

1776:The Continental Congress agrees to enlist free blacks, allowing 7,000 African-American volunteer soldiers and sailors to take part in the Revolutionary War.

1812-1815:African-American volunteer soldiers and sailors fight against the British in the War of 1812 at such critical battles as Lake Erie and New Orleans.

1862:President Abraham Lincoln signs the Emancipation Proclamation.

1862-1865:During the Civil War, 180,000 African-American soldiers serve in Union Army volunteer regiments.

1865:The Confederate States of America begins to accept black recruits.

1866: Congress passes a bill increasing the size of the army and establishing African-American regiments. Black men may now enlist in the Regular U. S. Army.

1866-1890: Eighteen African Americans earn the Medal of Honor during the frontier Indian Wars.

1877: Henry O. Flipper becomes the first African American to graduate from the United States Military Academy.

1898: All four of the African-American regiments participate in the Spanish-American War, serving in Cuba and the Philippine Islands.

1914-1918: More than 400,000 African Americans serve in the U. S. Armed Forces during World War I.

1940: Benjamin O. Davis, Sr. becomes the first African-American general in the Regular Army.

1941: The Army Air Corps forms the first black aviation unit, the 99 th Pursuit Squadron. These pilots become known as the Tuskegee Airmen.

1941-1945: American forces in World War II include more than a million African-American men and women.

1948: President Harry S. Truman signs Executive Order 9981 ordering an end to segregation in the U. S. Armed Forces.

1950-1953: Black and white soldiers fight side by side in Korea as separate African-American fighting units are disbanded.

1965-1973: Twenty African-American soldiers receive the Medal of Honor for service during the Vietnam War.

1971: Samuel L. Gravely becomes the first African-American admiral in the history of the U. S. Navy.

1975: U. S. Air Force officer Daniel "Chappie" James becomes the first African American to achieve the rank of four-star general.

1989: Colin Powell becomes the first African-American Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

1990-1991: During the Persian Gulf conflict, 100,000 African-American men and women are sent to the Middle East.

1992: The Buffalo Soldier Monument is dedicated at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.