



PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

JAN 29 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Department of Defense 2016 National African American History Month Observance

The Department of Defense (DoD) joins the nation in celebrating National African American History Month. February is designated by Congress and the President as a time to celebrate the contributions African Americans have made to American history in their struggles for freedom and equality. The theme of this year's observance is "Hallowed Grounds: Sites of African American Memories." This theme reminds us that the imprint of African Americans is deeply embedded in the narrative of the American past, present, and future.

The renowned abolitionist and orator Frederick Douglass once said, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress." Over the course of many generations, African Americans have helped make our nation what it is today. Though they faced slavery, oppression, and prejudice, African Americans have persevered to overcome countless injustices and continue to contribute to our nation in myriad venues.

African Americans' pursuit of equality has also contributed greatly to the DoD. From the Buffalo Soldiers to the Montford Point Marines, the Tuskegee Airmen, the Golden Thirteen and beyond, their long-standing valiant service to our nation has enabled the Department to field a stronger, more diverse force defined by the highest character and courage. We all stand on the shoulders of African American men and women who have honorably served and continue to serve our nation today.

African American History Month is a time for all to deepen our understanding of the history of DoD and our nation. All DoD Components are encouraged to conduct appropriate activities in recognition of African American History Month. Mr. Norvel Dillard is the DoD point of contact for this observance and can be reached by telephone at (703) 614-3397, or via electronic mail at [norvel.l.dillard.civ@mail.mil](mailto:norvel.l.dillard.civ@mail.mil).

  
Clarence A. Johnson  
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