

“Asked for equality, we got
integration”

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The right to fight

World War II

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I. WHY BLACKS SHOULD FIGHT

- Common argument around idea of fighting to show deserve rights
- January 1942 James Thompson (26 year old African-American)
 - “Like all Americans, my greatest desire at this time...is a desire to serve...my country in the most advantageous way.”
 - “I love America and am willing to die for the America I know will someday become a reality.”
- Propaganda promoted idea of Blacks doing their part





DEMOCRACY

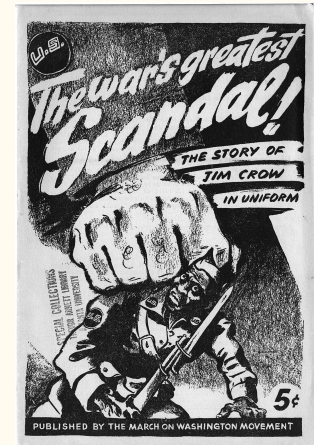


AT HOME ABROAD

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II. JIM CROW IN U.S. ARMED FORCES

- John Hope Franklin not wanted despite supposed need by military
- Many examples from all branches of segregation and discrimination
- Truman Committee failed look into reports of Jim Crow in U.S. Armed Forces



III. BLACK GIs RESPOND TO JIM CROW

- Black GIs responded in many different ways
- Winfred Lynn (June 1942 letter)
 - Stated was ready to serve but unless assured would be in a non-segregated unit he would refuse to report for induction
- Tuskegee Airmen at Freeman Field (April 1945)
 - 57 officers arrested for organizing a non-violent demonstration against segregated officers' clubs



IV. IMPACT

LESSON IDEAS

- **1 day on Jim Crow in Armed Forces and/or 1 day on Responses to Jim Crow in Armed Forces**
 - Ask students to brainstorm possible responses and obstacles to responding
- Use sources to create DBQ, stations, groups (jigsaw)
 - Pick one or more sources to analyze (see NARA)
 - *The Crisis* articles can be used to show conditions in Army & Navy, any change over time?
- Tie to today with discussion of inclusion in military today
 - See session from Symposium (“The Future of Inclusion”)
 - Start at **39:40**

OTHER RESOURCES

- *Divisions: A New History of Racism and Resistance in America's World War II Military* by Thomas A. Guglielmo
 - especially Chapter 6
- *The Double V: How Wars, Protest, and Harry Truman Desegregated America's Military* by Rawn James, Jr.
- *The Watchdog: How the Truman Committee Battled Corruption and Helped Win World War Two* by Steve Drummond
- Truman Civil Rights Symposium (“Black Americans in the U.S. Armed Forces”)
 - watch at 48:10-54:10, 1:15:07-1:19:35, and 1:29:15-1:29:52

Korean War

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Korean War: Integration (1950-1954)

- U.S. Air Force: Newly formed
 - Integrated units/policies reflected from the beginning.
 - Ignored Jim Crow laws on base.
- U.S. Navy:
 - Many restricted to stewards/messmen
- U.S. Marines:
 - Encouraged retirement/Stewards following World War II
 - 1952-integrated offset Korean War losses
- U.S. Army: Last to integrate-resistant
 - 1950-100,000 African-American soldiers/14 All-Black units
 - Ended enlistment cap in 1950 (10%)
 - 1951-Gen. Matthew Ridgway took command April 1951



Integrating the U.S. Army

- General MacArthur-impeded integration movement (1950-1951)
- General Matthew Ridgeway-integrated Far East Command (1951-1953)
- All-Black 24th Infantry Regiment “Buffalo Soldiers” (Act of Congress, 1866)
 - Major Gen. William B. Kean request Army to disband
 - Based on claims: untrustworthy & incapable/racial prejudice
 - Majority Officers were white
 - Inactivated Oct. 1, 1951: reassigned to integrated units
 - “It took the Chinese to integrate the American Army.”
 - 8th Army integrated the All-Black 3rd Battalion, 9th Infantry & 64th Tank Battalion



Integrating the U.S. Army

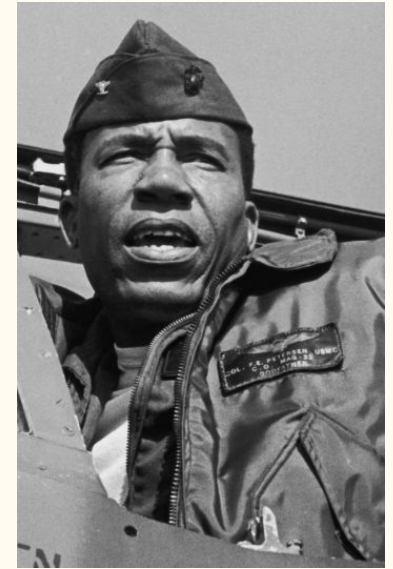
Captain Alvin Vincent Blount, Jr.

- 1st black physician 8225th M.A.S.H., Fort Bragg
 - 10 miles from the 38th Parallel
 - 1,936 admissions/11 deaths (99.5% survival rate)
 - 90 surgical cases a week
 - Chief of Surgery
- Simkins vs. Moses H. Cone Hospital (Greensboro, N.C.)
 - Challenged public federal funds used in segregated hospitals
 - 1st surgeon to operate at Moses H. Cone Hospital (1964)



Integration the U.S. Navy

- Ensign Jesse L. Brown-Aviator
 - 1st African-American Navy Aviator-1948**
 - Flew F4U Corsair
 - Battle of Chosin Reservoir, North Korea
 - Killed in Action
 - “Devotion”
- Inspired Lt. Gen. Frank E. Petersen to pursue career in aviation
 - 1st African-American Marine Corp Aviator
 - 1st African-American General of Marine Corp



Lesson Ideas & Resources

Studying history through various viewpoints:

- Biography/letters/V-mail are great tools.
- Review a specific time period/event
- Selecting 2-3 biographies of individuals within a similar timeline, regions, or event.
- Students study the individual paths and compare experiences in relation to surrounding events.

Vietnam War

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Vietnam War - the first “integrated” war

- Vietnam was a testing ground for E.O. #9981
- Disproportionate minority numbers in draft boards and casualties in the beginning
 - Grand Dragon of KKK, Jack Helms, led Louisiana's largest draft board - inequities abound!
- Frontlines = full integration (fighting common enemy)
- Rear bases shows a more segregated societal dynamic



Vietnam War - the first “integrated” war

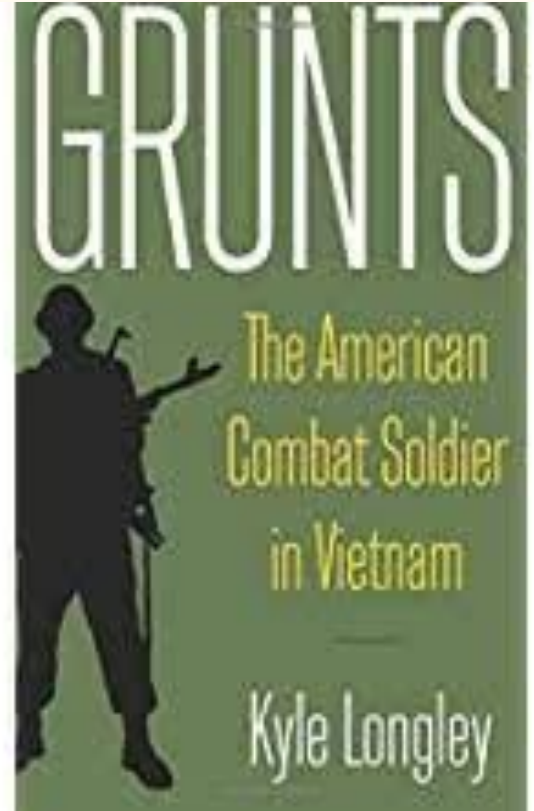
Failures of EO #9981

- Latinos drafted in high numbers & died in high numbers
 - No Spanish language training
 - Desire to prove themselves & take the most dangerous jobs
- African- Americans = 11% of the total population, but were only 1.3% of draft board members
- Native Americans faced obstacles also - sent ahead to be point men
- Asian-Americans were expected to think like the Viet Cong

Vietnam War - the first “integrated” war

Successes of EO #9981

- Idea that service = equality
- Prejudice rarely survives experience
- “Vietnam caused a major reevaluation of the organization [Army] and its goals and procedures and created a different ...institution of an all-volunteer military that helped engineer and overwhelming victory in the First Persian Gulf War...”
(Longley, 156)



Lesson ideas

Primary Source

Use excerpt of MLK's speech "Beyond Vietnam speech - transcript [here](#)
Audio [recording](#)

Begin with the paragraph

"I come to this platform tonight to make a passionate plea to my beloved nation."

Speech is a mix of civil rights and the inequities of the Vietnam War

Secondary Source

Book excerpts of *Grunts*, specifically Chapter 4 pages 127-133 (*A Racial Divide Widens*)

Have students read this section and discuss how each minority group explained their experience in serving in an integrated military.