

Dec. 16, 1944—Jan. 1945—969th Field Artillery Battalion fought in the Battle of the Budge, the Ardennes Offensive. The Battalion received the Distinguished Unit Citation from General Troy H. Middleton, with the words “Your contribution to the great success of our arms at Bastogne will take its place among the epic achievements of our Army.”

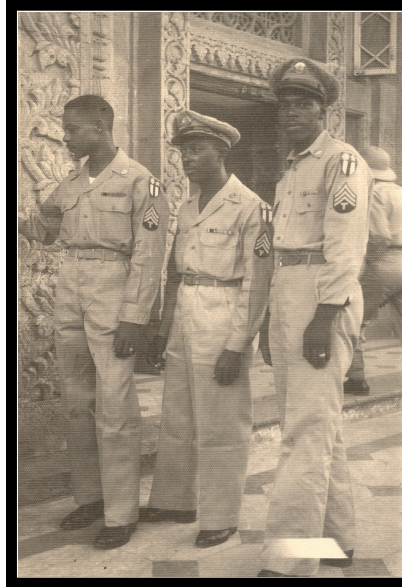
February 19, 1945—D-Day, the 36th Depot Company, Marines, landed at Iwo Jima as a part of the V Amphibious Corps. For several months after, the fight for Okinawa involved at least 2,000 African American Marines.

March — 332nd Fighter Group was decorated with the Distinguished Unit Citation for its 1600-mile roundtrip air attack on Berlin. The Group received at minimum 95 Distinguished Flying Crosses, one Silver Star, one Legion of Merit, 14 Bronze Stars, 744 Air Medals and Clusters, and 8 Purple Hearts.

March 1— 4,562 African American soldiers were organized into platoons to fight along white soldiers in Germany.

June 21— General Achor Report

“The Negro platoons performed in an excellent manner at all times while in combat. These men were courageous fighters and never once did they fail to accomplish their assigned mission. They were particularly good in town fighting and [were] often used as the assault platoon with good results. The platoon assigned to the 393rd Infantry is credited with killing approximately 100 Germans and capturing 500. “



January 13, 1997—President Bill Clinton presented the Medal of Honor to the following African Americans of World War II - John Fox, Vernon Baker, Edward A. Carter, Willy F. James, Jr., Ruben Rivers, Charles L. Thomas, and George Watson.

References Courtesy of the Matthews Collection:

American Negro Reference Book, John P. Davis, 1966

The Right to Fight: African-American Marines in World War II, Bernard C. Nalty, 1995

United States Army in World War II: The Employment of Negro Troops, Ulysses, Lee, 1966

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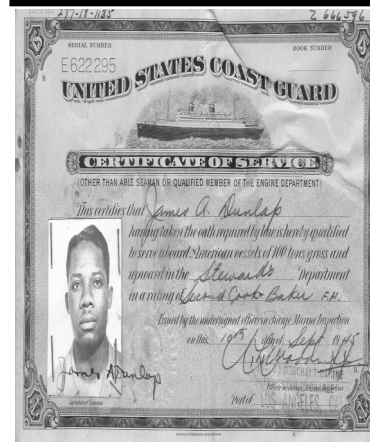
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**ONE
 MILLION
 STRONG:
 WW II
 AFRICAN
 AMERICANS
 IN THE
 MILITARY**



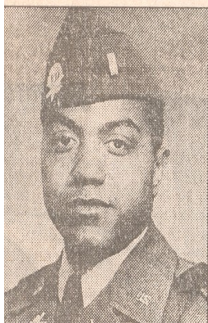
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U S C T I N S T I T U T E

One Million Strong

WW 11: African Americans in the Military

More than 1 million African Americans served in the military during World War 11. The segregated society from which they engaged in battle generally viewed African Americans as inferior and unable to make good soldiers. Each African American soldier thus became a symbol of ability, achievement, and service. World War 11, more than any previous war, set the stage for the elimination of segregation in the



armed services and the progressive agitation for equal rights within American society.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Selective Service Act on September 14,

1940. Included was an amendment by Representative Hamilton Fish, R-NY, that read:

... Providing that in the selection and training of men under [the] Act, and in the interpretation and execution of the provisions of this Act, there shall be no discrimination against any person on account of race or color.

New Policy: October 9, 1940

A new policy regarding African Americans in the military was approved by the War Department and announced at the White House on October 9, 1940. It provided for African Americans in the military being equal to their percentage of the American population and having positions throughout all areas of the military. It was made clear, however, that the policy was not advocating the “mingling” between black and white personal.

October 25, 1940— Colonel Benjamin O. Davis promoted to Brigadier General;

William H. Hastie— An African American Judge was appointed the civilian aide to the Secretary of War.

December 7, 1941—Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Dorie Miller, a Mess Attendant with no training in gunnery, shot down a Japanese Plane and helped rescue his wounded captain. Miller received the Navy Cross, Purple Heart, World War II Victory Medal, and the American Defense Medal.

January 6, 1943— Hastie resigned from his appointed position because of the lack of positive action toward integration in the Air Force.

Secretary Stimson issued policy that African Americans would be accepted “throughout the entire Technical Training Command as well as at the Air Force’s Officer Training school at Miami.”

Major General Millard F. Harmon offered to accept the 93rd Division, but only if it was under the command of white officers. The offer was declined.

January 1, 1944— General Harmon reluctantly accepted the 93rd Division in the South Pacific. General Douglas MacArthur expressed support for the African American soldiers.

1944 - Great Lakes Naval Training Station — Thirteen African Americans graduate from the Officer Candidate School, becoming the first black Ensigns of the Navy.

June 2— The 99th Pursuit Squadron, of Tuskegee Institute fame, flew its 500th combat mission for a total of 3,277 sorties.

The 99th became a part of the 332nd Fighter Group under the command of Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.

August 26-28— 92nd Division, led by the 370th Infantry and 598th Field Artillery Battalion entered the battle zone at Pontedera facing German and Italian Divisions.

October 10— 761st Tank Battalion attached to General George Patton enters combat on Omaha Beach. It remains in action almost continuously for 183 days. Ten of its tanks were a part of the honor guard when German General Lothar von Rundstedt surrendered the Germany Army in Austria.

November 22— Remaining units of the 92nd Division arrived in Italy.

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