

CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX



**RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE
CONTRIBUTIONS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN
MILITARY VETERANS AND AFRICAN AMERICAN
MILITARY HERITAGE DAY**

WHEREAS, This year, on May 16, 2026, Veterans and Friends of the General Edward O. Gourdin Statue Project will celebrate the 21st Annual African American Heritage Day at Edward O. Gourdin African American Veterans Memorial Park; and

WHEREAS, Newly renovated in 2023, culminating in the installation of artwork created by the late Fern Cunningham, the park is located directly across the street from BPD Station 2. Named in honor of Massachusetts' first African American Superior Court Judge and Brigadier General Edward O. Gourdin, the park features his statue and ten surrounding bas reliefs of African American Veterans, honoring their bravery, sacrifices, and legacy in military history—serving both our nation and our communities; and

WHEREAS, Twenty-one years ago, in May of that year, the Organization of Afro-American Veterans and other military veterans organizations in Boston first gathered at Peace Park—now known as the General Edward O. Gourdin African American Veterans Memorial Park—to acknowledge the history and contributions of African American military veterans; and

WHEREAS, African Americans have participated in every war fought by or within the United States, including the Revolutionary War during the colonial period, the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Afghanistan War, the Iraq War, and more recent conflicts over the past several decades; and

WHEREAS, The 272nd Field Artillery Battalion, commanded by General Gourdin during the Korean War, was the last all-African American Army unit to be disbanded in

1954—six years after President Harry S. Truman signed Executive Order 9981 on July 26, 1948, which mandated the integration of the U.S. military and called for equality of treatment and opportunity for African American soldiers; and

WHEREAS, African American veterans from Boston bravely fought for freedom abroad, often at great sacrifice and risk, yet upon returning home, they frequently faced denial of those very freedoms. Despite these challenges, they persisted, thrived, and became leaders across various sectors of society and their communities; and

WHEREAS, The annual celebration on May 16th, known as African American Military Heritage Day, in Gourdin Park is a commemorative event honoring the service, sacrifice, and contributions of African Americans in the military. It highlights both historical and present-day achievements and challenges. **NOW, THEREFORE IT**

RESOLVED: The City of Boston recognizes the vital role that General Edward O. Gourdin African American Veterans Memorial Park in historic Roxbury plays in commemorating this history, ensuring that it will not be forgotten. **AND BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: That the Boston City Council acknowledges and celebrates African American Military Heritage Day on Saturday, May 16, 2026.

Filed in Council: May 13, 2026