

***“The humanity of all Americans is diminished when any group is denied rights granted to others.”***  
***Julian Bond, NAACP Chairman Emeritus***  
***1940-2015***

**Middlesex County NAACP Branch - CT Unit 2018-B**

Gary Wallace, (U.S. Navy '87-'91)  
Armed Services & Veteran Affairs Committee Chair  
David E. Roane (U.S. Marine Corps '60-'64)  
Anita Ford-Saunders, Branch President  
Barbara Wade-Holloman, Branch Secretary  
Ann Percival, Membership Committee Chair

**This initiative is funded by a grant from the**



**Recognition and Resources:**  
**Black U.S. Armed Services**  
**Veterans of Middlesex County**

**NAACP**  
*Middlesex County Branch*



Middlesex County NAACP  
Harry Ruffin, Jr.  
American Legion Post 206  
American Legion Auxiliary 206



working together to raise awareness and  
advocacy



**Message from the President**



The Middlesex County NAACP Branch is honored and committed to recognizing members of the U.S. Armed Forces. We understand all too well that “Freedom is never free” and appreciate the dedication and sacrifice that service members have given over the decades of peace and war time in these United States. We also recognize that service members come from an array of different backgrounds, ethnicities, and nations around the world, where they proudly call this land “Home” and have served honorably. It is our hope and desire that veterans will join us in the continued fight for the freedoms and liberties we continue to enjoy!

**Anita Ford Saunders, President**

**NAACP**  
*Middlesex County Branch*

## About the NAACP

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) mission is to ensure that all people have equal rights and opportunities, and to eliminate discrimination based on race:

### Promote equality

The NAACP works to achieve political, educational, social, and economic equality for all people.

### Eliminate discrimination

The NAACP works to remove barriers to racial discrimination through democratic processes.

### Advance policies

The NAACP works to advance policies and practices that support marginalized people.

### Educate

The NAACP educates people about their constitutional rights and takes lawful action to ensure they are exercised.

The NAACP is recognized as the first civil and human rights law organization in the United States. It has over 2,200 branches and units across the country, and more than 2 million activists.

## Armed Conflicts of Interest & Black Americans

Historical experiences of racial segregation and discrimination within the U.S. military branches of service:

- Complex relationships with white military service members where they often faced unequal treatment despite serving in every major conflict.
- Difficulty with navigating potential paths to upward mobility and opportunity that might not be available elsewhere in society.
- Reservations due to past experiences with discrimination and disproportionate casualties.
- Inability to receive fair treatment and fair outcomes with reporting instances of racism and bias throughout the ranks.





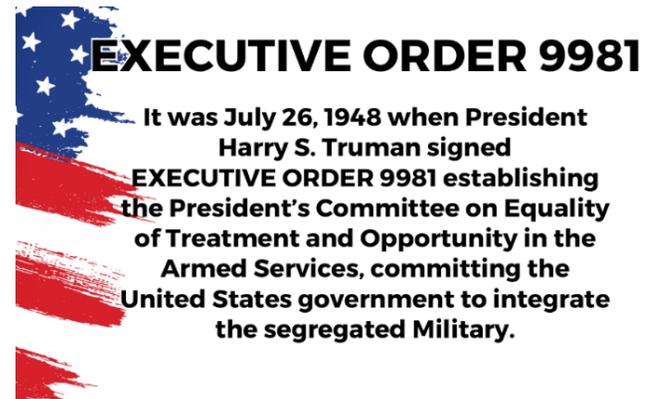
**ARMED SERVICES & VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**FACTS:**

- In 1984, 2% of Air Force pilots were Black; nearly 40 years later, we are still at 2% (apnews.com).
- Black veterans still struggle to achieve economic equity compared with white civilians and veterans on such indicators as annual income and need for food assistance (rand.org).
- Black veterans have higher odds than Black civilians of experiencing chronic pain, high-impact pain, hypertension, high cholesterol, Type 2 diabetes, prostate cancer, and work-related limitations (rand.org).
- In fiscal year 2023, 84.8% of all Black veterans who applied for physical or mental health benefits were given assistance by the VA, compared to 89.4% of their white counterparts who applied (Dept. Veterans Affairs).
- 33.1% of Veterans experiencing homelessness are Black, compared with 12.3% of the general Veteran population (National Alliance to End Homelessness).
- Blacks are underrepresented at the highest military leadership levels.
- VA data shows that, from 2002 to 2020, nearly 30% of disability claims filed by Black veterans were denied when compared with a 24.2% rejection rate for those filed by white veterans.

The NAACP continues the fight to protect our Military! In recognition of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Executive Order 9981, the NAACP and the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs,

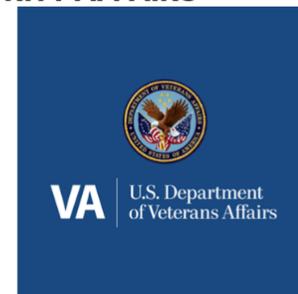
Minority Affairs, Center for Minority Affairs, signed a Memorandum of Agreement which sets forth a structure in which both entities will work in a mutually beneficial manner to advance and improve the quality of life for all our nation’s veterans including minority veterans.



**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT  
NAACP & U.S. DEPT. OF VETERAN AFFAIRS,  
CENTER FOR MINORITY AFFAIRS**



**“This agreement sets forth a structure in which both entities will work in a mutually beneficial manner to advance and improve the quality of life for all our Nation’s Veterans, including Minority Veterans.”**



**A Resolution by the City of Middletown:  
Submitted by Councilman Grady Faulkner & Carl  
Chisem featuring American Legion Post 206**

WHEREAS, on Veterans Day 2014 the Amistad Committee Inc. of New Haven hosted a viewing and discussion of the video entitled “VETERANS OF COLOR courage, adversity and triumph” which ties into the theme for Black History Month; and

WHEREAS, this discussion focused on the history of veterans of color and raised awareness of the plight of those veterans today and the need to have further discussions not only of black history and culture but specifically ways to help our veterans of color; and

WHEREAS, Middletown’s American Legion Harry Ruffin, Jr. Post 206 is uniquely positioned to assist local and statewide efforts to perform outreach and advocacy for veterans of color regarding services available to them and their families.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MIDDLETOWN: That we recognize February as Black History Month and further acknowledge the unique and challenging history, service and sacrifice of our Veterans of Color, especially during World War II, Korea and Vietnam when the domestic struggle at home was Civil Rights; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That we encourage and thank our local veterans’ organizations for continuing to remind us all of the collective cost of our Freedom today and in future generations.

**Middlesex County NAACP & American Legion Post 206:  
Commitment to Service**

American Legion Post 206 has recognized and honored key military figures in the community that have served our country, state, and community with distinction and integrity during Annual Gala style, recognition events:

- 2009: WWII
- 2011: Korean War
- 2012: Vietnam War
- 2016: Women in the Military & The 10<sup>th</sup> Year as Post 206
- 2017: Gulf War/Desert Storm-Afghanistan/Iraq
- 2018: Youth & African American Veterans



**Post Honors**

Since 2009, Post 206 has been honoring black veterans across the county and state during recognition ceremonies spanning all major U.S. conflicts and branches of service.

The Middlesex County NAACP & the American Legion Post 206 have members serving for the greater good of the community:

- Healthcare Services
- Education
- Workforce Development
- Social Justice
- Legacies

## Middlesex County NAACP Branch History



In 1946 the Portland/Middletown NAACP Branch was formed by a group of concerned African Americans from both towns. Mr. Roosevelt Steele, a Portland resident, became the first president. The Branch thrived for several years taking a stand for the rights of African Americans during the early days of the civil rights movement. Earlier presidents were Mr. Charles Ghent, Mr. Roosevelt Steele, Sr., Rev. William Davage, and Captain Edward Jackson.

It was years later, when Captain Edward B. Jackson, retired member of the Middletown Police force and Mrs. Reba Moses, a community activist, met with Mr. Willie Walton to talk about forming a branch of the NAACP in Middletown. The group met with Mr. Benjamin Andrews, President of the CT State Conference of NAACP Branches. Notices were sent to all the churches in the community inviting members to attend a meeting at the Idella Howell Daycare Center. There were 98 people who attended the meeting. Mr. Willie Walton became the first president of the re-established Middlesex County NAACP Branch. He served three terms as the president and was responsible for the establishment of the Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration and formation of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Committee of Greater Middletown, Inc., under Mr. Richard Thompson, who was the Education Chair for the branch at that time. Rev. Mack Elder served as the committee's first president. The committee later became a separate 501(c)3 entity under the leadership of its second president, Lillie Mae Fitzpatrick.

One of the branch's earliest issues, uniting the city residents, stemmed from the death of a homeless man who froze to death. Both Black and white citizens came together and marched in protest over the lack of housing. The group demonstrated for three days. In the end, the Eddy Shelter and other shelters were opened in Middlesex County, and they remain to this day.

In its earlier days, the branch published the "Watchdog," a weekly paper. James "Cup" Moody served as its first editor. The paper provided the community with information on politics and other important issues in the City of Middletown. The branch has advocated over the years on key issues such as economic development, education, healthcare, and the criminal justice system, specifically impacting young Black men.

The following individuals have served as President of the Middlesex County NAACP Branch since its establishment: Willie Walton, James Moore, Roland Cockfield, Debra Hopkins, David Roane, Faith M. Jackson, Timothy Franklin, Roxanne Aaron-Selph, Rosa Browne, and Faith Jackson, (served multiple nonconsecutive terms), and Anita Ford Saunders, APR currently president for the 2025 – 2027 term.

## Harry Ruffin Jr., American Legion Post 206 History



The American Legion Post #206 was established in 2005 by three African American veterans who felt very disenfranchised by the mistreatment of Black veterans. William Ted Perry, Cornelius Greenway and Anthony Gaunichaux founded the post to address the issues of discrimination, denial of benefits such as medical insurance, housing and employment.

The trio recruited 41 men as members which was 15 more than needed to apply for a charter. Ms. Sara Ruffin gave her permission and blessings to use her husband's name for the post. Mr. Ruffin was a well-decorated veteran with strong ties to his family, community and friends.

Post #206 was chartered in May 2006 after a year of difficult negotiations. This became the second ALP in Middletown. There have been five commanders to date: Anthony Gaunichaux, Sr., David Roane, Cornelius Greenway, Rosellen Duncan-Phillips and Stanley Howell, Jr.

The women's American Legion Auxiliary Unit #206 was chartered in July 2007. The original charter had 12 signatures. Most members were wives, daughters, sisters and granddaughters of post veterans. Linette Gaunichaux was the first president of the women's unit, followed by Katherine Bryant and Joyce Y. Jones.



## Members of Post 206 (May 2006 – December 2025)

Tracy Barnett, USA Vietnam  
Isadora Bella, USN, GW Terrorism  
Johnie Brown, Vietnam  
Fredric Buttram, Vietnam  
Charles Campbell  
John Dawkins, USAF Korea  
Allen Douglas  
Rosellen Duncan, USA Persian Gulf  
Sylvester Ellis, USAF Vietnam  
Mary Hamlin, USA Vietnam  
Lloyd Henry, USA Vietnam  
Richard Herring, USA Vietnam  
William Howard, Korea  
Stanley Howell, Jr., USA Vietnam  
John Jackson, Vietnam  
Woodrow James, USAF Vietnam  
Robert Jefferson, USA Vietnam  
Mark Loman, Vietnam  
Carl McKeller, USAF Korea  
William Perry, USAF Vietnam  
Olin Richey, Korea  
James Riddick, Vietnam  
**David Roane, Commander, USMC Vietnam**  
John Robinson, USA Vietnam  
Kenneth Robinson, Vietnam  
Daniel Ryan  
Roosevelt Steele, Jr., USA Vietnam  
Harold Thorpe, Jr., Vietnam



## Members of Post 206 (continued)

Gerome Turner, USA Persian Gulf  
David Warmsley, Vietnam  
William White, USA Vietnam  
Jonathan Wilson, USAF Persian Gulf  
Kelvin Wilson, Lebanon Grenada  
Gregory Winborne, Korea  
James Wright, USA Vietnam



## Armed Forces of the United States Happy Birthday!

- National Guard: December 13, 1636
- Army: June 14, 1775
- Navy: October 13, 1775
- Marine Corps: November 10, 1775
- Coast Guard: August 4, 1790
- Air Force: September 18, 1947
- Space Force: December 20, 2019

The Department of Defense oversees the U.S. Military & the Secretary of Defense reports directly to the President of the United States



## Members of the Women's Auxiliary

*(July 2006 – December 2025)*

Floresia Allen  
Carolyn Barr  
Melissa Bass  
Katherine Bryant  
Christina Gaunichaux  
Linette Gaunichaux

Regina Gaunichaux  
Lottie Grant  
Mary Hamlin  
Amara Hennessey  
Amelia Hennessey  
Monique Hennessey  
Madeline Holley  
Mishon Holley  
Alaura Ives  
Arabelia Ives  
Jaimila Jones

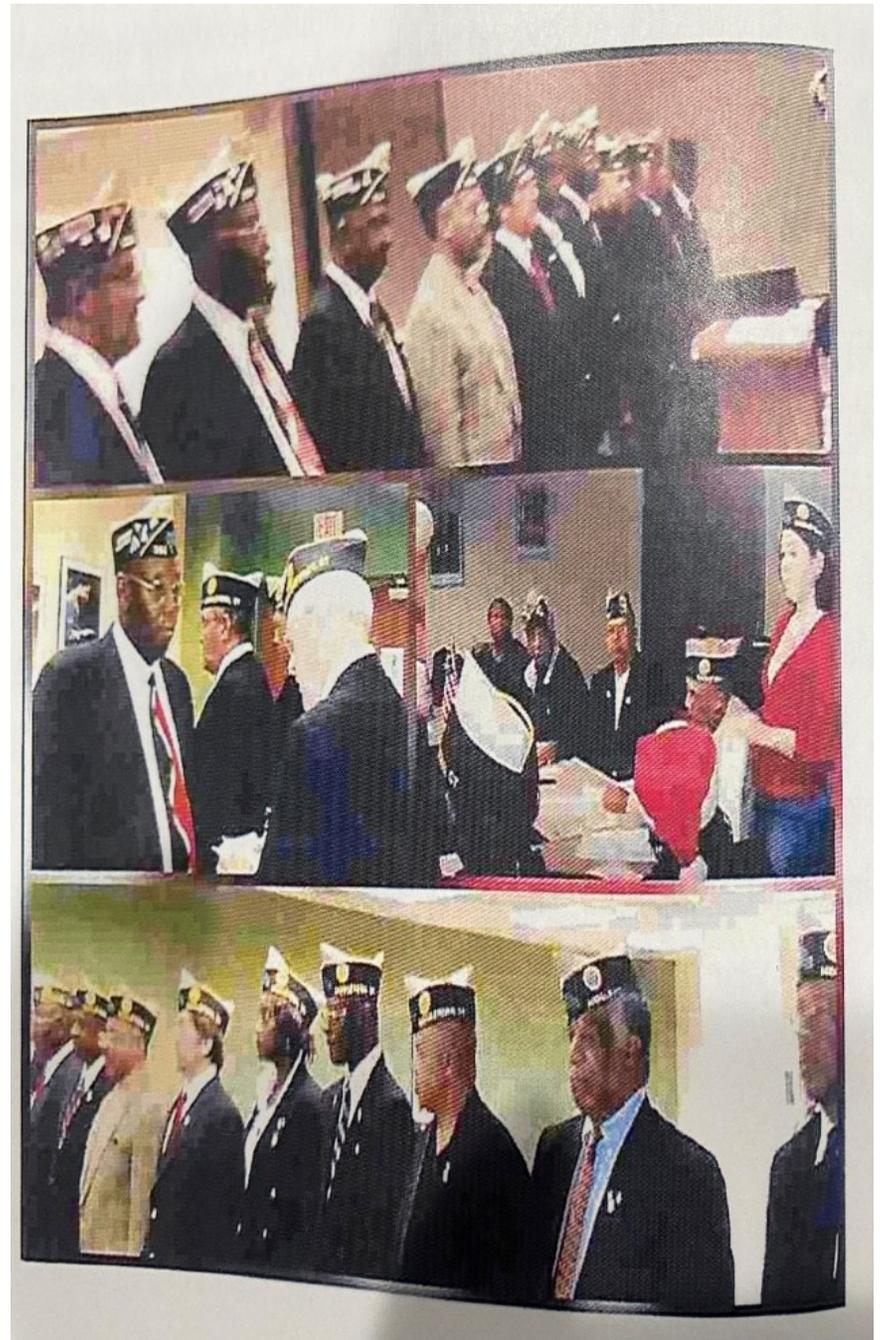
**Joyce Y. Jones, President**

Bianca Kenny  
Beverly Lawrence  
Onyae Lawrence  
Sanji Lawrence  
Mardi Loman  
Mutima McArthur  
Judith McMillan  
Krystle McMillan

Marjorie McMillan  
Lorraine Moody  
Kino Moore  
Joyanne O'Malley  
Susan Owens  
Kay Perry

Ella Richey  
Valerie Sansbury  
Vanessa Sansbury  
Carol Shimoda-Bloom  
Christie Shimoda  
Jennifer Steele  
Pamela Steele  
Sandra Steele  
Priscilla Taylor  
Josephine Teart  
Dawn Turner  
Willow Turner  
Celeste Vereen  
Mamie Wickers  
Charlotte Warmasley  
Shirely Weaver  
Barakah White  
Barbara White  
Annie Yopp







*God looked around His garden,  
and found an empty space.  
Then He looked upon this earth,  
and saw your tired face.  
He put His arms around you,  
and lifted you to rest.  
God's garden must be beautiful,  
He only takes the best.*

## Resources

### City of Middletown: Veteran's Service

Faith M. Jackson

Phone: (860) 638-4830

[Faith.jackson@middletownct.gov](mailto:Faith.jackson@middletownct.gov)

### Office of Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro United States House of Representatives

Phone: (203) 562-3718

### Connecticut Veterans Affairs

287 West Street

Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Phone: 860-616-3600

Fax: 860-616-3562

### United States Service Academies

- U.S. Military Academy-West Point, New York\*  
<https://www.westpoint.edu>
- U.S. Naval Academy-Annapolis, Maryland\*
- U.S. Air Force Academy-Colorado Springs, Colorado\*
- U.S. Coast Guard Academy-New London, Connecticut
- U.S. Merchant Marine Academy-Kings Point, New York

*\*Need a formal appointment from your U.S. Senator or U.S. Congressman/woman*

### Middlesex County NAACP Branch 2018-B

P.O. Box 378

Middletown, CT 06457

[www.middlesexctnaacp.org](http://www.middlesexctnaacp.org)



*This booklet is a result of a collaboration between the veterans and auxiliary members of American Legion Post 206 and the Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee of the Middlesex County NAACP. The purpose is to heighten recognition and appreciation for the Black members of the U.S. Armed Services who served our country with distinction. The resources within are meant to assist all veterans in seeking support. The service academy information is meant to encourage young men and women of color who are seeking a career in the Armed Services to consider entering this profession through a service academy rather than enlistment.*

