



CUYAMACA
COLLEGE

THE CUYAMACA VETERANS CENTER CELEBRATES

BLACK HISTORY

FEBRUARY 2022



Photo: Members of the 761st Tank Battalion During WWII

Black Heroes Throughout Military History

In celebration of Black History Month and to honor all of the brave Black men and women who have served our country with valor and distinction, the Veterans Center would like to acknowledge the contributions of African American's who went above and beyond the call of duty.

African Americans have served in the U.S. Armed Forces during every conflict dating back to slavery, the American Revolution, and even during segregation and racial discrimination. Black Americans have fought valiantly to protect our country in the face of racial disparity. For that reason, the Veterans Center would like to thank those heroes who have lost their lives and those who continue to fight to protect our rights and freedom.

Moments in History



Pvt. Henry Johnson | Photo credit U.S. Army

Pvt. Henry Johnson, pictured left, served from 1917 to 1919 in the 369th Infantry Regiment, famously known as the "Harlem Hellfighters," an all-African American unit in World War I. This unit saw more combat than all other U.S. outfits.

Johnson was described as one of the "five bravest Americans" who served in the war by President Theodore Roosevelt. Pvt. Johnson single-handedly fought off more than 20 German soldiers and saved a fellow soldier from being captured - all while injured and armed with only a bolo knife.

In 2015 Henry Johnson was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously by President Barack Obama.

**"We are not makers of history.
We are made by history."
– Martin Luther King, Jr.**

During World War II, Staff Sgt. Ruben Rivers, pictured right, served from 1942 to 1944 in the primarily Black 761st Tank Battalion, also known as the "Pattons Panthers." The unit was infamous for having fierce fighters like Staff Sgt. Rivers.

Rivers suffered a severe leg injury after hitting a mine with his tank, but this did not stop his bravery, and he further put himself in harm's way by covering the U.S. retreat from advancing German soldiers. Staff Sgt. Rivers ultimately lost his life in battle and was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously by President Bill Clinton.



Staff Sgt. Ruben Rivers

**"For to be free is not merely to cast off one's
chains, but to live in a way that respects and
enhances the freedom of others."
– Nelson Mandela**

Moments in History

Major Oleta Crain, pictured right, entered the United States Air Force officer training in 1943 during World War II. Crain was one of only three Black women in the program. Major Oleta Crain was also a civil rights activist in and out of her service to the Armed Forces.

Throughout her career, Crain completed tours in Alaska, England, and Germany, but her fight did not end there. During her career, Crain fought against racial segregation and discrimination in the military and successfully gained the respect of her superiors due to her efforts. Major Crain eventually retired from the military and continued to fight for civil rights, specifically for Black women.



Major Oleta Crain



Phyllis Mae Dailey

Phyllis Mae Dailey, pictured left, was a Columbia University student and the first African American woman sworn into the Navy Nurse Corps in 1945. Daily was one of only four Black women to serve in the Navy during World War II.

Commander Jeanine McIntosh-Menze, pictured right, joined the Coast Guard in 2003 after graduating from Florida International University. Commander McIntosh earned her wings at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas, and piloted the HC-130 Hercules. McIntosh also flew rescue missions in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. Commander McIntosh has the honor of being the first African American female aviator in the U.S. Coast Guard.



Lt. j.g. Jeanine McIntosh | U.S. Coast Guard

"I had no idea that history was being made. I was just tired of giving up."

– Rosa Parks