the Hayward Executive Airport property, which was formally known as the “California Air National Guard Base.” The contract to develop approximately 12 acres of land in four phases was given to SP Aviation, a local Fixed Base operator located on the Hayward Executive Airport.

SP has agreed to allow a space of 2,000square feet for a Tuskegee Airman Museum exhibit and space for East Bay Aviators, Inc. To develop its “Motivation and Learning through Aviation” (MALTA) program.

The old California Air National Base has a very large Hangar that will be developed in the first phase of four phases that it will take to complete the project. This hangar is large enough to house a four engine aircraft in its main interior structure and it has office and shop type space on three sides of the building. The Tuskegee Airman Museum exhibit is slated to go in the ground floor southwest corner of the building and the MALTA project is scheduled to go above this location on the second floor.

The airport was built in 1942 during World War II when it was known as Russell City Army Air Field. It was constructed to be a Fighter Aircraft Base and the original aircraft assigned there were the P-38 “Lightning” aircraft. In 1947, the war department deeded over 690 acres of land and buildings to the City of Hayward; whereupon the airport was renamed “Hayward Municipal Airport.” In 1949, the California Air National Guard began to occupy what is currently known as the “Old California Air National Guard” Property and erected an “Air Traffic Control Tower.” It became the home of the 61<sup>st</sup> Fighter Wing, which included the 194<sup>th</sup> Fighter Bomber Squadron in June of 1948 and in November 1950 the Wing was redesignated the 144<sup>th</sup> Fighter Bomber Wing and flew the P-51 H from 1948 to 1954. On April 3, 1955, the Base was reorganized and designated the 129<sup>th</sup> Air Resupply Squadron and equipped with Curtis C-46D and in the summer of 1955 it was supplemented with the SA16 A Albatrosses. By January 1962, the unit had received its Federal recognition and operated at Hayward until May of 1980. I, Ben Henderson, arrived at the Base from 10 years of active Air Force duty in January 1963 and remained until 1978 with a three year hiatus. During my tenure at the Base, I worked on the following aircraft: the SA-16,C-119, C-130 and Helio Courier.

As the development of the Hangar is taking place, I will update this article. Currently, I am looking forward to moving MALTA’s operation in the Hangar by early Spring; when I also hope to see some progress on the museum project. I will be putting together a task force very soon to get this project underway.

Ben Henderson

Executive Director  
MALTA