



ASA HUTCHINSON
GOVERNOR

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
CAMP JOSEPH T. ROBINSON
NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72199-9600



KENDALL W. PENN
MAJOR GENERAL
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

NGAR-HRO-EEM

15 January 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR All Arkansas National Guard Personnel

SUBJECT: Black History Month 2021

1. February is designated as Black History Month (Also known as African American History Month). This year's theme is "**Honoring the Past, Securing the Future!**" Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Arkansas National Guard will not be conducting any speaking engagements, but we do encourage you to take this opportunity to educate yourselves individually on the contributions that African Americans have made throughout history.

2. Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans. Known as the "Father of Black History," Dr. Carter G. Woodson founded the celebration he called "Negro History Week" in 1926. He selected the second week of February because it fell between the birthdays of the famed orator and abolitionist Frederick Douglass and President Abraham Lincoln. In 1976, the celebration expanded to include the entire month. We celebrate Black History Month to honor the significant contributions African Americans have made to our great Nation—contributions that stand as a testament to their resolve, resilience, and courage.

3. African Americans have served in every military conflict in U.S. history. When the military was segregated, there were myths that Black men were not successful fighters, so commanders would assign them to menial labor. However, groups such as the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment of the Civil War; the 92nd Infantry Division of World War I; and the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II—who flew over 200 combat missions and lost none of their own to enemy fire—proved this theory wrong. The intrepid demeanor that Black Soldiers displayed during battle was instrumental in burying myths about correlations concerning race and combat skills and paved the way to full integration of the U.S. military.

4. In 1975, President Gerald Ford issued a *Message on the Observance of Black History Week*, which urged all Americans to "recognize the important contributions made to our nation's life and culture by Black citizens," and in 1976 he issued the first *Message on the Observance of Black History Month*. In 1986, Congress passed Public

NGAR-HRO-EEM
SUBJECT: Black History Month 2021

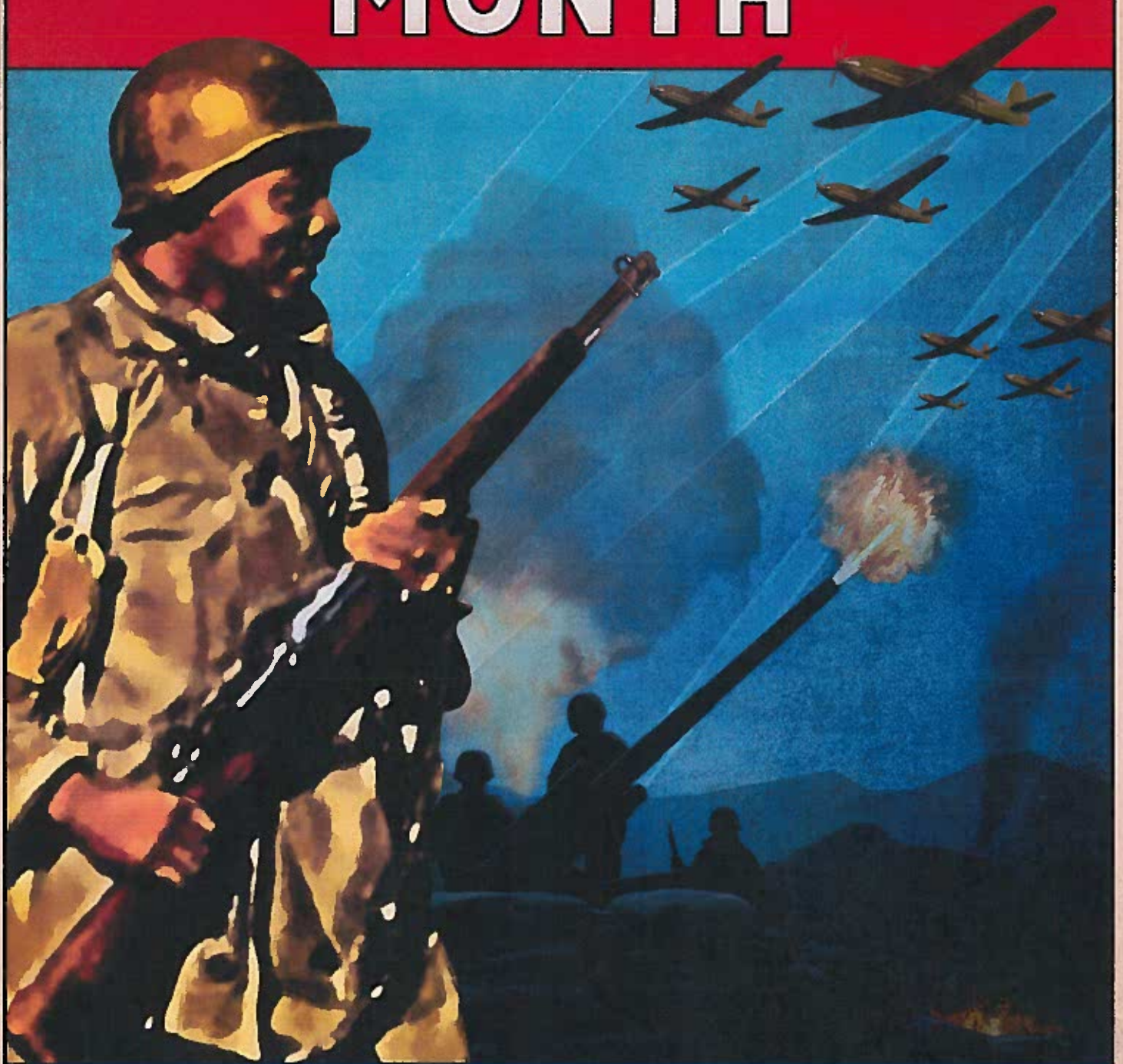
Law 99-244, designating February 1986 as "National Black (Afro-American) History Month." Since 1996, all Presidents have issued annual proclamations for National African American History Month. I encourage you all to take this opportunity to reflect upon the many African Americans who bravely fought and died in the name of freedom, and to remember that the fight to ensure that respect and equality is secured for all United States citizens continues.

5. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact CW2 Patrick Jacob, EEO Specialist, at 501-212-4222 or DSN 962-4222.



KENDALL W. PENN
Major General
The Adjutant General

BLACK HISTORY MONTH



**HONORING THE PAST,
SECURING THE FUTURE!**

