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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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# BLACK AMERICANS IN DEFENSE OF OUR NATION



Office of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense  
for Equal Opportunity and Safety Policy





THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

16 February 1982



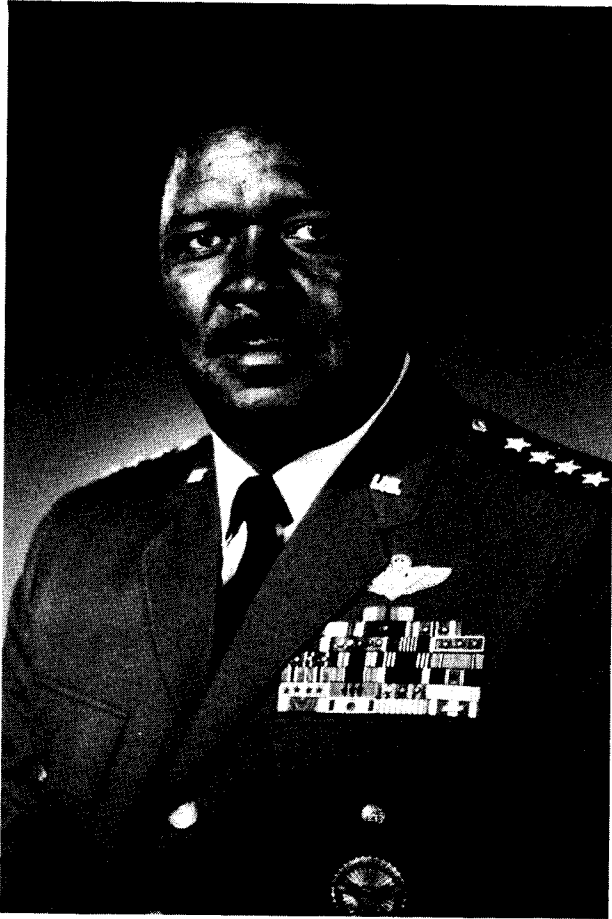
Dear Reader:

This expanded and revised edition of Black Americans in Defense of Our Nation pays tribute to the heroic contributions of black Americans to this Nation's security. The contribution we particularly wish to highlight in this edition is their distinguished military heritage. All Americans can take very justifiable pride in the four-and-a-half centuries of black support to the defense of this Nation.

I believe it is vital for the American people to appreciate and to honor publicly the roles that everyone in the uniformed services and the people who support them perform for all of us. The black Americans, who have served and do serve in America's defense, certainly deserve recognition as well as fair and equitable treatment. This is the public policy of our Human Goals Program and one that we intend to fulfill completely.

A handwritten signature of Joseph W. Heintzger is located at the bottom of the page. The signature is written in a cursive style, with the first name "Joseph" and the last name "Heintzger" clearly visible.

## A Fighter's Famous Words



General Daniel "Chappie" James, Jr. 1920-1978

- "MY MOTHER USED TO SAY: DON'T STAND THERE BANGING ON THE DOOR TO OPPORTUNITY, THEN, WHEN SOMEONE OPENS IT, YOU SAY, WAIT A MINUTE, I GOT TO GET MY BAGS. YOU BE PREPARED WITH YOUR BAGS OF KNOWLEDGE, YOUR PATRIOTISM, YOUR HONOR, AND WHEN SOMEBODY OPENS THAT DOOR, YOU CHARGE IN."

- "WE'VE STILL GOT ANOTHER MILE TO RUN IN THAT RACE FOR EQUALITY. BUT WE'VE GOT A LOT BETTER TRACK TO RUN ON AND THE TROPHIES AT THE END ARE A LOT BETTER THAN THEY USED TO BE."

- "PROVE TO THE WORLD THAT YOU CAN COMPETE ON AN EQUAL BASIS."

- "IT IS STRANGE NOT TO BE PATRIOTIC IN A COUNTRY THAT HAS AFFORDED ME AS MANY OPPORTUNITIES AS MINE HAS."

- "I WEAR MY PATRIOTISM LIKE A BADGE. I'M PROUD OF IT."

- "I AM ... ABOVE ALL ELSE ... AN AMERICAN."

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# **The Military Heritage of Black Americans in Defense of Our Nation: An Overview**

"There are those who will ask, why make a parade of the military services of Colored Americans instead rather of their attention to and progress in the various other departments of civil, social, and political elevation? To this let me answer that I yield to no one in appreciating the propriety and pertinency of every demonstration, on the part of Colored Americans, in all pursuits, which, as members of the human family, it becomes them to aspire for; and, among those, my predilections are, least and last for what constitutes the pomp and circumstances of War.

But the Orator's voice and Author's pen have each been eloquent in detailing the merits of Colored Americans in the various ramifications of society, while a combination of circumstances have veiled from the public eye a narration of those military services which are generally conceded as passports to honorable and lasting notice of Americans."

William C. Nell, 1851

"I, Too, Am America"

Langston Hughes

## Introduction

The military heritage of black Americans is as long as the history of a black presence in North America. From the first recorded visit of a black person to what is now the United States in 1528, blacks, slave and non-slave, have participated in military or quasi-military actions. Such participation has not received extensive coverage in general history books. Nor was such participation undertaken without difficulty. White Americans have been ambivalent over the years about black participation in military organizations and in most instances have encouraged or allowed blacks in military activities only when forced by circumstances to do so.

This booklet does not attempt to chronicle the full range of black contributions to America's military; for they are substantial. Rather, it presents a brief overview which touches upon significant events in U.S. military history and the role of black Americans in that history.

The image of military organizations within the societies they serve, particularly in democracies, is a cyclical one - positive in times of crisis, negative in times of peace. Whatever the current image, it is appropriate to remember those who have made contributions or set precedents. It is to such a group that this brief history is dedicated.



## Colonial Period (1528-1774)

Most history books note that the first blacks to arrive in North America came as slaves to Jamestown in 1619. The first recorded visit of a black person to what is now the United States, however, occurred almost one hundred years earlier.

In February, 1528, Panfilo de Narvaez led an expedition of 400 persons from Cuba. His goal was the Rio Grande river. Among his party was a black slave named Estebanico (also known as Estevan, or Stephen).

Beset by storms, the expedition was driven ashore on the west coast of Florida. The party split and some proceeded overland while others stayed aboard ship and attempted to reach their original destination. The land party met disaster, and seven years later, four survivors, Estevan among them, reached northern Mexico where they were rescued. Taken to Mexico City, the survivors told of their incredible journey and of a region to the north which had several large, wealthy cities. It was also stated that Estevan knew the trail leading to them.

Don Antonio de Mendoza, Imperial Viceroy in Mexico, authorized Estevan, now called Estevanico de Dorantes, to guide an expedition to seek out the golden cities which he had learned about while wandering among the Indians in Texas and northern Mexico.

Traveling north from Mexico City, Estevan soon separated from Fray Marcos, a priest and titular head of the expedition. Striking out with his own retinue, Estevan traveled through northern Mexico, parts of Arizona, and New Mexico. He eventually reached the pueblo of Hawikuh, one of six pueblos of the people now known as the Zuni, in

May, 1539. There, after apparently insulting the tribespeople, he was killed; thus ending the first visit of a black person to this continent. His death and the continued reports of the golden cities caused Viceroy Mendoza to send a second expedition, under Coronado, to the area. Coronado's search for the Seven Cities of Cibola are well known.

During the seventeenth century, Europeans--English, Dutch, French, Spanish--established colonies along the east coast of the present day United States. Blacks, principally slaves, arrived in 1619 (Jamestown), 1626 (New Amsterdam), and 1636 (Salem). Native Americans were perceived by most colonists to pose a threat. Consequently, militia groups were organized for self-defense from among the citizens. The first law enacting such an organization was passed in 1607.

Throughout Europe, defense of one's city or country was an obligation of male citizens. Prominent, upper-class citizens became officers and more common folk, soldiers. The lower classes of society served in the professional army for service abroad. This pattern was loosely followed in the colonies. Early legislation made no reference to race as a criterion for membership or nonmembership; however, by 1639, Virginia had enacted a bill excluding "Negroes" from being provided with arms or ammunition.

Experiences varied from colony to colony. In 1641, the Dutch West India Company in the colony of New Amsterdam armed black slaves with "a tomy hawk and a half pike" to assist the colonists in fighting "murderous" Indians. In 1643, a black man, Abraham Pearse, was listed on the roles of men capable of bearing arms in Plymouth colony. By 1652,

Massachusetts colony required: "All Negroes and Indians from sixteen to sixty years of age, inhabitants or servants to the English, be listed and hereby enjoined to attend [militia] trainings as well as the English."

Such militia service by blacks, however, was scattered and on an individual basis. New England colonies soon followed the Virginia lead and began to ban blacks from militia organizations. These actions created much controversy among white colonists. While there was fear that blacks trained in the use of weapons and tactics would increase the likelihood of slave revolts, exclusion of blacks from the militia gave them a high social status on par with ministers and public officials, who were also exempted. Many colonial legislatures, therefore, required able-bodied free blacks to work on public projects for as many days as white settlers gave to military service. Black slaves were also commonly used as laborers as demonstrated by the Dutch in 1664 when they put their slaves to work building breastworks to defend New Amsterdam from assault by the English.

Throughout the colonial period in New England and the central colonies, free blacks were generally permitted to enlist as soldiers in the militia. Slaves, however, were excluded from armed service and were used only as laborers. South Carolina was the sole exception, allowing "trusty" slaves to assist in the defense of the colony in 1703.

In the southern colonies, greater restrictions were placed upon blacks, due generally to their greater numbers, the paucity of free blacks, and white concerns about slave revolts. Nonetheless, in times of emergency, blacks were permitted by law to serve in military units. This was a policy adopted of neces-

sity as there were too few whites to carry out a large scale military effort. By 1706, all free men in North Carolina were required to be organized into militia units and in the event of Indian outbreaks, all able bodied men, slave and free, were required to serve. In 1711, blacks fought in the Tuscarora War in North Carolina and in 1715 approximately four hundred blacks and six hundred whites defeated a group of Indians in the Yamasee War.

In the southernmost colonies, a similar pattern occurred. From 1718 to 1731 approximately two thousand black slaves had been brought to the French colony of Louisiana. They constituted over a third of the colony's population. Most were sold to white settlers by the Company of the Indies, but others were retained by the Company. Some of these people were organized into semimilitary units for control purposes, and in late 1729, a company of volunteers from this group was used by the governor to destroy a village of the Chaouacha Indians as a lesson to neighboring tribes not to join a revolt underway by the Natchez Indians.

Later in 1730, blacks constituted approximately 10% of a force which clashed with Natchez warriors near Pointe Coupe'e. A memorial praising black participants in this conflict was presented in mid 1730 which recommended freedom for all slaves who risked their lives for the French. Some were freed. In 1736, blacks constituted almost 19% of a Spanish force assembled in Mobile for another assault on the Natchez. Accompanying them was a separate company of blacks with free blacks serving as officers. This represents the first occasion blacks served as officers in a colonial military unit.

Further north, French and English forces clashed over the boundaries of the possessions of the two

countries. The fight, known as the French and Indian War, began in 1753 and ended in 1764. Blacks served as scouts, wagoners, and laborers in this war with the regular English forces. In addition, black militia men served with independent colonist units from Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts. By the end of the war, England had captured much of the territory previously claimed by France, and black Americans had won honors in battles at Fort Duquesne, Fort Cumberland, and the Plains of Abraham outside Quebec. "Negro Mountain" in Western Maryland honors a black man killed in a fight against the Indians during this war.

By the end of the Colonial period, several patterns had emerged.

Black had become synonymous with slave even though there were numerous free blacks in many Northern colonies. As the black population grew from zero in the 1600's to 462,000 in 1770, white colonists increasingly feared that blacks trained in military arts would foment revolts. Hence blacks were exempted from peacetime military duty. During emergencies, however, there was insufficient manpower among the white colonists to meet the military need. Therefore, limited numbers of blacks were allowed to participate; generally in support roles, but occasionally in combat units. Leadership roles, particularly officer positions, however, were denied to blacks.



1st Rhode Island Regiment by Jerry Pinkney

U.S. Army Photograph  
CC-102245

## American Revolution (1775-1783)

### General

On the eve of revolution, approximately 20% of the colonial population of 2½ million was black. From the very beginning, the question of arming the black population proved a source of bitter controversy among the colonists. Blacks had already proven themselves in combat during the previous years and many were members of the new state militias. Fear of slave revolts, however, was still first in the minds of many white colonists. Resultant policies differed in the newly created Continental Army and Continental Navy, so they will be examined separately.

### Army

As early as April, 1775 black "minutemen" had fought at Lexington and Concord. But should they be permitted into the newly formed "regular" army?

In May, 1775 the Committee of Safety of the Massachusetts legislature presented the following resolution:

"Resolved, that it is the opinion of this Committee, as the contest now between Great Britain and the Colonies respects the liberties and privileges of the latter, which the Colonies are determined to maintain, that the admission of any persons, as soldiers, into the army now raising, but only such as are freemen, will be inconsistent with the principles that are to be supported, and reflect dishonor on this Colony, and that no slaves be admitted into this army upon any consideration whatever."

Thus when George Washington assumed command of the Continental

forces in July, 1775, his Adjutant General, Horatio Gates, ordered recruiting officers not to enlist any "stroller, Negro, or vagabond".

If the colonists were fearful of black recruits, their British opponents were not. Recognizing that slavery was a divisive issue, suffering from his own manpower shortages, and desiring a swift end to the conflict, John Murray, Earl of Dunmore and Royal Governor of Virginia, issued a proclamation on November 7, 1775 which stated:

"...and I do hereby further declare all indented servants, Negroes, or others, (appertaining to Rebels,) free, that are able and willing to bear arms, they joining His Majesty's Troops, as soon as may be, for the more speedily reducing the Colony to a proper sence of their duty, to His Majesty's crown and dignity."

By December, 1775 almost three hundred blacks, paying this price for freedom, with "Liberty to Slaves" inscribed on their uniforms, were members of Lord Dunmore's "Ethiopian Regiment".

As a result of Lord Dunmore's action, the continuing debate in the Continental Congress, and the protests from the excluded black community, Washington, in December, 1775, authorized recruiting officers to sign up free Negroes "desirous of enlisting". Slave participation was strictly prohibited and this was reinforced by General Orders issued on February 21, 1776.

Despite these policies, slaves did participate. Some were "substituted" for their masters who chose not to serve. In 1777, a journal entry by a Hessian officer noted the presence of blacks in most colonial

regiments and British troops sang this derisively:

"The rebel clowns, oh what a sight  
To awkward was their figure  
'Twas yonder stood a pious wight  
And here and there a nigger"

By early 1777, Washington's army was down to only 1,400 effectives. In order to resolve the manpower shortage, Congress resorted to a draft, although it was unable to enforce the policy.

By mid 1778, each brigade in Washington's little army averaged 42 black soldiers; all serving on an integrated basis. Later in the year, all-black units (a battalion from Rhode Island, a company from Boston called the "Bucks of America", and a company from Connecticut known as the "Colonials") were formed. The most significant encounter in which an all-black unit fought was the battle of Rhode Island in August 1778. During that engagement, this unit, which was relatively untrained, held the line against four hours of British-Hessian assaults, enabling the entire American army to escape a trap.

In 1779 allied French forces besieged the British garrison of Savannah. Among the troops were approximately 600 free blacks and slaves from the French West Indies. Later that year, when Spain joined France as an ally, black troops from Louisiana comprised almost half the force commanded by Governor Bernardo Galvez who successfully drove the British from Louisiana and the Mississippi valley; thereby preventing the southern flank of the Continental forces from being turned.

By war's end, approximately 5,000 black soldiers had served in

the Colonial army of 300,000. Black troops had fought in most major battles and had garnered honors and praise from their commanders.

### The Navy

The small Continental navy was supplemented by individual state navies, privateers, and vessels sailing under letters of marque. All carried blacks, although race was not always noted on ship rosters.

Naval vessels suffered from chronic manpower shortages. Many black seamen had naval experience from previous colonial wars or from serving on numerous coastal vessels prior to the war. Although no ship captains were black, many pilots were black. As early as 1775 a recruiting poster in Newport sought "ye able backed sailors, men white or black, to volunteer for naval service in ye interest of freedom."

No state passed legislation barring blacks from naval service and several states paid bonuses to black crew members or granted freedom to known slaves.

### Conclusion

Service in Colonial military units on land and at sea brought some gains to specific blacks who had participated. Some who were slaves were freed and others received land grants for service. On the whole, however, contributions of black Americans were soon forgotten by the society at large. Although blacks died and gave brave, honorable service, none were given much recognition or declared to be national heroes.

## War of 1812 (1812-1815)

With the end of the American Revolution, blacks were virtually eliminated from the small armed forces of the new nation. Congress passed an Act in 1792 restricting militia service to "free able-bodied white male citizens." Most states followed suit, restricting service in their militias to whites. Even rules issued in 1798 for the newly established Marine Corps stated that "no Negro, mulatto or Indian" was to be enlisted.

In 1803, however, the purchase of Louisiana from France created a dilemma for the new nation. A militia unit of free blacks, recognized by both Spain and France when they held the territory, volunteered to continue service under the United States. They were ignored; then partially recognized; then ordered disbanded. America was not prepared to support a group of armed blacks; particularly in the South.

During 1804-05, Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark explored the newly purchased Louisiana Territory and mapped an overland route to the Pacific Ocean. Clark brought along a slave called York. York soon became an ambassador for the expedition among the plains Indians. They had never seen a black man before and were intrigued. In addition, it was a custom among many of the tribes that warriors returning from a successful raid or battle would daub parts of their body with charcoal to symbolize their bravery. York was seen as a very brave man. His entire body was black and the color would not come off. He was obviously the leader of the group to many, not Lewis or Clark, for only braves lead parties such as this. Consequently, many tribes assumed to be hostile by Lewis and Clark were found to be friendly, thanks to York.

Although blacks had been barred from the militia in 1792 and from

the Marines in 1798, the Navy was too short of personnel to seek or enforce a similar ban. Thus, when the British man-of-war Leopard stopped the American ship Chesapeake in 1807 to search for deserters from the British navy, four blacks were among those impressed.

The war of 1812 proved, for the most part, to be a naval war with fleets engaged at sea as well as on the Great Lakes. With their Revolutionary war experience and relatively unlimited access to shipping jobs, blacks proved to be a most valuable and eagerly sought source of manpower. Blacks constituted from 10-20% of most ship's crews and performed heroic duty in many engagements. Even Oliver Hazard Perry, who objected to the "motley set-blacks, soldiers, boys" sent him in 1812, spoke of his black crew members as "absolutely insensible to danger" after their efforts in freeing the Great Lakes from British control.

On land, however, the black soldier was excluded. Attempts to volunteer were rejected in most states, although soon after Louisiana became a state in April, 1812, the legislature authorized the governor to enroll free black landowners in the militia. In September, 1812, the Battalion of Free Men of Color was formed around the group which had previously existed, but rejected in 1803. The commanding officer was white, but three black second lieutenants were commissioned. These troops did not see action until 1815.

New York was the first northern state to seek black participation in the war effort. In 1814, approximately two thousand blacks, slave and free, were enlisted into two regiments. Slaves were to receive their freedom at the end of the war. A battalion of blacks was also

raised in Philadelphia, but the war ended before it saw service.

But it was in the southern theatre of war that the greatest contribution of black soldiers occurred, even though the war was officially ended.

British forces under General Pakenham threatened the city of New Orleans. Local citizens had rejected offers by the Battalion of Free Men of Color to assist in the city's defense. General Andrew Jackson, however, being short of effective troops insisted the offer be accepted. Drawn up on the Chalmette Plains, the American forces resisted the British attack. The black troops participating (the Battalion of Free Men of Color plus a battalion of soldiers from St. Domingo) held their

portion of the line, then counter-attacked. The worst defeat suffered by British arms in years produced a psychological high point for the American people. Ironically, the black role was soon overlooked, as black veterans were not permitted to march in the annual parades celebrating the victory.

The War of 1812 not only provided the capstone of American independence, it also consolidated the slave system of the South. Hopes of black Americans for peace and liberty were dashed when the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the war, provided for the mutual restoration of properties. Blacks who had fled to British lines seeking freedom were returned to slavery or taken to the West Indies, sold, and their American owners were indemnified.



Black sailors join in celebrating a victory during the War of 1812

## The Seminole Wars (1816-1842)

Throughout the colonial period, but particularly during the American Revolution and the War of 1812, black slaves took advantage of the societal disruptions to escape. Many sought and obtained haven with the Seminole Indians in Florida, England and later Spain, which claimed portions of the area, refused to return the escapees to their irate owners. The blacks settled with the Seminoles, intermarried, and established themselves as farmers, counselors, and tribal war leaders.

During the War of 1812, a small British force rebuilt an old Spanish fort in Florida, approximately sixty miles from the border with the United States. The Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Nichols, recruited Indians and runaway blacks to staff the fort and soon raids were being conducted into Georgia. Their base became known as the "Negro Fort" and was a major irritant to Georgia slaveowners. In 1816, the fort was attacked and destroyed by American troops under Colonel Edmund Gaines. Thus the First Seminole War began as an attempt to recapture runaway slaves. After the Battle of New Orleans, General Andrew Jackson led a second expedition into Florida to recapture runaway slaves. He destroyed Indian villages, scattering their inhabitants and eventually forcing the Spanish to cede their Florida territory to the United States in 1819.

The Second Seminole War (1835-1842) was fought in order to remove

the Seminole from Florida because they were in the way of white settlement. Blacks constituted from one-quarter to one-third of the warrior strength that resisted this removal policy. After seven years of war, 2,000 U.S. soldier deaths, and \$40-60 million in government expenditures, the Seminoles and a few blacks were allowed to emigrate to Indian Territory. Some blacks escaped to Mexico, others were returned to former white owners.

The black presence among the Seminole is believed to be a principal reason that removal of the Seminoles was sought, as they were a magnet to plantation slaves in Georgia and elsewhere. Black presence with the Seminole also heavily influenced the Seminoles to resist. The prolonged and costly nature of the war proved to the soldiers who fought them that contrary to popular opinion, blacks could fight, had initiative, and possessed leadership qualities. These lessons were lost on the society at large.

In 1820 the Army prohibited "Negroes or Mulattoes" from enlisting and by 1850 the military exploits of blacks had been forgotten. It took the work of John Greenleaf Whittier in 1847 and of William Nell, a black historian, in 1851 to remind the Nation that blacks had honorably served in America's military and deserved recognition for those efforts.



## The Civil War (1861-1865)

When the war began in 1861, most people were in agreement that slavery was not the primary issue; restoration of the Union was the principal concern. Within days of its beginning, blacks volunteered to serve, but Lincoln, worried about driving the border states into the Confederacy, and Secretary of War Cameron, informed the volunteers that "This Department, has no intention at present to call into the service of the Government any colored soldiers."

As occurred in the American Revolution, policies affecting black participation in the war effort were different in the Army and Navy, hence the policies of these services will be treated separately.

### Army

It was generally thought that the war would be a short one, so

volunteers were sought for only ninety days. The abolitionist Frederick Douglass foresaw a much longer war and argued eloquently for the admission of blacks into the military. If the Government did not want blacks as a policy, some individual military leaders did. General John C. Fremont issued a proclamation of emancipation in Missouri in 1861; General David Hunter raised a regiment of black troops on the sea islands off the coast of Georgia; Senator James H. Lane accepted blacks in two Kansas volunteer units; and in Cincinnati, a black brigade was raised to build fortifications around the city in 1862. Each of these initiatives was countermanded or otherwise negated by the Lincoln administration.

Abolition was not a popular cause in the North, but Northern commanders knew the price being paid for not addressing the issue. They



Black soldiers pledge their allegiance to the United States

saw black laborers building fortifications for the Confederacy, working as cooks and teamsters, and taking over work on the farms. By May 1861, General Benjamin Butler attempted to circumvent Union policy by declaring slaves who entered his lines to be "contraband" and then put them to work as laborers building fortifications. By the end of 1861, blacks had moved into many semimilitary or military support positions.

Many leaders were convinced that blacks could not, or would not, fight. The educational efforts of Whittier and Nell had been for nought. It took a broadside by William Lloyd Garrison and a pamphlet by George Moore, a librarian and archivist, to prove to Lincoln and others that blacks had fought in the American Revolution!

By mid 1862, new calls for volunteers were meeting with limited success. Congress revoked the militia laws banning blacks and authorized Lincoln to use blacks as laborers, like Cincinnati's Black Brigade. Pressures persisted, and recently appointed Secretary of War Stanton finally approved the recruitment of black soldiers in August. An all-black regiment, with white officers, was raised in South Carolina and mustered into Federal service in January, 1863 as was a Volunteer Regiment in Kansas.

Soon after issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation, the Governor of Massachusetts was allowed to raise a regiment of black volunteers. The 54th Massachusetts Infantry (Colored) was born and Frederick Douglass appealed "men of Color, to Arms!" A new war objective had also been established--abolition.

In May 1863, the War Department created the Bureau of Colored Troops to handle the recruitment and organization of black regiments. All officers, however, were to be white.

Units were to be mustered directly into Federal service and to be known as the United States Colored Troops (USCT).

In 1861 and 1862, black soldiers had yet to participate in a major engagement, and many observers were still skeptical about their fighting ability. However, in May, June and July of 1863 black units fought at Port Hudson, Milliken's Bend, and Fort Wagner. The blood of black soldiers mixed with that of white compatriots on the battlefield and no one who saw the actions doubted black determination to fight. Yet, doubts persisted, and month after month, black soldiers felt the need to prove their worth, while few asked about the fighting ability of white units.

Bravery aside, most people did not expect black units to serve other than garrison duty-to free white units for combat. Black privates were paid only \$10.00 per month in comparison to \$13.00 for white privates. In addition, whites received an extra \$3.50 per month for clothing while \$3.00 was deducted from the black soldiers pay for clothing. Men of the 54th Massachusetts went without pay for a year in protest against this indignity. Equal pay was finally achieved in January 1864.

From 1864 through the end of the war, black participation in the war effort grew rapidly. Over 180,000 blacks served in USCT units, constituting 10% of the total Union strength. In addition, another 200,000 blacks served in service units as teamsters, laborers, dock workers, and pioneers. Blacks served in all military branches; over 120 infantry regiments were raised in addition to 7 cavalry regiments; 12 heavy artillery regiments; 5 engineer regiments; and 10 batteries of light artillery. Not all were in existence at the same time, however.

**"Who Would Be Free, Themselves Must  
Strike the Blow!"**



# **COLORED MEN Of Burlington Co.,**

Your Country calls you to the Field of Martial Glory. Providence has offered you an opportunity to vindicate the Patriotism and Manhood of your Race. Some of your brothers accepting this offer on many a well-fought field, have written their names on history's immortal page amongst the bravest of the brave.

## **NOW IS YOUR TIME!**

Remember, that every blow you strike at the call of your Government against this accursed Slaveholders' Rebellion, you Break the Shackles from the Limbs of your Kindred and their Wives and Children.

## **The Board of Freeholders of Burlington Co.**

Now offers to every Able-Bodied COLORED MAN who volunteers in the Service of his Country a BOUNTY of

**\$200 CASH!**  
WHEN SWORN INTO THE SERVICE, and  
**\$10 PER MONTH**  
WHILE IN SUCH SERVICE. COME ONE! COME ALL!

**GEO. SNYDER,**

Recruiting Agent for Colored Volunteers of Burlington County.

U. S. Steam Print, Ledger Buildings, Philade

Despite the large number of black troops and units, fewer than 100 blacks served as officers. White officers were carefully selected, screened, and trained. Their quality generally being considered higher than for officers serving with white units. But it was assumed that this was necessary to motivate and control black troops. Further, it was assumed that blacks lacked the leadership qualities necessary to be officers, although thirteen black non-commissioned officers received Medals of Honor for their actions at Chapins Farm in 1864. All were cited for assuming command of their units and leading them in the assault after their white officers had been killed or wounded.

### Navy

Suffering from its long standing shortage of manpower, the Navy began enlisting blacks as early as September, 1861. Blacks who early sought service, flocked to the Navy as entry into the Army was barred to them. Blacks, however, were confined to the positions of servant, cook, or Powder boy. By 1862, the regular seaman ranks were opened to blacks, and by war's end, some 30,000 blacks had served of a total Naval enlisted strength of 118,000; a much higher proportion than the Army.

Though blacks never achieved officer or petty officer rank, discrimination in the Navy was less apparent than in the Army. Ships crews were integrated and there were no separate all-black units. Prejudice

existed, particularly among Southern officers. Admiral Porter, for example, ordered segregation on ships in his command and prohibited blacks from jobs such as "lookout" for which he believed they lacked the requisite intelligence.

Perhaps the most famous incident involving seafaring blacks occurred early in the war. In May 1862, Robert Smalls, a black pilot, and seven slave crewmen seized the Confederate ship Planter. Making their way through the defenses of Charleston harbor, they turned the ship over to Union blockade forces. As a reward, Smalls was appointed to a position in the Union Navy and after the war was appointed as a general officer in the South Carolina militia.

### Conclusion

By 1865, over 37,000 black soldiers had died--almost 35% of all blacks who had served in combat. This heavy toll reflected the fact that black units had served in every theatre of operations and in most major engagements, often as assault troops. Some of these casualties were due to poor equipment, bad medical care, and the "no quarter" policy followed by Confederate forces facing them. To the black troops themselves, these casualties reflected their great desire to prove to an uncaring nation their right to full citizenship and participation after the war. They were fighting to be free, not to return as slaves.

## Reconstruction (1867-1877)

By the end of the war, black military units constituted almost 13% of the Union Army. They had fought well, and like their white counterparts, wanted to be discharged to pursue civilian careers.

Most blacks had enlisted for a term of three years or for the duration of the war. Since the bulk of the black units had not been organized until 1863 or 1864, most enlistees had one year left to serve when the war ended. The Army was inclined to keep these units as the rapid demobilization process was stripping it of troops necessary to garrison the recently surrendered southern states.

In June, 1865 there were approximately 122,000 black troops on active duty; by January 1866, this figure had dwindled to half and by June 1866, only 15,000 remained--most in the south.

The Federal Government believed that stationing troops in the South was necessary to maintain a tenuous

hold on political stability. Many white southerners wanted to return to their life style extant before the war. The presence of armed black soldiers in the South seemed to preclude achievement of either goal.

Tensions between white citizens and black soldiers increased, often because blacks would not revert to pre-war servility. In addition, black militia units were created to enable newly established state governments to reassert their authority. A large portion of these forces were comprised of blacks. Ten blacks were even appointed to general officer positions in these militia units, predominately in South Carolina.

The violent reactions of white southerners eventually caused the government to move the black USCT troops to western posts and to disband the militia units created to restore order. The Civil War was over, but negative attitudes about the role and status of black Americans remained.

## The Indian Campaigns (1866-1890)

In March 1866, the U.S. Senate passed a bill establishing the Regular Army at 67 regiments. Six were to be composed of black troops with white officers. A further reorganization in 1869 reduced the six black regiments to four, the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry.

The four regiments were scattered across the West to garrison posts in company or battalion size units. Their mission was to protect settlers moving west, suppress the hostile Indian tribes, guard the mail, and protect the railroad under construction. In addition, they often had to build their own quarters and forts.

To do this, they were issued "broken down" horses rejected by

white cavalry units, deteriorating equipment, and grossly inadequate rations. Despite the adversities, the morale in these units was high and they enjoyed the lowest desertion rate of all the Army units.

Life on the western frontier was harsh and monotonous. Boredom was a continual problem for all soldiers, but particularly black ones. On paydays, there were few places to spend their money. Even if a town were near a black garrison, the townspeople generally refused service to blacks and heaped abuse upon them, even though the soldiers constituted the town's only defense.

In 1881, for example, after several years of conflict with the citizens of San Angelo, Texas, sol-



Pen & Ink Sketch by Frederic Remington

diers posted the following handbill in town.

"We, the soldiers of the United States Army, do hereby warn cowboys, etc., of San Angelo and vicinity, to recognize our rights of way as just and peaceable men. If we do not receive just and fair play, which we must have, someone will suffer; if not the guilty, the innocent. It has gone too far; justice or death.

U.S. Soldiers, one and all"

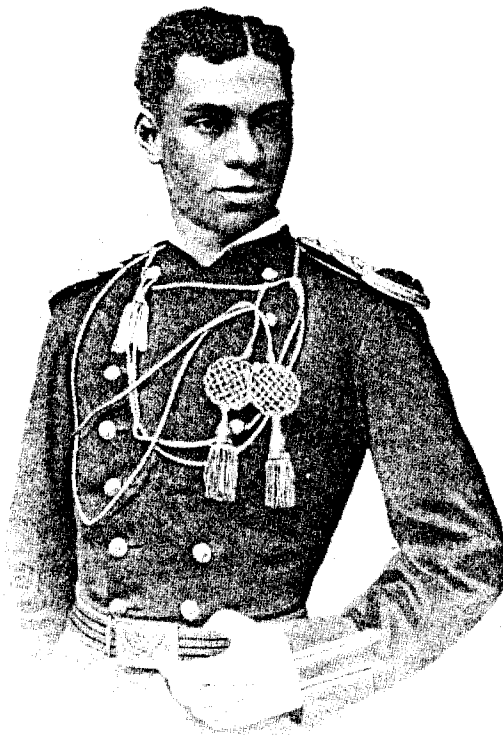
In addition to hostile climate and a hostile citizenry, black soldiers faced numerous Indian tribes who resented the encroachment of the "civilizing influence from the East." In over one hundred battles, black soldiers clashed with Indian warriors. Their bravery earned them the sobriquet "Buffalo Soldiers" from the Indians and 18 of 370 Medals of Honor awarded by the U.S. Government.

The first black American to receive the Medal of Honor during the Indian Campaigns was Sergeant Emanuel Stance, Company F, 9th Cavalry. Stationed at Fort McKavett, Texas in 1870, Sergeant Stance and nine troopers commanded by Captain Henry Carroll left the fort on routine patrol. They were searching for Indians who had stolen two children during a raid. Approximately 14 miles from the fort, they observed a party of Indians escorting nine horses. They attacked and engaged in a running fight for eight miles when the Indians broke contact, abandoning the animals. Camping overnight, the soldiers headed back for the fort the next morning with the captured horses when they encountered about twenty Indians who were stalking a herd of government horses and a small detachment of guards. Again Stance and the men attacked. The Indians retreated,

regrouped and counterattacked. Stance and several men constituted the left flank of the Army column. They outflanked the attacking Indians, who fled. Captain Carroll was full of praise for Sergeant Stance and recommended him for a medal which was awarded in June.

Sixteen years later, Stance, now a First Sergeant, was still in the Army. His unit, F Troop, had been reassigned to Fort Robinson, Nebraska, and found little to do other than chase an occasional outlaw. Garrison duty bore heavily upon the soldiers. Tempers flared and brawls became a frequent occurrence. The non-commissioned officers began to lose control of their men and the guard house filled with bored, harassed soldiers who had responded to pettiness with violence. Stance was one of the more strict disciplinarians in the unit and a center of the conflict.

In December 1887, the body of First Sergeant Stance was found on



Second Lieutenant Henry O. Flipper

the road to Crawford, Nebraska with four bullet wounds; the probable victim of his own men.

No black served as an officer in the Regular Army until 1877 when Henry Ossian Flipper became the first black to graduate from the United States Military Academy at West Point. Given the segregation policies in effect at the time, Lt. Flipper would have had no place to serve if the black regiments in the West had not existed. Flipper was assigned to the 10th Cavalry, but despite successful service for four years, he found himself under attack by his fellow officers and was discharged in 1881 for conduct unbecoming an officer.

Though rejected by the military, Flipper found his engineering skills in demand by many people. He worked as a civil engineer, trans-

lated Spanish land grant documents and helped to build a railroad in Alaska. Throughout his civilian career he built a reputation for professionalism and incorruptibility. During his lifetime he never overcame the stigma of the unproven charge of "embezzling public funds" early in his military career.

In December, 1976, the Army, at the behest of the first black graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Commander Wesley A. Brown, and the historian Ray O. MacColl, reviewed the circumstances surrounding Flipper's discharge and issued an Honorable discharge in his name. In 1977, through the efforts of Mr. H. Minton Francis, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Equal Opportunity), the U.S. Military Academy dedicated a memorial bust and alcove in the cadet library in honor of Lt. Flipper on the 100th anniversary of his graduation.



Pen & Ink Sketch by Frederic Remington



## Spanish-American War (1898)

When the battleship Maine sank in Havana Harbor in February 1898, twenty-two black sailors went to the bottom with the crew. In the patriotic fervor which followed, some black leaders argued that blacks could win respect and improve their status by participating in the conflict. Many black Americans, however, expressed sympathy with the Cuban rebels who were fighting for their independence from Spain.

Among the troops mobilized for what proved to be a ten-week war, were the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry regiments. From the first, these units were in the forefront of the fighting.

Since the regular army only had roughly 28,000 troops in 1898, the government soon called for volunteers. Congress authorized the activation of ten regiments of black troops, but only four were actually formed -- the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th United States Volunteers. None saw combat due to the short duration of the war.

Although blacks were still barred from state militia units, several states permitted blacks to organize volunteer units and to enter service. Among these were the Third Alabama, Third North Carolina, Sixth Virginia, Ninth Ohio, Eighth Illinois and Twenty-third Kansas regiments. Some of these units had black officers, which perturbed many military leaders as blacks were still considered unfit for leadership positions.

Once in Cuba, of all the black units raised, only the four black Regular regiments saw combat. The 10th Cavalry garnered honors at the Battle of Las Guasimas and at El Caney. The 25th also fought at El

Caney and the 24th helped in the assault on San Juan Hill.

The war closed quickly and by the time the 8th Illinois, 3rd North Carolina, and 23rd Kansas arrived, only garrison duty befell them.

White American citizens did not know quite how to react to the returning black veterans. Some were met with speeches and parades. A few were assaulted and lynched.

A popular song of the day seems to summarize the story of the black soldiers in Cuba:

"Hats Off to the Boys Who Made Good"

"The millionaire clubmen, the 'dudes' they would dub them, They said that the coon boys would quit, But the hills of San Juan, they were the first to come on, Did they fight for our flag? Are they it?"



Black veterans of the Spanish-American War

## World War I (1914-1918)

When war broke out in Europe in 1914, most Americans were concerned with problems at home. There were serious social, economic, and educational disparities between most black and white Americans. Full citizenship was still an issue of importance to black Americans. By 1917, however, public interest in the war in Europe had grown.

Within the regular army, the 9th and 10th Cavalry, plus the 24th and 25th Infantry, were still in the West. The Indian Campaigns were over but the Mexican Punitive Expedition against Poncho Villa and border patrol kept these black troops busy. They were not to see overseas service during the war in Europe even though they were probably the best trained and most experienced troops in the army.

As in previous wars, the burden of staffing the expanding military structure fell on the militia and on draftees. Also as in previous wars, the black community had to agitate and pressure for a role. The military establishment lacked a policy for utilization of black manpower in the war. Integrated units were ruled out as a matter of policy and age old questions of black fighting qualities were again raised. Eventually, two black divisions were formed, the 92nd and the 93rd. Neither received its full complement of combat support or support units. In fact, the 93rd was limited to four infantry regiments; three National Guard units and one comprised of draftees. When they arrived overseas, they were assigned to French divisions by General Pershing and they fought with French weapons, under French leadership until the end of the war.

The 92nd was formed entirely from black draftees. From the be-

ginning, there were troubles. Strict racial segregation was practiced and facilities set aside for training of black troops were severely limited. Part of the Division trained at Camp Funston, Kansas. While there, a black soldier tried to enter a theater in nearby Manhattan and was denied entry, even though Kansas law prohibited discrimination. When General Charles C. Ballou, the division commander, learned of the incident he issued a bulletin in which he chastised his soldiers for starting trouble. He also said:

"The Division Commander repeats that the success of the Division, with all that success implies, is dependent upon the good will of the public. That public is nine-tenths white. White men made the Division, and they can break it just as easily if it becomes a trouble maker."

An uproar of protest flowed from the black community. Two months later, the division hurriedly left for France, poorly trained and poorly led. Once in France, the Division gathered a reputation as inept and it could do no right.

The bulk of black draftees saw service in labor battalions, stevedore companies, and depot brigades. Almost one-third of all labor troops in the Army were black. The General Staff believed that since most blacks had been manual laborers in civilian life, they should be laborers in the Army. Black service troops received little or no combat training because the "poorer class of backwoods negro has not the mental stamina and moral sturdiness to put him in the line" against more highly educated and trained German soldiers. Consequently, when black draftees reported for active duty,

they were given fatigue uniforms and immediately put on work details, and the white draftees were not assigned to labor work.

Among the first American troops to arrive in France in 1917, were several hundred black stevedores. This pioneer unit and the others which followed, performed prodigious feats on the docks and in the warehouses, often working day and night. Soon known as Services of Supply (S.O.S.) units, these black soldiers provided the core of the growing logistics system on the Continent. Although their hard work earned official praise, it did not warrant promotion or reassignment. Blacks were limited to all ranks corporal and below, their officers were also white, and combat and combat support roles were denied them.

When the first black combat troops arrived in France in December, 1917, there was some controversy as to what to do with them. Some leaders wanted to convert the four infantry regiments to S.O.S. units. Eventually, however, they were "loaned" to the French where they were given French rifles, helmets and other gear, including rations; although their uniform remained U.S. issue.

Three months after its arrival, the 369th Infantry joined the French 4th Army at the front. It stayed in the trenches for 191 days, the longest front line service of any American regiment. During that period, the regiment, as a unit as well as over 170 of its men and officers, was awarded the French Croix de Guerre or the Legion of Honor for

gallantry in action. The Germans called them "Hell Fighters", they called themselves "Black Rattlers."

The remainder of the 93rd Division arrived in France piecemeal, some six months after the 369th. The 370th, 371st and 372nd regiments all saw extensive action and garnered many awards. The division never fought as a unit. The 92nd Division saw less extensive combat. Since it was a part of the American Expeditionary Force, it fought as a unit.

Over 400,000 blacks served in uniform during World War I. Of these, approximately 10% were assigned to combat units, the remainder to stevedore, depot, and other laborer units. Despite segregation and discriminatory assignments, over 1300 blacks were commissioned as officers (less than 1% of all officers), most as 2nd or 1st Lieutenants, but some as Captains. The highest ranking black officer, COL Charles Young had been forcibly retired at the beginning of the war for medical reasons. Some people suggested that given his seniority and the expanding size of the Army, he was cashiered in order to prevent his being promoted to brigadier general. Three other black officers achieved field grade rank during the war; two in the 370th Infantry and one in the 9th Cavalry which did not see overseas action.

Although there was obvious discriminatory treatment of blacks, and particularly of black officers, World War I saw the largest number of blacks in commissioned grades since the entry of blacks into the Army.

## The Black Swallow of Death

Although only 10% of all black Americans who served during World War I experienced combat, those who did served in all branches except aviation. One black American did see service as a combat fighter pilot in World War I, Eugene Jacques Bullard. Bullard was born and raised in the United States but emigrated at an early age to England and later to France in an attempt to escape discrimination. While in England he worked in various laboring jobs and trained as a prize fighter. He eventually became a professional fighter and fought all over Europe and the Middle East.

When war broke out in Europe in 1914, he enlisted in the French Foreign Legion. One of the regiments with which he served was known as the "Swallows of Death" and he became the "black swallow."

Having suffered serious wounds at the front, Bullard volunteered for service in the newly formed aviator corps. He was accepted and took pilot training. Upon graduation, he won a \$1,000 bet from an American who felt blacks were incapable of learning to fly and joined his unit at the front. He flew many combat missions and is credited by some with downing two German planes, although neither is recorded in his official records.

When flying, Bullard's plane was marked with a heart pierced by an arrow with the motto: "All Blood Runs Red."

Though he eventually married and returned to the United States during World War II, his exploits have been generally ignored in this country.



Eugene Jacques Bullard

Corp

Smithsonian A#5  
"Blk Dgs"

Col. G. P. P. P. P.

AV: 225-4466  
14: 695-4466

569-1549

Dominic

Pisano

Von

Handwritten signature

## The Interim Years (1919-1941)

When the war ended on November 11, 1918, political pressures began to bring the troops home. Most combat troops came home as soon as transportation could be arranged and gathered. Service troops, particularly blacks, remained to clean up the battlefields, tear down the unneeded fortifications, and dismantle military installations. It was backbreaking, dirty, dangerous work but it was performed with little complaint.

Upon returning to the United States, black veterans found that little had changed. Jim Crow laws were rampant and several veterans from the South were assaulted by white crowds and stripped of their uniforms at railway stations. One white speaker in New Orleans was quoted as saying:

"You niggers were wondering how you are going to be treated after the war. Well, I'll tell you, you are going to be treated exactly like you were before the war; this is a white man's country and we expect to rule it."

The year 1919 saw an increase of lynchings and a renewal of the Ku Klux Klan. Race riots broke out across the country during the summer. Blacks were blamed for the violence as whites fought to suppress veterans infected with "foreign ideas and by foreign women".

Many people in the War Department felt that blacks should be removed from the peacetime army. Based upon reports submitted by white officers, allegations of poor performance by black troops in combat were circulated and charges of cowardice were common. In 1924, the Army War College submitted a SECRET

report to the Army Chief of Staff which stated as fact the inferiority of the black man and argued for limited use of blacks in future mobilizations. Resentment grew among many white officers, and it was argued that the imposition of black troops on the Army by politicians should not be allowed to happen again.

During the 1930's the American public expressed little interest in the military generally and in black soldiers particularly. Blacks were confined to the four black regiments which had existed prior to the war, and even those units were maintained at greatly reduced strength.

Other War Department "studies" stressed the poor leadership qualities of black officers and argued for their removal. Blacks could fight, it was conceded, but only when led and motivated by whites. By 1939 there were only slightly more than 3600 blacks in the Army and five black officers, three of whom were chaplains.

As fascism grew in Europe, black Americans watched with alarm. They particularly objected to the racist doctrines of Nazism and were resentful of Hitler's snubs of Jesse Owens at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

In 1939, the Army created two new black units, the 47th and 48th Quartermaster regiments. War was coming again, but the racist assumptions of 1917 had not been overcome. When the Selective Service System was initiated in 1940, blacks were registered, but when induction began, the black induction rate was lower than that for whites.

As in the regular Army, black participation in the National Guard in the interim years was limited.

The 369th Infantry still existed in New York as did the 372nd Infantry and the 184th. In October 1940, the War Department announced that the strength of blacks in the Army would be limited to their proportion of the general populace in the U.S. (approximately 10%).

Thus, on the eve of another World War, there were twelve black units and several small detachments in the Regular Army. They were:

24th Infantry Regiment  
25th Infantry Regiment

9th Cavalry Regiment  
10th Cavalry Regiment  
349th Field Artillery Regiment  
41st Engineers  
31st Quartermaster Regiment  
47th Quartermaster Regiment  
48th Quartermaster Regiment  
76th Coast Artillery  
77th Coast Artillery  
1st Chemical Company (Decon.)  
Field Artillery School Detachment  
Army War College Detachment  
Engineer School Detachment  
Medical Detachment, U.S.M.A.  
Medical Detachment, Fort Huachuca

## World War II (1941-1945)

Over 2.5 million blacks registered for the draft in World War II. Of that number, approximately half served in one of the four major services. In none of the services, however, did the black participation rate reach the 10% quota set in 1940; most had from 8-9% blacks in their ranks. Policies on utilization of blacks differed sufficiently in each service so that separate discussions are necessary. A brief overview follows:

### Army

Almost three-fourths of all blacks to see military service in World War II were in the Army. The black percentage of total strength varied from 5.9% at the time of Pearl Harbor to a high 8.7% in September 1944.

Army policies on the utilization of blacks in World War I were generally continued in World War II. Blacks were used principally in combat support, constituting 15.5% of all such units and only 2.8% of all combat arms. Even within the combat support branches, blacks were clustered in Quartermaster units (45.6%) and in Transportation units (32.3%).

Army leaders argued that the Army was not a laboratory for social experimentation. Therefore, black participation should be limited and should be in segregated units. Politically, however, this was an indefensible policy. While blacks were allowed to enter previously closed military specialties, segregation remained.

The two black Divisions from World War I were reactivated. The 92nd Division was eventually committed to the Mediterranean Theater of Operations. It saw limited ser-

vice and was tagged with the label of being cowardly. This label was the result of actions which occurred in late 1944 and early 1945 when certain battalion-size units failed to seize or hold their objectives. The resultant controversy overlooked the fine service of the rest of the Division, particularly its artillery and support units. The performance of the 92nd is more appropriately evaluated by its overall record in World War II. Over twelve thousand decorations and citations were eventually awarded to individuals in the 92nd; including two Distinguished Service Crosses, sixteen Legion of Merit Awards, ninety-five Silver Stars, and nearly eleven hundred Purple Hearts. In addition, the 92nd also suffered over three thousand casualties in six months of fighting. Despite these sacrifices and accomplishments, blanket generalizations about the poor fighting qualities of black soldiers were made. Though based on the alleged performance of a few, these accusations were unjustifiably applied to the entire division.

The 93rd Division was assigned to the Pacific but never fought as a whole unit and saw very little combat. In addition, the 2nd Cavalry Division was created in 1943 and sent to North Africa. However, once overseas it was deliberately disbanded and its members reassigned into laborer units.

Several small, non-divisional units, were also created. Perhaps the most well known was the 761st Tank Battalion which fought in the European Theater of Operations. It was the only all-black unit to win the Presidential Unit Citation. Fighting for 183 continuous days, the unit conducted over 30 major assaults. Although nominated for an award six times, between 1945 and 1976, it did not receive the award until 1978.

As a result of the German's Ardennes offensive in late 1944, some 2500 blacks were organized into separate platoons and assigned to all white companies in the First and Seventh Armies. This was the only example of integrated units in the Army during World War II.

### Navy

Blacks were prohibited from enlisting in the Navy after World War I. It was not until 1932 that blacks were permitted to enlist and then only in the messman's branch which was filled predominately with Filipinos. Only in 1942 did the Navy decide to accept volunteers for general service in all branches. Even then, blacks were prohibited from going to sea and were restricted to assignments ashore or in small harbor or coastal craft. The 10% quota established in 1940 was applied to each ship and was used as a ceiling, not a floor, for black participation.

In 1943, two ships, a destroyer escort (USS Mason) and a submarine chaser (PC 1264) were staffed with all black crews. Initially all officers and petty officers were white, but the objective was to replace the white petty officers with blacks as soon as possible. This was accomplished within six months of commission on the sub chaser, but was never achieved on the destroyer. The first black officer in the Navy did not report for duty until 1945 and he was assigned to the sub chaser with the all-black crew.

Despite this segregation, almost 150,000 blacks served in the Navy during World War II. Few saw combat.

### Army Air Force (AAF)

As in the other services, blacks were segregated in the AAF and were generally assigned to ser-

vice units. Although some 140,000 blacks joined the AAF, they never constituted more than 8% of all members.

During the course of the war, five all black units were created, the 99th and 100th Fighter Squadrons, the 332nd Fighter Group, the 477th Bombardment Group (Medium), and the 477th Composite Group. All pilots and air crews were trained at the sole training facility for blacks at Tuskegee University in Alabama.

Although almost 1000 awards and medals were presented to individual "Tuskegee Airmen", their units were considered by some to lack aggressiveness and to suffer from poor maintenance and other technical deficiencies. They were never able to overcome this negative image, despite much hard work and sacrifice.

### Marine Corps

Blacks did not enter the Marine Corps until August 1942 and then only in segregated units. Most were placed in service units - depot companies and ammunition companies. Only two combat units were created, the 51st and 52nd Defense Battalions. Although 75% of the 17,000 black Marines served overseas, few saw combat.

### Black Officers

As in previous wars, the military approached the subject of black officers with some caution. Black leadership qualities were considered questionable. In 1940, when the War Department established the 10% quota for blacks, it opened officer candidate schools in addition to previously opened R.O.T.C. units to blacks. Surprisingly, these schools were integrated, although the AAF retained its segregated training site at Tuskegee. In addition, five



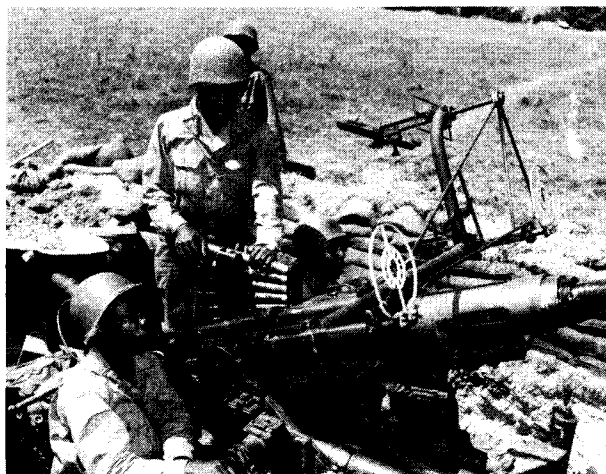
blacks graduated from West Point during the war, none from Annapolis.

Production of black officers was very slow and it was not until 1942 that appreciable numbers of blacks were graduated. Even at that, black officers constituted less than 1.9% of all officers in the military by 1945. None achieved general officer or flag rank during the war.



A gun crew of Battery B  
598th Field Artillery  
Battalion in Italy

U.S. Army Photograph  
SC-224665-1



An all-black crew operate a  
40mm Bofers AA gun in France

U.S. Army Photograph  
SC-198659



Members of the 93rd Division  
on a jungle trail  
in the South Pacific

U.S. Army Photograph  
SC-196151

THESE ARE OUR FINEST  
MEN OF THE 99th BATTALION  
AND THE 332d BATTALION...  
BRAVE BLACK MEN WHO HAD TO  
ENTER THE RIGORS OF PILOT  
TRAINING AND GO ON TO WIN  
THEIR WINGS AGAINST ALL THE  
FORCES OF HOME-GROWN BIGOTRY.  
THEY ARE THE BRAVE, THE VALIANT,  
THE LONELY EAGLES, THE REST IS  
A MATTER OF RECORD... A THRILL-  
PACKED SAGA OF BOLD BLACK PILOTS  
WHO FOUGHT AGAINST NAZIS AND  
FASCISM IN THE SKIES OF NORTH  
AFRICA AND EUROPE TO HELP SAVE  
OUR NATION...  
THESE ARE OUR FINEST,  
TOTAL NUMBER OF PILOTS  
GRADUATED AT Tuskegee 992  
AWARDS: LEGION OF MERIT, SILVER STAR,  
PURPLE HEART, DISTINGUISHED FLYING  
CROSS, SOLDIER MEDAL, BRONZE STAR,  
AIR MEDAL AND CLUSTERS  
TOTAL KILLED IN ACTION 66  
WORLD WAR II 1941-1945

ROY L. LA GRON  
TUSKEGEE AIRMEN 8177



MEN OF THE 99th BATTALION AND THE 332d BATTALION...

U.S. Army Photograph Collection...

## **Ships Named After Black Americans**

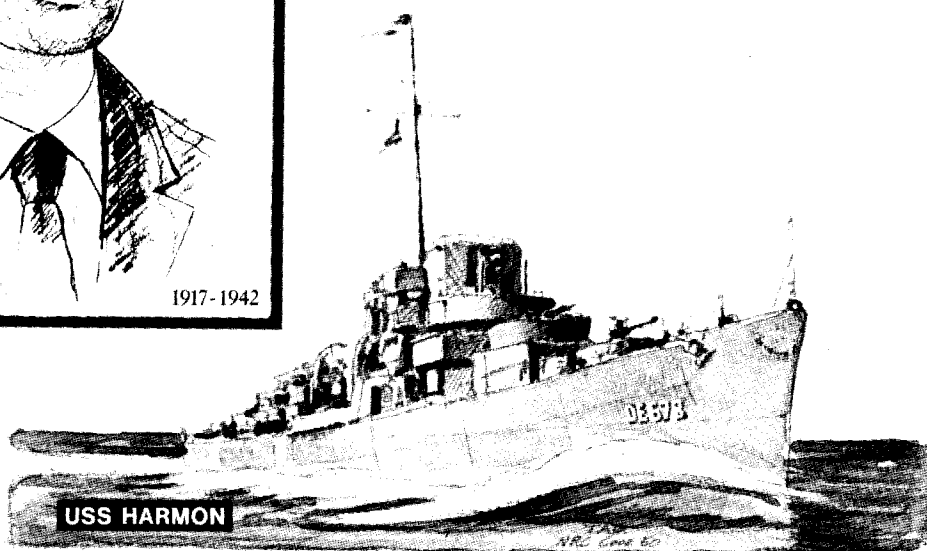
The practice of naming ships after prominent persons has had long standing in the Navy. World War II saw the first ships to be named after black Americans. On July 10, 1943 the U.S.S. Harmon, a destroyer escort was launched. It was named after Mess Attendant First Class Leonard R. Harmon, a recipient of the Navy Cross in 1942.

In addition, eighteen Liberty Ships, the famous mass produced merchant ships, were named after prominent blacks; fourteen after historic personages and four after black merchant seamen killed on active duty with the Merchant Marine. Also, four Victory ships were named after black colleges. The ships were:

The Booker T. Washington  
The George Washington Carver  
The Frederick Douglass  
The John Merrick  
The Robert L. Vann  
The Paul Laurence Dunbar  
The James Weldon Johnson  
The John Hope  
The John H. Murphy  
The Toussant L'Ouverture  
The Robert S. Abbott  
The Harriet Tubman  
The Edward A. Savoy  
The Bert Williams  
The James Kyron Walker  
The Robert J. Banks  
The William Cox  
The George A. Lawson  
The Fisk Victory  
The Tuskegee Victory  
The Howard Victory  
The Lane Victory



**BLACK HISTORY**  
**Leonard R Harmon**  
**STEWARD**



## Interim Years (1945-1950)

With the end of World War II, strong political forces once again arose to demand rapid demobilization of the armed forces. In addition, a liberalization of the military's segregationist policies was sought. Several studies were undertaken, principally by the Army, to examine extant racial policies. In October, 1945 a three person board under LTG A.C. Gillem, Jr. was directed to "prepare a policy for the use of authorized Negro manpower potential during the postwar period." In November, 1945 the Gillem Board issued a report for comment and in January 1946 issued a supplementary report.

The Board concluded that in previous wars, adequate plans for utilization of blacks had not been developed and that what policies had existed were not implemented. It recommended a wider use of blacks in all occupational specialties but under existing quotas.

The controversy generated by the Gillem Board report, plus several studies undertaken by the War College, resulted in a second board, under LTG S.J. Chamberlin. It was directed to review progress under existing policies for utilizing blacks and to recommend any new policies considered appropriate. In February 1950 the Board reported that the 10% quota should be maintained as well as segregated units; in other words business as usual.

In the midst of these internal studies, President Truman issued Executive Order 9981 on July 26, 1948. This order established a policy that there be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin. The order also established a Presidential Committee to examine racial policies within the armed services and to determine how best to implement the Presidential policy.

Chaired by Charles Fahy, the committee began its study in early 1949 at the same time that an unofficial civilian group known as the Committee against Jim Crow in Military Service and Training issued its final report. In May 1950, the Fahy Committee issued its final report which examined two basic questions: (1) are blacks mentally and technically qualified to hold all military occupations?; and (2) should segregated units be maintained? The committee concluded that military efficiency would be improved with full utilization of blacks and that segregated units were an inefficient use of black resources.

These studies plus the rapidly changing policies being developed by the military reflected the changing social conditions which demanded full citizenship for blacks and an end to blatant racism. Implementation of these developments was delayed by the Korean Conflict.

## Korean Conflict (1950-1953)

By late 1949 or early 1950, each of the military services had adopted policies of equality of treatment, although full integration of units was not always the objective. The Air Force, for example, chose to retain some black units, but agreed to maintain no strength quota. Implementation, however, had not been effected.

Units initially committed to Korea included racially segregated components, such as the all-black 24th Infantry Regiment, as well as independent black battalions. By 1951, however, those units designated as black were approaching full strength. The Selective Service system was continuing to provide black replacements who would soon have no place to go. In addition, some white units were understrength. As a result, blacks were individually assigned to previous white units in order to make maximum use of available manpower. Some whites were also assigned to all-black units.

Some commanders objected to this procedure, however, and attempted to retain the old policy, or to create pockets of small all-black units within their commands. The result was that by mid-1951, while blacks constituted 13.5% of the total U.S. strength, 80% of all black soldiers in Korea were assigned to all-black units and almost two thirds of those in service support units.

Both during and after the fighting, there was much controversy about the utility and contribution of black combat troops. Prominent among these disputes were negative reports circulated about the performance of the 24th Infantry Regiment. It was alleged to have panicked and withdrawn from forward positions on several occasions in mid-1950. Satisfactory performance later in the war, plus positive contributions made by black units as well as black soldiers in white units, could not erase the stigma of the allegations about the 24th.

Although the Korean Conflict was principally a land action, there were significant contributions by air and naval forces. A landmark in naval aviation occurred with the appointment of Ensign Jesse L. Brown as the first black naval aviator. He was killed on a combat mission in December, 1950 and posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal for his actions. In addition, Frederick C. Branch became the first black to be commissioned in the Marine Corps.



## Interim Years (1954-1960)

The record of black troops in Korea was basically no better nor worse than that of white troops. If anything, it should be noted that withdrawals by white units were not attributed to racial characteristics. During the war, the Army had initiated a study on the effects of segregation and integration in the Army. Conducted by the Operations Research Office of Johns Hopkins University, "Project Clear" studied the situation both in Korea and in the United States. Their study, released in 1954, concluded that racially segregated units limited overall Army effectiveness, while integration enhanced effectiveness. Further the study noted that integration throughout the Army was feasible and that a quota on black participation was unnecessary. With this and other studies as a further prod, desegregation in the military continued. By 1954 the last all-black unit had been disbanded and

black enlistments grew with elimination of the quota system.

Vestiges of discrimination remained, however. Some on-post clubs remained segregated as were other post facilities. Off-post housing was often segregated and the issue was not addressed by military authorities. The military justice system was disproportionately hard on blacks and off-post discrimination in services hindered blacks in education and business.

Attempts to address some of these problems began in June 1961 with issuance of the first DOD directive designed to eliminate off-post discrimination. By 1963, post commanders were made responsible for developing equal treatment in both on-base and off-base situations. Implementation of this policy, however, was severely hampered by the war in Vietnam.

## Vietnam Era (1960-1973)



When U.S. forces were first committed to the fighting in Vietnam, only regulars were used. However, as fighting escalated, it was decided to use draftees rather than to activate Reserve or National Guard units in order to meet troop needs. The result was that disproportionate numbers of blacks entered the armed forces, constituting some 16% of all those drafted and only 11% of the national population. This was primarily due to the inability of many blacks to receive deferments and the underrepresentation of blacks on local draft boards.

Once in the military, blacks tended to stay longer than whites and to volunteer at higher rates for elite units, such as airborne or air cavalry units. Consequently, blacks assumed a higher proportion of the casualties than might be expected, given the fact that units in the military were truly integrated for

the first time.

Expectations of black service members were heightened by legislated civil rights gains in the civilian community throughout the mid and late 1960's. Blatant off-base discrimination gave way to new, more subtle forms of discrimination, both on-post and off-post. The heightened racial pride initiated by the "black power" movement generated increased sensitivity to problems facing blacks throughout the military. Not all situations, however, were handled peacefully, as violence at various military installations indicated; particularly in the late 1960's and into the early 1970's.



## Post-Vietnam Era (1974-1980)

With the cessation of fighting in Vietnam, the inevitable post-conflict draw downs occurred. Units are disbanded and reorganized. The All Volunteer force was introduced and the Selective Service System drastically reduced.

Peacetime equal opportunity programs were reinstituted and pre-conflict issues were addressed. A summary of major developments follows.

Equal Opportunity Training: An important element of the DoD Equal Opportunity Program is the Human/Race Relations Education Program. This program was formally established with the publication of the DoD Directive 1322.11, "Department of Defense Education in Race Relations for Armed Forces Personnel," dated June 23, 1971. It requires as a matter of policy that an education program in race relations be conducted on a continuing basis for all military personnel in an effort to improve and achieve equal opportunity within DoD and to eliminate and prevent racial tensions, unrest and violence. The program was placed under the supervision of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (now Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics). The directive also established a Race Relations Education Board (RREB) with the mission of developing overall policy guidance for the DoD program of education in race relations. The original membership of the RREB included the Assistant Secretary for Manpower from each military department, a representative of each military service, and two Deputy Assistant Secretaries of Defense--Equal Opportunity and Reserve Affairs. The Board was, and still is, chaired by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics.

The directive established the Defense Race Relations Institute (DRRI) to train armed forces personnel assigned as instructors in race relations. The DRRI was organized as a DoD field activity, attached to the Air Force (Patrick Air Force Base, Florida) for administrative and logistical support, and under the operational supervision of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs). As with the overall DoD Race Relations Education Program, the DRRI was subject to the policy guidance of the RRBB.

The primary focus of the program initially was achievement of racial harmony. Through the armed forces, emphasis was placed on interpersonal relations at the small unit level. The program accommodated only active duty personnel. DRRI was charged with the development of a standard program of instruction for all services, except the Marine Corps which was excluded from the provisions of the directive. The Marine Corps had previously established a Human Relations Institute which was considered to be a parallel course toward achievement of the DoD goal of harmonious relations among all military personnel.

In August 1973, the DoD directive was reissued to extend its applicability to members of the National Guard and the Reserve. While the program continued to be called Race Relations Training/Education, the scope was broadened at the Institute to include women in the military and ethnic/cultural awareness training, such as the Hispanic culture and the anti-Semitism. For this reason, the program name was expanded to Human/Race Relations Institute (DRRI) to Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (EOMI). These changes were not made

for cosmetics purposes, but reflected a basic change in approach to equal opportunity and training as a result of detailed study.

Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute: The Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (EOMI), formerly known as the Defense Race Relations Institute (DRRI), is located at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida. Established in June 1971, the Institute was originally designed to train race relations instructors for all of the Armed Forces. The primary objective of the Institute was to reduce racial tensions and prevent racial violence in the Armed Forces.

After an extensive review of the race relations and equal opportunity programs in DoD, and an assessment of the training program offered by the Institute, the Institute was reorganized in 1977-1978 and its mission was expanded. Today, the Institute trains military and civilian personnel to be equal opportunity specialists and staff officers. The curriculum has been revised to shift the focus from what was almost exclusively individual forms of discrimination to the concern with both individual forms of discrimination and the more pervasive systemic and institutional forms of discrimination. The name of the Institute was changed in July 1979 from DRRI to EOMI in order to reflect the total range of what is now being taught. With this broader focus, however, there has been no reduction in the amount of effort devoted to training personnel in race/human relations. The course length has been expanded.

In addition to serving the active forces of the DoD, EOMI recently implemented a course consisting of correspondence and resident phases to accommodate the scheduling needs of the National Guard and the Reserves.

Since its inception, EOMI has trained over 6,000 race relations instructors and equal opportunity specialists for the Armed Forces and the United States Coast Guard. EOMI continues to assist commanders in attaining and maintaining the highest degree of organizational effectiveness and combat readiness through the promotion of harmonious relations throughout the DoD.

Affirmative Action Plans and the DoD Budgetary Process: An Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) is designed to be a management plan which identifies specific equal opportunity problems and outlines the actions that the command will take to resolve or mitigate those problems. In the past, AAP's were developed independent of all other planning, programming and budgeting, and, as a consequence, AAP's were not considered to be in the mainstream of the system. That situation has now changed.

Today, affirmative actions which have major fiscal resource implications are required to be integrated into the DoD budgetary process where resources are allocated to accomplish the stated objective. This is a major advancement for equal opportunity and one which brings equal opportunity policy considerations into the forefront.

To further refine this process, all of the military departments now report on ten common subject areas as a part of their AAP's:

1. Recruiting/Accessions
2. Assignment
3. Evaluation
4. Training
5. Promotion
6. Discipline
7. Separation
8. Recognition
9. Utilization of Skills
10. Discrimination Complaints



Discrimination Complaints: In the discrimination complaint area, the military departments ensure that procedures dealing specifically with the resolution of discrimination complaints are published at every level including the lowest command level and that each member of the command is fully aware of the procedures. These procedures must be in writing and prominently displayed, on a permanent basis, where all servicemembers will have open access to them. Further, personnel are instructed in their equal opportunity and human relations training on the proper procedures to follow in filing discrimination complaints. Equally important, personnel must be assured that complaints can be initiated without fear of intimidation, reprisal, harassment, or embarrassment.

Equal Opportunity in Off-Base Housing Program: The Department of Defense supports federal fair housing legislation through its Equal Opportunity in Off-Base Housing Program. This program is designed to insure that DoD personnel have equal opportunity for available housing regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

The objective of the program is the elimination of discrimination against DoD personnel in off-base housing, an objective not achieved simply by finding a place to live in a particular part of town or in a particular facility for a person from a minority group.

The goal of the program is achieved when a person who meets the ordinary standards of character and financial responsibility is able to obtain off-base housing in the same manner as any other person anywhere in the area surrounding the installation, without suffering refusal and humiliation because of arbitrary discrimination.

Under the DoD off-base housing program each major installation has a housing referral office (HRO) and maintains listings of available rental and for sale property. The HRO is responsible for surveying the market within commuting distance of the base to determine the availability of housing, particularly rental housing. Available units are listed along with pertinent information such as number of bedrooms, distance from the base, parking facilities, and whether children or pets are permitted. These listings are maintained by the housing referral office and are used as referrals for personnel authorized to live off-base. They are checked by HRO staff periodically for accuracy and removed when the facilities are no longer available.

For housing to be listed with the HRO, the agent for housing must give an assurance that the facility is available to all military personnel without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, or sex.

Upon reporting to the housing referral office, all military service personnel are informed of the military's fair housing program. The servicemembers are also counseled on various methods that may be used by agents to discriminate against minorities and women, such as arbitrary refusal to consider the applicant as a tenant or false statements that the unit was just rented to another applicant. Personnel are also advised to immediately report any suspected act of discrimination to the housing referral office.

These HRO activities reflect the commitment of the DoD program. The vigorous activities of some 1,000 HRO personnel to list and survey available housing for the entire military population and to assist military personnel who have been the

subjects of housing discrimination are the backbone of the DoD program.

Information programs to apprise DoD personnel and the civilian community of the DoD policy and program of the equal opportunity in off-base housing are needed at each installation. These programs are essential since equal opportunity in DoD off-base housing will be strengthened by ensuring that all military personnel fully understand their fair housing rights.

As in any equal opportunity program, the total effort suffers without command emphasis. The military in general, and commanders in particular, are tasked with the inherent responsibility of providing for the morale, health, and welfare of their assigned personnel. Providing adequate and nondiscriminatory housing is a key element in fulfilling this responsibility. The DoD program is structured to assign appropriate responsibility and authority to commanders in support of fair housing. The unique aspects of command allow timely and thorough investigations, processing of alleged discrimination complaints, and the imposition of 180-day restrictive sanctions against agents when discrimination complaints are determined valid. This is accomplished through guidance from the installation HRO and legal staff.

There are three areas of interest and concern for DoD managers. First, commanders and supervisors should insure that full HRO staffing and training is accomplished. The HRO should be allocated a fair share of the installation personnel resources, and the assigned personnel should be afforded every opportunity to attend the service-sponsored joint housing referral workshops held each year. These workshops provide an excellent vehicle for the

HRO staff to train and crossfeed information on the tenets and intricacies of the program.

Second, commanders and supervisors should insure that the HRO is being properly utilized. In these inflationary days, the HRO is the best source for our personnel to locate adequate housing at fair prices. The HRO staff spends a great amount of time coordinating the needs of our personnel with community housing managers. In other words, they know the territory and have communicated the needs of our people to the community. Third, commanders and supervisors should see the HRO as the tool available to insure that newly assigned personnel are treated fairly and without discrimination as they settle in at the installation. This can mean that through the HRO, newly assigned personnel are greeted with positive, initial experiences which, as you well know, can set the tone for an entire tour of duty.

The DoD Equal Opportunity in Off-Base Housing Program has gained a respected reputation by providing an efficient and responsive service in a very sensitive and critical area to hundreds of thousands of military personnel. This service includes ensuring fair housing practices for all DoD military personnel worldwide and civilian personnel at all overseas locations-the latter a service which, to our knowledge, no other federal agency presently assumes.

#### Blacks in the Active Force

Black participation in the active force has steadily increased in the post-Vietnam era, as the table below shows. Blacks now constitute 19.6% of all personnel on active duty; in 1971, blacks were 10.2%.

# Blacks in the Armed Forces

	<u>Total officers</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total Enlisted</u>	<u>%</u>
1971	8,435	2.3	266,531	11.4
1972	7,851	2.3	249,396	12.6
1973	8,107	2.5	269,583	14.0
1974	8,554	2.6	289,336	15.7
1975	9,047	3.1	293,324	16.1
1976	9,485	3.4	297,011	16.6
1977	10,852	3.9	310,941	17.4
1978	11,734	4.3	341,749	19.3
1979	12,831	4.7	368,767	21.2
1980	13,869	5.0	385,860	21.9
1981	15,207	5.3	394,803	22.1



Keeping A Close Watch  
by Roderick Schenken

U.S. Army Photograph  
CC-109384

## **A Tribute to General Daniel "Chappie" James, the Highest Ranking Black General Officer**



During the Vietnam era, a number of black officers achieved general or flag officer rank. Perhaps the most well known was Daniel "Chappie" James of the U.S. Air Force. In 1975, General James became the highest ranking black officer when he was promoted to four-star grade.

General James was born on February 11, 1920, in Pensacola, Florida. From September 1937 to March 1942, he attended Tuskegee Institute, where he received a degree in physical education and completed civilian pilot training under the Government-sponsored Civilian Pilot Training Program.

He remained at Tuskegee as a civilian instructor pilot in the Army Air Corps Aviation Cadet Program until January 1943, when he entered the program as a cadet and received his commission as a second lieutenant in July 1943.

In September 1949, General James went to Clark Field, Philippines, and in July 1950 he left for Korea, where he flew 101 combat missions in P-51 and F-80 aircraft.

In July 1951, General James went to Otis Air Force Base, Massachusetts, as an all-weather jet fighter pilot. While stationed at Otis, he received the Massachusetts Junior Chamber of Commerce 1954 award of "Young Man of the Year" for his outstanding community relations efforts.

From 1957 until 1966, General James attended the Air Command and Staff College and was stationed at Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Pentagon, the Royal Air Force Station at Bentwaters, England, and Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona.

General James went to Ubon Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, in December 1966. He flew 78 combat missions into North Vietnam, many in the Hanoi/Haiphong area, and led a flight in which seven communist Mig 21s were destroyed, the highest total kill of any mission during the Vietnam War.

He was named Vice Commander at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida in December 1967. While stationed at Eglin, the Florida State Jaycees named General James as Florida's Outstanding American of the Year for 1969, and he received the Jaycee Distinguished Service Award. He was transferred to Wheelus Air Base in the Libyan Arab Republic in August 1969.

General James became Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) in March 1970 and assumed duty as Vice Commander of the Military Airlift Command, on September 1, 1974.

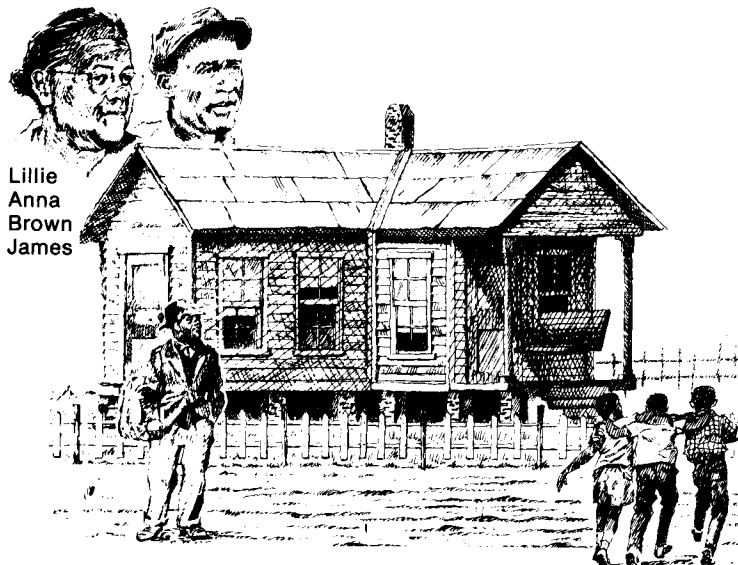
General James was promoted to four-star grade and assigned as Commander in Chief NORAD/ADCOM, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, on September 1, 1975. In these dual capacities, he had operational com-

mand of all United States and Canadian strategic aerospace defense forces. General James retired from the Air Force on February 1, 1978.

General James was widely known for his speeches on Americanism and patriotism for which he was editorialized in numerous national and international publications. Excerpts from some of the speeches have been read into the Congressional Record. He was awarded the George Washington Freedom Foundation Medal in 1967 and again in 1968. He received the Arnold Air Society Eugene M. Zuckert Award in 1970 for outstanding contributions to Air Force professionalism. His citation read "...fighter pilot with a magnificent record, public speaker, and eloquent spokesman for the American Dream we so rarely achieve." General James died on February 25, 1978.

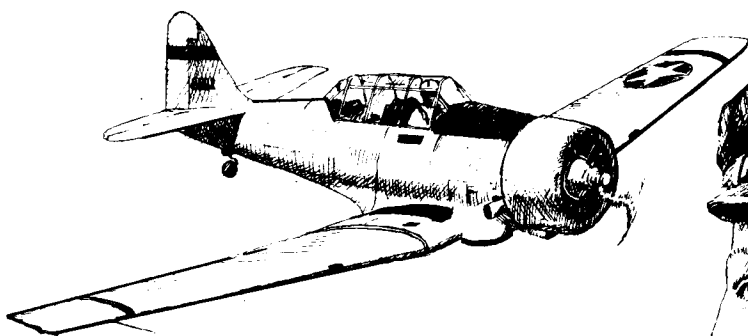
*"You don't have to stop and take issue with every idiot who would hurl a rock or an epithet at you. Just pass them by."*

Daniel James Sr.



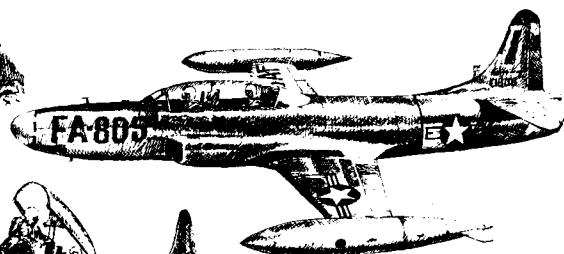
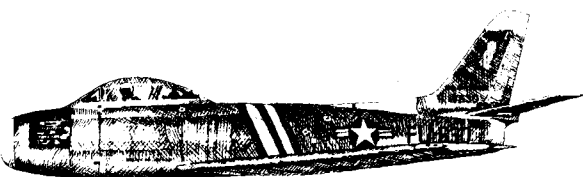
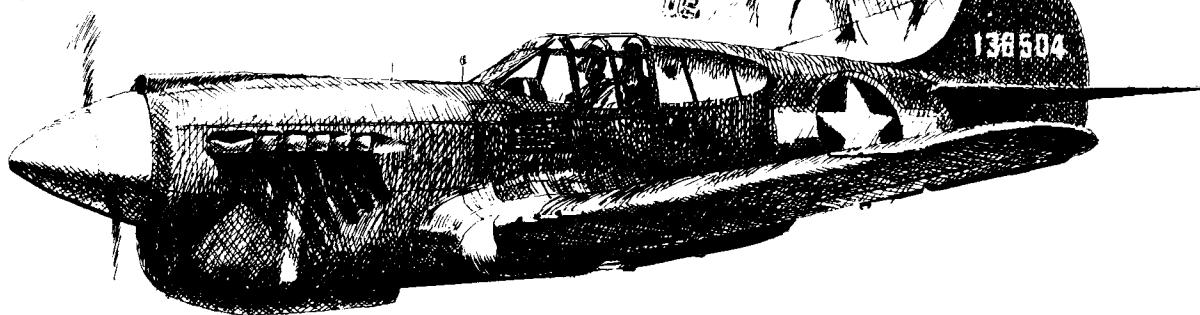
Lillie  
Anna  
Brown  
James

- Daniel James, Jr., born February 11, 1920, in a poor section of Pensacola, Florida, the youngest of seventeen children.
- His mother found the schools in Pensacola were not giving her children a proper education, so she started her own—the Lillie A. James School.
- At 12 years of age he worked at odd jobs to earn plane rides and flying lessons.
- Completed the Civilian Pilot Training Program (CTP) under Chief Charles A. Anderson and Chief Albert Anderson at Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama. Graduated with a B.S. degree in physical education.
- Civilian flight instructor in Army Air Corps Aviation Cadet Program at Tuskegee.

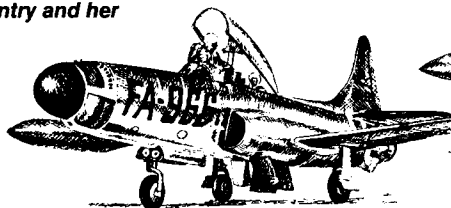


- Graduated number 1 in his Army Air Corps cadet training and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant.
- Attended Fighter Pilot Combat Training at Selfridge Field, Michigan.

*"Prove to the world that you can compete on an equal basis."*



*"I have a deep and abiding belief in my country and her security."*



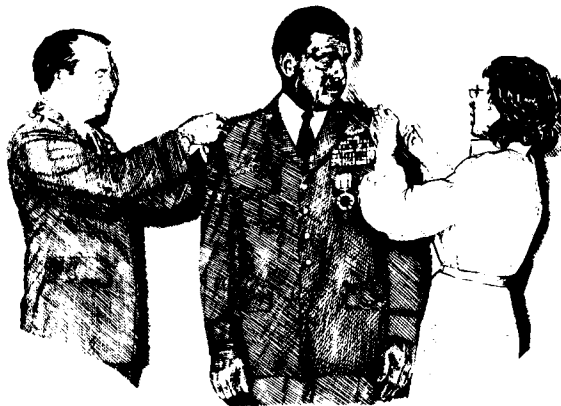
- After the Korean War, he served as a jet fighter and fighter interceptor pilot and squadron commander.
- Received the Massachusetts Jr. Chamber of Commerce Award of "Young Man of the Year" in 1954.

**December 1967-August 1969**

- Served as tactical fighter wing commander in Florida and Libyan Arab Republic.



***"Nobody dislikes war worse than warriors, but we understand it better."***



***"This promotion is important to me by the effect it will have on some kid on a hot sidewalk in some ghetto. If my making an advancement can serve as some kind of spark to some young Black or other minority, it will be worth all the years, all the blood and sweat it took in getting here."***

***"We didn't invent this war, nobody dislikes war more than warriors, but we value the causes of peace so highly that we will not duck a war in an effort to get a lasting peace."***



***"We still got another mile to run in that race for equality, but we've got a lot better track to run on and the trophies at the end are a lot better than they used to be."***



## **Black American General Officers in the Army**