



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

JAN 29 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: 2024 Department of Defense Black History Month Observance

The Department recognizes February 1, 2024 to February 29, 2024, as Black History Month. This year's theme, "African Americans and the Arts," recognizes African Americans' wide-ranging contributions to American culture, to include the visual arts, music, cultural movements, and more.

Our Nation continues to be enriched with the vastness of African American cultural traditions, art, music, and literature. In addition, African American artists have used their craft to preserve cultural identity, confront prejudice, advocate for justice, and promote unity and mutual support in the face of adversity.

African American writers, such as Junius Edwards, Chester Himes, and John A. Williams, have played crucial roles in capturing the stories of African Americans in wartime. Their literary contributions provide valuable insights into the challenges, triumphs, and nuanced experiences of African American Service members and veterans, contributing to a deeper understanding and ensuring that the history of African Americans in wartime is not forgotten.

The influence of African American culture in the arts has been instrumental in shaping the democracy we cherish today. As leaders in DoD, it is incumbent upon us to embody courage in dismantling racial and cultural barriers wherever they may persist. For more resources and help leading and organizing observances, visit: <https://www.deomi.mil/Special-Observances/Black-History-Month/>.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ashish S. Vazirani".

Ashish S. Vazirani
Acting