



Image courtesy of Naval History and Heritage Command

Naval Initiatives

Civilian Initiatives

Brown v. Board of Education

The Supreme Court of the United States rules that segregated schools are not equal and are thus are not constitutional.

1954

March on Washington

One of the largest political rallies in U.S. history takes place in August. Over 200,000 people attend seeking freedom and equal opportunities for jobs.

1963

Civil Rights Act of 1964

The act outlawed discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

1964

Assassination of MLK Jr.; Riots

Following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in April 1968, the U.S. experiences major race riots in over 100 cities.

1968



Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)

The ERA is passed by both houses of Congress and goes to the states for ratification.

1972

Black History Commemoration

Since 1976, February has been designated as Black History Month.

1976

The Equal Rights Amendment reaches its highest level of support, with 35 of the necessary 38 states approval for ratification. Ultimately, it will not be ratified.

1977

Women's History Commemoration

Under Public Law 97-28, Congress establishes a Women's History Week in March 1981. In 1987 Women's History Week is expanded to Women's History Month.

1981

1960s

1970s

1948

Executive Order 9981

President Harry Truman signs EO 9981, desegregating the U.S. military and promising "equality of treatment and opportunity" without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin.

Women's Armed Services Integration Act

The act allows women to serve as permanent members of the military (not just during war); however, it caps the number of women in the services at 2% of the total number and restricts women from shipboard service, except as nurses.

1949

Wesley Brown is the first African American to graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy.



1967

Public Law 90-130

This law lifts the 2% restriction on women in the U.S. military. Increases recruitment efforts for women in the Navy.

1970

Z-Gram 66

Issued by Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, Z-Gram 66 recognizes the need for improved race relations in the Navy and outlines committees to enact change.

1971

Increased Recruitment

The U.S. Naval Academy increases recruitment efforts of African Americans with the goal of recruiting between 50 and 75 black midshipmen for the following year.

1972

Racial Riots in the Pacific

In the fall, race riots occur on two aircraft carriers, USS *Kitty Hawk* and USS *Constellation*, while deployed to Vietnam.

Z-Gram 116

Issued by Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Zumwalt, Z-Gram 116 authorizes women in all ratings. Shortly after, the Navy enacts a pilot program for women at sea aboard USS *Sanctuary*.

1975

Service Academies Open to Women

Eighty women enter U.S. Naval Academy in the fall after all U.S. Armed Forces academies are opened to females by a Congressional decision.

1976

Naval Affirmative Action Plan

The Naval Affirmative Action Plan (NAAP) is established in June 1976. NAAP institutionalizes equal opportunity and affirmative action in the Navy.

1978

Owens v. Brown decision

Brought forward by Yona Owens in 1976, *Owens v. Brown* is a class action lawsuit decided by the District Court of Washington, D.C., which declared that barring women from sea duty unconstitutional.