



The Double V: How Wars, Protest, and Harry Truman Desegregated America's Military

Rawn James Jr.

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Executive Order 9981, issued by President Harry Truman on July 26, 1948, desegregated all branches of the United States military by decree. Truman's historic order is often portrayed as a heroic and unexpected move--but in reality, it was the culmination of more than 150 years of legal, political, and moral struggle.

Beginning with the Revolutionary War, African Americans had used military service to do their patriotic duty and to advance the cause of equal rights. The fight for a desegregated military was truly a long war--decades of protest and labor highlighted by bravery on the fields of France, in the skies over Germany, and in the face of deep-seated racism on military bases at home. Today, the military is one of the most truly diverse institutions in America.

In *The Double V*, Rawn James, Jr. expertly reveals how the campaign for equality in the military gave impetus to the fight for equality in civilian society. Taking the reader from Crispus Attucks to President Barack Obama, *The Double V* illuminates the African American military tradition and its vital place in American history.

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