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### **TUSKEGEE AIRMAN AMONG VETERANS MEETING TO SUPPORT ORTIZ**

It's not often that veterans from four wars spanning more than six decades appear together on the same program. But that's what will take place this Thursday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 pm in Room B at the Community Courthouse Center. Veterans from World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Iraq will meet to mark the founding of "Veterans for Ortiz," a group dedicated to promoting the candidacy of R. Paul Ortiz, an Independent running for Supervisor in Stafford's Aquia District. Approximately one out of four households in Stafford County includes a current or former member of the military.

Thursday's distinguished panel will include Colonel Elmer Jones (retired), a maintenance officer with the famous Tuskegee Airmen in World War II. The Tuskegee Airmen were America's first black military airmen, formed in 1941 at a time when the U.S. War Department maintained a policy of racial segregation (a practice that only ended with a presidential order in 1948). The unit derived its name from the historically black Tuskegee Institute, which prepared many of the pilots. In 2007, Col. Jones and the other surviving Tuskegee Airmen received the Congressional Gold Medal for their service.

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Corporal Jack Colby (retired), 4th Marine Division, will also speak at the gathering. He fought in the Pacific battles of World War II, seeing combat in the battles of Saipan (the largest sea battle of WWII up to that point), Tinian and Iwo Jima.

Korean War veteran Gunnery Sergeant Frank Farkas (retired) will also take part in the proceedings. GySgt Farkas earned two purple hearts for his service in Korea. He fought in the battles of Inchon (which led to a decisive victory for the United Nations); Chosin Reservoir (a brutal seventeen day battle in freezing weather in which UN forces were surrounded and outnumbered); and Seoul. Farkas appeared in *War Story Classics: Masterstroke! The Battle for Inchon and Seoul*, and his stand as a young marine to protect his right to free speech earned him a special feature on Eric Severaid's *Small Sounds of the Night* radio show.

These and other veterans are coming together to express their support for R. Paul Ortiz, Independent candidate for Aquia Supervisor. "Serving in the military is an important way to help preserve the American freedoms we hold dear," said Geoff Pomroy, one of the program's scheduled participants. "But we also need people with integrity to serve here at home, keeping the democratic process honest and efficient. That's why we're all proud to help someone as distinguished as Paul Ortiz in his campaign to serve Stafford."

Col. R. Paul Ortiz (USMC, ret.) served thirty years in the Marines, earning numerous commendations and awards. His son, Lieutenant Junior Grade Paul Robert Ortiz, graduated from the US Naval Academy in 2007, and is serving overseas in an undisclosed location.

Greetings and introductions will take place at 6:30 pm, followed at 7:00 pm by remarks from Col. Jones, Cpl. Colby, Gy Sgt Farkas and others.