



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 32D ARMY AIR AND MISSILE DEFENSE COMMAND
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AFVL-CG

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MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: African American/ Black History Month

1. The contributions African Americans have made in the development of this great Nation and its fighting forces have been and continue to be truly monumental. The Department of Defense theme for this year is "At the Crossroads of Freedom and Equality" celebrating the 150th anniversary of the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation and the 50th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington. As we enter the month of February it is important to take time and reflect on the impact African Americans have made in our Nation's history.
2. The scientific community is filled with African American inventors who are responsible for several of our modern conveniences both on the home front and the battlefield. Otis Boykin invented the electronic control devices for the pacemaker, IBM computers and guided missiles; Garrett Morgan invented the first traffic signal and the gas mask; and Dr. Patricia E. Bath invented an eye surgery method that has given sight to many blind people.
3. Our government has been influenced by African Americans on nearly every level. Through our Nation's struggle for civil rights among our citizens, figures like Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks distinguished themselves as American heroes. African American Soldiers have bravely served in every American conflict since the Revolutionary War and have achieved every rank in our military. Gen. Colin Powell became the first African American to hold the position of Joint Chief of Staff and later served as Secretary of State; Condoleezza Rice served as our National Security Adviser and then later as Secretary of State; and President Barack Obama became the first African American to hold the office of president and Commander-in-Chief.
4. America is indeed a melting pot, and it is important to honor the contributions each race and gender has had in making our Nation the land of the free and the home of the brave. Throughout the month of February, I encourage you to take time to reflect on the contributions African Americans have made, and hope throughout the year you will honor and remember the service of all those who helped make our Nation great.

Swift and Sure!



JAMES H. DICKINSON
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding