

Reading a Timeline

Use Unit 12 and Chapter 41 timelines to complete the following:

1. Look at the unit timeline. How many years does it cover? Do you think a lot of exciting or scary events took place in a short time in this period—in the world as well as in the U.S.? Use examples from the timelines to support your answers.
2. What kind of period was this for African Americans? Was it a period of more enthusiasm and dignity than, say, during World War I and immediately before and after? Or was it a mixed period? Explain your answer.
3. Look at the chapter timeline. List the areas in which African Americans made outstanding achievements. Do any African Americans occupy positions of major political power, in the U.S. or elsewhere, as shown on the chapter or unit timeline?
4. Speculate on how a debate on the major worldwide political issues of the day might have been conducted if more African Americans were in major positions of political power.



In the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, Germany, Jesse Owens proved he was the “fastest human on earth” by winning four gold medals. This infuriated Adolf Hitler, the leader of Germany and the Nazi party. Use the Internet and information from

this chapter to write an essay on the reasons why Hitler was so furious at Owens’s feat. Was it only because Owens was of African descent? Was it just because of so-called national pride?

Multiple Perspectives

Organize a political campaign for the presidential run of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., as though he were running for office today. Have each person, acting as part of the campaign, tell the class just what he or she would do to help get Powell elected. Incorporate the answers to the following questions in your campaign strategy.

1. What can Powell offer to the country and to African American people?
2. What party ticket is he running on and why?
3. What actions has Powell taken during his political career to demonstrate that he would be an effective leader for all people?
4. What criticisms can you anticipate from Powell’s oponents?
5. What strategies can you implement to counter those criticisms?

CENTER YOUR WRITING

Using the information gathered in the political campaign exercise above, write a campaign speech for Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., as though he were running for

president of the United States today. Include his credentials, experience, and his visions for America. Deliver your speech to the class.

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AS YOU READ

- Why did few African Americans benefit from the Lend Lease Act?
- How did the outbreak of violence in Guam on Christmas Eve of 1944 illustrate the treatment of African Americans in the military?
- How did African American pilots distinguish themselves during World War II?
- Why is Dorie Miller considered an American hero?
- How did the Red Ball Express support the Allied invasion of Normandy, France?
- What was the Alcan Highway?
- Which United States president is credited with integrating the armed forces?

Chapter Outline

- America Gears Up for War
- African Americans in the Military
- The Tuskegee Airmen
- The Heroics of Dorie Miller
- The Red Ball Express
- The Alcan Highway
- Integration of the Military
- On the Home Front
- African Americans Win the First Victory in Korea

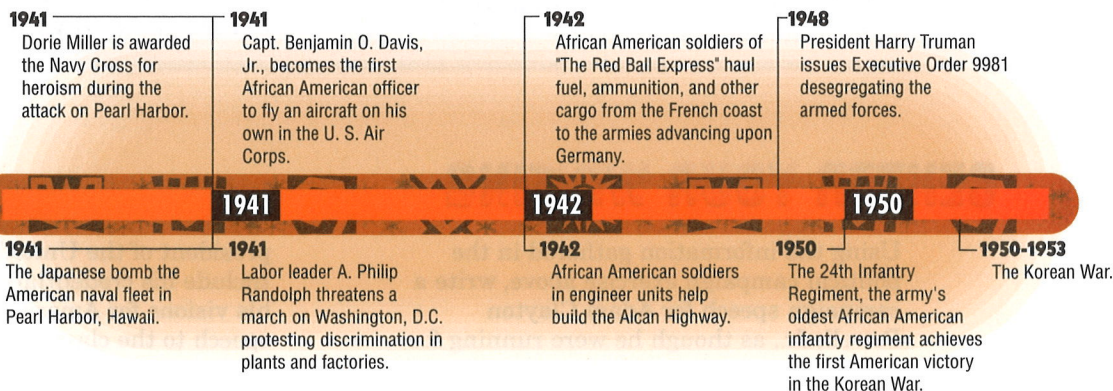
Vocabulary

- arsenal • discrimination • Fair Employment Practices Committee • Tuskegee Airmen
- integrate • desegregated • segregated schools • social revolution • activists

America Gears Up for War

On March 11, 1941, President Roosevelt signed into law the Lend Lease Act, which was designed to provide the European nations warring against Nazi Germany with a massive stockpile of war material. Upon signing the legislation, he said that it would be “an **arsenal** of democracy.” Although the Roosevelt Administration was generally supportive of expanding the rights of all citizens, as the war effort rose to the top of the national agenda, few African Americans were among the first to benefit from the development of the arsenal of democracy.

Ninety percent of the white defense contractors did not use African Americans as workers, and the few who did restricted them to low-skill





African American troops at a Northern Ireland camp in August 1942.

“We shall not call upon our white friends to march with us. There are some things we must do alone.”

The president was angered and puzzled by this threat and called a meeting of Randolph and other top African American leaders. He wanted them to call off the march. Randolph said the march would go forward unless Roosevelt issued an executive order prohibiting **discrimination** in the defense industry. To avoid a confrontation in the capitol, the president issued Executive Order 8802 on June 25, 1941—one week before the march was to take place, reaffirming the government’s position that discrimination in employment was illegal. The order also established the **Fair Employment Practices Committee** (FEPC) to investigate charges of discrimination in employment.

jobs. As the country geared up for war, racism still blocked African Americans from the rewards reaped by the American workforce.

By the end of March, only 5,000 of the 175,000 trainees under the National Defense Training Act, designed to train workers for defense industries, were African Americans. Discrimination in employment was so severe that African Americans began protests. The African American press was out front in calling for picket lines, but it was A. Philip Randolph’s Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters Union that took action. Randolph called for a national march by 100,000 African Americans in Washington, D.C., by 100,000 African Americans to be held on July 1, 1941. Emerging as an eloquent, outspoken leader, Randolph said:



Two African American soldiers with a machine gun in World War II.

African Americans in the Military

While conditions had improved since World War I, enlisted African American men in the still-segregated armed forces continued to confront the brutal realities of racism during the 1940s. Few African Americans held an officer's rank, and there was only one African American general when America entered World War II—Benjamin O. Davis, Sr. had been made a one-star brigadier general on October 9, 1940. Something was happening, however, that began to make a difference.

The Selective Service Boards, or local draft boards, which called citizens to serve in the armed services, had begun to accept African Americans as members. The presence of these members caused an increase in the numbers of African Americans who registered to enter the armed services. Since the army remained segregated, the increased number of African Americans required more African American officers to lead the African American units.

The training of African American and white officers together began at Fort Benning, Georgia, where they slept in the same barracks and marched. In the words of one trainee:

"elbow to elbow across the wide expanse of South Georgia soil..."

By December 1942, a year after Pearl Harbor, more than 1,000 African American officers had been trained and held the rank of second lieutenants. African American women were also trained alongside white women at the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps in Des Moines, Iowa.

The mixed training programs had a positive influence on the military's policy on training African Americans as air cadets. Soon Hampton Institute, Virginia State, Howard University, and Tuskegee Institute—historically African American colleges—were selected to offer civilian pilot training to African American college students. By April 1, 1941, the choice for the army's pilot-training facility had been narrowed to Hampton or Tuskegee.

OTHER AFRICAN AMERICAN HEROES

In every theater of battle during World War II, numerous other African Americans stood out as heroes, including:

- Mack B. Anderson and Ralph Snell in northern India
- George Watson in the South Pacific
- Woodall I. Marsh and John R. Fox in Italy
- Edward Carter, Jr., Willy James, and Ruben Rivers in Germany
- Charles Thomas in France
- Charles Jackson French on the USS *Gregory*
- Elvin Bell on the USS *Lexington* in the Battle of the Coral Sea
- Christopher Columbus Sheppard on the USS *Borie*
- Willam Pinckney on the *Enterprise*
- Leonard Leroy Harmon on the *San Francisco* in the Solomon Islands

Equally challenged by the conditions of war abroad and racism at home, African American soldiers wrote chapters on valor.

By 1945, the record of African American courage and fighting ability was uncontested. Nearly 600 African American pilots and more than one million African American soldiers and sailors served in the armed forces during the war. The 761st Tank Battalion won 391 awards for 183 days of combat—the longest period any unit ever served under constant enemy fire without relief. The 761st Tank Battalion knocked out 331 machine-gun nests occupied by German soldiers and captured a German radio station. The 24th Infantry routed the Japanese on the Pacific island of New Georgia; the 92nd, as part of the Fifth Army, pushed into Italy from the south. The 94th Infantry lost more than 3,000 men. The men of this unit won 65 Silver Stars, 65 Bronze Medals, and more than 1,200 Purple Hearts. Not even this display of heroism in a

DEBT OF HONOR

Fifty years after the end of World War II, seven of the many African American heroes were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military honor. By the time they were so honored, all were dead but one.

HONOREES

Staff Sergeant Edward A. Carter, Jr., of Los Angeles, California killed six of the eight German soldiers who attacked his three-man patrol. He captured the other two.

First Lieutenant John R. Fox, of Boston, Massachusetts died shortly after calling friendly fire onto his position in order to destroy the hundreds of German troops about to overrun an American unit. The July 16, 2000, edition of *The New York Times* reported that Albert O. Burke, 80, and two other aged and frail African American veterans sobbed as they walked around the area where Fox and his men were killed. The article reported that the war veterans and their Italian hosts could "not shed their bitterness of the United States' long refusal to recognize the combat records of black servicemen fully. . . ."

Private First Class Willy F. James, Jr., of Kansas City, Kansas,

was killed in action when he went to the aid of his fallen platoon leader and then assumed leadership until he too was hit by German bullets.

Staff Sergeant Ruben Rivers, of Tecumseh, Oklahoma was killed in action after a German shell struck his lead tank. Injured in a previous battle, he had refused to be evacuated.

First Lieutenant Charles L. Thomas, of Detroit, Michigan went out front to draw enemy fire in Climbach, five miles from the German border. When his armored car was hit, he grabbed a .50-caliber machine gun and kept firing until he was shot three times.

Private George Watson, of Birmingham, Alabama drowned while rescuing others after Japanese bombers off the coast of New Guinea sank his ship. A field is named in his honor at Fort Benning, Georgia.

First Lieutenant Vernon J. Baker, of St. Maries, Idaho routed nearly 10 Germans when his platoon of 25 men came under attack. He then helped to destroy six machine gun nests, two observer posts, and four dugouts; and put 26 Germans out of action.

segregated fighting force would spare the returning African American soldiers from racism when they got home.

TENSIONS ABROAD

In Asia, the relationship between African American and white American soldiers was unfortunately similar to that in other parts of the world—when they were not fighting the Japanese, they were often busy fighting each other. On Christmas Eve 1944, a serious riot occurred on the island of Guam, in the capital city of Agana. The island had been taken from the Japanese by African American and white units. Although these units were segregated, they often came into contact with each other in the capital city.

Christmas Eve on the African American base began on a peaceful note. A group of nine African American soldiers received passes (special permission) into Agana. The soldiers left the base excited at the prospect of a fun-filled leave

from their army duties. When they arrived in the city, the soldiers began talking to some Asian women. Some white soldiers grew resentful and opened fire on the African Americans, driving them out of the town. Eight of the soldiers arrived back at the camp safely; but the ninth was feared wounded or killed. Some 40 African Americans then piled into two trucks and drove back to town looking for the missing soldier. One

DID YOU KNOW ?

Led by Congressman Charles Diggs of Detroit, Michigan, in 1971, nine African American members of the House of Representatives formed the Congressional Black Caucus. The caucus established a legislative agenda to address the needs of African Americans. There are currently 38 members of the Congressional Black Caucus. In March 2000, the Congressional Black Caucus declared May 25 as a Day of Honor for the more than one million African Americans who fought in World War II.

of their company who had been left behind on the base telephoned the U.S. military police in Agana to warn them that the 40 soldiers were on their way to find the missing soldier. The all-white military police blockaded all roads leading to the city. When they spotted the African American soldiers, they told them that the missing soldier had not been killed or wounded but had hidden in a ditch until nightfall and then returned to the camp. The soldiers turned their trucks around and headed back to their camp.

Shortly after midnight on Christmas morning, a truck filled with white marines entered the segregated African American camp. The whites claimed that one of their soldiers had been hit with a piece of coral thrown by one of the African Americans. Instead of arresting the men, who were shouting threats at the soldiers from the truck, the white commanding officers of the African American company pleaded with the whites until they finally left.

Tensions remained high throughout Christmas Day. Two drunken white marines shot and killed an African American soldier who was walking from Agana back to his camp. Within hours, a second drunken white soldier in Agana shot another African American. Word about the killings reached all quarters of the four African American units at the camp. Anger boiled over on both sides. Around midnight, a jeep filled with whites fired on the African American camp. Guards in the camp returned fire, injuring a white military police officer. The whites in the jeep took cover and fled toward Agana. The African Americans followed in quick pursuit, but were

stopped at a roadblock, arrested, and charged with unlawful assembly, rioting, theft of government property, and attempted murder.

In a quickly arranged trial, the men were brought before a military court. Fortunately, NAACP Executive Secretary Walter White was traveling in the area. Hearing of this injustice, White felt compelled to defend the African American soldiers, even though he was not a lawyer. The African American soldiers were convicted and sentenced to serve several years in prison, but their sentences were overturned when White and the NAACP appealed to the Secretary of the Navy.

The Tuskegee Airmen

On April 19, 1941, Eleanor Roosevelt visited Tuskegee to evaluate the facilities and meet Charles Anderson, the African American in charge of the flight training program. During the course of their conversation, Mrs. Roosevelt asked Anderson:

"Can Negroes really fly airplanes?"

Anderson replied:

"Certainly we can, as a matter of fact, would you like to take an airplane ride?"



African American cadets at the Basic and Advanced Flying School for Negro Air Corps Cadets, at the Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, are lined up for review by Major James A. Ellison on January 23, 1942.



Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. became the first African American to fly an aircraft on his own as an officer in the U.S. Air Corps.

Mrs. Roosevelt accepted the invitation. The Secret Service agents accompanying the First Lady tried to dissuade her. They even ordered Chief Anderson not to fly her. Mrs. Roosevelt, however, overruled their objections. They immediately called President Roosevelt who said:

"Well, if she wants to do it, there is nothing we can do to stop her."

The First Lady got into the back seat of the Piper J-3 Cub, and Anderson gave her a 30-minute aerial tour of the campus and the surrounding area. A military flying school was established at Tuskegee on July 19, 1941.

About two months later, on September 2, 1941, Captain Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., became the first African American to fly an aircraft on his own as an officer in the U.S. Air Corps.

On March 7, 1942, just eight months after the founding of the air school, five young African American pilots stood at attention at Tuskegee Army Air Field's lone runway in Alabama. These young men were participants in an historic

graduation. The candidates received their wings and commissions with pride. As the first African American pilots of the Army Air Corps, they formed the core of the 99th Pursuit (later Fighter) Squadron. By the end of May, 43 pilots had been trained and a second squadron, the 332nd Fighter Group, had been activated. The 100th Fighter Squadron took its position as a part of the 332nd Fighter Group.

By June 2, 1943, the **Tuskegee Airmen** had flown their first combat mission. On June 9, African American pilots of the 99th Fighter Squadron engaged enemy pilots in aerial combat. By the spring of 1945, near the end of the European campaign, the 332nd was escorting bombers deep into enemy territory. Despite the risky missions over Germany, with the Nazis using newly developed jet-propelled planes, the group never lost a bomber. First Lieutenant Roscoe Browne, flying a P-51D, shot down one of the German jets. African American airmen scored a number of decisive hits, but their contributions remained unrecognized until long after the war was over, continuing a pattern that had begun with the Revolutionary War. Once more, racist ideas overshadowed the accomplishments of people of African descent.

Racism was not eradicated by the fact that African American pilots distinguished themselves and flew as well as any other pilots. William H. Hastie, a civilian aide to the Secretary of War, was deeply disturbed by the slow pace of the recruitment of African American pilots. He resigned in protest on January 5, 1943.

The Heroics of Dorie Miller

On December 7, 1941, Japanese planes flew over the American naval fleet at Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii, dropping bombs and shooting at all military targets. On that day, Dorie Miller, 22, an African American who worked in the kitchen on the battleship USS *Arizona*, became an American hero for all time. Despite the restriction against African American navy



Dorie Miller (inset) receives a medal from Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz for action, in World War II. Miller, a Navy cook, shot down enemy aircraft during an attack.

personnel using weapons, Miller, a Waco, Texas native, violated the racist policy to defend the ship during the Japanese attack. Miller, a cook, took over a machine gun while most of the officers and crewmen on the ship were spending the weekend ashore or were asleep below.

At the outset of the attack, Miller and another crewman made their way to the deck and ran into Lieutenant Commander Doir Johnson, who asked Miller to help care for the ship's skipper, Captain Mervyn Bennion. The Captain had been seriously injured when a bomb exploded on the bridge. Johnson and Miller carried him to a sheltered spot behind the ship's tower.

Victor Delano spotted two inactive machine guns and recruited another officer and a seaman to handle the guns. He asked Miller to bring

ammunition. As several Japanese planes headed straight for them, however, Miller began firing the machine gun, sending streams of bullets toward the planes. He had never been trained in the use of the guns, but his marksmanship was stunning. Witnesses to the incident declared that he shot down six planes, and he was officially credited with downing four.

Miller was honored as one of the first heroes of World War II. Six months later, he was awarded the Navy Cross. Two years later, on Thanksgiving Day, 1943, Miller went down with most of the 700-hundred man crew of the aircraft carrier *Liscombe Bay*, sunk by a Japanese torpedo.

The Red Ball Express

African American soldiers, who served as drivers, mechanics, and administrative clerks, comprised three-fourths of the personnel of

the Red Ball Express. This military operation involved hauling fuel, ammunition, and other cargo from the French coast to the armies advancing upon Germany. At its peak, the Red Ball Express included nearly 6,000 vehicles carrying 12,342 tons of supplies.

When these units were first organized, there were not enough trucks or drivers. The army took trucks from other units, and any soldiers whose duties were not critical to the immediate war effort were enlisted to help. Because of the discrimination in the military, numerous African American soldiers were not assigned to combat missions, so many inexperienced drivers were forced into duty with very little training.

The Allies invaded Normandy on June 6, 1944 and, within 10 days, they had landed a million men and 500,000 tons of supplies. The

Red Ball Express played a role in this effort. The trucks frequently dropped ammunition at artillery positions within a few miles of the front lines. One Red Ball driver remembers driving right up to a stranded tank and passing cans of gas to the crew while Germans were nearby.

The African American and white soldiers of the Red Ball Express were urged not to mingle during off-duty hours. Washington Rector of the 3916th Quartermaster Truck Company recalls:

"You accepted discrimination. We were warned not to fraternize with whites for fear problems would arise."

The Red Ball Express was officially terminated on November 16, 1944, when it had completed its mission.

Colonel John S.D. Eisenhower wrote:

"The spectacular nature of the advance [through France] was due in as great a measure to the men who drove the Red Ball trucks as to those who drove the tanks. Without it the advance across the country could never have been made."

The Alcan Highway

The war also involved the military in domestic activities. In 1942-43, the 95th Engineer Regiment was deeply involved in building the Alaska-Canadian Highway, called the Alcan Highway. More than 10,000 U.S. soldiers built the 2,449-kilometer (1,522-mile) road in eight months. Of these soldiers, 3,695 were African Americans. The role that African American soldiers played in making the nation strong and secure without ever going overseas is often overlooked.

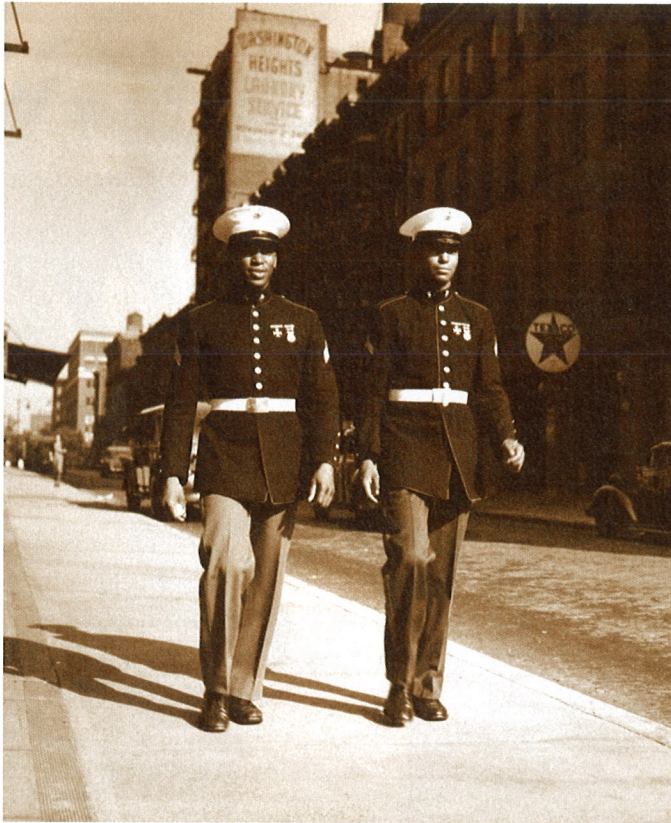


African American troops pose for a photograph in Italy during World War II.

Integration of the Military

As the war went on and the African American contributions mounted, pressure increased on the army to **integrate**. As early as December 8, 1941, a committee of African American journalists headed by Claude Barnett, director of the Associated Negro Press, had urged war department officials to end segregation in the armed forces. This request was held up for nearly two years and rejected in September 1943.

President Harry Truman, who had served in France during World War I as an artillery battery commander, is credited with integrating the armed forces. Envisioning a unified force of Americans ready to defend the nation, he declared discrimination unacceptable in the armed forces. On July 26, 1948, Truman issued Executive Order 9981, which **desegregated** the armed forces and called for "equality of treatment and opportunity" in the military



African American servicemen, wearing medals earned during World War II, march in Harlem in 1943.

services. With this order, African Americans in the armed forces could advance as far as their skills and ambitions would take them.

On the Home Front

Back on the home front, the industrial jobs in the North created in the war effort had attracted a growing population of African Americans from the South. Nearly two million had gone north to find work in the defense industry. The presence of so many African Americans in the northern cities created fear and apprehension among whites. Riots against African Americans broke out in many cities and at many plants and mills—the North was not so different from the South in some respects. In each region of the nation, the mere presence of African Americans soldiers and workers was enough to cause tension. Returning from battle, African American soldiers were often in more danger in their own

country than they had been in Europe or Asia.

On July 25, 1946, two African Americans who had been recently honorably discharged from the U.S. Army were lynched along with their wives in Walton County, Georgia. Two weeks later, another brutal lynching of an honorably discharged African American soldier occurred in Minden, Louisiana. It was revealed later that the former soldier had refused to give a white man a war souvenir that he had brought back from overseas. For this refusal, he lost his life to a mob of whites.

With the war over, African Americans demanded better treatment and a more just society. This was particularly true in the area of education. **Segregated schools** existed all across the country. African American students went to separate schools and used educational materials that were inferior to those of all-white schools. These schools also received inadequate financial support. The time had come for the United States to make real the country's ideals of justice and fair play.

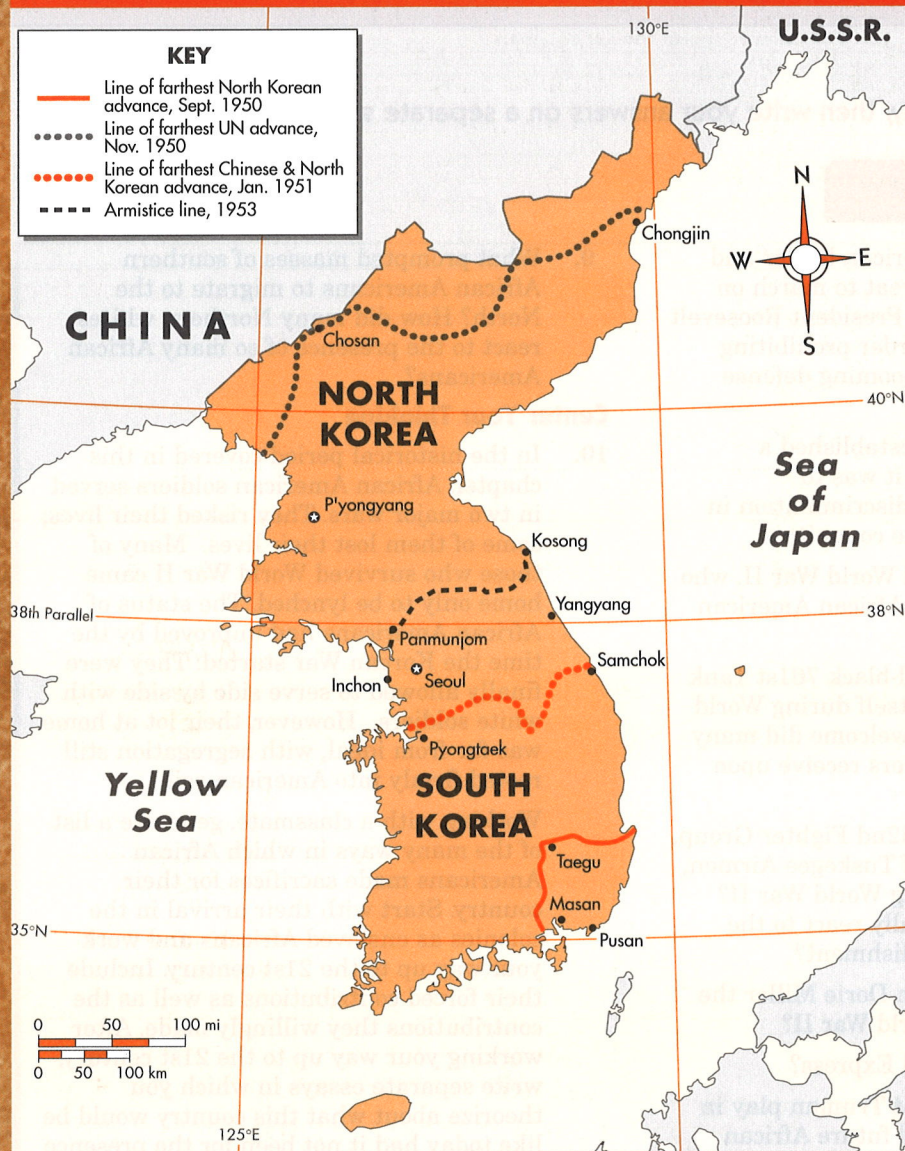
The returning African American soldiers sparked a **social revolution**. So explosive and contagious was the hunger for equality in the 1950s that it seemed at one time that there were as many movements for freedom as there were preachers and **activists**. Activists, preachers, and everyday people would lead African Americans into protest marches, boycotts, demonstrations, mass meetings, and more in their effort to obtain equality under the law. Many moral victories had been won by 1954—the start of the modern Civil Rights Movement. There would be no going back.

African Americans Win the First Victory in Korea

Fighting racism in Alabama and Georgia and fighting communism in Korea, the African American people showed an immense passion for accomplishing their missions.

The *Congressional Record* of July 1950 recorded the event for history in an article

KOREAN WAR, 1950–1953



USING A MAP KEY AND DRAWING INFERENCES

Look at the lines of advance on the map. Note the dates. How did soldiers on both sides of the war move across and occupy territory? The armistice line of 1953 became

the tense border between the two Koreas for more than 45 years. What kind of war do you think this was?

entitled “First United States Victory in Korea Won by Negro G.I.s.” The Fighting 24th Infantry Regiment, an African American regiment, had spearheaded a drive by the 25th Division, which was a combination of the 24th and two white regiments. On July 20, 1950, the Army’s “oldest

Negro infantry regiment” had attacked and driven the Korean Army out of Yechon, marking the first battle of the Korean War won by an American unit.

As in World War II, African Americans were cited for their courage in the Korean War:

On Land—Second Lieutenant William M. Benefield, Jr., of Kansas City, Missouri, was killed in combat while clearing a minefield near Sangju. Platoon leader Chester J. Lennon received the Distinguished Service Cross for gallantry in battle. He had been a professor at Hampton Institute in Virginia before the war.

In the Air—Lieutenant Colonel Daniel “Chappie” James of Pensacola, Florida; Captain Ernest Craigwell, Jr. of Brooklyn, New York; Major George Ray of Welch, West Virginia; and Captain Dayton Ragland of Washington, D.C. were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

The Korean War marked a turning point for the nation and the African American people. Segregation was dead in the armed forces and would soon be history in the general society. Democracy had been expanded and deepened by the role of

African Americans. Many veterans returning from World War II and the Korean War would see action on the home front in the Civil Rights Movement.



Chapter 42 After You Read

Read each section carefully, then write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

Comprehension Review

1. Name the African American leader and organization whose threat to march on Washington convinced President Roosevelt to issue an executive order prohibiting discrimination in the booming defense industry.
2. Roosevelt's order also established a committee whose duty it was to investigate charges of discrimination in employment. Name the committee.
3. When America entered World War II, who was the country's only African American general?
4. In what way did the all-black 761st Tank Battalion distinguish itself during World War II? What kind of welcome did many African American soldiers receive upon returning to America?
5. In what way did the 332nd Fighter Group, which was composed of Tuskegee Airmen, distinguish itself during World War II? How did America initially react to the fighter group's accomplishment?
6. What heroic action won Dorie Miller the Navy Cross during World War II?
7. What was the Red Ball Express?
8. What role did President Truman play in the lives of present and future African American soldiers?
9. What prompted masses of southern African Americans to migrate to the North? How did many Northern whites react to the presence of so many African Americans?

Center Your Thinking

10. In the historical period covered in this chapter, African American soldiers served in two major wars. They risked their lives; some of them lost their lives. Many of those who survived World War II came home only to be lynched. The status of African Americans had improved by the time the Korean War started: They were finally allowed to serve side by side with white soldiers. However, their lot at home was far from ideal, with segregation still rooted firmly into American soil.

Working with a classmate, generate a list of the many ways in which African Americans made sacrifices for their country. Start with their arrival in the colonies as enslaved Africans and work your way up to the 21st century. Include their forced contributions as well as the contributions they willingly made. After working your way up to the 21st century, write separate essays in which you theorize about what this country would be like today had it not been for the presence of African Americans.

Vocabulary and Concept Development

1. Compare the meaning of the term *draft* in the sentences "Local draft boards called citizens to serve in armies" and "Roosevelt began to draft a speech to Congress."
2. What does the author mean by the statement "Miller went down with most of the crew of the aircraft carrier *Liscombe Bay* in 1943"?
3. What was the Red Ball Express?
4. What does the author mean by the statement "Segregated African American schools often had inadequate financial support"?