



## Michael J. Singleton, M.D.

Commander, U.S. Navy Medical Corps  
Senior Medical Officer, USS *Peleliu*

San Diego, CA

As a child in rural South Carolina, Commander Michael J. Singleton grew up witnessing the harmful results of poor health care access.

“I saw people around me dying from diseases I now know were curable,” he said. “I saw my granddad get his injured leg amputated because he couldn’t afford the proper care. I decided back then that I wanted to do something to help.”

Singleton saw the military as a way to reach his goal of becoming a doctor. He won a military scholarship to study biology and chemistry while serving in the U.S. Air Force ROTC. As an active-duty Air Force officer, he volunteered as an emergency room assistant on his own time.

“One of the ER nurses told me I should go to medical school. I didn’t think it was possible. But my desire and willingness to be a servant to others convinced me to apply, and I got in,” he said.

Singleton returned to the military after completing his medical residency. Today, he is the senior medical officer onboard the USS *Peleliu*, a U.S. Navy assault ship.

“My job as a healer goes way beyond being a job,” Singleton said. “I believe naval and public service is my calling. It validates me as a physician and as a human being.”



1954  
Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. becomes the first African American general in the U.S. Air Force.

# 1956

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M. Joycelyn Elders, first African American U.S. Surgeon General, enrolls in the University of Arkansas Medical School after serving as a nurse in the Army.

# MAY 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 1867: First four students enter Howard University.
2 1995: Shirley Jackson assumes chairmanship of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.	3 1964: Frederick O’Neal becomes first black president of Actors’ Equity Association.	4 1961: Freedom Riders begin protesting segregation of interstate bus travel in the South.	5 1988: Eugene Antonio Marino installed as first U.S. African American Roman Catholic archbishop.	6 1991: Smithsonian Institution approves creation of the National African American Museum.	7 1845: Mary Eliza Mahoney, America’s first black trained nurse, born.	8 1983: Lena Horne awarded Spingarn Medal for distinguished career in entertainment.
9 1899: John Albert Burr patents lawn mower. <b>Mother’s Day</b>	10 1950: Boston Celtics select Chuck Cooper, first black player drafted to play in NBA.	11 1895: Composer William Grant Still, first black to conduct a major American symphony orchestra, born.	12 1862: Black slaves commandeer the Confederate ship “The Planter.”	13 1872: Matilda Arabella Evans, first black woman to practice medicine in South Carolina, born.	14 1913: Clara Stanton Jones, first black president of the American Library Association, born.	15 1820: Congress declares foreign slave trade an act of piracy, punishable by death. <b>Armed Forces Day</b>
16 1927: Dr. William Harry Barnes becomes first black certified by a surgical board.	17 1954: In <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> , Supreme Court declares segregation in public schools unconstitutional.	18 1896: In <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> , Supreme Court upholds doctrine of “separate but equal” education and public accommodations.	19 1993: University of Virginia professor Rita Dove appointed U.S. poet laureate.	20 1961: U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy dispatches U.S. marshals to Montgomery, Alabama, to restore order in the Freedom Rider crisis.	21 2006: Katherine Dunham, pioneering dancer and choreographer, author and civil rights activist, dies.	22 1921: <i>Shuffle Along</i> , a musical featuring a score by Eubie Blake and Noble Sissle, opens on Broadway.
23 1900: Sgt. William H. Carney becomes first black awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.	24 1854: Lincoln University (Pa.), first black college, founded.	25 1926: Jazz trumpeter Miles Dewey Davis born.	26 1961: During Kennedy administration, Marvin Cook named ambassador to Niger Republic, the first black envoy named to an African nation.	27 1942: Dorie Miller, a ship’s steward, awarded Navy Cross for heroism during the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.	28 1948: National Party wins whites-only elections in South Africa and begins to institute policy of apartheid.	29 1901: Granville T. Woods patents overhead conducting system for the electric railway.
30 1965: Vivian Malone becomes first black to graduate from the University of Alabama.	31 1870: Congress passes the first Enforcement Act, providing stiff penalties for those who deprive others of civil rights. <b>Memorial Day Observed</b>					