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Brothers/Veterans,

We greet you with gratitude for your service to America on Veterans Day. We thank you for all you have done for our country. We, who live in freedom will always be grateful to those who helped preserve it.

Veterans Day means freedom, sacrifice, and honor for those who served in the military. This day allows Americans to remember the sacrifices that were made by those who served. Some paid the ultimate sacrifice with their lives.

The first Veterans Day under the new law was observed with much confusion on October 25, 1971. It was quite apparent that the commemoration of this day was a matter of historic and patriotic significance. On September 20, 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed Public Law 94-97 (89 Stat. 479), which returned the annual observance of Veterans Day to its original date of November 11th, beginning in 1978. This action supported the desires of the overwhelming majority of state legislatures, all major veterans' service organizations, and the American people.

Omega's Military History

The War Chapter at Fort Des Moines was up and running by June of 1916 with Omega men in attendance. This was followed by Students Army Training Corps (SATC). Omega men were in SATC and this was a War Department special training program established in 1918 for college students. Brother Campbell C. Johnson, 18th Grand Basileus, was assigned to the unit at Howard University and Brother John W. Purnell at Virginia College Institute (now West Virginia State University). This program was the predecessor for the present-day ROTC program and of the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) during World War II.

In addition, Omega's history with the military and veterans dates back to Colonel Charles Young, the second honorary member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., and an American soldier. He was the third Black graduate of the United States Military Academy, the first Black U.S. National Park superintendent, first Black military attaché, first Black man to achieve the rank of colonel in the United States Army, and the highest-ranking black officer in the regular army until his death in 1922. Brother Clarence F. Holmes, 6th Grand Basileus, gave a Testimonial Banquet in honor of Colonel Young in 1917. One of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.'s International Achievement Week Awards is named in honor of Colonel Charles Young.

A special thank you to:

- Ω Buffalo Soldiers originally were members of the 10th Cavalry Regiment of the United States Army, formed on September 21, 1866, at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. This nickname was given to the Black Cavalry by Native American tribes who fought in the Indian Wars. The term eventually became synonymous with all of the Black regiments formed in 1866.
- Ω The Tuskegee Airmen were a group of primarily Black military pilots and airmen who fought in World War II. They formed the 332nd Expeditionary Operations Group and the 477th Bombardment Group of the United States Army Air Forces.
- Ω The Golden Thirteen were the thirteen Black enlisted men who became the first Black commissioned and warrant officers in the United States Navy.
- Ω The Montford Point Marines are the first Black marines to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps after President Franklin Roosevelt issued an Executive Order establishing the Fair Employment Practices Commission in June 1941. The recruits trained at Camp Montford Point in Jacksonville, NC from August 26, 1942, until the camp was decommissioned on September 9, 1949. The largest number of Black marines to serve in combat during World War II took part in the seizure of Okinawa, with approximately 2,000 seeing action.
- Ω In 228 years of Coast Guard history, Black men have been the first minority group to fight and the first to sacrifice. During the early years of the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service, many Black cuttermen were slaves as well as free men of color. Regardless of their status, Blacks served side-by-side with their white shipmates.

We say to those that are serving – “Continue coaching, teaching, and mentoring those that are coming behind you.” Give them “uplift” so they may get to where you are and beyond.

Fraternally,

Conrado B. Morgan
Colonel (Brother), U.S. Army Retired
District Representative, Third District