



Montgomery County

Veterans Services

Commission Newsletter

February 2022

Director's Message

Every February, the U.S. honors the contributions and sacrifices of Americans who have helped shape a nation. As we observe Black History Month, we celebrate and recognize the rich cultural heritage, triumphs and adversities that are an indelible part of our country's history. Dating all the way back to the American Revolution, African Americans have played key roles in the history and success of the U.S. military.

Executive Order 9981 was an executive order issued on July 26, 1948, by President Harry S. Truman. It abolished racial discrimination in the United States Armed Forces, and eventually led to the end of segregation in the services.

There are many Veterans that can be recognized for significant contributions through out our history. I've highlighted a few.

Kimberly Frisco
Executive Director

Recognizing African American Heroism in Military History



Formed on September 21, 1866, as a segregated African American unit, the 10th Cavalry was one of the original "Buffalo Soldier" regiments in the post - Civil War Regular Army. The regiment served in combat during the Indian Wars in the western United States, the Spanish-American War in Cuba and in the Philippine-American War. The nickname was given to this cavalry by Native American tribes who fought in the Indian Wars.

Among the first U.S. regiments to arrive in France for World War I, and among the most highly-decorated when it returned, was the 369th Infantry (formerly the 15th Regiment, New York Guard), more gallantly known as the "Harlem Hellfighters." This unit received a Croix de Guerre (for feats of bravery) for taking Sechault.



On October 25, 1940, **Benjamin O. Davis Sr.** became the first African American to hold flag officer rank in the U.S. Army and in the armed forces.

Davis's slow, steady, and determined rise in the Army paved the way for countless minority men and women--including his son, Benjamin O. Davis, Jr (commander of the famous Tuskegee Airmen (see below)).

Doris "Dorie" Miller was one of the first heroes of World War II and was awarded the Navy Cross for actions during the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. Miller's bravery was cited as follows:

While at the side of his Captain on the bridge, Miller, despite enemy strafing and bombing and in the face of a serious fire, assisted in moving his Captain, who had been mortally wounded, to a place of greater safety, and later manned and operated a machine gun directed at enemy Japanese attacking aircraft until ordered to leave the bridge.



The **Tuskegee Airmen** established in 1941 were the first African American military aviators in the U.S. Army Air Corps (AAC), a precursor of the U.S. Air Force. Trained at the Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama, they flew more than 15,000 individual sorties in Europe and North Africa during World War II. Their impressive performance earned them more than 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, and helped encourage the eventual integration of the U.S. armed forces.



Among the 13 members of the first class of aviation cadets in 1941 was Benjamin O. Davis Jr., a graduate of West Point and the son of Brigadier General Benjamin O. Davis, one of two African American officers (other than chaplains) in the entire U. S. military.

African American Herosism in Military History (cont)



Vice Admiral Samuel Lee Gravely, Jr. enlisted in the Navy on September 15, 1942. Gravely went from recruiting sailors to building a Navy career that lasted 38 years and included many distinguished accomplishments, including a string of impressive "firsts". The first African-American to:

- Command a U.S. Navy warship (USS Theodore E. Chandler)
- Command an American warship under combat conditions since the Civil War (USS Taussig)
- Command a major naval warship (USS Jouett)
- Rise to rank of vice admiral
- Command a U.S. Fleet (Commander, 3rd Fleet)

Frank E. Petersen Jr. 1st African American Marine Corps Aviator and General. He enlisted in 1950 as a seaman apprentice and served as an electronics technician. In 1951, he entered the Naval Aviation Cadet Program and completed training in October, 1952. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps. Petersen served combat tours in the Korean War (1953) and in the Vietnam War (1968). He would fly over 350 combat missions and had over 4,000 hours in various fighter/attack aircraft. He held command positions at all levels of Marine Corps aviation, commanding a Marine Fighter Squadron, a Marine Aircraft Group and a Marine Aircraft Wing. He was also the first African-American to command a fighter squadron, a fighter air group, an air wing and a major base.



Hazel Winifred Johnson-Brown was a nurse and educator who served with the U.S. Army from 1955-1983. In 1979, she became the first African American female general in the United States Army and the first African American Chief of the United States Army Nurse Corps.

Colin Powell was an American politician, statesman, diplomat, and United States Army officer who served as the 1st African American Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (89-93) and Secretary of State (2001-2005).



Vernice Armour was the first African American Female Combat Pilot. In 1998, Armour became the first African American to serve as a police officer in Tempe, AZ before joining the Marines as an Officer Candidate in October 1998. Armour was sent to flight school where she was #1 in her class of twelve, and #1 among the last 200 graduates. In March 2003, she flew with HMLA-169 during the invasion of Iraq, becoming the first female combat pilot. She completed 2 tours in the Gulf.

About Us

Montgomery County Veterans Services Commission

627 Edwin C. Moses Blvd. 4th Floor, East Medical Plaza Dayton, OH 45417

Office Hours:

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Appointment Hours:

Monday - Friday
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

937-225-4801

<http://www.mcvsc.org/>

Upcoming Events

Commission Meetings

Currently at 10:00 a.m. every second Wednesday of each month.

March 9, 2022

April 13, 2022

May 11, 2022

June 8, 2022

July 13, 2022

August 10, 2022

September 14, 2022

October 12, 2022

November 9, 2022

December 14, 2022

Commissioners

Jerry Hays, President

Disabled American Veterans

William Fried,

Vice President

Vietnam Veterans of America

James Dare, Secretary

American Legion

John Theobald

American Veterans (AMVETS)

Michael Howley

Veterans of Foreign Wars

(VFW)

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