

Executive Order 9981: Desegregating the Armed Services

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As I was discussing the NHD topics with my history teacher, we narrowed a few segregation-based topics, and I picked Executive Order 9981, based on his recommendation. Right from the start, I felt connected to the topic and wanted to take a deeper dive into one of the greatest historical moments in our country. The topic was a perfect fit with this year's theme of Breaking Barriers as African Americans had to overcome strong barriers to desegregate, within the United States Armed Services.

To gather my resources and research, I used many different techniques. My history teacher assigned us a document called "Skeleton Bibliography". We needed to identify four primary sources, four secondary sources, five print (book or article) sources, and had to reach out to an individual, group, museum, organization, or historical site. For my research, I primarily used the Harry Truman Presidential Library Website. There were a lot of primary source documents, with great information, that I leveraged for my research and website. I also used a lot of other content-rich websites like ourdocuments.gov, archivesfoundation.org, Congressional research service, Britannica.com, and Newspaper.com. For example, the Los Angeles Times and the Hartford Courant wrote articles about Executive Order 9981 with great information. I reached out to Jim Armistead and Tammy Williams, who are employees at the Harry Truman Presidential Library, and they directed me on where to go to find more primary source images, videos, and reactions of people from that time to EO 9981.

Many people, including my history teacher, said that the NHD Website Creator is a challenging platform this year compared to prior years. After hearing this information, I started on a proof of concept, to evaluate the platform. Initially, it took time to understand all the features, but over time, I got very comfortable using the website creator. I loved the challenge of being creative, enjoyed building webpages, creating subpages, and linking all of them together. I gathered images, videos, and text from all the primary and secondary sources, and uploaded them to my website. I browsed some of the project samples on the NHD site, and other websites for ideas.

My topic fits the theme of Breaking Barriers in History because Executive Order 9981 was a big stepping stone to end segregation in U.S. Armed forces. It broke the barriers of race, culture, creed, national origin, by integrating whites and blacks, in the organization and activities of all branches of the U.S. Armed Services. Harry S Truman and the Fahy Committee had to overcome a lot of barriers to successfully desegregate the Armed Forces. Executive Order 9981 established an important breakthrough in race relations within the military, and Executive Order 9981 was instrumental in passing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that outlawed discrimination or segregation on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.