

THE CUYAMACA VETERANS CENTER CELEBRATES



CUYAMACA
COLLEGE

BLACK HISTORY

FEBRUARY 2021



Photo: Members of the 369th Regiment known as the Harlem Hellfighters of WWI

The Long Road to Today

The Veterans Center aims to be a safe and diverse space. One way we do this is by reflecting on the history of the military we served and the country we swore to protect. We look back on how we went from a segregated military to where we are today. And most importantly, we ask ourselves, "how far are we?"

The Veterans Center would like to recognize Black servicemembers and veterans, the heroes throughout history that have served and continue to serve, and the inequality that continues today. Please join us in the celebration of Black history. Oorah.

1778

88 slaves "enlist" in the Patriot Army during the Revolutionary war. The Rhode Island Assembly pays their **masters**.

1812

The U.S. Navy is the only integrated branch. Enslaved Black men could serve, but **would not be given freedom**.

1862

President Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing slaves **only** in areas of active rebellion against the government.

1865

President Lincoln signed the **13th Amendment**, abolishing slavery in the U.S. on Feb. 1. Slaves in Texas were last to be freed in June, marking the celebration of Juneteenth.

1866

The "**Buffalo Soldiers**", formed by the U.S. Cavalry, forced Black soldiers to combat Native American tribes during the Indian Wars. This led to the expansion of the nation westward, and the massacres of Native American people.

The Red Summer of 1919



Many Black service members who served during WWI returned to the states not to thanks or appreciation but to riots and murder. White sailors, alongside of many civilian Americans, believed that the enlistment of Black service members threatened the racist caste system of the U.S. by promoting equality and the ability to work and live together. This fear of racial equality incited race riots across the country, and the lynching of hundreds of Black men, women and children, and Black veterans in uniform.

With riots surging in D.C., Ohio, Nebraska, and all across the South, President Wilson refused to act.

Known Black Veterans lynched returning home during WWI:

Private Charles Lewis, Kentucky
Sgt. Maj. John Green, Alabama
Robert Truett, Mississippi
Clinton Briggs, Arkansas
L.B. Reed, Mississippi
Robert Crosky, Alabama
Miles Phifer, Alabama
Frank Livingston, Arkansas
Bud Johnson, Florida
Lucius McCarty, Louisiana
Powell Green, North Carolina
Herman Arthur, Texas
Wilbur Little, Georgia
Leroy Johnston, Arkansas

**"We return. We return from
fighting. We return
fighting."
W.E.B. DuBois**

Tuskegee Airmen

In 1941, serving in the U.S. Army Air Corps (what would eventually become the U.S. Air Force) the Tuskegee Airmen were the first all-Black military pilot group. Prior to the integration of the Army Air Corps, it was assumed that Black people could not learn to fly or operate aircraft.

Following the U.S.'s entrance into WW2, the Tuskegee program trained over 1,000 Black pilots. Under the command of Benjamin O. Davis Jr., the Army's first Black General, the Tuskegee Airmen flew over 200 missions, destroyed over 260 German aircrafts, over 1,000 transport vehicles and one German destroyer. It wasn't until 62 years later in 2007 that over 300 Congressional Medals of Honor were distributed to the Airmen by President George W. Bush, for their exceptional contribution in defeating Nazi Germany.



1918

WWI breaks out. Although most of the military was still **segregated**, many Black men enlist. The "Harlem Hellfighters", a Black infantry unit, saw more combat than any other unit.

1919

The "Red Summer of 1919" erupted across the U.S. with anti-Black riots, including the **lynching of Black veterans** returning from the war.

1948

President Truman desegregates the U.S. military **only after the valor** shown by the Tuskegee Airmen, the 761st Tank Battalion, and the 452nd Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion during the Second World War.

1965

The U.S. enters the Vietnam Conflict. Enlistment of Black soldiers rose as infantry units became integrated. During Vietnam, Black soldiers represented **25% of those killed** in action.

1991

40 years after the integration of the military, General Colin J. Powell serves as the **First Black Chairman** of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the U.S. Army; the highest military position at the DoD.

Black Women in the U.S. Military

Black women have been serving in our nation's military since before the Civil War. Showing incredible valor and courage before racial integration and gender integration. Whether it was sorting millions of pieces of mail for our soldiers during World War II, or commanding naval ships in 1999, Black women have been paving the way for new generations of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines for decades, here are just a few:

6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion

In 1945, under the command of Captain Abbie N. Campbell and Major Charity Adams, this all-Black, all female battalion would be the first ever to serve over seas in the Women's Army Corps. Tasked with months of backlogged and undelivered mail, the battalion kept track of 7 million identification cards and serial numbers to distinguish soldiers with the same name, This battalion saved the morale of soldiers as they sorted mail in two different countries, over the course of an entire year.



Brigadier General Hazel Johnson Brown



After first being rejected from her hometown school of nursing because she was Black, Brig. Gen. Johnson went on to graduate with a nursing degree at the Harlem School of Nursing in 1953. After joining the Army in 1955, she went on to serve an outstanding career, leading her to become the Director of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Nursing in 1976. In 1979, she would be nominated as the 16th Chief of the Army Nurses Corps, and the first ever Black Brigadier General. She oversaw 8 medical centers, 56 community hospitals, and 143 freestanding clinics in the U.S., Japan, Korea, Germany, Italy, and Panama.

Admiral Michelle Howard

In 1978, Admiral Howard was one of 7 Black women accepted into the U.S. Naval Academy, in a class of 1,363 officers-to-be. Twenty-one years later, in 1999, she would take command of the USS Rushmore (LSD), making her the first Black woman to ever command a ship in the U.S. Navy. 15 years later, in 2014, she would become the first woman to be promoted to a 4 star Admiral. That same day she was also appointed to the 38th Vice-Chief of Naval Operations, making her the second highest ranking officer in the Navy.



2001

General Colin Powell makes history again with his appointment of the **first Black Secretary of State** under the George W. Bush Presidential Administration.

2001

72 years after his death, Henry Johnson was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross by the Army for his courage during a WWI battle where he was shot 21 times and still saved a fellow soldier.

2003

Vernice Armour, a Marine Corps pilot, flies during an invasion of Iraq, becoming the U.S.'s **first female Black combat pilot**.

2008

The U.S. elects it's first **Black Commander in Chief**, President Barack Obama.

2020

The U.S. Navy names it's newest aircraft carrier, the USS Doris Miller CVN, after a courageous Black enlisted sailor. **This carrier will sail among others, named after segregationists: the USS Vinson and the USS Stennis.**