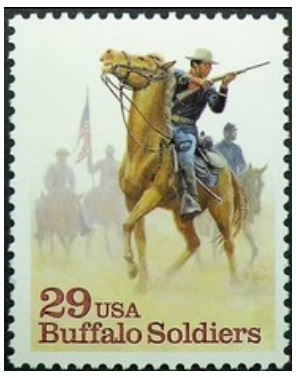
U.S. POSTAGE STAMPS HONORING MILITARY RELATED AFRICAN AMERICAN PERSONALITIES, SUBJECTS, AND EVENTS

JAMES JOPPY JR.

This exhibit pays tribute to the African Americans who served in the U.S. armed forces and sacrificed their lives in every American conflict while fighting for equality. In the process they endured racism, segregation, Jim Crow laws, and violence at home and abroad. Their sacrifices, perseverance, bravery, and accomplishments played a significant role in paving the way for future African American soldiers and leaders with the signing of Executive Order 9981 in 1948 abolishing racial segregation and discrimination for all U.S. armed forces.



BUFFALO SOLDIERS Established in 1866 by Congress, were the U.S. Army's first all-Black segregated regiments after the Civil War, which consisted of six Calvary and Infantry regiments, later consolidated to four. Their mission was to help rebuild the country and serve on the Western frontier. The 10th Calvary Regiment was given the nickname Buffalo Soldiers by Native American tribes in the 1860s because their dark, curly hair resembled the fur of a buffalo and for their fighting ability and courage. The name eventually became synonymous with all of the African American regiments that served on the Western frontier, including the 9th Calvary and the 24th and 25th Infantry. In addition to the Indian Wars, the regiments served in the Spanish-American War; Philippine-American War; Mexican Border War; World War I; and World War II. The regiments were inactivated in 1951 ending their service as segregated units during the Korean War.

(Issued 4/22/1994 - Scott # 2818)

Buffalo Soldiers of the 25th Infantry Regiment in 1890

BENJAMIN O. DAVIS SR. (1877-1970) A career officer in the U.S. Army at a time when there were only a few Black officers, he was the first Black in any U.S. military branch to be promoted to Brigadier General in 1940. He enlisted in the Army in 1898 and as a private, served in the 9th Calvary of the Buffalo Soldiers. He was eventually promoted to sergeant major and earned a commission of second lieutenant in 1901. All of his assignments as an officer avoided him being put in command of any White soldiers or troops. He conducted inspections of Black units to evaluate morale, equipment, and training during WWII. He also served as an inspector and consultant on policies affecting Black soldiers and offered recommendations promoting integration. He was a staunch supporter of civil rights, an advisor on race relations and his advocacy for better treatment and opportunities for Black soldiers helped lay the foundation for desegregation by President Truman signing an executive order to desegregate the armed forces. He retired in 1948 after 50 years of service spanning the Spanish-American War to WWII. His stamp is the 20th stamp in the Black Heritage Series and the first adhesive stamp in the series.

(Issued 1/28/1997 - Scott # 3121)

Circa 1945

DORIS "DORIE" MILLIER (1919-1943) Miller joined the Navy in 1939 as a mess attendant, which was one of few occupational specialties open to Black males as they were restricted in the types of jobs and positions they could perform. In 1940 he was assigned to the battleship USS West Virginia, stationed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. During the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, he moved his mortally wounded Captain to safety and fired on Japanese planes by manning an anti-aircraft gun. For his actions of bravery he received the Navy Cross in 1942, the first African American to be awarded the Naval Cross for valor. He was killed in action in 1943 when a torpedo by a Japanese submarine sank his ship the USS Liscome Bay. Two U.S. Navy ships have been named in his honor. In 1973 the Navy commissioned a frigate USS Miller, which was decommissioned in 1991 and the aircraft carrier USS Dorie Miller, currently under construction.

(Issued: 2/4/2010 - Scott # 4443)

Miller receiving Navy Cross aboard USS Enterprise, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, May 27, 1942.

CHARLES ALFRED ANDERSON SR. (1907-1996) Often referred to as "The Father of Black Aviation" because he mentored and trained so many African American pilots. Anderson obtained his pilot's license in 1932 and was the only African American in the country qualified to serve as a flight instructor and to fly commercially. In 1940 he became the Chief Civilian Flight Instructor after the U.S. Army Air Corps awarded the Tuskegee Institute a contract to provide flight training. Anderson played a key role during WWII in training America's first Black military pilots, The Tuskegee Airmen, who gave him the nickname "Chief." In 1941, when First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt visited Tuskegee Institute's airfield she stated "I've always heard colored people can't fly, but I see them flying abound here." She asked to take a flight with one of the pilots. Chief Anderson piloted Mrs. Roosevelt for a hour-long flight. Her support of the program helped with racist stereotypes and political support.

(Issued 3/13/2014) - Scott # 4879)

P-51 MUSTANG (The Red Tails) The Tuskegee Airmen flew numerous aircraft during WWII, most notably the P-51 fighter bomber. The pilots trained at the segregated Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama. In 1944, the 99th Pursuit Squadron, later the 332nd Fighter Group, the first all-Black flying squadron to enter combat, was assigned to escort bombers in Europe, flying P-51 Mustangs. The planes were distinguished by their painted red tails, which led to being given the "Red Tails" nickname by the bomber pilots they escorted. Never losing a bomber to enemy fire and destroying many enemy aircraft. The squadron was awarded numerous unit, group, and individual awards, which dispelled the belief that African Americans lacked the courage, skill, and intelligence to fly aircraft in combat. Their bravery and flying skills helped with the desegregation of the U.S. military in 1948. The pilots success is also shared by the Black support personnel (men and women) .

(Issued 7/19/1997 with Classic American Aircraft - Scott # 3142a)

Pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group, known as Tuskegee Airmen, based at Ramitelli Airfield, Italy, 1944 to 1945.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 9981 (1948) Signed by President Harry Truman on July 26, 1948, his order abolished racial segregation and discrimination for all U.S. armed forces and declared equality of opportunity without regard to color, race, or religion. The President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services was established to oversee the desegregation of the armed forces, leading to integrated forces during the Korean War. The reasons for the order were civil rights pressure, political necessity, moral imperative, and military efficiency. The last remaining all-Black units were disbanded in 1954.

(Issued 8/20/2005 as one of 10 stamps "To Form a More Perfect Union" - Scott # 3937a)

Black and White soldiers of a U.S. infantry division in Communist led North Korea in 1950.