

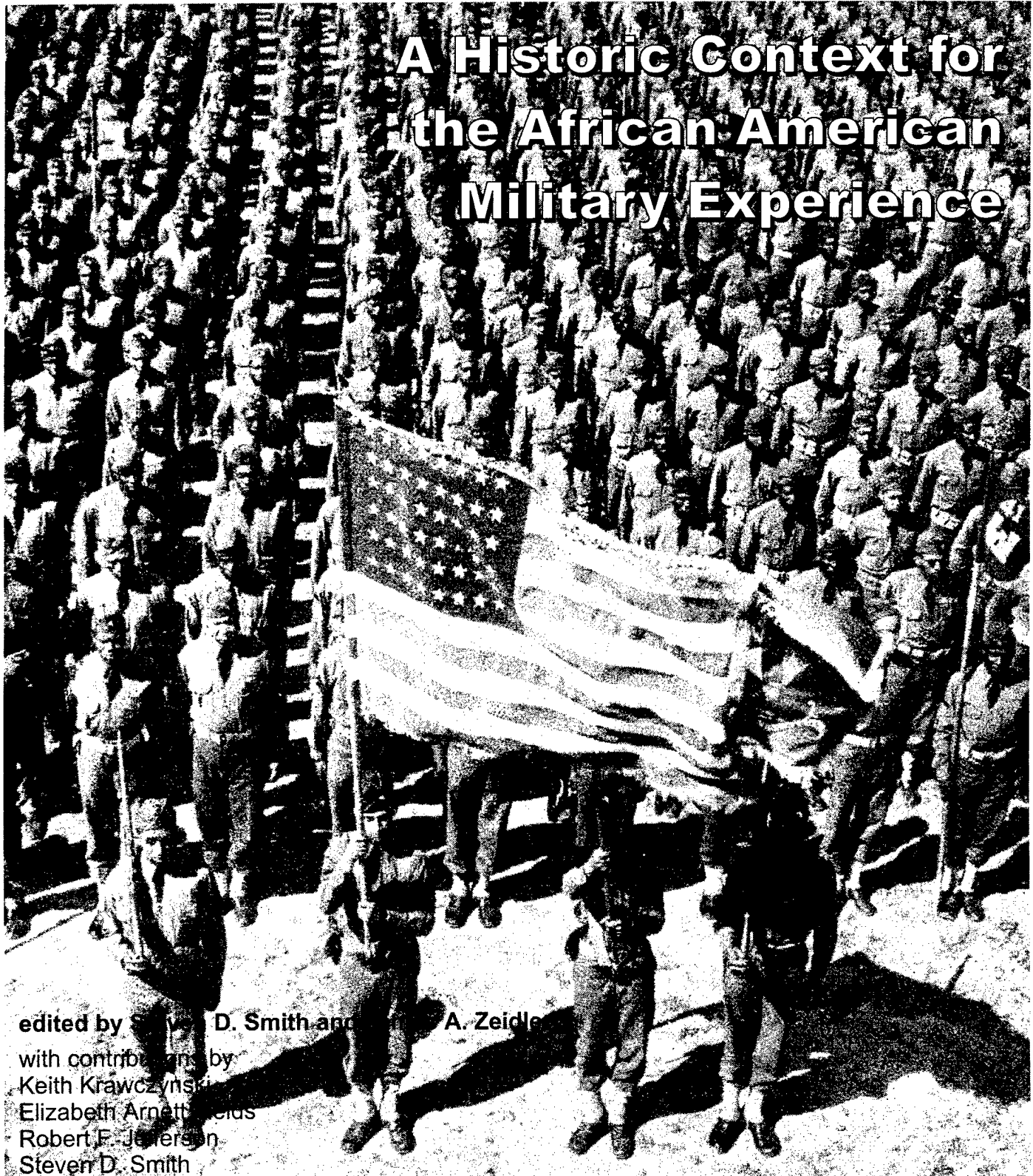


**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**

Construction Engineering  
Research Laboratories

19980805045

USACERL CRRC 98/87  
July 1998



# A Historic Context for the African American Military Experience

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# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave Blank)		2. REPORT DATE July 1998	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Final	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE A Historic Context for the African American Military Experience			5. FUNDING NUMBERS Reimbursable Order No. N57	
6. AUTHOR(S) Steven D. Smith and James A. Zeidler				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratories (USACERL) P.O. Box 9005 Champaign, IL 61826-9005			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER  TR CRRC 98/87	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) ODUSD (ES) ATTN: EQ-LP 3400 Defense Pentagon, Room 3E791 Washington, DC 20301-3400			10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Copies are available from the National Technical Information Service, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, VA 22161.				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT  Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words)  The purpose of this report is to recognize and highlight the contributions of African Americans to the military history of the United States. This is accomplished by providing a historic context on the African American military experience for use by Department of Defense (DoD) cultural resource managers. Managers can use this historic context, to recognize significant sites, buildings, and objects on DoD property related to African American military history by nominating them for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. In this manner, civilian and military personnel currently serving in all major services will be made aware of the contributions of African Americans to our military heritage. While the focus of this work is on all-black military units, significant individuals will be recognized also.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS African American soldiers historic buildings military history			National Register of Historic Places	
			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 364	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT SAR	

## Preface

The Cultural Resources Research Center at the U.S. Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratories (USACERL) in Champaign, Illinois, has been involved for over a decade in all facets of cultural resource management and historic preservation issues related to military installations and training lands. Activities include four basic thrust areas: (1) prehistoric and historic archaeological resources, (2) Native American issues, (3) historic military architecture, and (4) historic military landscapes. One of the basic tasks of these diverse thrust areas is to ensure compliance with current historic preservation legislation so that the military mission is not impeded or adversely affected. This usually involves proactive planning and project execution in the context of an Integrated Cultural Resource Management Plan (ICRMP), and can impose a considerable burden, both fiscal and logistical, on the installation cultural resource manager. One of the most useful and cost-effective tools in facilitating this task is the nationwide "theme and context" study. A *historic context* is defined as an organizational format that groups historic properties that share similarities of time, theme, and/or geography. By grouping related cultural resources under the umbrella of a broader theme or historic context, significance evaluations and nominations for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) can be conducted much faster since basic reference material is already made available. Thus, the high start-up costs of installation-specific research on a given theme or context can often be avoided.

The USACERL Cultural Resources Research Center has carried out a number of such "theme and context" studies. These include thematic overviews on World War II temporary structures, Department of Defense (DoD) aircraft hangars, and DoD Cold War facilities. All of these studies serve as guidelines for the identification and evaluation of resources for purposes of determining eligibility for listing on the NRHP, providing significant cost savings for the Department of Defense. The present study represents another effort along these lines. Unlike the other studies, however, which are devoted to specific kinds of cultural resources, this one focuses on a specific ethnic minority: the African American soldier. Its purpose is to recognize and highlight the contributions of African Americans to the military history of the United States by providing a historic context for the identification and preservation of buildings, objects, and archaeological sites related to that involvement. Using this theme and context study as an aid, specific buildings and sites significant to African American military history on DoD properties can be evaluated and, where warranted, nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Cultural Resources Research Center is pleased to have had the continued support of the Legacy Resource Management Program for this project as well as the collaboration of scholars from the Cultural Resources Consulting Division of the South Carolina Institute for Anthropology and Archaeology (SCIAA) in conducting the historical research. It is our hope that the information contained in this report will be consulted repeatedly in coming years to support National Register nominations and advance our understanding of African American military history.

James A. Zeidler, Ph.D.  
Principal Investigator

## Foreword

This study was conducted for the Office of the Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Environmental Security under Reimbursable order No. N57. The technical monitor was Ms. Jackie Howard.

The work was performed under the direction of the Tri-Services Cultural Resources Research Center and the Planning and Mission Impact Division (LL-P) of the Land Management Laboratory (LL), U.S. Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratories (USACERL). The USACERL principal investigator was James A. Zeidler. The research was conducted under the direction of Steven D. Smith, Cultural Resources Consulting Division of the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina. Dr. Harold E. Balbach is Chief, CECER-LL-P; Dr. John T. Bandy is Acting Operations Chief, CECER-LL. The USACERL editor was Gloria J. Wienke, Technical Information Team.

COL James A. Walter is Commander and Dr. Michael J. O'Connor is Director of USACERL.

This document is a Legacy Program work product and does not suggest or reflect the policy, programs, or doctrine of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or United States Government.

# Contents

SF 298 .....	1
Preface .....	2
Foreword .....	3
<b>1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>7</b>
By Steven D. Smith	
Background .....	9
Objective .....	10
Historic Context Research Design .....	11
Project Scope .....	13
Methods .....	13
Report Organization .....	15
Summary .....	16
<b>2 African American Soldiers Before the Civil War .....</b>	<b>17</b>
By Elizabeth Arnett Fields	
Early Colonial Conflicts .....	22
Service in Non-English Colonies .....	26
American Revolution .....	27
Blacks in the Armed Forces, 1783-1812 .....	34
War of 1812 .....	35
Black Soldiers in the Antebellum Period .....	38
Summary .....	40
<b>3 African Americans in the Civil War .....</b>	<b>41</b>
By Keith Krawczynski and Steven D. Smith	
Introduction .....	43
Northern Attitudes Toward Arming the Black Man .....	43
Service in the Union Navy .....	45
Blacks in the Confederate Army .....	49
Blacks in the Union Army .....	53
Confederate Response to the Union Enlistment of African Americans .....	61
Black Soldiers Life and Labor .....	63
The Martial Spirit .....	70
Summary .....	75

<b>4</b>	<b>The West 1865-1897</b> .....	77
	By Elizabeth Arnett Fields	
	Introduction .....	79
	The Creation of Black Regiments .....	80
	Origin of the Term "Buffalo Soldier" .....	80
	Cavalry Regiments .....	82
	Infantry Regiments .....	101
	Seminole Negro-Indian Scouts .....	112
	Service in Other Branches of the Army .....	112
	First Black Cadets at West Point .....	113
	Problems Faced by the Black Troops In the West .....	114
	Qualities of the Buffalo Soldiers .....	122
	Summary .....	124
<b>5</b>	<b>The Spanish American War and Aftermath</b> .....	127
	By Keith Krawczynski	
	Spanish American War .....	129
	African American Attitudes Towards War with Spain .....	129
	Black Regular Army Cavalry and Infantry Units .....	130
	State Volunteer Units In the War .....	136
	Immune Regiments .....	138
	The Philippines .....	138
	Reactions to Increased Racial Discrimination .....	141
	Punitive Expedition .....	143
	African Americans in the National Guard .....	146
	Naval Service, 1865-1917 .....	147
	Summary .....	149
<b>6</b>	<b>World War I</b> .....	151
	By Keith Krawczynski	
	Declaration of War .....	153
	African American Call to Arms .....	153
	Recruitment .....	155
	Appeasement of African Americans .....	156
	Creation of Black Units .....	156
	Demands for African American Officers .....	160
	Training in the United States .....	163
	Labor Battalions Overseas .....	166
	Combat in France .....	167
	Postwar 1918-1940 .....	181
	Summary .....	183

<b>7</b>	<b>African American Navy, Marine, Women's Reserves, and Coast Guard Service During World War II</b> .....	185
	By Keith Krawczynski	
	Introduction .....	187
	Dorie Miller .....	188
	U.S. Navy .....	188
	Marine Corps .....	202
	Coast Guard .....	206
	Merchant Marine .....	209
	Women's Reserve Corps .....	211
	Summary .....	211
<b>8</b>	<b>African Americans in the U.S. Army During World War II</b> .....	213
	By Robert F. Jefferson	
	Introduction .....	215
	Quotas: Linkages of Black Intelligence and Combat Efficiency and Discrimination, 1920 - 1941 .....	216
	Black Response to War and War Department Intransigence .....	221
	The Stateside Employment and Training of Black Personnel and Units at Regular Army Facilities: 1941-1944 .....	226
	Race, Labor, and War: The Employment of Black Troops in the African, Pacific, and European Theaters .....	234
	Summary .....	246
<b>9</b>	<b>Victory and Context: Recognition of African American Contributions to American Military History</b> .....	247
	By Steven D. Smith, Keith Krawczynski, and Robert F. Jefferson	
	The Integration of the Armed Forces 1946-1954 .....	249
	Historic Context: Themes and Sites .....	254
	Installation Survey .....	313
	Summary .....	315
	<b>Appendix A: Congressional Medal of Honor Recipients, 1863-1953</b> .....	316
	<b>Appendix B: Congressional Medal of Honor Recipients, 1863-1953</b> .....	321
	<b>Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire</b> .....	327
	<b>Appendix D: Survey Data</b> .....	328
	<b>References</b> .....	335
	<b>Distribution</b>	



# 1 Introduction



*President Truman's Executive Order of July 1948 marked the end of the segregated African American military unit in the Armed Services.*

# 1 Introduction

by Steven D. Smith

## Background

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the president that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale.

Executive Order 9981, 26 July 1948  
(Nalty and MacGregor 1981:239).

President Truman's Executive Order "Establishing The President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services," marked the end of the segregated black military unit in the United States military. It was an objective sought by African Americans since they first served in the uniform of a nation founded on the principles of democracy. Blacks in the military had achieved a cherished goal — to fight on the line beside their fellow Americans rather than as separate units. It was the "Double V" victory, victory abroad and at home, that the *Pittsburgh Courier* had championed during World War II (Potter et al. 1992:55).

For African Americans that had endured far more than mere segregation, this announcement obviously brought great elation. But perhaps for those who had served in those all-black divisions, regiments, and companies, there was also some sadness. While they had attained a goal long sought and deserved, the order meant the end of a distinguished history where all-black regiments had endured both the hardships of battle and the hardships of discrimination. Given little training, undesirable jobs, the poorest equipment, in the harshest posts, they had often performed well, and usually better than expected, from the colonial period through the Korean War. Their history and their contributions to this country were significant and influential. Yet until recently, they were also largely unacknowledged.

## Objective

The purpose of this report is to recognize and highlight the contributions of African Americans to the military history of the United States. This is accomplished by providing a historic context on the African American military experience for use by Department of Defense (DoD) cultural resource managers. Based on this historic context, significant sites, buildings, and objects on DoD property related to African American military history can be recognized by nominating them for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. In this manner, civilian and military personnel currently serving in all major services will be made aware of the contributions of African Americans to our military heritage. While the focus of this work is on all-black military units, significant individuals will be recognized also.

Although this effort focuses on military history, its significance is much larger. As Dudley Taylor Cornish, author of *The Sable Arm*, has stated "American military history, by the very nature of our society and the organization of our government and of our army, is more nearly social and political history than mere military analysis" (Cornish 1966: xii). Indeed, a reoccurring theme throughout this historic context is the direct parallel between the common attitude toward African Americans in American society and American military racial policy. Therefore, the events, attitudes, and philosophies related here have relevance and significance far beyond the history of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. For this reason it is important that the DoD recognize the contributions of African Americans by formally recognizing the sites, buildings, objects, and places for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. This report provides the first step for cultural resource managers in the process of nominating eligible sites for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

This historic context was prepared by the Cultural Resources Consulting Division of the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA) University of South Carolina, Columbia, through an Interagency Personnel Act (IPA) arrangement and several Short Form Research Contracts (SFRC) with the Tri-Services Cultural Resources Research Center of the United States Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratories (CERL), Champaign, Illinois. The project was funded through the DoD Legacy Resource Management Program.

## Historic Context Research Design

### *Research Framework*

In 1966, the National Historic Preservation Act (P.L. 89-665, as amended) recognized that "... the preservation of this irreplaceable heritage [i.e., historic properties significant to the Nation] is in the public interest so that its vital legacy of cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational, economic, and energy benefits will be maintained and enriched for future generations of Americans" (NHPA Section 1(b)(4)). This act, its regulations, and subsequent legislation required Federal agencies, like the DoD, to inventory, preserve, and manage these properties or cultural resources. This historic context provides the background or context from which historic and archaeological sites within DoD may be evaluated for their significance to local, state, and national heritage on the basis of their significance to African American military history.

Numerous DoD service regulations set forth policies, procedures, and responsibilities for the management of cultural resources on DoD-owned and -managed land. Army Regulation (AR) 420-40, *Historic Preservation* (15 May 1984), ensures that Army cultural resource management is consistent with national policies set forth in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). For instance, Section 110 (a) (2) of the National Historic Preservation Act directs Federal agencies to establish a program to locate, inventory, and nominate all properties under the agencies' ownership or control that qualify for the National Register of Historic Places. AR 420-40 also states that cultural resources meeting the established criteria for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places must be taken into account in any undertaking, on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), or within the procedures set forth by an Installation Historic Preservation Plan.

Air Force Instruction (AFI) 32-7065 *Cultural Resources* (13 June 1994) similarly establishes policies, procedures, and responsibilities for managing historic resources on land owned by the Air Force and consistent with national policies. Under the AFI, properties may be nominated individually, or in a systematic approach based on surveys, inventories, and historic preservation plans. Likewise, Navy Instruction SECNAVINST 4000.35 *Department of the Navy Cultural Resources Program* (17 August 1992) outlines the policies and responsibilities of the Department of the Navy and the Marine Corps. These instructions include not only sites, buildings, and districts, but also specifically mention ships and aircraft of historical significance. In addition, laws and regulations pertaining to cultural resource manage-

ment include paleontological collecting. The Navy must also apply admiralty law to underwater situations.

Central to historic preservation management and planning is the identification and development of historic contexts. Historic contexts are defined as "an organizational format that groups historic properties that share similarities of time, theme, and geography" (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the National Park Service 1989: 7). These organizational constructs provide the context within which individual archaeological sites, buildings, and objects are evaluated for significance, and thus eligibility for inclusion on the National Register. "Historic contexts are those patterns or trends in history by which a specific occurrence, property, or site is understood and its meaning (and ultimately significance) within prehistory or history is made clear (National Park Service 1991: 11).

Within a historic context of this magnitude, three different resource types can be identified: (1) historic buildings; (2) archaeological sites; and (3) objects. In addition, there may be significant locations, which may be considered traditional locations and are relevant to this context. Each of these resource types requires different evaluation treatments. Historic buildings may be considered to have significance if they have integrity of historic design and played a role in housing, supporting, or facilitating activities related to black regiments or important individuals. They may also illustrate a pattern or subtheme recognized in the historic context. Similar criteria will be evaluated for objects (in this case, primarily ships) and traditional places. Battle sites may be considered examples of significant locations.

For archaeological resources it is crucial that significance be developed in light of basic archaeological research. This is because the value of an archaeological property is measured primarily, and often wholly, by its potential to reveal information about the past. Indeed, the archaeological sites are usually determined significant because "... they have yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history" (36 CFR 60.4 d). The potential of archaeological properties to reveal insights into the African American military experience is very large. However, it will also be necessary to demonstrate that the site has archaeological integrity and that the deposits relating to the regiment that created the site can be isolated from earlier or later occupations by other regiments.

Regardless of the resource, it is necessary that it be evaluated within its historic context. This document serves as an overall statement regarding the African American military experience, which can serve DoD personnel nationwide who are charged with the responsibility for managing cultural resources at DoD installations and facilities.

## Project Scope

This historic context focuses on those black regiments, groups, divisions, companies, squadrons, etc. that were segregated from white units from the very earliest wars and conflicts in America. As noted previously, individuals important to black military history will be recognized but the context will not focus on these persons.

While the historic context must cover the entire range of activities pertaining to African American military history, identification of relevant historic properties in this report is confined to those found within the boundaries of the DoD. Historic properties on private or state lands will be mentioned within the historic context narrative, but these sites will not be subject to further discussion. Because this project is limited to DOD land, the study is further confined to land within the United States, District of Columbia, and the commonwealths, territories, and possessions of the United States.

## Methods

The methods (and thus overall goals) used for this project changed radically as the project progressed. The project was originally conceived as a 3-year effort involving historic research, field work, and data recording to substantiate site eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. As originally conceived, the first year was to concentrate on the development of a context statement for all-black military units from 1862 to 1920; essentially those historic regiments designated during the Civil War and during the expansion of the American West. The second year was planned as a general field effort to visit appropriate installations, gathering data on specific potentially eligible sites, buildings, and objects relevant to the context which could be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. A final year was planned in which follow-up visits would be made and nomination forms would be completed for eventual transfer to cultural resource managers at the visited installations. The managers could then submit the forms to the appropriate State Historic Preservation Offices for the nomination process. Finally, a brochure highlighting the contributions of African Americans was also planned for distribution to military personnel at the installations. Due to discontinuation of funding after the second year, the field effort, including site visits and nomination of significant sites, and preparation of a brochure, was canceled.

Other factors arose during the course of the work, which changed the scope of the project. Most importantly, it became obvious to the Principal Investigator that to provide a complete and useful historic context, the chronological coverage needed to

expand to cover the entire African American military experience from the colonial period to the end of segregation. This expanded the time needed to be devoted to historic research to 2 years. However, to ignore the colonial and antebellum period, and the post World War I period, would have made the context less useful. This was especially true as the vast majority of property currently owned by the DoD (and was thus the main geographical target of this project) was purchased during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Conversely, many of the sites and buildings that might be eligible under the more limited time period (1862 to 1920) are not now owned by the DoD. The context statement, as finally developed, can now be used by both the DoD and non-DoD cultural resource managers.

The primary method for developing the historic context was archival research using available secondary and primary resources. Researchers were assigned chronological periods to be researched and written about. Recent scholarship in African American military history has expanded exponentially since the 1980s and new and detailed published sources were continually being introduced as this context was being researched. These resources were a great source of information in developing this context. Thus, the major source of historical documentation was through research at the University of South Carolina, especially the interlibrary loan system. However, several research visits were made to the following locations:

- National Archives, Washington DC and Suitland, Maryland
- Library of Congress, Washington DC
- Air Force Historical Center, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama
- U.S. Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania
- Moorland Springarn Research Center, Howard University
- Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York
- Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
- Thomas Cooper Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia
- Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia
- South Carolina State Library, Columbia

Beyond archival research, two activities proceeded under the assumption of a 3-year program. The initial identification of sites, buildings, and objects was to be completed primarily as a result of the historic context development. That is, as the document was generated, researchers were directed to earmark specific installations and facilities for a field visit for site evaluation. Likewise, other installations would be eliminated from consideration. However, to ensure full coverage, a survey instrument was designed to be faxed to DoD installations, essentially asking resource managers at these installations if they knew of sites, buildings, and objects that should be considered. The context and the survey together then, would be used

to identify the installations to be visited during the third year. A one-page fax was designed and sent to Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marine Corps installations. Though the installations were not visited as a result of the cancellation of funding, the results of this survey are presented in Chapter 9.

The second field activity also concerned the planned field portion of the project. This involved short field test visits to work out logistic and other problems that might develop when the field visits began in full. This involved two field visits to Walterboro Airport, South Carolina, formally known as Walterboro Army Air Field during World War II. African American airmen had been stationed at this site. Here researchers conducted a preliminary evaluation of the property and extant World War II vintage buildings. Another field visit was made to Camp Sevier in Greenville, South Carolina, to examine an area where African American soldiers were trained. This area is currently in various private ownership.

The initial goals of the project were reduced to the production of a historic context. This context statement can be used as a first step in the nomination process for specific sites, buildings, and possibly objects relevant to the African American military experience.

## **Report Organization**

Historic contexts may have a regional, chronological, or thematic focus. This project primarily takes a chronological and thematic approach, focusing on the black military experience within the United States from early colonization until U.S. military policy dictated the integration of black and white soldiers (i.e., the Korean War). Special emphasis is made toward recognition of the contributions of segregated all-black regiments and other all-black military units. This historic outline is presented in Chapters 2 through 8.

Once the history has been detailed, Chapter 9 summarizes the context with the purpose of highlighting themes (or perhaps subthemes) that run throughout this history, or have a regional aspect. Also, significant regiments will be identified that may have a chronological and regional focus, but deserve special recognition. The Buffalo Soldiers are an obvious example of regiments deserving this special recognition. In this chapter, specific sites relating to each subtheme will be identified along with available information regarding their current status. For archaeological properties, suggested research topics will be provided also. Other subthemes will come to light in the development of the historic narrative providing



a series of subthemes. Thus, while the over-arching approach is thematic, subthemes may have a chronological or regional aspect.

The final section of the report focuses on the preservation and management of the resources identified. These suggestions will necessarily be general as the specific recommendations for each resource will depend on local political, social, and environmental considerations. Differences in specific service or installation needs will also need to be considered in any final decisions regarding the identified resources. A list of important installations and facilities is presented along with data on sites currently on the National Register that may fall under this context. Finally, the results of the installation survey are presented.

## **Summary**

This document provides a narrative history of the African American military experience. It is intended to be used as a historic context for the nomination of historic sites, buildings, and objects to the National Register of Historic Places. The document focuses on African American military units and DoD property as part of the Legacy Resource Management Program. However, it has application to relevant sites throughout the continental United States. The final chapter discusses the management and preservation activities for such sites on DoD properties.

## 2 African American Soldiers Before the Civil War



*During the American Revolution, most militia units had black soldiers among the ranks. The Continental Army initially refused to enlist African Americans.*

## 2 African American Soldiers Before the Civil War

by Elizabeth Arnett Fields

African Americans have served in the military from the very beginning of American history. Their experience in the military before the Civil War varied widely. Since the armed forces at this time consisted of militia units, each colony or state enacted their own laws governing the units — including whether or not to allow African Americans to serve. Generally, however, colonial legislatures excluded blacks from armed service except during military conflict. During the earliest phases of settlement, all able-bodied men, white and black, free men and slaves, were expected to defend against American Indian attacks. Once a colony was relatively secure, blacks then were excluded from serving in the peacetime militia.

The main reason for the exclusion of blacks from military service stemmed from fear by the white population of slave insurrections. This fear was especially valid in the several Southern colonies where blacks outnumbered whites. These colonies also excluded free blacks from the militia out of concern that they would lead slave rebellions (Bowman 1970:62). Another explanation for the exclusion policy was the belief among whites that blacks were not intelligent enough to learn military skills.

There were also economic considerations for excluding blacks. Since slaves were private property, complications arose over how owners should be compensated, especially if their bondsmen were maimed or killed in combat. Historians have also suggested that because the peacetime militia also fulfilled an important social function, blacks were excluded for the same reasons they were denied access to many other white-dominated social organizations (Donaldson 1991:2).

At one time or another, all colonies enacted legislation excluding blacks from serving in the militia. Virginia became the first to pass such a law in 1639 (Johnson 1969:10). However, when conflict with Native Americans arose, the desperate need for additional manpower required the services of blacks. In those situations, government officials either ignored the statutes or simply changed them. For example, in Massachusetts, a 1652 law requiring blacks to attend military training was alternately repealed and reinstated four times throughout the remainder of the century (Wilkes 1970:9).

The capacity in which blacks served in the military also varied from colony to colony. In the Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam in 1641, for example, slaves were allowed to help defend against Indian attacks with hatchets and pikes, but not with firearms. Blacks served as laborers to assist in constructing fortifications around the town. In contrast, blacks in North and South Carolina were fully armed and fought side by side with whites during the Tuscarora and Yemassee Indian Wars. Virginia, with possibly the lowest tolerance for arming African Americans, allowed only free blacks to serve in the militia as fifiers, drummers, or in other noncombatant roles (Wilkes 1970:16). The military experience of blacks in other colonies varied similarly.

When blacks were allowed to enlist in the militia, they eagerly joined the ranks. Many different reasons motivated them to enlist, even though it was obvious that the government would terminate their services once the conflict ended. Free blacks viewed even temporary military service as a way to improve their civil status (Greene 1951:123). Moreover, the militia was not segregated and blacks received the same pay as whites. Of course, slave owners required their arm-bearing chattel to turn over all or part of their pay (Foner 1974:5). An especially strong incentive for slave enlistment in the militia was an offer of freedom granted by some local governments in exchange for killing or capturing an enemy (Binkin, et al 1982:12). Many southern states, however, reduced the award for capturing or killing an enemy from freedom to a monetary award. Finally, slaves joined the military to escape their more strenuous daily duties.

Separate units of African American soldiers were first formed in the French and Spanish colonies. In 1736, the French formed a separate company of slaves during their campaign against the Chickasaw and Natchez Indians in Louisiana (McConnell 1968:11). While their performance in battle was not exemplary, many of these black militiamen gained freedom for such service. Moreover, they set an important precedent in the history of African American military service.

In 1740, the Spanish colonial government in Florida created at least four companies of blacks who served as a part of the garrison at Saint Augustine (Wilkes 1970:16). These companies consisted largely of runaway slaves from Georgia and the Carolinas, lured to Florida by the promise of freedom. Runaway slaves, either living with the Spanish or the Seminole Indians, later played a major role in the Seminole Indian wars during the early 19th century (Porter 1951:250).

During the American Revolution, while most militia units had one or more blacks among the ranks, the Continental Army refused to enlist African Americans until forced to do so by lack of manpower (Quarles 1961:vii). Thereafter, the Continental

Congress allowed only free blacks to enlist — at least officially. It is likely, however, that enlistment officers, desperate to reach their quotas, ignored this policy. Once enlisted, black soldiers were integrated into the Continental Army.

As the American cause grew increasingly desperate, the army finally began actively seeking the enlistment of slaves. Several segregated units were formed during the Revolution, the most famous being the Rhode Island regiment (Greene 1951:126). Most of the men in this regiment were slaves who volunteered for military service in exchange for freedom. The British also offered freedom to slaves for service against the colonists. Thousands responded to the British call. Three hundred of these fugitives formed Lord Dunmore's Ethiopian Regiment, an all-black unit that fought for the British (Donaldson 1991:15).

Another means by which blacks came to serve in the army was the practice of slave owners who sent one of their bondsmen to local recruiters in place of himself. It is uncertain when this custom started, but may have evolved from colonial statutes, which allowed a draftee to pay someone else, usually an impoverished man or even a free black, to replace him in the ranks. This practice brought in so many blacks, in fact, that a Hessian officer fighting for the British was compelled to write in his journal that "you never see a regiment in which there are not negroes" (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989:34).

Blacks also served in the Continental Navy and in the state navies during the Revolution. In fact, virtually every ship's crew had at least one black sailor. The reasons for the higher percentage of black sailors than soldiers can be traced to two major factors. First, prior to 1775, the United States did not have a navy. The Continental Navy and state navies were formed largely by outfitting merchant ships, whose crews already contained black sailors. Secondly, life on board ship during this time was so unappealing — with bad food and cramped living conditions amidst extremely hazardous conditions — that maritime employers took any man willing to serve; black or white (Donaldson 1991:18). There were no all-black ship crews during the Revolution; blacks were integrated into the naval forces.

Following the Revolution, the Continental Army was disbanded except for a small contingent. The Continental Navy was completely dispersed. Without wartime manpower needs, the armed forces could afford to exclude blacks from their ranks, and did so. However, each state continued to maintain its own militia. Of these, only North Carolina allowed free blacks to serve in an armed capacity. Two other states allowed free blacks to enlist in the militia, but only in noncombatant roles. Of course, slaves were completely excluded from the state militias.

African Americans were allowed to serve in the armed forces again in 1798 when hostilities erupted between the United States and France. Offended by the United States' recent treaty (Jay's Treaty 1796) with Great Britain, France began capturing hundreds of American ships and manhandling their crews. In response, the United States government established the United States Navy Department in 1798 to fight an undeclared, "Quasi War" against France (Langley 1967:275). Fought entirely at sea, only the Navy and Marine Corps participated. Maintaining the open enlistment policy of its predecessors, the nascent United States Navy allowed blacks the opportunity to serve aboard its ships. However, the Marine Corps excluded all blacks from its inception in 1775 (Logan 1951:128).

African Americans played a significant, although often unrecognized, role in the early years of the American military. The most obvious facet regarding their service during this formative period was the establishment of a pattern of black participation: exclusion during peacetime, initial exclusion during wartime, and eventual acceptance in the face of critical manpower shortages. This pattern was to be repeated throughout U.S. history until World War II.

## **Early Colonial Conflicts**

Military conflict occurred frequently during the colonial period. The most common clashes were between Native Americans and frontier settlers who encroached on Indian territory. Competition between Britain, France, Spain, and Holland for control of North America touched off many other conflicts. In all these struggles, African Americans played a conspicuous role.

### ***Wars Against the Indians***

During the many Indian wars, government and military leaders were forced to employ blacks (mostly slaves) to successfully wage battle. This was especially true in the southern colonies where whites were outnumbered by blacks and Indians. There, white inhabitants were caught in a dilemma: to defeat the Indians, they must arm their slaves; yet, by doing so, they gave their bondsmen a much greater ability to successfully revolt. There was also the possibility that the Indians and blacks would join forces to subdue the white population. These concerns led whites to play the two races against one another. They employed Native Americans to track down and return runaway slaves; in turn, they enlisted blacks in the militia to fight against Indians. The enmity between Indians and blacks thus created substantially reduced the white's fear of a union between the two.

In the northern colonies, where blacks comprised the smallest percentage of the population, their manpower in defending against Indian attacks was not so desperately needed as in the South. Therefore, blacks were usually confined to noncombatant positions. If slaves were armed, it was frequently only with "a tomahawk and half pike," as represented in the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam. Southern colonies, however, were not allowed the luxury of an option in the matter. In fact, prospective colonists in North Carolina were awarded an extra 50 acres of land for every slave they brought who was capable of bearing arms (Wilkes 1970:10).

Two Indian wars in the Carolinas — Tuscarora in North Carolina and the Yemassee in South Carolina — deserve special attention. In both conflicts, several Indian tribes joined together in a common goal to expel frontier settlers. Whites were forced to enlist help from neighboring colonies to defend themselves against the Indians. With such a desperate need for men, colonial officials also enlisted all available slaves and free blacks.

**Tuscarora.** In the autumn of 1711, the Tuscarora Indians joined forces with five other tribes in a 2-year struggle to prevent whites from settling on their lands and to halt the practice of kidnapping and selling Indian youths into slavery. On the morning of 22 September, 500 warriors swept down on defenseless settlers in the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers in North Carolina. Two hours later 130 colonists lay dead. "Some were tortured horribly; others were desecrated after death. Many were left wounded. The less fortunate were taken captive. The rest of the people fled for their lives, leaving the bodies of their loved ones to be eaten by wolves and vultures" (Lee 1963:23-24). The Indians continued slaughtering settlers without regard for age or sex. When all the whites concealed themselves behind garrisons, the Indians ravaged the countryside, plundering and burning homes and fields (Lee 1963:24).

The North Carolina legislature, divided by political factionalism, failed to take any steps to defend the colony. Few men offered their services, although a 1706 law required all able-bodied men to perform military service in the event of an Indian attack (Johnson 1969:17-20). This law also applied to free blacks and slaves. Nevertheless, the legislature was forced to plea for help from its southern neighbor. In late January Colonel John Barnwell of South Carolina arrived in North Carolina with 500 Indians loyal to the whites and 30 whites, free blacks, and slaves. With North Carolinians still refusing to defend themselves, Barnwell marched alone into Tuscarora country, destroying Indian towns along the way. By 17 April he had forced the Indians into a conditional surrender (Lee 1963:26-31).

Soon after Barnwell and his forces left North Carolina, the remaining Tuscaroras returned to slaughtering white settlers. Again, the irresolute North Carolinians

were forced to seek assistance from South Carolina. This time Colonel James Moore arrived with 33 whites and blacks, and over 850 Indians to break the power of the Tuscaroras once and for all. On 20 March 1713, Moore and his force attacked the Indians' main defensive post of Nooherooka, either killing or capturing almost 950 Tuscarora warriors. Moore's loss was 57 killed and 82 wounded. With this one crushing blow, the power of the Tuscarora nation was broken. The remaining survivors soon fled northward to Pennsylvania and New York (Lee 1963:36; Covington 1968:12).

***Yemassee.*** Just 2 years after South Carolinians had subdued the Tuscaroras in North Carolina, they were forced to defend themselves against the very powerful Yemassee tribe, who, with the assistance of the Muskogees, Appalachians, Catawbas, Congarees, and Cherokees, began a 3-year struggle against encroaching settlers and unscrupulous traders. The Indians gained a few initial victories in their earliest attacks. South Carolina troops quickly responded, supplemented by militia units from North Carolina and Georgia and by Cherokee Indians. Recently enacted legislation allowing the arming of slaves against Indian attacks further increased the colonists' military might. With this large force, the tide quickly turned and the Yemassee were forced to seek safe haven in Spanish Florida (Covington 1968: 12).

Because Indians were often employed to track down and return runaway slaves, blacks were eager to fight Indians. They proved themselves capable and courageous soldiers during these two Indian wars. In the struggle against the Yemassee, for instance, a garrison of 70 whites and 40 blacks at Goose Creek fought to the last man against an overwhelming force of 400 warriors (Wilkes 1970:14). A Negro company led by an "Indian fighter" named John Pight also participated in the conflict (Porter 1948:57). This company of Indian fighters was not a militia unit, but a band of men recruited personally by Pight.

As a result of their military service during the Yemassee War, many slaves received their freedom. However, South Carolina soon changed this practice by providing monetary award rather than freedom (Nalty 1986:6).

### ***French and Indian Wars***

African Americans also participated in a series of four wars between 1689 and 1763 collectively known as the Wars for American Empire. Individually they were known as King William's War (1689-1697), Queen Anne's War (1702-1713), King George's War (1739-1748), and the French and Indian War (1754-1763). These conflicts were the manifestations of a heated contest between England and France over the role and purpose of the New World in the European scheme of things. The French only



wanted to exploit North America's resources to enrich aristocrats, the Church, and the Crown. The British had a different view. To them, the New World offered an escape, a haven for those oppressed by aristocrats, the Church, and the Crown (Hofstadter, et. al. 1967:97). Most friction occurred in New England and in the Ohio River valley, regions that formed the border between the English colonies and New France.

Several factors contributed to the increased use of African Americans during these wars. First, the nature of the conflict, with continuous attacks against English settlements by the French and their Indian allies, created a constant manpower drain on the English colonists. Second, many white landowners feared for the safety of their families if they left to join the militia. Therefore, many whites refused to enlist, preferring to stay and protect their family and property. Third, many whites who did enlist, later deserted. Consequently, many colonies had no choice but to enlist African Americans to augment troop levels.

As in previous colonial conflicts, northern colonies enlisted and armed blacks much earlier than the southern colonies. For example, Rhode Island's manpower need was so great during Queen Anne's War (1702-1713) that the provincial assembly compelled all able-bodied men to enlist in the militia — regardless of race (Wilkes 1970:15). During King George's War (1739-1748), moreover, African Americans served in virtually every New England militia company (Greene 1951:124).

The southern colonies, in contrast, allowed African Americans to serve only as menial laborers. Southerners feared that arming slaves would encourage them to revolt. As a result, the Virginia House of Burgesses passed a statute in 1754 exempting all servants, enslaved and indentured, from rendering military service. However, free blacks could enlist as laborers and servants. General Edward Braddock used them as personal servants to his officers during his assault on Fort Duquesne in 1755. He viewed the use of blacks as menials as a means to free white soldiers for combat. Of course, these black servants often had to fight in the thick of battle. As the campaign worsened, Braddock disobeyed the Virginia law and ordered all servants armed and placed in the front lines (Bowman 1970:59).

African American participation in these wars proved significant for several reasons. First, they served in integrated units and received the same pay as whites. Second, no African American was charged with either cowardice or treason (Greene 1951:124). Finally, these African American veterans set an important precedent that later influenced military policy concerning use of black troops during the American Revolution.

## Service in Non-English Colonies

Although England came to dominate the North American continent, the Spanish and French colonies left an important legacy to the United States regarding the employment of African Americans in the military. It was in these non-English colonies where blacks first served in segregated, all-black units, led by black non-commissioned officers. Milder slave codes, greater equality and opportunity for free blacks, and widespread miscegenation accounted for this increased tolerance to arm blacks (Donaldson 1991:6).

### *Spanish Florida*

The relative freedom offered to African Americans in Spanish Florida attracted many blacks away from the English colonies. During his failed expedition to capture St. Augustine in 1740, Governor James Oglethorpe reported that at least four companies of black soldiers assisted in that city's defense. These companies were composed largely of runaway slaves from plantations in Georgia and the Carolinas. Spanish armies in the West Indies even included regiments composed entirely of blacks, including officers who were treated similarly to white officers. Historians have suggested that over seven centuries of occupation and control of the Iberian Peninsula by the darker-skinned Arabians (Spanish Moors), Spaniards developed a more tolerant attitude towards blacks than other Europeans.

### *French Louisiana*

While the French colony of Louisiana did not attract blacks from the British colonies in the same numbers that Florida did, blacks still enjoyed greater freedom there. The *Code Noir* of 1724 provided for the welfare of slaves in an enlightened manner for the time. For example, it forbade separation of husbands and wives, or of children under 14 from their parents; prohibited work on Sundays and feast days; provided that owners adequately clothe and feed their slaves; guaranteed religious instruction; legalized slave marriages; and allowed them to testify against whites (Taylor 1963:22,59,106,195). This enlightened treatment resulted from the benevolent influence of the Roman Catholic Church and increased miscegenation resulting in a higher percentage of nonwhite population (McConnell 1968:4).

The colony of Louisiana did not place much emphasis on military preparedness; instead, they put almost all their energy into the cultivation of tobacco. When war erupted with Natchez and Chickasaw Indians in 1735, the colony was caught unprepared and could muster only about 400 soldiers. Desperate for additional troops, Louisiana was forced to arm slaves for military service, promising them

freedom in return. In April 1736, Jean Baptiste le Moyne assembled his forces at Fort Tombechee (near present-day Epps, Alabama), where he formed the first all-black military unit in Louisiana. A motley crew of slaves and free blacks, the company performed miserably during its first exposure to battle. Only the bravery of one of its officers, a free man named Simon, saved the unit from charges of cowardice. Despite their conduct, the slaves in the unit received their freedom following the war. Thereafter, a regular company of free blacks in Louisiana became customary (McConnell 1968:12).

During the colonial period, African Americans fought either out of a sense of duty to help defend the community or to gain their freedom. They did not view military service as a way for *all* blacks to acquire autonomy or a better way of life, but it was the way for them. With the advent of the American Revolution, however, African Americans began fighting with an eye toward universal emancipation. The American Revolution provided blacks with a "cause," albeit one they would not fully achieve for nearly two more centuries.

## American Revolution

Even before blacks adopted this "cause," they were fighting against British tyranny. The most famous of these early black revolutionaries was Crispus Attucks, a runaway half-breed Indian residing in Boston. On the evening of 5 March 1770, Attucks led an angry mob (who were already upset over the Townshend Duties recently passed by Parliament) seeking revenge against a particular soldier who had pistol whipped an extremely miscreant boy. They managed to corner the sentinel and pelted him with snowballs and rocks. Nine other troops quickly came to his aid. This only encouraged the crowd, who jeered and taunted the soldiers as cowards, closed about them and dared them to fire. The intrepid Attucks even managed to wrest a rifle away from one of the redcoats. Fearing for their lives, the soldiers fired into the hostile assembly, killing Attucks and four others (Wilkes 1970:23-24). Attucks and the others killed in this "massacre" quickly became martyrs, their deaths signifying increasing British oppression against her colonies and the sacrifice Americans were willing to make in defense of their rights as Englishmen.

African Americans also gave their lives 5 years later in the first official engagement of the Revolution. Although few in number, the names of those black soldiers who were present the morning of April 19, 1775 on the Lexington Common have been preserved: Peter Salem, Sam Croft, Prince Estabrook, and Pompey (Greene 1951:124). Two months later at the Battle of Bunker Hill black soldiers again fought side by side with their white compatriots.

### ***Early Military Policies***

Despite displays of courage on the fields of Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill, Revolutionary leaders began excluding blacks from military service. In May 1775, the Massachusetts Committee of Safety prohibited slaves from the provincial army, but failed to mention free blacks (Johnson 1969:32). When General George Washington took command of the Continental Army in July, 1775, one of his first acts was to ban the enlistment of all blacks, both free and slave. Although he had commanded African Americans during the French and Indian War, Washington viewed them (during the early phase of the war) as unnecessary to the patriots' cause. A special committee assigned to suggest improvements for the military endorsed Washington's decision later that year (Wilkes 1970:29).

Other military leaders not only wanted to exclude blacks from enlisting but also wanted to discharge those already in the Continental Army. These officers were strongly supported by many southern members of the Continental Congress, notably Edward Rutledge of South Carolina (Nalty 1986:11). However, as the ranks of the Continental Army dwindled, the American military was forced to reconsider their position excluding African Americans.

### ***Lord Dunmore's Ethiopian Regiment***

When the American Revolution began, African Americans (mostly slaves) comprised about 20 percent of the colonies' population (Donaldson 1991:11). Excluding such a large percentage of men from military service was a significant oversight. Military leaders soon realized their mistake when Lord Dunmore, former royal governor of Virginia, issued a proclamation from his ship in the Norfolk harbor in November, 1775 "inviting slaves to leave their masters and join the royal forces" (Quarles 1961:19). Thousands of slaves heartily answered this and other British calls-to-arms. In fact, it is estimated that nearly three-fourths of Georgia's slaves deserted to the British during the Revolution (Hartgrove 1916:117).

A month after announcing his proclamation, over 500 black fugitives had joined Lord Dunmore. Approximately 300 of them were formed into the "Ethiopian Regiment," wearing uniforms with "Liberty to Slaves" inscribed across their chests (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989:76). However, a lack of proper training prevented the unit from performing well on the battlefield. After one decisive defeat 10 miles south of Norfolk in December 1775, Lord Dunmore and his forces quit the continent, never to regain a foothold (Quarles 1961:23).

The defeat did not end Dunmore's use of black troops. He continued employing them as sailors and foragers instead of as soldiers. Dunmore was even accused of using blacks to conduct "germ warfare" by sending several of them infected with smallpox ashore into Norfolk to spread the disease (Quarles 1961:29). It is ironic that the majority of blacks who served under Dunmore died of disease.

### ***American Reversal of Policy***

Lord Dunmore's proclamation, and subsequent similar declarations by the British, had an inflammatory effect on colonial leaders. To deter slaves from fleeing to British camps, officials ordered an increase in local patrols. Slaveowners also pointed out to their slaves that Dunmore's offer only referred to able-bodied men who could bear arms for the Crown. Women, children, the old, and the infirm had no like promise of freedom. Finally, the Virginia Convention declared that any slave captured bearing arms for the royal forces "shall be liable to such punishment as shall be directed by the Convention" (Quarles 1961:25). In other words, death. Other southern states soon followed with similar legislation. Despite the threat of execution, which was rarely administered, African Americans continued to make their way to British camps.

In an attempt to forestall a wave of free blacks and slaves from enlisting into the British forces, Washington (goaded by more liberal and pragmatic officers) reversed his decision on black enlistments late in 1775 (Maslowski 1972:5; Wilkes 1970:30). At first, the Continental Congress recommended that free blacks "who had served faithfully in the army ... might be reenlisted but no others" (Hartgrove 1916:117). However, they left enforcement of this policy to individual states. By February 1776, the ban on slave enlistments continued because some recruiting officers were enlisting every black volunteer without verifying his status.

Some slaves unintentionally circumvented this law by serving as substitutes for their masters. The practice of paying another man to serve as a replacement for military service was completely legal, and many poor free blacks served in such capacities. The law, however, prohibited slaves from serving as substitutes. To legally allow their slaves to serve in their stead, owners promised them freedom in exchange for military service. It is impossible to determine how many slaveowners kept their promise of freedom. Apparently many did not, prompting several states to legislate freedom for all slaves who had fought in the Revolution. However, most other legislatures did nothing and allowed owners to reenslave Revolutionary veterans. The Continental Congress also ignored the problem, leaving the states to resolve the issue (Foner 1975:71-72).

As the military's need for additional manpower became increasingly urgent, recruiting practices became lax, enabling more blacks to enlist. However, the real turning point came in September 1776 when Congress created 88 new battalions and assigned quotas for the states to fill them. As the war continued, state officials found it increasingly difficult to meet their quotas, especially those in New England. To overcome this problem, most New England states allowed widespread enlistment of slaves (Quarles 1961:56). In fact, New Hampshire had to virtually abolish slavery in order to raise adequate troops (Hartgrove 1916:120). Southern states, on the other hand, had little trouble meeting their enlistment quotas. Only Maryland passed legislation allowing slave enlistments (Nalty and MacGregor 1981:12).

The state legislatures reversed their policy on slave enlistment out of practical necessity, not benevolence. Because most soldiers enlisted for only 3 months, the military was having difficulty maintaining troop strength. By enlisting slaves, the Army could demand a longer term of enlistment as a requirement for granting freedom. Most New England states established terms of enlistment for 3 years or until the end of the war. Furthermore, many white soldiers were reluctant to fight far away from home and when so ordered they often deserted. Since the alternative to military service for bondsman was continued slavery, fewer were likely to desert (Foner 1975:55).

African Americans served in the Continental Army and the state militias under four different circumstances: (1) as free blacks; (2) as fugitives posing as freemen; (3) as slaves enlisting under the promise of freedom; and (4) as slaves serving as substitutes for their master or their owner's sons (Jackson 1942:253). No matter how they entered the army, commanders relegated blacks to the military's lowest echelons. Most black soldiers served as privates; only a few were able to overcome prevailing prejudices and rise to the rank of staff sergeant. No African American received an officer's commission in either the state militias or the Continental Army.

### ***All-Black Units***

During the first 2 years of the war when the number of blacks in the military was relatively small, they fought alongside whites in integrated units. With widescale enlistment of slaves, however, the ability to segregate the races became more feasible. Moreover, many military and colonial leaders believed that the discipline and *esprit de corps* of African American troops might be improved if they were placed in all-black units.

The creation of segregated regiments occurred in New England, which was forced to recruit large numbers of blacks to meet its manpower needs. In January 1778

Rhode Island failed to enlist enough white men to fill its quota of two battalions. The following month the state legislature authorized the enlistment of slaves to solve this predicament. To ensure the success of black recruitment, the legislature offered full compensation to owners for slaves allowed in the military.

Other states attempted to follow suit, but only Connecticut was able to overcome stiff political opposition to the creation of a separate black unit (Foner 1974:58; Foner 1975:10). Unlike Rhode Island, Connecticut did not encourage slave enlistment by offering their owners compensation for lost property (Foner 1975:11; Quarles 1961:54). Lacking such a crucial enticement, the state had to wait until June 1780 before it had enough African Americans to fill a battalion.

One of the most zealous, yet unsuccessful, efforts to raise an all-black regiment came from two prominent South Carolinians: Henry Laurens (a very successful merchant who served as President of the Continental Congress) and his young son John (a diplomat and *aide de camp* to Washington). Upon learning of the success of the Rhode Island Regiment, they encouraged the Continental Congress to create segregated units for an estimated 3,000 blacks who would volunteer for military service in exchange for freedom. Congress approved the plan and suggested that the South Carolina legislature, if it thought the idea expedient, immediately put it into action. But the Palmetto state, which possessed the highest percentage of blacks in the Confederacy, was the least likely state to pass such a proposal. Fed largely by fear that it might instigate a slave insurrection, the legislature rejected the Laurens' suggestion (Maslowski 1972:8-17; Wilkes 1970:53-54).

**First Rhode Island Regiment.** Eventually, five all-black military units fought for the American cause in the Revolution. The most famous was the First Rhode Island Regiment, commanded by a white officer named Colonel Christopher Greene. The approximately 300 blacks who comprised this unit distinguished themselves in several conflicts including the Battle of Rhode Island where they attained their crowning glory on the hills and dales surrounding Providence and Newport. Three times the blacks distinguished themselves by deeds of desperate valor in successfully repelling this furious attack by British troops and their Hessian allies (Wilkes 1970:35). The slaughter was terrible; some contemporaries considered it the hardest fought battle of the war. The British lost 1300 men, while Americans suffered only 200 casualties. This victory allowed the Americans to leave Rhode Island just before the arrival of British reinforcements commanded by Sir Henry Clinton (Wilkes 1970:35).

**6th Connecticut Battalion.** Much smaller and less recognized than the Rhode Island Regiment is the 6th Connecticut Battalion, also known as the Colonials or 6th

Company. In 1777 the Connecticut General Assembly recommended that black and mulatto slaves, whose masters were to be paid the sum of their appraisement and who themselves upon enlisting would be set free, should be formed into a separate company. A 56-man unit was subsequently organized and placed under the command of Colonel Humphrey (Wilkes 1970:37; Foner 1975:58; Greene 1951:126). It fought as a separate unit until November 1782, when the members were integrated into the 6th Connecticut Battalion. Throughout the war, they "conducted themselves with fidelity and efficiency" (Wilkes 1970:37).

**Massachusetts "Bucks of America".** An even more obscure all-black regiment was the Massachusetts "Bucks of America." Never authorized by the state legislature, there is almost no documentation concerning the creation and activities of this regiment (Foner 1975:58). Some historians speculate that the "Bucks of America" was merely "an association of colored men ... who guarded the property of Boston merchants" during the war (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989:66). Nevertheless, what little information does exist reveals that a noted African American horsebreaker named Middleton commanded the unit. There is also no data on military action, but they evidently rendered sufficient service to merit a hand-painted banner presented to the survivors at the Governor's mansion by John Hancock. The "buff colored" banner is currently preserved in the Massachusetts Historical Society (Wilkes 1970:32).

**West Indian Volunteer Chasseurs.** Two all-black military units from outside the colonies also fought for the United States. When the French allied with the United States in 1778, they sent a 3,600-man force from the West Indies known as the Volunteer Chasseurs to assist in defeating the British (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989:68). Among these troops was a unit of 545 blacks, mostly from Santo Domingo (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989:68; Quarles 1961:82). In the fall of 1779 the Volunteer Chasseurs reached Georgia, where they assisted in the unsuccessful siege against the British garrison at Savannah (Donaldson 1991:18; Nalty 1986:17). After this defeat, the French returned to the West Indies.

**Galvez' Army.** Later that same year, Spain entered the war as an ally of France against the British. Since 1762, New Orleans and all of Louisiana west of the Mississippi belonged to Spain and it was from here that they attacked the British. Among the Spanish forces were companies of free black militiamen, heirs to the legacy of the 1736 French war with the Chickasaw and Natchez Indians. Under the command of Bernardo de Galvez, a small army of 750 men (about 100 of whom were black), succeeded in capturing Fort Charlotte at Mobile and Fort George in Pensacola and eventually driving the British from Louisiana and West Florida (McConnell 1968:15-22). By cutting off British access to the west and engaging



troops that might have otherwise been employed elsewhere, Galvez' army, and the black troops in it, made a significant contribution to American victory (Nalty 1986:17).

### ***Blacks in the Revolutionary Navy***

During the American Revolution, the United States' naval force was divided into 3 different groups: (1) the Continental Navy consisting of about 50 vessels; (2) state navies, some of which rivaled the Continental Navy in size; and (3) an untold number of privateers commissioned under letters of marque from the Continental Congress. African Americans served as sailors in each of these three groups. In fact, virtually every ship's crew in the American naval forces had at least one black sailor. Some vessels like the *Royal Lewis* commanded by Stephen Decatur, were manned predominantly by African Americans (Wilkes 1970:58).

In addition to their service aboard ship, blacks also worked in the shipyards building and repairing vessels. Unlike the land forces, the Continental Navy and state navies accepted blacks from the beginning of hostilities. (The crews on the privateers already contained black sailors when the war began.) As a result, black sailors represented a much larger percentage of the naval forces than the armies.

The naval forces readily accepted African Americans for two reasons. First, since their earliest arrival in America, free blacks had chosen seafaring as a way of life, serving either on merchant ships or with the Royal Navy. In addition, slaves belonging to ship's captains frequently served on board with their masters. The second reason for the naval forces' widespread acceptance of blacks was sheer necessity. Life at sea during the eighteenth century was difficult and dangerous. Therefore, the navies were forced to enlist practically anyone who was willing to serve. Captains especially desired slaves because when conditions became intolerable, white sailors frequently abandoned ship; slaves, on the other hand, did not have that alternative. Southerners, too, favored the use of slaves in the navies because the physical separation of ships at sea posed no threat of instigating a slave rebellion (Foner 1975:69).

More African Americans served in the state navies than in the Continental Navy because pay was better, the terms of enlistment were shorter, opportunity for advancement was greater, and the range of operations was often limited to the state's own coast (Quarles 1961:86). In contrast, blacks in the Continental Navy usually served in the lowest positions of cooks, gunners, and powder boys. However, in the state navies, blacks more frequently served as seamen, marines, and even pilots. Privateers attracted even more blacks into service aboard ship than the state

navies. Because privateers were privately owned and manned, the captain was less likely to ask many questions about the status of his crew, as long as they served well. In addition, the financial rewards for work on a privateer were far greater as the crews divided the prize money from seized enemy vessels.

African Americans also served as sailors aboard British naval ships. Surprisingly, many of those captured from the British were pressed into service for the American navies. On the other hand, black American sailors captured by the British were often sold into slavery to work on West Indian sugar plantations.

Excluding the blacks who served under the French and Spanish, approximately 5,000 African Americans fought for American independence from Britain (Foner 1975:67). Black soldiers participated in every major battle of the war from Bunker Hill to Yorktown. A majority of those slaves who served did receive their freedom. Ironically, those who chose to cast their lot with the British fought for the same objective: freedom. Yet that freedom for which so many had fought and died was denied them.

### **Blacks in the Armed Forces, 1783-1812**

The status of African Americans declined following the American Revolution, despite the abolishment of slavery in five Northern states (Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania) by 1784. The gains made by black patriots were almost entirely lost. The successful slave revolt in Haiti in 1794 frightened many leaders of the new republic; consequently, free northern blacks lost suffrage and southern slave codes became harsher. Government officials in the newly acquired territory of Louisiana even disbanded their free black militia unit first formed in 1736 under the French (McConnell 1968:41). This increasingly discriminatory racial attitude was also reflected in the policies of the nation's armed forces.

Between 1783 and 1812, the Regular Army numbered only a few hundred men, expanding to 3,000 with the threat of Indian warfare. The Continental Navy was completely disbanded after the Revolution, and the ships sold. Only when the country became involved in an undeclared naval war with France in 1798 (Quasi War), did Congress establish the United States Navy.

As in the colonial period, American leaders were fearful of maintaining large organized armies during peacetime, preferring small, local militias. In 1792 Congress passed the Militia Act requiring states to enroll all white men between the

ages of 18 and 45 into service. While the Act did not specifically exclude the enlistment of free blacks, every state except North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia barred them from serving. Only North Carolina allowed free blacks to enlist as soldiers; South Carolina, and Georgia employed them only as noncombatants (Foner 1974:20-21).

In 1798 the War Department followed the states' lead in their interpretation of the Militia Act and excluded all blacks from the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps. The Army and Marine Corps had no problem recruiting sufficient numbers of white men to fill the smaller peacetime ranks. Faced with the same horrendous shipboard living conditions that had led to enlistment of African Americans during the Revolution, the Navy was forced to continue enlisting free blacks out of necessity.

## War of 1812

When the United States declared war on Great Britain in June 1812, the Navy was the only branch of the armed forces allowing blacks to serve, although they also officially barred them from enlisting. As the "Second War of American Independence" was primarily a naval war, the largest manpower needs fell upon the Navy. Naval recruiting officers were forced to accept more blacks; so much so in fact, that in March 1813 the Navy finally reversed its official policy excluding African Americans. Free blacks responded by joining the Navy in even larger numbers.

**Navy.** During the War of 1812, African Americans comprised between 10 and 20 percent of naval personnel (Foner 1974:22). Official records indicate that they served admirably and played a major role in naval battles. In response to a complaint from Captain Oliver H. Perry about the black sailors assigned to his command, Commodore Isaac Chauncey replied, "I have nearly fifty blacks on this boat, and many of them are among the best of my men" (Wilson 1968:79). At the Battle of Lake Erie, where the American Navy led by Captain Perry defeated the British fleet, blacks constituted one-fourth of the 400 man force aboard the 10-vessel fleet. Their performance in the American victory so impressed Perry, who originally objected to their presence, that he wrote the Secretary of the Navy praising their fearlessness in the face of excessive danger (Wilkes 1970:71,73).

**Privateers.** The United States Navy was still very small, having only 16 seagoing vessels at its disposal when war erupted in 1812 (Morris 1965:141). As the conflict escalated, the United States began employing privateers, just it had done during the Revolution. The crews of these privateers included blacks. Unfortunately lack of

surviving ships' logs and other pertinent records prevent even a conjectural estimation of their numbers and service.

### ***All-Black Units***

A smaller number of African Americans also participated in land battles of the war. Although the Army and most state militias excluded African Americans, some individual company officers allowed free blacks to join their ranks. In addition, the New York legislature passed an act in 1814 to raise two regiments of black soldiers. By the time the statute became effective, however, fighting in the northeast had ceased (Johnson 1969:71; Nalty 1986:23). Nevertheless, New York still raised the two black battalions and sent them to Sacket's Harbor (Wilson 1968:84). Free blacks also helped to build fortifications around the city of Philadelphia. A group of these builders organized themselves into a company and soon found themselves under command of the United States Army (Wilkes 1970:65-66). Since Philadelphia was never attacked, this unit never engaged the enemy.

***British Recruitment of Blacks.*** When the British fleet sent an expedition into Chesapeake Bay in the spring of 1813, both the British and Americans were amazed at the eagerness of slaves to desert their masters. The mere sight of a British ship was enough to incite slaves to escape. Apparently only the white population had forgotten Lord Dunmore's proclamation a mere 38 years earlier. With visions of "liberty and happiness" in the West Indies, an estimated 3,000 to 5,000 slaves from Maryland and Virginia fled to the British (Cassell 1972:147-154). In April 1814, British Vice Admiral Cochrane issued a proclamation welcoming aboard all slaves who wished to emigrate to Britain. All fugitives had the choice of either serving with the British forces or being sent as free settlers to British possessions in North America and the West Indies (Foner 1974:23).

Cochrane improved upon Dunmore's Revolutionary proclamation by providing for anyone who wished to leave America, not just able-bodied men willing to fight. To process the thousands of emigrants, the British established a base camp on Tangier Island in Chesapeake Bay (Nalty 1986:22). Most of these runaway slaves served the British as spies, laborers, and guides (Foner 1974:23). However, a contingent of 200 were formed into an all-black marine unit.

In May 1814, Admiral George Cockburn began enlisting and training runaway slaves for the marine unit on Tangier Island. They saw their first action in late May during the successful British attack upon an American battery at Pungoteague, Virginia (Cassell 1972:150-151). The British commander of the expedition was impressed with the performance of the black marines and continued to use them

throughout the British Chesapeake campaign, including the American defeat at Bladensburg, the burning of Washington, and the British defeat at Baltimore. The achievement of the black marines encouraged Cochrane and Cockburn to expand their use, but the war ended before they could implement additional plans (Cassell 1972:152).

***Battle of New Orleans.*** Black soldiers also played a predominant role in the last major land engagement of the war: the Battle of New Orleans. Louisiana had achieved statehood only 9 weeks before the United States declared war on Great Britain. With the sudden need for defensive troops, the state legislature authorized the recruitment of free black landholders into the militia. In effect, this action reestablished the "Battalion of Free Men of Color" which had been disbanded in 1804 (Everett 1953:392). The unit's commander was white, but Louisiana governor William Claiborne commissioned three black second lieutenants as assistants — the first African American commissioned officers in any state militia.

After defeats in the Great Lakes and the Chesapeake campaign in 1814, the British forces shifted their attention from the northeastern United States to the South. By the summer of 1814, it became increasingly obvious to the Americans that Britain would next attack New Orleans. In August, Andrew Jackson, commanding general of the United States 7th Military District (comprising Louisiana, Tennessee, and Mississippi Territory), ordered the region to call up their militias into active service. Even with the New Orleans Battalion of Free Men of Color, Louisiana failed to meet its quota of 1,000 men after the first call-to-arms (McConnell 1968:61-62). To remedy this predicament, Governor Claiborne made an appeal for volunteers among the free black population of New Orleans, promising them the "same pay, rations and bounty as white volunteers" issued by General Jackson, still in Mobile at that time (Nalty 1986:24).

This plea was prompted in part by fear that blacks would join the British, as many had done during the Revolution. Nevertheless, hundreds of free blacks answered the governor's call, swelling the ranks of the Battalion of Free Men of Color from 4 companies of 64 men each to 6 companies with a total strength of 353 men (McConnell 1968:67). On 16 December 1814, the battalion became part of the United States Army and was placed under the command of Major Pierre Lacoste. The ranking black officer was Major Vincent Populus, the first African American to attain field grade rank in the United States military.

Jackson was so favorably impressed with the African Americans' eagerness for military service that he endorsed Governor Claiborne's suggestion to raise a second unit of free black soldiers. Joseph Savary, a black emigre from Santo Domingo and

a veteran of the French Army, was instrumental in recruiting volunteers from among the free black immigrants from his homeland to form this battalion (Everett 1953:397). The United States Army activated this second Battalion of Free Men of Color on 19 December 1814, with a total strength of 256 men. Jackson commissioned Savary with the rank of second major. Although initially placed under the command of a white officer, Major Savary was assigned to lead the second Battalion of Free Men of Color into battle.

On 8 January 1815 (weeks after the peace treaty was signed between the United States and Britain) 8,000 veterans of the Napoleonic campaigns under General Sir Edward Pakenham attacked the Crescent City, defended by Jackson's ragtail collection of 4,500 militiamen, sailors, and pirates. Both Battalions of Free Men of Color fought with distinction, helping the British to suffer its "worst defeat in years" (Foner 1974:25). The British lost more than 2,000 men in this useless encounter. American casualties numbered only 21. After the battle Jackson specifically commended the performance of the two black battalions. In a letter to Secretary of War James Monroe, Jackson specifically noted that he believed Pakenham, who was killed in the skirmish, "fell from the bullet of a freeman of color, a famous rifle shot of the Attakapas District" (Wilkes 1970:83). When they were mustered out, the black volunteers received the same pay and bounty as whites, but federal pensions and land grants of 160 acres also promised were never provided. The black militia units slowly dissolved due to lack of peacetime recruits until officially disbanded in 1834.

### **Black Soldiers in the Antebellum Period**

After the War of 1812, the United States military returned to peacetime levels. Once again, the Army and Marine Corps had no trouble recruiting sufficient numbers of white volunteers. As a result, the official policy to bar blacks from enlisting remained unchanged. Army regulations issued in 1820 and 1821 reinforced the ban on African American recruits, but did not prevent them from employing blacks as laborers.

The Navy continued to enlist free blacks out of necessity. Conditions on board ship had not improved and whites were still reluctant to enlist. However, in 1816 the Navy banned slaves from serving aboard ship or in shipyards (Nalty 1986:26). Nevertheless, black sailors constituted an increasing proportion of Naval personnel, alarming southern leaders. In response to their fears, the Navy in 1839 limited black enlistments to 5 percent of white enlistments, a percentage that remained constant until the Civil War (Foner 1974:26-27).

Opportunities in the peacetime state militias were no better. Even before the War of 1812, all state militias except Louisiana excluded black recruitment, although North Carolina did allow them to serve as musicians (Foner 1974:21). Following the alarm caused by Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831, southern states banned all black service in the state militias.

### ***Seminole Wars***

African Americans played a large role in the first and second Seminole Wars (1816 and 1842), although fighting against the United States. Throughout the Spanish colonial period, the promise of freedom lured many southern slaves to Florida. Many of these fugitives sought refuge with the Seminole Indians. Treated as equals by the Seminoles, the blacks embraced their lifestyle. However, the slave sanctuary among hostile Seminoles (who occupied Fort Apalachicola, abandoned by British after War of 1812) posed a serious threat to the "peculiar institution" (slavery) in the South and along the Georgia border.

The United States government responded by dispatching an expedition in July 1816 to destroy Fort Apalachicola, capture any runaway slaves, and pursue all hostile elements across the Florida boundary to the limits of the Spanish posts. General Andrew Jackson, appointed commander of the expedition in December 1817, marched into Florida and seized St. Marks the following April and Pensacola in May (Foner 1974:28). His success in Florida convinced Spain to renounce all claims to West Florida and cede East Florida to the United States.

The Second Seminole War, which lasted from 1835 to 1842, was the fiercest of all wars waged by the United States against Indians. It began as a consequence of the refusal of part of the tribe to abide by a treaty made in 1834 to cede its lands and move to the Indian Territory. Despite heroic efforts by the celebrated chief Osceola, the United States Army subdued the last resisting Seminoles and removed them from Florida to beyond the Mississippi.

In both conflicts, the blacks and Seminoles used effective guerilla warfare tactics against the United States military, killing over 1,500 American soldiers during the two Indian wars. However, they could not overcome the overwhelming numerical superiority of the United States Army and were forced to surrender.

### ***War With Mexico***

African Americans played only a limited role in the War with Mexico (1846-1848). Three separate factors explain their absence. First, there were no blacks serving in

the Army at the time. Second, many correctly viewed the war as merely an expansion of the United States' slave territory and therefore blacks "wanted no part in it" (Reddick 1949:15). Third, southern leaders responsible for the conduct of the war were unyieldingly against the employment of blacks in the military.

When Congress authorized the enlistment of 50,000 volunteers, black men were among those who answered their country's call. Most blacks (approximately 1,000) who fought in this brief war served in the navy, which played a minor role in the conflict. A few also served as infantrymen, guides, and musicians in the Army in regular and volunteer units, particularly the First Regiment of Volunteers, New York; the Fourth Artillery Regiment, the Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, and Thirteenth Infantry Regiments. Many more also served in nonmilitary capacity as personal servants to white officers. A few runaway slaves fought for Mexico under the promise of freedom denied them by the United States.

## Summary

From the time of the earliest permanent settlements in North America to the Civil War, African Americans participated in every major military conflict. Denied military service during peacetime, they were actively recruited at the commencement of hostilities. Blacks responded to these calls-to-arms in large numbers. Many saw military service as a way to improve their own condition. Others enlisted in hope that their participation would prove to whites that African Americans deserved equal rights.

Unfortunately for these men, their honorable and distinctive military service failed to elevate their status or that of other blacks. Instead, their experiences are replete with disappointment and irony. During the Revolution, for example, many African Americans fought for an independence denied to them. Surprisingly, however, the vast majority of black soldiers were not ostracized from whites; instead, they were placed in integrated units, often receiving equal pay. (This integration policy ended with the Civil War, and did not resurface for almost another 100 years.) Without the service of blacks, the American military successes might not have been possible; still, their contributions were quickly forgotten after each war when they were once again excluded from military service — until the next conflict.



### 3 African Americans in the Civil War



*During the final year of the Civil War, when soldiers were deserting by the thousands, African American troops helped fill this gap and provided a critical contribution to the Federal victory.*

### **3 African Americans in the Civil War**

by Keith Krawczynski and Steven D. Smith

#### **Introduction**

The Civil War, as no other event in 19th century America, irrevocably changed the lives of African Americans. Regardless of the conflict's initial causes, by 1863 it had become a war of liberation for southern blacks. African American leaders and abolitionists recognized this critical fact from the very beginning, for the "peculiar institution" of slavery was inextricably interwoven into the very fabric of antebellum southern society. To save the Union, slavery must end. But in the beginning, the federal government and white northern citizens were fighting a war to preserve the Union. As such, the black man was not needed or wanted in the ranks of the Union Army.

However, exigencies of war and the actions of many who sympathized with the African Americans forced a change in the attitudes of the northern populous and government. Blacks were organized into segregated state and federal regiments and eventually placed on the battle line. The record they created belied those who questioned their ability to soldier. A fact that was soon ignored after the war when African American units were reduced in number. Equal opportunity was still a long road for African Americans in American society and in the military ranks. Still, their Civil War record speaks for itself, and recent scholarship has brought to light their contributions to the war.

#### **Northern Attitudes Toward Arming the Black Man**

The question of arming African Americans was a complex issue for the newly elected Abraham Lincoln. First and foremost was the reality that the overwhelming majority of white Americans above the Mason-Dixon Line did not see blacks as equals. Dr. John S. Rock, physician, attorney, and prominent leader of the African American community in Boston remarked that "The present situation of the colored man is a trying one; trying because the whole nation seems to have entered into a conspiracy to crush him...The masses seem to think that we are oppressed only in the South. This is a mistake; we are oppressed everywhere in this slavery-cursed

land" (McPherson 1965:248). Congressman George Julian of Indiana concurred, stating that "Our people hate the Negro with a perfect if not a supreme hatred" (McPherson 1982:275). The discerning French reporter of American traits and characteristics, Alexis de Tocqueville, observed in the 1830s that the "prejudice of race appears to be stronger in the states that have abolished slavery than in those where it still exists" (Litwack 1961:65). While technically free, northern blacks were relegated to the position of second class citizens. Laws relegated them to segregated railway cars, stagecoaches, churches, schools, prisons, hospitals, and even cemeteries. Usually excluded from all but low-paying, menial jobs, northern blacks labored as mariners, waiters, barbers, porters, draymen, washerwomen, dressmakers, seamstresses, and cooks. Some state legislatures also barred them from voting, giving evidence in court, and marrying white persons (Litwack 1961:vii, 31, 35, 65, 75, 97, 99, 153, 155).

The sentiments in Union ranks early in the war naturally reflected northern society, making it difficult for sympathetic northern leaders to support arming the black man. An Ohio volunteer remarked, "If some of the niger [sic] lovers want to know what most of the Solgers [sic] think of them [blacks], they think about as much as they do a reble [sic]" (Cowdrey 1970:708). Most white Union soldiers simply refused to fight side-by-side with them (Robertson 1988:31). "We think we are a too superior race for that," explained a New Yorker (Robertson 1968:22-23). Even General William T. Sherman felt it "unjust to the brave [white] soldiers and volunteers" to place them on an equal basis with blacks (Robertson 1968:23).

Another reason African Americans were initially excluded from the military was that Lincoln's goals were to save the Union, not emancipate the slaves. President Lincoln explained: "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery" (quoted in Quarles 1953:161). Lincoln also understood that most northerners at that time were unwilling to sacrifice their lives in a war to end slavery (McPherson 1991:31). Even late in the war less than 1 in 10 Union soldiers had any interest in emancipation (McPherson 1982:275). "I came out to fight for the restoration of the Union," explained one trooper, "not to free niggers" (McPherson 1982:276). Among some soldiers such attitudes were so strong that one Union infantryman not only wanted to keep blacks from military service, but thought "the best way to settle the question of what to do with the darkies would be to shoot them" (McPherson 1982:276). In any case, military strategists believed the war would end quickly, and whites were flocking to recruiting centers, so there was no need for black soldiers (Mays 1984:2-3) in 1861.

As the war progressed and spread, foremost in the mind of President Lincoln, was the sticky problem of the border states — Maryland, Kentucky, Delaware, and

Missouri. To employ blacks as soldiers implied their equality with white men, which would threaten the ideological foundations of the slave system in these states (Shannon 1926:565). "To arm the Negroes" explained the President, "would turn 50,000 bayonets from the loyal border states against us that were for us" (Akers 1975:48).

The prevailing prejudice however, did not dissuade free blacks from attempting to join the Union ranks. Thousands throughout the north answered President Lincoln's April 1861 call for 75,000 volunteers. African Americans in New York began drill practice and in July of 1861 the black population offered the governor three regiments of soldiers; armed, clothed, and ready. They even offered to pay the soldiers, but the governor turned down the offer (Cornish 1966:6) as similar offers were turned down throughout the North. In places such as Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Cleveland and Cincinnati, Ohio; and Boston, Massachusetts, African Americans formed citizen committees and "home guards" to aid in the defense of the Union (Cornish 1966:20-23). One unit, the "Black Brigade of Cincinnati," was formed as early as 4 September 1862, and labored to build defenses around Cincinnati (Toppin 1963). Meanwhile, as they were being turned back and refused, unwelcome in the ranks of the Union Army, the Union Navy saw the matter differently.

### Service in the Union Navy

While Union leaders debated, African Americans were serving in the Union Navy from the beginning. The United States Navy had always employed black sailors. As noted in Chapter 2, African Americans had served in both the Continental and state navies during the Revolution and had played a conspicuous role in the War of 1812. Unlike the Army, blacks had found a place in the Navy even in peacetime, especially blacks living in port cities (Aptheker 1947a:67-69; Aptheker 1947b: 171; Mays 1984:59; Quarles 1953:229). When war between the states erupted in 1861, free blacks already serving in the Navy continued their service. Moreover, while the politicians debated arming blacks for the Army, they rationalized blacks in the Navy because it was not yet a presence in the border region between North and South, and thus did not pose a threat to southern loyalists who might turn against the Federal government at the sight of armed blacks (Oates 1977:290). On 25 September 1861, the Navy officially sanctioned the active enlistment of blacks (Lord 1960:286).

One of the earliest dilemmas the Navy confronted concerned the thousands of runaway slaves who flocked to its ships. Desiring to play their part in the conflict but barred from serving in the Army, blacks swarmed naval establishments.

Believing that these fugitives “can neither be expelled from the service ... nor can they be maintained unemployed,” Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles in September 1862 authorized commanders to enlist them at no higher rate than “boy” (*Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of Rebellion* 1897 Series 1, vol. 6: 252 subsequent citations, *ORN*).

These black fugitives were a godsend. Because state and federal governments discouraged white enlistment in the Navy by not providing bounties for those who joined nor counting them in local recruiting quotas, the Navy was suffering from a chronic manpower shortage and was forced to take anyone it could get (Aptheker 1947b:177; MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 2:185). Fugitive slaves were encouraged to join and in fact, the Navy had made “enlistment landings” to gather up physically fit contrabands for service (Aptheker 1947b:178). Thus, contrabands were soon serving throughout the Navy and were especially plentiful on gunboats. For instance, the crew of the Mississippi gunboat, the *Glide*, had 30 black crewmen out of 38 men (Aptheker 1947b:182). As a result, the Navy treated their black contingent relatively well. For instance, black sailors received \$10 a month, had complete control over their earnings, and had all the privileges of ships’ crew. African American soldiers, on the other hand, realized only \$7 a month with little control over how they could spend their wages (Aptheker 1947b:177). The close confinement of life on board a ship meant that all naval personnel were messed and quartered in common, resulting in a relative absence of segregation and discrimination (Aptheker 1947b:183-184). This fair treatment encouraged many blacks to join the Navy instead of the Army. In fact, the approximately 30,000 (an estimate reported by Secretary of the Navy, John D. Long in 1902) African Americans who served in the Union Navy comprised an amazing one-fourth its force, a much higher ratio than the 7 percent of blacks who eventually made up the Federal Army (Aptheker 1947b:179; MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 2:186). A few vessels such as the *Glide* and *Stepping Stone* were even manned by predominantly black crews (Mays 1984:62).

### **Robert Smalls**

The 30,000 black mariners played a crucial and often distinguished role in the Union war effort. And while one event was not technically a Union Navy operation, any recognition of African American contributions cannot ignore “[o]ne of the coolest and most gallant naval acts of the war,” according to Union Admiral Samuel F. DuPont — the capture of a Confederate warship by a 23-year-old illiterate slave named Robert Smalls (Westwood 1992:74). When war erupted, Smalls was living in Beaufort, South Carolina, and was employed in the trusted position of wheelman on the Confederate steamer *Planter*. Upon hearing that the Union Navy was

enlisting blacks, Smalls carefully contrived a daring plan for the black crew of the vessel and their families to escape by taking the steamer and all its contents past the batteries in Charleston harbor and placing it under command of nearby Union blockaders. The plan was extremely dangerous. Detection by Confederates meant certain death. Rather than be taken alive, Smalls and the others made a pact to blow up the ship if they failed to make their escape (McPherson 1965:154-157; Uya 1971:14).

Their escape opportunity arrived on the evening of 12 May 1862 when all three white officers of the vessel went ashore for a restful night's sleep, leaving Smalls and his brother (who was employed as an engineer on the ship) alone to prepare the ship for the next day's delivery of powder and munitions to Forts Sumter and Ripley. Meanwhile, the crew's family members and a few friends quietly and unobtrusively boarded the ship and hid below deck. At 3:00 a.m. Smalls cast the vessel from the wharf and slowly drove it out of the harbor toward its appointed destination. As the *Planter* passed the lower batteries in the harbor, Smalls pulled the captain's hat down low to avert his face and blew the customary signal (Westwood 1992:80). The officers on duty, viewing nothing out of the ordinary, allowed the vessel to pass. Ninety minutes later, Smalls passed Fort Sumter. Once out of the fort's firing range, he abruptly picked up speed and swung away — not toward the outer forts, but toward the harbor's bar and the distant blockaders. As the vessel speeded on, Smalls lowered the Confederate and Palmetto flags and raised a white bedsheet as a banner of truce to Union warships waiting just outside the harbor (Westwood 1992:76, 80; Quarles 1953:71-74).

When Union naval officers boarded the *Planter*, Smalls handed over command of the ship, remarking "I thought the *Planter* might be of some use to Uncle Abe" (Mays 1984:64). Indeed it was. The Confederate vessel was a 300-ton, side-wheel, wood-burning, armed steamer, loaded with munitions, food, and other supplies. The ship was also armed for battle, with a 32-pound cannon and a 24-pound howitzer (Westwood 1992:76). As a reward for their daring exploit, Congress passed a resolution giving half the appraised value of the *Planter* to Smalls and his party. During the remainder of the war Smalls served as pilot of the *Planter* and fought in 17 engagements (Uya 1971:20). Following the war he became active in politics, representing Beaufort in the state Assembly during Reconstruction and the House of Representatives from 1875 to 1887. Thereafter, Smalls acted as collector for the Port of Beaufort until 2 years before his death in 1913 (Westwood 1992: 85; Mays 1984:63-64; MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 2:178-181).

### ***The Duties of Black Sailors***

Few African American sailors, however, had such a distinctive and venerable career in the Union Navy as did Robert Smalls. Most performed the undesirable, laborious, dangerous, and unhealthy positions of coal heaver and fireman (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 2:182). Others labored on shore loading and unloading tons of supplies and equipment on and off ships (Mays 1984:67). As the case of Robert Smalls demonstrates, naval commanders did assign some qualified blacks to higher positions. Those African Americans with a unique knowledge of local rivers and streams were especially helpful in piloting vessels through waterways unfamiliar to northern seaman (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 2:183). Others served as navigators and engineers — as did Robert Smalls' brother. Eventually, black sailors were trained in the combat arms. When Lincoln authorized the formation of black regiments including artillery, the Army's Adjutant General to the Secretary of War telegraphed him that "The experience of the Navy is that the Blacks handle heavy guns well." (Aptheker 1947b:192). As a result of this wide variety of service, black sailors held all ranks in the Navy short of petty officer (MacGregor and Nalty, 2:184; Aptheker 1947b:185).

### ***Naval Combat***

African American sailors did their share in the fighting. Naval records reveal that they were killed, captured, and wounded in action aboard at least 49 different naval vessels (Aptheker 1947b:180). These same accounts are also replete with descriptions of the black mariners' fighting spirit. During an engagement in January 1863, one bystander on board the steamer *Ben De Ford* observed:

There is a fiery energy about them beyond anything of which I have ever read. ... It requires the strictest discipline to hold them in hand. ... When collected into the hold they actually fought each other for places at the few port-holes from which they could fire upon the enemy (*ORN* Series 1, vol. 14:196).

This "fiery energy" among black sailors is exemplified at the Battle of Mobile Bay in August 1864, where three earned the Congressional Medal of Honor for their valiant conduct. Of particular note is the bravery of landsman John Lawson, who was aboard the *USS Hartford* during the attack against Fort Morgan, rebel gunboats, and the rebel ram *Tennessee* on 5 August 1864. Wounded in the leg and thrown violently against the side of the ship when an enemy shell either killed or wounded the six-man crew at the shell whip, Lawson, upon regaining his composure, promptly returned to his station, and although urged to go below for treatment,

steadfastly continued his duties through the remainder of the action. In all, five African American sailors were recommended for the nation's highest military honor during the Civil War and at least four received it (Aptheker 1947b:192).

## **Blacks in the Confederate Army**

When hostilities erupted in April 1861, free African Americans throughout the South answered the Confederacy's clarion call for volunteers. Why would free blacks fight to save a government intent on continuing the enslavement of their brethren? In some cases it was for the same reason they volunteered for the Union Army — patriotism and the hope that in proving their loyalty they would have better treatment and greater equality. But another motivation appears to have been the fear that eventually they would be impressed anyway (McPherson 1965:23-24; Wesley 1919:241). In the latter case, they were right, as six states did pass legislation to impress free blacks into labor battalions (McPherson 1965:24).

Unlike the Federal government, the Confederacy did not universally bar black volunteers from serving in its armed forces in the early months of the war when the southern states were scrambling to organize a national government and mobilize for war. During this hurried and confused period, free blacks were actually armed and received into state service. For instance, the Tennessee legislature in June 1861 authorized the governor to allow all free black males between 15 and 50 to serve in the military. The state of Louisiana mustered into service 1,400 free Negroes who had reorganized themselves into several regiments of the historic "Native Guards" and placed them in defense of New Orleans (Everett 1958). During the Autumn of 1861, Alabama also enlisted free blacks from Mobile to help defend that city from an anticipated attack. A year later the Confederate Army organized these men into an artillery battalion (Hay 1919:37-38). However, except for these few examples early in the war, the Confederate War Department uniformly declined the offers of African Americans to join the Army until the passage of the black soldier bill of March 1865, a move of desperation in the last stage of the war (Wiley 1938:147-149).

But because the South had a much smaller white population than the North, the Confederate government found it necessary almost immediately to use their slaves to perform the countless menial and laborious tasks required in large military campaigns. As one historian aptly put it, "every slave wielding a shovel, freed a Johnny for the ranks" (Wiley 1938:110). During the first years of the war the Confederacy had no problem acquiring sufficient numbers of black workers. The zeal among slaveholders was so great that they even lent their slaves without wages (Wiley 1938:114). But as the war waged on and Union forces moved deeper into the



South, planters wanted the slaves to remain on the plantation to work and possibly defend their property. Moreover, the arduous and dangerous military labor weakened, maimed, and killed many of their best slaves. Finally in February of 1864, President Jefferson Davis called for the impressment of 20,000 slaves for menial service. Later that fall he suggested that this number be increased to 40,000 with the promise of freedom at the end of service (Wesley 1919: 242-243). But slave owners retaliated by hiding their slaves.

Overall though, the Confederate Army managed to obtain the employment of over 500,000 slaves (Hay 1919: 40). The life of these military laborers was difficult and unpleasant. In addition to being poorly paid (\$10 a month for an adult male), poorly fed, and poorly clothed, they were subjected to rigid control, allowed few privileges, and were severely disciplined for the smallest infraction. Serious injury was frequent and many succumbed to diseases, which ran rampant throughout labor camps (Wiley 1938:131-132).

The military activity employing the largest number of black laborers was the construction of defensive works — digging trenches and canals and building batteries and breastworks. Many others labored as cooks, teamsters, hospital attendants, ambulance drivers, grave diggers, lumberjacks, foragers, and servants (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 2: 193; Cornish 1966:16-17; Berlin et al. 1982:3; Wiley 1938: 111-113). Slave women performed their share of military work as cooks and laundresses. Despite the Confederacy's critical need for manual labor, commissioned officers could not let go of their black personal servants who looked after their clothing, groomed their horses, kept their quarters clean, washed their clothes, polished their boots, and cut their hair (Wiley 1938:134-135). Ironically, many of the free blacks who volunteered for the Northern armies would find themselves serving the Union Army in the same capacity as their slave brethren.

### ***Confederate Recruitment of Blacks as Soldiers***

Although the Confederacy was all too willing to give their slaves shovels to dig trenches, they were reluctant to provide them with rifles to help fight the Yankees. A few far-sighted Southerners suggested arming some of their bondsmen, arguing "What is the use ... to kill up all the white male population and leave the country thronged with women, and none to protect them, but a few old men?" (Berlin et al. 1982:285). Most Rebels, however, disagreed vehemently with such a radical idea. Most white soldiers wanted to do the fighting, leaving the drudgery of trench-digging, cooking, and other heavy and menial tasks to blacks. Major General Howell Cobb summed up the feeling of most Confederates on this topic when he remarked:

I think the proposition to make soldiers of our slaves is the most pernicious idea that has been suggested since the war began. You cannot make soldiers of slaves, nor slaves of soldiers. The moment you resort to negro soldiers your white soldiers will be lost to you. The day you make soldiers of them is the beginning of the end of the revolution. If slaves will make good soldiers our whole theory of slavery is wrong (*Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies in the War of the Rebellion [ORA] 1897 Series 4, vol. 3:1009-1010*).

In addition, southerners feared that arming slaves would increase their aspirations for freedom and light a torch that would "spread a flame throughout the slave kingdom" (Wesley 1919:239). As a result, such "pernicious" ideas never went beyond the discussion stage.

Not until the last year of the war did Confederate leaders begin seriously debating the idea of arming some of its large slave population. The reasons for this change in attitude was the inability of Democrats to regain the White House in 1864, the failure of King Cotton diplomacy to acquire recognition and aid from Europe, the elevation of the conflict to a war of attrition, the disintegration of the southern economy, and the decreasing morale of the civilian population. The most important factor in their decision, however, seems to have been military reverses (Eaton 1954:259). With major defeats at Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and Nashville in the second half of 1864, and with Grant's relentless war of attrition decimating Rebel ranks, Confederate soldiers deserted in droves. Historians estimate that nearly 15 percent of Rebel enlistments abandoned the Confederate cause during the last year of the war (Eaton 1954:260; Wiley 1938:150). Fewer than 50 percent, moreover, were re-enlisting for a second tour of duty (Hay 1919:39). The Confederate government "was at its wits' end" (Hay 1919:34) about how to fill its rapidly thinning ranks. Desperate for manpower, field commanders renewed the notion of using slaves as a means to fill their depleting Army.

One of the earliest and certainly most vigorous proponent of this idea was General Patrick Cleburne. In December 1863 he penned such a proposal, with the signatures and blessings of 14 additional officers, to the Confederate Congress. He prefaced his suggestion by vividly describing the crisis confronting the Army. The Confederacy has "spilled much of our best blood," Cleburne declared, while the enemy still:

menacingly confronts us at every point with superior forces. Our soldiers can see no end to this state of affairs except in our own exhaustion; hence, instead of rising to the occasion, they are sinking into a fatal apathy,

growing weary of hardships and slaughters which promise no results. ... If this state continues much longer we must be subjugated (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 2:200).

To "furnish us with the means of preventing temporary disaster, and carrying on a protracted struggle," he continued, the Army must "immediately commence training a large reserve of the most courageous of our slaves" (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 2:202-203). President Davis felt that circumstance did not warrant such a radical step and lambasted Cleburne's recommendations as "productive only of discouragement, distraction, and dissension ... and are to be deeply deprecated" (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 2:206).

In spite of Davis' order to suppress Cleburne's proposal, news of the plan leaked throughout the Confederacy and aroused a lively discussion. Citizens throughout the South were holding meetings, urging the use of blacks as soldiers (Hay 1919:61-62). One Georgia slaveholder wrote Davis late in the war that "many of our wealthy farmers are willing, *yea anxious* to put their negroes into the war...The crys (sic) from the suffering widows and orphans demand it, humanity, in behalf of our bleeding country, calls loudly for help, *and there is no other help*" (Berlin et al. 1982:286). A fellow planter added that "He who values his property [slaves] higher than his life and independence is a poor, sordid wretch; a gold worshiper; a slave in spirit" (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 2: 211). Political leaders also seriously contemplated the use of slaves as a cure for the Army's problems. In October 1864, five southern governors met in Augusta to discuss the numerous problems facing the Confederacy. One of the resolutions they passed was support of Cleburne's proposal to arm the slaves (Quarles 1953:278-279; Wiley 1938:151). An increasing number of Confederate Congressmen and even some of Davis's cabinet members also pushed for the plan.

The first move toward implementing this scheme was initiated the following January when the Virginia legislature authorized the arming of slaves without promise of emancipation (Eaton 1954:264). That same month General Robert E. Lee, commander of the Confederate Army, "broke the back" (Wiley 1938:158) of any opposition to the arming of slaves when he wrote Congress declaring:

I think ... we must decide whether slavery shall be extinguished by our enemies and the slaves be used against us, or use them ourselves at the risk of the effect which may be produced upon our social institutions. My own opinion is that we should employ them without delay. I believe that with proper regulations they can be made efficient soldiers (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 2:212).

As the leading military commander in the Confederate Army (and a well respected member of Southern society), Lee's suggestion carried great weight with fellow southerners (Hay 1919:67).

Giving in to such overwhelming military and public opinion and realizing the desperateness of their situation, the Confederate Congress passed an act on 13 March allowing the enlistment of slaves into the Army. Each state was to enroll 300,000 slaves (Wesley 1919:251). However, the bill lacked one important element: emancipation for volunteers. Congress left that decision to individual states. (Preisser 1975:103; Wesley 1919:251; Hay 1919:67). The call for recruitment quickly went out, but it was far too late. Only one irregular unit of Virginians appears to have engaged in combat in late March, but the war was soon over (Preisser 1975:113).

## **Blacks in the Union Army**

### ***Contraband***

As Union troops moved south, thousands of slaves fled behind their lines seeking refuge. At the beginning of the war the United States government had no clear policy concerning these fugitives. Slave owners asked Union officials to return their property under the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law and for the first months of the conflict Union officials complied with this statute (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 2:4). But the increasing number of refugees compelled the government to revise this policy. The person most responsible for pushing the government to change its policy was General Benjamin Butler, commander of the Department of Virginia. In June 1861 he issued a revolutionary and rather ingenious decree by branding the hundreds of fugitives in his camp as "contrabands of war," arguing that as the southern states had seceded and were in a state of war with the Union, then Confederate property was subject to seizure as contraband (Williams 1968:69; Quarles 1953:59-61).

The news of Butler's "contraband" theory spread rapidly through the slave population. Soon thousands flocked to Union lines, claiming they were contraband (Oates 1977:258). After careful consideration with his advisors, Lincoln silently approved Butler's actions. With tacit acceptance from the President and a growing need for labor, other field commanders quickly adopted Butler's canny scheme (Mays 1984:7-8; Berlin et al. 1982:4).

### ***Confiscation Act***

The increasing number of runaway slaves entering Union-held territory forced the United States government to make an official decision regarding the relationship between slavery and the war. On 6 August 1861 Congress passed the First Confiscation Act, giving legal sanction to Butler's policy. The Act declared that all slave owners who allowed their bondsmen to work in support of the rebellion forfeited their claim to them. The status of slaves belonging to loyal owners, however, still remained uncertain. Nevertheless, Union commanders paid little attention to whether or not these runaways had actually served in the Confederacy, and employed them all to fill their labor shortage (Berlin et al. 1982:4). Through the Confiscation Act, Congress made the Army a powerful liberating force that brought slaves one step closer to emancipation (McPherson 1965:28; Mays 1984:8-10; Oates 1977:258).

### ***Laborers***

In all, more than 200,000 African Americans served as laborers in the Union armies. Military commanders took full advantage of this large labor pool flooding their encampments. These fugitives performed basically the same duties as laborers in the Confederacy (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 2:13-16, 25). The Federal government also employed hundreds of thousands of ex-slaves as agricultural laborers to grow the vast amounts of food necessary to feed its armies (Wiley 1938:230-244). Their labor proved indispensable to the Union in two critical ways. First, they filled a desperate need for labor that the government would otherwise have had to fill with white men; second, these runaways removed a large labor pool from the Confederacy, requiring them to use arm-bearing whites to fill such assignments.

### ***First Enlistments***

After passage of the Confiscation Act, movement toward emancipation and use of blacks as soldiers moved forward quickly. During the first half of 1862 Congress legislated compensated emancipation in the District of Columbia and prohibited slavery in the territories (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 2:24; Berlin et al. 1982:4-5). Lincoln also asked slaveholders in the border states to consider gradual compensated emancipation. They refused the President's request; Kentucky Senator Lazarus Powell Whitehead stating "I regard the whole thing, so far as the slave state are concerned, as full of arsenic, sugar-coated" (Quoted in Quarles 1953:145). Still, Lincoln's act created great joy and anticipation among blacks throughout both the North and South, as a sign that emancipation was within reach.

As the temperature heated up during the summer, so did the issue of emancipation and enlistment of blacks. On 17 July 1862 Congress passed the Second Confiscation Act, declaring all slaves of Rebel masters "forever free" as soon as they entered Union held territory and empowering the President to mobilize them "in any military or naval service for which they may be found competent" (Berlin et al. 1982:5). One week later Lincoln made an extraordinary decision by approving Stanton's request allowing General Rufus Saxton, military governor of the South Carolina Sea Islands, to raise five regiments (5,000 freedmen) of black troops as a means to rectify the "impossibility of obtaining from Government all the troops required for service" (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 2:29). This was merely a single order and not a broad policy for arming blacks (Wiley 1938:305). Nevertheless, it was the first Federal authorization for recruiting black soldiers and marked a turning point in Lincoln's policy toward African Americans in the military and a foreshadowing of large-scale organization of African American regiments (Cornish 1966:80; Mays 1984:18).

With this authorization, Department of the South Commander Major General David Hunter was ready to act quickly, having previously moved ahead without authority to form the 1st South Carolina Volunteers. Back in 14 October 1861, General T.W. Sherman had been authorized by the Secretary of War to employ fugitives in the Army (Gladstone 1993:7). Sherman never acted on this authorization. But Hunter, pointing to Sherman's authorization, had attempted to raise squads and companies in the spring of 1862, impressing slaves from the countryside to fill the ranks and issuing a radical proclamation declaring all persons who had been held as slaves in Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina forever free (Wiley 1938:195). Lincoln acted quickly to void Hunter's proclamation. Now Saxton received word to go ahead and the 1st South Carolina Volunteers mustered, legally, on 7 November 1862 and saw action 6 days later near Darien, Georgia (Quarles 1953:119; see also Higginson 1898).

Hunter was not the only high-ranking Union officer with abolitionist spirit who forced the issue of arming blacks upon the Federal government by either enlisting the services of blacks into their ranks or freeing slaves in territory under their command. The first black regiment used by the Federal Army was the formerly Confederate Louisiana Native Guards, who offered their services to Union commander Benjamin Butler in spring of 1862 when New Orleans fell under Union control. The guards had been organized to defend New Orleans against Union attack. Butler initially refused their offer, but when Confederates threatened to attack in August, he quickly placed them in defense of the city. One of Butler's subordinates in Louisiana, General John W. Phelps, commander of Camp Parapet near New Orleans, organized five companies of former slaves in the early summer

of 1862 (Mays 1984:18). But because Butler “wanted all the credit of doing the thing himself” he forced Phelps to disperse his troops and resign his commission (Westwood 1992:37). Regardless, the 1st Regiment Louisiana Native Guards mustered into Federal service on 27 September 1862, followed by the 2nd on 12 October and the 3rd on 24 November (Cornish 1966:67).

Meanwhile in Kansas, General James H. Lane had been busy raising two African American regiments composed of fugitive slaves from Missouri and free blacks from the North. On 6 August 1862, Lane acting as Commissioner of Recruiting in Kansas, issued General Order No. 2 offering \$10.00 a month to African Americans joining the ranks. Later that August, the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry was raised at Fort Scott, Kansas (Gladstone 1993:15). The 1st Kansas Colored became the first black unit to engage the Confederates in combat near Butler, Missouri on 29 October 1862 (Gladstone 1993:15). The troops engaged Confederate forces on several other occasions in Kansas and Missouri before the War Department officially recognized them in early 1863 (Mays 1984:18). Finally, John C. Fremont — western trailblazer, presidential candidate, radical abolitionist, and Union commander of the Western Department at St. Louis — went beyond his orders of instruction and the law in late August 1862 when he ordered martial law in the recalcitrant border state of Missouri and declared freedom for slaves whose masters had taken up arms against the Union, effectively preempting Lincoln’s emancipation proclamation (Cornish 1966:12-13). Lincoln usually acted quickly to condemn and nullify these renegade acts, explaining that he alone “would decide when military emancipation was necessary to save the country” (Oates 1977:325). But the pressure continued to mount to recruit and raise African American troops for the Union war effort.

Setbacks on the battlefield, war weariness, mass desertions, and the decreasing number of recruits induced the Republicans, field officers, and a growing number of citizens to proclaim emancipation as a means of winning the war by converting the slaves from a vital resource for the Confederacy to allies in the North. An even graver problem was the defeatism and war weariness corroding the morale of the North (McPherson 1991:87). There seemed to be no end to the war. Many northerners were tired of fighting and wanted a quick end to the conflict. They came to realize that commitment to total war (including the arming of blacks) was necessary to conquer the South (Akers 1975:50). Even the more prejudiced northerners came to realize the advantages of a black man stopping Rebel bullets that might otherwise come their way (Berlin et al. 1982:8-9; McPherson 1982:355). Their attitude was put to lyrics under the title “Sambo’s Right to be Kilt”, a popular song among Union troops:

Some tell us 'tis a burnin shame  
To make the naygers fight;  
An' that the trade of bein' kilt  
Belong' but to the white;  
But as for me, upon my soul!  
So liberal are we here,  
I'll let Sambo be murdered instead of myself  
On every day in the year.  
(McPherson 1982:355)

Northerners also argued that if one goal of the war was to emancipate the slaves, and the war was quickly turning to that goal, then African Americans must sacrifice their lives along with whites to purchase black freedom. Finally, some northerners suggested that the discipline of military life might be the best means to elevate enfranchised bondsmen "to the level of our higher intelligence and cultivation" (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 2:29).

### ***Emancipation***

But before the Union could enlist slaves into their ranks, they had to first resolve the issue of slavery. Despite the state's rights issue, everyone understood that slavery was inextricably intertwined with the origins of the conflict. Congressional Republicans and abolitionists exerted all their powers to convince Lincoln of the importance of emancipation to the war effort. "It was absurd," they commented, "to fight a war without removing the thing that had brought it about" (Oates 1977:258). If the North preserved the Union with slavery intact, the South would merely secede again and start another war. Moreover, emancipation might prevent Great Britain from recognizing and aiding the Confederacy (Oates 1977: 289-291). Lincoln also understood that most slaves would not fight without a promise of freedom.

Succumbing to such outside pressure and exigencies of the war (Cox 1981:6; Westwood 1992:15), Lincoln finally came to the conclusion that the Federal government must act to free the slaves. During the summer of 1862, Lincoln worked on a draft of a preliminary emancipation proclamation and finally submitted a draft of a general Emancipation Proclamation to his Cabinet. His advisors approved the declaration but persuaded him to withhold its publication until the Union Army had won a major military victory, otherwise Europe might view the announcement "as a wild and reckless attempt to compensate for Union military ineptitude by provoking a slave insurrection" (Oates 1977:337). This victory came on 17 September at Antietam Creek in Maryland, where Union soldiers under command of General George B. McClellan halted General Robert E. Lee's advance on



Washington. Five days later Lincoln "crossed the Rubicon" (Redkey 1992:24) and called his Cabinet together to announce his decision to issue the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation "as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion" and declared that from 1 January 1863 all slaves in the rebellious states are "forever free" (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 2:27). The proclamation formally changed the war from a dispute about state rights to the overthrow of slavery (McPherson 1991:34).

### ***Full-Scale Recruitment***

In the formal Emancipation Proclamation of 1 January 1863 Lincoln broadened and gave presidential blessing to recruitment of African Americans as soldiers in the Union Army stating that "such persons of suitable condition will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places and to man vessels of all sorts in said service" (Quoted in Cornish 1966:96). This was hardly a rousing endorsement, but states moved quickly to recruit African Americans. Free black leaders like Frederick Douglass acted as recruiting agents, traveling throughout the North urging their brethren to take advantage of the opportunity "given us to be men" and "co-operate with in burying rebellion and slavery in a common grave" (Blassingame 1985:596). Motivated by this prospect "to break the chain and exclaim 'Freedom to all!'" (Redkey 1992:214), thousands of black men responded to the recruiters' call.

One ardent abolitionist was in a particularly good position to act quickly once Lincoln issued the proclamation. Governor John Albion Andrew of Massachusetts received authorization on 26 January 1863 and soon began recruiting blacks for the 54th Massachusetts. He was so successful that enough African Americans answered his call to raise another regiment, the 55th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry (Smith 1993:7).

Other states moved forward with recruiting also. As early as August of 1862 the Rhode Island Adjutant General's Office had tried to organize the 6th Regiment made up of black citizens, but the regiment failed to materialize. With the Emancipation Proclamation the War Department authorized Rhode Island to form the 14th Rhode Island Regiment of Heavy Artillery, which was mustered on 28 August 1863 (Gladstone 1993:37-38). In Connecticut, the black 29th Regiment Connecticut Volunteer Infantry mustered on 8 March 1864 and a second regiment, the 30th, mustered in February of 1864 (Gladstone 1993:38), later to be consolidated with the 31st U.S.C.T. (United States Colored Troops).

Admittedly, not all African Americans rushed to the recruiting centers once the proclamation was made, even with such inducements as freedom for themselves and their families, financial bounties, and expressions of enthusiastic praise (Wiley 1938:307). In fact, the majority of blacks who wore the Union blue, particularly ex-slaves, probably did not join voluntarily. Discrimination in pay, rumors of the enemy killing blacks rather than taking them prisoner, and their families' critical reliance on their income discouraged many from joining the Army. Northerners were greatly disappointed with such apathy among blacks. One disheartened northern black recruiting agent remarked:

I had hoped that these fugitives when leaving their Rebel masters & coming into our lines were made instrumental ... to help crush this wicked Rebellion, but to my sad surprise, I am sorry to say that while white & colored men from the north are breathing out their last breath upon the Battle field in freeing these stupid [sic] creatures, they are left Idle to rove over the country like the ox that feed the Army (Berlin et al. 1982:141).

Union recruiting agents used many heavy-handed and unscrupulous means to persuade the reluctant. Like a posse in search of an escaped criminal, these agents scoured the southern countryside, kidnaping both slave and free black males from their houses, workshops, churches, and schools (Berlin et al. 1982:139; Wiley 1938:308-311). These frightened men did not know what was wanted of them upon their capture. Many feared they were going to be placed in front of a firing squad or taken to Cuba and sold into slavery (McPherson 1965:170; Shannon 1926:570). A group of black soldiers impressed into a Kansas Black Artillery Battery described some of the recruiting agent's techniques:

We were pressed into Service by force ... many of us were knocked down and beaten like dogs, others were dragged from our homes in the dead hour of [night] and forced into a Prison without Law or Justice; others were tied and thrown into the river and held there until forced to subscribe to the oath. Some of us were tied up by the thumbs all night, we were starved, beaten, kept out all night until we were nearly frozen and but one alternative to join the service or nearly suffer death (Berlin et al. 1982:421).

Such unscrupulous behavior by recruiting agents bred paranoia among black men, who fled to the woods, caves, and swamps upon the sight of any stranger. Armed parties of recruiters hunted down these men and in some instances shot them like fugitives (Robertson 1968:24).

### ***Bureau of Colored Troops***

Still, forced 'recruiting' methods and volunteers did not meet the Army's immediate need for increased manpower. To better organize the recruitment of blacks, centralize their control into Federal units, and select able (white) officers to train and lead them, the War Department on 22 May 1863 established the Bureau of Colored Troops through General Order No. 143 (Gladstone 1990:9). The Bureau was responsible for recruiting blacks, organizing regiments, commissioning officers, and maintaining records for the "Color Troops." Major Charles Warren Foster, another of the many Massachusetts gentlemen in the forefront of the cause of black participation in the ranks, was assigned as Chief of the Bureau (Gladstone 1993:47).

With the creation of this agency and the use of professional recruiters, enrollment of African Americans and their organization into segregated regiments became much more uniform and thorough (Cornish 1966:130-131). By December the Union Army had enrolled over 50,000 blacks into over 70 regiments (Mays 1984:24). The number of regiments continued to increase as Union forces moved deeper into Confederate territory.

To find fit officers for all the regiments rapidly forming, Boards of Examiners were established to hear petitions of white candidates for a commission in the U.S.C.T. The board met regularly in cities like Davenport, Iowa; Nashville; Cincinnati; New Orleans; St. Louis; and Washington DC (Cornish 1966:208-210; Glatthaar 1990:38). The examination consisted of appearing before the board to establish the candidate's knowledge of Army regulations, arithmetic, history, geography, and tactics. A free military school was formed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for the training of men who applied for a commission in the U.S.C.T. It operated from 26 December 1863 until 15 September 1864, and graduated 484 officers. This school also trained some black noncommissioned officers (NCOs) from Maryland (Glatthaar 1990:45-47; Gladstone 1993:61-63).

The first regiment of the U.S.C.T. was mustered into the Army on 30 June 1863 at Camp William Penn in Philadelphia. This camp was the largest for training black enlisted personnel during the war, and was the home of the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 22nd, 24th, 25th, 32nd, 41st, 43rd, 45th, and 127th U.S.C.T. (Gladstone 1993:67). Though black regiments in Connecticut, Louisiana, and Massachusetts maintained their state designations, 14 other states redesignated their black soldiers as U.S.C.T., forming 135 infantry regiments, 6 cavalry regiments, 12 heavy artillery regiments, and 10 batteries of light artillery (Gladstone 1990:11).

Eventually, some 186,000 African Americans served as Federal soldiers in the Civil War, constituting approximately 7 percent of the entire Union Army. Of these, over 134,000 came from the slaveholding states. Louisiana led the list with 24,052 black soldiers, while Texas contributed the fewest, with 47. Among the northern states, Pennsylvania mustered 8,612 blacks to the armed forces, followed by New York with 4,125 and Massachusetts with 3,996. These men were organized into 120 infantry, 12 heavy artillery, 7 cavalry regiments, and 10 light artillery batteries (Robertson 1968:31-32; *ORA* March 17, 1866). They were led by some 7,000 white and approximately 109 black officers (Glatthaar 1990:x,279-280). According to Gladstone (1993:208-212) U.S.C.T. and other black units took part in some 251 separate battles during the Civil War.

The U.S.C.T. units would survive until December of 1867, when they would be replaced by four regular Army regiments.

### **Confederate Response to the Union Enlistment of African Americans**

The Confederacy reacted to the Union's policy of arming African Americans with disbelief, fright, and indignation. Southerners equated armed blacks with murder, rape, pillage, and burning. It was impossible for them to see black recruitment as anything but an attempt "to overthrow the institution of African slavery and bring on a servile war in these States" (*ORA* Series 2,5:940). To prevent the occurrence of "atrocious consequences" arising from tactics "inconsistent with the spirit of the usages which in modern warfare prevail among civilized nations," the Confederate Congress on 1 May 1863 authorized "full and ample retaliation." The men who were training and officering black troops, stated the Confederate Congress, "shall if captured be put to death or be otherwise punished at the discretion of the court" and any African American taking up arms against the Confederacy or aiding her enemies, will "be dealt with according to the present or future law of such State or States" (*ORA* Series 2, 5:940). The latter punishment was equivalent to a death sentence since the law in all the seceded states labeled such blacks as insurrectionists.

In retaliation, Lincoln issued an executive order promising that for every Union prisoner killed in violation of the laws of war, a Rebel captive would be similarly executed, and for every Union soldier enslaved, a Confederate prisoner would be placed at hard labor. For the most part, this order seemed to have the desired effect. The Confederacy never executed officers of black regiments, but treated them as any other white officer prisoner (Dyer 1935:282; McPherson 1982:352). Nor did they re-enslave black prisoners, but exchanged and treated them as they did white

prisoners. Finally, casualty statistics reveal that Confederates did not kill black soldiers instead of capturing them as many northerners charged. "Not only did the southerners usually capture Negro troops rather than kill them," explains one authority, "but when the captives were wounded they were hospitalized and cared for ..." (Dyer 1935:285).

### **Fort Pillow**

There were, however, exceptions. Most notably was the so-called "Fort Pillow Massacre." On 12 April 1864, Confederates under the command of Nathan B. Forrest overran and captured this Union outpost on the Mississippi River in Tennessee, giving no quarter to its black defenders. "Our colored men were literally butchered," remarked a survivor (Berlin et al. 1982: 540). Confederates argued that after the Union garrison retreated to a nearby riverbank, they continued to offer resistance. However, one scholar who carefully examined the evidence surrounding the event concluded that Forrest's troops, "out of a combination of race hatred, personal animosity [many of the white defenders were ex-Confederate soldiers] and battle fury," did, in fact, kill a large portion of the garrison "after they had either ceased resisting or were incapable of resisting" (Castel 1958:50).

Exaggerated and erroneous accounts of the battle, including reports of killing women and children and burying and burning alive wounded soldiers, spread throughout the North. Outraged northerners demanded vengeance, and cabinet and military officials offered Lincoln several retaliatory options to prevent a "recurrence of the fiendish barbarities practiced on the defenders...at Fort Pillow" (Berlin et al. 1982:548). Fearful of even greater Confederate retaliation, other officials advised against any "extreme action" until the outcome of Ulysses Grant's Wilderness Campaign, which, if successful, would place the Union Army in a position to thwart any Rebel retaliatory measure. Swayed by the latter argument, Lincoln decided to do nothing, leaving the black troops "to their own devices" (Cornish 1966:176).

Since the Federal government refused to deter further Rebel atrocities against its black troops, African American soldiers adopted several "devices" of their own to protect themselves. One of these included fighting even more stubbornly and ferociously, since they now believed that capture was equivalent to execution. Black troops were also less reluctant to show Confederate troops any mercy. "If this is to be the game of the enemy," commented one African American serviceman, "they will soon learn that it is one *at which two can play*" (Berlin et al. 1982:540). Thereafter, "Remember Fort Pillow" became an encouraging battle cry (Cornish 1966:177).

## Black Soldiers Life and Labor

Although the Union eventually allowed African Americans to serve in the Army, they still refused to accept them as equals. Many Union officers assigned them an inordinate amount of fatigue and garrison duty, provided them with inadequate training, inferior equipment, and unequal pay. All but a few were excluded from officer rank. Now that United States military policy would be to place blacks in segregated units, a policy that would not change for some long time in the future, blacks began to fight the two-front war — a war against the enemies of the United States and the war for equal treatment in the ranks.

From their earliest discussions concerning employment of African Americans as soldiers, Union leaders planned to use them only as auxiliary forces in labor battalions and garrison units. Four factors guided them to this decision. First, it would relieve white troops from such duties, allowing them to serve in frontline operations. Second, the stereotypical view of blacks caused many northerners to doubt that blacks would or could fight (McPherson 1982:354). Third, there was a prevailing belief that southern blacks were less susceptible than northern whites to the heat and fevers of the South. Finally, military strategists assumed that the Union would achieve victory before they could train blacks for combat duty (McPherson 1982:351; Cornish 1952:185-186; Berlin et al. 1982: 483-484).

African American soldiers were obviously disappointed in their exclusive use as laborers, complaining "Instead of the musket It is the spad[e] and the Wheelbarrow and the Axe" (Berlin et al. 1982:501). Some officers worked these 'soldiers' like beasts of burden 8 to 10 hours every day digging trenches and wells, drawing sand, dredging swamps, felling trees, cleaning latrines and ship bunkers, and building fortifications, bridges, and railways (Redkey 1992:64; Quarles 1953:31). Such exhausting and abusive treatment not only reduced the African American servicemen to the status of slaves again, but also gave them "no chance for improvement in Discipline, Instruction, and the duties of a soldier" (Berlin et al. 1982:504). The black trooper found himself locked into the role of military menial. As one scholar explained, "they could not fight because excessive fatigue duty prevented them from drilling, and because their lack of proper training rendered them unsuitable for battle, they might as well keep on digging" (Berlin et al. 1982:485).

In addition to overwork and physical mistreatment, African American infantrymen suffered from inadequate shelter, medical care, and food. Sickness, poor rations, and insufficient medical care became the worst enemies of the African American soldier. Permanent housing was unheard of for black troops and tents and oilcloths were

never in abundance, leaving them little protection from the weather. In the northern climes, soldiers often woke in the morning with frostbitten extremities. In addition, surgeons were scarce during the Civil War and almost nonexistent in black regiments. Insufficient food resulted in malnutrition at an alarming rate and available water was frequently so unfit that horses refused to drink it. Such conditions were common to all Civil War soldiers, but black troops suffered the greatest from these afflictions (Robertson 1988: 145-169).

The lack of sufficient food, medical care, and lodgings, coupled with exhausting work, made these men much more susceptible to diseases typical of soldiers confined to one place (McPherson 1982:354). One commander of a black regiment complained that "the fatigue duty of my regiment has been incessant and trying — so that my sick list has increased from 4 or 5 to nearly 200 in a little over a month" (Berlin et al. 1982:493). Pestilence was the deadliest foe for all troops, but especially for blacks. In fact, 19 percent of all African American servicemen died from assorted diseases; more than twice the percentage of northern white troops (Aptheker 1947a:14-18; McPherson 1982:354). While it was believed that southern blacks would better stand the heat of the south, death due to diseases was especially high among the ex-slaves. Weakened by poor treatment as slaves, they were susceptible to many diseases in the crowded camps.

However, this disparate and abusive use of African American troops did decrease as the war continued. The increasing unwillingness of northern white men to join the Army and the gallant conduct of African American troops at Port Hudson, Milliken's Bend, and Fort Wagner compelled Secretary of War Stanton in July 1864 to allow them more training time "to prepare them for the higher duties of conflict with the enemy" (ORA Series 3,4:431). Thereafter the equipping and training of African American troops began in earnest.

Still, Ordnance departments sent African American regiments old, obsolete, and inferior arms and equipment condemned by inspectors, but considered good enough for black soldiers. While white units secured the new model Springfield rifles (considered one of world's finest at the time), black troops more often were issued the old rifled-muskets. The bayonets they received, moreover, often did not fit their guns (Quarles 1953:204-205; Mays 1984:34; Aptheker 1947a:28).

Some white officers who trained and commanded African American soldiers were of a quality similar to the equipment. Caring little about black advancement or emancipation, some of these men volunteered to become officers in black regiments merely to receive the social distinction, better pay, food, quarters, and less chance of becoming a battlefield statistic that went along with being an officer (Cornish

1966:207, 222). The Provost Marshall of Norfolk wrote president Lincoln describing the attitude of white officers toward their black charges:

The decided majority of our officers of all grades have no sympathy with your [African American] policy; nor with anything human. They hate the Negro, more than they love the Union... There is a regular cabal here among the very worst class of Negro hating officers... For Gods sake don't let this black army fall into such hands (Berlin et al. 1982:412-413).

Black soldiers also begged Lincoln for deliverance from the hands of "Our Pretended Friends" (Berlin et al. 1982:429). Lead and trained by such indifferent and intolerant officers, black troops were frequently sent into battle with only a minimal amount of military instruction.

However, other white officers were abolitionists, or sympathetic and dedicated to the cause of black freedom. Massachusetts white officers like Robert Gould Shaw worked for and volunteered for black units and worked for their equal treatment. They also set up schools for illiterate blacks and continually protested the mistreatment of their soldiers at the hands of other officers who were using the soldiers on detached duties. During the siege of Charleston, some white officers were using members of the 54th and 55th Massachusetts, and the 1st North Carolina (which later became the 35th U.S.C.T.) as servants to white soldiers, ordering them to set up camps for the white troops. Officers of these units demanded that black soldiers stop being used as menial laborers for white units. Meanwhile their surgeons protested the demand that injured or ill blacks being sent back to the line too soon. Their protests galvanized General Quincy Gillmore to issue orders to stop such abuse (Smith 1993:35).

Naturally, as African Americans became better trained and proved their worth on the battlefield, they sought commissions into the officer corps. The Federal government, however, was extremely unfavorable to the idea of giving blacks such power. Lincoln and Stanton believed that accepting blacks as privates was a major step in recognizing blacks and wanted to wait until whites more widely accepted the use of black troops (McPherson 1965:238). Moreover, they correctly observed that few blacks had the military experience to lead and train raw recruits (McPherson 1982:351).

These explanations failed to satisfy the northern African American community and their white sympathizers (many of whom were in Congress) who pressured Washington to allow black soldiers to become commissioned officers (the rank of lieutenant and up). As a compromise, the War Department permitted African



Americans to become noncommissioned officers (sergeants and corporals) — assignments which still remained within the enlisted ranks and carried no significant leadership roles. The Army also barred them any opportunity for advancement, ensuring that blacks would not be placed in a position of authority over whites (Berlin et al. 1982:303, 311; McPherson 1982:351).

The commissioning of black officers would be very slow. Of the 166 African American regiments formed during the war, only about 109 blacks were commissioned into the officer corps (Berlin et al. 1982:310-311; Glatthaar 1990:279-280). Nearly two-thirds of these belonged to the Louisiana Native Guards, which was formed before the Union began organizing black regiments. Commanders soon purged most of these men from the service and replaced them with white officers (Berlin et al. 1982:321-322). The remaining few black officers belonged to leaderless positions of chaplain and surgeon (Glatthaar 1992:152).

Officer rank did not gain these men any additional respect from whites and probably increased resentment. White surgeons, for instance, frequently refused to work alongside black physicians. Black chaplains, in addition, were “often treated below a private” by fellow officers (Berlin et al. 1982:359). Nevertheless, the command experience gained in the Army gave many African American men the skills and encouragement to participate in politics after the war, and generally proved important to the development of black leadership (Berlin et al. 1982:312).

One example of just such a prominent rise was Lieutenant Colonel Alexander T. Augusta, who received his medical degree in Canada and was appointed surgeon of the 7th U.S.C.T. in 1862. As part of this unit, he participated in the expedition to Beaufort, South Carolina. Later in the war, the Union government placed Augusta in charge of a hospital at Savannah, Georgia. Soon after the cessation of hostilities, he became one of the first black faculty members in the Department of Medicine at Howard University and later developed a successful practice in Washington DC.

### ***The Pay Dispute***

Of all these inequities, the most galling to the African American soldier was his disproportionate pay. In 1862, Secretary of War Stanton entitled African American volunteers the same pay and rations as whites enlistees — \$13.00 per month plus an allowance of \$3.50 for clothing (Cornish 1966:184-185). A few black regiments (54th Massachusetts and 3rd South Carolina) were mustered into the Army under this contract and were initially paid at the promised wages (Westwood 1992:127). However, Stanton had no legal authority to make this agreement, and Congress rescinded it and issued their own pay scale — \$10.00 a month minus \$3.50 for

clothing, whether or not they received additional garb. Such a low salary not only made it nearly impossible for a black soldier to support his family, it was also a flagrant reminder of his second class citizenship (Berlin et al. 1982:363; Mays 1984:29).

The arguments for paying blacks less to serve were directly related to their status as second-class citizens. To pay African American troops the same as others, officials argued, would degrade white soldiers and discourage their enlistment (Mays 1984:28). Lower pay for blacks "seemed a necessary concession to smooth the way to their employment at all as soldiers" (Westwood 1992:13). Moreover, when the War Department accepted blacks into the Army, they intended to use them mainly as laborers. Whites would continue to bear the brunt of the fighting and should therefore receive greater pay (Cornish 1966:184-185).

These arguments did not placate African American troops, especially those who had volunteered under the promise of equal pay. Some took drastic measures to try and correct this injustice. Members of the 54th and 55th Massachusetts, for instance, refused any pay unless it was the same amount received by whites. In an extraordinary act of bravery off the battlefield, 74 members of the 55th Massachusetts wrote directly to the President, as did at least one wife of one of the soldiers, stating their case (Smith 1993:36). Sympathizing with their situation, the Massachusetts legislature passed a bill to pay them the additional money necessary to bring their salary in accordance with whites. The two regiments refused this generous offer, however, contending that to accept it "would be acknowledging a right on the part of the United States to draw a distinction between them and other soldiers from Massachusetts and in so doing would compromise their self respect" (Berlin et al. 1982:387). They continued to refuse any pay for more than a year until the Federal government finally provided all black units their full salary.

The 3rd South Carolina Volunteers undertook an even more radical (and as it turned out deadly) strategy than their northern counterparts. Even before the Army reduced their wages, members of this regiment faced many trying difficulties. Commanders assigned them to an excessive amount of fatigue duty, leaving little time for training; white troops and civilians from the North incessantly harassed these ex-slaves; and the Army's decision to eliminate the men's "family rations" left many of their loved ones destitute (Westwood 1992:128-129).

The last straw for the black Palmetto warriors came when Congress reduced their monthly wages. On the morning of 19 November 1863 the men of Company A marched to the tent of their regimental commander Colonel Augustus G. Bennett, stacked their arms and refused to perform any duties until they received just

payment. Astonished at this behavior, Colonel Bennett asked his men for an explanation. The ringleader, 23-year-old Sergeant William Walker replied that they "would not do duty any longer for seven dollars per month" (Westwood 1992:129). Although Bennett sympathized with their problem, he charged them with mutiny and arrested Walker and demoted him to private. Six weeks later he was brought before a general court-martial and found guilty of mutiny and two counts of disorderly conduct. Soon after his sentencing, Walker was placed before a firing squad and executed before the entire brigade to deter any future misconduct (Westwood 1992:130; Berlin et al. 1982:365-366).

Like Colonel Bennett, most commanders of black regiments agreed with the principle of equal pay and "respectfully demanded to their superiors that if they don't receive equal pay as whites, then they should muster them out of the service" (Berlin et al. 1982:367, 377). With the assistance of black soldiers, their commanders, and other sympathizers, the black community was able to mobilize northern public opinion to demand an end to this injustice. News of Walker's execution further agitated Congress into pushing for equal pay for all black soldiers (Westwood 1992:134-138).

Effected by this groundswell of protest from civilians and soldiers alike, Stanton, in December 1863, asked Congress to equalize the pay for black servicemen (McPherson 1965:199). Seven months later Congress complied by passing the Military Appropriations Act. Back-pay for all black troops was finally issued with the Enrollment Act in February 1865, just 1 month before the cessation of hostilities. Congress did not make these concessions on the principle that black soldiers were inherently equal to and worth as much as whites, but because they believed the government should uphold its contractual promises (Belz 1976:212-213).

### ***Education***

One area of the war in which blacks were assisted in becoming full citizens rather than being thwarted was in educational instruction. Since northern blacks had limited educational opportunities and southern slave codes made it a crime to teach bondsmen to read or write, the vast majority of African American servicemen were illiterate. This posed a serious problem for the military. On a practical level the Army needed literate men for efficient functioning. Even the simple task of issuing a warrant for arrest could turn into a fiasco if a soldier could not read the document (Berlin et al. 1982:614). With few literate African American soldiers, officers of black regiments quickly became overwhelmed with paperwork. Educating the black man would allow for the promotion of some as noncommissioned officers and

alleviate this situation. Furthermore, education would instill moral and social discipline in the ranks — two important characteristics for a soldier (Berlin et al. 1982:611, 614). Finally, as noted, some white officers were genuinely interested in seeing that blacks become full citizens and realized that a basic education was necessary for blacks to become full participants in a democracy.

Although the Union Army desperately needed many more literate black troops, it had no official role in promoting their education. The Army had more pressing problems and felt its primary mission was to organize and train troops, not educate them. In addition, the War Department and Bureau of Colored Troops lacked the staff to organize the education of thousands of illiterates (Cornish 1952:370, 375-376). Instead, the primary impetus for the instruction of black soldiers came from Union officers, northern educators, benevolent associations, and philanthropists who understood that “the best way to win the respect of all, and to render themselves worthy of the right which Freedom confers, is for every man to acquire the best Education he can” (Berlin et al. 1982:626).

Commanders of black regiments ordered the establishment of schools and instructed those with an education to teach others in an “energetic and zealous” spirit (Berlin et al. 1982:618). Black chaplains played an especially significant role in instructing their less-educated brethren. Some officers did their best to require all men under their command to attend these schools. Those who refused had their leisure activities curtailed; if an individual continued to “skip class,” he was “compelled by hunger” to attend (Berlin et al. 1982:619). Topics of instruction included the three “Rs” — reading, writing, and arithmetic — along with geography and military tactics for more advanced students. To instill morality in the soldiers, much of the instruction was placed in a religious context (Wiley 1938:290).

Overall efforts to educate the African American soldiers varied enormously. Some regiments had schools for every one of its companies, while other regiments offered no instruction at all. A lack of suitable buildings, books, slates, and maps also rendered instruction difficult (Wiley 1938:261). Due to its unsystematic nature and the more serious distractions of war, the education program had very limited success. By the end of the war, most black soldiers still could not sign their names. Nevertheless, the educational experience of blacks in the Union Army did help to prepare them for their future lives as citizens and encouraged them to establish their own schools after the war (Cornish 1966:381; Quarles 1953:293).

## The Martial Spirit

Acceptance of African Americans as soldiers was only a partial victory. Many northern whites still doubted whether blacks (particularly ex-slaves) possessed the will to fight. Complete acceptance of them as warriors depended ultimately on their battlefield performance. African Americans welcomed this challenge, believing that they were fighting for more than just their own reputation, but also for future freedom and equality. Failure to demonstrate valor on the battlefield would degrade all blacks and forestall any chance of elevating their status, while success (they hoped) would legitimize their demands for greater equality (Cornish 1966:133; Berlin et al. 1982:517). Both skeptics and proponents waited in anticipation for news of black troops first engagements. Many whites hoped they would prove "cowards and sneaks," while African Americans and their sympathizers feared it (McPherson 1965:183).

### *Port Hudson*

African American infantrymen had their first true test of valor on 27 May 1863 at Port Hudson, Louisiana. Located on the Mississippi River just above Baton Rouge, the well positioned, fortified, and defended (6,000 troops) garrison was the last remaining Rebel fortification on the lower Mississippi. Its reduction would enable General Ulysses S. Grant to focus his efforts against helpless Vicksburg. The capture of this crucial river city would, in turn, complete the second part of the Union's strangling "Anaconda Plan" against the Confederacy.

Two black regiments, the 1st and 3rd Louisiana Native Guards (comprising nearly 1,100 of General Nathaniel Banks' 13,000-man attack force), participated in the assault against this fixed position. Placed in the extreme right wing of the attack force, directly in front of two large forts, the black troops began their advance in double time at 10:00 a.m. At 400 yards, the Confederates opened with a "most murderous fire" (Berlin et al. 1982:529). Reeling from this initial salvo, the black legion regrouped and once more "charged into the storm of bullets" toward the Confederate batteries lined up against the high bluff (Quarles 1953:217). Again the Confederates forced the attackers to retreat. Deterred but not defeated, they made five additional desperate charges. In each assault, the bold African American troops were "dreadfully slaughtered" (Cornish 1966:142). When it became obvious that no amount of courage and tenacity would capture the rebel post, Union commanders finally ordered the decimated Native Guards to permanently withdraw. Over 300 of them, however, never made it back to Union lines (Wiley 1938:326-327). General Banks wrote "Whatever doubt may have existed before us as to the efficiency of organizations of this character, the history of this day proves conclusively...that the

government will find this class of troops effective supporters and defenders" (Quoted in Williams 1968:221).

### ***Milliken's Bend***

Twelve days later, the 9th and 11th Louisiana Native Guards received their baptism by fire at Milliken's Bend, a Union camp located about 20 miles upstream from Vicksburg. Here the tactical situation was reversed from that of Port Hudson. On 7 June, a Confederate force of about 1,500 Texans under General H.E. McCulloch launched an assault against 1,000 (840 of which were ex-slaves) recently organized, poorly trained, and poorly equipped soldiers left behind by Grant to defend this Union camp.

With a piercing "Rebel Yell" and cries of "No Quarter!" Confederates charged the waiting Federal troops who were huddled behind a levee. The defenders fired a volley into the Texans, causing them to waver briefly. Having only 1 day of instruction using their old, dilapidated rifles, most of the troops failed to reload before the attackers reached the ramparts. In a rare display of bloody hand-to-hand fighting that "made even seasoned officers blanch" (Berlin et al. 1982:518), the sable corps managed to hold off the enemy line for 9 hours until two Federal gunboats, the *Lexington* and *Choctaw*, arrived to bombard the Confederates into withdrawal (Bigelow 1960:161; Cornish 1966:144-145; Mays 1984:36-37; Quarles 1953:222-223; Wiley 1938:329). The bravery of these men and the fierceness of this battle is reflected by the 9th Louisiana, which lost 45 percent of its strength in battle — the highest percent killed and wounded suffered by any unit in a single engagement during the war (Quarles 1953:224). Rebels and Yanks were found side-by-side, each killed by the bayonet of the other. General McCulloch observed that the number of serious wounds among his men was more than he had ever seen in any battle in his long military experience (Wiley 1938:329). In addition to the unbridled ferocity of the contest, Milliken's Bend is also unique because it was the first battle where African American troops outnumbered whites, and the first where most of the blacks participating were ex-slaves (Wiley 1938:337).

### ***Battery Wagner***

The most infamous military engagement involving black troops during the Civil War occurred 18 July 1863 at Fort Wagner on Morris Island, South Carolina (Wise 1994). As part of the outer ring of forts, which were designed to keep the enemy from coming within artillery range of the Charleston, this bastion played a crucial part in Charleston's defense. It had to be taken if the Union wanted to use it as a base of operations against the city (Quarles 1953:5; *ORA* Series 1, Vol. 28:16). Realizing

this, the Confederates made it nearly impossible for an assault force to capture the fortification. They constructed the citadel with compact (bullet-proof) sand, high wooden parapets, and a deep, wide ditch in front. Natural obstacles allowed assaulting troops only one narrow approach to the fort, which the Rebels protected with two cannons and one mortar. Finally, a "capacious bomb-proof shelter" protected the nearly 1,200 defenders during Union bombardment (*ORA Series 1*, vol. 28:16). The nearly 5,000-man assault force faced a nearly impossible task.

Given the honor of leading the 18 July assault on the seemingly impenetrable fort was the Massachusetts 54th Regiment. Official military records state that the 54th was selected for its efficiency and tenacity; unofficially, however, reports indicate that General Truman Seymour wanted to "put those damned niggers from Massachusetts in the advance," explaining, "we might as well get rid of them one time as another" (Nalty 1986:38). Factors surrounding the 54th's participation in the assault support the latter judgment. First of all, the 54th was in no physical condition to lead the storming against the fort. On July 16 the regiment had fought a fierce engagement on nearby James Island, losing nearly 10 percent of its men (Mays 1984:38). After 2 days of marching in subtropical heat with no rations, the half starved and physically spent troopers finally reached Morris Island just hours before the assault. Union commanders also failed to provide them with guides, engineers, or provisions for overcoming obstructions. Finally, these soldiers had no prior experience in storming a fort, much less leading an assault against one (Aptheker 1947a:36).

Colonel Robert G. Shaw, commander of the 54th Massachusetts, understood the dire situation facing him and his men, but as a staunch abolitionist, he could not refuse this opportunity for black men to demonstrate their valor. At twilight Shaw proudly led his 600 enlisted men and 22 officers over unfamiliar terrain toward the enemy stronghold. As the black phalanx neared, the fort suddenly erupted into a "volcanic hell, vomiting shot and shell with deafening explosions" (Quarles 1953:14). Sheets of grape and canister shot and musket fire mowed down entire sections of the assault line. Those that survived this opening salvo filled the gaps and continued their charge. The black attackers did not go far before they were slowed by a 4-foot ditch filled with water. Here Confederate sharpshooters picked off the sluggish soldiers like fish in a barrel. Undaunted, they charged onward through a rain of bullets toward their final hurdle — the parapet. Shaw urged his men over the earthwork and into the bastion, but was quickly shot dead as he scrambled over the parapet. In vicious hand-to-hand fighting with bayonets, handspikes, and gun rammers, the surviving aggressors managed to gain a brief foothold in the fort. Unfortunately supporting troops did not move rapidly enough to take advantage of their exploit. With over half the officers and recruits of Shaw's regiment either

killed, captured, or wounded, the black assailants were forced to withdraw. After a second failed attack by reserves, Union commanders determined that Fort Wagner was impregnable to assault and admitted defeat (Cornish 1966:153-155; Mays 1984:38-39; Nalty 1986:38; Quarles 1953:13-15;).

The boldness and sacrifice of the 54th immortalized them as symbols of the character, courage, and capability of African Americans. Particular praise went to Colonel Shaw, who the Confederates (out of hatred for any white man who would lead black troops) buried with the black men who followed him in the assault. One of the forgotten symbols of bravery was Sergeant William H. Carney, the fearless soldier who brought back the regiment's battle-scarred banner under a focused fire from the enemy. For his valor the Federal government awarded him the Congressional Medal of Honor, the first black to receive the nation's highest military honor. Later, some 16 black soldiers would earn this tribute during the course of the war (Mays 1984:56).

Following the 54th's intrepid attack, there was no longer any doubt about the African American's martial spirit. Many "sneers were tempered into eulogy" by the bravery demonstrated by these black soldiers. In August 1863 former Secretary of War Joseph Holt wrote Edwin Stanton, "the tenacious and brilliant valor displayed by troops of this race at Port Hudson, Milliken's Bend, and Fort Wagner has sufficiently demonstrated to the President and to the country the character of the service of which they are capable" (*ORA Series 3*, vol. 3:696).

There were plenty of other examples of African American bravery under fire. At Olustee, Florida, the 8th U.S.C.T. "stood to be killed or wounded — losing more than three hundred out of five hundred and fifty" while the 35th U.S.C.T. lost 230 killed, wounded, or missing (Cornish 1966:267). The 54th and 55th Massachusetts and the 35th U.S.C.T. would lose more men in another frontal attack reminiscent of Battery Wagner at Honey Hill, South Carolina (Smith 1993:11). Before Petersburg on 30 July 1864, the 19th, 23rd, 28th, 29th, and 31st U.S.C.T. charged into a large crater blown by a mine. Checked by white regiments retreating out of the crater, the blacks made it into and beyond, but were forced out. They tried again and were again repulsed and at a terrific toll. Considerable controversy surrounded their retreat and questions regarding their conduct continued for sometime in the press. But Colonel Thomas, their commander, defended their retreat, noting that the white soldiers were also retreating and "Whether we fought well or not, the scores of our dead lying as if mowed down by the hand of some mighty reaper and the terrible loss of the officers can best attest" (Quoted from Cornish 1966:278). Finally, at the Battle of Nashville on 15 and 16 December 1864, the 12th, 13th, 14th, 17th, 18th,



and 100th U.S.C.T., along with the 2nd Light Artillery, performed heroically in the struggle for that city.

In all, African American regiments participated in some 252 different battles according to Gladstone (1993:208-212). Aptheker (1947b:12) estimated that a total of 324 officers and 36,523 enlisted men from the U.S.C.T. lost their lives from combat and disease. Some 2,870 of these men died in action or were mortally wounded. To this we must add those who died in state regiments that did not become redesignated as U.S.C.T. Further, some 800 black sailors were killed according to Aptheker and perhaps 2,400 died of diseases (1947b:70,75).

### ***Aides and Spies***

One of the most valuable and little known services African Americans provided to the Union forces was their unique knowledge of the enemy and local terrain. Aptheker (1947b:194) has gone as far as to state that "It is impossible to study the thousands of first-hand reports from the Army and Navy officers ... without concluding that the greatest single source of military and naval intelligence ... for the Federal government during the Civil War was the Negro." Union commanders openly sought out fugitive slaves with such useful knowledge, and hired others as spies to infiltrate enemy encampments. In a few instances, officials were able to gain the employment of several personal servants to high-ranking Rebel commanders. Confederate leaders were aware of this "omnipresent spy system," but could find "no means to guard against it" (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 2:201).

These aides and spies provided both the Navy and Army with valuable intelligence on position, activity, cargo, size and names of Confederate ships, the position of armies, their strength, and defensive works (*ORN* 1897 Series 1, vol. 6:85, 95; *ORA* 1897 Series 1, vol. 13:257). However, military strategists had to be careful in accepting information from blacks. As slaves (or ex-slaves), they were used to telling whites what they thought they wanted to know, not necessarily the truth. Nevertheless, used with prudence and collaboration with other sources, this information contributed a major source of superiority for Union forces over the Confederacy (Mays 1984:63).

An example of such beneficiary knowledge is embodied in the ingenious and bold act of a Norfolk slave named Mary Louvestre. On a Spring day in 1863 while bringing lunch to her master John Louvestre, Mary overheard his conversation with a Confederate engineer concerning the refitting of the ironclad *Merrimac* (renamed the *Virginia*) which they bragged would be able to blow the Union Navy out of the water. These careless men also left the secret designs of the refitted ship on a table

where Mary saw them. Early the next morning, she sneaked into the engineers office and used her seamstress skills to accurately trace the drawings of the ironclad.

Understanding the importance of her information, Mary contrived a daring plan to get it to Union leaders. She obtained permission from her master to visit her previous owners in the valley. Instead of going there, however, she headed directly for the Union lines. With assistance from clandestine organizations that helped fugitive slaves, Mary was able to safely reach her destination. Union officials immediately escorted her to Washington under military guard. As a reward for her brave and quick-witted action, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles offered Mary freedom and employment. Mary refused the offer, however, preferring to go back home to await freedom there. Because of Mary's feat, the Union hastened completion of its own ironclad the *Monitor* in time to prevent the *Merrimac* from wreaking havoc on the Union Navy (Mays 1984:66-67).

## Summary

Because African Americans played such an ambiguous and unofficial capacity for much of the war, it is difficult to assess their contributions and impact on the war's outcome. They served in both the Union and Confederacy — as soldiers, sailors, laborers, spies, and in many other roles. To correctly evaluate their contribution in the war, one must analyze the parts they played on both sides of the Potomac.

On the Confederate side, the few African Americans who donned the Confederate gray made no significant contribution in the conflict. Some sailors, as in the case of Robert Smalls, did assist the Confederate Navy (until he deserted to the Union) in important and often highly responsible duties. Nevertheless, the real contribution came from the nearly 500,000 laborers who helped build fortifications, dig trenches, and other innumerable labor-intensive and menial tasks. In doing so, they made it possible for hundreds of thousands of white Confederates to fight on the front lines.

Like the Confederacy, the largest contributions made by Africans Americans for the Union came from the 250,000 laborers. Because these workers came from the South, they made a second contribution by adding to the Confederacy's labor problems by removing themselves from the labor pool. The 30,000 black sailors who made up about one-fourth of Union naval personnel also made important contributions in the numerous capacities aboard Union vessels and loading docks. As spies and informants, ex-slaves provided the Union with valuable information that gave them a distinct advantage over the Confederacy.

On the other hand, historians disagree on the impact made by black soldiers on the outcome of the war. "It is doubtful," remarked one historian recently, "that these African American troops ever played an instrumental role" in the northern war effort (Dean 1994:40). Several reasons account for his conclusion. First, the 186,000 African American troops comprised only 7 percent of all Union soldiers. This number is almost identical to the amount of men inducted into the service as a direct result of wartime draft, a program that Union leaders determined was a failure in augmenting troop levels. Second, African American troops were generally reserved for fatigue duties until late in the war. Their markedly lower combat casualty rates (6 percent killed among white northern troops, compared with only 1.6 percent for black soldiers) demonstrate that even in uniform they were used less in combat than white troops (Dean 1994:40; McPherson 1982:354).

Historian Joseph T. Glatthaar disagrees. He believes the presence of 186,000 black servicemen made the deciding difference in enabling the Union Army to successfully carry out its plan. This strategy called for General Grant to mobilize every available man, apply pressure on all fronts, and stretch the Confederacy so that General William T. Sherman could break through the Confederate defenses and attack the South's infrastructure. In order for this scheme to work, regiments had to remain full, which was difficult during the final year of conflict when soldiers were deserting by the thousands and draft riots were occurring in many northern cities (Glatthaar 1992:133-134). African American troops helped to fill this gap, and provided a critical contribution to victory. In fact, their "absence would have foiled Grant's strategy and quite possibly doomed efforts at reunion," argues Glatthaar. Instead, "their presence enabled Grant to embark on a course that promised the greatest hope of Federal victory" (Glatthaar 1992:137).

Regardless that historians disagree on the influence of African American servicemen to Union victory, it must be remembered that black troops served under more constricting circumstances than white troops. Many were impressed into service, discriminated in pay and duty, faced constant threat of death or return to slavery if captured, sent into battle with less training, given outdated and inferior weapons, provided little medical care, and were habitually harassed and physically abused by white soldiers (Mays 1984:34-35). Yet they did not desert in abnormally large numbers; instead, they worked hard and fought bravely (Cornish 1966:287-289). In the words of one black veteran:

We too have borne our share of the burden. We too have suffered and died in defense of that starry banner which floats only over free men (Redkey 1992:36).

## 4 The West 1865-1897



*African American soldiers played a significant role in advancing the settlement of the West.*

## 4 The West 1865-1897

by Elizabeth Arnett Fields

### Introduction

Many African Americans suffered and died while fighting for freedom in the Civil War. Indeed, their brave battlefield behavior had even convinced Congress that they deserved to be part of the future American military. Moreover, radical Republicans wanted to punish the southerners while proving that blacks could function well at all levels of society, and wished to place freedmen in the mainstream of American life — including military service. Less than a year after Lee's surrender, the Federal government moved to form several regiments of African Americans for the regular Army (Donaldson 1991:50).

For the first time in American military history, African Americans were allowed to enlist in the Regular Army during peacetime. In a clear pattern, the Army posted these soldiers to the most remote frontier forts in the West, provided them with the least training and worst supplies, and often disregarded their outstanding military service. Nevertheless, the "Buffalo Soldiers" made significant and lasting contributions to the settlement of the desolate and dangerous American West. They protected settlers and railroad construction crews from Indian attacks; built roads and erected telegraph lines; and performed escort duty for the postal carriers, stage lines, and survey parties. Buffalo Soldiers also helped maintain order during civil disputes, such as the Johnson County War in Wyoming. One of their lesser known duties was escorting white intruders out of the Indian Territory.

Because the Army posted black soldiers away from areas of civilization to avoid possible racial conflicts, blacks actually constituted a higher percentage of troops in the West than in the entire Army. While African Americans made up approximately 10 percent of the Army's enlisted corps, 1 in 5 soldiers serving in the West was black (Donaldson 1991:67).

## The Creation of Black Regiments

With the end of the Civil War, the United States faced the need for a large "peacetime" army to occupy the South and protect settlers on the western frontier from Indians and bandits. In early 1866, Congress began discussing proposed plans for this peacetime army. One of the more hotly debated issues concerned the inclusion of African Americans in the Regular Army. Liberal politicians made the radical suggestion that the Army follow the Navy's policy and fully integrate blacks into its ranks. More conservative leaders wanted the Army to remain white only. They eventually agreed to maintain the status quo and continue placing black recruits in segregated units. The final version of the military plan, passed in the summer of 1866, doubled the size of the Army, from 30 regiments to 60 — 10 cavalry, 45 infantry, and 5 artillery — for a total strength of 54,000 men (Utley 1973:11-12). Of the 30 new regiments, 6 were devoted to black enlistees: 2 cavalry and 4 infantry. The Army refused to create a black artillery regiment because many believed blacks were not intelligent enough to serve as artillerymen and did not want to place them near population centers in the East where such units were usually stationed (Donaldson 1991:61; Nalty 1986:51). By limiting blacks to cavalry and infantry regiments, the Army could keep black troops in the West, away from regions where racial trouble might begin.

On 1 August 1866, the 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments and the 38th, 39th, 40th, and 41st Infantry Regiments were officially organized (Nalty and MacGregor 1981:47). The Army immediately sent both cavalry and two of the infantry regiments to posts along the Texas border. The other two infantry regiments replaced volunteer units in the Reconstruction South. The number of black units did not remain at this level for long, however. In March 1869 the Army downsized its forces, eliminating 20 infantry regiments. As a result of this reorganization, the four black infantry regiments were consolidated in two — the 38th and 41st merged to form the 24th Infantry, while the 39th and 40th united to become the 25th (Fowler 1971:12).

## Origin of the Term "Buffalo Soldier"

Without debate, African American regiments served with distinction in the West, especially in combat. The nickname "Buffalo Soldiers," bestowed upon the black cavalrymen by the Native Americans, attests to their valor in battle. The most common explanation given for the origin of this sobriquet is that the Indians saw a similarity between the hair of the African American soldier and the buffalo. Since the buffalo was a sacred animal to the Native Americans, they would not bestow its

name on the soldiers unless they were worthy adversaries. The proud acceptance of the appellation "Buffalo Soldiers" by the black troops supports this explanation (Leckie 1967:26).

Some historians contend that the nickname was a result of a specific encounter between black cavalymen and Cheyenne Indians in Kansas. In September 1867, Private John Randall of Troop G of the 10th Cavalry was assigned to escort two civilians on a hunting trip. Soon after losing sight of the camp, the hunters suddenly became the hunted when a band of 70 Cheyenne warriors swept down on them. The two civilians quickly fell in the initial attack and Randall's horse was shot out from beneath him. Randall managed to scramble to safety behind a washout under the railroad tracks, where he fended off the attack with only his pistol until help from the nearby camp arrived. The Indians beat a hasty retreat, leaving behind 13 fallen warriors. Private Randall suffered a gunshot wound to his shoulder and 11 lance wounds, but recovered. The Cheyenne quickly spread word of this new type of soldier, "who had fought like a cornered buffalo; who like a buffalo had suffered wound after wound, yet had not died; and who like a buffalo had a thick and shaggy mane of hair" (Starr 1981:46). Over time, the nickname came to apply to all black soldiers and the 10th Cavalry later incorporated the buffalo into its regimental crest. White soldiers, on the other hand, preferred calling their black counterparts more disparaging names such as "brunettes" and "hokes" (Leckie 1967:26; Nalty 1986:54).

The Buffalo Soldiers served on the western frontier continuously from their inception in 1866 until the Spanish American War in 1898. Despite their impressive combat records amassed during the Indian Campaigns, the American public remained largely unaware of the valuable service performed by African American soldiers. The black regiments rarely received the recognition due them; often official Army reports limited their contributions in campaigns to a terse "colored troops ... were also engaged" (Foner 1974:134). However, 17 black soldiers received the United States' highest military decoration — the Congressional Medal of Honor — during this period (Foner 1974: 53).

While common threads run through the experiences of all African American soldiers who served in the West, histories of the individual regiments provide a larger view of their role and accomplishments. Unfortunately, until recently, little had been written about the Buffalo Soldiers before the Spanish American War because the Army did not require units to write regimental historical reports until the 20th century. The few that were written vary widely in content and quality. Nevertheless, the information in them, when supplemented with other writings, can provide a complete account of black regimental activities from 1865 to 1898. What follows

is an attempt to provide a summary record of the Buffalo Soldiers' achievements in the West.

One difficulty in chronicling the duties of the four African American regiments is that they frequently moved from one frontier outpost to another. Following the Civil War, the United States Army was faced with the formidable task of defending a frontier that stretched westward from Texas to California and northward from Mexico to Canada. To adequately protect this vast territory, the Army was forced to disperse various companies from a single regiment to several different forts and camps. As a result, the experiences of individual companies in any particular regiment were often very different from one another. Not until the Native Americans were finally subjugated late in the century did the Army begin consolidating entire regiments at one post. One must remember, too, that black soldiers were always garrisoned with white infantry and cavalry units — despite the omission of white units in the following narrative. Comprising only about 20 percent of all troops stationed in the West, African American servicemen were always in the minority.

The following examination of the four African American Regular Army regiments is not meant to be comprehensive. Instead, its purpose is to characterize their service from 1866 to 1898, with emphasis on major military campaigns and outstanding achievements.

## **Cavalry Regiments**

### ***9th Cavalry***

The 9th Cavalry was organized in Greenville, Louisiana, in August 1866. Most of the original recruits came from nearby New Orleans with a few from Kentucky. Given command of the 9th Cavalry was Colonel Edward Hatch, who spent the next 7 months completing the formation of his regiment. He faced a formidable task. While the recruits poured in, the officers did not. Without officers, new conscripts could not be adequately trained and disciplined. Ignoring the units' lack of officers and insufficient training, the Army, in March 1867 ordered all 12 companies (with a total strength of 885 men) of the 9th Cavalry to San Antonio, Texas. While en route to the Alamo city, mutiny flared among the troops, leaving one officer and two enlisted men dead.

Immediately following this fatal episode, Hatch made an urgent appeal to his superiors for additional officers. They complied with his request and soon the



regiment possessed a full complement of officers. The regiment remained in San Antonio for only 2 months before being reassigned to forts further west. Two companies had already been stationed at Brownsville. The remaining 10 companies received orders to occupy Forts Stockton and Davis along the Texas-Mexico border. Colonel Hatch established the regimental headquarters at Fort Stockton along with four companies. His second-in-command, Lieutenant Colonel Wesley Merritt, led the other six companies at Fort Davis.

***The Texas Years.*** The 9th Cavalry remained in Texas for 8 years. Their primary missions were to protect the mail and stage route from San Antonio to El Paso, establish law and order in the border region, and prevent Indian raids. In other words, "to help pave the way for the western advance of civilization, and to add their part in the great work of opening to settlement the vast resources of the great West" (Hutcheson 1896:283).

During the Civil War, west Texas had degenerated into a state of complete lawlessness. Many of the Texas forts had been abandoned, first by the Union Army and later by Confederates. Mescalero Apaches from the west, Kiowa and Comanches from the north, and Kickapoos and Lipans from Mexico, all took advantage of the discord among Americans and sought to wreak vengeance upon the white settlers and reclaim as much of their former lands as possible. The region's lack of law enforcement also attracted bandits, thieves, and cattle rustlers from both sides of the border. Lawlessness and chaos reigned.

The Army exacerbated the situation by assigning only three cavalry regiments to Texas — the 4th, 6th, and 9th. Of these three, only the 9th served continuously in the region. The other two regiments spent much of their time serving as occupation forces in the more populated regions of the state during Reconstruction (Leckie 1967:83). Even if all three regiments had been posted to the Texas frontier, however, the area was still too vast and the Native Americans too numerous for effective patrolling. To make their duty even more difficult, the 9th Cavalry was forced to work in the face of continuing societal prejudice. Although the settlers in Texas desperately needed protection from Indians and bandits, they did not welcome black soldiers.

When the 9th Cavalry arrived in west Texas in the summer of 1867, they were unprepared for the duty awaiting them. The Indians' lightning fast raids surprised the raw recruits. For the first several months they had little success in thwarting the Indian attacks. However, toward the end of 1867, K Company engaged nearly 1,000 Kickapoos, Lipans, and Mexicans at abandoned Fort Lancaster. Although outnumbered 12 to 1, the black soldiers managed to drive off the attackers, killing

at least 20 and wounding many more. The black unit suffered only three casualties in the unbridled skirmish.

For the next 7 years, the 9th Cavalry was almost constantly occupied in warfare. Only during the coldest part of winter (which lasted about 2 months) did the Indian raids and outlaw activity slowdown. The remainder of the year Texas was "literally swarming with small war parties" (Leckie 1967:86). To protect as much territory as possible, members of the 9th Cavalry occupied, at one time or another, virtually every fort along the west Texas frontier. After the attack at Fort Lancaster, the two companies at Brownsville were moved further north along the Rio Grande to Forts Duncan and Clark. Abandoned Fort Quitman, northwest of Fort Davis, was reactivated and also garrisoned by elements of the 9th Cavalry (Leckie 1967:86).

As the troopers of the 9th became familiar with both the harsh elements of west Texas and their enemies' tactics, the Buffalo Soldiers had more success in intercepting the raiders and chasing them down. Unfortunately for the black soldiers, the proximity of the Mexican border offered the marauders a nearby sanctuary. Knowing that United States cavalymen were prohibited from crossing the Rio Grande, the raiders, when closely pursued, invariably fled into Mexico (Leckie 1967:86). It became obvious that more drastic means were necessary to curb Indian raids. Upon his return as commander of the 9th in September 1869, after 18 months of detached service with the Freedman's Bureau in Louisiana, Colonel Hatch launched an all-out campaign to clear the region of Native Americans.

By this time the troopers of the 9th Cavalry were combat-hardened veterans and anxious to take the offensive against their elusive enemy. In January 1870, in the height of winter, members of the 9th Cavalry marched out of Fort Davis and into Apache territory. For the following 5 months, the Buffalo Soldiers chased the Mescalero Apaches west into New Mexico, killing relatively few but destroying many of their lodges and capturing their horses. During this campaign Sergeant Emanuel Stance of F Company earned the Congressional Medal of Honor.

While the Spring 1870 campaign was largely successful in removing the Mescaleros from west Texas, the Kiowas, Comanches, Kickapoos, and Lipans remained in the area. Believing that the only way to subdue the Kickapoos and Lipans was to pursue them back to their villages in Mexico, in December 1870 Colonel Hatch sought permission from the United States and Mexican governments to cross the Rio Grande. Washington complied with the request but President Benito Juarez, who was struggling to maintain his presidency against General Porforio Diaz, refused. Without the ability to go into Mexico, the Buffalo Soldiers had limited success in controlling these tribes.

Also hamstringing the efforts of the Buffalo Soldiers was racial hostility and lack of cooperation from local authorities. The situation became so intolerable that in May 1875 Secretary of War William Belknap threatened Texas governor Richard Coke with withdrawing all Federal troops from his state if he did not curb the racial hostility against the black troops (Leckie 1967:111). Whether or not Governor Coke improved conditions for black troops, the Army decided to transfer the 9th Cavalry out of Texas. Its new assignment was the Department of New Mexico, a region fraught with hardships and problems similar to those in Texas.

In 8 years of service in some of the most rugged and hostile territory in the country, the 9th Cavalry was in constant conflict with Native Americans, Mexican revolutionaries, and outlaws. Although they achieved only limited success in curbing the violence in the west Texas frontier, their accomplishments were noteworthy. Besides constant patrols and skirmishing, the Buffalo Soldiers also were able to explore and map vast regions of the west, paving the way for further settlement of the frontier.

***The Apache Campaigns.*** Beginning in the early 1870s, the United States Indian Bureau created a number of reservations for the Apache Indians in Arizona and southern New Mexico. However, the various Apache tribes resisted efforts by the Federal government to isolate them in this barren and desolate region. Faced with the choice of either remaining on the reservations and starving to death or leaving their compound and facing the wrath of the United States cavalry, many bands of Apaches fled to Mexico. Meanwhile, the United States punished those who remained by attempting to consolidate the various tribes to the reservation at San Carlos. This only increased Apache defiance. They began raiding at will throughout the region.

In late 1875, the 9th Cavalry received orders transferring the regimental headquarters to Santa Fe, New Mexico. For the next 6 years, the regiment was scattered at posts throughout the region, including Forts Bayard, McRae, Wingate, Stanton, Union, Selden, and Garland. Their primary mission was to subdue the uncooperative Native Americans and respond to trouble within the reservations. As hardened veterans of Indian warfare in Texas, the 9th Cavalry were immediately placed on patrol, chasing Apache raiders. Unfortunately for the black soldiers, they were forced to fight the Indians with only half their authorized strength (the remaining not being assigned). As in Texas, the 9th Cavalry was spread across too much territory and was severely undermanned.

Their first significant encounter with the Native Americans came in September 1877 when 300 Apache warriors led by Victorio, fled the San Carlos reservation and

began raiding along the Upper Gila River. The 9th Cavalry caught up with Victorio and his band in the Mogollon Mountains. Within a month they forced the Apaches to surrender and return to the San Carlos reservation. Not long after the black troops left, Victorio and his men quickly returned to raiding and pillaging. Again the 9th Cavalry was sent to round-up the raiders. In February 1878, the black troops surrounded the natives at Ojo Caliente. In the subsequent negotiations, Victorio and his followers agreed to surrender on the condition that they would not be forced to return to San Carlos. This would not be the last encounter with Victorio.

During their 6-year stint in the New Mexico Territory, the 9th Cavalry did more than just subdue rebellious Apaches. The Buffalo Soldiers were also involved in tempering a number of civil disputes. The most famous of these was the El Paso "Salt War" in December 1877 between Americans and Mexicans who made similar claims to the salt deposits east of the border town. The dispute led to all-out rioting in nearby San Elizario, resulting in nearly a dozen deaths. Texas governor Richard Coke was forced to request Federal assistance to quell the uproar. The arrival of nine troops from the 9th Cavalry quickly quieted the rioters.

The following summer the 9th Cavalry was ordered to Lincoln County, New Mexico, to restore order in the McSween and Murphy-Dolan feud. The most famous participant of which was William Bonney, also known as Billy the Kid. For months, troopers from the 9th Cavalry chased down the outlaws.

Meanwhile, the Buffalo Soldiers were faced with a new challenge — Utes from Colorado. In 1868 the Utes agreed to remove themselves to a reservation in western Colorado. However, the silver boom in Colorado during the 1870s led to boundary disputes between Utes and miners. Following Colorado's entrance into the Union in 1876, whites pushed the Federal government to remove the Utes from their silver-laden land. While Washington pondered the request, squatters moved onto the Ute lands. The Utes naturally resisted, leading to rampant warfare in the region. In March 1878 members of the 9th Cavalry were dispatched to the southern border of the Ute reservation. Colonel Hatch managed to pacify the dispute without resorting to force. He then successfully negotiated an agreement between the two, which provided white settlers with a small strip of land from the Ute reservation.

Other elements of the 9th Cavalry were not so fortunate in their encounter with the White River Utes the following year. Trouble began when Federal Indian agent Nathan Meeker tried to force the nomadic Utes to settle down and become farmers. The Utes resisted this new lifestyle and threatened to revolt. Meeker immediately asked for military support and the Army complied with his request by sending the

3rd and 5th Cavalries and 4th Infantry. When the troops crossed the Milk River on 29 September, the Utes attacked. Later that day Company D of the 9th Cavalry received an urgent request for assistance. Captain Dodge and his Buffalo Soldiers immediately saddled up their mounts and marched continuously for 23 hours to reach the Milk River, where they found the troops pinned down. For 3 days the soldiers held off the Utes. Finally on 5 October, troops from the 5th Cavalry arrived from Fort D. A. Russell giving the Americans the needed manpower to overwhelm the Native Americans. As a result of his actions during the conflict, Sergeant Henry Johnson of the 9th Cavalry was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

One of the most frustrating campaigns for the 9th (and 10th) Cavalry was the "Victorio War" of 1879-80. In late August 1879, Victorio once again led a group of Mescalero Apaches off the reservation to raid sheepherders and generally wreak havoc among the white population. On 4 September they made a daring attack against Company E of the 9th Cavalry at Ojo Caliente, killing 8 guards and stealing 46 horses. The 9th Cavalry quickly responded, sending virtually every man to search out and destroy Victorio's band of warriors. The Buffalo Soldiers chased the Apaches, even following them across the border into Mexico. Only when they had exhausted their supplies did the black troops return to Fort Bayard. Victorio remained in Mexico. The Apaches finally caught the ire of the Mexican Army when they killed over two dozen civilians in two separate attacks at Carrizal. In January 1880 Victorio and his men beat a hasty retreat across the border, taking refuge in the San Andres mountains.

The following month Colonel Hatch came south from the regimental headquarters in Santa Fe to take charge of the campaign against Victorio. Suspecting that Victorio was getting supplies from the Mescalero Apaches on the Tularosa Reservation, Hatch's first move was to disarm and dismount the Native Americans on this reservation. This action only angered the Apaches, compelling between 30 and 50 to join Victorio's gang. The Mescalero Apaches were not the only ones to receive reinforcements. Five troops from the 10th Cavalry, two troops from the 6th Cavalry, and two Indian scout companies arrived from Texas and Arizona to assist the 9th Cavalry.

Before the Buffalo Soldiers could get in the field, however, Victorio and his band escaped from the San Andres mountains and headed west for their former homeland near the Mogollon range in western New Mexico. Throughout May 1880 the 9th Cavalry exhausted themselves chasing Victorio through the Mogollon and Black mountains as far west as San Carlos. When the black troops finally closed in on the band at the end of the month, Victorio once again fled across the border into Mexico. Because of his attacks against citizens of Carrizal the previous year, the Mexicans

were equally anxious to bring Victorio to justice. By crossing the border, Victorio had, in essence, jumped out of the frying pan and into the fire. In October, Mexican troops trapped Victorio and his men in a mountain canyon. Refusing to surrender, the Apaches made a gallant, yet suicidal attempt to shoot their way out of the Mexican snare. Victorio and 60 of his followers were killed.

Although Victorio was dead, his legacy lived on. In October 1880 a surviving group of his followers led by Nana (Victorio's former lieutenant) continued to raid southern New Mexico. For the next year, troopers of the 9th Cavalry chased small raiding parties in and out of New Mexico mountains and back and forth across the Mexican border. They continued this grueling campaign until relocated out of New Mexico late in 1881. Nana and his men eventually shifted westward into Arizona.

***In Kansas and the Indian Territory.*** After nearly 14 years of continuous warfare in the southwest, the 9th Cavalry finally received relief from frontier duty and was sent to the relatively quiet solitude of Kansas and Oklahoma Territory. Regimental headquarters were established at Fort Riley, Kansas, with various troops posted at Forts Elliott, Hays, Sill, Reno, and Supply. In their new assignment, the cavalrymen spent more time than ever before in garrison, but they also faced new challenges.

In the 1880s, the Oklahoma Territory was still used by the Federal government as a reservation for more than a dozen different Indian tribes. Whites were prohibited by law from entering the Indian Territory. Of course this did not stop them from invading the Indian's domain. Between 1879 and 1881, alarming numbers of settlers began filtering into Oklahoma (Leckie 1967:246-247). To stem this tide of settlement, the Army sent the 9th Cavalry to Kansas and Oklahoma Territory. Instead of fighting Indians as they had in Texas and New Mexico, here the Buffalo Soldiers defended them by removing these squatters from their land. Whites in the region quickly grew to detest the black cavalrymen.

One soldier, pioneer, adventurer, and would-be colonizer named David L. Payne proved particularly troublesome to members of the 9th Cavalry. Recognized as the leader of the "Oklahoma Movement" (an unofficial organization designed to promote settlement of Oklahoma), Payne bravely made four forays into Indian Territory in 1882 alone to try and establish a colony; each time he was arrested and escorted out of the region. However, with each successive attempt, Payne and his followers (known as "Boomers") became more determined to stay. In August 1882 the situation reached a critical point when the squatters refused to reload their wagons and leave. Just as determined to perform their duty, the Buffalo Soldiers loaded the Boomers' belongings, hog tied them and tossed them into their wagons before

driving them out of the Indian Territory. This treatment apparently only stiffened Payne's resolve, for in January 1883 he came back with over 900 settlers. Again the Cavalrymen arrested Payne (only temporarily) and escorted the would-be colonizers back to Kansas. In June the following year, David Payne made another attempt to colonize the Indian Territory. This venture proved no different than previous ones. While organizing another colony to invade Oklahoma in 1884, Payne suddenly died.

However, his death did not kill the Boomers' dream of a colony in Oklahoma. William Couch, one of Payne's most forceful followers, took over the Oklahoma Movement. At least three times during the second half of 1883, Couch led the Boomers to Oklahoma. Each time, members of the 9th Cavalry escorted them out of the Indian Territory. With each encounter the squatters became more reluctant to leave, increasing the probability of a bloody confrontation.

A "blood bath" was narrowly avoided between the two groups in January 1885 when Couch and 300 settlers encamped on Stillwater Creek refused to leave upon Colonel Hatch's order. To compel the Boomers to leave, Hatch assembled seven companies of the 9th, a company of infantry, and two howitzers and threatened to attack the encampment. The squatters still refused to leave and promised to defend themselves if the Army tried to forcibly remove them. Wanting to avoid bloodshed, Hatch decided to surround the camp and cut off their supplies. Within 5 days, the Boomers were forced to load their wagons and return to Arkansas City.

After nearly 4 years of performing the thankless, unpopular service of controlling white encroachment, the War Department transferred the 9th Cavalry to the Department of the Platte. During their stay in Kansas and the Indian Territory, the Buffalo Soldiers of the 9th never participated in combat; instead, they spent most of their time in garrison and on routine patrols. The reason for their transfer remains unclear: there was no pressing demand for troops in Nebraska, while there was a continuing need for them in the Indian Territory — at least until the area was opened for settlement in 1889. Perhaps the racial tension between white settlers and black troopers convinced the Army that the job was best left to white soldiers. In any case, the 9th Cavalry moved on.

***The Sioux Ghost Dance Movement.*** In June 1885, the 9th Cavalry moved to various posts throughout the upper Plains. Regimental headquarters were established at Fort Robinson, while assorted companies were stationed at Fort Duchesne in Utah, Fort McKinney in Wyoming, and Fort Niobrara in Nebraska. Headquarters frequently shifted troops from one post to another, but the general trend was to consolidate regiments in one or two forts. By 1896, troops from the 9th Cavalry were stationed only at Forts Robinson and Duchesne. With the closing of

the frontier near the turn of the century, the west became much more peaceful. Except for a few explosive incidents, the 9th's years in the Department of the Platte reflected this tranquility.

The 9th Cavalry's "one last moment of glory" in the old west was quelling the Sioux Ghost Dance uprising during the summer of 1890 (Leckie 1967:252). The winter of 1889-1890 was particularly harsh and the Sioux Indians, confined to six small reservations in North and South Dakota, suffered miserably. Impoverished, hungry, and sick, the Sioux needed only a foretelling of future bliss to spark them into a mass delusion. This rumor originated from a Paiute named Wovoka, who talked of a new world in which the Indians "would be reunited with dead friends and relatives in a blissful and eternal life, free of pain, sickness, want, and death, free, above all, of white people" (Utley 1973:402). By working themselves into a trance through intense prayer and the physically exhausting "Ghost Dance," the Sioux supposedly were able to glimpse into this promised new world. Soon, the Ghost Dance Religion swept throughout the Sioux camps "like a prairie fire" (Leckie 1967:252).

The movement might have passed peacefully except for two unfortunate events. First, the Bureau of Indian Affairs replaced the agent at the Pine Ridge reservation with one lacking experience in Indian relations. This new agent, D.F. Royer, overreacted to the frenzied dancing and chanting and asked the Army to send troops to quiet the Indians. In late November 1890, five companies of the 9th Cavalry, along with eight companies from the 2nd and 8th Infantry, arrived at the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations. The presence of the 600 troops alarmed the Sioux, who quickly divided into two groups: those who wished to comply with the soldiers and others intent on defying them. The recalcitrant Sioux withdrew to a remote area in the northwest corner of the Pine Ridge reservation. By early December, approximately 600 Sioux families from Pine Ridge and Rosebud had joined them.

To prevent a situation similar to the one at Pine Ridge from occurring at the other Sioux reservations, General Brooke ordered the arrest of the two most influential Sioux chiefs — Sitting Bull and Big Foot. This turned out to be the Federal government's second, and most damaging mistake.

After his arrest by Indian police, Sitting Bull's followers attempted to rescue their leader. The venture failed miserably, resulting in the deaths of Sitting Bull, six Sioux warriors, and an equal number of Indian police. In response, the chiefs at the Pine Ridge reservation invited Big Foot (who was still under military observation) to come and help restore peace. The military was unaware of this invitation, so when Big Foot left the reservation, they misunderstood his intentions. Troopers from the 9th and 7th Cavalry were immediately dispatched to retrieve him. Two



companies of the 7th Cavalry eventually located Big Foot and his entourage and began escorting them to Pine Ridge. However, when the rest of the 7th Cavalry caught up with them at Wounded Knee Creek, the commander ordered the Sioux to hand over their weapons. The warriors refused. What resulted was the famous tragedy known as the massacre at Wounded Knee.

The 9th Cavalry also engaged the Sioux in two skirmishes during this campaign. The first came immediately after their fruitless search for Big Foot before Wounded Knee. On 29 December, three of the four companies had returned to the Pine Ridge Agency, but Troop D had fallen behind with the pack train. After waiting 2 hours at the Agency for the train and Troop D, the other three troops received word that their colleagues were under attack. They quickly remounted and raced to aid their comrades. During the brief but fierce contest, the black cavalrymen killed most of the Sioux attackers, while suffering only one casualty (Perry 1891:253-254).

The 9th Cavalry had very little time to celebrate their victory. The few Sioux who had survived the aforementioned slaughter fled to the northwest corner of the Pine Ridge reservation to join other rebellious warriors. The following day, some of these Sioux vented their frustration by setting fire to buildings at the Drexel Mission located in a nearby valley. The 7th Cavalry went to investigate the incident. However, Colonel Forsythe, commander of the cavalry unit, failed to secure the surrounding hills before sending his men into the valley. Sioux warriors quickly entrapped the cavalrymen and began firing upon them. Fortunately for the soldiers, the gunfire could be heard at the Pine Ridge agency. Troopers of the 9th Cavalry came charging to their rescue and dispersed the Indians. Within a span of approximately 30 hours, four troops of the 9th Cavalry marched over 100 miles, had two engagements with the Sioux, and lost only one man and two horses (Perry 1891:254). One Buffalo Soldier, Corporal William O. Wilson, received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his part in the fighting. The incident at Drexel Mission was the last of the fighting during the Ghost Dance Movement. The defeated Sioux warriors returned to their reservations several weeks later. The Ghost Dance uprising represented the last major campaign of the Indian Wars, and the 9th Cavalry was "the first [regiment] in the field in November and the last to leave late the following March" (Hutcheson 1896:287).

***Civil Disputes in Wyoming.*** Shortly after their arrival in Nebraska, the Buffalo Soldiers were called upon to intervene in a civil dispute. As they had been called to restore law and order in the "Salt War" in El Paso, Texas, and the Lincoln County dispute in New Mexico, troopers of the 9th Cavalry were ordered to Johnson County, Wyoming, in June 1892, to avert civil war. The incident is also important because

it highlights how little effect the Buffalo Soldiers' exemplary service had in dispelling racial prejudice in the West.

The Johnson County War was a dispute between large corporate cattle ranches and small landholders — an all too common occurrence in the post-Civil War American West. Law and tradition were on the side of the settlers and, until the 1890s, the large cattle ranching corporations simply moved onto unsettled land. By this time, however, northern Wyoming represented the last of the free range. Heavy winters in the mid 1880s and other financial problems only added to the already hostile feelings between corporate cattlemen and small landholders.

Problems between the two groups of ranchers began in 1884 when the cattle corporations, which possessed a great deal of political clout in the state, pushed a bill through the legislature that allowed large ranchers to claim all unbranded cattle. Despite the law, "rustling" increased, mostly by small ranchers claiming their own cattle. By April 1892, a group of corporate cattlemen decided to end the theft of cattle by attacking the leading group of rustlers located in Johnson County. On April 9, these "invaders" killed two men and burned a ranch. The Johnson County sheriff assembled a posse and besieged the invaders at another ranch, some 13 miles from the site of their attack. Wyoming's acting governor requested military assistance, which arrived in the form of troops from the 6th and 8th Cavalry and the 8th Infantry. These troops took the invaders into custody without further bloodshed, and escorted them to Fort McKinney. However, when the Army was about to turn them over to the Johnson County sheriff, they refused to surrender, fearing that civilians would lynch them. These men used their political clout to pressure the Army to protect them from civilians, which it did, placing them under arrest at Fort McKinney and later at Fort D. A. Russell near Cheyenne.

The invaders continued to use their political influence and requested a change of the troops assigned to maintain the uneasy peace. In a telegram sent on 1 June 1892 to Senator Joseph Carey of Wyoming, the invaders specifically asked that the Army move troops belonging to the 9th Cavalry from Fort Robinson to Fort McKinney (Murray 1966:70). Their reasoning was that the black soldiers would not be sympathetic to the white settlers. Senator Carey urged the Secretary of War to "concentrate troops in the disturbed area" (Schubert 1973:60). Within 2 weeks, six companies of the 9th Cavalry arrived in Johnson County and established Camp Bettens near the town of Suggs, located at the end of the Burlington Railroad. Suggs was a typical end-of-the-line town with a large transient population and an inordinate number of saloons. The "drifters" of the town were especially unfriendly toward the blacks troops, frequently making insulting remarks (Schubert 1973:62).

Violence probably would have been avoided except for another agitating element — prostitutes. In Suggs, there were a number of prostitutes who had serviced the Buffalo Soldiers at Forts McKinney and Robinson. A soldier from G Troop, Private Champ, found one of these women and tried to enter her house. At the time the woman was living with a white man and refused to let the soldier enter. Private Champ eventually left and went into a nearby saloon, where another Buffalo Soldier soon joined him. The man who was cohabitating with the prostitute showed up at the saloon and threatened to shoot the two soldiers. The troopers left the saloon without incident but were fired upon as they rode back to camp. Seeking revenge, the 2 soldiers (along with 18 others) returned to town that night firing into houses, stores, and the saloon they had earlier visited. The local townspeople returned the fire, killing one soldier and wounding two others. The Buffalo Soldiers managed to wound one civilian.

The gunshots were heard in the camp, and the remaining companies were sent to investigate and arrest the troopers who were absent without leave (AWOL) (Schubert 1973:66-67). The Army was deeply embarrassed over the incident and conducted an investigation which concluded that the soldier killed was probably shot by his companions (Murray 1966:73). Nevertheless, the Buffalo Soldiers remained at Camp Bettens until November 1892 when they were transferred back to Nebraska.

***End of the Indian Wars.*** The 9th Cavalry remained in Nebraska until the outbreak of the Spanish American War in 1898. With no need for the regiment to be spread over a large area, the regimental headquarters remained at Fort Robinson and troops were consolidated at that post and Fort Duchesne, Utah. Two troops were “skeletonized” — that is, only a minimum number of personnel were assigned to them. The Buffalo Soldiers spent these years performing garrison duty — a well-earned respite from the rigors of the Indian campaigns. Life must have seemed almost idyllic, compared with the preceding 18 years.

### ***10th Cavalry***

***The First Year.*** The 10th Cavalry was created in August 1866 and organized at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Recruiting the necessary men was especially slow, however. Four months after its creation, the 10th Cavalry consisted of only 3 officers and 64 “unassigned recruits” (Bigelow 1899:289; Glass 1972:13). The recruiting was so slow because men were selected specifically for these regiments by the regiments’ officers (Bigelow 1899:289). After several months of disappointing results from recruiting stations in the upper South, Grierson sent officers to the northern cities of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh (Leckie 1967:13). By the Spring of 1867,

the organization of the regiment was proceeding more quickly, with larger numbers of recruits arriving at Fort Leavenworth. This system of recruitment occurred with all the African American regiments, and was unique only to them (Glass 1972:12).

Colonel Benjamin H. Grierson, commander of the 10th Cavalry, is considered one of the foremost cavalry officers of the Civil War and gained fame for his raid through Mississippi. By the end of the conflict he had achieved the rank of brevet major general of volunteers. Grierson was released from the service in April 1866 but quickly accepted his Regular Army commission when offered command of the new regiment (Leckie 1967:8). He proved to be an excellent commander, establishing high standards for his men. Under his leadership for more than two decades, the 10th Cavalry became a well-disciplined, combat-proven unit.

The regimental headquarters remained at Fort Leavenworth for 1 year, occupied mainly with recruiting and organization. While at Fort Leavenworth, the regiment suffered under the prejudice of the fort commander, General William Hoffman. Hoffman pettily beleaguered Grierson and his men, with contrived complaints ranging from tardiness to the mishandling of correspondence (Leckie 1967:14). This harassment compelled Grierson to instruct his officers to omit the word "Colored" from all official correspondence. He wanted the regiment to be known "simply [as] the 10th Regiment of Cavalry, United States Army" with no reference to race (Leckie 1967:14). Grierson also expressed his frustration with General Hoffman in formal complaints to his superiors but the situation remained unchanged. His final solution was to move the regiment out of Fort Leavenworth and into the field.

By February 1867, the first company of the 10th Cavalry was organized and dispatched to western Kansas to provide protection for railroad construction crews. Two months later, Company B followed Company A into the field. In May, barely 48 hours after arriving at Fort Leavenworth, Company C joined them. By late summer, eight companies of the 10th Cavalry were in the field, posted at a number of forts and camps along the line of the Kansas Pacific Railroad, which was then under construction (Bigelow 1899:290; Leckie 1967:16; Wharfield 1965:51). In early August 1867, the regimental headquarters was transferred to Fort Riley, further west in Kansas. Here the remaining four companies were organized (Bigelow 1899:291; Leckie 1967:17). By October, the 10th Cavalry was fully organized and ready for combat.

***Duty on the Great Plains.*** The 10th Cavalry was stationed in Kansas and Indian Territory (Oklahoma) for the next 7 years. The regiment's first engagement took place on 2 August 1867 when Company F, under command of Captain Armes, was attacked by a band of Cheyenne warriors. After holding off the Indians for 6 hours,

the troopers attempted to retreat back to camp. The Cheyenne chased them for 15 miles until finally ceasing their attack. One Buffalo Soldier was killed and Captain Armes was wounded. The captain estimated the Cheyenne dead at six (Bigelow 1899:291; Glass 1972:15; Leckie 1967:22).

The situation in Kansas and the Indian Territory in 1867 was similar to that faced by the 9th Cavalry in Texas. The withdrawal of Federal troops during the Civil War had reduced the area to a state of nearly complete lawlessness. Cattle thieves roamed the land with little fear of legal reprisal; Kiowa, Comanche, Arapaho, and Cheyenne Indians attacked white settlers; and bootleggers and other illegal traders compounded the situation. Bungled efforts by the Army, shortly after the Civil War, to subdue the Indians only succeeded in escalating the violence (Leckie 1967:19).

Into this maelstrom rode the untried African American troopers of the 10th Cavalry. Three companies — D, E and L — were posted in Indian Territory at Forts Gibson and Arbuckle with the remaining nine companies at Forts Hays, Harker, and Larned in Kansas (Leckie 1967:21). From these forts, the soldiers patrolled along the Smoky Hill and Santa Fe routes of the Union Pacific railroad and tried to protect “far-flung” settlements (Bigelow 1899:290; Glass 1972:15).

During its first year of field service the 10th Cavalry participated in only a handful of engagements. Just 3 weeks after the attack on Company F on 2 August, the same company and 90 men of the 18th Kansas Cavalry (a volunteer unit) came under fire again. One Buffalo soldier and two of the volunteers were killed; Cheyenne casualties are unknown. Soldiers of the 10th Cavalry fought in three more skirmishes before the end of the year; two with Cheyenne and one with Comanches (Glass 1972:96). These first fights revealed a lack of training among the Buffalo Soldiers, but also demonstrated their bravery and willingness to follow orders (Leckie 1967:25). Elements of the 10th also participated in General Sheridan’s 1867-68 winter campaign against Black Kettle’s band of Cheyenne (Bigelow 1899:291-292; Glass 1972:15-16).

In November 1867, Colonel Grierson shifted Company M south into Indian Territory, posting the unit at Fort Gibson. During this time, the soldiers posted in Indian Territory experienced no combat but were busy nonetheless. One activity in particular that kept them occupied was rebuilding Fort Arbuckle (Leckie 1967:28). Many of the forts abandoned by the Army during the Civil War had fallen into disrepair. The duty of making these places habitable again fell to the soldiers who occupied them. Anyway, there was little the soldiers of the 10th Cavalry could do about the occasional Indian raid, the illegal whiskey trade, or the theft of cattle and

horses. By the time word reached the forts of such activity, the Native Americans or white intruders were out of reach (Leckie 1967:28).

For most of 1868, peace reigned on the Great Plains. In late 1867, the Comanches, Kiowas, Kiowa-Apaches, Southern Cheyennes, and Arapahos had signed the Medicine Lodge treaties. Unfortunately, the Senate battled internally over the details of the treaties, delaying their ratification and implementation. As 1868 wore on, the aforementioned tribes grew increasingly upset with the United States' apparent failure to honor the treaties. Groups of Indians gathered at the various Indian agencies throughout the area, expecting the free supplies promised them. When the Indian agents told them they had little to offer, the Indians responded with raids. In May, a band of Comanches made a major raid on the Wichita Indian Agency, burning it to the ground (Leckie 1967:29-30).

In late summer, Congress finally appropriated the necessary funds to implement the Medicine Lodge treaties. Disbursal of the annuities to the Indians began during the first week of August 1868. However, the government made the fatal mistake of including guns and ammunition (for use in hunting game) as part of the payment. Instead, the Indians used the weapons to attack white settlers in Kansas. This response compelled the United States government to initiate a policy forcing all Indians south of the Kansas border into Indian Territory. Those who refused to move were to be killed (Leckie 1967:31-32). Troopers of the 10th Cavalry saw a great deal of combat in implementing this policy. As the Indian attacks continued to increase, however, General Sheridan made plans for a decisive campaign that winter.

During this campaign, the 10th Cavalry played a variety of roles. In November 1868, three companies were sent to Fort Cobb to keep an eye on the Kiowas and Comanches who had assembled nearby. Although these Indians had not participated in any of the fighting, they were reported to be "sullen and restless" (Leckie 1967:39). Company E remained at Fort Arbuckle while four other companies patrolled the Kansas border and another four moved to Fort Lyon. The companies at Fort Lyon did not see any combat but made long marches under blizzard conditions that kept the various tribes from moving north or west. The troopers stationed in Indian Territory, on the other hand, experienced the same blizzard conditions but also engaged the Indians (Leckie 1967:39-44).

The 1868-69 winter campaign on the Great Plains was a successful one, and as a result, the entire 10th Cavalry was moved into Indian Territory early in 1869. In January 1869, several companies of the 10th arrived at the site on Medicine Bluff Creek and began constructing temporary shelters. The new post was named Camp

Wichita and regimental headquarters was transferred there in March. Permanent construction began shortly thereafter, and in August the camp was renamed Fort Sill. By that time, the regiment was divided between Fort Sill and Camp Supply, six companies at each post. For the next 6 years, the 10th Cavalry remained in Indian Territory, acting as "an army of occupation" among the various Native American tribes removed to the reservations (Leckie, 1967:47). The Buffalo Soldiers were charged with keeping Native Americans on the reservations, and keeping whites out. Various companies were stationed at Forts Dodge, Gibson, Arbuckle, Sill, and Supply, and at the Cheyenne Indian Agency in accomplishing these duties (Bigelow 1899:293).

However, most of the hostile activity took place off the reservations with raiding parties riding south into Texas. So the black troops devoted most of their time to patrolling the Red River hoping to intercept groups returning to the reservations, scouting for trespassers, and continuing construction of the fort. Only occasionally was Fort Sill attacked. More frequently, army brass deemed "a show of force" necessary and ordered the 10th Cavalry to patrol the field, periodically for weeks at a time (Leckie 1967:45-67).

In June 1872, the army transferred the 10th Cavalry's headquarters back to Fort Gibson in response to an increase in the number of white intruders into Indian Territory from the north. Less than a year later, regimental headquarters returned to Fort Sill where it remained until March 1875. But during those years, the regiment was divided between Indian Territory and Texas (Leckie 1967:68-71). In April 1873, the army ordered companies south into Texas. Three companies were stationed at Fort Richardson, two at Fort Griffin, and two at Fort Concho. The companies remaining in Indian Territory were concentrated at Fort Sill and Camp Supply. The Indian Territory was relatively quiet during the summer of 1873, although small raiding parties continued to harass the north Texas border (Wharfield 1965:55-57). The black troopers spent most of the summer in the saddle, scouting for these raiders, but saw little action (Leckie 1967:76-78).

The winter did not bring the expected respite from field duty. Kiowa and Comanche raids into Texas were so frequent that the 10th Cavalry spent the winter stationed at a string of stockaded camps between Fort Sill and Fort Griffin to more quickly intercept raiding parties. Through the spring and summer, hostile activity increased. By July, military leaders planned another major campaign against the Kiowas and Comanches, similar to the one of 1867-68. Troopers took to the field in September and remained there until the following spring. During this campaign, known as the "Red River War," five columns were formed from regiments stationed in the Departments of Texas and Missouri, with the 10th Cavalry forming the

"backbone" of one of these columns (Leckie 1967:124). After enduring the winter of 1874-1875 mostly in the saddle, the regiment moved back south to Texas.

**South Into Texas.** In April 1875, the entire regiment was stationed in Texas, with regimental headquarters established at Fort Concho. Six companies were assigned to Fort Concho, with two each at Forts Griffin and McKavett, and one each at Forts Davis and Stockton (Glass 1972:20). The seven companies that were moved south into Texas 2 years earlier remained as busy as the troopers in the Indian Territory. West Texas in 1873 was a barely settled region, with frontier towns comprised mostly of transients. In addition to preventing and responding to Apache raids, the troopers' duties included providing escorts for contractors' trains and stages, and assisting civilian authorities to capture rustlers and other criminals (Leckie 1967:73).

After the regiment was reunited in April 1875, it was destined to remain in Texas for the next 10 years. For 7 of those years, regimental headquarters remained at Fort Concho. The various companies of the regiment would be scattered over "the length and breadth of western Texas" for protection of the frontier (Bigelow 1899:295). Their pursuits of small bands of hostile Indians kept the Buffalo Soldiers in their saddles for many long marches over a great expanse of harsh land, from the north border of Texas across the Rio Grande into Mexico (Glass 1972:20).

In July 1875, six companies of the 10th Cavalry participated in an extensive expedition aimed at sweeping the Indians from the region of Texas known as the Llano Estacado, or Staked Plains. A detailed explanation of this campaign follows in the narrative of that regiment's history (Leckie 1967:143). During the following 10 years, the 10th Cavalry participated in countless small campaigns against bands of Apaches, Lipans, and Kickapoos throughout the region. In 1880, the regiment participated in a major campaign against the Warm Spring Apaches, known as the "Victorio War," previously discussed.

Following the conclusion of the Victorio War in 1880, unprecedented peace settled over the Texas-Mexico border region. This harmony allowed the 10th Cavalry to concentrate its companies at Forts Concho, Stockton, and Davis, although the troopers continued to patrol the Rio Grande to the south and the Guadalupe Mountains to the west. In 1882, regimental headquarters was transferred to Fort Davis. For the next 3 years, the Buffalo Soldiers enjoyed a welcome rest from the constant campaigning of previous years. As more settlers arrived in west Texas, the region became more "civilized" and the Buffalo Soldiers' Indian fighting skills were no longer required. By early 1885, the Army decided to transfer the 10th Cavalry



to the Department of Arizona, where those skills would be tested once again (Leckie 1967:234-237).

**West Into Arizona.** In July 1885 the 10th Cavalry moved west into Arizona. After arriving in Arizona, the various troops of the regiment were dispersed throughout the area to cover as much territory as possible. Regimental headquarters and one troop were stationed at Whipple Barracks, five troops at Fort Grant, three at Fort Thomas, two at Fort Verde, and one at Fort Apache. Almost immediately upon arriving in Arizona, commanders sent four companies from Fort Grant into the field to join the campaign against Geronimo.

For months the Buffalo Soldiers combed the Sierra Madre mountains in search of Geronimo and his followers. In March 1886, Geronimo surrendered but managed to quickly escape. Despite a vigilant month-long chase by the 4th and 10th Cavalries, Geronimo made his way across the border into Mexico. The Buffalo Soldiers were withdrawn from the remainder of the campaign and ordered to arrest and transport four hundred Chiricahua Apaches — most of whom had remained on the reservation during Geronimo's defiant last stand in September 1886 — to Holbrook, Arizona, where they were placed on trains bound for Florida.

In addition, Buffalo Soldiers participated in the last fighting of the Apache Wars. One small band of Apaches, led by Mangus, had remained at large; Troop H finally cornered them on 18 September 1886, forcing their surrender (Leckie 1967:241-245). By the time of Mangus' surrender, every troop in the entire 10th Cavalry had participated in the campaign (Glass 1972:24).

In July 1886, the Army moved the regiment's headquarters to Fort Grant and then to Santa Fe later that year. For the next 5 years, the 10th Cavalry experienced relative harmony in northwestern New Mexico, quelling an occasional outbreak from the nearby reservation. However, in 1887, elements of the regiment participated in a futile campaign against one of Geronimo's followers, the "Apache Kid."

In 1890, the 10th Cavalry experienced its first change of command when Colonel Benjamin Grierson was promoted to Brigadier General and retired. His successor, Colonel J. K. Mizner, would lead the 10th for 7 years until his own promotion to Brigadier General. When Colonel Mizner took command, he moved regimental headquarters back to Fort Grant. The only other major incident during the 10th Cavalry's time in Arizona took place on the Hopi reservation in 1891. The previous year, the United States government had begun to enforce a compulsory attendance policy at Indian Agency schools. Unrest among the Hopi grew to such heights that in the summer of 1891 the Army sent two troops of the 10th Cavalry to the

reservation to help settle the difficulties (Bigelow 1899:296-297; Glass 1972:26-28; Wharfield 1965:65-68).

**North Into Montana.** In August 1891, Colonel Mizner wrote the Adjutant General of the Army requesting that the 10th Cavalry be reassigned. He stressed that the Army had stationed the regiment south of the 36th latitude for more than 20 years and specifically requested a gradual change of climate with assignment not farther north than Kansas. For having the nerve to request a reassignment, the Adjutant General ordered the 10th Cavalry, in midwinter, to the icy tundra of Montana. Regimental headquarters were established at Fort Custer while troops were dispersed at Forts Assiniboine and Keogh (Montana), Fort Buford (North Dakota), and Fort Leavenworth (Glass 1972:28-29).

In general, the years spent in Montana and North Dakota were a great relief after so many years of hard duty in the Southwest. Garrison duty, hunting parties, and practice marches took up most of the soldiers' time. Sports, including baseball and football, became the preferred recreational pursuits of the soldiers. But life was not all play and no work; the 10th Cavalry was occasionally called upon to restore civil order or quell Native American unrest off the reservations.

In April 1894, three troops from Fort Custer were dispatched to guard railroad trains belonging to "Coxey's Army," a group of unemployed on their way to protest in Washington. Later that summer, other troops were detailed to guard the railroad from strikers (Glass 1972:29-30; Wharfield 1965:68). In the summer of 1896, the entire regiment was in the field rounding up Cree Indians who had fled from their reservations in Canada and escorting them back north. One of the leaders of this assignment was Lieutenant John J. Pershing, who in his first duty assignment, led Troop D over 600 miles while chasing the Indians. Later known as "Black Jack" Pershing, the future general acquired that nickname for his service with the 10th Cavalry (Glass 1972:30; Smythe 1968:20-22).

In 1897, the 10th Cavalry had its second change of command when Colonel Mizner, after serving as the regiment's commander for 7 years, was promoted to Brigadier General in June and Colonel Guy V. Henry took charge of the unit. That same year, several troops were called out to the Tongue River Indian Agency to resolve a disturbance among the Cheyenne. The Buffalo Soldiers made a few arrests and the outbreak died down. At the end of the year, the Army consolidated the regiment at Forts Assiniboine and Keogh, where they remained until the outbreak of the Spanish American War (Glass 1972:30; Wharfield 1965:68).

## Infantry Regiments

Compared to the cavalry, the infantry led a boring life — no daring chases across the wilderness; no last-minute rescues of supply trains or besieged cavalry companies. While the infantry's function was less visible than the cavalry's, this does not imply that their efforts and accomplishments were less important. The 24th and 25th Infantry Regiments participated in some of the most important military campaigns in the West. The infantry was also instrumental in advancing the settlement of the West, devoting much of their time to standing guard, riding shotgun on a mail stage, building roads, and stringing telegraph wire. As a result of the unglamorous nature of their experiences, the infantry has not generated the same level of research nor a comparable amount of study as the cavalry.

**Four Black Infantry Regiments.** On 1 August 1866, Congress created four African American infantry regiments: the 38th, 39th, 40th, and 41st. For the next 3 years, these regiments served on the frontier and in the Reconstruction South becoming experienced and disciplined fighting units. However, because these regiments existed for only a few years, historians have written little about them. In late 1866, the 38th Infantry Regiment was organized at St. Louis, Missouri. Early the following year, the Army ordered most of the regiment to New Mexico, with two companies posted in Kansas to protect railroad workers (Muller 1972:19, 28). In the summer of 1867, one of the companies in Kansas helped defend Fort Wallace against an attack by Cheyenne. The black troops in New Mexico also fought with Indians, although official records of these engagements no longer exist.

The 39th Infantry Regiment was organized in Greenville, Louisiana (near New Orleans) in August 1866. During the next 3 years, the regiment was posted throughout southern Louisiana and western Mississippi. In January 1868, regimental headquarters was transferred from Greenville to Ship Island, Mississippi, where it remained for 1 year. In January 1869, the Army moved regimental headquarters back to Louisiana — first to New Orleans, and then to Jackson Barracks.

The 40th Infantry Regiment was organized in Washington DC in September 1866. Shortly thereafter, regimental headquarters was moved to Camp Distribution, Virginia. During the next 2 years, the regiment's companies were stationed at sundry posts in North and South Carolina (Forts Macon, Hatteras, Fisher, Caswell, Kinston, Plymouth, and Goldsboro in North Carolina and Castle Pinckney, Walterboro, Orangeburg, and Hilton Head, South Carolina), never staying at one location more than a few months. In 1868, the Army more or less consolidated the

regiment in North Carolina, assigning the companies at Goldsboro and Raleigh (Nankivell 1972:7-9).

Immediately after its organization, the 41st Infantry Regiment was ordered to posts along the Rio Grande, with regimental headquarters established at Fort McKavett (Fowler 1971:18). Unfortunately, little has been written about the 41st Infantry. However, since it was stationed in the frontier, one can assume that its duties were essentially the same as those of the 38th Infantry, which also served in the West.

In March 1869, the Regular Army was reduced from 45 infantry regiments to 25. As a result, the four black regiments were consolidated into two regiments. On 20 April 1869, the 39th and 40th were reorganized and renumbered as the 25th Infantry. Seven months later, the 38th and 41st regiments became the 24th Infantry (Fowler 1971:17; Muller 1972:19; Nankivell 1972:9).

**Typical Duties.** The main function of the infantry on the western frontier was to provide support to the cavalry. The infantry was not well-suited or equipped to fight Native Americans. Even the cavalymen had trouble catching them; the infantry had no chance. On occasion the infantrymen were mounted and assigned to scouting patrols, but mostly their duties consisted of guard and fatigue details, fort repair, and escort assignments.

One of the black troops' most frequent tasks was guarding the stage lines' remount stations located on the roads between the forts and frontier towns. Remount station guard duty was generally quiet, and a welcome relief from the routine of garrison life. Most of the stages carried mail and freight, but if there were white passengers, stationmasters frequently refused to allow off-duty black infantrymen to board the stage. This discrimination led Colonel William Shafter, one of the officers of the 24th Infantry, to threaten the stage companies with the removal of the guards if they continued to mistreat his troops. Government supply trains and survey parties also relied on the protection of the infantry. Constructing roads and stringing telegraph lines were duties that often fell to the infantrymen.

### **24th Infantry**

**Llano Estacado.** Soon after its creation in November 1868, the 24th Infantry was stretched along the southern edge of the Llano Estacado (Staked Plain) in northwestern Texas. Regimental headquarters were at Fort McKavett, with companies posted at Forts Davis, Stockton, and Concho. These forts formed a 320-mile line along the Texas frontier (Muller 1972:21). The 24th Infantry was stationed

on the Texas frontier for the next 11 years, shifting its men up and down the Rio Grande as necessary.

The 24th Infantry took part in many skirmishes on the Texas frontier during the 1880s (Scipio 1983:7). Small bands of Kiowas and Comanches from the west and Kickapoo and Lipans from Mexico made frequent, lightning-fast raids along the Texas frontier during this period. While the infantrymen were limited in their ability to catch the raiders, their presence provided some deterrence. In June and July 1871, for example, companies of the 24th Infantry tried to chase down a party of Indian raiders in the White Sands region of southeastern New Mexico. Although this minor campaign was unsuccessful in capturing Indians or regaining the cattle stolen by them, it was the first time United States soldiers had penetrated the White Sands region and survived (Leckie 1967:96-97). During the following Spring, the regiment moved southeast along the Rio Grande, taking up stations at Forts Brown, Ringgold, Duncan, and Clark. The regimental history reports that while stationed along the Rio Grande, "the duties of the troops were light, and ... we now look back upon those times as the halcyon days" (Muller 1972:24).

In 1875, two companies of the 24th Infantry returned to the Llano Estacado to explore the region. Led by Lieutenant Colonel William Shafter, the expedition had two purposes: to clear the Llano Estacado of renegade Comanches and make a detailed map of the region. One of the reasons the Llano Estacado provided a refuge for the Comanches was its vast and hostile expanse. In addition to the 24th Infantry, the expedition included troops from the 10th Cavalry, one company from the 25th Infantry, and two companies of Indian scouts. Companies D and F of the 24th Infantry left the Rio Grande area in May 1875 and joined the other forces at Fort Concho.

The expedition departed Fort Concho 2 months later and headed north to the Fresh Fork of the Brazos River where a supply camp was established. While the Cavalry and Indian scouts set out to the west, chasing Comanches and destroying Native villages, the Infantry remained for the most part at the supply camp. A few detachments of infantry were sent out to the southwest on scouting patrols. After being in the field for nearly 5 months, Shafter's expedition returned to Fort Duncan in late November 1875. By demonstrating that the Llano Estacado was not impenetrable, Shafter — with the help of the African American soldiers — destroyed a sanctuary for the Comanches and opened that region to settlement by whites. The map that resulted from the 1875 expedition became the standard for more than 30 years (Fowler 1971:32-33; Leckie 1967:143-148; Muller 1972:24-26).

The same two companies of the 24th Infantry participated in a third expedition commanded by Lt. Col. Shafter the next year. In the Spring of 1876, the Army received tacit authorization to cross the Rio Grande into Mexico when in pursuit of raiders. Kickapoo and Lipan Indians were the first to suffer from this new policy. Throughout the rest of 1876 and into 1877, the U.S. Army crossed the Rio Grande repeatedly (Utley 1973:11-12). The 24th Infantry saw their share of the action. In the Summer of 1876, Shafter organized an expedition of troops of the 8th and 10th Cavalry and companies of the 24th and 25th Infantry to cross the Rio Grande above the Pecos into Mexico, in search of Native American villages. The role of the infantry on this campaign was to guard the railroad crossing over the Rio Grande. The expedition did manage to destroy some villages but also enraged the Mexican citizens. The United States troops recrossed the Rio Grande with the Mexican Army virtually on their heels (Leckie 1967:149-150; Muller, 1972:26-28). The 24th Infantry played only a minor role in another campaign into Mexico in 1877, organized at Fort Clark (Muller 1972:28).

In 1878, the rest of the 24th Infantry moved up from the Rio Grande posts, back to Forts Davis, Stockton, and Concho. From these stations, four companies of the regiment took part in one more important campaign against the Texas Apaches (Utley 1973:362). The "Victorio War" of 1879-80 (described in detail above under the 9th Cavalry Regiment), has long been overshadowed by other Indian campaigns, probably due to the fact that the Army did not succeed in capturing or killing Victorio. They did, however, confine Victorio to Mexico, where he was finally defeated.

Even less recognized is the role that black infantrymen played in the Victorio Campaign. In fact, the regimental history of the 24th Infantry does not even mention this campaign. Under the command of Col. Benjamin Grierson during this campaign, infantrymen from the 24th served as camp guards and protected the supply train for the 10th Cavalry. In August 1880, the black footsoldiers played a role in the battle at Rattlesnake Springs, which finally drove Victorio from Texas for good (Leckie 1967:226-227).

***Experiments With the Gatling Gun.*** In a virtually ignored episode of American military history, black infantrymen from the 24th Regiment tested an early machine gun, the Gatling, for use in the Indian Wars. The Gatling gun was initially dismissed as "worthless for Indian fighting," due to its size and weight and the fact that it jammed easily. But the soldiers had not been trained to operate the gun. The unit used condemned cavalry horses to haul the new weapon. Colonel Henry Hunt of the 5th Artillery believed that if the Gatling gun was deployed by trained artillerymen and strong animals, it would be highly effective in Indian warfare.

In 1878, a platoon of soldiers from the 24th Infantry was detailed to the 2nd Artillery and given extensive training in the operation of the Gatling gun. Col. Hunt and General Ord, commander of the Department of Texas, were impressed by the platoon's success with the gun, and by the gun's accuracy and mobility (Utley 1973:73). The African American soldiers who tested the gun's operation apparently never got the chance to demonstrate their abilities in combat.

**Oklahoma Territory.** The 24th Infantry finally left Texas in late 1880, after the Victorio Campaign, when they were transferred north into Indian Territory (Oklahoma). For the next 8 years, the regiment "lived an uneventful life" in Indian Territory (Muller 1972:28). Regimental headquarters was established at Fort Supply, and companies of the regiment were posted to Forts Reno and Sill in Indian Territory, with one company stationed at Fort Elliott in Texas.

The 24th Infantry's duties were the same as the duties of the cavalry — to keep the Kiowa, Comanche, Apache, and Cheyenne Indians on their reservations and to keep white settlers out of the reservations. The white settlers caused more trouble for the Buffalo Soldiers than the Native Americans did (Muller 1972:28). Of course, the regiment was still tasked with the usual garrison duties and the telegraph and road construction details. The forts in Indian Territory were more isolated from civilization than the forts on the Texas border. Because the area was not open to white settlers, even the usual raw frontier towns were absent (Fowler 1971:74-75). Still these forts were undoubtedly the best the 24th Infantry had been stationed at to date. Most of the forts in Texas had been built before the Civil War and had fallen into disrepair. These newer forts were in much better condition.

**New Mexico and Arizona.** In the Spring of 1888, the 24th Infantry was ordered to New Mexico and Arizona. Traveling by railroad to Albuquerque, the regiment was assigned to Fort Bayard, New Mexico, and Forts Apache, Grant, Huachuca, San Carlos, Thomas, and Bowie, in Arizona. Most of these forts, located in the desert mountains, were considered good stations, although not as good as the ones they had just left in Indian Territory. Forts Thomas and San Carlos, however, were located in canyons and the summers at these forts were unbearable. In fact, soldiers stationed at San Carlos were rotated every 6 months to "prevent a breakdown in the troops' health and morale" (Fowler 1971:81). During the 8 years that the regiment spent in New Mexico and Arizona, there was "no fighting to speak of" and the soldiers spent most of their time in garrison (Muller 1972:28).

The Apaches were confined to the reservations and the regiment was charged with guarding the Indians and protecting white settlers from outbreaks should any occur. Again, like in Indian Territory, the settlers and other transient whites in the area

were often more trouble than the Apaches. The 24th Infantry also continued to provide escort details to various groups traveling through the Southwest. On one occasion, while escorting an Army paymaster from Fort Grant to Fort Thomas, in May 1889, the wagon was ambushed by highwaymen. Although 8 of the 11 infantrymen in the escort detail were wounded, they continued to fight until forced to withdraw. The robbers made good their escape with over \$28,000. Nine of the black soldiers were recognized for their courage and fighting, two with the Congressional Medal of Honor (Fowler 1971:85-86).

**Utah.** In 1896, the 24th Infantry moved north in Utah. For the first time in the regiment's history, the entire regiment was posted to a single fort, Fort Douglas, near Salt Lake City. The assignment to Fort Douglas represented another first in the regiment's 27-year history: it was the first time that the 24th Infantry was posted anywhere near civilization.

Initially, the citizens of Salt Lake City were so opposed to having African American soldiers stationed at Fort Douglas that they petitioned Washington to cancel the orders. But the orders were not canceled and a year later the Salt Lake City newspaper published a lengthy editorial apologizing to the regiment. The 24th Infantry remained at Fort Douglas until April 1898, when the regiment was ordered to Georgia in preparation for its combat duty in Cuba during the Spanish American War. When the regiment left to fight in the Spanish American War, the citizens of Salt Lake City had been so impressed with the regiment during its stay that the entire city turned out to see them off, even suspending business for the day (Muller 1972:30).

### **25th Infantry**

The 25th Infantry Regiment was formed by the consolidation of the 39th and 40th Regiments in New Orleans on 20 April 1869. For 1 year the 25th Infantry remained posted in the Reconstruction South at stations in Louisiana and Mississippi, "performing the usual garrison duties" (Nankivell 1972:15). In addition, the unit was frequently called upon by civil authorities to assist in maintaining law and order in cities suffering from rioting and other disturbances (Fowler 1971:16-17). During this time, the regiment lost many of its experienced soldiers through discharge at the end of their enlistments. Apparently no recruiting efforts were made to bring the regiment to full strength. By the time the 25th Infantry left the South, the unit contained slightly more than 500 enlisted men (Nankivell 1972:15).

**Texas.** In April 1870, the regiment received orders transferring the unit to Texas, where it would remain for 10 years. The move started in May, and all of the



companies had arrived in San Antonio by 9 June 1870. On 22 June, the regiment set out for its new stations. Regimental headquarters was established at Fort Clark, with the companies assigned to Forts Davis, Quitman, McKavett, Duncan, and Stockton.

In Texas, the duties of the 25th Infantry were the same of those of the 24th — building and repairing roads and telegraph lines, the occasional scouting patrol, escort duty, guard details, and the everyday garrison duties. Escort duty was the worst of these various jobs, for it entailed marching long hours in all kinds of weather, and the pace was determined by the oxen or mules pulling the wagons. Occasional skirmishes with the Indians broke the monotony of their daily routine. After 2 years at the same posts, members of the 25th Infantry were rotated to different stations.

In May 1872, regimental headquarters moved to Fort Davis. The 25th Infantry continued to garrison at Forts Quitman and Stockton, but Forts Bliss and Sam Houston were new stations for the regiment. In addition, two companies were transferred north into Indian Territory, posted first to Fort Gibson and later to Fort Sill (Nankivell 1972:18-24). These two companies assisted the 10th Cavalry in patrolling the boundaries of the reservations. Before returning to Texas in 1875, one of these companies was engaged in an Indian outbreak at the Wichita Agency in August 1874 (Fowler, 1971: 30).

In the summer of 1876, one company of the 25th joined the 24th Infantry in Col. Shafter's expedition into Mexico; the details of this expedition and the infantry's role are recounted above. In 1878, Company B of the 25th Infantry was involved in a final expedition into Mexico, this one led by Colonel Ronald Mackenzie. Mackenzie's intent was not to search for Indians who had found refuge in Mexico. This expedition was a show of force for the benefit of the Mexican government.

For years, the United States had battled with the Mexican government over the lawlessness along the border and the Mexican government's failure to do anything to solve the problem. Although the United States finally officially recognized Mexico's Diaz government in April 1878, the border problem remained unresolved. The Diaz government refused to take action as long the Army's order allowing U.S. troops to cross the Rio Grande was in effect, and the U.S. Government refused to withdraw the order until the Diaz government took action. The Army forced this last point home.

On 12 June, Col. Mackenzie crossed the Rio Grande with eight troops of cavalry, three companies of infantry (one of which was Company B of the 25th Infantry), and

three batteries of artillery. Twice during the 9-day expedition, the Mexican Army moved to block their advance and twice the U.S. infantry marched through, the Mexican troops falling back. Mackenzie led his troops back across the Rio Grande on 21 June 1878. Company B returned to their post of San Felipe on 23 June.

Their last 2 years in Texas were relatively quiet for the men of the 25th Infantry. Throughout their years in Texas, the individual companies of the 25th Infantry moved frequently. A company would move from one fort to another, be stationed at a border town in protection from Mexican bandits, or spend a month or longer repairing a road, or guarding some other site. Although much time was spent in garrison, a great deal of time was spent marching from one post to the next.

**Dakota Territory.** In April 1880, after a decade of frontier duty, the 25th Infantry Regiment received orders transferring the unit to the Dakota Territory. This assignment was considered something of an experiment by the Army. African Americans were commonly thought to be unadaptable to colder climates (which was also used as one of the arguments for leaving the black troops in the Southwest for so long) (Fowler 1971:49-50). Nevertheless, the orders stood and in May 1880, the 25th Infantry began the move north. In addition, the move to the Dakota Territory was closer to civilization than the 25th Infantry had been stationed since leaving the Reconstruction South. The move actually took several months to accomplish. Each company had to march from west Texas to San Antonio, and then take the train north to Dakota Territory (Fowler 1971:50). By August 1880, the entire regiment had arrived at their new posts.

Posted at Forts Hale, Meade, and Randall, with regimental headquarters at Randall, the regiment spent the next 2 years performing "the usual garrison duties, and occasionally providing protection from hostile Indians for working parties on the Northern Pacific Railway and settlers on the Keya Paha and Niobrara Rivers" (Nankivell 1972:37). In addition to garrison duties, in the Dakota Territory the soldiers were still assigned to telegraph construction and repair but there were no station guards, escort duties, or regular scouting patrols. Two new duties not necessary (or possible) on the Texas plains did occupy some of their time: cutting wood and hauling it back to the forts for heating and cooking fuel, and protecting railroad tie-cutting crews (Fowler 1971:51).

For the most part, Native Americans stayed on the reservations in the Dakota Territory, but occasionally there would be a threat of an uprising. In May 1881, soldiers of the 25th Infantry were dispatched to the Rosebud Indian Agency because settlers along the Keya Paha and Montana Rivers feared violence during the Sun Dances, an annual summer religious ritual. The infantrymen stayed at the

reservation until the ritual was completed and then returned to Fort Randall. Also in the spring of 1881, the 25th Infantry was involved with relief efforts for settlers along the Keya Paha River. An exceptionally severe winter had produced record amounts of snow and when the spring thaw came, the river flooded. Men of the 25th Infantry delivered relief supplies and occasionally herded livestock to safety (Fowler 1971:52-53). In November 1882, a large part of the regiment moved eastward, even closer to civilization, to Fort Snelling, Minnesota. Companies remained stationed at Forts Hale and Meade in the Dakota Territory but regimental headquarters was established at Fort Snelling.

The next 5 years, from the end of 1882 to early 1888, proved to be the most uneventful period in the regiment's history. During this time, the soldiers probably spent more time practicing, drilling, and parading than ever before. The only event of note appears to be the abandonment of Fort Hale and the subsequent move of the companies stationed there to Fort Sisseton, also in the Dakota Territory (Nankivell 1972:38-39).

**Montana.** The 25th Infantry's next major change of station took place in the spring of 1888. The regiment was ordered to exchange posts with the 3rd Infantry in Montana. Regimental headquarters and four companies were stationed at Fort Missoula, with the rest of the regiment divided between Forts Shaw and Custer. Other than the scenery, little changed for the regiment. Their duties in Montana were the same as those that had occupied them in the Dakota Territory. The only real difference was that the forts in Montana were not as isolated; towns like Missoula and Great Falls were well-established by 1888, due to the railroad's construction.

With proximity to civilization came racial trouble. No doubt, inflammatory stories of clashes between the black troops and white citizens of the South during Reconstruction as well as the overall increasing racially discriminatory attitudes of the American public during this period fueled these tensions. Both in the Dakota Territory and in Montana, the 25th Infantry was shocked by lynchings of their members. These events, more fully described in a later section of this chapter, however, appear to have been relatively isolated incidences. Overall, the Buffalo Soldiers were probably treated much like white soldiers were. Historians often overlook the fact that soldiers in general, white or black, were not held in high regard by civilians in the late 19th century (Fowler 1971:58-60, 66-67).

Their years in Montana were much like those in the Dakota Territory. The majority of their time was spent in garrison and on practice marches and drills. They were assigned a few special duties, like the installation of headstones at the military

cemetery at Little Bighorn and other similar tasks. In addition, the 25th Infantry was occasionally sent to protect settlements from potential Indian outbreaks, at the request of agents on the reservations or the settlers themselves. The outbreaks rarely actually occurred and after a few months in the field, the infantrymen returned to the forts (Fowler 1971:64-65).

The 25th Infantry did participate in the last major engagement of the Indian Wars, the Pine Ridge Campaign of 1890-91. A fuller account of this campaign, which ended the Ghost Dance Movement of the Sioux, is recounted earlier in this chapter. However, the involvement of the 25th Infantry has been almost completely ignored, even in by the regiment's own historians. The regimental history records that the "part played by the 25th Infantry ... was a minor one," but it does not elaborate on exactly what part the men of the 25th Infantry did play (Nankivell 1972:48-49). Apparently, all four companies detailed to the campaign were sent to Fort Keogh where they remained as reserve forces, and never took part in any of the fighting (Fowler 1971:69).

The years following the end of the Indian Wars were ones of relative peace. During the rest of 1891, little of note happened. In the summer of 1891, Fort Shaw was abandoned and the companies stationed there transferred to Fort Buford, North Dakota. The following year brought new experiences to the Buffalo Soldiers. Much like the 9th and 10th Cavalry during this time, the 25th Infantry found itself often called upon by civilian authorities to restore law and order. Early in the year, trouble had erupted in the mining town of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, between mine owners and labor unions. By June anarchy reigned and Federal troops were called in. Three companies of the 25th Infantry were sent to Coeur d'Alene in July 1892 to help quell the violence.

During the weeks that the men remained in Idaho, they were primarily occupied with guarding the railroad, escort duty, and assisting in arrests. The 25th Infantry returned to Fort Missoula at the end of July, although martial law was not revoked until November (Nankivell 1972:51-52). Two years later, when the military took control of the Northern Pacific Railroad due to labor disputes, the 25th Infantry served a similar role. Through July and August 1894, men of the 25th Infantry guarded various railroad property in Montana, including passenger cars and railroad trestles against the strikers (Nankivell 1972:53-54).

The 4 years following the conclusion of the strike duty, August 1894 until the outbreak of the Spanish American War in 1898, was another uneventful period in the history of the 25th Infantry. In 1895 the two companies at Fort Buford, North Dakota, moved to Fort Assiniboine, Montana. Two years later Fort Custer was

abandoned and the companies there went to Fort Harrison, Montana (Nankivell 1972:58).

***Bicycle Corps.*** During this period of peace before the outbreak of the Spanish American War, the Army found the time to experiment with innovations in warfare. A group of men from the 25th Infantry played a major role in one of these experiments, albeit an informal one. In July 1896, eight volunteers from the four companies at Fort Missoula were led by Lt. James Moss in the testing of the bicycle for military purposes. Lt. Moss selected his corps members based on previous cycling and mechanic experience. A drill manual had been written for military cyclists and the bicycle corps spent its first month learning to cycle in formation and to execute such maneuvers as "Jump Fence" as a team.

In August 1896, the bicycle corps set out on its first field exercise, an overnight trip to Lake McDonald. This trip was about 126 miles round-trip over fairly rough terrain with poor to nonexistent roads. The corps completed the trip in 3 days, with approximately 24 hours of actual traveling. Although their progress was hampered by tire punctures and muddy routes, Lt. Moss deemed the exercise a success and began planning their second trip.

On 19 August 1896, the bicycle corps pedaled out of Fort Missoula and headed for Yellowstone Park. The first leg of the trip was over the Rocky Mountains to Fort Harrison, near Helena, Montana. The soldiers averaged 6 miles per hour but were plagued with mechanical difficulties. To avoid mud and steep grades, the corps rode along the railroad bed. The constant jouncing up and down caused by riding over the railroad ties was almost worse than the problems they sought to avoid. Once they reached Fort Harrison, the corps traveled along the Missouri River to Fort Yellowstone. The one-way trip was made in 8 days. The men spent 5 days touring Yellowstone Park, which none of them had visited before.

On 1 September, the cyclists departed for the return trip to Fort Missoula, retracing the route they had taken south. They arrived back at Fort Missoula on 8 September, having traveled 790 miles in 126 hours of actual riding. In September, the bicycle corps accompanied the 25th Infantry on a traditional field exercise. During this exercise, the cyclists were employed mostly in reconnaissance duty. They scouted ahead along the route of march and relayed messages back to the commander (Fletcher 1974c: 222-226; Nankivell 1972: 62).

The next summer, Lt. Moss received permission to expand the corps and conduct another field exercise. For this trip, he asked for more volunteers and selected a total of 20, 5 of whom had been in the original corps. On 14 June 1897, the 25th

Infantry bicycle corps set out from Fort Missoula; their ultimate destination was St. Louis, some 1,900 miles to the east. They made the trip in 40 days, 35 of which were actually spent cycling. The men averaged 52 miles per day and encountered the same mechanical difficulties they had experienced the summer before. After staying in St. Louis for a week, the 25th Infantry bicycle corps returned to Fort Missoula by train. Lt. Moss and the African American soldiers proved that the bicycle had reasonable applications for the military, especially for reconnaissance and courier duty. The testing was not taken any further however (Fletcher 1974c:227-229).

The 25th Infantry remained in Montana until the outbreak of the Spanish American War in 1898. In fact, the regiment was the first to be moved in preparation for the war. In April 1898, the 25th Infantry left Forts Missoula, Harrison, and Assiniboine for Georgia.

### **Seminole Negro-Indian Scouts**

From colonial times, runaway slaves in the southeast had intermarried with Seminole Indians in Florida, living their lives in separate villages from the Seminole, but tied by kinship and mutual resistance to American expansion. Eventually the Seminoles were transferred to the western Indian Territory and between 1870 and 1881, 50 of them became some of the most efficient and effective scouts the U.S. Army had in the West (Porter 1952). During their service to the Army the scouts were stationed at Forts Clark and Duncan in Texas. Under the command of Lieutenant John Lapham Bullis the scouts participated in some 26 expeditions from 1873-1881 (Porter 1952: 358, 365).

In one action on 25 April 1875, Lt. Bullis was caught dismounted as the scouts were being forced to retreat. Facing a fierce fire, Bullis was rescued by his scouts, three of whom were awarded the Medal of Honor (Porter 1952:367). The scouts gained a well deserved reputation for their skill, endurance, marksmanship, and were greatly feared by their Lipan and Mescalero enemies.

### **Service in Other Branches of the Army**

The confinement of African Americans to the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry — the four Army regiments — was not entirely by law, but also by custom. Army regulations stipulated that those four regiments would be composed of black enlisted men but did not specifically prohibited blacks from serving in the

other branches of the Army. However, as a rule, they were not assigned to other units.

In April 1884, an African American graduate of the College of the City of New York, W. Hallett Greene, applied for enlistment in the Signal Corps (Foner 1970:141). Commander of the Signal Corps, Brigadier General William B. Hazen initially turned down Greene's application. When Secretary of War Robert T. Lincoln intervened, General Hazen explained that "it is well known that, except for the four regiments specifically designated by Congress for colored men, the 40 regiments of the Army, the engineer battalion, the ordnance detachment, the 150 hospital stewards, 148 commissary sergeants, and 500 enlisted men of the Signal Corps, have all been closed to colored men" (Nalty and MacGregor 1981:54). Hazen went on to recommend that the custom not be changed but also allowed that Greene's performance on the preliminary examination had placed him "near the head of all the applicants for enlistment to the Signal Corps" (Nalty and MacGregor 1981:54-55). After a lengthy correspondence between Lincoln, Hazen, the Signal Corps recruiting officer, and others, Greene was enlisted in the Signal Corps on 26 September 1884, the first African American to so serve (Foner 1970:141; Nalty and MacGregor 1981:54-58). Greene's enlistment in the Signal Corps opened the door for African Americans to join the other branches of the Army. In 1885, African American soldiers were enlisted in the Hospital Corps, the Ordnance Corps, and the Commissary and Quartermaster Departments (Foner 1970:142). Blacks were still excluded from serving with the artillery and the engineers.

### **First Black Cadets at West Point**

Although Army regulations did not prohibit black enlisted men from being recommended for officer rank, tradition and the prejudice of the white officers who would have made such recommendations prevented the appointment of black officers. The other way for a black man to become an Army officer was through the United States Military Academy at West Point. Appointments to West Point were, and still are, made by U.S. Senators and Representatives for candidates from their respective states.

The first African American to attend the Academy was a South Carolina native named James Webster Smith. Smith entered West Point in 1870 and spent 4 years there although he did not graduate. Forced to repeat his freshman year, he was dismissed at the end of his junior year for academic deficiency (Vaughn 1971:100-102). For the first 3 years at the Academy, Smith was the only black cadet. However, in 1873, Henry Ossian Flipper, from Thomasville, Georgia, entered

the Academy and he and Smith became roommates (Vaughn 1971:100). Flipper survived the rigors of West Point and in June 1877, became the first African American to graduate from the United States Military Academy. Flipper was also the first black officer in the Regular Army. His career, however, was short-lived. After 5 years with the 10th Cavalry in Texas, Flipper was court-martialed in 1881 for embezzlement of post commissary funds. Found guilty, Flipper was dismissed from the Army in June 1882 (Dinges 1972:60).

The second African American to graduate from the Military Academy and receive a commission in the Regular Army was John H. Alexander (Wesley 1978:80). Alexander graduated in 1887 and was assigned to Fort Robinson, Nebraska. His career was cut short due to diminished health. While serving as a military instructor at Wilberforce University in 1894, Alexander died of a heart attack.

The third black graduate of West Point was Charles Young. He received his commission in 1889 and was assigned to the 10th Cavalry posted at Fort Robinson, Nebraska. During the Spanish American War, Young commanded the 9th Ohio Volunteer Infantry with the temporary rank of Major (Heinl 1977:31). After returning to the Regular Army at the end of the war, Captain Young served in the Philippine Islands for 18 months. Young also served a number of tours as military attache in Haiti and Liberia. Recalled by the Army in 1915, Young commanded a squadron of the 10th Cavalry during the Punitive Expedition in Mexico. During this campaign he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. Young was the last black graduate of West Point until 1936.

Prior to the outbreak of World War I, General Pershing had included Young on the list of officers to be considered for brigade or higher command. In July 1917, 1 month after he was selected for promotion to full colonel, Young appeared before the American Expeditionary Force promotion board. He was found medically unqualified and retired, although he was promoted to colonel after his retirement. Young rode on horseback from Ohio to Washington DC to prove his health. Inexplicably, the Army refused to release Young's medical records, contributing to the general suspicion that his retirement was merely an excuse to keep a black man from reaching the rank of General. However, once the records were released it became evident that Charles Young suffered from chronic nephritis, a condition which killed him less than 5 years after his forced retirement (Heinl 1977:33).

Despite the exemplary career of Charles Young, African Americans were still largely barred from the officer ranks. The few blacks who served as chaplains, received direct commissions into the Army, but not as line officers. Not until the Spanish American War did any enlisted men receive commissions, but only as officers in the



volunteer regiments. With the exception of Flipper, Alexander, and Young, African American soldiers were commanded and led by white officers.

### **Problems Faced by the Black Troops in the West**

The black regiments faced many obstacles along the path to becoming fully-functioning units of the Army. Many of these problems had their roots in racial prejudice — problems they were unable to solve themselves. But other problems and their solutions were more easily identified. These problems stemmed from the fact that most of the black recruits were former slaves and, as a result, lacked formal training and education.

The almost complete illiteracy of the black soldiers forced the white regimental officers to handle all of the clerical work, including duty rolls and post returns, normally done by the noncommissioned officers. Any black recruit who could read or write, despite the lack of other qualifications, usually became a quartermaster sergeant. To remedy the illiteracy problem facing the black soldiers, the Army established regimental schools. These schools began during the Civil War and formed the basis for future Army educational programs in general. During the Civil War, the Army had established regimental schools to educate the illiterate black soldiers; Army chaplains had been primarily responsible for these schools (Berlin 1982:612). With the formation of the black regiments, chaplains were assigned to specific regiments rather than to posts. In other words, a chaplain was assigned to the 25th Infantry Regiment rather than to Fort Davis, where there might be troops from three or four separate regiments. This change, the only modification of Army structure made for the black units, facilitated the employment of chaplains as educators (Fowler 1971:92; Whitman 1962:34).

Once at forts in the west with the black regiments, the regimental chaplains began to hold classes for the enlisted men. Initially, the Army did not provide buildings or supplies for these schools. Due to the dedication of the chaplains, however, the educational programs were quite successful. Chaplain George G. Mullins, regimental chaplain assigned to the 25th Infantry at Fort Davis, held 2 school sessions per day, 5 days a week. The afternoon sessions included the children of the post but the evening sessions were exclusively for the enlisted men. Attendance averaged 100 students a day during the 4 years from 1875 to 1879 (Fowler 1971:94-99). An advocate of the "social and military value of education in the army" and later the head of Army Education, Chaplain Mullins became convinced of the relationship of education to good discipline and troop morale.

In 1878, the Army ordered all posts, garrisons, and permanent camps to establish schools for the enlisted men. As part of this order, the Army then provided classrooms, desks, books, and other supplies, including fuel, for these schools. Unfortunately the program was not as successful as it might have been because the Army did not make attendance mandatory. Nonetheless, by the 1890s, the problems caused by the illiteracy of the black soldiers were greatly alleviated (Thompson 1968:226).

Another legacy of slavery that hindered the new black recruits was their lack of mechanical skills. Most of the recruits were unskilled laborers or farmers. Skills such as blacksmithing and carpentry were rare among the black recruits. In fact, most of the skills required for the efficient operation of an Army regiment were foreign to them. The new black soldiers had to be taught how to perform nearly every task, from how to wear the uniform to how to fire a rifle. Riding and the care of the cavalry horses was less of a problem, as many of the recruits did have some experience with horses.

Though the difficulties in transforming groups of ex-slave recruits into effective combat regiments were obvious, the War Department issued no specific guidance to the officers of these regiments on how to train these new recruits. The white officers were left to deal with these problems within their respective units (Whitman 1962:35-37). As a result, many of the tasks assigned to the new black regiments, like road building, were menial labor rather than expected soldierly pursuits (such as fighting Indians).

In addition, the new black soldiers lacked resourcefulness, self-reliance, and initiative. The paternalistic nature of slavery did not place value on and worked against the development of individual initiative among the slaves. As a result the black soldiers were initially more dependent upon good leadership than most white soldiers. The deficiency in initiative and self-sufficiency, however, was environmental rather than inherent. As time passed and the new recruits became veterans, the black soldiers proved their capabilities, especially in their ability to handle themselves in battle without the leadership of a white officer.

Other problems that faced the black regiments were the products of racial prejudice or perceptions colored by prejudice. One of the largest problems the Army faced with the creation of the black regiments was finding enough white officers willing to serve with black troops. A cavalry regiment's full complement of officers totaled 41. A regiment was commanded by a full colonel, who was assisted by one lieutenant colonel and three majors. Each of the 12 companies (or troops) was commanded by a captain, assisted by a first lieutenant and a second lieutenant. The

smaller infantry regiments had only 1 major and 10 companies instead of 12, for a total of 33 officers (Utley 1973:11).

When first formed, the black regiments left the recruiting stations and marched to their new postings with barely enough officers to maintain order and discipline. Most officers felt an assignment to a black regiment was an indication that they had been rated as capable of commanding only "inferior" black troops and that the assignment was a mark against their careers. Many officers preferred to be a second lieutenant in a white regiment than a captain in a black regiment, even though they would be promoted more rapidly within the black regiments. Graduating cadets at West Point overwhelmingly expressed a preference for artillery, in which there were no black regiments, despite the miserable opportunities for advancement within that field. Some cadets even requested assignments as "additional second lieutenants" in white regiments. Some senior officers, when assigned to a black regiment, would resign their commissions rather than accept the postings (Foner 1974:60-61).

The irony of this perception — that inferior officers were assigned to command the black regiments — is that the black regiments required superior officers in order to be successful. The Army commanders must have realized this, because all potential officers of the black regiments were required to undergo a special examination in Washington, determining their fitness for the assignment (Whitman 1962:32). More effort was certainly demanded of the officers of the black regiments, since the officers had to do all of the clerical work as well as more intensively train and supervise the black recruits. A comparison of the accomplishments of officers from the black regiments with those of the officers from white regiments reveals that the two groups were not significantly different. On the average, more officers from the black regiments became generals; on the other hand, more officers from white regiments achieved field grade rank (major and above) (Thompson 1968:259).

In many cases the officers of the black regiments were excellent officers dedicated to their regiments. The commander of the 10th Cavalry from its inception in 1866 until 1888, Col. Benjamin Grierson, on occasion openly argued with superior officers over prejudicial treatment of the black troops. Grierson even ordered his subordinates to omit "Colored" from all official correspondence, insisting that the regiment was simply the 10th U.S. Cavalry.

Unfortunately, long after black soldiers overcame many of the deficiencies that were the result of slavery and proved themselves to be excellent soldiers, the perception persisted among white officers that an assignment to a black regiment was a blot on their records. Of 100 white officers assigned to the all-black regiments, 36 requested and received transfers to white units (Thompson 1968:260). In addition, the belief

that the outstanding combat records of the black regiments were a result of leadership by white officers was widely held by both the Army and the general civilian population.

Excerpts from published commentary on the employment of African Americans in the United States military, which appeared following the Spanish American War, reflect these views. In *Public Opinion*, in an article otherwise praiseworthy of the black soldiers, the author noted that "the young Negro is ebullient and full of animal spirits and more mutinous than the white man until thoroughly disciplined" (*Public Opinion* 1899: 198). A former Army surgeon, obviously believing himself to be a fair-minded, unprejudiced man, wrote an article entitled "The Evolution of the Colored Soldier," detailing the advancement of the black soldiers since they first entered the Regular Army. The doctor quoted another officer as saying, "they [black soldiers] don't care what the danger is, so long as they have a white man for their leader, and they won't follow one of their own color across the street to pick apples" (Parker 1899: 228). An even more biased account claimed that "the best officers have always been sent to serve in colored regiments, a system which accounts for the fact that the behavior of the colored troops has been as good as it has been" (Bonsal 1907: 323). The continued belief that African American soldiers were inferior to white soldiers, in spite of the evidence of their accomplishments to the contrary, reinforced racially motivated military policies.

The refusal of officers to serve with the black regiments and the treatment of black troops by certain individual officers reflect only personal prejudices. However, the black regiments were also subject to discrimination by Army actions and policy. The most outstanding example of this discrimination was the assignment of the four black regiments for over two decades without relief to the most remote regions of the Texas frontier and Indian Territory. From 1869 to the outbreak of the Spanish American War, only one company of black soldiers was stationed east of the Mississippi River (Villard 1903:724). Normally the reward for extended duty at the hazardous frontier was assignment to a more peaceful location. While white regiments were, of course, assigned to the frontier forts, those regiments were regularly rotated between the frontier and military installations east of the Mississippi River. Because the presence of black soldiers near towns brought complaints from white citizens and more numerous incidents of violence, the Army sought to avoid racial problems by posting the black regiments away from civilization (Foner 1974:56).

But this discrimination by the Army was really nothing more than a reflection of the nationwide attitude towards blacks. It is ironic that much of this rising prejudice was found in the very region that had prided itself on championing the African

Americans in their struggle for freedom — New England. Each of the several attempts by the Army to post one or another of the black regiments in New England was met with successful resistance. The orders assigning one regiment to Fort Ethan Allen in Vermont were canceled after Senator Proctor opposed the stationing of African Americans in his home state. He later boasted that getting those orders canceled constituted the “most arduous struggle of his whole career” (Bonsal 1907:322). When the officers of the black regiments complained about their seemingly permanent consignment to the isolation of the West, the Army responded by proposing to rotate only the white officers back to the East, leaving the black soldiers on the frontier (Nalty 1986:56). Thus, the Army left the black soldier on the frontier not because of Army needs but to avoid conflicts resulting from civilian attitudes toward blacks.

Such racial prejudice was ingrained in many white officers as noted above. When the 40th Infantry was transferred to Louisiana in 1869 for consolidation with the 39th Infantry, as was normal, the troops traveled by train. However, the Army provided cattle and freight cars for the troops instead of the expected passenger cars (Fowler 1971:16). Black troops also received substandard housing and equipment. When the 10th Cavalry was forming at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, the post commander, General Hoffman, quartered the black soldiers in an area of low ground, which became a swamp in wet weather. General Hoffman then proceeded to complain to Col. Grierson, the regiment commander, about the muddy appearance of his troops (Leckie 1967:13-14).

Reports made by Army Inspector General officers highlighted the miserable living conditions soldiers endured at the forts in the West. One officer reported that the barracks provided for the black troops at Fort Quitman, Texas, were “not fit to stable cattle in” (Foner 1974:55). Even the food the black troops received was inferior. At Fort Concho, the post surgeon reported that “the bread was sour, the beef of poor quality, and the canned peas not fit to eat” (Leckie 1967:98-99). What little variety in food the white troops enjoyed — canned tomatoes, dried apples and peaches, molasses, potatoes, onions — was denied the black soldiers.

The black regiments experienced discrimination not only in both the quality and quantity of supplies and equipment, but even the horses they received (Utley 1973:27). One officer of the 10th Cavalry wrote in 1870 that since the regiment had been formed in 1867, they had received nothing but repaired equipment. In addition, most of the horses the 10th Cavalry received were the wornout and broken down mounts discarded by the 7th Cavalry (Leckie 1967:51). Major John Hatch, visiting Fort Sill on an inspection tour in 1873, found that many of the saddles had actually been condemned. The Army had not even provided the regiment with the

regulation silk-embroidered regimental standard (Leckie 1967:71-72). The Army Quartermaster clearly placed the black regiments at the end of the line, on the lowest priority.

Other instances of the types of duties assigned, or not assigned, illustrate the daily problems the black soldier faced. In 1875, regiments posted to the western forts were required to provide riders from among the troops to deliver mail between posts. The quartermaster specifically excluded the black regiments from this requirement "since black troops as a rule were not reliable" and stated that other arrangements would be made for the posts between Fort Concho and El Paso which were all garrisoned by black soldiers. However, by the time the quartermaster's instructions reached Fort Davis, black soldiers of the 25th Infantry had already been delivering mail to Fort Quitman. At least one officer of the 25th Infantry took issue with the quartermaster's directive and protested by letter (Fowler 1971:128-129). If the quartermaster rescinded his order or not is unknown.

Admittedly, other ethnic groups did rank lower than the black soldiers. The presence of Indians and Mexicans in towns near reservations or along the border, sometimes alleviated the racial tension between white citizens and black soldiers. Discrimination against black soldiers was also lessened in general at posts near larger cities and in particular by the presence of a large community of black civilians. Discrimination was at its worst in small isolated communities, especially those with a mostly transient population. Still, in general, black soldiers were ostracized by the white communities. They were often refused service in the local shops and other establishments. Any altercations between the local citizens and the black soldiers were usually blamed on the soldiers. When accused of a crime, often the black soldiers were virtually tried and convicted by the local press. In many cases where violence erupted between black soldiers and white citizens, the Army did little to help the soldiers.

The first indication of how a particular town would treat black soldiers was usually found in the pages of the local newspaper even before the regiment's arrival. Derogatory editorial comments, most often about the imminent arrival of black prostitutes and the expected higher incidence of violence, presaged turbulent relations with a local community. Army records indicate that the crime rates among white and black regiments were nearly equal (Thompson 1968:232-233). However, local newspapers were "more interested in crimes committed by black soldiers than by whites" (Schubert 1971:413). Newspaper accounts of desertions by white soldiers, if published at all, could be found on inside pages. Black deserters, especially when apprehended, rated front page space.

The reporting on an incident in Suggs, Wyoming, in June 1892 bordered on hysteria. While in town, a soldier from the 9th Cavalry was insulted and then shot at as he and another soldier rode back to camp. In retaliation, a group of about 20 soldiers returned to Suggs and fired a number of shots into a saloon. Local townspeople returned fire and one soldier was killed. The local newspaper's headline read "War at Suggs — A Party of Colored Troops attack the town in the night and are routed by citizens" (Schubert 1973:63-65). Not all newspapers were so inflammatory, but in the papers that did accord the black soldiers favorable comments, even minor incidents could reverse the friendly disposition.

There were also many examples of black soldiers murdered by white citizens who then went unpunished. In many cases, the criminals were never even arrested. Occasionally, the murderers were indicted and brought to trial, but juries swiftly acquitted them. One of the most outrageous incidents involved men from the 9th Cavalry. In January 1875, while on patrol from Ringgold Barracks in south Texas, Sergeant Edward Troutman and four privates from Company G were ambushed by a group of local ranch hands. Two privates and one of the attackers were killed in the fight that ensued. The next day, Colonel Hatch, the 9th Cavalry Regiment commander, rode to the scene of the attack with 60 soldiers and a deputy sheriff of Starr County, Texas. They found the bodies of the two privates, and entering a shack nearby found their uniforms and equipment. Nine Mexicans were arrested for the murders and indicted by a grand jury. Only one actually stood trial and was acquitted. The other eight were released. Amazingly, the three soldiers who survived the ambush were then arrested and charged with the murder of one of the attackers. Colonel Hatch and another officer were indicted for burglary of the uniforms of their two dead soldiers. Only through a great deal of legal expense and a change of venue were the five members of the 9th Cavalry able to clear themselves of the charges. And the murderers of their two comrades went unpunished (Leckie 1967:108-109).

On the other hand, when a black soldier was accused of a crime, punishment could be swift and unlawful. In August 1885, a black soldier stationed at Fort Meade was arrested on the basis of circumstantial evidence for the murder of a doctor in Sturgis City. Corporal Hallon never made it to trial; two days after his arrest, a mob broke into the jail and lynched him (Fowler 1971:58). In another case, Private Robert Robinson, stationed at Fort Shaw in the Montana Territory, apparently shot a man in Sun River, a town close to the fort. Robinson eluded authorities in town but was arrested upon his return to the fort. The military authorities turned Robinson over to the Sun River sheriff and his deputy. Again, the soldier never made it to trial; he was lynched on the night of June 10, 1888 (Fowler 1971:61-62). In fact, lynchings were so common that when soldiers were taken into custody by the local sheriff after

the Suggs, Wyoming, riot, their commander was authorized to send sufficient troops with them to provide protection from "lawless violence" (Schubert 1973:66-67). In several instances, such as in Suggs, black soldiers took matters into their own hands. Unfortunately, these attempts to redress the wrongs of racism, in most cases solidified racial prejudice within the local community by focusing the violence upon the soldiers.

Racism and discrimination both within the Army and by local communities increased after 1890. There are two reasons for the increase. First, the Indian Wars ended in 1890 and the Army entered a period of transition. Many of the western forts were closed and entire regiments were then stationed at a single post. Before the end of the Indian Wars, the companies of a single regiment were usually scattered between half a dozen forts, trying to cover as much territory as possible. The higher concentration of black troops at a fewer number of forts certainly had an effect within the military. The second and greater reason for the increase in prejudice against blacks in the military is a reflection of the increased racism within the country in general. The legal segregation and disfranchisement of blacks in the South, manifested by such court cases as *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which established the concept of "separate but equal," and *Williams v. Mississippi* (1898), which upheld poll taxes and voter literacy tests, contributed to the overall racism directed toward black soldiers (Morris, 1965:494; Wesley 1978:26-27).

Also during this period the Navy reversed a tradition of integration over 100 years old and restricted blacks to the steward's branch (Fletcher 1974a:28-29). The two most publicized racial incidents involving black soldiers, the Brownsville Raid in 1906 and the Houston Race Riot in 1917, vividly illustrate increasing racism within both the Army and the general American population. These incidents are discussed in later sections.

### Qualities of the Buffalo Soldiers

The performance of the black soldiers belied all of the negative predictions made by those who opposed the creation of the all-black regiments and the inclusion of blacks into the Regular Army. Not only did the black soldiers prove their critics wrong, in many cases African Americans out performed their white counterparts. While years of slavery hindered the black soldier's performance, other aspects of slavery actually provided African Americans advantages in dealing with the hardships of military life. Black soldiers were outstanding in their discipline, patience, morale, and "good humor in adversity" (Utley 1973:26). Frederick Remington, the artist, served with the 10th Cavalry in Arizona and noted that one of their most charming traits was



that when in a miserable situation, the black soldiers did not make things worse by complaining (Remington 1889:902).

Black soldiers had other traits that made them excellent soldiers. For example, alcoholism was a serious problem in the regiments assigned to the West. Harsh conditions and frequent boredom exacerbated the abuse of alcohol. Yet alcoholism was nearly nonexistent in the black regiments. In addition, the rate of desertion among the black units was significantly lower than in the white regiments. The desertion rate for white regiments was 25 percent; in the black regiments, the rate was 4 percent or less. The 9th Cavalry Regiment once went an entire year without a single desertion (Foner 1974:53). Since the black regiments suffered under the same conditions that caused the high alcoholism and desertion rates among the white troops — long hours of labor, harsh living conditions, boredom, and lack of recreation — the reasons for the low rates among the black regiments are hard to define but they are a fact that cannot be overlooked in any assessment of the performance of the Buffalo Soldier.

Rates of reenlistment among black soldiers were much higher than among whites (Utley 1973:26). This difference is most likely due to the lack of opportunities for blacks in the civilian world. The Army offered a steady income, housing, clothing, and food, as well as an opportunity for some education. Few civilian jobs offered as much to the illiterate laborers and farmers who made up the majority of black enlistees. For black soldiers, the Army represented a career, not merely the escape it offered to most white enlistees. Black soldiers took personal pride in their Army accomplishments.

In addition to the dearth of civilian opportunities, the higher reenlistment rate could be explained by the fact that black soldiers were well-respected and highly regarded within the black community. The opposite was true of the white population's attitude towards white soldiers. Most civilians looked upon the soldier with contempt regardless of race (Utley 1973:22). The combined effects of death, desertion, and discharge within the white units resulted in the annual loss of between 25 and 40 percent of the enlisted force (Utley 1973:23). While the death rate among black units was about equal to that among the white units, the lower desertion and higher reenlistment rates meant that black regiments had fewer unfilled positions than the white regiments and had a much higher percentage of veterans within the ranks. The cumulative effect of these factors was that at the outbreak of the Spanish American War, the black regiments in the Regular Army were the most experienced fighting units in the entire American military (Donaldson 1991:58).

Regimental pride was especially high among the black units. Believing themselves to be representative of their race, black soldiers were determined to prove their abilities to the Army, and the whole country. A solidarity born of prejudice contributed to *esprit de corps* and raised morale. Other factors contributed as well. William Leckie suggests that the initial closer supervision required by black soldiers led to a "more intimate" relationship between the men and their officers (Leckie 1967:16).

In addition to retaining a high percentage of the enlisted men, the black regiments also experienced longevity in their leadership. Both cavalry regiments and the 25th Infantry had commanders who served for more than two decades. Col. Hatch commanded the 9th Cavalry for 23 years, Col. Grierson the 10th for 22 years, and Col. Andrews the 25th for 21 years (Utley 1973:27). A history of shared adversity between the men and the officers created greater unit cohesion than that experienced by white regiments. But as Erwin Thompson concluded in "The Negro Soldiers on the Frontier," with the exception of their illiteracy, the low desertion rates, and the high reenlistment rates, the black regiments "must be regarded as being more like the white units than different from them" (Thompson 1968:233).

In the late 1870s, the suggestion was made that the black regiments be abolished and soldiers be enlisted and distributed in the Army regardless of race. Opponents of this measure, which seemingly was aimed at ending racial discrimination in the Army, recognized the true purpose. Under such an organization, enlistment would be left entirely in the hands of recruiting officers, with the probable result being the complete elimination of blacks from the Army (Nalty 1986:57-58; Utley 1973:27-28). Congress successfully blocked the proposed change. As a result, the four black Regular Army regiments continued to provide African Americans with opportunities for personal and racial advancement not found in the civilian world through the First World War.

## Summary

African American soldiers played a significant role in advancing the settlement of the West. This role has been ignored or overlooked until recently. In 1910, after the Spanish American War, Paul Arnold wrote of the four African American Regular Army regiments: "It is unnecessary to go into details in regard to the services of the negro troops in the West. The infantry was mainly engaged in garrison duty, the cavalry in Indian fights, none of which were very important" (Arnold 1910: 12). Perhaps the root of this lack of acknowledgment was the near invisibility of the Buffalo Soldiers to the majority of the American population. In *The U.S. Soldier Between Two Wars*, Jack Foner points out:

Up to the time of the outbreak of the war with Spain, only one company of colored soldiers served at a post east of the Mississippi River. In 1891, the *New York Times* observed: "Very many citizens have never seen a military organization of Negroes since the entire service of those troops has been on the Western frontiers." Many people in the United States realized for the first time that Negroes were actually serving in the regular army when they saw the black regiments on the way to Cuba (Foner 1970:133-134).

## 5 The Spanish American War and Aftermath



*Many African Americans saw the war with Spain as a contradiction in a policy that strove to end oppression abroad, while allowing it to thrive at home.*

## 5 The Spanish American War and Aftermath

by Keith Kraeczynski

### Spanish American War

On the night of 15 February 1898, the United States battleship *Maine* drifted just off the coast of Cuba, the turrets of its guns pointed in the direction of the capital city of Santiago. With the ongoing brutal conflict between Cuban rebels and their Spanish oppressors, the *Maine's* mission was to help protect American citizens and property jeopardized by this conflict. It had little opportunity to accomplish its mission. Without warning, an explosion ripped through the forecastle of the ship, detonating nearby stores of ammunition. The battleship quickly sank to the bottom of the ocean, taking with it 260 Americans, 22 of whom were black. An American court of inquiry attributed the tragedy to a mine placed below the keel. Recent engineering studies, however, determined that an accidental explosion on board ship was the cause (Nalty 1986:64).

Enraged Americans blamed Spain and sought to avenge the loss, crying "Remember the Maine! To Hell with Spain!" After more than 2½ months of unsuccessful diplomatic negotiations, President McKinley became convinced that Spain had no desire to end their subjugation of Cuba. The President also sensed a political defeat for Republicans in the upcoming elections if the United States continued its restraint in the face of increasing public aspirations for war. On 11 April 1898 McKinley asked Congress to authorize the use of armed force to end the conflict and suffering in Cuba. Nine days later Congress complied, declaring the Caribbean island to be a free and independent country.

### African American Attitudes Towards War With Spain

The death of 260 Americans aboard the *USS Maine*, vivid and often exaggerated press reports of Spanish atrocities in Cuba, the close proximity of the island to the United States, large investments by American businessmen, a desire among Americans to demonstrate American strength in the face of growing European imperialism — all were reasons compelling Americans to seek a state of war with Spain. Yet many African Americans questioned the morality of this decision. Many

blacks saw the contradiction in a policy that strove to end oppression abroad, while allowing it to thrive at home. One disgruntled writer to the *Washington Bee* explained, "The negro has no reason to fight Cuba's independence. He is opposed at home. He is as much in need of independence as Cuba is" (Marks 1971:13). Another black added, "Let Uncle Sam keep his hands off other countries till he has learned to govern his own. Human life at home is at a low ebb now and should be protected before reaching out to protect others" (Marks 1971:8).

Yet other African Americans viewed participation in the overseas conflict as an obligation of citizenship:

As much as we abominate the terrible injustice done to the Afro-America under his own government ... we deemed it our duty that every citizen should respond to the demands of the national defense (Marks 1971:18-19).

As in previous wars, some blacks viewed military intervention as an opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty and win respect from whites, furthering their chances for advancement. On the other hand, to oppose the war, they reasoned, would likely play into the hands of those attempting to further restrict the already curtailed freedoms of African Americans. In sum, many blacks felt that the allegiance and patriotism of their race were on trial (Gatewood 1972:547-548; Gatewood 1971:ix-x; Early 1970:19).

### **Black Regular Army Cavalry and Infantry Units**

The story of the black organizations that participated in the 114-day conflict with Spain is principally that of the four Regular Army Regiments — 9th and 10th Cavalry and 24th and 25th Infantry. Nearly 5,500 African Americans served in these four units. Several thousand additional blacks belonging to state and Federal volunteer units served as garrison and peacekeeping forces after hostilities ceased (Early 1970:110).

Once it became clear the United States would enter war with Spain, three of the black regular regiments that were stationed at various posts throughout the west were ordered to Chicamauga Park, Georgia, with the fourth sent to New Orleans. After completion of their training in April they moved to either Tampa or nearby Lakeland, Florida. Upon arrival in the Sunshine State, the black regiments became part of an invasion force known as the 5th Army Corps under the command of Major William R. Shafter. Of the black contingent, the 9th and 10th Cavalry were assigned to General Joseph Wheeler's (Dismounted) Cavalry Division, while the

24th was placed with Major General Jacob F. Kent's Infantry Division, and the 25th with Brigadier General Henry W. Lawton's Infantry Division (Early 1970:27; Scipio 1983:17; Muller 1972:n.p.; Nankivell 1972:67-68; Glass 1972:32).

### *Riots in Florida*

African American troops had their first confrontation not in Cuba, but in Florida where white citizens met them with open hostility. The black servicemen, in turn, incited the wrath of whites by not submitting to the discriminatory treatment accorded to local black civilians. Signs placed outside establishments and parks warning "No Niggers and Dogs Allowed in Here" were particularly offensive to the black soldiers, who sometimes reacted violently to such overt racism (Gatewood 1971:139). After being refused service in a drug store and barbershop in Lakeland, for instance, members of the 10th Cavalry fired their weapons into the two establishments and then into the crowd of startled spectators that had gathered in the street. One individual was killed and several wounded.

However, the most serious racial clash in a military encampment during the war occurred in Tampa. The tension in the town, which had been steadily increasing since the arrival of the black troops, was finally ignited on 6 June 1898 when intoxicated white volunteers from Ohio amused themselves by snatching a 2-year old black boy from his mother and using him as a target to demonstrate their marksmanship (they eventually returned the child unharmed to its mother). Members of the 24th and 25th Infantry regiments, already upset by an accumulation of outrages, went on a wild, destructive rampage. They stormed into the streets firing their pistols indiscriminately, wrecking saloons and cafes that had refused to serve them and forcing themselves into white brothels. After the provost guards and Tampa police failed to quell the rebels, town authorities sent white troops from the 2nd Georgia Volunteer Infantry to subdue the rioters. These southern soldiers were overzealous in their task, inflicting serious injury on more than 30 of the black rioters (Gatewood 1970:1-10; Nalty 1986:68).

These racial conflicts only served to solidify preconceived notions among members of both races. To many whites, the disturbances proved that the decision to mobilize African American troops was a mistake because it made the black "forget his place," and proved that military discipline had little effect on them. The effect of these riots among blacks was to increase doubts that their support of the war would benefit their status in society (Gatewood 1970:10).

### ***Campaigning In Cuba***

To prevent further disturbances, military authorities began quickly boarding the black troops in preparation for their departure to Cuba. The soldiers waited on board ship nearly a week before sailing out of Tampa Bay on 15 June. After a 7-day journey they arrived at the coastal town of Daiquiri. Turbulent seas made it very hazardous to unload men and supplies. In fact, two privates from the 10th Cavalry drowned in the endeavor. Once they had unloaded all necessities, the Americans hurriedly marched inland through dense tropical vegetation toward their first and most important objective — the capital city of Santiago.

***Fighting at Las Guasimas.*** To reach Santiago, the Americans had to first dislodge the Spaniards from Las Guasimas southeast of the city, where they were well positioned behind stone walls on a very high and steep hill. General Joseph Wheeler assigned this important mission to the 1st Volunteers (Rough Riders) and the 1st and 10th Cavalries (Freidel 1958:99). In a hard day of marching, these regiments reached Las Guasimas and positioned themselves for the attack. Early in the morning of 24 June, they charged up the steep hill in high, jungle-like grass and vegetation toward the Spaniards (Cashin 1969:79-80; Glass 1972:33). The black troops, who looked like “devils” according to one defender, absolutely “terrified” the Spanish by persistently charging under heavy fire “as if they didn’t care the least about it” (Alexander 1914:369). After about an hour of intense action, the Spaniards could no longer withstand the Americans’ incessant attack and quickly retreated toward Santiago. Exhausted by the tropical heat, the battle-fatigued Americans were unable to pursue the enemy. Nevertheless, it was a clear-cut victory that raised the confidence among American troops (Gatewood 1971:50; Early 1970:29).

***Fighting at San Juan Heights.*** With the Spaniards extricated from Las Guasimas, the Army moved northwest toward Santiago, finally settling on the outskirts of a plain just below San Juan Heights 6 days later. Meanwhile, the Spaniards were busy positioning themselves on three strategic hills — San Juan, El Pozo (named Kettle Hill by Americans because of a sugar refinery on top, which resembled a kettle from afar) and El Caney — which formed the outer defenses of the capital city. The capture of these hills was crucial if the Americans hoped to continue the invasion of Santiago. Positioned high above the plain, with deep entrenchments, breastworks, barbed wire, and an open field of fire, the Spaniards were in an ideal defensive position (Early 1970:34; Bigelow 1899:127). At El Caney, the defenders had the added protection of four wooden blockhouses, a stone church, and fort (Freidel 1958:119, 121; Fletcher 1974a:37).



The American plan to capture San Juan Heights involved dividing the troops into two groups. A small force (which included the 25th Infantry) under the command of Brigadier General Henry Lawton was to attack the Spanish position at El Caney. Once they had reached the forts there (which General Shafter believed Lawton could accomplish in a few minutes), they would join Wheeler's dismounted cavalry (including 9th and 10th) and Kent's Infantry (including 24th) in the assault on San Juan and El Pozo Hills (Fletcher 1974a:37; Early 1970:30; Freidel 1958:126).

Under the cover of dense forest in the early morning of 1 July, about 6,600 American troops maneuvered into position immediately below San Juan Heights (Bigelow 1899:112). At dawn Lawton began the battle by attacking El Caney and its approximately 520 Spanish defenders (Freidel 1958:126) with an artillery bombardment. The artillery fire failed to destroy the fortifications or demoralize the resolute Spaniards. Unable to dislodge or weaken the defenders with artillery, Lawton ordered his men (the 25th was assigned as a reserve unit) to advance into the open clearing and charge the Spanish entrenchments (Gatewood 1971:56). By noon this first assault had overrun the Spanish entrenchments, but at a heavy cost. While these battle-fatigued troops were resting, Lawton directed his reserves to proceed to the front line in preparation for a general assault on the Spanish fortresses. Advancing in a broad swarm, members of the 25th rushed through cactus, thick underbrush, and other obstacles. The accurate fire from Spanish sharpshooters inflicted heavy casualties among the regiment. Men "were falling all around me and I thought every minute would be my time" (Gatewood 1971:48), remarked one veteran of the action. Once reaching the shelter of a hollow in the hill, marksmen fired several volleys into the defender's portholes, rifle pits, doors, and windows. Hoping their fire had weakened the defenders, the American troops made a general advance up the hill. After several hours of fervent fighting, the Americans routed the Spaniards and captured the fortresses (Fletcher 1974a:38; Nankivell 1972:72; Friedel 1958:31-34).

Securing El Caney was much more difficult than General Shafter had predicted. The battle lasted 10 hours (instead of the estimated 10 minutes) and resulted in nearly 450 American casualties (Freidel 1958:138). Moreover, the stubbornness of the Spanish defenders prevented Lawton from assisting in the assault near San Juan Heights as General Shafter had planned. Such miscalculations nearly resulted in American defeat at San Juan and El Pozo.

Unable to wait for Lawton, General Shafter ordered his men to position themselves across the San Juan River. At the appointed moment, the troops rushed from the palm grove jungle and into the open meadow in front of the two hills. In an assault reminiscent of Pickett's advance at Gettysburg, the Americans rushed in a confusing

and haphazard fashion up the hills toward the Spanish blockhouses to what many observers claimed would be a very gallant, but foolish slaughter (Freidel 1958:166). The black soldiers in particular, "went to that incline yelling and shouting," inspiring their white comrades and spreading dismay among the Spaniards (Alexander 1914:369). By mid-afternoon, the Americans had cut through the barbed wire and flung themselves into the trenches filled with Spanish troops. In hand-to-hand fighting, the Americans drove the Spanish from their defenses and captured the two hills.

Despite the glory surrounding the assault at San Juan and Kettle Hills, the victories came at a high price. More than 1,000 Americans were killed and wounded in this brief assault. The 24th Infantry, in fact, suffered an astonishing 40 percent casualty rate (Scipio 1983:25). Standing atop San Juan after the battle, one black soldier described the death surrounding the hill: "The dead and wounded soldiers! It was indescribable! One would have to see it to know what it was like, and having seen it, I truly hope I may never see it again" (Gatewood 1971:70). Moreover, the exhausted survivors were left to defend their precarious position until Lawton's even more fatigued troops arrived after an all-night march from El Caney (Freidel 1958:172). One positive, but brief, effect of the battle was a new unity among the white and black troops. Lieutenant John Pershing, commander of the 10th Cavalry, reflected in his memoirs:

White regiments, black regiments, regulars and Rough Riders, representing the young manhood of the North and South, fought shoulder to shoulder, unmindful of race or color, unmindful of whether commanded by an ex-Confederate or not, and mindful only of their common duty as Americans (Freidel 1958:173).

### ***Spain Surrenders***

Although the Spaniards still occupied a long line of trenches and blockhouses in front of Santiago and had a fleet in the harbor, they realized the end was near. On 3 July the two warring nations agreed to a truce. Later that day the United States Navy destroyed the Spanish fleet in Santiago harbor and immediately dashed any remaining hopes of victory among Spanish leaders. Two weeks later the commander of Cuba surrendered the island to the United States.

The black troops received praise from the white comrades-in-arms, military leaders, and the public for their fearless pugnacity. One soldier from the 71st New York Volunteers remarked that the African American soldiers were the "bravest lot of warriors I ever saw...They fought like demons" (Thweatt n.d.:2). Shortly after the

battle of San Juan Hill, Theodore Roosevelt personally commended the men of the 9th Cavalry for their valiant conduct. The Army also recognized the valuable service of African American soldiers by awarding 5 with the Congressional Medal of Honor and more than 20 with Certificates of Merit (Fletcher 1974a:45-46). The black troops left Cuba in August and were soon back in their familiar posts out West.

Exactly where the black soldiers were stationed after the war is difficult to know as a result of being once again divided into companies and detachments. Elements of the 10th Cavalry were stationed at Forts Sam Houston, Clark, Ringgold, McIntosh, and Camp Eagle Pass — all in Texas. The 24th Infantry either went to Fort Douglas, Utah, or Fort D.A. Russell, Wyoming. The 25th Infantry was separated and detached to Forts Huachuca, Apache, Grant, and the San Carlos Agency in the Arizona Territory, and Forts Wingate and Bayard in the New Mexico Territory. To date, the posts for the 9th Cavalry have not been pinpointed.

#### ***24th Infantry at Siboney Field Hospital***

Although African American troops proved their courage and bravery in the attacks at Las Guasimas, El Caney, San Juan, and El Pozo, perhaps their most gallant service came when they volunteered duty at the Siboney field hospital where thousands of soldiers were seriously ill with yellow fever. The Army's Medical Department, lacking adequate medicine, supplies, and workers, was overwhelmed by the magnitude of the problem. Hospital workers were quickly overcome with fever and became patients themselves. The situation grew so critical that Colonel Charles Greenleaf, the surgeon in charge of the hospital, was forced to appeal for help. Army Headquarters, not wanting to order men to expose themselves to definite infection, called for volunteers. Eight different regimental commanders ignored requests for help until the 24th Infantry agreed to assist in this dangerous duty.

When the regiment arrived at Siboney on 16 July they were met with a horrific sight. The camp was extremely overcrowded, filthy, and full of rubbish. Regiment officers immediately called for volunteers to clean the camp. All members of the 24th stepped forward. Moved by this demonstration of courage, the surgeon in charge of the hospital remarked:

There is more real heroism in marching into a fever-stricken tent and staying there day and night...than there is in making a single charge up any hill... Yet, I made the demand, asking the colonel of the regiment to appeal to his men so that, say, a dozen of them would come as volunteers to work in the

hospital. "Tell them...that when they go in they will have to stay in, and that I want no man who is not willing to face the danger." He made the call...not twelve men, not a hundred men, but every single man in the regiment [came forward]. There was not one negro who stayed behind. [It was] as fine a bit of heroism as was developed in the whole war (*Leslie's Weekly* 3 November 1898:3).

The commander finally selected 65 as nurses, and another 70 as cooks, burial parties, and attendants. As these men fell to the ravages of the disease, others bravely filled the gap, knowing too, that they could soon become patients, and possibly even die. Nevertheless, they continued in their task undaunted for nearly 6 weeks. Only 24 men of the 24th escaped sickness during their service at Siboney and 31 of the regiment died (Muller 1972: n.p.; Scipio 1983:27-28; Fletcher 1974a: 43).

### State Volunteer Units in the War

Besides the Regular Army units, other African Americans served in eight state volunteer regiments. These units included the 3rd Alabama, 8th Illinois, A and B companies of the 1st Indiana, 23rd Kansas, 3rd North Carolina, 9th Ohio, 6th Virginia, and Company L of the 6th Massachusetts. The reason for so few black volunteer units is that most governors mustered only their National Guard regiments under President McKinley's two calls for volunteers, and few states had black regiments (Fletcher 1974b:48).

Of the 6,002 blacks who served in these volunteer regiments, only a few saw overseas duty (Early 1970:110). In fact, these units were not even completely formed until after the fighting had ceased. Consequently, most just performed garrison duty at various camps throughout Cuba. The 3rd Alabama never left the state, being stationed in Mobile. Companies A and B of the 1st Indiana were sent to Fort Thomas, Kentucky, and Chickamauga Park, Georgia. The 3rd North Carolina was sent to Camp Roland (near Knoxville, Tennessee). The 9th Ohio saw duty at Camp Russell A. Alger near Falls Church, Virginia; Camp Meade near Middleton, Pennsylvania; and Summerville, South Carolina. The 6th Virginia was sent to camps Corbin and Roland, both in Virginia. Here they drilled, cut ditches, filled gullies, laid water lines, felled trees, and cleared underbrush. The soldiers managed to occasionally break the monotony of this work with assorted athletic matches (Gatewood 1971:109, 115-116).

### ***Black Officers***

A key issue in the genesis of the African American volunteer units was whether they should have black officers. Most white policy makers still believed that blacks made good soldiers only if lead by whites. African Americans obviously disagreed. They quickly took up the slogan: "No officers, no fight" (Fletcher 1974b: 48). The issue climaxed when nine black officers belonging to the 6th Virginia State Volunteers (one of the few African American regiments commanded by black officers), resigned their commissions rather than undergo a proficiency test they viewed as a means used by the Army to remove them. Instead of replacing these men with other black officers, the Army appointed whites in their stead. In protest, many of the men refused to obey orders from the new white officers. Only after camp commanders assured them that official personnel would review their written protests, did the black troops back down. When military leaders did examine their objections, they rejected them as "absurd" and took no action (Early 1970:57-60).

### ***State Volunteers in Cuba***

Only two of the state volunteer regiments — the 8th Illinois and 23rd Kansas Infantry — ever saw action in Cuba. In early August the Governor of Illinois sent the 8th regiment to replace the 1st, which was decimated by disease. Brigaded with the 8th was the 23rd Kansas, both of which helped preserve peace between Spanish and Cuban residents of Santiago and the remote San Luis area. One of the first duties of these black volunteers was to take charge of the 5,000 Spanish prisoners of war interned in town and supervise their shipment back to Spain. They also helped rehabilitate the province by improving sanitation, constructing roads and bridges, and repairing streets and plazas (Early 1970:43-52; Hall 1900:95; Johnson 1992:70; Gatewood 1971:184).

### ***State Volunteers in Puerto Rico***

Immediately following the capture of Cuba, the United States implemented a campaign to take Puerto Rico. Company L, 6th Massachusetts, was the only African American element in the Puerto Rican campaign. Here it fought in a minor battle around the port city of Guanica and later participated in the drive toward San Juan, encountering no resistance along the way. With the capital city surrounded, Spain quickly surrendered the island on 13 August 1898. After the capitulation, Company L engaged in peacekeeping and occupation duties. The company returned to the United States in October 1898 (Early 1970:40, 52-54).

## Immune Regiments

A third group of African Americans mustered into service during the Spanish American War were the 4,327 men belonging to the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th United States Volunteers (Early 1970:110). Once the invasion of Cuba became imminent, many leaders feared (correctly) that yellow fever would decimate the American troops. To relieve those that became ill, Congress authorized the formation of a 10,000-man volunteer Army composed of those already exposed to yellow fever, and therefore presumably immune to the disease. The military selected most of the African Americans for these "Immune Regiments", as they were nicknamed, from the southeastern portion of the country because of its subtropical climate. Army physicians later admitted that these men were not immune to tropical diseases and suffered similarly as other soldiers (Early 1970:61-62; Fletcher 1974b:48-49).

Of the four black Immune Regiments, only the 9th saw active service overseas. From August through most of April, this unit performed garrison, peacekeeping, and cleaning duties at various venues throughout the island. Nearly 7 percent of the regiment died from yellow fever, proving that these men were not any less susceptible to the ravages of tropical diseases (Early 1970:67-69). The remaining troops remained in various cantonments throughout the United States. The 7th was stationed in Lexington, Kentucky, and Macon, Georgia. The 8th was sent to Fort Thomas, Kentucky, and the 10th was stationed in Lexington, Kentucky, and Augusta, Georgia.

## The Philippines

Although the Spanish American War was fought to free Cuba from Spanish domination, the first confrontation took place in the Far East. Military leaders believed that to defeat Spain, the United States had to first destroy the Spanish navy. Immediately after declaring war, Commodore George Dewey ordered the Asiatic Squadron under his command out of Hong Kong harbor and to Manila Bay where a Spanish fleet lay anchored. Arriving there on the night of 30 April, Dewey waited until daylight before calmly ordering captain Grimley of the *USS Olympia* to "fire when ready." The American ships, outfitted with the latest weaponry, quickly sunk or disabled the 10 antiquated Spanish vessels in the fleet. Three hundred and eighty-one Spaniards were either killed or wounded in the battle. Not one American was lost (Gruver 1985:604).

Despite this resounding naval victory, the Spaniards still controlled Manila. Realizing that an invasion force would be required to capture the capital, the Army

began sending large numbers of American troops in August — after they had secured Cuba on the other side of the world. In addition, Emilio Aguinaldo, the poorly-educated, yet highly intelligent 29-year-old Filipino nationalist and leader of the islands' *insurrectos* (rebels), agreed to assist the Americans in exchange for Philippine independence after the defeat of Spain. On 17 August the United States officially declared a military occupation of the Pacific archipelago.

By this time, however, Spain realized it was thoroughly defeated and military conflict was superfluous. Four months later in Paris, Spain ceded the islands to the United States for \$20 million. The United States acquired the Philippines because most American leaders, persuaded by a belief in Anglo-Saxon superiority, did not consider the backward and uncivilized Filipinos capable of self-government. Underlying economic, military, and religious incentives also encouraged annexation (Welch 1979:8).

### ***Aguinaldo's Insurrection***

Aguinaldo and his rebels were not about to allow Americans to govern the Philippines, especially after receiving promises of independence. Feeling betrayed, Aguinaldo quickly organized a 70,000 man army, established a government, and called on foreign powers to recognize Philippine independence. On 4 February 1899, he launched an attack on the Americans in Manila. The United States forces soundly defeated Aguinaldo's army, which was forced to disperse into the dense Philippine jungle (Fletcher 1974a:48). For the next 2 years, American troops combed the forests of the archipelago in search of the rebel leader, finally apprehending him in March 1901. It required almost another 2 years to crush the remaining small bands of revolutionaries.

### ***Black Units in the Philippines***

All four regular black regiments played a role in suppressing the Filipino rebels. In addition, the Army created two regiments of black volunteers, the 48th and 49th Infantry, in the fall of 1899 to assist in the effort (Gatewood 1971:240). During their stint in the Philippines, the "soldados negros" as the Filipinos called the black soldiers, spent much of their time pursuing the elusive "insurrectos" across towering mountains, sweltering jungles, and balmy coastal plains. When they were not on the move, the black soldiers guarded communication lines, water supplies, and construction crews from rebel attacks. The Army also garrisoned small detachments in the important towns of each province to maintain control of the islands and allow the functioning of civil government. Moreover, because a large number of robbers preyed on the citizens, the soldiers devoted a great deal of energy to policing urban

areas (Scipio 1983:32-34; Muller 1972: n.p.; Nankivell 1972:89-92; Glass 1972:38-40).

The jungle terrain of the islands prevented the Americans from engaging the enemy in full-fledged battles. Instead, fighting developed into guerilla warfare involving primarily sniper fire and hit-and-run attacks. American troops devoted most of their time in small scouting parties probing the thick jungle for insurgents (Fletcher 1974a:52-53). Occasionally, elements of the black contingent located and engaged large forces of the enemy. On 12 August 1899, for instance, a small patrol belonging to the 24th Infantry discovered a force of 300 Insurgents at San Mateo. In the ensuing skirmish, one black trooper was killed and four others wounded before routing the enemy (Scipio 1983:33). In early January 1900, more than 1,000 revolutionaries attacked elements of the 25th at Iba, Zimbales. Despite overwhelming odds, the African American soldiers managed to drive the enemy from the field, killing over 100 while incurring no casualties themselves (Nankivell 1972:91).

In one of the more unusual and daring operations of the war, 350 members of the 24th regiment led by Captain Joseph B. Bachelor marched more than 300 miles through jungles, over mountains, and across wide rivers into central Luzon where few non-Filipinos had ever traversed. Bachelor's mission was to defeat the rebels in the region and prevent Aguinaldo from escaping into the Cayagan valley. Upon reaching Naguilian, the black soldiers discovered a large force of rebels entrenched on a bluff across the Cayagan River. Several daring soldiers crossed the swiftly running river (one drowned in the attempt), enabling them to outflank and drive off the enemy. The group met little resistance after this skirmish and continued their trailblazing march unimpeded. When the 24th finally reached Tugeraraoa (capital of Cayagan), General Daniel Tirona, commander of the Filipinos in the region, surrendered himself and his 1000 soldiers to Captain Bachelor without a fight (Fletcher 1974a:49-52).

The African American regulars returned to the United States in 1902. After several years of post duty in the West, they made a second tour of the Philippines from 1906 to 1908. With no large force of rebels to suppress, this second stint was not nearly as eventful as their first. The soldiers devoted most of their time to performing guard, escort, and police duties. Their only military confrontations included several minor expeditions against the hostile Moros. The black regulars broke the tedium of garrison duty by going on long marches, playing baseball, and holding track and field and military competitions. Once completing their tour, they returned to various posts in the West (Nankivell 1972:121; Muller 1972:n.p.; Glass 1972:50-53).



## Reactions to Increased Racial Discrimination

### *Brownsville Riot*

Between assignments in the Philippines, members of the 24th Infantry (and the newly arrived 25th Infantry) experienced the racism spreading throughout the nation. Late at night on 13 August 1906, a group of about 10 to 20 men ran through the border town of Brownsville, Texas, firing randomly into buildings. The shooting spree lasted just 10 minutes. In that short time, the rioters managed to kill one man and wound several more, including a police officer (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 3:217). Citizens immediately accused members of the 25th Infantry.

The next day a committee organized of community leaders, operating under the assumption that black soldiers had done the shooting, investigated the incident. During the proceedings, 8 of the 22 witnesses testified (not under oath) that they had actually seen black soldiers shooting. After two days of gathering information limited to evidence against the African American soldiers, this citizen-committee concluded that African American soldiers had raided the town. Military and governmental authorities performed their own investigations.

At the end of eight inquests (five by the military, one by a citizen's committee, and others by the Texas Rangers and county Grand Jury) the guilty parties still remained unidentified (Lane 1971:18-19; Fletcher 1974a:124). President Theodore Roosevelt, acting in capacity as commander-in-chief, ordered Brigadier General E.A. Garlington, Inspector General of the Army, to make another investigation and recommend appropriate punishment of the troops. As with earlier probes, he came to the conclusion that some members of the black regiment were responsible for the episode (provoked by numerous insults by local white citizens), but could not determine the guilty participants (Wynne 1972:154).

Through all these inquiries, interrogators threatened the black soldiers with dishonorable discharges if they did not reveal those involved in the riot. Undaunted by these threats, the soldiers consistently denied any knowledge of the incident. Examiners interpreted this silence not as a reflection of innocence, but as a conspiracy of silence. Inspector General Garlington recommended to Roosevelt that he discharge "without honor" all the black soldiers, explaining that a "forceful lesson should be given to the Army at large." With the importance of the citizen's confidence in the Army in mind, Garlington added "the people of the United States, wherever they live, must feel assured that the men wearing the uniform of the Army are their protectors, and not midnight assassins..." (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 3:223-224). Roosevelt accepted Garlington's recommendation and ordered the

discharges of 160 servicemen. However, he ordered this command withheld until after the Congressional elections to prevent the expected backlash by African Americans from harming Republican candidates at the polls.

As Roosevelt had predicted, the black community throughout the nation responded to the dismissals with extraordinary outrage and anger. Black editors accused the President of playing politics with the lives of the 160 black soldiers by deliberately waiting to announce his action until it was too late to be judged at the polls. Black ministers described Roosevelt's action as "damnable" (Wynne 1972:155-156). Although African Americans were used to injustices, they were particularly upset over this insult because of the humility inflicted upon some of the leading members of its community — those who courageously risked their lives for American liberty. They also felt abandoned by Roosevelt and the Republicans who they considered friends of the African American (Lane 1971:70). With support of the predominately racist Democratic party not a viable alternative, African Americans were forced to accept Roosevelt's order and continue to place their hopes for a better future in Republican leaders.

Justice of a sort was finally gained 65 years later when Secretary of the Army Robert F. Kroehlke (upon pressure from black Congressmen), ordered an investigation of the discharges resulting from the Brownsville riot. After studying the information, Kroehlke declared that the "concept of mass punishment is repugnant to the American concept of justice" and ordered the records of the soldiers changed from "discharges without honor" to "honorable discharges" (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 3:324-325). Unfortunately only two survivors remained to receive the good news (Fletcher 1974a:144).

### ***Houston Riot***

Violent affairs involving African American soldiers stationed in Texas continued throughout the first quarter of the 20th century. In 1911 and 1916 black servicemen nearly revolted in San Antonio in reaction to racial insults and unequal access to public accommodations. Additionally, members of the 24th Infantry, stationed in Del Rio in 1916, provoked the wrath of the Texas Rangers by throwing rocks at brothels where white prostitutes had refused them service (Haynes 1973:420).

White southerners' fear of armed African Americans climaxed in August 1917 following the arrival of the 24th Infantry based at Camp Logan in Houston, Texas. The appearance of black servicemen stirred racist feelings among white Houstonians, who hurled insults at them and began strictly enforcing local Jim Crow laws (legal discrimination/segregation enforcement). Angered by this abuse,

many soldiers, in an "overbearing spirit," disobeyed segregation ordinances (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 3:377). In response, local police harassed and arrested these protesters for their insolence, increasing the already hostile tensions between the races (Macgregor and Nalty 1977, 3:380). Racial strains finally snapped on 23 August when a rumor (later revealed to be false) spread throughout the black camp that policemen had shot two of their comrades. More than 100 soldiers responded by forcibly seizing rifles and ammunition from the armory and angrily marching into Houston to seek vengeance. In the ensuing shoot-out, 2 black soldiers and 17 white men were killed. Many more were wounded.

In response to the bloody riot, the Army placed 64 black soldiers on trial at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio for murder and mutiny. Subsequent investigations implicated additional members of the battalion. Military authorities quietly executed 16 soldiers and sentenced another 65 to life in prison (Haynes 1973:419-438; Schuler 1944:300-301, 311-312, 322, 337; Barbeau and Henri 1974:28-29). Even though enforcement of segregation laws played the leading role in inciting this outbreak, Secretary of War Newton Baker attempted to appease white southerners by advising all commanders of black troops to order their men to obey the local Jim Crow laws (Giffin 1978: 698).

Incidents between black military personnel and civilians were merely one small part of the general racial anxiety in American society at this time. During the summer of 1917 numerous race riots occurred in major northern cities, where large numbers of southern blacks had recently migrated in search of better employment. Fearful of competition for labor and resentful of black advancement, whites in Chicago, New York, Newark, Danville (Virginia), Lexington, and Chester (Pennsylvania) went on killing sprees. The worst riot occurred in East St. Louis, where civilians and police shot and wounded over 100 African Americans (Barbeau and Henri 1974:23).

## **Punitive Expedition**

African American Regulars continued their military service in the West, performing usual post duties, maneuvers, and marches. This relatively peaceful and mundane duty quickly changed in the early morning of 9 March 1916 when Mexican rebel leader Francisco "Pancho" Villa and 400 of his followers crossed the international border and launched a massive, surprise attack against Columbus, New Mexico. Several American soldiers and civilians were killed (as well as one-fourth of Villa's party) and considerable property was destroyed before the 13th Cavalry drove off the Mexican bandits (Clendenen 1969:205-211).

Villa's purpose in attacking this small American settlement was to incite the United States into war against the unstable Mexican government headed by Venustiano Carranza, whom Villa believed was more interested in political changes and not the social and economic reform that compelled them to start the revolution against military dictator General Victoriano Huerta nearly 4 years earlier. Villa was also upset with the United States for providing arms to Carranza's army, which was wreaking havoc on his rag-tag force. President Woodrow Wilson understood the political circumstances in Mexico and was not fooled by Villa's actions. The day after the attack, Wilson ordered Brigadier General John J. Pershing, commander of the 10th Cavalry regiment, to lead a punitive expedition into Mexico to break up Villa's rebel units. While doing so, Pershing was to make every effort not to offend the Carranza government (Clendenen 1969:214).

It took Pershing nearly a week to organize and requisition materials for the expedition. His plan was to enter Mexico in two wide V-shape columns in hopes of trapping Villa between the two. The only black soldiers he assigned a significant role in the operation were his own 10th Cavalry, which he placed in the leading column with the 7th Cavalry and Battery B of the 6th Field Artillery. However, small elements of the 24th Infantry did perform garrison duty in Mexico near the end of the expedition (Scipio 1983:43; Glass 1972:67-68).

### ***Crossing the Border***

On 15 March, Pershing's troops crossed the border into Mexico, following the now cold trail left by Villa and his raiders. For the next 5 weeks the Americans played a "game of hare and hound" (Clendenen 1969:232), chasing Villa and his bandits through northern Mexico. The trek was one of the most trying episodes in the history of the United States Cavalry. A harsh and ever-changing environment caused the most hardship, with blazing hot days and bitter cold nights. The hundreds of pounding hooves kicked-up choking clouds of dust and violent windstorms mercilessly blasted sand and dirt at the unprotected men. To make matters worse, supply trains rarely kept up with the ever-moving cavalry. Mexican citizens did not help, either, hiding their produce and livestock upon the approach of American soldiers (Clendenen 1969:219-227). Information about Villa was even harder to obtain than needed supplies; the officer's inaccurate maps of the country caused further problems (Fletcher 1974a:55; Clendenen 1969:231, 237).

### ***First Engagement***

Not discouraged by these difficulties, the tenacious Americans continued their search for the Villistas. Finally, on 29th March they had their first contact with the

enemy at Guerrero. Here the 7th Cavalry, at a strength of 370 men, routed approximately 600 rebels whose only concern was to escape, not fight (Clendenen 1969:237-240). Two days later the 10th Cavalry had its first engagement. While on a routine patrol near the outskirts of Aguas Calientes, an advance guard of the regiment surprised a group of approximately 150 Villistas. A dismounted fight ensued, which forced the Mexicans to a wooded ridge in the back of the settlement. The black troops riddled the Mexicans with machine-gun fire, forcing the Mexicans to retreat in confusion. They chased the fleeing bandits until their horses were overcome by exhaustion (Glass 1972:71-72).

Such skirmishes with the elusive Villistas were rare, however. So in early May, Pershing decided to alter the method of pursuit. He divided northern Mexico into five military districts, with a regiment given responsibility for the search in each region. Pershing assigned the 10th Cavalry to the Namiquipa district (Clendenen 1969:272-273). Here the regiment set into a long, tedious routine of camp life, with only outpost duty and scouting to relieve the monotony. During this time the Carranza government, feeling that the Americans had overextended their visit, warned them that they would oppose troop movement in any direction except northward back to the United States. Army leaders ignored the warning and continued their search. Altercations between Carranza's men and Pershing's "Expeditionary Force" increased (Glass 1972:79; O'Connor 1967:107).

### ***Skirmish at Carrizal***

The growing tension between American and Mexican forces finally erupted on 21 June at Carrizal, where 90 members of the 10th Cavalry confronted over 400 Carranzistas. The African American soldiers, led by Captain Charles Boyd (white), were on their way to Ahumada to check out reports of 10,000 Carranza troops in the area (O'Connor 1967:107). Upon arriving in Carrizal, Boyd requested permission from the Mexican officers commanding the garrison to pass through the town. The Mexicans refused. Believing that a show of force would disperse the Carranzistas (a tactic that had worked in the past), Boyd decided to fight his way through Carrizal (Clendenen 1969:306-307; Glass 1972:79; Fletcher 1974a:57-58).

With negotiations broken down, the Mexicans positioned themselves and their four machine guns behind the bank of a creek (O'Connor 1967:107). In a maneuver as suicidal as the charge of the British Light Brigade in the Crimean War, Boyd ordered his men to advance headlong into the machine gun and rifle fire (O'Connor 1967:107). Captain Boyd and the other commanding officer, Lieutenant Adair, were among the first killed in the charge. Stopped by the fierce fire from the Mexican guns, the black troops quickly dismounted and returned fire. But with no officers

left to command them, the black troops became confused. Ammunition was nearly exhausted. Realizing that defeat was imminent, the greatly outnumbered survivors beat a hasty retreat. Nevertheless, the black soldiers managed to inflict over 80 casualties on the Mexicans, while suffering less than one-fourth that figure (Glass 1972:80; Clendenen 1969:309-311).

In addition to the defeat, Boyd's recklessness at Carrizal nearly sparked a war between the United States and Mexico. Citizens on both sides of the border clamored for revenge, but government leaders ignored the warmongering. Carranza had his hands full with Villa in the North and Emiliano Zapata in the South, while Wilson realized that the United States would probably soon enter the raging European conflict. Both sides began negotiating the details for Pershing's evacuation from Mexico. Finally, after their 11 months of wandering through northern Mexico, Wilson recalled the dejected American troops back to the United States (Fletcher 1974a:58; Clendenen 1969:312-313; O'Connor 1967:107).

## **African Americans in the National Guard**

With service in the Regular Army numerically limited, many African American men joined state reserve militia units. Several Congressional bills passed during the years of Radical Reconstruction allowed blacks to serve in militia organizations. Southerners were naturally fearful of arming African Americans recently released from their charge. But state officials believed that a few black militia units would not pose either a political or military threat (Johnson 1992:13, 19).

### ***Formation***

With government authorization, blacks primarily from the South began forming militia divisions. With the formation of a five-company Guard Battalion in 1874, North Carolina became the first state with a black militia unit. Other states quickly followed suit, each with their own unique qualities. South Carolina's black militia was especially distinctive. It was the only state that had more blacks in the National Guard than whites. African Americans also acted in all levels of military service, including commanding general, adjutant general, and division, brigade, and regiment commanders. All black officers, moreover, were active in state politics (Johnson 1992:20-21). Georgia's black Guardsmen were also unique in that Georgia was the only state to form simultaneously all three types of companies — infantry, artillery and cavalry — for its African American militia (Johnson 1992:21). By the early 1880s most states with an adequate number of African Americans had formed black National Guard units.

### *Duties*

Although National Guard organizations were created as reserve forces for helping to quell civilian disturbances, adjutant generals rarely used black Guard units for such duty. When the black reservists were called to service, however, they successfully performed their duty in a professional manner. The 9th Ohio Battalion was probably the most active of all the black Guard units. In 1884 it assisted in dispersing the Hocking Valley disturbance. Twenty years later it quelled the disorder following the lynching of a prisoner in Springfield. They did the same during the Columbus strike of 1910 and provided valuable manpower in the flood of 1913. More reflective of the service of black Guardsmen were those in Texas, who were used only once (to prevent the lynching of a Mexican prisoner in 1889) during their 30-year existence. With few National Guard responsibilities, most adjutant generals relegated black units to marching in parades, drills, ceremonies, and gubernatorial inaugurations (Johnson 1992:57-58).

### *Disbandment*

In the late 1890s state officials began reducing, or even eliminating, African American guard units. Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Maryland and Tennessee — all disbanded their black Guard units. Other states reduced the number of black militia companies. Officials argued that the disbanded companies had lost much of their strength and efficiency and were not worth maintaining. Racial feelings, however, played a role in some of this reshuffling. Militia leaders in North Carolina eliminated some black units because of increased protests from whites who disapproved of equipping African Americans with weapons. Other states disbanded black companies because they exceeded the percentage of the African American civilian population (Johnson 1992:34-43). As a result, there remained only a handful of black National Guard units by World War I. Ironically, it would be these inexperienced black Guardsmen, and not the seasoned African American regulars, which the Army sent overseas to fight the powerful German army.

### **Naval Service, 1865-1917**

During the Civil War, thousands of African Americans proved their worthiness as sailors in the United States Navy. Nevertheless, Navy officials slowly eliminated most of the black force over the next 50 years. From a zenith of 30,000 blacks in the Union Navy in 1865, less than one-fourth that number fought during the first World War (Nalty 1986:84). Construction of a new, modern (and highly technical) fleet, changes in recruiting and training, increasing segregation, and growing preference

for Asians as servants — all disfavored the enlistment of African Americans. Thus in 1907 when the American fleet of 16 new battleships proudly sailed around the world in an exhibition of strength, it was aptly labeled the “Great White Fleet” (Nalty 1986:79, 86).

### ***Decreasing Opportunities for Black Sailors***

One of the most important alterations in the Navy at this time was the changeover from an antiquated fleet of wooden sailing vessels to a modern fleet driven by steam, constructed of steel, and using the most up-to-date technology. To have enough competent sailors to man these modern ships, naval recruiters avoided the salty, undisciplined, yet experienced mariner that previously staffed the Navy. Instead, they sought young, sober, disciplined, inexperienced, yet intelligent conscripts from all over the country. By expanding its manpower pool nationwide, the Navy was able to exclude blacks from all but the least desirable jobs (Harrod 1979b: 49; Nalty 1986:83). Moreover, whites still would not tolerate blacks in positions of authority over them. To prevent insulting the majority of recruits (whites), naval leaders placed African Americans in the lowest positions aboard ship — as servants waiting tables and serving food for the officers. A few also labored as firemen, coal passers, gunners’ mates, machinists, and oilers (Campbell 1903:408). Advancement to higher positions was rare. African American seamen not only worked in segregated conditions, but to “avoid friction between the two races,” commanders also segregated their eating and sleeping areas (Harrod 1979b:51).

### ***Blacks in the United States Naval Academy***

During the 1870s, three aspiring and daring young African Americans sought advancement in the Navy via the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. All three failed to complete the grueling 4-year instructional program, a feeling experienced by approximately one-third of all entering freshmen. Although they failed to graduate, the travails of these three plebes illustrates the difficulties faced by blacks in the Navy.

The first black candidate, James H. Conyers from South Carolina, managed to survive the vicious hazing and isolation only to fail academically because he was too proud to accept tutoring. Alonzo McClennan, also from South Carolina, arrived in Annapolis in September 1873 just a few months after Conyers departed. Despite some vague allegations of misconduct, McClennan performed well and survived the harassment. He received a more enticing offer to study medicine at another school. Henry E. Baker from Mississippi was the third and final black to enter the Naval Academy before the First World War. The Academy quickly expelled Baker on a



frivolous charge. The Secretary of the Navy interceded on Baker's behalf, but he refused an offer of reinstatement, instead becoming a clerk in the United States Patent Office (Nalty 1986:81-82; Harrod 1979b: 49).

The final insult to African American sailors came when the United States Navy began replacing its black contingent with Asians at the turn of the century. An established tradition in the Navy held that Orientals from the Far East made the best servants because they were neater, quieter, and less insolent and threatening than African Americans. Thus, when the United States gained control of the Philippines, the Navy quickly tapped this new supply of Asiatic servants. Black seamen objected to the Navy replacing them with "the scum of foreign dens" (Campbell 1903:412). Despite such objections, Filipinos outnumbered blacks in the naval service by 1917 (Nalty 1986:84).

## Summary

During the half century after the Civil War, African Americans demonstrated incomparable ability as soldiers in a variety of harsh environments and in the face of numerous adversities. These men fought Indians and outlaws in the freezing winters of the northern plains and sweltering summers of the southwest; they braved the disease-ridden climate of Cuba to help thwart Spain's bitter struggle to maintain its crumbling empire; they matched the guerilla tactics of the *insurrectos* in the dense Philippine jungles; and they traveled hundreds of miles with no supplies through the hills and mountains of northern Mexico in search of the elusive Villistas. Others demonstrated their patriotism and martial spirit by serving in the Navy and state militias.

Although black servicemen proved their worthiness time and again, discrimination against them only increased, reflecting attitudes in the civilian world. In a strong desire to keep peace between the races, the Army assigned the black regulars frontier duty away from civilian population centers. But even in these remote areas, harassment and discrimination continued, including the strict enforcement of segregation ordinances. Those who revolted against this discrimination were severely punished (sometimes executed) by the Army. The Navy's answer to the problem was to replace blacks with Asians, removing most of its African American contingent by World War I.

As if discrimination was not enough, the post Civil War black serviceman also had to overcome the legacies of slavery, particularly illiteracy and mechanical inefficiency — crucial requirements in the increasingly technological aspects of

modern warfare. Advancement in the armed services was a rare achievement for the African American. Nevertheless, they did make some progress. For example, the military began admitting blacks into its academies, although few ever graduated. Blacks also began serving in areas outside the usual infantry and cavalry regiments, such as the Signal Corps. Moreover, a few blacks — Charles Young, for example — climbed to the rank of full Colonel.

These many tribulations and occasional triumphs were a reflection of the general African American experience during this 20-year period and a callousing rehearsal for the future hardship black soldiers were to face during World War I. However, with the formation of a nation-wide African American leadership and increasing political potency, blacks had greater ability and determination to fight the growing intolerance.

## 6 World War I



*With the United States' commitment to enter the European conflict, African Americans quickly "closed ranks" to help defend liberty and democracy in Europe.*

## 6 World War I

by Keith Krawczynski

### Declaration of War

While Pershing was chasing Villa throughout northern Mexico, relations between the United States and Germany had grown critical. In January 1917, Germany initiated a policy directing their submarines to attack vessels entering any port controlled by their enemies in Britain, Ireland, western Europe, and the Mediterranean. President Woodrow Wilson responded by severing diplomatic ties with Germany. During the same month the British notified the United States of a German plot to entice Mexico into allying themselves with the Central Powers. The infamous Zimmerman telegraph proposed to Mexico that in the event of a war with the United States, Germany would allow them to reconquer territory lost in 1848 (Texas, Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona) in return for persuading Japan to break her alliance with the Allies and join the Central Powers. As disturbing as this was, the final incident that drove the United States into the fray was Germany's indiscriminate attacks against American vessels, including hospital and relief ships (Center of Military History United States Army [CMHUSA] 1992: 7-13; subsequent citations: CMHUSA 1992).

This series of events compelled President Wilson to address a special session of Congress on 2 April 1917. In his speech, Wilson asked for a declaration of war against the Imperial German Government, explaining that "the world must be made safe for democracy." Congress approved the request 4 days later with only a few dissenting votes.

### African American Call to Arms

Before Wilson's announcement, blacks, like all other Americans, possessed differing opinions regarding the European conflict. However, with the United States' commitment to enter the hostilities, African Americans quickly "closed ranks" to help defend liberty and democracy in Europe. Black leaders, after obtaining promises by government officials of improved racial conditions after the war, rallied

young African Americans to enlist in the Army and Navy (Williams 1923:18; Williams 1918:400; Foner 1974:109).

One of the most influential black spokesmen was W.E.B. DuBois, editor of the African American newspaper the *Crisis*. In a July 1918 editorial, DuBois told his readers:

We of the colored race have no ordinary interest in the outcome, that which the German power represents today shall spell death to the aspirations of Negroes and all darker races for equality, freedom, and democracy. Let us not hesitate. Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and close ranks shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow citizens and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy (DuBois 1918a:111).

One month later, DuBois reminded his subscribers not to "bargain" with their loyalty or to "hesitate the fraction of a second when the God of Battles summons his dusky warriors to stand before the armposts of His Throne" (DuBois 1918b:164).

Moved by such patriotic discourse, African Americans eagerly joined the war effort. An even greater influence in their decision was the feeling that their race's patriotism and loyalty was on trial. Again, they viewed the conflict as an opportunity to prove their worthiness for greater democracy at home and a chance to discard their second-class citizenship (Scott 1969:89; *Crisis* 1917 15:35; Coffman 1968:69). African Americans hoped to inscribe their "position and purpose in deeds of valor and sacrifice high upon the scrolls of heroes, so that future generations will not be in doubt as to the bravery, loyalty, and patriotism of the American Negro" (Lawrence 1918:400).

Osceola McKaine, a soldier from Sumter, South Carolina, exemplified this enthusiastic attitude, proclaiming, "I am eager for the fray. Death does not matter, for it will mean life for thousands of my countrymen, and for my race, for right must triumph" (McKaine 1918:592). Like many others, McKaine truly believed that participation in the war would bring positive changes to African Americans. "I am not apprehensive of the future of my people in the States," continued McKaine, "for the free allied nations of the world will not condone America's past treatment of her colored citizens in the future" (McKaine 1918:592).

## Recruitment

Prior to the war, there were only 75,000 men in the American army, 20,000 of whom were soldiers in the 4 all-black regiments — the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry (Williams 1923:17; Department of Defense 1991:50). With so few men in uniform, authorities in Washington DC realized that the volunteer system was inadequate for recruitment of soldiers. To obtain a sufficient number, Congress passed the Selective Service Act on 18 May 1917, requiring the registration of all male citizens between the ages of 21 and 31. The government ordered its first draft on 5 June, and eventually announced three additional registrations during the war. Once men were registered, local draft boards classified, examined, and selected them for induction into the military. Draft boards eventually declared 24,234,021 men acceptable for military service; blacks comprised 2,290,527 or 9.63 percent of the total registration (Johnson 1943:298).

But from the outset, Federal, state and local officials instituted discriminatory policies in the draft and recruitment of African Americans. Draft boards and other agencies of the Selective Service were entirely white. In fact, only five or six blacks sat on draft boards during the war. In addition, the military's policy of segregation ensured that blacks were inducted separately from whites, for although draft legislation contained no specific racial provisions, local draft boards required black registrants to tear off one corner of their registration card so they could be more easily identified (Murray 1971:58; *Crisis* 1917 15:34; Coffman 1968:70).

In a reversal of the usual racial discrimination policy that had kept blacks out of the military in the past, discrimination during World War I consisted of bias review of registrants. For instance, a Fulton County (Georgia) exemption board discharged 44 percent of white registrants on physical grounds, while exempting only 3 percent of black registrants (Wilson 1939:43). Similarly, southern draft boards frequently inducted blacks who owned their own farms and had families to support, while exempting young, single men who worked for large planters. Southern local postal and police officials were known to have created schemes to arrest alleged "draft dodgers." In this racket, postal authorities deliberately failed to send registration cards to eligible black men. Policemen would then arrest these delinquent "draft dodgers," enabling officers to collect the \$50 reward, half of which would go to the postmen (Williams 1923:21-22; Barbeau and Henri 1974:37; Johnson 1943:300).

Despite this bias in recruitment, the Army was far ahead of other military departments, opening opportunities for blacks to serve in almost every branch except the pilot section of the aviation corps. During World War I, African Americans served in cavalry and infantry regiments, engineer, signal, medical,

hospital, ambulance and veterinary corps, sanitary and ammunition trains, coast and field artillery, and depot brigades. Blacks also served as regimental adjutants, judge advocates, chaplains, intelligence officers, chemists, surveyors, draftsmen, truck drivers, and mechanics.

The Marines, on the other hand, excluded African Americans entirely from their forces. The Navy and Coast Guard, although not barring blacks from serving, discouraged enlistment by bluntly telling them that they would be employed only as messmen, water tenders, and coal passers (Moton 1918:74). Rather than serve in these degrading positions, most black men went to Army recruiting stations in the hope of serving in a combat unit (Franklin 1956:450). Consequently, blacks comprised only 1 percent of seamen in the Navy during the war (Nalty and MacGregor 1981:91; Davis 1943:345-346; Mueller 1945:111-112).

## **Appeasement of African Americans**

To alleviate African Americans' concerns over their treatment in the military and to diminish tensions between the races following the summer riots of 1917, Secretary of War Newton Baker appointed Emmet J. Scott (Secretary of Tuskegee Institute) as his Special Assistant on 5 October 1917. In this capacity, Scott was to serve as "confidential advisor in matters affecting the interests of the 10,000,000 Negroes of the United States, and the part they are to play in connection with the present war" (Scott 1969:40). Despite his influential position, Scott did not earnestly fight for the African American cause while serving in Washington. Instead, he chose to serve as an effective middle man, conveying decisions of the War Department to his black brethren, while relaying their concerns to military leaders. Blacks throughout the country commended Baker for selecting an African American to such an important post. Whites, too, were generally pleased with the selection, believing that an African American was best suited for solving problems special to their race (*Outlook* 1917:117:279; Coffman 1968:70; Scott 1969:41).

## **Creation of Black Units**

### ***Labor Battalions***

Overall, the military continued to discriminate against African Americans by limiting their assignments primarily to labor battalions. Black men hoped to demonstrate their patriotism and loyalty by serving in combat units, fighting the

Germans on the front lines. The War Department, gave few of them this opportunity, explaining that it would:

select those colored men of the best physical stamina, highest education and mental development for the combatant troops... After this cream has been skimmed off, there remains a large percentage of colored men of the ignorant, illiterate, day-laborer class (Nalty and MacGregor 1981:80).

Military leaders believed that this large laboring class of African Americans did not have the physical, mental, or moral character necessary to withstand combat. Consequently, the Army assigned them to labor battalions, constructing wharves, docks, railroads, and warehouses. They also loaded and unloaded freight, felled trees, repaired roads, and buried soldiers killed in action. Of the 200,000 African American soldiers in the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), over 160,000 (or 80 percent) served in this capacity (Table 6.1). In fact, blacks comprised more than one-third of all labor troops, although they formed less than 10 percent of the expeditionary force (Barbeau and Henri 1974:89; Wilson 1939:44).

**Table 6.1 Labor and Other Service Units**

<b>Butchery Companies</b>	Nos. 322, 363
<b>Engineer Service Battalions</b>	Nos. 505-550 inclusive
<b>Labor Battalions</b>	Nos. 304-315 inclusive, 317-327 inclusive, 329-348 inclusive, 357
<b>Labor Companies</b>	Nos. 301-324 inclusive
<b>Pioneer Infantry Battalions</b>	Nos. 801-809 inclusive, 811, 813-816 inclusive
<b>Stevedore Battalions</b>	Nos. 701, 702
<b>Stevedore Regiments</b>	Nos. 301, 302, 303

The War Department rationalized their policy of placing blacks in labor battalions on several grounds. First, there was a shortage of common labor in the Allied Armies; France, especially, was in desperate need of manual labor. Second, many whites, especially southerners, were still afraid of training large numbers of blacks in the use of firearms, and it conformed to their long-held views that blacks were fit only for manual labor. Assigning African Americans to labor units helped alleviate both these problems. Third, the larger number of blacks in labor battalions allowed more whites to serve in the combat units (Williams 1923:38; Wilson 1939:44).



### ***Regular Army Regiments***

While some justification, albeit thin, could be made for placing many African Americans in labor battalions in that discriminatory behavior had left many uneducated, the policy of the Army not to use the all-black Regular Army units overseas seems illogical. However, the War Department announced that they would not assign any of the four all-black Regular Army regiments (9th and 10th Cavalry and 24th and 25th Infantry) in combat roles overseas. The War Department feared that these units, some of which were involved in racial incidents at home, might cause trouble in France. Consequently the Army dispersed these all-black regiments throughout American-held territory. They sent the 9th Cavalry to Stotsenberg Camp in Luzon, Philippines, for the duration. The 10th Cavalry spent the war years patrolling the United States-Mexican border around Fort Huachuca near Tombstone, Arizona. In the summer of 1917, the three battalions of the 24th Infantry (stationed in Columbus, New Mexico) received orders to relocate to several camps in Texas and New Mexico. The 25th Infantry, stationed at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii, had high hopes for service in France until early summer of 1918 when they received orders to transfer to Camp Little in Nogales, Arizona, for the remainder of the war (Barbeau and Henri 1974:27-28; Muller 1972:n.p.; Nankivell 1972:144-145).

The experience of these veterans, however, was not completely wasted. Over 1,600 men belonging to these units were transferred into newly formed black divisions of officers, specialists, and noncommissioned officers. Nevertheless, African Americans vigorously denounced this lack of opportunity for black soldiers to serve in combat. In response to this protest, the War Department created two all-black infantry divisions late in 1917 — the 92nd and 93rd (Foner 1974:117; Williams 1923:156).

### ***92nd Division***

Although military leaders desired to put remaining African American recruits into labor battalions, black public sentiment demanded that they assign them to combat units. As a result, the War Department in October 1917 created the 92nd Division under the command of Brigadier General Charles C. Ballou. Unlike the 93rd, the Army organized the 92nd along similar lines as other American Divisions. Components of the 92nd Division included four Infantry Battalions, three Field Artillery Battalions, three Machine Gun Battalions, an Engineer Regiment, an Engineer Train, a Signal Corps, and Trench Mortar Battery (Table 6.2). Most officers were African American; however, blacks were unable to attain a rank higher than first lieutenant, and in no unit did a black officer outrank a white. Unfortunately, members of the 92nd never trained together while stationed in the United

States. Recent incidents involving black troops in Texas had compelled the War Department to distribute the various units among seven camps in the North, depriving the division the opportunity to develop pride, trust, and cohesiveness (Barbeau and Henri 1974:81-82; Williams 1923:156; American Battle Monument Commission [ABMC] 1944a:1, subsequent citations: ABMC 1944a; Lee 1966:5; CMHUSA 1988:431).

**Table 6.2 Elements of the 92nd Division**

<b>183d Infantry Brigade</b>	365th Infantry, 366th Infantry, 350th Machine Gun Battalion
<b>184th Infantry Brigade</b>	367th Infantry, 368th Infantry, 351st Machine Gun Battalion
<b>167th Field Artillery Brigade</b>	349th Field Artillery, 350th Field Artillery, 351st Field Artillery, 317th Trench Mortar Battery
<b>Divisional Troops</b>	349th Machine Gun Battalion, 317th Engineers, 325th Field Signal Battalion, Headquarters Troop
<b>Trains</b>	317th Train Headquarters and Military Police, 317th Ammunition Train, 317th Supply Train, 317th Engineer Train, 317th Sanitary Train (Ambulance and Field Hospitals 365-368)

### ***93rd Division***

The 93rd Division, commanded by Brigadier General Roy Hoffman, a white officer, was organized at Camp Stuart, Newport News, Virginia, in December 1917. This unit was different from most infantry divisions because it was limited to four infantry regiments, three of which were National Guard units from New York, Illinois, Ohio, Maryland, Tennessee, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Washington DC. Draftees from North and South Carolina filled the division's fourth infantry regiment. Because the 93rd was comprised of a mixture of national guard units and draftees, it lacked uniformity in its experience and leadership. Possessing neither artillery brigades, divisional troops or trains, the division also lacked its full complement of combat units and support elements (Table 6.3). As a result, the 93rd never attained full divisional strength and never really functioned as a division. The 93rd Division did have African American officers of junior grades but were otherwise commanded by white officers (CMHUSA 1988, 2:437; ABMC 1944b:1; Williams 1923:195, 208, 219, 229-230; Lee 1966:5).

Table 6.3. Elements of 93rd Division.

185th Infantry Brigade	369th Infantry, 370th Infantry
186th Infantry Brigade	371st Infantry, 372nd Infantry

### Demands for African American Officers

The Army had very few black officers in its ranks before America's entry into war, hanging on to the argument that "the experience of our own and other armies had demonstrated undeniably that colored troops can not be made efficient unless they have white officers" (Judy 1930:57). African American leaders were dissatisfied with this explanation. In December 1917 a committee of black leaders, led by Joel E. Spingarn, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), initiated efforts to have black servicemen obtain reserve officer training in the newly created Plattsburg camps. Not wanting to suggest any equality between the races, the Wilson Administration and the Army refused to integrate officer training camps. Spingarn responded that if the military refused to allow black officer candidates to train with whites, then they should "give them a camp of their own" (*Crisis* 1917 14:60). Although some African Americans disagreed with Spingarn's proposal for a segregated camp, they all concurred that black soldiers should have the opportunity for officer training (Chase 1978:298-299; Patton 1981:54-55; Williams 1923:36).

Constant pressure by African Americans (especially in Washington DC where the decision would be made) and wartime expediency finally forced the War Department to authorize the establishment of a Volunteer Negro Officers' Training Camp in May 1917. Yet additional roadblocks were contrived, for the proposal of the camp required Spingarn and his followers to obtain letters of intent from 200 college-educated men. A letter to the *Atlanta Independent* reflected the view of many blacks concerning this new opportunity:

There is a terrible responsibility resting upon us. The government has challenged the Negro race to prove its worth, particularly the worth of its educated leaders. We must succeed and pour into camp in overwhelming numbers. Let no man slack (Nalty and MacGregor 1981:76).

The black collegiate community responded aggressively in fulfilling the required stipulation, eventually providing over 1,500 names to the War Department (Scott 1969:82-84; Patton 1981:54).

### *Creation of Fort Des Moines*

Government officials decided to locate the new training camp in Des Moines, Iowa, hoping that its relative isolation and small black population would reduce the possibility of racial conflict. To help prevent such an event from occurring, the commander of Fort Des Moines, Lieutenant Colonel (later General) Charles C. Ballou, reminded black candidates of their place in society: "this country is nine-tenths white and one-tenth colored and that we need not expect democratic treatment" (Long 1943:310; Patton 1981:55).

Approximately 1,250 men attended Fort Des Moines during its brief existence from June to October 1917. Two-hundred and fifty candidates were noncommissioned officers while the remainder came from the civilian population. There is evidence that the Army intentionally selected the poorest candidates to ensure their failure and prove that blacks were not officer material (DuBois 1919a:69). In classification tests conducted by the Army, for example, only 12 percent of the men at Des Moines had above-average ratings, compared to 75 percent of white candidates. Moreover, black candidates needed only a high school education, while the Army required whites to have a college degree (Hastie 1943:317; Barbeau and Henri 1974:58).

### *Officer Training*

Ballou, his staff of 12 West Point Graduates, and a group of noncommissioned officers from the 4 black regiments, put the candidates through a rigorous training routine. A typical day at Fort Des Moines included:

- 5:30 a.m. -- reveille and flag raising.
- 6:00-7:00 -- breakfast.
- 7:00-8:30 -- infantry drill without arms.
- 8:30-9:00 -- physical training.
- 9:15-10:15 -- infantry drill with arms
- 10:45-11:45 -- a practice hike without arms.
- 12:00-1:30 -- lunch.
- 1:30-2:30 -- training in arms.
- 2:30-3:00 -- semaphore signaling.
- 3:00-4:30 -- instruction on care of equipment.
- 4:30-6:00 -- dinner.
- 6:00-9:00 -- instruction on organization of the regiment.
- 9:30 -- call to quarters.
- 9:45 -- Taps.

As candidates advanced, instructors added bayoneting, maneuvering, map reading, and rifle practice to their regimen. Despite this seemingly intensive training schedule, candidates at Fort Des Moines received poor and inadequate instruction. Unfortunately, they did not realize this until placed on the front lines, when much of it proved "to be so utterly useless" (Long 1943:310). In all fairness, however, all U.S. Army units had received training and instruction irrelevant to the potential combat situations to be found in the front lines of the Great War (DuBois 1919a:69; Williams 1923:41-42; Chase 1978:307; Patton 1981:58-59).

On 15 October 1917, 639 members of the first (and only) class at Fort Des Moines received their commissions as either Captain or First and Second Lieutenant and were assigned to infantry, engineer, and artillery units with the 92nd Division. Soon after their departure, the War Department closed Fort Des Moines and announced that future black candidates would attend regular officer training facilities. The military had no official policy regarding the integration of black candidates within these camps. Instead, they allowed each facility to determine its own policy. Consequently, some camps such as Fort Sill (Oklahoma) practiced segregation, while others like Camp Pike (Arkansas) and Camp Hancock (Georgia) integrated their candidates. Posts using the latter policy experienced the fewest problems between black and white candidates (Hastie 1943:316). Over 700 additional African Americans graduated from these camps, bringing the total number of black officers who served in the war to 1,353. However, this figure comprised only about 0.7 percent of all officers in the American Army, although blacks constituted 13 percent of draftees (Davis 1948:502-503; Barbeau and Henri 1974:58).

### ***Discrimination Against Black Officers***

The new status of these black servicemen did not exclude them from discrimination and persecution. The most frequent insult, for instance, was refusal of white enlisted men to salute black officers. White officers also demonstrated intolerance towards their black counterparts by barring them from officers' clubs and quarters. In addition, white officers would not tolerate a black of the same grade in their unit. Such overt insolence resulted in numerous altercations. To reduce the number of possible conflicts, commanders transferred black officers to other divisions and replaced them with whites (Foner 1974:118-119; Barbeau and Henri 1974:65).

Because its primary mission was to win a war, and not to solve the race problem, the War Department ignored discrimination both at home and overseas (Barbeau and Henri 1974:64-66). The abuse and mistreatment of these officers only added to the

increasing animosity between the races. One African American officer described his feelings toward whites:

I am beginning to wonder whether it will ever be possible for me to see an American (white) without wishing that he were in his Satanic Majesty's private domain. I must pray long and earnestly that hatred of my fellow man be removed from my heart and that I can truthfully lay claim to being a Christian (Davis and Hill 1985:181).

## **Training in the United States**

### ***Southern Fear of Armed Blacks***

While African American officers were training at Fort Des Moines, the conscripted soldiers began arriving at various cantonments throughout the country. Many of these conscripts received hostile receptions from white military personnel and civilians. Southerners, who feared large numbers of armed blacks, were particularly hostile. Previous confrontations between black troops and white citizens had instilled fear among southerners that additional armed black servicemen would provoke further violence. As a result, governors, mayors, and congressmen throughout the South vehemently protested the placement of black soldiers in their states (Coffman 1968:69).

A conference in Washington addressed these trepidations and concluded that while southerners might protest African American soldiers from other states in their camps, they could not legitimately prevent blacks from their own states from training in their cantonments. Still, to mollify their apprehensions, the War Department stipulated that black troops could not comprise more than one-fourth the total number of military personnel at any camp (Scott 1969:72-75, 92-93; Embree 1918:537; Wilson 1939:44). Consequently, African American soldiers were stationed at nearly 50 camps throughout the country (Chapter 9).

Despite southerners' fears of racial conflict, few serious clashes occurred between black servicemen and white citizens. The most serious incidents occurred at Camp Wadsworth, South Carolina, where soldiers of the 15th New York regiment (369th) were forced out of the state by local citizens only 2 weeks after their arrival, and at Camp MacArthur, Texas, where black soldiers became involved in a shoot-out with local police. Fortunately no casualties resulted from the altercation (Christian 1986:68-69). Black troops at Camps Jackson, South Carolina; Stuart, Virginia; and Logan, Texas, experienced little racial violence throughout their training (Coffman 1968:73). This was due primarily to the discipline and behavior of black soldiers,

who viewed their placement in southern cantonments as an opportunity to allay whites' concerns by conducting themselves honorably. Such an attitude is exemplified by an officer of the 370th Infantry, who, upon his arrival at Camp Logan in Houston, Texas remarked:

Hardly had we arrived at our Training Camp before we were impressed with the fact that it was up to us to make good by converting the whites of Houston from hate to love, to make a people who regarded the regiment as a bunch of lawless men, to realize that we would wade through the fires of Hell to gain and hold for our race a large place in the sun (Bradden n.d.:28).

Military leaders helped prevent racial conflicts with civilians by ordering their black soldiers to respect local segregation restrictions. In a bulletin issued to his men on 28 March 1918, General Charles Ballou (commander of the 92nd Division), explained that his order had:

nothing to do with any policy of segregation, or with any policy outside of the military establishment. Its purpose was to prevent race friction, with the attendant prejudice to good order and military discipline. Good order and military discipline are the foundation stones of the military service. They are indispensable (Scott 1969:100).

He concluded the message, warning that "White men made the Division, and they can break it just as easily if it becomes a trouble maker" (Coffman 1968:72). This order caused great disappointment among black soldiers in the 92nd Division, who quickly lost confidence in their commander.

### ***Provisioning***

As in previous wars and conflicts, African American soldiers received inadequate and inferior provisions. Black soldiers often went for long periods without shoes and overcoats — even in winter. Quartermasters at Newport News, Virginia, gave black troops old Civil War uniforms. Camp commanders often crammed up to 30 men into 16- by 16-foot tents, while housing white servicemen in comfortable barracks. Such inadequate furnishings were sometimes fatal. During the winter of 1917-1918 over 20 black servicemen at Camp Alexandria, Virginia, froze to death in their tents. Black soldiers stationed there also lacked access to bathing facilities or a change of clothing during one 4-month period. During winter months, cooks and mess attendants served food outdoors; the food frequently froze before the troops could consume it. Not all black soldiers, however, received such gross mistreatment.

Those housed at newly constructed national army cantonments where barracks were plentiful, lived comfortably in dwellings with heat, ventilation, sanitary latrines, and spacious mess halls (Williams 1923:25-26, 141; Foner 1974:119; Wilson 1939:44).

### *Training*

In addition to obtaining inadequate provisions, most black soldiers received insufficient training. Those assigned to labor battalions received virtually no military instruction, although regulations specifically required camp commanders to provide labor battalions with a "minimum of training *under arms*" (Nalty and MacGregor 1981:78). What training non-combat troops did receive usually consisted of parade drilling, with some target practice; most never participated in gas attack drills. One soldier assigned to a labor battalion described his company's training as "marching to and from work with hoes, shovels, and picks on our shoulders" (Williams 1923:27).

Defending their neglect of African American conscripts, the War Department explained that since these troops would not actually fight, they required little training. Moreover, their Allies in France and Britain were in desperate need of laborers, and further training would delay their arrival overseas. Racial discrimination evidently played the determining factor, for all white soldiers — even those in labor battalions — received full basic training (DuBois 1919a:65; Barbeau and Henri 1974:97-99; Williams 1923:27).

Adding insult to inadequate training, the Army contracted out black soldiers to white civilians. While these servicemen cleared land, built roads, and harvested crops, camp commanders kept the profits their labor generated. This practice suggests that the Army viewed African American soldiers merely as conscripted labor to use for their own monetary gain (Scott 1969:106; Barbeau and Henri 1974:100).

African American soldiers assigned to combat units received more training than those belonging to labor battalions. But the amount of instruction these combat troops received varied considerably, depending on their commanding officer. Many black soldiers received full combat training: they were taught the importance of discipline and organization, practiced sighting and shooting, and participated in bayonet, gas, and grenade exercises. Other camp commanders, however, made their black soldiers (even officers) perform menial tasks such as cleaning camp, making repairs, digging trenches, scrubbing floors, and pulling sentinel duty, while allowing



less than an hour per day for drill instruction. Some instructors limited their training to military courtesies (*Crisis* 1918:228; Heywood 1928:11).

## Labor Battalions Overseas

The first African American troops sent overseas were the labor units, commonly referred to by blacks as "Slave Battalions" (Bradden n.d.:48). Regardless of its ignominious role, labor battalions provided the core of the Allied logistics system in Europe. The success of any military campaign, in fact, depends on efficient supply and transportation. To motivate black stevedores, military leaders promised special leave if they attained specified goals.

With such incentives, black stevedores often worked in 24-hour shifts under grueling conditions. At one French port they unloaded 1,200 tons of flour in 9½ hours, a task usually requiring several days (Franklin 1956:454). This "army behind the army," working at numerous bases, ports, and railroad depots in France and Britain, successfully supplied and transported more than 4 million American servicemen (Marcossan 1919: 66-67, 101).

The duties of labor battalions were not limited to unloading ships and transporting men and material. After battles, military authorities assigned non-combat troops the grisly task of burying the bloated, decomposed, and mutilated bodies of soldiers killed in action. They also filled trenches, carefully removed unexploded shells from fields, and cleared equipment and barbed wire (Barbeau and Henri 1974:165).

Despite the crucial, back-breaking labor they performed, African American stevedores received the worst treatment of all black troops during the war. In their journeys to France, for instance, black stevedores were forced to sleep on the lowest decks, with little or no ventilation. Upon arrival in France, white officers worked them up to 16 hours a day, frequently subjecting them to physical violence for perceived slowness. The Army also did not provide labor battalions with adequate food. Exhausted after work, they were forced to sleep in poor housing (frequently barns and stables), and were rarely provided opportunities for relaxation and recreation in nearby towns and villages. Additionally, few of these men received promotions or citations for their important contributions (Williams 1923:147; Barbeau and Henri 1974:106; Dubois 1919a:65; Bradden n.d.:48).

## Combat in France

The performance of the two black combat divisions is a story of contrast. On the one hand, units belonging to the 93rd Division, particularly the 369th regiment, performed admirably on the front lines. On the other, the 92nd faltered under heavy fire, especially members belonging to the 368th regiment. Such contrast in performance revealed more about the training and provisioning than the capabilities of the troops as combat soldiers. Nevertheless, the less than outstanding performance of the 92nd Division had a lasting effect on white military leaders, who already believed that blacks (especially black officers) were unfit to fight in or lead men into battle.

### *93rd Division*

The first African American combat troops to arrive in France belonged to the 369th Infantry of the 93rd Division. The division sailed from Hoboken, New Jersey, on 12 December 1917 aboard the *USS Pocahontes*. The ship arrived at the port city of Brest, in northwestern France, just 15 days later despite experiencing engine trouble, an onboard fire, and colliding with a British oil tanker. Additional units of the division arrived in various stages during March and April 1918 (CMHUSA 1988, 2:437; Little 1936:77-98).

When the 93rd arrived in France, the situation was desperate for the Allies. After nearly 4 years of fighting, France's army, composed primarily of men either too old or too young to be effective fighters, was near defeat. Although Britain's troops possessed higher morale, they were also weakened by years of intense fighting and could offer little assistance. Russia's military was also rapidly declining. The weakened Allies could not hold out much longer (Esposito 1964:103; CMHUSA 1992:7, 21).

The Central forces, on the other hand, were still strong with their resources untouched by hostile occupation. German troops were near Paris, preparing to attack the city. Arthur Little, a black officer with the 369th Infantry, described the situation in France upon his arrival in the final days of 1917:

When we first landed in France we found the morale of the country at a very low ebb. France was bled white. The cry for help which for months, even for years, had been going out to sister republics across the sea, had given way to a cry of despair. France was beaten. And she was so sick of body and heart that the common people of the towns and the soldiers of the ranks not only sensed defeat but admitted it (Little 1936:185).

With the United States' entrance into the war, the Allies breathed a collective sigh of relief.

Members of the 92nd Division were anxious to prove themselves in battle. William S. McNutt exclaimed to his comrades in arms:

Now is our opportunity to prove what we can do. If we can't fight and die in this war just as bravely as white men, then we don't deserve an equality with white men, and after the war we had better go back home and forget about it all. But if we can do things on the front; if we can make ourselves felt; if we can make America really proud of ole \_\_\_\_\_ th, then I am sure it will be the biggest step toward our equalization as citizens (McNutt 1918:179).

However, their enthusiasm was soon diminished upon witnessing the grim realities of war. One black serviceman recounted his first exposure to the human carnage resulting from combat:

After while us landed where there was a whole lot of blind men, and one-legged men, and one-armed men, and sick men, all coming this way. Man! It was sure a bad looking sight...Then I asked a white man, "Where did all these wounded men come from?" And he says, "Nigger, they come from right where you are going to be day after tomorrow" (MacIntyre 1923:56).

**Integration Into French Army.** France, her armies depleted and exhausted, begged the United States for additional manpower. John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Force, promised them four American regiments. He decided to give them the four regiments of the 93rd Division because France's military had experience in using Senegalese soldiers, and this arrangement would also solve the problem of integrating his own troops. The 93rd Division joined France's 4th Army approximately 2 months after their arrival in France and remained with them until the close of hostilities (Barbeau and Henri 1974:112; Nalty and MacGregor 1981:81-82).

The French military armed, equipped, and organized the 93rd as a French division. The 93rd adjusted quickly to their new assignment, but not without some difficulties. Used to three substantial meals a day (usually consisting of meat stews and cornbread), it took the black soldiers some time to become accustomed to the French Army ration of soup and bread served twice daily. The French also replaced the 93rd's American equipment with their own rifles, pistols, helmets, machine-

guns, horses, and even wagons. In addition to provisions, American soldiers experienced typical problems with communication and monetary exchange (House Report 1925:1-3; Scott 1969:216).

**369th.** The overseas contribution of the 369th began rather ignominiously. Instead of placement behind the front lines for intensive training, the American Army ordered the 369th to move to St-Nazaire and Camp Coetquidan on the western coast for duty with the Services of Supply (S.O.S.). For nearly 2½ months they unloaded ships, guarded German prisoners, drained swamps, laid railroad track, and constructed store-houses, roads, docks, hospitals, and dams (Racshke 1977:51; Scott 1969:201; Coffman 1968:232). Members of the 369th were insulted by their placement with the S.O.S. This "pick and shovel" work destroyed the morale of these combat soldiers. "We put up with it, and the incidental indignities, for a long time," exclaimed one serviceman, "but the condition was not to be endured indefinitely" (Little 1936:99).

The 369th did not have to endure this mistreatment indefinitely, for on 10 March they received orders to join the French 16th Division (4th Army) in Givry en Argonne for additional training. After nearly 3 weeks of instruction in modern tactics of trench warfare, the battalion began moving up to the front lines in a region just west of the Argonne Forest near the Aisne River. For nearly a month they defended a 5-kilometer section against several German assaults. Although the 369th comprised less than 1 percent of American troops in France, it held 20 percent of all territory held by American troops at the time (ABMC 1944b:4 Raschke 1977:52; Williams 1923:197-198; Scott 1969:202; CMHUSA 1988, 2:438).

After a brief respite from fighting, the 369th was placed in the path of the German offensive at Minacourt (their fifth in the Champagne-Marne Offensive). Just before the attack on 6 July, the Germans attempted to soften Allied defenses with heavy artillery fire. These shellings often inflicted a tremendous amount of damage, as described by one survivor:

...stones, dirt, shrapnel, limbs and whole trees filled the air. The noise and concussion alone were enough to kill one. Talk about shell shock. The earth swayed and shook and fairly bounced with the awful impact. Flashes of fire, the metallic crack of high explosives, the awful explosions that dug holes fifteen and twenty feet in diameter, the utter and complete pandemonium and the stench of hell, your friends blown to bits, the pieces dropping near you — even striking you (Ross 1920:54).

The German shelling failed to have the desired effect, enabling the Allies to thwart the assault. This failed offensive had a devastating psychological effect on the German military. The Germans expected the attack to be the crushing blow that would end the war.

On 18 July the Allies launched a counter-offensive (Aisne-Marne, 18 July-6 August) in the Marne bulge. The 369th regiment, still supporting the French 161st, helped drive the Germans from their entrenchments at Butte de Mesnil. The Germans attempted a counter-offensive against the 369th, dropping over 9,000 shells on them in a 45-minute period (ABMC 1944b:4; Esposito 1964:117). The 369th managed to repulse the attack. By 3 August the Allies had eliminated the Marne salient, forcing the Germans to retreat behind the Vesle and Aisne Rivers.

The Germans made many small night raids into enemy Allied territory. During one of these raids, Henry Johnson, a member of the 369th Infantry, was guaranteed immortality when he fought off an entire German raiding party using a pistol and a knife. He killed four of the German raiders and wounded many more. His daring exploit prevented an injured comrade from certain capture and allowed the Allies to seize a stockpile of weaponry. Both Johnson and his comrade were wounded during the raid and received the French Croix de Guerre for their gallantry. Johnson was subsequently promoted to sergeant and became one of the most well known African American soldiers of the War.

From 26 September until 5 October, the 369th participated in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. With the successful reduction of the Marne salient, French military leaders believed the time was appropriate for a major offensive. The Allies hoped the Meuse-Argonne Offensive would sever the German line of supply in the Western Front, destroying vital railroads and railroad junctions, particularly at Aulnoye and Mezieres. The Allies planned to do this by driving a wedge into enemy lines with frontal assaults. Troops were to penetrate the enemy's defenses, outflanking the Germans and forcing them to evacuate the Argonne Forest. This would clear a path north to the Carignan-Sedan-Mezeries railroad, and help ensure a successful offensive (ABMC 1944a:7-8; ABMC 1944b: 8-9; Esposito 1964:123, 126; CMHUSA 1992:169-170).

At 11:00 p.m. on 25 September, the Allies began an artillery bombardment in preparation for their assault, "the like of which I have never heard," exclaimed one soldier. "The thunder and the roar of the massed artillery shook the earth and the sky was alight with the flashes of the guns" (Heywood 1928:160). After more than 6 hours of shelling with heavy artillery and poisonous mustard gas, the 369th went over the top "shouting like maniacs and pouring over the embankments through the

few remaining strands of barbed wire...." (Mason and Furr 1921:117). Flanked by the French 163rd on the right and 2nd Moroccan Division on the left, the 369th advanced toward the enemy. Meeting an onslaught of machine-gun and grenade fire, the troops suffered horribly, the wounded and dying emitting "groans of agony, curses, prayers, and all manner of heartrending cries...." (Mason and Furr 1921: 118). The survivors continued to push back the Germans until they evacuated the town of Ripont. (Williams 1923:201-202; ABMC 1944b:12-13; CMHUSA 1992:359-360).

The 369th continued fighting well throughout the offensive. Elements of the battalion participated in capturing the Bellevue Signal station and the strategic railroad junction at Sechault (ABMC 1944b:15; Williams 1923:202-203). The latter assault was particularly difficult as the troops encountered heavy fire from well fortified machine-guns and snipers. Only through methodical and dangerous house-by-house attacks did they succeed in forcing the enemy from the town.

In 5 days of relentless combat, the 369th incurred 851 casualties; so many losses that the regiment could not continue the advance. African American leaders back home charged Colonel Hayward (commander of the 369th) and his officers with needlessly sacrificing the lives of their men (DuBois 1919a:73). This reaction was understandable but cannot be supported considering the casualty rate incurred by other regiments throughout the war. With the regiment so depleted, the French transferred it to a quiet sector in the Vosges Mountains for rest and reorganization (Williams 1923:202-204; ABMC 1944b: 20, 23; CMHUSA 1992:423).

The combat record of the 369th should have forever put to rest concerns about African Americans' will to fight. The regiment fought in the front lines for a total of 191 days, 5 days longer than any other regiment in the AEF. During this time the unit never lost a foot of ground or a prisoner to the enemy. Their tenacity and fearlessness in battle earned them the nickname "Hellfighters" from the Germans. France awarded the entire unit with the Croix de Guerre, that country's highest military honor. Additionally, 171 members received individual awards for exceptional gallantry in action. This record is amazing considering the 369th received less training than many other American infantry regiments (Raschke 1977:52; Williams 1923:204-205).

**370th.** The 370th did not see action until early July when the regiment joined the French 36th division on the Meuse-Argonne front. Just before going into the trenches, their chaplain reminded them of the importance to perform bravery in battle:

Fellows, you stand as pioneers on the frontier of your Race's progress. If you fail the hands on the dial of your Race's progress will be pushed back fifty years. The whites over there are expecting you to fail because you are officered by your Race men, now go to it and show them how, when led by your own officers, you can and will charge hell with a bucket of water (Bradden n.d.:59).

The regiment did not let him down. In a drive against German lines in early July, the battalion captured 1,900 prisoners, 4 cannons, 45 trench mortars, and 200 machine guns (Barbeau and Henri 1974:124; Scott 1969:216). A few weeks later the regiment was relieved from front line service and sent to second line positions in preparation for their role in the Oise-Aisne Offensive (CMHUSA 1988, 2:441; Scott 1969:218; Bradden n.d.:71, 85, 89; ABMC 1944b:5).

The 370th proved themselves again during the Oise-Aisne Offensive — a secondary operation during late August and early September to fill the gap between the converging Meuse-Argonne and Cambrai-Saint Quentin assaults where they helped drive the Germans from Ecluse, Ferme de la Riviere, Mont-des-Singes, and Bis de Mortier. Under heavy machine gun and rifle fire they eliminated well-fortified German positions, and eventually pushed the Germans north of the Oise-Aisne Canal. Such intensive fighting took a staggering toll on the 370th. The regiment suffered the loss of about 500 officers and men during the operation, half this number in just 5 days. After this assault, the war-torn 370th acted as division reserve, patrolling south of the Oise-Aisne Canal (Scott 1969:220; Williams 1923:214-215; CMHUSA 1988, 2:441-442; ABMC 1944b: 27-29; CMHUSA 1992:91-93; Barbeau and Henri 1974:125, 127).

October was relatively quiet for the 370th division. Their only engagement occurred in the middle of the month when they participated in the advance toward Laon. With little opposition, the 370th, with assistance from the French 31st division, crossed the Oise-Aisne Canal and Ailette River and captured the town of Bois de Mortier. (ABMC 1944b:30-31; Williams 1923:214-215). The division suffered its greatest loss that month while stationed in reserve near Chambry (northeast of Laon). Here a German shell landed among a large group gathered around the kitchen, resulting in over 80 casualties and 41 deaths (Williams 1923:215; ABMC 1944b:30-31; DuBois 1919a:78). The division's final combat duty occurred during the final days of the war, when they pursued retreating Germans and assisted in evacuating them from the towns of Beaume, Aubenton, and Signy le Petit. The 370th also had the honor of fighting in the last battle of the war, capturing a German wagon train ½ hour after the armistice went into effect (Franklin 1956:455).

During their combat service, the 370th suffered 20 percent casualties and lost only 1 man as a prisoner. Although they did not achieve the record of the 369th, the 370th did performed very well. They were not awarded a unit Croix de Guerre, but 71 individual servicemen did receive the medal and another 21 accepted the Distinguished Service Cross, America's second highest military decoration. Company C, however, received a Croix de Guerre with palm for conspicuous bravery (Williams 1923:215-216; Barbeau and Henri 1974:127; ABMC:32-33; CMHUSA 1988, 2:442; CMHUSA 1992:91-93; Scott 1969:230).

**371st.** After receiving intensive training in the French military system, trench warfare, and proper use of gas masks and grenades, the 371st was sent to the Verdun area in early June to replenish the badly depleted French 157th division (the famous "Red Hand" under General Goybet). The regiment remained on the front lines for more than 3 months. Most of its duty consisted of patrols and nightly raids on enemy outposts. On 14 September the French military command ordered the 371st to Somme Bione, Champagne, to participate in the upcoming Meuse-Argonne (Champagne) Offensive (Heywood 1928:65, 66, 76, 97-100; Williams 1923:222-223; Barbeau and Henri 1974:134; CMHUSA 1988, 2:439; ABMC 1944:6).

The regiment's first combat assignment was to fill a gap between the French 161st division and 2nd Moroccan division. In heavy fighting (often hand-to-hand) the regiment captured 60 prisoners, 3 field guns, 2 anti-tank rifles, and large quantities of ammunition. Over the next 2 days the regiment forced the Germans from Bussy Farm and assisted in the capture of Ardeuil and Montfauxelle. These were hard-won victories. At times the Germans had their machine guns "runnin' like a millrace on us" commented one black soldier (*Literary Digest* 1919:57). Ravaged by a 45 percent casualty rate, the 371st was elated when they were relieved of combat duty and sent to a reserve area in Vosges. One soldier described the regiment's march from the front lines:

A dirty, tired, haggard, nerve-shattered bunch of men we were, but as we moved to the rear and the din of battle grew fainter we breathed easier and knew that for the time being at least, we were safe from the death that had stared us in the face for days. It was a quiet and somber column of men that pulled out of that sector (Heywood 1928:193).

The 371st remained in the relative quiet Vosges region near the German border until the Armistice.

During its participation in the Champagne offensive, the 371st had captured 3 German officers, 90 men, and large amounts of weaponry including 8 trench



mortars, 37 77mm guns, 47 machine guns, a munitions depot and several railroad cars. All this came at a heavy price; the regiment lost 4 officers and 122 men; an additional 41 officers and 873 men were wounded. For its extraordinary bravery the regiment was awarded the Croix de Guerre with palm. Additionally, 3 officers won the French Legion of Honor, 123 men earned the Croix de Guerre, and 26 won the Distinguished Service Cross — more and higher honors than any other regiment in the 93rd Division (Franklin 1956:455; Barbeau and Henri 1974:135-136).

**372nd.** Although the 372nd arrived in France in mid April 1918, assignment to stevedore work at Montoir and further training prevented it from reaching the front lines until early June. During the summer, the regiment served under several different French divisions, primarily in the Verdun sector, a relatively quiet part of the front; the unit saw little action (CMHUSA 1988, 2:439; ABMC 1944b:6). Probably their most gruesome and unpleasant task during the hot summer months was redigging the bombed trenches. One soldier assigned to this grisly duty recounted:

In digging new trenches all sorts of relics of the previous fighting were uncovered, skulls, bones, and putrid clothing, rusted and rotting equipment of all kinds. The odor became so offensive and dangerous that medical attention was called to it and disinfectant constantly employed to keep down disease and other infection (Mason and Furr 1921:86).

During August white officers of the 371st and 372nd Infantry regiments began a campaign to discredit their black counterparts. On the 24th of that month Herchel Tupes, commander of the 372nd requested permission from General Pershing to replace his African American officers with whites. He explained that there was a tendency for the black officers to “neglect the welfare of their men and to perform their duties in a perfunctory manner.” It appears, however, that Tupes’s main reason for the request was to maintain racial barriers in his division (Davis and Hill 1985:176-177).

Upon General Pershing’s approval, Tupes immediately placed the black officers of the 372nd on trial by all white “efficiency boards.” These courts found most officers incompetent for military duty — either because of a lack of training or inadequate education. The military discharged some, transferred a few to other units, and placed the remainder in labor battalions. African American officers in the 371st went through a similar experience. Ultimately, the military relieved over 80 black officers in these two regiments. Black servicemen in these regiments were furious and contemplated mutiny. Only after regiment commanders threatened to transfer them to labor battalions were these protests suppressed. The unit, however, never

regained its morale (DuBois 1919b:16; Mason and Furr 1921:75, 98-99; Barbeau and Henri 1974:129).

Regardless of the letdown in morale, the 372nd performed admirably during the American assault in the Champagne. Only 2 days into the battle when the 372nd reached the front lines on 28 September, the area was marked by much death and destruction. "The dead were everywhere," remarked one soldier, "and the wounded suffered in the churned up fields" (Heywood 1928:161). The regiment helped drive the Germans from Bussy Farm and assisted the 369th in their attack at Sechault, where enemy resistance was heaviest. In fact, the 1st and 3rd battalions incurred such heavy losses in this attack that afterward they were combined into a single battalion.

After reorganizing, the regiment relieved the 371st at Trieres Farm on 1 October and assisted in the capture of Monthois (an important railway center and base of supply). Here the regiment met strong resistance and counterattacks, often forced to repel the enemy in hand-to-hand fighting. The regiment was finally relieved on 7 October by the French 125th division.

In less than 2 weeks of front line service, the 372nd received nearly 600 casualties (ABMC 1944b:24). Many of those not physically wounded "were in such a mortally shaken and nerve-racked condition" that they required medical care (Mason and Furr 1921:135). The success and sacrifice of the 372nd compelled Colonel Quillet of the French 157th to remark that their actions "gave proof, during its first engagement, of the finest qualities of bravery and daring which are the virtues of assaulting troops" (Mason and Furr 1921:125). The exploits of the regiment earned it a unit Croix de Guerre with palm. In addition, 43 officers, 14 noncommissioned officers and 116 privates received either the Croix de Guerre or Distinguished Service Cross (Barbeau and Henri 1974:131).

### ***92d Division***

The 92nd Division did not perform as well in battle as its counterpart. In fact, contemporary military authorities deemed its actions in France a failure. The division suffered handicaps similar to the 93rd — discrimination, brief and inadequate training, separation of its regiments, and efforts to replace its black officers with whites. However, it suffered from one obstacle it could not overcome: a bitter career competition between General Robert Bullard, commander of the American 2nd Army and General Ballou, whose 92nd Division was under Bullard's command. Bullard, a "thoroughgoing Negro hater" (Barbeau and Henri 1974:138), maligned the efforts of black soldiers in order to discredit his rival. Even Ballou's

chief of staff, Colonel Allen J. Greer, spread misinformation about blacks in the division to staffs and superiors (Barbeau and Henri 1974:139-140). No matter how well the 92nd performed on the battlefield, it would be unable to overcome the malicious slander thrown at it from prejudiced military commanders.

**Lorraine.** Upon completing their training on 12 August, the 92nd began moving to the St. Die Sector (Lorraine) near the Rhine, southeast of Metz. Two weeks later the division engaged the enemy for the first time when it assaulted and captured German positions in the region. On 30 August the Germans counter-attacked near the town of Frapelle. Elements of the 92nd intercepted the enemy and beat them back. The following day the division repeated their success against the Germans at Ormont, despite being bombarded with more than 12,000 shells in a 2½-hour period (Williams 1923:162-163; CMHUSA 1988, 2:433; Barbeau and Henri 1974:145). The 92nd remained in the sector, performing an average of 13 patrols a day, until 20 September when they were ordered to proceed to the Argonne Forest, northwest of Clermont in preparation for the Meuse-Argonne Offensive (ABMC 1944a:4; Barbeau and Henri 1974:149).

**Meuse-Argonne Offensive.** The 92nd Division reached the front lines just before the first assault. The 368th battalion immediately received instructions to maintain an 800-meter combat liaison (gap) between the American First Army (77th Division) and the French Fourth Army (37th Division). Since it was crucial for the two armies to maintain contact with each other, the 368th played an important role in the battle. However, their unfamiliarity with the rough and broken terrain and lack of experience or training as a liaison unit, severely hindered the 368th's successful completion of the assignment. Their superior's failure to provide the battalion with grenade launchers, signal flares, wire cutters, maps, and specific objectives ensured the battalion's failure. The experience of the 368th left an indelible mark that the division could not remove no matter how well they performed thereafter. This failure also was used by military authorities for more than 30 years to prove the inadequacy of black soldiers and officers (DuBois 1919a:80; Barbeau and Henri 1974:150, 154; CMHUSA 1992:367).

In the early morning of 26 September the 2nd battalion of the 368th led the attack, with the 3rd battalion following behind in support. Unfortunately, the artillery barrage failed to destroy the heavily wired enemy positions, forcing the troops to advance through either trenches or paths. The regiment's advance was further hampered by heavy machine-gun and artillery fire, as well as huge craters created by earlier fighting. As a result, utter confusion reigned throughout the assault, making lateral communication (their first priority) very difficult. By mid-afternoon the 2nd battalion lost contact with the American 77th Division, and a few hours

later with the French 37th. The regiment finally reestablished liaison with these two divisions later that evening (ABMC 1944a:12-13; Williams 1923:164; Scott 1969:141; Barbeau and Henri 1974:150; Esposito 1964:127).

The next day General Durand ordered both battalions of the 368th to advance toward the enemy position near Clotilde. Slowed by wooded terrain and the extended width of the sector, the battalion commander lost contact with some of his units, causing a disjointed and haphazard advance. Additionally, a portion of the 3rd battalion (just 200 meters before contacting the Dromodaire trench line) broke under heavy artillery, grenade, machine-gun, and rifle fire. To regain control of his troops, the battalion commander ordered his men to withdraw to their original positions (DuBois 1919a:81-82; Williams 1923:164-165; Coffman 1968:315-317; ABMC 1944a:17-18).

After reorganizing that night, the 368th (reinforced by two companies of the 351st Machine Gun Battalion, French artillery units, and a squadron of the French 10th Dragoons) attacked in the direction of Binarville the following morning. Intense fire from trench mortars and 77mm machine-guns, inability to cut through wire entanglements, and lack of artillery support, once again forced the regiment to break their lines and retreat in turmoil. When French authorities received notice of the withdrawal, they ordered the 1st battalion of the 368th (which had been held in reserve) to relieve them and renew the attack on Binarville. Fortunately, recent Allied successes in the Champagne forced the Germans to withdraw, allowing the 1st battalion to advance 6 miles past Binarville with few obstructions and less confusion while maintaining liaison between the French and American armies (DuBois 1919a:82; Williams 1923:165; Barbeau and Henri 1974:151-152).

**Marbache Sector.** Because of the 368th's lackluster performance, the entire division was relieved of duty in the region and sent to a relatively quiet portion of the front in the Marbache sector. Entering the region on 7 October, their primary mission was to harass the enemy with frequent patrols. Such assignments were quite dangerous, as reflected in the 462 casualties suffered in just 1 month of patrol activity (Barbeau and Henri 1974:157). Members of the 365th Infantry and 350th Machine Gun Battalion were decorated by French commanders for aggressiveness and bravery in this duty (Barbeau and Henri 1974:159). Yet American military commanders were not satisfied with the division's achievement, complaining that they did not bring back enough prisoners (Barbeau and Henri 1974:159).

By 6 November the Germans were in full retreat along the entire front. The Allied Commander in Chief ordered vigorous pressure against the retreating enemy. The 92nd's objective in this assault was to seize the heights east of Champney and

continue to advance along the Moselle River. Just prior to their assault on 10 November, the commander of the 365th walked sadly along his front line troops:

looking into the face of each man, each so busy with his thoughts. How pinched, how tired — how worn they looked. Many cheeks were wet with tears. Each man made an effort to smile. Many chins and lips trembled. The very chill and the darkness seemed charged and potent with death (Ross 1920:43).

Nervousness and fear quickly faded among the troops as they advanced through heavy barbed wire entanglements, machine-gun fire, gas bombs, and booby traps (Ross 1920:52-53). By the time hostilities ceased at 11:00 the next morning, various battalions of the division had proceeded to the woods of Cheminot, Voivrette, and Frehaut surrounding Metz. Although the attack lasted only 1 day, fighting was fierce and costly for the 92nd, which suffered over 500 casualties, mostly from poisonous gas (ABMC 1944a:31-33; Barbeau and Henri 1974:160; Williams 1923:168-169; CMHUSA 1988, 2:434; DuBois 1919a:84; Garvin 1928:385).

**Supporting Units.** The 92nd's infantry and artillery regiments were not the only elements of the division to make a significant contribution to the war effort in France. Non-combat battalions such as the Engineers, Signalers, and Supply trains also performed vital roles. For example, the 317th Engineers loaded baggage and constructed roads, barracks, mess halls, bath houses, warehouses, stables, and railroad yards. This regiment also labored for 3 months in the front lines where they dug and repaired trenches, mined bridges, cleared and built roads, and delivered material to the forward units (DuBois 1919a:84; Williams 1923:174-178).

Divisional trains (motor supply, ammunition, sanitary) also contributed to the successful operation of the 92nd Division. The Motor Supply and Ammunition Trains transported desperately needed rifles, ammunition, and other support materials. Sanitary Trains, which included field hospitals and ambulance companies, established "dressing stations" just behind the front lines. Here they provided necessary medical care — ranging from changing dressings to complicated surgery. Many members of this regiment also served as litter bearers, cooks, and blacksmiths (DuBois 1919a:83-84; Williams 1923:178).

**Accolades.** Despite the unit's reputation as a failure, men of the 92nd received numerous commendations, awards, and citations. General John J. Pershing, the highest ranking American military leader in France, remarked, "The 92d Division stands second to none in the record you have made since your arrival in France...I

commend the 92d Division for its achievements not only in the field, but on the record its men have made in their individual conduct" (Scott 1969:167). Every officer and enlisted man of the 351st Field Artillery received one Service Chevron (Ross and Slaughter n.d.:50), and the 367th Infantry received a unit Croix de Guerre for bravery in its drive toward Metz. Fifty-seven other members of the division received the Distinguished Service Cross (Scott 1969:174; *Crisis* 1919 17:192).

***Campaign to Dishonor the 92nd.*** Immediately following the 368th's debacle during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, military authorities, especially those within the 92nd Division, instituted a campaign to discredit the bravery and sacrifice of African American soldiers. They placed most of the blame on the "cowardly" behavior of the black officers. In subsequent military trials, 30 African American officers were relieved from duty and 5 were court martialed. Four men received death sentences while a fifth was given life in prison. The military eventually freed all five (Coffman 1968:317).

Robert L. Bullard, commander of the 2nd American Army, was the most vociferous critic of the African American division. "The Negro division seems in a fair way to be a failure," remarked Bullard. "They are really inferior soldiers. There is no denying it...Poor Negroes! They are hopelessly inferior" (Bullard 1925:294-295). Colonel Fred Brown, commanding officer of the 368th, investigated the charges of cowardice and incompetence of the black soldiers under his command. Brown's report, entitled "The Inefficiency of Negro Officers" glorified his own role in the battle while depicting the lack of leadership among black officers, their refusal to follow orders, and cowardice of their retreating men. Commanders of the 1st and 3rd battalions of the 358th also joined in the criticism, claiming African American soldiers were cowards with no desire to engage the enemy.

However, such condemnations today appear to have been attempts to cover their own failures in combat and pitiful efforts to promote their belief in black inferiority. Major B.F. Norris, commander of the 3rd battalion later admitted hiding in a ditch during the failed assault. Major Max Elser, commander of the 2nd battalion, which lead the attack, broke down during the battle, begging others to take him back to safety (Barbeau and Henri 1974:153-157).

These attacks on African American troops were unjustified. Responsibility for the 368th's inadequate performance must lay with the leaders who failed to adequately organize, train, supply, and support the division. A campaign of negligence began early in the selection and training of the division's black officers. As General Charles C. Ballou, commander of the 92nd Division explained, "For the parts of a machine requiring the finest steel, pot metal was provided" (Nalty and MacGregor

1981:85). Army commanders assigned black officers without regard to training or education, creating a foundation for failure. For example, over 300 illiterates were selected to outfit a machine gun battalion, a very technical branch of warfare, while assigning some of the most highly educated recruits to labor battalions. As a result of such practices, over 40 percent of soldiers in the 92nd division were illiterate (Colson and Nutt 1919:22-23; Lee 1966:13).

This program for failure continued in France. Instead of receiving intensive training in trench warfare, military authorities forced the 92nd to devote most of its attention to police duty. The training and instruction they eventually received was often vague. Frequent changes in staff officers only exacerbated problems of leadership and morale. When Allied commanders ordered the battalion to join the fierce fighting at the Argonne Forest, it was ill-prepared for the encounter. This, coupled with a lack of artillery support, rifle grenades, wire cutters, maps, or even leadership during the attack, ensured the muddled performance of the battalion (Colson and Nutt 1919:24; Barbeau and Florette 1974:154).

Having noted the failure of the U.S. Army in the treatment of this unit, it must be noted that the Army in 1919 investigated the conduct of the 368th in the Argonne Forest, and exonerated it of any cowardice or failure. In their report, investigating officers concluded that the reasons for the "failure" of the battalion were the inexperience of the unit, the difficult terrain, and the lack of maps, wirecutters, and artillery support (Coffman 1968:317). This investigation and report stand as testimony to the U.S. Army's continuing institutional effort to treat African Americans with fairness despite personal bias of certain officers and the general attitudes of the country. Unfortunately, this exoneration did not remove the tarnished reputation of African American soldiers. For the next 30 years military leaders continued to believe blacks were incompetent soldiers and restricted their duties accordingly.

**Attempts to Malign Black Troops.** The black soldiers' conduct off the battlefield also came under attack. White servicemen during the war were known to have spread reckless rumors of wanton rape committed by African American troops, especially by members of the 92nd Division. Even the Chief of Staff of the 92nd, Allen J. Greer, told Congress that at least 30 members of the division had sexually assaulted females, while an additional 22 had even gang-raped one woman (DuBois 1919b:19). Subsequent investigations, however, confirmed only one charge. African American soldiers, in reality, behaved honorably while on furlough. In fact, no other American division had a better record of conduct while overseas (Williams 1923:72-75; Barbeau and Henri 1974:143; DuBois 1919a:87; Coffman 1968:232). One mayor even wrote the commander of an African American brigade, remarking:

The entire population is unanimous in reaching the conclusion that the attitude and behavior of your soldiers have been above reproach. They have earned our high regard by their discipline and their faultless behavior and have likewise endeared themselves to us by their good nature and kindness to all (Miller 1925:304d).

## Postwar 1918-1940

### *Homecoming*

The contributions of African Americans to the war effort increased their expectations and self-conceptions as American citizens, "confident that after democracy was rendered safe abroad they would receive some few crumbs of democracy at home" (*The Nation* June, 931). Lieutenant Osceola McKaine of the 367th infantry asked: "Is the servant to remain without compensation for his services? These self-inquiries are recurrent and constant. His homecoming will give him the answer" (McKaine 1919:50). A white man addressing a group of Negroes in New Orleans just prior to the Armistice provided the answer to McKaine's query. "You...are wondering how you are going to be treated after the war," he chided. "Well, I'll tell you, you are going to be treated exactly like you were before the war; this is a white man's country and we expect to rule it" (Blanton 1919:20). Realizing that they would have to fight for equal treatment, one black leader raised a clarion call to his brethren:

We return. We return from fighting. We return fighting...But by the God of Heaven, we are cowards and jackasses if now that the war is over, we do not marshal every ounce of our brain and brawn to fight a sterner, longer, more unbending battle against the forces of hell in our own land (*Crisis* 1919 18:14).

Believing that the Negroes' increased efforts for equal rights posed a threat to the established order, many whites renewed their reign of terror to maintain African American subordination. The Ku Klux Klan, dormant since the 1880s, reinstated tactics of fear and violence against blacks. As black troops returned home, racial violence increased. During the summer and fall of 1919, race riots erupted in 26 cities across America. The most violent conflicts occurred in New York City, Chicago, Charleston, Norfolk, Knoxville, Longview in Texas, and Bisbee in Arizona. Lynchings also increased from 58 in 1918 to 77 the following year. At least 10 of the victims, moreover, were war veterans (Barbeau and Henri 1974:177; Donaldson 1991:100-101; Foner 1974:125-126).



### ***Reenlistment***

Despite their treatment in the armed forces, a large portion of African American servicemen and officers volunteered for postwar duty. Most of these men reenlisted because of the restricted range of economic opportunities open to them and the greater chances for social recognition and relative economic security provided by the Army. Whites, with better employment opportunities in the civilian sector, left the military *en masse*. Military leaders were fearful that should this trend continue, the Army might possibly become disproportionately black (Foner 1974:127; Donaldson 1991:102; Lee 1966:3-4).

To prevent this from happening, the War Department acted as it had in previous non-war years imposing restrictions on African American enlistment in the cavalry and infantry. Ignoring their record in the war, military leaders argued that blacks, due to certain racial characteristics, were intellectually, physically, and biologically inferior to whites, and were unfit for modern combat. The military discouraged enlistments, and accepted reenlistments only conditionally. The four black regiments created shortly after the Civil War (9th and 10th Cavalry and 24th and 25th Infantry), which could not be disbanded without Congressional approval, were reduced significantly and used primarily as service battalions. African American soldiers, though, continued to serve in all-black National Guard units in New York, Massachusetts, Maryland, Illinois, New Jersey, and the District of Columbia.

The lack of military opportunities continued for African Americans throughout the 1930s. The Army accepted blacks only when there were vacancies. Since most blacks reenlisted, few others had the opportunity to enroll. To enter the Army, a black man had to find out what posts had black units assigned to it, discover if there were any vacancies, apply to the commander of the base, and present himself at the post once enlistment was authorized. The difficulty of this procedure ensured few blacks would ever enlist. Therefore, it is no surprise that African Americans comprised only 2 percent of servicemen in the Army and National Guard (Donaldson 1991:101-102; Nalty 1986:128-129; Johnson 1969:55; Nalty and MacGregor 1981:92-93; Foner 1974:128; Lee 1966:24-27).

The Army also continued to bar blacks from the Air Corps, arguing that Congress had not made provisions for such a unit; moreover, they claimed that not enough black men possessed the education or technical training in operating and servicing aircraft to comprise an entire unit. Eugene Jacque Bullard, a southern black who left the United States for Europe to escape increasing racism, proved these military policymakers wrong when he became the first (and only) African American to pilot an aircraft during the war. While in Europe, Bullard lived a bohemian life until

joining the French Foreign Legion soon after hostilities erupted in 1914. After recovering from serious wounds he received while fighting as an infantryman, Bullard volunteered for flight training. He quickly mastered the limited skills necessary to pilot the crude aircraft (nicknamed "chicken-coops") and joined a pursuit squadron in 1917. On 7 November of that year he shot down a German triplane. Throughout his service as a pilot for France, Bullard offered his assistance to the United States air corps, but was rebuffed by the Army, which wanted this elite corps to remain white (Nalty 1986:123-24).

Army leaders continued to ignore the achievements of black pilots after the war. Flight training schools at Tuskegee Institute and other black institutions were successfully training hundreds of African Americans to service and fly airplanes. In reality, military and political leaders were afraid that if blacks excelled as fighter pilots, then they would have a legitimate reason to seek and demand more important roles in both the military and civilian sectors (Donaldson 1991:104; Nalty 1981:130, 133-135; Nalty and MacGregor 1986:94).

African Americans faced discrimination in other branches of the military, too. The Marine Corps continued to exclude blacks altogether during this period. The Navy continued to use blacks in their traditional roles as laborers, messmen, servants, and housekeepers. They also paid them less than other sailors and provided them with no advancement opportunities. In fact, not one of the 20,000 officers in the Navy was black. As African American seamen retired, the Navy replaced them with white men (Donaldson 1991:106-107; Foner 1974:129).

## Summary

Such was the situation of African Americans in the military just prior to World War II. Despite all their sacrifice, contributions, and continued record of bravery and service, their status changed little between the Argonne and Pearl Harbor. With racism still prevalent throughout American society, blacks had little chance of increased opportunity in the Armed Forces. Although black soldiers and officers proved they were as proficient as whites in combat when given a fair chance, military leaders ignored such evidence. Only with the slow crumbling of racism and America's need for increased manpower during the Second World War would military and political leaders provide increased opportunities for blacks in the Armed Forces.

## 7 African American Navy, Marine Corps, Women's Reserves, and Coast Guard Service During World War II



*World War II was a time of great transformation in the Armed Forces as opportunities expanded and training facilities became integrated.*

## **7 African American Navy, Marine Corps, Women's Reserves, and Coast Guard Service During World War II**

by Keith Krawczynski

### **Introduction**

At 7:55 a.m. on Sunday 7 December 1941, white-garbed sailors on board the 94 vessels of the Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor busily prepared for the morning's flag-raising ceremony. Five minutes later a low-flying plane with a red sun emblem painted on its fuselage swooped over the harbor and dropped a bomb amongst eight battleships moored next to Ford's Island. The plane was soon followed by 260 others. In less than 2 hours the Japanese fighters managed to destroy or disable 19 ships (including 5 battleships) and 150 planes, and kill 2,335 soldiers and sailors. The next day, with only one dissenting vote, Congress declared war on Japan (Nash 1992:518).

With the entrance of the United States into World War II, the Armed Forces' need for manpower became critical; yet commanders, consistent with 166 years of military policy toward blacks in the military, discouraged African American enlistment. The Navy and Coast Guard still assigned black recruits either to the segregated Steward's Branch or to all-black stevedore units at shore facilities. African American servicemen also had very few opportunities for advancement; neither the Navy or Coast Guard could claim an African American officer in its ranks. The Marine Corps refused to admit blacks altogether.

But finally, the policy was about to change. World War II turned out to be a watershed in race relations within the Armed Forces. In just a few years the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard were to make significant advancements in the treatment of their black members. They began integrating training facilities and vessels and commissioning black officers. Nearly all positions, including captain of warships, were opened to them as well. However, the force behind these changes did not come from top military officials; instead, black leaders, who, unwilling to sacrifice possible gains in equal rights for the war effort, put increased pressure (threats of labor strikes and massive marches on Washington) on the government

to expand opportunities for blacks both in the civilian and military sectors. President Roosevelt and other high-ranking government officials, who were courting the black vote and who were somewhat sympathetic to the African Americans' predicament, coerced reluctant military commanders to alter their treatment of black personnel. By V-J Day, the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard were unrecognizable from their pre-war years.

## **Dorie Miller**

A minor incident during Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor illustrates the devotion and patriotism of African American sailors in the war, the Navy's attitude toward its black complement, and the outside forces that were brought to bear on the naval establishment during this period. During the attack, Dorie Miller, a young Texas steward on the burning battleship *West Virginia*, helped carry the wounded men (including the captain) from the deck to places of greater safety. With this task completed, Miller manned a machine gun, even though he had no training in the use of the weapon, and shot down between four and six Japanese planes (depending on Miller's or the Navy's account of the incident).

The first Navy reports identified Miller as an "unnamed Negro Messman" (Reddick 1947:205). African Americans complained that the department deliberately withheld the steward's name in order to avoid recognizing the heroism of a black sailor. Only after repeated requests did the Navy finally identify Miller in March the following year. A second campaign by African Americans and white's sympathetic to civil rights was needed to compel the Navy in May to award Miller with the Navy's highest honor — the Navy Cross. Despite such heroism, Miller was still in the messmen's branch waiting on officers when he went down to a watery grave on 24 November 1943 when the aircraft carrier *Liscome Bay* on which he was serving was sunk by the Japanese (Harrod 1979a: 41; Reddick 1947:204-207; Nalty 1986:186; Department of Defense 1991:113).

## **U.S. Navy**

### ***Policy Before Pearl Harbor***

As noted in the previous chapter, during World War I the Navy recruited a very small number of African Americans for use primarily as cooks and servants. By the end of World War I, Negroes comprised just 1.2 percent (5,328 of 435,398) of the total naval enlistment (Reddick 1947:203; Mueller 1945:112). This percentage

decreased even further when the Navy barred African Americans from enlisting after the war and replaced them with Filipinos, who were preferred as chefs, stewards, and messmen (Binkin et. al. 1982:20). However, the number of Filipinos volunteering for service in the Navy decreased over the years, finally forcing Naval authorities in 1932 to once again accept black volunteers — but only as messmen. By forcing all African Americans into one occupation, the Navy was able to maintain a policy of segregation on its vessels. They required blacks to sleep and eat together, and allowed them to mingle with whites only when performing their duties: attending the personal needs of commissioned officers, preparing and serving meals, making bunks, cleaning rooms, polishing shoes, running errands, checking laundry, caring for uniforms, and countless other subservient chores. The banishment of black servicemen to a servile role prompted the editor of the *Crisis* to warn black males that service in the Navy was “not worth any colored youngster’s time” (*Crisis* 47 1940:201; Nelson 1951:10-11; Byers 1947:213; Bureau of Naval Personnel 1945:185).

Because of their unfavorable treatment by the Navy, very few blacks served more than one tour of duty. Consequently, the number of blacks in the Navy remained low throughout the interwar years. In June 1940, for example, African Americans comprised less than 3 percent of the Navy’s total enlistments (Mueller 1945:112). Anticipating that the United States might become involved in the European conflict soon, the Navy issued a memorandum the following month calling for 200 additional blacks to serve as mess attendants, cooks, and stewards. African Americans desired the more glamorous combat assignments. Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, however, saw no sufficient reason to increase opportunities for black sailors. In a letter to Senator Arthur Capper on 1 August 1940, Knox explained: “I am convinced that it is no kindness to negroes to thrust them upon men of white race. One branch of the Navy is reserved exclusively for negroes, and that is messmen...” (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:3).

### ***Pressure for Change***

African American leaders were extremely upset over the Armed Forces’ continued practice of assigning blacks to only service and labor billets. They were determined not to make the mistakes of the previous generation of black leaders who suspended agitation on racial issues in the interest of the war effort, only to be rewarded by lynchings and repression following military victory (Harrod 1979a: 41). In late September, several African American leaders (Walter White, Secretary of the NAACP; A. Phillip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; and T. Arnold Hill, assistant in the National Youth Administration) responded to the continued discrimination against blacks in the Armed Forces by presenting a

memorandum to President Roosevelt, Secretary Knox, and assistant Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson offering suggestions for increasing the opportunities of African Americans in the national defense program. Concerning the Navy, these civil rights activists recommended that it create positions "other than the menial services to which Negroes are now restricted" (*Crisis* 47 1940: 351; Lee 1966:74-75). If the president did not issue an executive order to "effectuate the speediest possible abolition of discrimination in war industries and the armed services" warned Walter White, then they would initiate a march on the nation's capital of at least 100,000 African Americans (White 1948:192).

Less than 2 weeks later Roosevelt approved a plan proposed by Assistant Secretary Patterson for the military to use the services of African Americans on a "fair and equitable basis" (Lee 1966:75). The primary provisions of the plan stipulated: (1) the percentage of African Americans in the military will be equal to their proportion in the United States population; (2) each branch of the service will include black organizations; and (3) blacks will have opportunities for advancement as officers. However, authors of the plan allowed the continuation of segregation, explaining that this "policy has been proven satisfactory over a long period of years, and to make changes now would produce situations destructive to morale and detrimental to the preparation for national defense" (Lee 1966:76).

Pressure from the White House and the black community compelled Secretary Knox in June 1941 to establish a committee to investigate African American opportunities in the Navy and Marine Corps (Harrod 1979a: 41). Six months later, this committee recommended in its final report that "no consideration should be given to the further increased employment of enlisted men of the Negro race, other than as navy mess attendants, to any vessels or forces now assigned or to be assigned to the Atlantic, Pacific and Asiatic Fleets" (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:23). It explained that past experience with black sailors in ratings other than messman's branch lead to disruptive conditions that undermined efficiency, harmony, and cooperation. Moreover, only 1 out of every 40 black recruits met the educational standards required for general service. At the time it appeared that the Navy's policy would remain the same during World War II.

Meanwhile, African American leaders continued pressure for increased participation through other channels. Immediately following Japan's assault on the Pacific Islands, the Armed Forces initiated a massive recruiting operation. In light of this, the NAACP asked Secretary Knox if the Navy would accept African American recruits for positions other than messmen's branch. The Navy replied that it would not change the policy. In protest, the NAACP wrote President Roosevelt asking for his intervention in the matter. On 9 January 1942 Roosevelt, after consulting with

advisors, informed Knox that "I think with all of the Navy activities, the Bureau of the Navy might invent something that colored enlistees could do in addition to the rating of messmen" (Bureau of Naval Personnel n.d.:5).

Pressured by the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Knox asked the Navy's General Board to submit a plan for accepting 5,000 African Americans in positions other than the Steward's Branch. On 3 February the General Board presented its report. It recommended that "members of the colored race be accepted for enlistment only in the messman branch." (Bureau of Naval Personnel n.d.:6). The board explained that this was the most practical policy because white men would simply not accept African Americans in a position of authority over them. However, it did offer the alternative of allowing blacks to enlist in general service, which would provide them the opportunity to serve in every enlisted specialty (Nalty 1986:187).

President Roosevelt was not pleased with the General Board's all-or-nothing report. He returned the matter back to them for further study, recommending that the Navy provide some special assignments to African Americans that would not disrupt race relations. On 25 February the naval board finally complied with Knox's and Roosevelt's demands. It suggested that the Navy enlist blacks for general service and assign them to construction battalions, shore stations, supply depots, training and air stations, section bases, and yard craft. After studying the report together on 31 March 1942, Knox and Roosevelt ordered the program into action along the recommended lines (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 6:68, 79; Bureau of Naval Personnel n.d.:6-8).

One week later Secretary Knox announced that beginning 1 June 1942, the Navy would begin accepting African American volunteers for enlistment in general service in the reserve components of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard with opportunities for all ratings in these three branches. The Navy planned to use black sailors for duty on various kinds of district craft, maritime activities around shore establishments and in the Navy Yards, and in one or more construction battalions. However, the practice of recruiting African Americans for service in the messman branch would continue "without change or interruption" (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:103). Secretary Knox made it clear that this new departure was only an experiment, alluding that the Navy could withdraw the new plan at any time (MacGregor and Nalty 1977:108, 111-112; Reddick 1947:207-208; Nalty 1986:188; Byers 1947:217; Harrod 1978: 42).

This plan set an enlistment quota of 277 men for general service each week beginning in June 1942. The Navy estimated that the first year's recruiting would



yield approximately 14,400 blacks as Apprentice Seaman, which was approximately 3 times the number of messmen in uniform when the Navy initiated the policy (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 6:109-110; Nalty 1986:188). In preparation for this large influx of inductees, the Navy began creating and using facilities for training these additional men "in a way that will accomplish segregation" (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:107).

### ***Training in the United States***

The vast majority of the new African American recruits received their basic training (an 8-week course) at Camps Robert Smalls, Moffett, and Lawrence of the Great Lakes Naval Training Center in Illinois (Prum 1964:20). Those who qualified for specialized training [approximately one-third of all black recruits (Nelson 1951:40)] were assigned to segregated vocational schools at either Great Lakes Training Center or at Hampton Institute in Virginia. Here they received instruction as carpenters, engineers, electricians, cooks, bakers, shipfitters, machinists, metal-smiths, signalmen, radiomen, quartermasters, yeomen, storekeepers, aviation ordnancemen, and gunners. A few blacks also attended an Aviation Machinist's Mate School at the Navy Technical Training Station in Memphis, Tennessee, a Soundman School at the Naval base at Camp May, New Jersey, and a Messmen's School at Bainbridge, Maryland (Nelson 1951:27-28, 39; Reddick 1947:208-209; Byers 1947:218; MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:107-108; Bureau of Naval Personnel n.d.:56).

***Camp Robert Smalls.*** Camp Robert Smalls, the largest and most important of all the African American naval training facilities, was supervised by Lieutenant Commander Daniel W. Armstrong. A broad-minded officer with a keen sense of human nature, Armstrong understood that training black recruits in segregated units would leave a psychological burden that would destroy morale and initiative. To help prevent this from occurring, he initiated a program designed to make the experience of black trainees at Camp Smalls both educational and uplifting. Armstrong encouraged pride by exposing them to the many accomplishments of African Americans in art, science, industry, education, business, athletics, literature, music, and participation and heroism in the Navy. Other morale-building programs included organized baseball, basketball and football teams, bands, dance orchestras, choirs, glee clubs, and quartets (Nelson 1951:28-29, 32-35; Bureau of Naval Personnel n.d.:63; Reddick 1947:209).

***Illiteracy.*** A serious problem faced by the naval training facilities was the number of illiterate African American recruits. Originally the Navy sent most of its illiterate recruits directly into the Steward's Branch with very minimal training (Nelson

1951:57; Bureau of Naval Personnel n.d.:59). As the quota for messmen was filled, however, recruits had to be assigned to other training activities; activities that required a minimum of a fourth-grade reading level (Nelson 1951:50, 57).

The training establishments confronted this growing dilemma by establishing voluntary remedial schools. The instructors (many of whom were black) proffered their time and services to teach students the "three R's" in the evenings after basic training. To help make better servicemen and citizens of these recruits, the instructors placed the rudimentary material within the context of the African American's crucial role in the Navy, the fundamentals of citizenship, and the value of the franchise. The large number of men who volunteered to attend these schools and their eagerness to learn made the Navy's remedial instruction program very successful. More than 15,000 black recruits went through the 12-week course. Less than two dozen had to be retained for additional instruction (Nelson 1951:58-60, 62; Bureau of Naval Personnel n.d.:61-62; Reddick 1947:210).

### ***Construction Battalions***

Since the number of black recruits exceeded the limits that the Steward's Branch could accept, Naval leaders had to determine where to assign the troops without disrupting the racial barrier. In May 1942 the Navy considered creating segregated construction battalions (popularly referred to as CBs or "Seabees") for most of these new black enlistees (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 6:29). This consideration came to fruition that October when the Navy opened construction battalions to African American seamen. The Navy eventually established 17 all-black (except for white officers) Seabee Special Battalions and two regular Construction Battalions (Byers 1947:219). Over 14,000 African Americans served in these segregated stevedore units during the war.

African American naval personnel assigned to construction battalions received their basic training at Camps Bradford and Allen, near Norfolk, Virginia, where they were quartered in separate barracks, fed in separate chow halls, and drilled in separate companies to reduce the contact between blacks and whites (Reddick 1947:210; McNatt 1944:137). They received instruction in a wide variety of duties, both skilled and unskilled. Additionally, because much of their work would be on or near the front lines, they also received some combat training.

As the name implies, the construction battalions performed the Navy's heavy construction work, building airfields, roads, housing, defense installations, docks, wharves, bridges, canals, storage facilities, installing lights and telephones, and unloading equipment. Working on or near the front lines, Seabees were sometimes

forced to fight alongside combat troops to fill in gaps or to protect their own positions. In the Palua Islands, for example, 200 black Seabees with no previous combat experience joined in the assault against the Japanese. In the first week of the attack, half of the blacks in this stevedore unit were either killed or wounded. On many occasions, black Seabees suffered casualties performing their duties under artillery and mortar fire. A Navy Department report acknowledged the important, yet hazardous duties rendered by these African American seamen: "Negro seabees have been piling up an enviable list of accomplishments on both the fighting and working fronts under conditions equaling the worst the Pacific Theatre has to offer" (Furr 1947:139; Byers 1947:219-220).

### *Selective Service*

On 5 December 1942 President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9279, making the Armed Forces dependent on the Selective Service System for all manpower of draft age (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 6:128). The executive order compelled the military to receive African Americans on the quota basis of 10 percent, approximately the percentage of blacks in the general population. During its long history, the Navy had accepted African Americans only on a voluntary basis, and Secretary Knox was extremely reluctant to change this policy. When Roosevelt issued this order, the Navy was already accepting 1,200 blacks every month for general service and 1,500 for the messmen's branch. Knox argued that the Navy could not accept a larger quota of blacks without resorting to mixed crews, something even Roosevelt opposed. However, the President had grown tired of excuses by the Navy and its general stubbornness toward providing opportunities for African Americans in areas other than the messmen's branch (Nalty 1986:189; Bureau of Naval Personnel n.d.:12; Reddick 1947:210) In a letter to Knox, Roosevelt insisted:

Most decidedly we must continue the employment of negroes in the Navy, and I do not think it the least bit necessary to put mixed crews on the ships. I can find a thousand ways of employing them without doing so...You know the headache we have had about this [pressure from blacks for greater opportunities in the Navy] and the reluctance of the Navy to have any negroes. You and I have had to veto that Navy reluctance, and I think we have to do it again (MacGregor and Nalty 1977, 6:131).

Beginning in December 1942, the Navy (along with the other branches of the Armed Forces) was forced to accept blacks from Selective Service. Thereafter, the number of African Americans in the department increased dramatically. By July 1943 the Navy was inducting approximately 12,000 blacks monthly. Not only was the Navy

conscripting more blacks, but they were also assigning them to duties other than the Stewards Branch (see Table 7.1).

**Table 7.1 African American Strength in the Navy\***

Date	Total Black Strength	Number in Stewards Branch
February, 1943	26,909	18,227 (68%)
December, 1943	101,573	37,981 (37%)
June, 1944	142,306	48,524 (34%)
December, 1944	153,199	52,994 (35%)
June, 1945	165,500	75,000 (45%)

\* Source: Bureau of Naval Personnel n.d.:9.

As Table 7.1 illustrates, there was a dramatic decrease in the proportion of blacks assigned in the Stewards Branch during 1943 — from 68 to 37 percent. This figure remained at approximately the same level until near war's end when the number rose to 45 percent. Nevertheless, black seamen had opportunities for advancement in more than 50 different positions. Some of these included boatswain, signalmen, carpenter, painter, machinist, electrician, aviation, metalsmith, yeoman, storekeeper, pharmacist's assistant, hospital apprentice, firemen, and shore patrol (Reddick 1947:211).

Many African Americans viewed these new opportunities as mere token concessions. They complained that they were not assigned to the specialized duties for which the Navy had trained them. In fact, the Navy still assigned the vast majority of its black recruits to ignoble assignments as cooks, bakers, and servants, or to dangerous work unloading ammunition and other explosive materials at ammunition depots and base companies, and arduous tasks in construction battalions (Mueller 1945:114). This continued discrimination had a detrimental effect on black morale. In a letter to an African American-owned newspaper, a sailor assigned to the depot station at St. Juliens Creek, Portsmouth, Virginia, remarked that the *esprit de corps* among black workers was so low that they did not care who won the war, just as long as it ended soon. Their most prevalent complaint was over their lack of opportunity to go to sea. "I was looking forward to going to sea," remarked this disgruntled black sailor, "doing something useful but they will keep us in this hell hole for the duration, so we can't ever go out to sea" (McGuire 1983:72). Other grievances included long working hours and infrequent liberty. In his concluding remarks, the sailor warned all African Americans not to join the Navy (McGuire 1983:73).

### ***Racial Disturbances in the Navy***

Despite the Bureau of Naval Personnel's order that "all enlisted rates are open to Negroes," few blacks received promotions. In fact, most still worked in the Steward's Branch, shore stations, and labor battalions. Naval facilities, moreover, remained segregated and black units received fewer liberty opportunities. Unfair treatment culminated in numerous disturbances involving African American naval personnel. Brief descriptions of three incidents will illustrate the generalizations inherent in these protests (Reddick 1947:214).

***80th Construction Battalion.*** One of the earliest incidents involved the discharge of 14 Seabees belonging to the 80th Construction Battalion for officially voicing their opinions concerning the mistreatment of blacks in the battalion. The disturbance arose in Trinidad, West Indies, where the battalion was stationed in July 1943. Here members of the unit encountered discrimination in promotions, limitations on liberty, and segregated facilities. Upset over these conditions, a few members complained to the commanding officer, who urged a dozen members of the battalion to privately discuss their grievances in his office. In addition to airing their objections, the Seabees requested that the chaplain organize a committee composed of black personnel and senior white officers that would handle race matters. Several days later the commanding officer declared their request subversive to military discipline and gave 19 of the battalion's ringleaders dishonorable discharges. Upon hearing of these discharges, African American and other organizations implemented a campaign to rectify this egregious error. After more than a year of continual pressure, the Navy finally changed the dishonorable discharges to "undesirability discharges under honorable conditions" (Nelson 1951:84-87; Bureau of Naval Personnel n.d.:78-79).

***Port Chicago.*** A serious revolt occurred in July 1944 when African American ammunition-handling units at Port Chicago in San Francisco Bay refused to continue work after more than 300 of their co-workers were killed and many more injured when two ships loaded with ammunition exploded. In addition to being afraid of another catastrophic explosion, the approximately 400 survivors were upset over their confinement to manual labor, lack of promotions, and inadequate training and safety provisions for their hazardous duties. After much persuasion by black chaplains and naval leaders, all but 44 of the "mutineers" soon returned to work. In September, the Navy placed the remaining recalcitrants on trial before a military courts martial. The military court found them all guilty of subversion and sentenced them to prison terms ranging from 8 to 15 years. However, the black community throughout the country made numerous pleas for clemency, compelling the Navy in

January 1946 to set aside the convictions and restore the men to active duty on probation (Nelson 1951:76-80; Byers 1947:221-222).

**Guam.** A third racial incident occurred on the island of Guam, where African American naval personnel claimed that they had suffered continual unprovoked assaults from white Marines since their arrival in the summer of 1944. There was also rivalry between the races for the attention of native females. The situation climaxed on Christmas Day when rumors spread throughout the black camp that a white Marine had killed a fellow sailor. This prompted 40 African American Navy men to steal weapons from the armory, commandeer several trucks, and drive toward the Marine camp. However, the Marine Corps Military Police intercepted the black sailors en route and placed them under arrest. In the subsequent naval trial, 34 of the mutineers received prison terms ranging from 1½ to 4 years for inciting a riot and unlawful possession of weapons. As in the previous racial injustices, African American and other organizations back in the United States initiated a campaign for the release of these men. After nearly a year of continual coercion, the Navy announced in January 1946 that they would release and clear of charges the remaining men in prison (Nelson 1951:82-83; Byers 1947:222).

### ***African American Naval Officers***

The African American community, as well as some government officials, put continued pressure on the Navy to improve its treatment of its black members. To help ameliorate the status and morale of its black sailors, and to improve its public image to the black community, the Navy decided to select a few African Americans for commissions as officers. Much of the push for this program came from Assistant Secretary of the Navy Adlai E. Stevenson. In late September 1943 he wrote Knox, professing:

I feel very emphatically that we should commission a few negroes. We now have more than 60,000 already in the Navy and are accepting 12,000 per month. Obviously this cannot go on indefinitely without making some officers or trying to explain why we don't (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:141).

Stevenson recommended that the Navy commission 10 or 12 African Americans selected from "top notch civilians" and a "few from the ranks" (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:141). Two months later Secretary Knox finally agreed on a plan to commission 22 African Americans, divided into 12 line and 10 staff officers. In selecting these men, the Navy carefully screened out all candidates with "extreme attitudes" (Byers 1947:228; Bureau of Naval Personnel n.d.:33).

Beginning 1 January 1944, the 12 qualified enlisted men selected as line officers began their training in a segregated class at Great Lakes Training Center. At the end of the 10-week course, these 12 line officers (and 1 warrant officer) became the first African American officers in the history of the United States Navy. However, not one of these "Golden Thirteen," as they were later called, was assigned duty outside the continental United States during the war. Instead, the Navy appointed some to unimportant positions in recruit training programs at Camp Robert Smalls, and others aboard small patrol craft or tug boats in harbors on the east and west coasts (Foner 1974:170; Nelson 1951:103-104).

Soon after the line officers received their commissions, the Navy began selecting the first 10 African American staff officers, primarily from the civilian sector. These officers completed their training at Great Lakes by early summer and were given ranks of either ensign or lieutenant. Upon graduation, the Navy assigned two of the officers to the Chaplain Corps, two to the Dental Corps, three to the Medical Corps, two to the Civil Engineer Corps, and the three remaining officers to the Supply Corps (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:146-47, 151-153; Byers 1947:228; Bureau of Naval Personnel n.d.:33; Nelson 151:101).

The Navy commissioned only 58 African American officers during World War II from a total of 160,000 black seamen. The Navy assigned these African American officers to positions that did not correspond to their experience or training. The majority were sent overseas and attached to advance base companies to superintend stevedore battalions. Moreover, since the Navy placed them under the command and jurisdiction of white officers, they had little real authority. Very few received promotions. In fact, only one black line officer attained the rank of full lieutenant before the end of the war (Nelson 1951:101-103).

### ***Experiments With Predominantly Black Crews***

To improve the demeanor among African Americans and reduce complaints from whites, who felt blacks were not doing their share of dangerous combat duty, the Special Programs Unit of the Navy proposed an experiment using an all-black crew to operate a modern warship. By using an all-black crew, the Navy wanted to avoid the problem of segregating the crew and the possibility of some blacks outranking whites. In late 1943, the Navy announced a program to place all-black crews with white officers on board the destroyer escort *USS Mason* and the submarine chaser *PC-1264*. On 29 January 1944, the Navy commissioned the *USS Mason* in Boston, with a complement of 143 blacks out of a total enlistment of 183 men. Two months later the Navy commissioned the *PC-1264* in New York. Its crew consisted of 50 African American sailors out of a total enlistment of 61. The plan designated blacks

to replace the top ratings held by white petty officers as soon as they were trained for those positions. Six months later this process was complete and the *PC-1264* became the first and only Navy vessel to achieve a completely black enlisted force during World War II (Bureau of Naval Personnel n.d.:40-42; MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:244-245; Byers 1947:224; Harrod 1978:43; Nalty 1986:193; Department of Defense 1991:114).

The crews of the *USS Mason* and *PC-1264* performed their duties commendably. From July 1944 until April 1945, the *USS Mason* shipped men and supplies on a convoy route between the United States and Europe. The crew never had the opportunity to participate in combat. The *PC-1264* had assorted duties during its nearly 15-month career. Much of its early service was devoted to escorting coastal convoys between New York and Cuba. Later the subchaser participated in far-sweeping patrols of the Atlantic to help combat any possibility of buzz-bomb attacks that might be launched from German submarines. Like the *Mason*, the *PC-1264* never met enemy vessels in combat. From the standpoint of nautical skills, however, these two experimental crews executed their duties proficiently. Their achievement convinced the Navy that African Americans could become skillful seamen in all branches of the department if given proper training (Byers 1947:225; Nalty 1986:193; Bureau of Naval Personnel n.d.:42-45; Harrod 1979a:43).

### ***Movement Toward Integration in the Navy***

On 28 April 1944, 70-year-old Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox died while in office. He was succeeded by James A. Forrestal, the Undersecretary of the Navy since August 1940 and a long-time member of the Urban League (a national civil rights organization) who understood the current trends in race relations in society. Forrestal believed that the best way to minimize the racial disturbances occurring throughout the Navy was to integrate the department. Less than 1 month after taking office, Forrestal initiated an experiment to determine the practicality of such a scheme. The Coast Guard's limited, yet successful, use of racially mixed crews in 1943 helped encourage Forrestal to adopt a similar strategy for the Navy. The experiment called for expanding the use of black personnel by assigning them to general sea duty positions. To prevent segregation, however, blacks in general service were restricted to large auxiliary vessels (tankers, oilers, district craft) of the fleet and their numbers limited to not more than 10 percent of the ship's complement. Because this plan was experimental, fewer than 500 African American sailors were given these new opportunities (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:245, 247; Byers 1947:225-226).



Notwithstanding the limited nature of the plan, it was quite successful. Little friction between whites and blacks arose on board the 25 auxiliary ships participating in the experiment. Pleased with the success of the trial, the Bureau of Naval Personnel announced on 6 March 1945 that it would gradually assign black general service personnel to all auxiliary ships of the fleet. Like the experimental plan, however, the number of blacks on any one ship could not exceed 10 percent of the enlisted complement, excluding the Steward's Branch (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:265, 268, 269).

The integration policy aboard ships prompted the Chief of Naval Personnel on 1 July 1945 to discontinue the special training program and camp at Great Lakes for African American general service recruits. The reason given for the new course was to obtain a "more complete utilization of all personnel and facilities" (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:296). In a letter to all naval district commanders, William Fectler (assistant Chief of Naval Personnel) explained that past integration experiments proved satisfactory when commanders used intelligent planning and forceful leadership (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:299). He ordered induction centers to assign African American enlistees to recruit training centers on the same basis as whites and directed training commanders to assimilate them.

#### ***"Guide to Command of Negro Naval Personnel"***

To aid commanders in effectively administering the Negro personnel under them, the Navy in February 1944 published a 15-page booklet entitled "Guide to Command of Negro Naval Personnel." This guide provided brief explanations for much of the frustration and disappointment among black sailors and how commanders could help boost their morale. For example, the handbook explained that most of the disappointment among African American naval personnel was a result of their lack of opportunities for advancement, their placement in primarily messmen and stevedore units, and infrequent liberty. To help dissuade such feelings, commanders were instructed to explain to their black servicemen that activity training programs, rating policies, and other opportunities were equal for all seamen, regardless of color (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:283). Additionally, to assist in offsetting the unpopularity of the menial and laborious work performed by most blacks, the Guide instructed commanders to explain the importance of that type of work and that many whites were performing the same duties (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:284). The guide also discouraged separate facilities for the races because it was offensive to blacks and would inevitably lead to antagonism (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:288). Most importantly, however, commanders were directed to indoctrinate black and white personnel at the beginning of their association so both groups understood what was expected of them (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:293).

### ***Lester Granger***

To help ensure the implementation of the Navy's new integration policy, in March 1945 Forrestal appointed Lester B. Granger of the National Urban League to investigate the treatment of African Americans at naval establishments throughout the United States and the Pacific Area. In 6 months Granger traveled more than 50,000 miles and visited 67 naval facilities. At every opportunity he talked with enlisted men (when their superior officers were not present) to obtain an accurate assessment of the treatment of black personnel at each base. Some of the most frequent complaints he heard included slowness in promotion, lack of opportunity for sea duty, and racial segregation. Granger reported that the spirit and performance of black sailors compared favorably with whites, except in situations where racial discrimination existed. He also discovered that those commanders using the Navy's "Guide to the Command of Negro Naval Personnel" had fewer problems between the races. When Granger turned in his report, Forrestal ordered commanders of naval facilities to follow all of Granger's suggestions for improved treatment of black sailors (Byers 1947:234-235; Dalfiume 1969a:102; Nalty 1986:196; Reddick 1947:216-217).

Because of unbiased and farsighted leaders like Forrestal, the Navy now had the most progressive African American policy of all the Armed Forces. Forrestal clearly explained this new course at the end of 1945:

[I]n the administration of Naval personnel no differentiation shall be made because of race or color...In their attitudes, and day by day conduct of affairs, Naval officers and enlisted men shall adhere rigidly and impartially to Naval Regulations in which no distinction is made between individuals wearing the Naval uniform or the uniform of any of the armed services of the United States, because of race or color (Nelson 1951:217-218).

By V-J Day hundreds of black sailors were serving as radiomen, metalsmiths, electricians, and machinists. Many others worked aboard auxiliary ships in both the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans. For the first time, black naval employees received officer commissions and operated vessels during wartime. Finally, the Navy implemented a policy to integrate its force (Byers 1947:238; Reddick 1947:216-217; Foner 1974:172).

## Marine Corps

### *Policy Changes*

From its inception during the Revolutionary War until World War II, the Marine Corps had an official policy of excluding African Americans. Nevertheless, naval records reveal that a few blacks did serve in the Continental Marines during the American Revolution. When this organization dissolved in 1784, blacks were not expected to serve in the reestablished Marine Corps. In 1798 Secretary of War Henry Knox officially barred blacks from the Marines when he imposed a set of rules which provided that "No Negro, Mulatto or Indian is to be enlisted" (Department of Defense 1991:123). Although a few African Americans did serve in the Marine Corps during the War of 1812 and Civil War, they were used primarily as laborers. There is no evidence that the Marine Corps employed blacks in subsequent conflicts until World War II (Nelson 1951:12-124).

On 25 June 1941 Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 8802 establishing the Fair Employment Practices Commission, which opened the door for blacks to serve in all branches of the Armed Forces. The President directed:

In affirming the policy of full participation in the defense program by all persons regardless of color, race, creed or national origin, and directing certain action in furtherance of said policy...all departments of the government, including the Armed Forces, shall lead the way in erasing discrimination over color or race (Shaw and Donnelly 1975:1).

This order was unpopular with Marine Headquarters, which immediately resisted Roosevelt's attempt to allow blacks into their exclusive order. When the United States entered the war 6 months later, they stiffened their opposition. In hearings before the General Board of the Navy held 23 February 1942, General Holcomb (Commandant of the Marine Corps) explained that "we [Marine Headquarters] believe there would be a definite loss of efficiency in the Marine Corps if we had to take Negroes; and it seems to me at a time like this, when the country is fighting for its life, any step which will reduce efficiency is unjustifiable" (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:48). Holcomb added that the Marine Corps did not need black enlistments because the number of white men desiring to enlist exceeded the facilities immediately available (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:5, 52-53).

Ignoring the protests and excuses of Marine Headquarters, on 7 April 1942 Roosevelt ordered the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard to begin accepting blacks for enlistment in general services as soon as they established suitable

training sites. Two months later the Marine Corps broke a 167-year tradition and officially opened its enlistment rolls to African Americans. The Marine Corps constructed segregated training facilities for these black recruits in late August 1942 at Montford Point, near Camp Lejune in New River, North Carolina. Recruiting officers put the first volunteers through a careful screening procedure, allowing only the most educated and physically fit to enter boot camp. Consequently, many of the first African American Marines had college experience and prior military service (Shaw and Donnelly 1975: 1, 5; Nelson 1951:125; Foner 1974:173; Nalty 1986:200; MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:416, 419, 420).

### ***Creation of 51st Composite Defense Battalion***

Marine Headquarters initially agreed to accept 1,000 African Americans. To prevent problems between the races, Headquarters decided to concentrate them into a single combat unit, which eventually became the 51st Composite Defense Battalion. White noncommissioned officers (later replaced by black instructors), put the African American recruits through 12 weeks of basic training that included drilling, exercising manual of arms, use of bayonets, tanks, artillery guns, assorted firearms, and anti-tank machine guns. Special schools held instruction in telephone and radio communications, motor transport electricity, carpentry, shoe repair, cooking, sanitation, first aid, rigging, and blacksmithing (Nelson 1951:124; Nalty 1986: 200, 448).

### ***Selective Service***

While the 51st Composite Defense Battalion was still in training, the military discontinued voluntary enlistments in the Armed Forces and replaced it with the Selective Service. Beginning in January 1943, the military would induct all able-bodied men 18 to 37 years of age into the services. With the implementation of this new policy, the Marine Corps encountered the possibility that African Americans would comprise as much as 10 percent of its future inductees. Marine Headquarters estimated that the Corps would have to absorb 9,900 blacks in the first year. Since the 51st Composite Defense Battalion could not accommodate such numbers, Marine commanders formed another Composite Defense Battalion (the 52nd), a Messmen's Branch composed entirely of African Americans, and large Marine Corps bases where black recruits would labor as messmen, chauffeurs, messengers, post exchange clerks, janitors, and guards. They justified relegating most blacks to non-combat duty because of poor academic performance on intelligence tests. These tests revealed that nearly 80 percent of African American Marine recruits scored below average or "Inferior," compared with only 30 percent of whites. However, Marine Headquarters promised to place those blacks who showed the aptitude for combat

duty in the Composite Defense Battalions (Shaw and Donnelly 1975: 10; Nalty 1986:200; MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:421-424, 433,434).

### ***Black Marines Overseas***

A total of 19,168 African Americans served in the Marine Corps during the war; 13,000 of whom served overseas. Very few, however, fought in combat battalions. The 51st and 52nd Composite Defense Battalions together held only about 2,500 men. Although they were organized as combat units, these two battalions never participated in organized assaults. While overseas they labored as service and supply units to white combat Marine units (Department of Defense 1991:125). Most black Marines sent overseas toiled in labor organizations. Surprisingly, it was these laborers with limited combat training who fought the Japanese throughout the Pacific.

***51st Battalion.*** The 51st Battalion (the first black Marine unit organized) left the United States in early February 1944 for Funafuti Island in the Ellice Group. While stationed here the battalion maintained and defended the airfields on the islands. In September 1944 the 51st Battalion moved northward to Eniwetok Atoll in the Marshall Islands. As soon as it embarked, the 51st went on an intensive schedule of training and anti-aircraft defense. The battalion continued with this duty until the end of the war, when it returned to the United States in early December 1945 (Shaw and Donnelly 1975:19-22; MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:443).

***52nd Battalion.*** The 52nd Composite Defense Battalion was formed on 15 December 1943 and did not complete its training until August the following year. Two months later it left for Roi and Namur Islands in the Marshall chain to provide air defense in case the Japanese attempted to use the islands for supply, evacuation, or reconnaissance purposes. The battalion saw no combat, nor captured any prisoners while stationed here. As the war moved forward to the Western Pacific, the Battalion relocated to the island of Guam in March 1945. Although the Allies had captured the island during the summer of 1944, there were still hundreds of armed Japanese troops hiding in the jungles. Members of the battalion helped in either capturing or killing many of these ragtag stragglers. With the island completely secured by July, most of the battalion's duties shifted to sundry labor tasks. The battalion remained here until November 1945 when it was divided into two groups and sent to Eniwetok, Kwajalein to help secure and maintain the area. The battalion finally returned to the United States in March 1946 (Shaw and Donnelly 1975:23-28; MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:443).

**Labor Battalions.** The majority of African American Marines serving overseas belonged to 51 depot and 12 ammunition companies. The primary duty of these labor units consisted of unloading supplies and ammunition onto beaches and moving it inland to the assault forces at the front lines. At night they established defense positions along the beachheads to protect the supplies from enemy raiding parties. These supply companies were frequently subject to heavy machine-gun fire and artillery shelling. Ironically, it was these "labor troops," and not the two black defense battalions, that participated in heavy combat. At Saipan, for instance, members of the 3rd Marine Ammunition Company knocked out a Japanese machine gun (Shaw and Donnelly 1975:33). Five weeks later on Guam, a platoon from the 4th Ammunition Company intercepted and killed 14 Japanese soldiers laden with explosives. In a demonstration of individual heroism, Private First Class (PFC) Luther Woodward tracked down six Japanese soldiers intent on raiding an ammunition depot. When he caught up with them, he killed two and wounded a third. For his actions, the Navy awarded Woodward the Silver Star, the highest honor won by a black Marine in World War II (Shaw and Donnelly 1975:37). During the war, nine black Marines belonging to labor units were killed while fighting in Saipan, Peleliu, Guam, Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. Seventy-eight others were wounded and nine suffered combat fatigue (Shaw and Donnelly 1975:29-46; MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:444; Foner 1974:173; Nalty 1986:201).

**Recognition for Service.** Despite the unglamorous work performed by the nearly 20,000 black Marines who served during World War II, they set a high standard of discipline and combat effectiveness. Marine leaders recognized them for such performance and dedication to duty. For example, Major General William H. Rupertus, Commander General of the 1st Marine Division, praised the 7th Ammunition Company for performing their duty on Guadalcanal under very hostile conditions. He told their commanding officer:

The Negro race can well be proud of the work performed by the 7th Ammunition Company as they appreciate the privileges of wearing a Marine uniform and serving with Marines in combat. Please convey to your command these sentiments and inform them that in the eyes of the entire First Marine Division they have earned a 'Well Done' (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:446).

In addition, the 3rd Company's (all-black supply company) admirable combat performance on Saipan prompted General A. A. Vandegrift, Commandant of the Marine Corps, to proudly proclaim: "The Negro Marines are no longer on trial. They are Marines, period" (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:446).

## ***Officers***

Near the very end of the war the Navy initiated a program to allow African Americans into the marine officer training program. During the summer of 1944, three black Marines were sent to Quantico to the Navy's V-12 program, which was designed to provide qualified enlisted men with a college education and ultimately with a commission in the Navy or Marine Corps Reserve. All three failed to make the grade, however, failing either physical or scholastic exams. Three more black candidates met the same fate during the next class. Finally, on 10 November 1945, Second Lieutenant Frederick C. Branch became the first commissioned officer (reserve) in the Marine Corps. With this achievement, Branch had broken down the barrier for future African American Marines. Three others received officer commissions the following year (Shaw and Donnelly 1975:47-48). Nevertheless, the Marine Corps was still segregated and many other barriers to African Americans remained intact.

## **Coast Guard**

Although the U.S. Coast Guard is not part of the Department of the Defense, the role of the Coast Guard in war may place them in harms way. As such it seems appropriate that in any discussion of African Americans' service to their country, their role in the Coast Guard should be included.

The Coast Guard is the oldest continuous seagoing service in the country, dating back to 1790 when Congress authorized the construction of ten vessels to assist in collecting customs and tonnage duty. Beginning in 1941 it served under the United States Navy during war; in time of peace, under the Treasury Department. Unlike the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard could boast a tradition of official black enlistment stretching back to the early 19th century. These African Americans served primarily in the Guard's vestigial components: the Revenue Cutter, the Life Saving and the Lighthouse Services (Department of Defense 1991:129). During the late 1800s black guardsmen also manned a lifesaving station at Pea Island on North Carolina's Outer Banks (Department of Transportation n.d.:14; Nelson 1951:129; MacGregor 1981:112-113).

### ***Early Opportunities in World War II***

By World War II, however, the Coast Guard restricted blacks to service in the messmen's branch. In early 1942 President Roosevelt ordered the Navy and Coast Guard to integrate African Americans into the general rates. In response, Rear

Admiral Russell R. Waesche, Commandant of the Coast Guard, proposed an experimental plan in February 1942 to enlist a group of approximately 150 African American men for instruction at the Coast Guard's training center in Manhattan Beach, New York. The Coast Guard would not enlist additional blacks until the first group had been trained and assigned to duty for a period long enough to "smooth out any twists or quirks that may develop in the plan" (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:73).

Waesche's plan was a significant improvement in the Coast Guard's racial policy. For the first time in its existence, the Coast Guard provided regular recruit training and specialized training for blacks. At Manhattan Beach Training Center, black conscripts received instruction in seamanship, knot tying, life saving, and small boat handling. Those intended for duty aboard ship, however, received additional training to enable them to take over all but the petty officer ratings of a designated ship (MacGregor and Nalty 1977 6:72). The classes of instruction were integrated, while sleeping and mess facilities remained segregated. Upon graduation, the Coast Guard assigned more than half of its black force aboard ship in close quarters with whites, and the remaining to port duty with no special provision for segregated service (Department of Transportation n.d.:20). This plan worked so well that by August 1942, the Coast Guard recruited, trained, and assigned 300 additional blacks to active duty at sea aboard small vessels and various Coast Guard stations (Nelson 1951:129).

### ***Selective Service***

This strategy for orderly induction and assignment of a limited number of black volunteers was terminated in December 1942 when President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9279 making the entire Armed Forces dependent on the Selective Service for its manpower. Hereafter the number of black servicemen in the Coast Guard increased enormously. During 1943, for example, the Coast Guard averaged 147 black inductees per month, a tremendous growth over the previous year's enlistment. Between February and November 1943, more than 13 percent of the Coast Guard's recruits were black. In all, just over 5,000 blacks served in the Coast Guard during World War II, comprising approximately 2 percent of its contingent (Nelson 1951:130; MacGregor 1981:116).

### ***Duties***

The majority of black guardsmen (63 percent) served in the racially separate Steward's Branch, where they performed menial service duties for white officers. The Coast Guard assigned most of the remaining black apprentice seamen to shore duty. Their assignments included security and labor details, patrol units looking out



for possible enemy infiltration of the coastline, and service as yeoman, storekeepers, and radio operators. Because the Coast Guard denied sea duty to all but a few blacks, they frequently promoted them to more desirable shore-based jobs to help maintain morale. Thus black guardsmen served in a variety of ranks and billets throughout Guard stations.

### ***Integrated Vessels***

However, this policy pleased no one. African Americans were upset over their inability to serve at sea; whites were angry because blacks were promoted to the more desirable shore-based positions. To help remedy the problem, while at the same time make more efficient use of manpower, Lieutenant Carlton Skinner of Coast Guard Headquarters, proposed an experimental plan to Commandant Waesche in June 1943. The plan was to provide a group of black seamen with practical seagoing experience in a completely integrated setting.

Commandant Waesche approved the plan and in November 1943 he placed Skinner in command of the *USS Sea Cloud*, a patrol ship operating in the North Atlantic (Department of Defense 1991:131). The 173-man crew of the first integrated vessel in the Armed Forces boasted 4 black officers and 50 black petty officers and seamen. After more than a year of protecting ocean weather stations off the coasts of Greenland, Newfoundland, and France, the *Sea Cloud* successfully fulfilled the experiment. It even helped sink a German submarine in June 1944. A report on the performance of the predominantly black crew determined that they executed their duties like any other seamen, with similar problems and achievements. No racial outbursts occurred during the vessel's brief tour of duty. The Coast Guard decommissioned the vessel in November 1944 (MacGregor 1981:119).

Despite the success of the *Sea Cloud*, only one other Coast Guard ship (the *USS Hoquian*) operating in the war zone ever attained a significant amount of integration. Nevertheless, the success of these two vessels provoked interest among senior Navy officials. In fact, the favorable reports on the performance of the *Sea Cloud* helped convince the Navy to integrate its auxiliary fleet near the end of the war (Department of Transportation n.d.:21; MacGregor 1981:118-120; Department of Defense 1991:131).

### ***Officers***

The Coast Guard was the first branch of the government's sea-going service to lift restrictions to officer rank and general service ratings for blacks. By July 1944, 25 percent of African Americans in the Coast Guard were officers — the highest

percentage of commissioned black officers in the armed forces. These men served predominately in white crews aboard cutters and at shore stations. A few worked as instructors at the Manhattan Beach Training Center. One black officer, Lieutenant Clarence Samuels, commanded a Coast Guard vessel (Nelson 1951:129; MacGregor 1981:121; Department of Transportation n.d.:23).

### ***Coast Guard as Leader of Change***

The Coast Guard was very liberal in training and commissioning officers during World War II. African Americans comprised only 2.1 percent of the Coast Guard's wartime contingent, which was well below figures for the military departments, including the Navy. However, the Coast Guard's program was more progressive in some ways than its parent organization. Those serving on shore stations, for example, generally had greater opportunities than their counterparts in the Navy. Moreover, the Coast Guard's limited use of racially mixed crews (two cutter vessels) in 1943 influenced the Navy's decision to integrate its auxiliary fleet 2 years later. African Americans in the Coast Guard also had much greater opportunity for advancement to officer rank than in any military branch (Tunnell 1966:53; Nelson 1951:131; MacGregor 1981:121-122).

## **Merchant Marine**

The United States Merchant Marine comprises all vessels of the nation engaged in water-borne commerce, but is considered to include only those ships that sail the seas. A primary purpose of the Merchant Marine is to assist in the national defense. It has done so since the earliest settlements in North America. Upon the United States' entrance into World War II, the government instituted a massive shipbuilding program to replace the slow and obsolete ships that made up 90 percent of the nation's ocean-going fleet. The foundation for this new fleet was the 10,000-ton 11-knot Liberty ship, a standard cargo vessel that could be built quickly and did not require the complicated propulsion machinery used in naval vessels. During the War the United States constructed 5,500 ocean-going vessels that were manned by 300,000 mariners who transported millions of soldiers, their weapons, and supplies to and from battlefronts throughout the world.

Approximately 24,000 African Americans served in the Merchant Marine during World War II (Department of Defense 1991:135). Early in the war they served in nearly every capacity aboard ship, including ship's masters, radio operators, pursers, pharmacists mates, engineers, wipers, oilers, firemen, watertenders, cooks, bakers, and messmen. As the war progressed, however, the Merchant Marine assigned an

increasing percentage of African Americans to the Steward's Branch. Very few rose to officer rank.

### **Hugh Mulzac**

One special exception to this discrimination was Hugh Mulzac, who became the first black to receive command of a merchant vessel. After 35 years of naval service in all aspects of sea duty, and a quarter century of unending requests for his own ship, directors at the newly formed War Shipping Agency finally gave Mulzac captaincy of a Liberty cargo ship in September 1942. Ironically, the name of this vessel was the *SS Booker T. Washington*. By granting Mulzac command of a ship, the War Shipping Agency (and military and government leaders, generally) hoped to determine if blacks were capable of commanding a seagoing vessel and if whites would willingly serve under them.

If these leaders were expecting the experiment of the *Booker T. Washington* to fail, as Mulzac believed, then they were severely disappointed. The racially mixed crew of 42 men from 13 states and various nations got along fine, developing respect and camaraderie. One member of the crew described the *esprit de corps* aboard the ship: "among us were white men, born and bred in the South, who took orders from Negro officers, ate and slept alongside Negro shipmates, went ashore in foreign ports with Negroes — and on occasion knocked down those who wanted to make something of it" (Beecher 1944:421). In 12 voyages to various ports in the North Atlantic, the Caribbean, and North Africa, Mulzac and the crew performed their duties capably and successfully. They demonstrated that blacks were capable of operating a vessel during wartime and that integration did not necessarily lead to disharmony and decrease in efficiency and morale (Mulzac 1963:141, 150, 162, 222, 238).

### **Status Quo**

Unfortunately, the success of Hugh Mulzac and the *Booker T. Washington* had little effect in the Merchant Marine during or immediately after World War II. Only three other African Americans commanded merchant vessels during the war — Adrian T. Richardson, John Godfrey, and Clifton Lastic. Of the 24,000 African Americans who served in the Merchant Marines, only 200 received officer commissions. By 1948 not one of these men served on deck of a ship; instead, they were either released from duty or placed below deck in the engine rooms. Moreover, most enlisted men continued to serve in the messmen's branch and other menial posts (Nelson 1951:138-141; Foner 1974:173-174).

## Women's Reserve Corps

In the summer of 1942 the Navy and Coast Guard began recruiting women into its female reserve components, the WAVES and SPARS, respectively. Black women at this time were given neither encouragement nor opportunity to join these reserve units. Pressure from both white and black organizations (especially the Alpha Kappa Alpha [AKA] sorority), compelled the Navy to examine the issue. In December 1942, the Bureau Chief of the Navy reported that "At this time the Navy does not have any substantial body of Negro men available or qualified for general service at sea. There is no occasion to replace Negro Personnel by Negro women enlisted in the Women's Reserve" (Bureau of Naval Personnel n.d.:15). The following September, the District Directors of the Women's Reserve recommended that "the inclusion of Negro women be deferred as long as possible..." (Bureau of Naval Personnel n.d.:17). Nevertheless, the AKA sorority continued its campaign for inclusion of African Americans into the Women's Reserves Corps. Finally, in October 1944 the WAVES and SPARS announced plans for the immediate admission of black women on a nondiscriminatory basis. The MARINETTES (the Marines contingent of Women's Reserve) did not accept an African American into its company during World War II.

Despite this hard-won victory, very few black women responded to this announcement by joining the reserve corps. By July 1945, only 72 African American women had reported for basic training at the Women's Naval Training Station at Hunter College in New York City. Two months later the SPARS had only five black members. Those few who did join the female reserve corps went through a 6-week training course in an integrated setting. Since black women entered the corps very late in the war, most positions were closed to them. The only major branches accepting women at that time were the Hospital and Clerical Corps (Bureau of Naval Personnel n.d.:15-17, 98-99; Nelson 1951:133-136; Foner 1974:174-175; Byers 1947:228-230).

## Summary

The experience of African Americans in the Navy, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Merchant Marine during World War II was replete with both frustration and hope. It was frustrating because most enlistees still served in traditional subservient roles as messmen and laborers. Yet there was hope as training facilities and naval vessels became more integrated and opportunities increased for black servicemen in skilled positions. In fact, African American servicemen experienced several firsts during World War II. It was the first time the Navy or Coast Guard commissioned

African American officers, the first time the Marine Corps officially accepted blacks, and the first time they received command of war vessels. It was also the first time the Navy and Coast Guard began recruiting women, both black and white, into their reserve components.

These advances exemplify the transforming nature of the Second World War, a transformation difficult for both the leaders of the United States Armed Forces and for African Americans serving in the military. Military commanders believed the changes forced upon them were too radical and were being implemented too quickly. Blacks, on the other hand, felt the new policies did not go far enough and were too slowly executed. Nevertheless, once the military (and society in general) began destroying segregation and providing greater opportunities for African Americans, there was no turning back. Throughout the postwar period, blacks fought with even greater determination to ensure that the military continued its movement toward racial equality. Today, with blacks serving in every capacity of the Armed Forces, including the top military position as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, we behold the product spawned during this world crisis.

## 8 African Americans in the U.S. Army During World War II



*African American soldiers soon discovered that receiving an overseas assignment was a battle in and of itself due to the unwillingness of foreign governments and theater commanders to accept black troops.*

## 8 African Americans in the U.S. Army During World War II

by Robert F. Jefferson

### Introduction

World War II marked the beginning of the end for segregated black military units. Substantial progress was made in the struggle for equality both at home and abroad, although there was still a long way to go when the war ended. African Americans were accepted into the Army Air Corps and the Marine Corps, and commanded naval vessels — and proved once again their bravery and competence in combat. The end came slowly and full integration would not come until the Korean conflict. However, World War II marked a positive turning point in the integration of African Americans. Part of this change came as a result of thousands of white and black Americans being forced to work side-by-side within a military structure for the common goal of overcoming a common enemy. Once again the military would provide the stage for societal change. This close contact with another race no doubt caused many Americans to see the contradiction in a democracy struggling to defeat extreme racist enemies, while at the same time countenancing racist policies at home. This awareness set the stage for later civil rights movements.

Thousands of African Americans participated in World War II as soldiers, sailors, and Marines in hundreds of regiments, squadrons, ships, and other military units. (Lee 1966; Nalty 1986; Foner 1974; Mullen 1973; Dalfume 1969a; Byers 1947; Jefferson 1995; Silvera 1964; Goodman 1952; Treadwell 1954; Terkel 1984; Motley 1975; Wynn 1975; McGuire 1983; McGuire 1988; Buchanan 1977; Macgregor 1981; Wiley 1946; Palmer 1983; Arnold 1990; Hargrove 1985; Sandler 1992; Shapiro 1988). The level and complexity of this participation makes it impossible to detail each unit in a study such as this historic context. For this reason, this chapter takes a different approach than previous chapters, which looked at individual unit histories. Instead, this chapter summarizes the historical trends that allowed black participation, African Americans' response to these events, the training of black personnel, and overseas employment. Individual units will not be detailed. However, Chapter 9 lists all the units identified during this research, and their stateside posts.

## Quotas: Linkages of Black Intelligence and Combat Efficiency and Discrimination, 1920 - 1941

Army plans for employing and training black troops during World War II were based largely on the testimonies of World War I commanders of black troops gathered by the Army War College, and on the racist mores of the period (e.g. Patton 1981; Scott 1919; Haynes 1917; Coffman 1968; Sweeney 1919; Henri and Barbeau 1974; DuBois 1943). Almost as soon as the smoke had cleared from the battlefields of Europe in 1919, the Assistant Commander of the General Staff College circulated surveys to officers who commanded black soldiers during the war, requesting them to comment on the troops' performances and to make recommendations for the use of black troops in the event of future wars. Their responses were largely negative. Major General Charles C. Ballou, formerly the commander of the all-black 92nd Division in Europe, expressed his belief that the use of black soldiers from the Civil War through 1917 revealed that they were liabilities rather than assets and used racist generalizations to suggest that black troops be placed in labor battalions and regiments commanded by white officers. Ballou contended that the black soldier "has little capacity for initiative, is easily stampeded if surprised, and is therefore more dependent than the white man on skilled leadership." Reflecting upon his own experience as the commander of the 92nd, he stated, "I simply forgot that the average Negro is a rank coward" and that "his faults and virtues stemmed from being children of people in whom slavish obedience and slavish superstitions and ignorance were ingrained." He went on to denigrate the performance of black officers and dismissed the performance of the 93rd Division's regiments, claiming that their success was based on the replacement of black officers by white personnel. Advising against the formation of segregated divisions, Ballou recommended that the War Department limit the size of black units to no larger than a regiment (Ballou 1920).

The responses of other field grade officers of the 92nd were similar, employing racial stereotypes and sexual myths couched in popular beliefs to demonstrate the lackluster performance of black personnel and to advise against the formation of all-black divisions. Responding to the Army War College in April of 1920, former 92nd Division Chief of Staff Allen J. Greer wrote, "the average Negro is naturally cowardly and utterly lacking in confidence in his colored officer." "Every infantry combat soldier should possess sufficient mentality, initiative, and individual courage; all of these are, generally speaking, lacking in the Negro" he stated (Greer 1920). Another former 92nd officer wrote, "my experience confirms the belief that, with Negro officers, the Negroes cannot become fitted as combat troops." He, like Ballou and Greer, recommended the assignment of black troops to labor and pioneer units no larger than a regiment, arguing that "it would be unwise to place more than one such regiment in a division" (Tupes 1919). A commander of the all-black 368th



Infantry claimed that black soldiers lacked home training and commented that "the average Negro has the mentality of an overgrown child so naturally it takes longer to train them." Advising against the formation of all-black divisions, he argued that no part of the country would permit the assembly of black divisions without protest (Jackson 1920). Reacting to the Army War College survey in early April, former 370th Infantry Commander, Major Thomas A. Roberts, described the officers and enlisted men in the unit as untruthful, illiterate, and lacking in initiative and a sense of responsibility. "I favor no larger unit than a regiment," he suggested (Roberts 1920).

Not all former commanders of black troops judged the World War I performance of black personnel as a failure. In late March 1920, Vernon A. Caldwell, Commander of black units in Cuba, the Philippines, and France, expressed his belief that the Army should organize black personnel in units smaller than regimental size. Caldwell defended his position on the grounds that the separation of black troops into larger organizations would result in resentment within the African-American community. Emphasizing that the country's well-being rested upon the efforts made by all segments of its citizenry, he stated, "most military men recognize that national defense is no longer a matter of a Regular Army but that it is, and always had been when correctly grasped, a matter of being able to make full use of its entire manpower." Emphasizing that black units fought best when serving in white regiments, Caldwell urged the War Department to place black companies in every Regular Army organization smaller than a division. His recommendations were virtually ignored (Caldwell 1920).

In the years that followed, staff members of the War Department's Operations and Training Section (G-3) drew upon the Army War College survey to formulate policies for the future employment of black manpower. Founded on the premise that because African Americans were citizens of the United States they should be subject to all of the obligations of citizenship, namely military service, manpower utilization plans developed between 1922 and 1935 limited black units to sizes no larger than regiments. These studies largely echoed the judgments of Ballou and other World War I commanders, casting doubt on the performance of black combat units during the war, the intellectual capabilities of black personnel, and the leadership abilities of black officers. Many of the studies concluded that in the event of war "large numbers of Negroes will be found unsuited for combat duty, and for these, other parts in the mobilization must be found" (Memorandum 1922). More important, the findings of these studies served as a training tool for the Army War College (AWC) Courses of the 1920s and 1930s, which were attended by several generations of Regular Army officers who served in World War I and would assume key army staff positions during World War II. During this period, student officers such as Dwight

D. Eisenhower, George Patton, George C. Marshall, Courtney H. Hodges, Edward M. Almond, and other field grade officers received instruction on the problems of employing black troops and could not help but imbibe the racist stereotypes that circulated throughout American society.

These racist stereotypes, in turn, shaped the thinking of many of the War Department officials who formulated the Army's racial policies. These stereotypes substantiated racist assumptions regarding black intellectual abilities, the Army's racial division of labor, and the image of black troops as inefficient soldiers. For example, Secretary of War Henry Stimson's views may give us an idea of the attitudes that Army officials held regarding the employment of black troops and the strict adherence to a racial division of labor:

Leadership is not imbedded in the Negro race yet and to try to make commissioned officers to lead the men into battle — colored men — is to work disaster to both. Colored troops do very well under white officers but every time we try to lift them a little bit beyond where they can go, disaster and confusion follows. In the draft, we are preparing to give Negroes a fair shot in every service, however, even in aviation where I doubt if they will not produce disaster there. Nevertheless, they are going to have a try, but I hope to Heaven's sake they won't mix the white and the colored troops together in the same units for then we shall certainly have trouble (Stimson September 27, 1940).

Expressing total disdain for African American press members and other black leaders, Stimson, like other War Department officials, felt that black soldiers should be relegated largely to the service support units and excluded from other branches of the service. Expressing very little confidence in black servicemen, he warned President Roosevelt on numerous occasions against "placing too much responsibility on a race which was not showing initiative in battle" (Stimson October 25, 1940). General George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, echoed Stimson's reservations, citing their "low intelligence averages" and the evaluations rendered by World War I commanders of black units to claim that the difficulties that black soldiers faced resulted from a lack of confidence in their commissioned and noncommissioned officers (Bland 1991:438, 501).

Based on these assumptions, War Department officials set the troop mobilization levels at approximately 50 percent of all black recruits available in the event of a future war; their policy remained in effect throughout much of the 1930s. Small revisions were made to the numbers to reflect the African-American proportion in the general population. In July 1923, for example, the Adjutant General informed

corps area commanders that additional segregated units would not be allocated until black personnel presented themselves physically and that decisions regarding personnel transfers were left to the commanders' discretion (Adjutant General July 12, 1923). Four years later, officials revised previous plans to establish the percentage of black representation in the armed forces in the event of war at 10.73 percent, reflecting their proportion in the general population (Craig March 26, 1927). By 1937, officials revised these proportions even lower, setting the percentage of black manpower during the first mobilization stage at 9.45 percent; reflecting the 1930 census estimates of blacks in the general population (Memorandum April 26, 1937). Despite several revisions, however, the Army's troop mobilization plans of the 1930s reiterated the racist assumptions of black combat efficiency and leadership capabilities found in previous War Department and Army War College Studies.

Unfortunately, these policies also linked black intellectual capabilities to issues surrounding their combat efficiency. As early as 1909, American psychologists developed individual intelligence tests based on models established by French psychologist Alfred Binet. During World War I, staff members in the Army's Medical Department and Classification Division, led by Stanford University psychologist Lewis Terman and University of Chicago-trained Walter V. Bingham, began to devise several intelligence tests to measure the recruits' knowledge of various occupations as well as to screen out mental incompetents from the Army. Deeply suspicious of the psychologists, the Army ended the testing program in January 1919 (Sears 1980:626-627; Smith 1977:58-59).

But by May 1940, as soon as President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked Congress to expand the Armed Forces, the Adjutant General appointed an advisory committee to develop aids to appraise and classify military personnel, and named Bingham as its chairman. Although Bingham and other framers of the testing methods revised much of the World War I standards, the Army General Classification Test (AGCT) was based on a nonrandom sample that failed to take variables of race, class, regional, and cultural biases fully into account. For example, when War Plans and Training Division psychologists administered the AGCT to a sample composed of 3,790 Regular Army enlisted men, 600 Civilian Conservation Corps members, and a few hundred other men in late 1940, all the men were white, between the ages of 20 and 29, and resided in the northeastern portion of the country, an area known for the highest rates of literacy in the nation (Adjutant General's Office 1942:133; Adjutant General's Office 1945:760-766). Although Bingham and other advisory committee members discovered some of the biases inherent in the War Department's testing methods, the overall result was a skewed distribution of test scores, dramatically affecting the employment of black troops during the beginning stages

of World War II. For example, with 100 being the average, nearly 75 percent of the sample scored in the highest three levels while only 24 percent made scores in the lowest two levels. On the other hand, because most black inductees came from communities that had poor school facilities, many blacks scored lower on the AGCT than white inductees; occupying levels lower than the standardized scores gathered by Army personnel technicians (Dorsey April 25, 1943).

To make matters worse, despite the Advisory Committee's claims to the contrary, many Army nonpsychologists used the AGCT scores as indexes of intelligence, confirming their already disparaging appraisal of black soldiers and allowing them to channel African-American recruits into service-support duties such as railhead and salvage, construction, quartermaster, engineering, and ordinance. For example, by examining the listing of black units in the Protective Mobilization Plan of 1940, one may note that nearly 70 percent of those slated for activation in the event of war were to be assigned to gas supply, truck, port, and railhead battalions in the Engineers and Quartermaster Corps (Andrews June 3, 1940).

As a result, the Army's racial policies had a profound effect on black participation in the armed forces during the prewar period. Blacks could enlist only as messmen in the Navy and were excluded from the Marine Corps and the Army Air Corps altogether (Lee 1966). Between 1931 and 1940, the number of blacks in the Regular Army made up less than 4,000 of the total 118,000 as vacancies and promotions became extremely rare in most segregated units (*Philadelphia African-American* October 28, 1939). Stationed largely at Georgia's Fort Benning, Arizona's Fort Huachuca, and Kansas' Forts Riley and Leavenworth, the four black regiments — the 24th and 25th Infantry and the 9th and 10th Cavalry — were reduced to grooming horses and performing other fatigue duties (Pierce October 10, 1939; *Philadelphia African-American* October 14, 1939; *Pittsburgh Courier* April 30, 1938). Few opportunities to gain a commission in the Regular Army existed for black aspirants as only one African American, Benjamin O. Davis Jr., had graduated from West Point between 1920 and 1940. Only five black commissioned officers were in the Regular Army; two line officers and three chaplains (Pierce October 10, 1939). African Americans constituted nearly 360 of the 100,000 officers in the Organized Army Reserves, largely products of Reserve Officer Training Corps training at Howard and Wilberforce Universities (Hamilton n.d.; Lautier May 4, 1940). Finally, in the few National Guard and Reserve units such as New Jersey's 1st Battalion, New York's 15th, Massachusetts' 3rd Battalion of the 372nd Infantry, and Illinois' 8th Infantry, that survived during the prewar period, blacks received very little peacetime training and faced the constant threat of disbandment and being converted into labor organizations (Lautier July 23, 1938; *Baltimore African-American* April 13, 1940; Johnson 1976:448-449).

Such was the status of African-Americans in the Army as the nation stood on the eve of its entry into the World War II.

### **Black Response to War and War Department Intransigence**

The outbreak of war in Europe in September of 1939 and the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June of 1941 evoked ambivalent sentiments from segments of African American society. During the first weeks of the European war, African American initial responses ranged from cynical isolationism to rabid patriotism. For example, George Schuyler, noted columnist of the *Pittsburgh Courier* expressed his belief that there were great similarities between the German invasion of Austria and British colonialism in Africa. "The war is a tossup," Schuyler claimed and he urged blacks throughout 1939 and 1940 not to become interested in the events overseas. Schuyler asked, "Why should Negroes fight for democracy abroad when they were refused democracy in every American activity except tax paying?" (Gill n.d.).

Schuyler's isolationist views were shared more or less by other segments of African American society. Members of the political left, most notably George Padmore, claimed that "if the British government or the French government were sincere in their war rhetoric, then let them extend Democracy to their colonies" (Padmore 1939:327-328). Recounting memories of World War I, many members of the American Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party saw the European crisis as an imperialist war and urged blacks to oppose military and economic aid to Britain and France. For example, on 14 November 1939, 22,000 members of the Communist Party met at a rally in Madison Square Garden to celebrate the 22nd anniversary of the Soviet Union. During the celebration, delegates heard speeches given by Earl Browder, General Secretary of the Party, and James Ford, excoriating both Britain and France. Arguing that the war to save democracy was futile, they concluded that there were forces in the United States that aimed to destroy the civil liberties of African Americans before the country became involved in the war and that the European War was being fought for the control of colonial peoples (Skinner 1978:14). In a pamphlet entitled *Why Negroes Should Oppose the War*, noted African-Caribbean scholar and activist C. L. R. James argued that no matter who won the war, blacks would continue to face discrimination, police brutality, and poverty worldwide (Johnson 1939:5).

What's more, between 1939 and 1941, publications such as the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *Scribner's Commentator*, *PM*, *Common Sense*, *People's Voice*, *Opportunity*, and black newspapers carried articles

that bore captions reading, "Should the Negro Care Who Wins the War?," "Should Negroes Save Democracy?," "What Have Negroes to Fight For?," "Is This a White Man's War?," and "A White Folks' War?" (Bond 1942:81-84; Johnson 1941:57-62; *PM* May 7, 1941; Powell 1942:111-113; Ottley 1942:29). Rayford W. Logan, noted historian and Howard University Professor held a slightly different viewpoint. In a January 1941 speech to the Cleveland Insurance Managers Council's Third Annual States Congress, Logan argued that the "White man's distress is the black man's gain" (Logan 1941:1-2).

Many of the wide-ranging views expressed by Logan and other African American leaders across the country regarding American involvement in the European War were deeply rooted in the debates surrounding black military service waged throughout 1939 and much of 1940. Before Germany extended its westward plunge into Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Belgium in the spring of 1940, and before Congress initiated debate on the Selective Service Act, segments of the black community held discussions regarding the matter, connecting the Act to other aspects of racism and poverty that blacks faced in the United States. To be sure, the discussion regarding black military participation in global war had been initiated less than 2 years earlier. In 1937, Robert L. Vann, Jane Hunter, George M. Murphy, West Hamilton, Mary Church Terrell, and other prominent black leaders attended a conference of the National Youth Administration in Washington DC on the problems of the Negro and Negro youth. Following 3 days of reports and open forum on matters affecting African American life such as education, health, housing, tuberculosis, lynching, disfranchisement, and civil rights in the District of Columbia, the group also examined black participation in the armed forces, adopting a resolution demanding proportionate representation at all levels within service branches as well as admission to federally supported service academies such as West Point and Annapolis (National Urban League 1937). Less than a year later, Robert L. Vann, editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier* penned an open letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, launching a campaign for the removal of racial barriers within the armed forces. Demanding equal representation for blacks in the armed forces, Vann called for the creation and maintenance of an all-black squadron and infantry division (*Pittsburgh Courier* February 19, 1941).

Although Vann's proposal was largely ignored, it sparked public debate regarding the nature of black participation in national defense, arousing a flood of responses from black teachers, labor organizers, clergymen, social workers, and urban and rural working-class youth across the country. Their comments tended to reflect a myriad of class and regional distinctions. For example, whereas President Ormonde Walker of Wilberforce University and NAACP Executive Secretary Walter White favored total integration, segments of African American society as diverse as leaders

of the Southern Negro Youth Congress and Howard University Secretary-Treasurer Emmett J. Scott supported Vann's position for various reasons (*Pittsburgh Courier* April 2,9,16,30, 1938). In April 1938, Emmett J. Scott, Robert L. Vann, Oscar De Priest, George S. Schuyler, and Eugene Kinckle Jones formed a steering committee after Congressman Hamilton Fish of New York introduced three bills for greater black representation in the armed forces to members of the House Committee on Military Affairs (*Pittsburgh Courier* April 2,9,16, 1938). After months of rallying support for the measure, however, the bills died in the House Affairs Committee in October as Franklin D. Roosevelt, ranking Committee members, and the NAACP failed to provide adequate encouragement.

In May 1939, the *Pittsburgh Courier* formed the Committee on the Participation of Negroes in the National Defense (CPNND) to work for the inclusion of blacks in the military establishment. Among its members were NAACP Special Counsel Charles Houston, Associated Negro Press Correspondent Louis Lautier, and Committee Chairman Rayford Logan. During the 1939 and 1940 debates on the size of the national defense program and the Selective Service Act, CPNND members clamored loudly for greater black participation in the Army by testifying before the House Committee, lobbying key Congressmen, working closely with the NAACP, and organizing local branches and committees throughout the country (Logan June 1-10, September 14-21, 1940). In September 1940, CPNND spokesmen Scott, Logan, and Vann worked to persuade Congressman Hamilton Fish to introduce CPNND-sponsored nondiscrimination clauses on the House floor. Although Fish's amendment was defeated, the organization's efforts reached fruition when Congress passed Public Law 783 containing two antidiscrimination provisions proposed by New York Senator Robert H. Wagner (United States Congress 1939-1940:887). Their legislative victory proved to be short-lived, however. As Rayford Logan noted in his diary later, CPNND members felt that "the Wagner Amendment was virtually meaningless because it prohibited discrimination only in cases of voluntary enlistment" (Logan August 31, 1940). Furthermore, as historian Ulysses G. Lee points out, the question of whether land and naval forces would accept African Americans remained unresolved (Lee 1966:74).

The CPNND's campaign coincided with other efforts to achieve black self-determination within the Armed Forces. During late 1938 and early 1939, the NAACP continued its call for total integration. The National Negro Insurance Association and the Southern Interracial Commission adopted measures against the Navy's and Army's racial policies regarding African American servicemen. The National Bar Association established a committee to protest the exclusion of blacks from National Guard units in a number of states. A Memphis, Tennessee-based black American Legion Post organized a group to secure a National Guard unit in

that state. Furthermore, at its April 1938 annual meeting held at Alabama's Tuskegee Institute, members of the National Medical Association's Executive Board voted to endorse the *Pittsburgh Courier's* campaign as a part of the association's fight for greater black representation in the Army's Medical Corps. As an outgrowth of their efforts, National Defense Committees were established statewide with various subcommittees coordinating with the national organization (Dalfiume 1969b:42-53; *Pittsburgh Courier* April 23, 1938; Thomas July 5, 1938).

Black self-organizing efforts to gain a greater role in the armed forces served as a galvanizing force during the presidential election year of 1940. Increasingly, black intellectuals, labor leaders, civil rights activists, and eventually communists and socialists came to realize that despite their real class divisions, collective empowerment in American civil society could not be achieved without strategic application of protest politics to various administrative posts within the White House. The most obvious target was the War Department and its racial policies. For example, in June of that year, branch members of the NAACP from 20 states and the District of Columbia assembled at the association's annual conference in Philadelphia. Much of the discussion focused on the attitudes of blacks toward the armed forces and the War Department's relationship to African American struggles for equality. Among the distinguished individuals in attendance were William Hastie, Ruth Logan Roberts, Aubrey Williams, George B. Murphy, Sr., and Dorothy Boulding Ferebee (*Baltimore Afro-American* June 15, 22, 1940). At the conference, members listened to a speech given by association president Arthur B. Spingarn who declared, "democracy will not and cannot be safe in America as long as ten percent of its population is deprived of the rights, privileges, and immunities plainly granted to them by the Constitution of the United States." Following the 5-day event, legal counsel Charles H. Houston urged association members to write letters to their Senators and Congressmen protesting the War Department's racial policies and informing them that discrimination in the armed forces would be an issue in the upcoming election (*Baltimore Afro-American* June 22, 1940).

Two months later, Mary McLeod Bethune, an influential advisor in the National Youth Administration, reported that blacks were demanding the appointment of a black advisor to the Secretary of War and warned the White House that "there is grave apprehension among Negroes lest the existing inadequate representation and training of colored persons may lead to the creation of labor battalions and other forms of discrimination against them in the event of war" (Bethune 1940). From June to October of that year, black newspapers, most notably Pittsburgh's *Courier* and Baltimore's *Afro-American*, carried editorials excoriating Roosevelt's silence regarding discrimination against blacks in the armed forces and endorsed Republican presidential candidate Wendell L. Willkie, a well-known proponent of



African American equality. After Congress passed the selective service legislation in September 1940, members of the Socialist Workers Party's (SWP) Political Committee gathered during a national conference in Chicago and adopted a resolution rejecting the measure. "The system of Jim Crowism in the armed forces demonstrates very clearly to the Negro the hypocrisy of slogans about war for democracy," they contended (*Socialist Appeal* November 9, 1940). Sentiments regarding black self-dignity also prefaced the thoughts of Eugene Kinckle Jones, Executive Secretary of the National Urban League. In a letter to President Roosevelt, Jones pointed out that black views of the discriminatory policies in the armed forces were grounded in their acute awareness of their amorphous positions in American society (Jones September 1940).

As the election drew nearer, Roosevelt moved to stem black criticism on the issue of black participation in the armed forces. As many scholars have pointed out, Roosevelt personally had little to do with the cause of civil rights and the issue was not one of the President's priorities (Freidel 1965: 73; Schlesinger 1960:431-432). But on September 5, 1940, the White House, with an eye on election-year politics, expressed its dismay over the attention that the Army's racial policies had attracted from black leaders, and directed the War Department and the Navy to prepare a statement publicizing the equal proportion of African Americans in the military (Ward 1940). During a cabinet meeting held a week later, Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall and Secretary of War Stimson informed the President that plans had been developed to organize several new black regiments in the Army and to accept 10 percent of the total African American population during the initial stages of mobilization (Marshall 1940a:25). What followed their announcements was a string of White House press releases aimed at assuring segments of the African American community that they would have proportional opportunities within the armed forces (*Baltimore Afro-American* September 28, 1940; Press Release September 16, 1940). The first announcement was that 36,000 African Americans would be drafted in the initial call for 400,000 soldiers under the Selective Service Act (Press Release September 16, 1940). Plans were also announced that the Army was moving toward creating African American air corps units (*Pittsburgh Courier* September 21, 1940). This was significant because the press releases represented the first time that the War Department's policies regarding black participation in the event of an emergency had been revealed to the public.

More important, these statements allowed War Department officials to claim that they promoted equal opportunity for blacks in the Army when, in fact, they had no intentions of abandoning their preexisting racial policies. For example, after the September 13 meeting with Roosevelt, Stimson told the Army General Staff that he wanted an "exact statement of the facts in the case and ... how far we can go in the

matter" (Marshall 1940a). In a late September letter to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., Marshall pointed out that although political pressure had forced the Roosevelt Administration to announce that African Americans would be accepted in the Army on a proportional basis, the War Department's policies had not changed. "It is the policy of the War Department not to intermingle colored and white enlisted personnel in the same regimental organization. The present exceedingly difficult period of building up a respectable and dependable military force for the protection of this country is not the time for critical experiments, which would inevitably have a highly destructive effect on morale — meaning military efficiency," he claimed (Marshall 1940b:336-337). Although Roosevelt had assured Walter White, National Youth Administration Advisor on Negro Affairs, T. Arnold Hill, and the head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, A. Philip Randolph, that African American officers and enlisted men would be employed throughout the Army and that black reservists would fill regular Army and National Guard vacancies "regardless of race," during a conference held in late September of 1940 Roosevelt authorized the release of a press statement sanctioning the Army's racial policies (NAACP October 5, 1940; Patterson October 8, 1940). By releasing this policy statement, Roosevelt and the War Department faced tremendous criticism from various segments of the African American community and, feeling compelled to shore up dwindling African American political support, promoted retired officer Benjamin O. Davis to Brigadier General, appointed William H. Hastie as a special assistant to the secretary of war, and appointed Campbell C. Johnson as advisor to the director of Selective Service a week before the general election (Logan October 5, 1940; *New York Age*, October 19, 26, 1940; Foner 1974:138-139; Flynn 1984:16; Dalfiume 1969b:52-55). Realizing that blacks had gained little from the President's election day concessions, early in 1941 A. Philip Randolph called for 100,000 African Americans to march on Washington. Although Roosevelt had preempted this move by establishing the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practices, Army officials were able to continue their discriminatory policy based on the racial division of labor and military efficiency (Sitkoff 1971:661-681; Anderson 1982:290-346; Lawrence 1952:361). By December 7, 1941, the tenuous relationship between African Americans, the Federal Government, and black soldiers had been forged.

### **The Stateside Employment and Training of Black Personnel and Units at Regular Army Facilities: 1941-1944**

Meanwhile, many young African Americans faced the immediate prospect of either being drafted or ordered to active duty. During the initial stages of the Selective Service Act, more than 1.8 million African Americans registered; reflecting roughly 10 percent of the total population. However, these registration totals varied widely

due to regional and rural/urban differences in population. For example, the percentage of young black male registrants between the ages of 21 and 35 in the Midwest and Great Lakes region (Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan) who registered on October 16, 1940 and the percentage of blacks who registered in the Northeast (New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey) were remarkably similar, fluctuating between 5 and 6 percent of their total populations. In Chicago alone, nearly 500,000 black youth registered with their local boards, reflecting 14 percent of the city's black population (*Chicago Defender* October 26, 1940a; Bureau of the Census 1940:117). By the July 1941 registration drive, more than 82,000 draft age blacks entered the national lottery, reflecting 9.8 percent of their proportions in the general population. During the initial stages of the Selective Service process, the number of young black men notified for induction was 96,000 (5 percent) (U.S. Selective Service System 1953:Volume 2,103; U.S. Selective Service System 1942: Volume 1,85). By late December, 1942, however, the figure nearly quintupled to 420,000 (17 percent).

Many black youth expressed very little concern over the Selective Service process because of the logjam caused by the War Department's system of racial quotas. Throughout early 1941 and 1942, nearly 28,000 blacks were passed over. In Midwestern and Northern industrial centers, approximately 8,000 black registrants were selected but thousands awaited induction while the armed forces worked to build separate training facilities and prepare instructors (*Chicago Defender* March 22, 1941, October 26, 1940b). In Southern areas, the number of black registrants awaiting induction notices from local boards may have been higher. In states located within the Fourth Corps Area (southern states), more than 6,000 black selectees waited to be placed in Army units while less than 1 percent were made available for military service (Executive Assistant to the Director of the Selective Service for William Hastie January 28, 1941). In March, nearly 200 of Chicago's black youth reported to the 122nd Field Artillery Headquarters for induction after months of delay (*Chicago Defender* March 22, 1941). During the first waves of the induction process, local boards in cities throughout the Midwest and Great Lakes region like Toledo, Columbus, and Milwaukee, called up hundreds of young black men who reported to Army reception centers and waited for new units to be formed (*Cleveland Call & Post* January 9, 1942, June 13, 1942). The backlog in the racial quota system became more apparent in the District of Columbia as selected African Americans awaited orders for induction while some 1,100 white men were called (U.S. Selective Service n.d.:254-56). In New York, more than 900 black selectees drafted in January of 1941 were sent home due to construction delays at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, where they were slated to receive basic training. Between January and September 1941, only 4,449 blacks were in the Army. By early 1943, Selective Service officials estimated that approximately 300,000 blacks awaited induction after being notified of their selection (Hershey February 14, 1941).

Not all black youth complied with the provisions under the Selective Service Act. Throughout much of 1941 and 1942, draft boards in major metropolitan cities like Cleveland, Chicago, and Detroit waged extensive searches to locate black youth who refused to comply with the provisions of the Selective Service Act. During late 1940, nearly 500 African American selectees were shipped to labor camps in Jamaica after they were charged, arrested, and imprisoned at Leavenworth, Kansas for refusing to comply with the Selective Service Act (*Chicago Defender* September 25, 1940; McGuire 1975:50). In many New York City neighborhoods, including Harlem, draft boards reported high rates of draft delinquency. Perhaps the most visible cases were those of the United Transport Employees of America Educational Director, Ernest Calloway, and a New York market gardener, Winfred W. Lynn, who refused to report to their local draft boards on the grounds that their induction violated the nondiscriminatory clause in the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 (Murray 1944:131; MacDonald and MacDonald 1943:5-7; Wynn 1972: 16-17; Lynn 1993). Between 1941 and 1943, nearly 19 percent of all registered African Americans refused to report to their induction boards after being notified of their selection. In May 1943, 15 men were prosecuted and imprisoned in Detroit after they refused to register with their local draft boards. These incidences of resistance were hardly isolated. By 1946, black draft violators represented 18 percent of all the draft violators who were prosecuted and imprisoned throughout the war (Johnson 1945; *Michigan Chronicle* May 22, 1943; U.S. Selective Service System 1943:291; U.S. Selective Service System 1953:83).

In early 1941, black youth traveled to various areas of the country to receive their basic training. At Tuskegee Institute's Moton Field in Alabama, 33 black cadets from nearby Maxwell Field, and from Fort Devens, Massachusetts, and Fort Bragg, North Carolina assembled to receive a 5-week introduction to military flying under the direction of Captain Noel Parrish and West Point-educated Captain Benjamin O. Davis Jr., as well as 30 weeks of advanced instruction in aerobatics and gunnery. Among those who stood in that first class were R. M. Long, G.S. Roberts, Charles H. DeBow, and Mac Ross. Despite inadequate training facilities, a limited number of training planes, and a hostile white community, many of the recruits formed the nucleus of the all-black 99th Pursuit Squadron that was activated at the Alabama institution. The unit eventually reported to the Mediterranean Theater after months of delay (Paszek 1977:137; Rose 1975:119-120; Francis 1955; *Baltimore Afro-American* September 13, 1941; Amidon 1941:320-324).

Other training areas were later constructed for prospective black pilots. At Selfridge Field, Michigan, in May 1943, black pilots received technical training after a black bombardment group was formed under the direction of Colonel Robert R. Selway, Jr. Among those pilots stood Daniel (Chappie) James, a future four-star general.

By July 1944, nearly 100 black pilots were receiving instruction as navigators and gunners at places as diverse as California's Mather Field and Texas' Hondo Army Air Field (Lautier 1944:7).

Similar experiences awaited those who reported to infantry and armor units in 1941. For example, 2,500 black draftees selected in late 1940 reported from Georgia to the reception center at nearby Fort McPherson and Fort Screven where they received a battery of examinations before boarding Pullman cars to Florida's Camp Blanding and Alabama's Fort McClellan (*Atlanta Daily World* November 21, 1940, December 23, 1940, November 29, 1940). During the spring of 1941, hundreds of black selectees streamed from all parts of the country to gather at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, where they were assigned to the 366th Infantry Regiment, which featured an all-black staff led most notably by Washington DC native and 428th Infantry Reserve Commander Colonel West A. Hamilton (*Baltimore Afro-American* September 13, 1941). Among those who instructed the newly arrived trainees were Washington DC-born Robert A. Brown, future 366th Commander Howard D. Queen, Claude T. Ferebee, Alonzo G. Ferguson, and West Point Graduate James D. Fowler (Brown 1981; Hamilton 1981; Leonard 1943).

During April and May 1942, Pullman cars arrived at Fort Huachuca reception centers carrying more than 6,000 men at a rate of 200 per day. They were assigned to and trained in platoons and companies within the 368th and 25th Infantry Regiments until they joined with the newly formed 369th Infantry Regiment and other components to constitute the 93rd Infantry Division (*Cleveland Call & Post* June 6, 1942).

At Fort Benning, Georgia, selectees reported to the reception center where they were classified and placed in the 24th Infantry Regiment before being put through rifle and small-arms training (*Baltimore Afro-American* September 13, 1941). In September 1942, nearly 200 black men, mostly from the Chicago area, arrived at the Engineer Replacement Center at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, where they underwent an intensive training program in combat engineer duty (*Chicago Defender* September 5, 1942). Shortly thereafter, black recruits reported to Fort Knox, Kentucky, and Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, where they received training from veterans of the 9th and 10th Cavalry before being assigned as cadre to the newly activated 758th and 761st Tank Battalions (Wilson 1982:30-31; Anderson 1945).

In addition to the training installations previously mentioned, hundreds of black soldiers flocked to Fort Sill, Oklahoma; Aberdeen, Maryland; Camp Lee, Virginia; and Camp Davis, North Carolina, for additional training. For example, troops of the veteran 9th and 10th Cavalry traveled from Fort Riley, Kansas, to Fort Clark,

Texas, in April 1941 where they, along with the 4th and 5th Cavalry Brigades, formed the all-black 2nd Cavalry Division. Under the command of Major General Harry H. Johnson, they trained in the sparse Fort Clark area until they moved to Louisiana to participate in the Third Army Maneuvers 4 months later (Davis 1943a; Owens 1942; *Michigan Chronicle* March 6, 1943; Stanton 1984:204). At Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, men of the 333rd Field Artillery Group, 333rd Field Artillery Battalion, 969th Field Artillery Battalion, and various ammunition components conducted their initial training in areas surrounding nearby Muskogee (Lowry 1943). Nearly 6,000 black recruits received training at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, as coast artillery men (*Atlanta Daily World* December 4, 1940).

As the men progressed through basic training, many found themselves spending much of their spare time in their barracks. After several weeks of training, few had the energy or desire to venture far from the post. As a result, the barracks and other areas on post became places of refuge for exhausted soldiers as well as areas to discuss various aspects of Army life. For example, at Fort Devens, men of the 366th attended post service clubs and theaters and heard music performed by Charles J. Adams and the regimental infantry band (*Baltimore Afro-American* October 25, 1941; Leonard 1943). Fort Huachuca draftees of the 93rd and 92nd Infantry Divisions watched boxing exhibitions put on by Heavyweight Champion Joe Louis and saw performances by noted entertainers Dinah Shore and Lena Horne. So popular was Horne that a theater was erected in her honor near the old post fire station. It was demolished by the War Assets Administration 5 years later (Special Service Bulletin 1943; Smith n.d.). Fort Dix, New Jersey, recruits of the 372nd Infantry assembled at the soldier's club and the newly constructed post theater where they were entertained by Jane Frohman, Ginger Harmon, Milton Berle, and Bill "Bojangles" Robinson (*Cleveland Call & Post* June 14, 1941, July 26, 1941).

At Fort Bragg in late 1942, thousands of black soldiers who served in sanitation and quartermaster units and their guests attended performances at the Field Artillery Replacement Center amphitheater where they were entertained by vaudeville acts performed by Alec Creer and musical performances by the Battery A Octet and Bob Warren, whose brother was a member of Count Basie's Band (*Chicago Defender* September 5, 1942). At Camp Gruber, men of the 333rd Field Battalion congregated in the post motion picture theaters, post exchanges, and at the newly constructed U.S.O. club during their off-duty hours (Lowry 1943). Throughout the winter months of 1943, Fort Jackson soldiers held a series of talent rehearsals and dances at which many soldiers performed.

Many black soldiers transformed the barracks and recreational areas of their military posts into sporting arenas, churches, and schoolhouses. For instance,

Arkansas' Camp Chaffee and Arizona's Fort Huachuca featured amateur boxing bouts on Friday evenings between individuals from various units. Soldiers at Kentucky's Fort Knox gathered at a large fieldhouse where they heard Post Chaplain George W. Williams deliver a sermon entitled "Christmas and the Negro's Apocalyptic Role in the War" (*Cleveland Call & Post* September 9, 1942; *Chicago Defender* January 9, 1943).

These examples of recreational events were unusual. For most black servicemen, recreational facilities and service clubs were extremely limited and were often packed beyond capacity.

The community-building activities staged by black servicemen during their stateside training reflected efforts to offset the daily indignities with which they had to live. When black soldiers sought additional recreational accommodations in cities and towns throughout the country, they encountered physical and verbal assaults at the hands of city, state, and military law enforcement authorities, not to mention white civilians. Soldiers stationed at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, experienced hostilities when they ventured to nearby cities like Columbia and Atlanta, Georgia (Neely 1942:1). In Tampa, Florida, black soldiers and white townspeople skirmished in the streets after a black veteran was arrested and sent to a nearby military police headquarters and a black noncommissioned officer (NCO) was stabbed in July 1941 (Lee 1966:350-351). At Fort Oswego, New York, guardsmen in the 372nd clashed with soldiers of the Delaware 198th Coastal Artillery Regiment after one of its members was harassed (*New York Age* July 14, 1941). Less than a month later, racial tensions exploded between black privates and white military police at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, ending in the killing of two soldiers and the wounding of five others (Murray 1941:75; *Cleveland Call & Post* September 20, 1941; Ottley 1943:312). During that same period, African American members of the 94th Engineer Battalion on temporary duty from Fort Custer, Michigan, exchanged fire with the townspeople of Gurdon, Arkansas, and with state troopers after being verbally and physically assaulted (Lee 1966:352-354; *California Eagle* December 18, 1941). In January 1942, black soldiers clashed with city policemen in Alexandria, Louisiana, when they refused to crowd into a dilapidated movie house (Brown 1942:477; *New York Age* January 17, 1942). Eleven months later, a shoot-out occurred between nearly 200 members of the 93rd Division's 369th Infantry Regiment and 100 military and civilian authorities and Bisbee, Arizona, residents when a soldier was seriously wounded by a military policeman after the soldier was denied service by a white cafe owner. When it was over, 2 servicemen lay dead and 15 were wounded as nearly 200 soldiers were apprehended. The soldiers each received 50-year prison sentences (*Atlanta Daily World* November 20, 1942; *Cleveland Call & Post* December 5, 1942). In Montgomery, Alabama, a Fort George,

Maryland, black servicemen was seriously wounded after he drew a knife on a bus driver after being refused a seat in the white section of the bus (*Atlanta Daily World* March 30, 1943).

Although Judge William Hastie and War Department Officials tried to develop measures to lessen the tensions between black soldiers, military policemen, and local civilians, the civil-military conflagrations continued at Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi; Camp Stewart, Georgia; Lake Charles, Louisiana; March Field and Camp Luis Obispo, California; Fort Bliss, Texas; Camp Phillips, Kansas; Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky; and in other stateside areas throughout much of the war (Cooney 1945; Roamer 1945; *Atlanta Daily World* December 14, 1943, October 10, 1943; McCloy 1943). The situation was such that a disgruntled black trooper at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, may have expressed what was on the minds of many black servicemen when he commented in 1944, "the conditions for a Negro soldier down here is unbearable the morale of the boys is very low. I see things brewing down here and I am afraid that we colored soldiers are going to be the goat or victims of a one side affair" (A Disgusted Trooper, Letter to the Editor *Cleveland Call & Post* August 16, 1944).

In spite of these conflicts, black soldiers advanced through the various stages of their military training. After receiving basic training at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, the men of the 93rd Infantry Division moved on to the 3rd Army Maneuvers in Louisiana in March 1943. There they spent 6 weeks maneuvering through endless rain, mud, canebrake, and snake-infested swamps against the men of the 85th Division near the Mississippi-Texas border. Shortly afterwards, the unit reported to the California-Arizona Maneuver Area located near Camp Clipper and participated in IV Corps maneuvers (Davis 1943b; Walker 1943; *Life* August 6, 1943). The men had trained there for nearly 6 months before Inspector General Major General Virgil L. Peterson inspected the unit in action during its Army Forces Tests and declared that it was ready to be committed to combat duty overseas. "The men have confidence in their officers, in their training, and in their ability to defeat the enemy," Peterson stated (Peterson 1943). By late December, black servicemen from the 93rd were on the troop transport ships *West Point*, *General John Pope*, *Lurline*, and *Torrens* heading for the South Pacific (Historical Section, 93rd Infantry Division 1946).

Other black units followed in the path of the 93rd, including the 16,000 black enlisted men and officers who constituted the 93rd's sister outfit, the 92nd Infantry Division. The 92nd Infantry conducted their training in separate components at Alabama's Fort McClellan, Indiana's Camp Atterbury, Kentucky's Camp Breckinridge, and Arkansas's Camp Robinson (Hargrove 1985:5; Kestling 1987:1-17). The men of the 92nd (consisting of the 365th, 370th, and 371st Infantry



Regiments, along with a full complement of field artillery and divisional support elements) underwent a series of standard firing tests on the Huachuca Mountains before they too were ordered to the Louisiana Maneuver Area (Adjutant General's Office 1940-1948). The unit later returned to Fort Huachuca where the men received post-maneuver training and were placed in the ranks of a Combat Team formed from the platoons and companies of the 370th Infantry. By late June 1944, the first soldiers of the 92nd Infantry Division were staged at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, before departing from Hampton Roads aboard transport ships heading for Northern Italy (*Michigan Chronicle* May 1, 1943).

The 366th Infantry Regiment followed a path similar to the 92nd. Having completed field training at Camp Lee, Virginia, the men of the 366th moved on to Camp Atterbury, Indiana, in late December 1943 before departing for Camp Patrick Henry 3 months later. At Camp Patrick Henry they boarded troop transport ships bound for North Africa (*Atlanta Daily World* December 25, 1943; Stanton 1984:252).

At Fort Sill, batteries of the 349th Field Artillery Battalion spent numerous weeks firing their 155mm howitzers at long-range targets before the unit was divided into smaller components (Harris 1941).

At Fort Dix, members of the 372nd received extensive training in the field and on the firing ranges throughout much of 1941 before participating in the 6th Corps' New England maneuvers along with the 366th Infantry Regiment (*Cleveland Call & Post* July 26, 1941). After returning to Fort Dix, the 372nd was assigned a 1st Army defensive mission under the Eastern Defense Command and was transferred to Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, and Fort Huachuca, Arizona, serving as a temporary rotational unit with the mission of training personnel as infantrymen. After brief stints at Schofield Barracks and other garrisons in Hawaii, the unit returned to the United States in October of 1945 (Anonymous 1945:22-26).

In September 1943, the 761st Tank Battalion at Fort Hood, Texas, added M-4 Sherman tanks to the unit inventory. The unit also added a company equipped with M5A1 light tanks. Less than a year later, the unit was alerted for overseas movement and set sail from New York Harbor for France before moving on to where the 3rd Army led by General George S. Patton was stalled at Metz (Wilson 1982: 30-31).

## Race, Labor, and War: The Employment of Black Troops in the African, Pacific, and European Theaters

Black soldiers and prominent black leaders soon discovered that receiving an overseas assignment was a battle in and of itself. As black servicemen continued combat instruction, Army officials struggled to place them in overseas theaters. Much of this struggle was due to the unwillingness of foreign governments and theater commanders to accept black troops. In early 1942, the Governors of British West Indian possessions and Atlantic possessions rejected the War Department's request to station black troops on American bases located in those areas, arguing that the presence of well-clothed and well-paid black soldiers would disrupt their colonial authority (Palmer 1983:59-62). Australian authorities informed the War Department that African Americans would not be welcomed in their territory (Saunders 1987:39-46; Saunders 1994:325-341; Potts and Potts 1985; Barnett 1977).

In April 1942, a War Department decision to deploy black troops to the British Isles was rescinded and replaced by one allowing for the assignment of only service units after the British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and others called for limits to the number of black troops assigned to Britain (Smith 1987:38-39; Hachey 1974:66-77). Even the Governor of Alaska, Ernest Gruening, contested the presence of black troops. He stated his belief that mixing of black personnel with Native Americans and Eskimos would be unacceptable.

Although Secretary Stimson and members of the Operations Division were determined to move black troops overseas, the War Department basically adhered to a policy of sending African American soldiers only to countries where they would be accepted by the general population (Stimson May 12, 1942). In the countries where black troops were accepted, some theater commanders canceled their requests for additional personnel when they learned that only black units were available. South Pacific Theater Commander, Lieutenant General Millard F. Harmon argued in 1943 that logistical problems and transportation difficulties placed a premium on receiving the most effective troops. Some commanders, such as Southwest Pacific Theater Commander, General Douglas MacArthur, felt that black troops could be assigned to their areas if they were placed in zones away from population centers. Consequently, the movement of black troops to overseas theaters was precarious. By May 1942, only 15,679 black troops were deployed overseas with another 23,000 projected for overseas locations (Lee 1966:428-433; Buchcanan 1977).

The military was concerned in early 1942 that Japan might isolate Australia. To prevent this tactic, the 24th Infantry Regiment and the all-black 76th and 77th Antiaircraft units were sent immediately to New Hebrides and Guadalcanal. Once

the danger subsided, the men worked as service support troops, loading and unloading ships, guarding air bases, and building roads. They remained at New Hebrides and Guadalcanal until elements of the unit were assigned to perimeter defense duty on Bougainville Island in March 1944 (Stanton 1984:204).

In another move to limit black troop involvement overseas, the 2nd Cavalry Division arrived in North Africa early in 1944 only to learn that the unit was to be immediately disbanded and transformed into labor units, unloading ships, repairing roads, and driving trucks. Some of troops were disappointed by the War Department's decision; others expressed relief at not having to go into battle. In the months that followed the breakup of the 2nd Cavalry Division, the War Department circulated a survey among former division members asking them if they preferred to be placed in action or remain in their service jobs. The survey revealed that only 27 percent of the men chose combat. What the War Department survey failed to realize, however, was that the attitudinal responses of the black 2nd Cavalry Division members had more to do with bouts of racism within their own ranks than anything else. One veteran, who recalled the racial dynamics in the unit during the period, stated, "we spent too much time hating and fighting our officers to have much energy left for the Germans" (Rose 1947:26-31).

The events surrounding the 2nd Cavalry Division's disbandment reflected the War Department's position of converting as many black troops into service units as possible (e.g., Reddick 1949:9-29; Johnson 1992). Facing growing criticism from various sectors of African American society over the Army's use of black troops in combat zones overseas, the newly created Advisory Committee on Negro Troop Policies met in early 1943 to discuss the issue. Formed in August of 1942 and headed by Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy, its members included Brigadier General Benjamin O. Davis, Sr. of the Inspector General's Office; Truman Gibson, Jr., Civilian Aide to the Secretary of War; and the directors of personnel for the Army Air Forces, Army Ground Forces, and Army Service Forces. After discussing the situation, the committee recommended to Secretary of War Stimson that "Negro combat troops be dispatched to an active theater of operations at an early date." In the opinion of the committee, "such action would be the most effective means of reducing tension among Negro troops." Stimson, however, decided to ignore the committee's recommendation and agreed with his staff's recommendation to convert the remaining Cavalry outfit into a service corps (Stimson January 27, 1944). Stimson and other staff members based their secret decision on other plans that would release white soldiers for front-line duty in combat and technical jobs (Stimson January 27, 1944). But when New York Congressman Hamilton Fish publicly asked Stimson why black combat units were being converted and why the War Department had not committed black troops to

front line duty in the 26 months following Pearl Harbor, Stimson replied that "it so happens that a relatively large percentage of Negroes inducted into the Army had lower educational classifications and many of the black units had been unable to efficiently master the techniques of modern weapons" (Stimson, March 6, 1944). After facing a firestorm of criticism from the black press, black leaders, and national protest groups, Stimson and other War Department officials were forced to devote more attention to the problem of committing black troops to combat areas overseas (*Chicago Defender* March 4, 1944a and b; *Cleveland Call & Post* March 4, 1944; *Norfolk Journal and Guide* March 18, 1944; Johnson 1944). By the end of February of 1944, the McCloy Committee had convened at Stimson's request and recommended that the Operations Division commit black Infantry, Field Artillery, and other units into combat (Advisory Committee in MacGregor and Nalty 1977: Volume 5:326-331). A week later, Stimson, McCloy, and other directors of the War Department's agencies met to discuss the Advisory Committee's recommendation and decided to commit some of the units of the 93rd Division, then entering the Southwest Pacific Area, into combat as quickly as possible. They also agreed to create a regimental combat team of selected men from the 92nd Division and deploy it in future theaters of operations (Stimson March 6, 1944). As many scholars such as Richard Dalfume have demonstrated, "like the drafting and assignment to units, the commitment of Negroes to combat was a reaction to pressure rather than the planned fulfillment of a need" (Dalfume 1969a:96-97).

Upon arriving in the Solomon Islands at the end of February 1944, the men and units that constituted the 93rd Infantry Division were assigned to various locations. Members of the Division Headquarters, 25th Infantry, and a wide assortment of Field Artillery, Medical, and Service battalions debarked at Guadalcanal. Men in the 368th Infantry, the 594th Field Artillery Battalion, and several attached medical and engineer companies landed at the ports of Banika in the Russell Islands Group and Vella Lavella Island. The all-draftee 369th Infantry, the 595th Field Artillery Battalion, and several detachments settled in at New Georgia in the central Solomons. There all units underwent jungle training and performed labor details at docks, warehouses, and supply dumps before moving on to relieve elements of other units advancing toward the Philippines (Historical Section, 93rd Infantry Division 1946:5-6).

It was on these islands during the spring and summer months of 1944 that the majority of the 93rd servicemen received their first taste of war. At Bougainville, battalions and companies of the 25th Regimental Combat Team clashed with Japanese troops while performing numerous reconnaissance and combat patrol missions along the Numa-Numa Trail and the Laruma River. During this period, the men of the 25th marched through knee-deep mud and rain that typified the

banyan tree-covered jungle terrain, protecting lines of communication and securing trails beyond the American defense perimeter. This work was hazardous and exposed the 25th to continuous Japanese fire. As a result, several of the men received commendations and promotions for their actions. Members of the 93rd's 593rd Field Artillery Battalion, led by Lieutenant Colonel Joe B. Phillips, earned a special commendation from Brigadier General William C. Dunckel, the Americal Division Artillery Commander for the accuracy of their howitzer fire and for their efficiency in constructing positions (Boyd 1945). At New Georgia and the Russell Islands, elements of the 369th and 368th Infantry Regiments carried out security patrols against Japanese troops and helped stabilize hostile areas against enemy sea and airborne attacks. Following these initial combat experiences, the elements of the 93rd were brought back together briefly on Morotai Island during the spring of 1945 before components of the 368th and the 369th were assigned as security forces on New Guinea, Biak, and Mindanao. On Morotai, Jack C. McKenzie, Alfonzonia Dillon, Stanley Nakanishi, and other patrol members of the 93rd Headquarters navigated the rugged terrain surrounding the Tijoe River to hunt down and capture Colonel Kisou Ouchi, the highest-ranking Japanese officer taken prisoner during the Pacific War (93rd Infantry Division Files 1945; Boyd 1945).

Components of the 24th Infantry Regiment performed service support duties on Guadalcanal from March to August 1943 while several of its battalions were ordered to Bougainville to unload ships, work supply dumps, and engage enemy forces. In February of that year, men in the 24th's First Battalion, attached to the U. S. 37th Division, moved forward to reinforce the American Defense Perimeter and to cut the Japanese communications and supply lines on the island (Martin 1944). Led by Henry McAllister, a native of Hamburg New York, the 1st Battalion assaulted enemy positions several thousand yards from the friendly lines. During the action, Chicago, Illinois, native Alonzo Douglas was credited with being the first African American infantryman to kill a Japanese soldier in the Pacific War (Kluckhohn 1944). The activities of the 24th's First Battalion were significant in that they represented the first time black infantrymen had engaged enemy forces during the war. Of the unit's action, 14th Corps Commander, General Oscar W. Griswold concluded, "Although this battalion has in the past been employed largely on labor duties to the detriment of its training, its work in combat here has progressively and noticeably improved" (e.g., Cronin 1951; Miller 1959; Muller 1972).

Men of the 24th Infantry's First Battalion returning to labor and guard details for the South Pacific Base Command and the Guadalcanal Island Command until they were ordered to Saipan and Tinian in the Marianas in late 1944 for garrison duty. As many of the men soon discovered, a posting to the Marianas was hardly a routine assignment. On Saipan the men conducted daily patrol missions against Japanese-

infested caves, bunkers, and "pillboxes" (machine gun emplacements) after they were given the assignment to clear the islands of enemy forces who refused to surrender. Their performances during this period earned each man a Combat Infantryman's Badge and a battle star. During the summer of 1945, the 24th left Saipan and Tinian for the Kerama Islands, west of Okinawa where it continued daily patrol missions. At the Kerama Islands, the 24th accepted the first formal surrender of a Japanese Army Garrison after the suspension of hostilities (Lee 1966:533-535).

In July and August of 1944 in the other World War II theater of operations, George Patton's 3rd Army and Courtney Hodges' 1st Army chased the Germans across France after defeating them at the Normandy Peninsula. The rout had taken American planners by surprise, for few of them thought that the enemy would collapse so quickly and completely. Supplies in massive dumps in the rear areas of advancing U. S. forces, were now needed immediately as Patton and Hodges prepared to open new offensives east of Paris. Allied tank units needed nearly 1 million gallons of gas per day. By late August, the logistical requirements that Patton's and Hodges' tanks posed to the Advance Section planners in the Communications zone gave rise to the Red Ball Express. This group consisted of black drivers, infantrymen, and mechanics in several quartermaster and transportation companies and battalions. Between late August and early November, the men of the Red Ball Express traveled from Cherbourg and St. Lo, France, to points east, moving more than 410,000 tons of gasoline, ammunition, and food to the American Army and covering more than 120 million ton-miles. By the end of the offensive, the Red Ball Express had supplied the 3rd and 1st Armies at the rate of 3.5 tons a minute and had contributed greatly to the liberation of northern France (Hara 1989:6-9). For their efforts, all of the truckers received the Bronze Star (Aldridge 1945:10). Years later Chester Jones, a soldier who served in one of the trucking units during the period, recalled "When General Patton was breaking through and running all over the place, it was the Red Ball Express that kept him supplied. Our truckers did a fantastic job driving with those slits, cat-eyes as we called them, at night loaded with high octane gas and all kinds of ammunition and explosives. Our speed was thirty to forty miles an hour no matter what the weather, and we drove every night" (Motley 1975:188). But things didn't go well all the time. Fatigue took its toll on the soldiers; accident and injury rates skyrocketed as truckers tried to maintain their high rates of tonnage delivered, (Hara 1989:9; v. Bykofsky and Larson 1957).

Many all-black units still did not receive combat assignments. The 99th Fighter Squadron had been declared combat-ready in September 1942 and placed on active duty status at Oued N'Ja, an isolated and uninhabited area near Fez, Morocco; but the War Department did not intend to use the squadron in battle. William

Hastie's abrupt resignation of his post as Civilian Aide to the Secretary of War in 1943, Liberia's reluctance to accept the 99th, and the Allied invasion of North Africa forced the Army to deploy the black fliers against the Germans and Italians in June of 1943 (Rhodes 1991:28-29). When the men arrived in French Morocco in April of 1943, they moved to Fardjouna on Cap Bon and were placed under the command of the 12th Air Force's 33rd Fighter Group. Many of the men felt that the white fliers treated the 99th as a joke and tended to ignore them during meetings discussing combat assignments. Spann Watson, one of the lieutenants who received his orders that fateful day, recalled a briefing:

We were to fly over to the 33rd Fighter Group base and be loaded, briefed and checked out for the mission to Pantellaria. The briefing was almost over when we got there. And I remember this obviously bigoted redneck was talking in this long Southern drawl, and he looked up at us and said, "y'all boys keep up." That was all the briefing I got before I went to war. So, brother, I kept up (Paszek 1977:138).

During the squadron's combat mission over the island of Pantellaria in the Mediterranean Sea on June 2, 1943, the men of the 99th performed admirably. The squadron, led by G. W. Dryden, withstood heavy enemy fire from the German Messerschmidts. Charles B. Hall, from Brazil, Indiana, shot down the unit's first enemy plane — a German FW-190 (Shaw 1943:13). Later that month, the 99th was transferred to the operational control of the 324th Fighter Group where they flew patrol and escort missions between Tunisia and Sicily and supported landing operations. For their efforts, the men earned a share of a Distinguished Unit Citation given to each squadron in the 324th Fighter Group (Ferguson 1987:27).

Army officials, however, were unimpressed with the performance of the black aviators. The 33rd Fighter Group Commander William W. Momeyer reported to Major General Edwin J. House's 12th Air Support Command Headquarters, "the 99th Squadron, instead of pressing home the attack against the bombers, allowed themselves to become engaged with the 109's. The unit has shown a lack of aggressive spirit that is necessary for a well-organized fighter squadron." Momeyer went on to criticize Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., the squadron's commander, for requesting that the 99th be removed from combat for 3 days during the Sicilian operations because of fatigue. The black pilots, he claimed, were far short of the average of 70 sorties flown by white pilots in the fighter group during the 9-month period (Lee 1966:454). The 12th Air Support Commander, Major General Edwin J. House shared Momeyer's view and proposed taking the P-40 planes away from the 99th and having the squadron assigned to the Northwest African Coastal Air Force where the unit would perform coastal patrol missions. As a consequence, Army Air

Forces Commanding General Henry "Hap" Arnold recommended that with President Roosevelt's approval, the 99th be removed from combat and placed in a rear echelon area, thus releasing white fighting squadrons for overseas movement. Two months later, Colonel Davis, was relieved of duty and ordered to return to the United States where he was assigned to command and train the all-black 332nd Fighter Group (Osur 1977:48-51; *Atlanta Daily World* October 10, 1943).

Black pilots saw the matter quite differently. Of the controversy surrounding the 99th's performance, Davis remarked years later, "the only measure applied to the 99th was the number of aircraft it shot down. That was not a good measure of the P-40, which was more of an air-to-ground machine" (Rhodes 1991:28). In his testimony before the War Department's Advisory Committee on Negro Troop Policies, Davis argued that although the 99th faced certain handicaps, its performance was neither better nor worse than white P-40 squadrons who went into combat. He defended his request for time off for his men, contending that his unit had operated for nearly 2 months without receiving replacements and pointing out that the 99th had only 26 pilots compared with nearly 35 in white units. He stressed the importance of an experienced cadre to facilitate the expansion of the 99th, adding, "I never saw a cadre in the Army Air Corps ... we were on our own." After commenting on the stamina and training conditions of the men, Davis answered charges that African Americans lacked aggressiveness in battle by stating, "I carried out my mission — if given a mission to bomb a target, I went ahead and bombed it." After listening to Davis' testimony, John J. McCloy and other Advisory Committee members decided to adopt a "wait and see" policy and suspended Arnold's decision to pull the 99th out of combat. Davis' assessment of the unit's improvement was vindicated in January 1944 when the squadron, under the leadership of George S. ("Spanky") Roberts, had effectively aided a besieged Allied landing force by downing nearly a dozen German planes over Anzio. As a result of their efforts, the 99th pilots earned yet another Distinguished Unit Citation. Emboldened by the squadron's progress, the War Department and the Army Air Forces decided to send the 332nd overseas to join the 99th in action. The officials also decided to implement the plan for an all-black medium bombardment group and its components. By the end of the war, the 99th and three squadrons of the newly organized 332nd Fighter Group (composed of the 100th, 301st, and 302nd) had successfully completed over 500 dive bombing and strafing missions and over 15,000 sorties. Additionally, the men escorted bombers deep into Germany, never losing a bomber assigned to them (Nalty 1986:152-153; Harris 1985:27-31). One pilot later recalled, "even though the 332nd was not integrated, the air force command in Italy considered us tops, and each one of us officers, and enlisted men as well, felt this. We did our job and we did it well. If there is ever an example of the fact that black men do not have to have white leadership, the 332nd is the proof" (Motley 1975:215).



The 477th Fighter Group fought a battle on a different front. In April of 1945, the 477th was conducting training at Selfridge Field, Michigan, when 19 black officers in the unit were arrested for trying to enter an officer's club after some of them were told by the base commander Colonel William L. Boyd that they were not welcome on the premises (*Politics* June 1944). Conditions at Selfridge were such that one soldier stationed there at the time commented, "Generally the conditions here are not improved and the morale of the pilots and enlisted men is at a low ebb as a result of the Post Commander telling them that they would not be allowed in the officers club" (Brown 1944). He went on to observe, "in the south, this thing could be excused on the grounds of state laws, but in Michigan, it only serves to undermine the morale of the men stationed here" (Brown 1944). To avoid an explosive racial situation, the Army Air Forces relieved and reprimanded Colonel Boyd and transferred the unit to Godman Field, Kentucky, where it remained until it was joined by returning 332nd pilots to form the 477th Composite Group (Osur 1977:52). By transferring the 477th from Selfridge to Godman Field, the Army Air Forces merely transplanted its racist policies to a more familiar locale (Osur 1977:52). Although the men of the 477th were told that they would be placed in action against Japan, the war ended before the group was given the opportunity (Osur 1977:52; cf. Gropman 1975).

Upon arriving at Naples, Italy, in early August 1944, members of the 92nd Infantry Division faced similar circumstances. After reporting to the 4th Corps' 1st U. S. Armored Division, elements of the 92nd's 370th Regimental Combat Team participated in seizing the Arno River and occupying the town of Lucca before cracking the Gothic Line on the southern slope of the Northern Apennines. The 92nd's 598th Field Artillery Battalion used its 12 105-mm howitzers with uncanny accuracy to deliver the needed fire for the rapidly advancing infantry battalions. In pursuit of the rapidly retreating German forces, the unit continued its advance along the Serchio Valley north of Pescia, capturing control of Highway 12 along Lima Creek and reaching Lima in the process. In October, the infantrymen, led by 92nd Division Commander Edward Almond, became a part of Task Force 92. Elements of the unit ventured northwest across the ridges of Mount Cauala to capture the city of Massa only to encounter fierce enemy resistance after 6 days of costly fighting. The treacherous terrain and steady counterattack fire from strongly fixed German fortifications required African American soldiers to pay a heavy price for their role in the Mount Cauala-Mount Castiglione Offensive of the 5th United States Army (Adjutant General's Office 1944-45; Hargrove 1985:11-26; Orgill 1969:35-36; Wellver 1946:333-339). Most of the men spent a great deal of time pinned down under enemy fire. "We made seven assaults in ten days before we were finally taken off of Hill California," Charles Brown, a veteran who served in the 370th later recalled. "During that period we were pretty well slaughtered and reduced to a fair-sized

single platoon" (Motley 1975:272-273). Another soldier echoed Brown's sentiments and stated:

Our situation on the mountain was as bad as it could be. Our position on the mountain was exactly face-to-face with the Germans. The only thing separating us was a mound of rock. We could almost toss cigarettes back and forth, to give you an idea of the proximity. We knew their position and they knew ours. We knew exactly when their mortars were going to lay down a barrage and they knew when ours were going to do likewise. Nobody had ever gotten half way along that mountain path without getting clobbered, and we had the casualty list to prove it. They, too, had learned a lesson the hard way. The Germans appeared to have settled for this Mexican stand-off. Not our command, they kept calling to throw us into that meatgrinder. We tried at night, in the rain, in fog, and paid for it (Motley 1975:284).

The 92nd's Commanders used the unit's problems, which were common to all inexperienced units, to reinforce reservations they had regarding the fighting abilities of black soldiers as well as to compensate for poor staff planning. The division's acting Inspector General Charles Welch filed a report claiming wholesale retreats in disorder and alleging the disappearance of key platoon leaders and noncommissioned officers during the unit's encounter with enemy fire. Instead of retraining the soldiers, Commander Almond court-martialled, demoted, and transferred many of them. Almond described the 370th's activities in late October 1944 in the following manner; "during this action the enemy resistance was stiff and well organized and in consequence the Negro units exhibited serious combat deficiencies; such as mass hysteria, lack of pride of accomplishment, lack of trust, exaggeration of danger, enemy strengths and capabilities, loss of equipment and failure to employ basic combat principles in training" (92nd Infantry Division July 2, 1945). The views of the 92nd Division Commander were echoed among his staff officers. In a late November meeting with Major Oscar J. Magee of the Army Service Forces' Intelligence Division, 92nd Chief of Staff William J. McCaffrey stated "although there had been many examples of individual heroism on the part of Negro officers and soldiers in the division", it was his "belief that the Negro is panicky and that his environment hasn't conditioned him to accept responsibilities" (92nd Infantry Division November 22, 1944, December 6, 1944). During this meeting, a section chief expressed his dislike for his assignment with black troops, stating, "I don't trust Negroes. White officers who work with them have to work harder than with white troops. I have no confidence in the fighting ability of Negro soldiers" (92nd Infantry Division November 22, 1944, December 6, 1944).

The officers in the 92nd high command failed to ask themselves the question of whether the soldiers had been given all the tools necessary to accomplish their tasks. This important factor was not missed by many of the 92nd Division members. Major Clark, a young Second Lieutenant from Tulsa, Oklahoma, who served in the one of the division's field artillery battalions during the period, recalled, "in Almond's command of the 92nd Division, racist assumptions and political considerations were paramount in every major decision. Black officers were considered inferior, and therefore limited to lower grades" (Clark May 18, 1992). Another soldier, Charles Brown, believed the immediate blame should have been placed on the Army staff system. "After days of futile assaults," he recalled, "Major Wren phoned Colonel Sherman and told him Hill California was as formidable as was first reported by us; that it was a major obstacle which required coordinated support: planes, tanks and artillery and that an infantry company could not possibly take that mountain. Ten days and seven assaults later, headquarters decided we were not lying and goofing off on the job" (Motley 1975:273). Another 370th soldier echoed Brown's assessment when he observed, "things became a befuddled mess" (92nd Infantry Division October 17, 1944). From October 1944 to May 1945, more than 1,800 court-martials were held and nearly 1,500 officers and enlisted personnel were transferred out of the division as the unit was reorganized (Kesting 1987:9).

The lack of trust that existed between Almond and his staff officers and the unit's black officers and enlisted men revealed itself in the 92nd's subsequent combat assignments. During the winter of 1944, the 370th, and its newly arrived sister components (the 371st Infantry and the 365th Infantry) advanced to seize Castelnuovo in the Serchio River Valley area while holding the coastal line south of Massa. They were joined by the all-black 366th who relieved the 365th. The 366th had spent 8 months guarding Army Air Forces bases in southern Italy before being assigned to the 92nd. Split into two sectors, the 370th attacked over 3 miles of rather difficult terrain only to be turned back by hostile enemy fire. Meanwhile, the 365th and the 371st performed platoon and company attacks against strongly entrenched enemy positions along the southern Massa coastal line. These attempted advancements bore little success due to low unit morale and poor staff planning. The casualty lists for the 92nd's actions dramatically illuminated these deficiencies; 5 officers and 152 enlisted personnel were killed, 14 officers and nearly 300 enlisted men were wounded, and 153 black personnel were reported missing in action (Kesting 1987:10).

The difficulties of the 92nd Division continued well into the next year. By March 1945, the limited, yet deadly, struggles of the 365th and the 366th Infantry Regiments to improve their positions in the Serchio Valley near Viareggio and the division's costly advance across a heavily mined area to capture the Cinquale Canal

on the 8th of February led to 5th Army Commander Mark W. Clark's decision to again restructure the 92nd Division. Under Clark's plan, the 366th was withdrawn to the Viareggio area where it was designated an engineer general service outfit in reserve areas behind the 442nd Infantry Regiment (an all-Japanese American unit). The 370th was reconstituted with the division's best officers and placed back in the line of battle. The men of the 365th and the 371st occupied defensive positions south of Viareggio as replacement troops. The new division was now composed of the 442nd, which was made of Japanese-Americans, and the 473rd, a white unit consisting of retrained antiaircraft artillery men (92nd Infantry Division July 2, 1945; Hargrove 1985:5-6; Lee 1966). Clark's move was significant for it represented the Army's first steps toward integrating the armed forces. For many veterans who served in the 366th, it came at a tremendous cost; the practical dissolution of the unit. Willard A. Williams, a soldier who was with the 366th during the period, stated, "More than half of the men of the 366th had been killed or wounded in action, but the fighting of our regiment was discredited so miserably that on March 14, 1945 at Bottinaccio, Italy, it was deactivated as a combat regiment and converted into two service units. A more devastating blow could not have been dealt this group of soldiers who were proud of their outfit and their contribution to winning the war. We were completely shattered. As far as I was concerned, this ended the history of the 366th, which had been written in blood in the mountains of northern Italy" (Motley 1975:344). Colonel Howard Queen, Commanding Officer of the 366th Infantry before being relieved in late 1944, stated, "General Almond may have succeeded in decimating the ranks of 366th and wounding their pride, but he never destroyed their self-respect" (Motley 1975:340). The newly constituted 92nd Division continued its operations along the Ligurian Coast until the German Forces in Italy surrendered on 2 May 1945.

Although most African American servicemen encountered racist discrimination in the European and Pacific Theaters the military exploits of all-black troops during did not go unnoticed. In the Ardennes, three battalions of black artillery men distinguished themselves during the German counteroffensive of December 1944. In the siege of Brest, the all-black 333d and 969th Field Artillery Battalions, under the control of the 8th Corps Artillery, reinforced the fire of the 8th Division during its attack on the Crozon Peninsula (*Field Artillery Journal* April 1946: Davidson 1944:9-10). The 969th, commanded by Einar Erickson, provided indirect fire for the 90th Division and occupied defensive positions near Rennes. In the Bastogne-Houffalize area, the 969th Field Artillery group helped to hold off German forces that sought to encircle Bastogne. The group endured seemingly endless bouts of dwindling ammunition and alarmingly high casualty rates. The men in the outfit earned the Distinguished Unit Citation. Taking notice of the unit's unswerving dedication, 101st Airborne Commander Major General Maxwell D. Taylor wrote:

The officers and men of the 101st Airborne Division wish to express to your command their appreciation of the gallant support rendered by the 969th Field Artillery Battalion in the recent defense of Bastogne, Belgium. The success of this defense is attributable to the shoulder to shoulder cooperation of all the units involved. This division is proud to have shared the battlefield with your command (Lee 1966:644-651).

The performances of black armored units also earned commendation. The 761st Tank Battalion was overflowing with confidence when it entered France. The tanker troops had just completed their training at Camp Hood, Texas, where they had earned the praise of Second Army Commander Ben Lear and had been greeted enthusiastically by 26th Division Commander, Major General Willard Paul, upon their arrival in Europe. The unit had scarcely been in Europe a week when General George S. Patton told them:

Men, you're the first Negro tankers to ever fight in the American Army. I would never have asked for you if you weren't good. I have nothing but the best in my Army. I don't care what color you are, so long as you go up there and kill those Kraut sonsabitches. Everyone has their eyes on you and is expecting great things from you. Most of all, your race is looking forward to you. Don't let them down, don't let me down (Anderson 1945:15, 21).

A week later, the black tank unit was committed to combat south of Metz. Spearheading the attack for the 26th Division, the 761st spent 183 days in action in France, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Germany, and Austria as both a separate tank battalion and as detachments with the 26th, 71st, 79th, 87th, 95th, and 103rd Infantry Divisions and the 17th Airborne Division (Wilson 1982:30). Many of their engagements resulted in great losses in personnel and equipment. The battalion was instrumental in supporting the 104th's attack and capture of Vic-sur-Seille, Moyenvic, and Benzange-la-Petite, but lost many tanks and 18 men during its storming of the town of Morville-les-Vic, largely as a result of the well-camouflaged German pillboxes that were concealed by the newly-fallen snow. The day before the battalion's initial encounter with the enemy, the 761st lost its commander to a mishap at Arracourt, France. Nevertheless, their performances of November 1944 won them special commendation from General Paul who cited the speed with which they adapted themselves to the front line under the most adverse weather conditions (Lee 1966:666).

In December, the black tankers participated in the taking of Bonnerue, Recogne, Remagne, and Pironpie in Belgium and at Steinbach in Luxembourg. The unit

distinguished itself in a 5-day battle with the 15th SS Panzer Division near Tillet, Belgium, in January 1945. In March, the unit took town and broke through the vaunted Siegfried Line, paving the way for Patton's Armored Division thrust to the Rhine River. The unit earned a well-deserved Presidential Unit Citation more than 30 years later (Johnson 1981:18-19). The tankers of the 761st, attached to the 95th Division in 16th Corps, moved 140 miles to Jabeek, Holland, where they participated in capturing End and cutting the Roermond-Julich Railway at Milich, crossing the German Border less than a month later. The 761st linked up with Soviet forces at the Enns River near Steyr on 6 May 1945 (Wilson 1982:31).

## Summary

In summary, the wartime contributions of African American soldiers reflected the War Department's strict adherence to segregation and indifference to black manpower and the self-organizational efforts of black soldiers to maintain their dignity under the most adverse circumstances. But many black soldiers realized they were fighting a three-front war. The first involved a struggle against fascism. The second was the battle they waged against racism at home and within the Armed Forces. The third was the everyday battle that was were both aided and hampered by disputes within the African American community over the image of the soldier. The stateside training facilities and the overseas embarkation points are critical to the African American experience in World War II for they provided the physical as well as the psychic spaces in which black soldiers struggled to resolve these conflicts. The struggles that black soldiers waged took on special significance after the war when the Army began its uneven movement toward integration prior to the Korean War, and the American society began to recognize its class oppression and racism.

## 9 Victory and Context: Recognition of African American Contributions to American Military History



*After World War II, decorated black veterans received a hero's welcome in their hometowns — followed by the realities of continuing racial discrimination.*

## 9 Victory and Context: Recognition of African American Contributions to American Military History

by Steven D. Smith, Keith Krawczynski, and Robert F. Jefferson

### The Integration of the Armed Forces 1946-1954

#### *Post-War Reassessment*

After World War II, many black soldiers gathered on the docks of embarkation points in the Pacific and European Theaters to return home. One can only wonder what was going on in their minds. Most of the soldiers had grown tired of Army life and were eager to see their loved ones. But other matters also occupied their thoughts. As they boarded the transport ships heading home, many knew that they were returning to racial shibboleths, Jim Crow lines, and daily humiliations. They wondered whether their struggles in the Army had changed America. "As I disembarked stateside I knew good and well I was coming back to the same kind of racism I left, separate and unequal," claimed 332nd veteran Alexander Jefferson (Motley 1975:226). Another soldier echoed Jefferson's sentiments when he recalled, "I was in the service about four years. And no, I most certainly was not naive enough to believe there would be any racial changes for the better upon my return to the states, and I was right" (Motley 1975:236). On the other hand, upon his return home to Decatur, Illinois, E. J. Wells, a Sergeant in the 365th Infantry Regiment, expressed his "hope that some changes had been initiated. But arriving in Decatur, I found nothing had changed. We blacks still had to sit upstairs in the theaters and we were still refused service in many places" (Motley 1975:236).

Landing at numerous gangplanks and reporting to camps scattered throughout the country, most of the returning black veterans probably had the same immediate experience as Isaac Woodard — a hero's welcome in their hometowns followed by the realities of racial discrimination. During a trip from Fort Gordon, Georgia, to his home in North Carolina in early 1946, Woodard, a Pacific War serviceman, was accosted, arrested, and beaten by law authorities in Aiken, South Carolina, after he was accused of public drunkenness. During his arrest, a policeman thrust his nightstick into Woodard's eyes, causing permanent blindness (*Cleveland Call & Post*



August 3, 1946 a and b). African American protest organizations such as the NAACP and a coterie of black newspapers publicized the incident and even President Harry S. Truman denounced the action. That a veteran in a United States uniform could be subjected to such indignities did not escape the attention of black servicemen (Kluger 1976:298). Upon hearing what had happened to Woodard, Wabasha Minnesota native Nelson Peery, who served in the 93rd Infantry Division's 369th Regiment, remarked, "there was work to be done. We [black soldiers] still had a mission — more difficult than the last one and more urgent" (Peery December 9, 1994). Another observer mused aloud, "will the government that sent us thousands of miles away to death and suffering, give those who survived, the same protection all of its citizens are constitutionally entitled to?" (*Cleveland Call & Post* August 3, 1946c). Many black veterans translated these feelings into action when they returned to their hometowns. In 1946, former World War II veterans organized to fight for fair treatment under the G.I. Bill of Rights in Atlanta, Georgia (McGuire 1975:200-201). In April 1946, more than 400 veterans, under the leadership of Detroit, Michigan, native Coleman Young, John O. Killens, and District of Columbia native George B. Murphy met in Chicago, Illinois, to form the United Negro and Allied Veterans of America, an interracial organization to address the needs of all returning servicemen (Townesley 1946:1; *Cleveland Call & Post* June 15, 1946). Other veterans staged voting rights demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama, during the early 1950s, preceding the civil rights struggles that would take place later in the decade (McGuire 1975:200-201).

Within the armed services, time was finally running out for segregated military units. The military establishment once again began the process of evaluating the performance of black troops with the purpose of establishing future policies. The civil rights movement in America, the treatment of Private Woodard, and the record of blacks in the war influenced many in the armed forces that segregation needed to be rethought. The need for more efficient use of manpower finally convinced the upper echelons of the Pentagon to work toward integration. The impetus was not the social aspects of the racial problem. (Prum 1964:26).

Within the Army, two reviews of black soldier performance were initiated at the war's end. A questionnaire was sent to senior commanders by the Assistant Secretary of War, John McCloy 2 weeks after the end of the war in Europe. The other review was conducted by Truman Gibson, Civilian Aide to the Secretary. Both pointed out that the performance of the two black divisions was generally unacceptable (MacGregor 1981:137). Gibson noted that the many officers believed that the source of the problem was segregation. The McCloy questionnaire indicated that the commanders wanted to keep segregation, but in small units (MacGregor 1981:138). Commanders favored breaking down all-black units into smaller sizes

and filling them with better qualified men. But civil rights leaders saw segregation as the fundamental problem. With these two views in conflict, McCloy recommended that a board of general officers be formed to study and prepare a revised Negro policy (Ansel 1990:18; MacGregor 1981:143). McCloy's recommendation was passed on to the new Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson.

On 1 October 1945, the Gillem Board, named after its chairman Lt. General Alvan C. Gillem, Jr., met for the first time and was charged to "prepare a policy for the use of authorized Negro manpower potential during the postwar period including the complete development of the means required to derive the maximum efficiency from the full authorized manpower of the nation in the event of a national emergency" (Memo quoted from MacGregor 1981:153). The board interviewed some 60 witnesses, studied the McCloy questionnaire, reviewed the Navy's partial integration policies, and reviewed a mass of other documents by 17 November 1945. The board's report, entitled "The Utilization of Negro Manpower in the Postwar Army," came just short of recommending full integration, basing its eighteen recommendations on two principals:

- (1) the Constitutional right of the Negro American to enjoy the privileges and share the responsibilities of citizenship, and
- (2) the obligation of the Army to make the most effective use of every individual in the military structure (Gillem Report quoted in Belknap 1991:165).

One important recommendation was to use qualified individuals in appropriate overhead and special units. This recommendation was one of the first to break the segregation barrier (Ansel 1990:22; MacGregor 1981:156). Another recommendation was that surveys of manpower needs at various installations include suggestions of where Negroes could be employed, thus opening up new opportunities for Negroes. The all-black Army division was eliminated. Small all-black units were still recommended as policy, but they were to be grouped with white units and work along side and within larger white units. Black platoons were consolidated into white companies, black companies consolidated into white battalions and black battalions into white regiments. The board also recommended that qualified black officers be accepted into the Regular Army and that opportunities for advancement be improved. Importantly, the board set no limits on the number of black officers to be trained nor recommended that these officers be assigned only to black units (Ansel 1990:19-21; MacGregor 1991:156-157). The 10 percent ratio of blacks to whites in the Army was maintained. Though the Gillem Board fell short of full integration and was a disappointment to many Civil Rights leaders, it took an

important step in the right direction. The Army Air Forces, soon to be the United States Air Force, generally followed the steps taken by the Army, while Generals James H. Doolittle and Follett Bradley called for the total abolishment of racial segregation (Nalty 1986:233-235).

The Navy moved toward integration at full speed. In fact, during the last year of the war, the Navy began integration in specialist and officer schools, in the Waves, and in recruit training centers (MacGregor 1981:166). In February of 1946, Secretary of War James Forrestal ordered the end of racial segregation in the Navy (Prum 1964:26). This policy was implemented through Chief of Naval Operations Circular Letter No. 48-46 reading "Effective immediately, all restrictions governing types of assignment for which Negro naval personnel are eligible are hereby lifted. Henceforth, they shall be eligible for all types of assignments in all ratings in all activities and in all ships of the naval service" (Quoted in Prum 1964:26). While the policy had been changed, the practice was still years to come. But the precedent had been set.

Resistance to integration was strongest within the Marine Corps. A smaller, tighter organization socially and bureaucratically, the tradition of an all-white force was stronger. The Marines had been forced to accept African Americans with Roosevelt's Executive Order No. 8802 in 1941 and the Corps had broken their 167-year tradition. After the war, opportunities for whites who wanted to stay with the Corps were very small, and there was much reluctance to include blacks in the ranks (MacGregor 1981:170-175; Shaw and Donnelly 1988:47-55). The Navy's policy change and the Army's review of policy increased the pressure to either integrate or provide separate but equal facilities. On 26 September 1946 the Marines "called for the enlistment of 2,264 blacks, 264 as stewards, the rest to serve in separate units, chiefly in ground security forces of the Fleet Marine Force in Guam and Saipan and in Marine Corps activities of the Naval shore establishment" (MacGregor 1981:174).

Despite the steps taken by all the services to increase efficiency, which increased opportunities for African American service people, the general result was a modified form of segregation. These results fell short of the desires of civil rights advocates across the nation. They believed that segregation and separate but equal treatment had to end through the actions the top leaders of the country. President Harry Truman was in position to take that step.

Truman (who was known to use the derogatory word for Negro in casual conversation) and others recognized that the United States had just ended a war against racism, but racism continued at home. Truman also was aware that his actions would affect the upcoming election (Nalty 1986:236-237). Two strong factions arose

within the Democratic Party at their annual convention. One pushed for adoption of a sweeping civil rights platform. The other faction of southern delegates was furious and walked of the convention to form the Dixiecrat Party. Truman, sympathetic to the civil rights platform, wanted a compromise but his advisors saw the split as an opportunity. As President and Commander-in-Chief, Truman could take executive action for equal rights and establish a firm hold on the black vote in the upcoming election. On 26 July 1948, Executive Order 9981 proclaimed the end of racial segregation within the armed services (MacGregor 1981:309; Nalty 1986:242; Prum 1964:27-28).

The policy did not immediately change attitudes or end segregation. But the Executive Order, more than any previous actions, established the long chain of events eventually leading to the end of segregation within the armed services (Belknap 1991). Opportunities had to be created. Qualified individuals had to be found and trained. Old attitudes had to be changed. All this took years to accomplish — through the 1950s and 1960s. Much of the change occurred outside of the armed services, but Truman's order, and those that came after, pointed the armed services in the right direction. Truman's order also signaled the end of the all-black military unit.

### *Korea and Beyond*

North Korean troops pushed into South Korea in 1950 to begin the bloody police action that would take some 140,000 American lives. Although military integration was in progress, the services still had all-black units. The most famous of the combat units was the 24th Infantry, whose performance in Korea may have helped to speed the integration process. Many individuals acted heroically, but overall performance of the unit was subpar (Donaldson 1991:141-149; MacGregor 1981:436-437). Integrated units were performing much better. The investigation of the actions of the 24th lead to a unanimous recommendation: integration. On 1 July 1951, the 24th Infantry was deactivated, ending a proud tradition dating back to the Indian wars (MacGregor 1981:444).

Full integration and equal opportunity for African Americans in the military would not come for many more years. Even after the war, all-black service units still existed. Other units in which 50 percent or more of the soldiers were black were also considered "segregated" under the Army's definition. On 30 October 1954 the Secretary of Defense announced that the last of these units had been abolished (MacGregor 1981:473).

Resistance to military integration continued throughout the 1950s and 1960s. But progress in integration continued and as the results proved positive, the military's experiences helped to shape civilian social policy. American servicemen of the 1950s became a positive if indirect cause of racial change in American society. By demonstrating that large numbers of blacks and whites could work and live together, the men destroyed a fundamental argument of the opponents of integration and made further reforms possible if not imperative (MacGregor 1981:614).

### **Historic Context: Themes and Sites**

As stated in Chapter 1, the goal of a historic context is to group historic properties that "share similarities of time, theme, and geography" (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the National Park Service 1989:7). The previous chapters have concentrated on reviewing the chronological or "time" aspect for the historic context "The African American Military Experience." This section describes the thematic and geographic aspects for this historic context. The following discussion outlines how this is accomplished.

During the course of the overview, certain themes have become apparent that encapsulate trends and components of the African American military experience. These themes recognize that blacks in the United States armed forces faced the additional challenge of racial segregation, which affected all aspects of their participation. Furthermore, these themes are more or less consistent throughout the long history of the African American military experience. African American military units contributed in all major conflicts in which the United States was involved, either at home or abroad. In doing so, they left their mark on the American landscape. Therefore, in the discussion of the various themes below, an attempt has been made to identify sites and structures that might be associated with the themes. These sites and buildings are the "geography," of the historic context, and with additional survey and evaluation may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. In the following discussion, lists of sites and buildings come wholly from documents, a survey instrument, and telephone conversations. The discussion usually does not offer any specific information regarding the status of the identified sites. The lists are incomplete. It is hoped that the following discussion will cause cultural resource managers at military installations to instigate the necessary investigations to complete this work.

The themes generally fall into one of two large elements. One set of themes is largely societal. That is, they deal with the changing relationship between blacks

and whites in American history and how these relationships were reflected in and influenced military policy. The second set of themes is chronological, recognizing that segregated African American units played a role in every major United States conflict. It is important to highlight both these elements and to attempt to recognize sites and buildings associated within each period of American military history.

Themes highlighting military policy include: (1) U.S. military policy and African American Soldiers; (2) African American resistance to racist policies; (3) the military as a leader in societal change; (4) support from the African American community; and (5) the martial spirit of African American Soldiers.

Themes highlighting the history of African American contributions to military history follow the time line established in the historic overview and include: (1) African American units and soldiers before the Civil War; (2) African American units and soldiers in the Civil War; (3) Buffalo Soldiers (1865-1897); (4) African American soldiers from the Spanish American War to 1917; (5) African American soldiers in World War I; and (6) African American units in World War II and Korea.

### ***U.S. Military Policy and African American Soldiers***

It is very clear from the historic overview presented in previous chapters is that the racial attitudes of American society were reflected in and strongly influenced United States military policy toward African Americans. Without doubt the experience of African Americans in the military paralleled the experiences of African Americans in civilian life.

History is replete with examples of these parallel experiences. For example, it can be argued that blacks were more integrated into society in colonial times than in antebellum times though they were slaves in both periods. Blacks often fought side by side with whites in militias and good service sometimes meant freedom. Slavery was found both in the North and the South, but the frontier aspect of colonial America required closer cooperation between the races. During antebellum times, blacks were more harshly treated, and institutionalized racism was rampant, which is reflected in the exclusion of blacks from the Army. During the Civil War, blacks were excluded from serving in the Army until the North's goals changed to include emancipation of slaves. Then blacks were allowed to participate though military leaders usually saw them only as laborers (slaves) and resisted their introduction into the battleline. Training and training facilities were subpar. When eventually they reached combat, blacks in the front lines received inadequate equipment and provisioning, poor leadership, and often lower pay with little or no opportunity for

advancement. Policies and traditions were against the black officer, and resistance of white soldiers being led by black officers was strong.

The black units were disbanded and only four regiments of blacks existed after the Civil War. These Buffalo Soldiers were sent to the west away from large centers of white population. Reflecting the Jim Crow policies of the late 19th century, radical racism and lynching was seen in the military. Later military leaders worried about the increasing number of blacks in the military. They eventually decided to limit the number of blacks in the military to 10 percent, reflecting the percentage of blacks in the general civilian population.

In every conflict from the War of 1812 to World War II, the military segregated black troops into all-black units, in keeping with the separate but equal policies evident throughout the United States. When blacks were allowed to carry arms, the military viewed their participation as experiments to see if they possessed the skills, intelligence, and martial spirit necessary for combat. The positive contributions of black soldiers were widely ignored, and their shortcomings were proclaimed as confirmation of their inferiority.

The military ended segregation after World War II. Experts note that this was primarily a result of the military finally realizing the inefficiency of having segregated units requiring segregated housing and facilities. But the problem of inefficiency had not ended segregation in the military before World War II. What had changed? One major element in the end of segregation was America's recognition of its own racist attitudes. During World Wars I and II, thousands of white and blacks were forced to work side by side to win. The soldiers saw that they all bled red. Another element was the shock of the strident racism of the Japanese and Nazis, which awakened America to its own race problems. These changes, combined with civil rights efforts, played on the minds and attitudes of military policy makers, eventually ending segregation. It is important to remember that the treatment and fortunes of the black soldier were directly influenced by the general treatment and fortunes of civilian blacks throughout American history.

Interestingly, though the obvious theme of segregation is seen throughout the African American military experience, sites and buildings related to this theme are difficult to highlight.

### ***African American Resistance to Racist Policies***

African American soldiers' response to discrimination and their search for equal treatment is a highly complex subject. Contemporary historians have minimized

accommodation by blacks, and instead, have underscored their resistant to prejudice in society. Black soldiers, like all African Americans, were acutely sensitive to unjust treatment. In fact, many felt the enemy was within their own ranks, forcing them to fight a war on two fronts: one against the country's enemies, and the other against racist military commanders and soldiers. This feeling eventually culminated in African Americans seeking a "Double V" victory during World War II: victory overseas and victory at home.

Overall, the response of African American soldiers to discriminatory military policies throughout American history reflected their status as citizens and their ability to overcome and resist. Prior to the Civil War almost all blacks were circumscribed politically, socially, and economically, allowing them very few opportunities to protest any mistreatment in the military. Black soldiers, who served only short stints during times of crisis, were in the same predicament. Not until the abolition of slavery in the North and the establishment of black self-help organizations (churches, newspapers, schools, anti-slavery societies) did blacks have the realistic opportunities to fight against civilian injustices (Quarles 1964:57).

These developments served to inspire and uplift all disadvantaged blacks to combat adversity and prejudice. African American soldiers reflected this new black man. The first organized protest among black soldiers against mistreatment occurred during the Civil War. Of all the injustices, the one causing the greatest outrage occurred over the lower salary blacks received from the Army. The 54th and 55th Massachusetts Regiment refused to accept any wage unless it was equal to the salary of white soldiers. Company A, 3rd South Carolina Volunteers went so far as to mutiny. Their leader, William Walker, was executed. A black artillery unit from Rhode Island serving in Texas also protested this injustice with similarly fatal results.

During the last quarter of the 19th century, Federal and state governments removed many of the political, economic, and social rights gained during the Civil War and Reconstruction, and separate but equal laws were instituted. The philosophy of blacks shifted from militancy to accommodation as their ability to protest was severely circumscribed. African American troops had little opportunity or power to fight against the numerous injustices because they didn't have adequate civilian support and were already spread thinly throughout the West. The only significant demonstration among black troops between Reconstruction and the Spanish-American War occurred in 1892 in Suggs, Wyoming, when Buffalo Soldiers responded to insults from civilians and prostitutes.



Increased urbanization among blacks around the turn of the century gave them large voting blocs and increased their ability to organize. This increased tensions between whites and blacks. The thinking of black leadership shifted from accommodation back to militancy with the creation of several national organizations devoted to African American progress. The behavior of black troops toward unfair treatment reflected this changed attitude. Protests increased during the Spanish-American War when the Army temporarily stationed black troops in or near urban centers in the Southeast before debarking for Cuba. The most violent protests occurred in the summer of 1898 between civilians and the 10th Cavalry in Lakeland, Florida, and 24th and 25th Infantry Regiments in Tampa. And soldiers belonging to the 6th Virginia State Volunteers refused to obey orders when the unit's black officers were replaced with white officers.

African American soldiers became even more aggressive against perceived injustices during the first decades of the 20th century. The 24th Infantry Regiment was involved in several incidents with civilians in various south and west Texas towns — Brownsville (1906) in which 160 soldiers from the regiment were discharged; San Antonio (1911); Del Rio (1916); Houston (1917), and the execution of 13 alleged participants at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio after a perfunctory trial. Civilians stationed in southern cities during World War I also protested civilian mistreatment. The most serious of these occurred at Camp MacArthur in Waco, Texas, where black troops exchanged shots with local police.

Black troops continued to resist unfair treatment during World War II. The most widely publicized of these incidents involved the 80th Construction Battalion in Trinidad, West Indies, in July 1943; black stevedores at Port Chicago (San Francisco) a year later; and black Marines on Guam in the summer of 1944. Winfred W. Lynn protested the military's segregation policy by refusing to report for induction. His celebrated trial convinced many military officials that blacks would no longer tolerate disparate treatment. Minor incidents occurred at Camp Van Doren, Mississippi; Camp Stewart, Georgia; March Field, California; Fort Bliss, Texas; Camp La Luis Obispo, California; Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky; Freeman Field, Indiana; Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and Port Hueneme, California. Altercations between black soldiers and military police occurred at bases throughout the South Pacific, Australia, and England.

### ***The Military as a Leader In Societal Change***

United States military policy regarding African Americans generally reflected society at large. But at times it was on the cutting edge of social reform and occasionally took the lead in ending discrimination and granting blacks increased

opportunities and advancement. These opportunities began during the War of 1812 when Major Vincent Populus of the New Orleans 1st Battalion of Free Men of Color and Major Joseph Savary of the New Orleans 2nd Battalion of Free Men of Color became the first African Americans to hold field rank in the United States Army.

This progress toward equality increased rapidly during the Civil War and has continued, albeit in cycles, ever since. In fact, the Civil War provided African American soldiers many opportunities to show that they deserved equality in treatment. The Army allowed black soldiers to attain officer rank in considerable number for the first time. After a struggle lasting more than 3 years, blacks also received pay equal to that of white troops. This was quite a significant achievement at a time when black civilians were rarely allowed to work in the same occupations as whites, much less receive equal pay. Abolitionist Union officers set up schools for black soldiers, providing them with an opportunity to help themselves later in civilian lives. The Navy, traditionally far ahead in equality of treatment in the military, entrusted blacks in responsible positions of engineer and pilots early on in the Civil War. In fact, blacks comprised nearly the entire crew aboard two Union vessels, the *Glide* and *Stepping Stone*.

Another major advancement occurred when blacks became a part of the regular peacetime Army during Reconstruction. The soldiers were relegated to segregated units but the military never again dissolved black troops *en masse* after the cessation of hostilities.

Relatively few blacks became officers prior to the Korean War. A few attained high rank. Charles Young, the third African American to graduate from West Point, rose to the rank of Colonel. He was in line to become the first African American Brigadier General during World War I, but the Army retired him because of poor health. Not until 1940 did a black, Benjamin O. Davis, rise to the rank of general. The Navy also commissioned 13 blacks (the "Golden Thirteen") during World War II. In November 1945 Frederick Bresh became the first black Marine to hold officer rank. Three years later Jesse Brown became the first black American to become a naval aviator in 1948.

Educational assistance to black soldiers began in the Civil War and continued into the Reconstruction period. At a time when blacks were barred from attending all but a few colleges, the military academies began accepting black students into their corps. The careers of these early cadets were marked with controversy and mistreatment, but barriers were being broken in the military that often weren't being broken in society. In 1877 Henry O. Flipper became the first black to graduate from West Point, while John H. Alexander became the second 12 years

later. In 1949, Wesley A. Brown became the first black to graduate from the United States Naval Academy, although three blacks attended the Academy in the 1870s — James H. Conyers and Alonzo McClennan of South Carolina, and Henry E. Baker of Mississippi.

The military's leadership in providing blacks greater opportunity and equal treatment continued during World War I when the Army began providing officer instruction for blacks at Fort Des Moines. The Navy and Marines established their own officer training school for blacks near the end of the World War II at Great Lakes Training Center, Illinois; Quantico Training Center, Virginia; and Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. The Navy also trained blacks in specialized occupations such as signal, aircraft maintenance, radioman at Hampton Institute and in Memphis, Tennessee. These changes resulted mostly from political and societal pressure, rather than from military preference.

More than a decade before the landmark desegregation case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954, the military was making strides toward integrating its forces. During World War II the Coast Guard (although not part of the Department of Defense) began training blacks at its Manhattan Beach training station for the first time and experimented with integrating vessels such as the *USS Sea Cloud* and *USS Hoquian*. The success of these two programs helped convince the Navy to begin integrating its fleet. The Navy created two predominantly black-crewed vessels — the *USS Mason* and *PC-1264* — enabling black sailors to prove themselves capable of performing all levels of naval duties. The Merchant Marine assigned the captaincy of a Liberty cargo vessel (the *SS Booker T. Washington*) to Hugh Mulzac — the first black to captain a merchant ship. Lieutenant Clarence Samuels commanded the Coast Guard vessel *Sweet Gum* in the Canal Zone. The Army Air Corps, too, made advancements at this time by accepting all-black squadrons into its force, training them at Chanute Field in Illinois and Tuskegee Airfield in Alabama. The military reserves accepted African American women into its forces for the first time during World War II. The Women's Army Corps, where officer training was conducted at Des Moines, Iowa, accepted 4,000 black women, including 120 officers. Two of these officers deserve special recognition: Major Charity Adams, who became supervisor of plans and training at the Des Moines training center; and Major Harriet West, who was chief of the planning bureau control division at WAAC headquarters in Washington. A few black women also attended the Women's Naval Training Station at Hunter College in New York.

Advancements increased at a rapid pace following World War II, forging the way for greater equality for blacks in the Armed Forces. Within a few years the Department of Defense (formerly the War Department) abrogated the all-black units, officially

desegregating the Armed Forces. As blacks were treated more as equals and provided increased opportunities, their advancement within the ranks corresponded accordingly. The best example of black achievement in the military was the 1989 appointment of General Colin Powell as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff— the highest military position in the Armed Forces.

### ***Support From the African American Community***

African American soldiers did not fight a lone battle for equal rights and opportunities. The experiences of black soldiers throughout United States history is inextricably linked with the African American civilian community. The black community, as well as many whites sympathetic to their cause, played a crucial role in every advancement of black soldiers. These civilians placed a great deal of pressure on Federal and local officials to correct injustices. Some of these victories include the formation of black units and equal pay for black soldiers during the Civil War. The cry of "no officers, no fight" from black civilians during the Spanish American War forced the Army to revise its policy of not commissioning black officers. Black leaders such as Joel E. Spingarn and W.E.B. DuBois fought for and won the right to establish a black officer training school at Des Moines, Iowa during World War I. And the Wilson Administration assigned Emmet Scott to serve as special assistant to the Secretary of War. Just before World War II, black civilians, lead by Walter White, A. Philip Randolph, and T. Arnold Hill put enormous pressure on President Franklin Roosevelt to create greater opportunities and equality for blacks in the Armed Forces. Roosevelt also assigned Judge William Hastie as a civilian aide to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson to coordinate policy on black troops; his subsequent resignation early in 1943 over War Department policies concerning blacks produced several changes in the Army's racial policy. Reports by Lester B. Granger (of the National Urban League) for the Navy helped create greater opportunities and equal treatment for blacks in that department.

Appendix A contains a list civilians who contributed to the progress for civil rights within the context of the military. Their homesites and work places may be appropriate locations for recognizing this theme.

### ***The Martial Spirit of African American Soldiers***

African Americans still eagerly served their country when called to arms. In fact, they demanded the opportunity to fight and prove their patriotism in the hope of gaining increased equality and opportunity after the conflict. This was a patterned response every time Americans entered a conflict. War would appear, African Americans would volunteer, be turned down, but eventually enter the ranks and

serve. Every time black soldiers were placed in the front lines, they understood their race was under scrutiny.

The significance of African American contributions in combat is an area that will continue to be debated and studied. Some units did performed poorly. But in these cases the cause was more often than not poor or inadequate training, poor equipment, and a lifestyle of prejudicial treatment that caused these soldiers to be unable to perform to their best ability. The Civil War provides many examples of racist treatment. Many blacks who entered or were forced to enter the armed services were slaves — malnourished, uneducated, and broken. They were usually given the worst equipment and in some cases indifferent officers. It is a marvel that they performed as well as they did. The record of African American Civil War soldiers is full of examples of great courage. Such enthusiasm resulted in successes on the battlefield and countless acts of individual heroism. This martial spirit is reflected in the accolades and achievements by black soldiers and units in which they served.

But the military reflected general society and ignored the lessons of the Civil War. The lessons were repeated again and again from the Indian wars to the Korean War — some regiments performed excellently and bravely and others fell short because of the lack of adequate training, education, and leadership. The military eventually learned the lesson: black units would fight well if properly trained and led, but blacks would fight best and most efficiently if integrated and treated equally in a color-blind military.

Sites and buildings associated with this theme are more easily recognized than the previous themes. Appendix B contains a list of black Medal of Honor recipients. Their homes and units could be recognized if they have not already been. Both the public and the Department of Defense have done much to recognize black individuals, units, and sites where they made significant contributions. In 1927, for instance, citizens of Chicago erected the Victory Monument, otherwise known as the "Black Doughboy Monument," saluting the 369th Infantry Regiment (which was formed from the Illinois National Guard). States that also had National Guard units fighting in France during World War I could erect similar monuments. Boston residents have erected a very large monument to Crispus Attucks and one to the 54th Massachusetts Regiment. More recently, the Army erected a monument to the Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and private citizens will erect a statue to the 5,000 black soldiers of the Revolutionary War on the Mall in Washington DC and a similar monument to the Tuskegee Airmen at the United States Air Force Academy. In 1920 the Federal government erected a statue to the 372nd Infantry Regiment south of Montheois, France, and one to the 371st 4 years

later near Ardeuil, France. Third, battlefields across the nation where African Americans fought still exist. It is beyond the scope of this project to list all the possibilities that might be pursued at the state level.

### ***African American Units and Soldiers Before the Civil War***

African Americans served in every major American conflict. The contributions made by blacks in colonial times were mainly as individuals integrated into militias and as laborers. In this capacity they were especially helpful in such wars as the Tuscarora War in North Carolina in 1711, and in the Yamasee War in South Carolina from 1715 to 1718. The French and Spanish militaries organized segregated units from which the black Louisiana regiments of the Civil War draw their heritage. During the Revolution, the British organized an Ethiopian regiment in Virginia. On the American side, Rhode Island and Connecticut created all-black units. It is likely that Massachusetts blacks organized a "Bucks of America" but little is known about them. Blacks also entered the Continental Navy where treatment aboard small sailing vessels was more equal than in the Army.

African Americans served in the U.S. Navy and rendered valuable service on Lake Erie during the War of 1812. New York raised an all-black unit. The most valuable contribution during the war may have been the two battalions of Free Men of Color at the Battle of New Orleans. U.S. military policy returned to its pattern of banning blacks from service in the Army during the antebellum period while there was unofficial use in the Navy. Some 1,000 blacks participated in the War with Mexico in an unofficial capacity.

Most military posts in the pre-Civil War era consisted of crude temporary structures, especially on the frontier where the units were frequently moved with the shifting frontier. Permanent brick or frame structures, such as coastal fortifications or Navy yards, still exist. Research has not revealed any military posts on Department of Defense land where black troops were stationed or were trained. (Goodwin 1992:1-3). Battlefield locations where blacks fought in this approximately 240-year period are most likely no longer owned by the Department of Defense. On the other hand, there have been some attempts by state and local officials to highlight the contributions made by African Americans during this period. Table 9.1 provides a summary of the known black units during this period, monuments related to this period, and national register sites.

Table 9.1 Pre-Civil War African American Units

Time Period	State	Unit
Pre-Revolution	Florida	4 companies, Saint Augustine Garrison, 1740
	Louisiana	Battalion of Free Men of Color, 1736 (Fort Tombeckee, Alabama)
Revolution, American	Rhode Island	First Rhode Island Regiment, July 1778
	Connecticut	6th Connecticut Battalion, June 1780
	Massachusetts	Bucks of America, Boston
	French West Indies	Volunteer Chasseurs, Santo Domingo, 1779
British	Virginia	Ethiopian Regiment, Norfolk, 1775
War of 1812, American	Pennsylvania	defensive company, designation unknown
	Louisiana	1st, 2nd Battalion Free Men of Color, New Orleans
British	Tangier Island	Black Marines, 1814

**Important Sites.** The following is an annotated list of selected monuments, museums, and battlefields that still exist that are related to the African American military experience.

**Home of Prince Goodin.** This parcel of land in Canterbury, Connecticut, once belonged to Prince Goodin, a free black who fought with the British against the French in the French and Indian War. He served at Fort William Henry, where he was captured and sold into slavery in Montreal. The French freed him 3 years later in 1760 when the British captured the city.

**Black Revolutionary War Patriot Memorial.** Located on the Mall in Washington DC, this monument is dedicated to the 5,000 African Americans who fought for American independence. It is to be erected by private organizations.

**Crispus Attucks Monument.** Though Attucks was not in the military, he is often recognized as a prominent figure in African American history, giving his life for liberty. Located at the Boston Massacre Site, this monument is part of the Freedom Trail.

Black Regiment Memorial, Rhode Island. This memorial honors the Rhode Island Regiment's participation at the Battle of Rhode Island. It is located west of Portsmouth on highway 114.

Great Bridge Battlefield Memorial. This memorial, located in Virginia, honors blacks who fought in this battle of 9 December 1775, helping convince General Washington to recruit blacks.

Jeff Liberty Grave. Located in Washington, Connecticut, this gravemarker erected by the Sons of the American Revolution, is in honor of an ex-slave, Jeff Liberty, who fought with an all-black Connecticut Regiment during the American Revolution.

Valley Forge State Park. Black soldiers were part of the bedraggled Continental troops who suffered through the winter of 1777 in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.

Site of the Battle of Rhode Island. Located in Portsmouth, this site, where blacks played a key role in this American victory, is now a National Historic Landmark.

Fort Ticonderoga. This site memorializes the battle in which Ethan Allen's Green Mountain Boys, many of whom were black (including Lemuel Haynes, Primus Black, and Epheram Blackman), defeated the British force.

Chalmette Battlefield. This site is part of the Jean Lafitte National Historic Park and is the location of the Battle of New Orleans. It is not known if the contribution of the Free Men of Color is recognized.

Lemuel Haynes House. Haynes was the first black clergyman to be ordained in America. He was also a member of the Green Mountain Boys.

### ***African American Units and Soldiers in the Civil War***

The trends in U.S. military policy, both official and unofficial, regarding African American participation in the ranks seemed to have been codified during the Civil War. First, there was official banning, followed by limited or unofficial experimentation, then active recruiting and organizing into segregated units. Following this sequence, African Americans established a record of mixed but overall valuable and brave service. In the end there was a general denial of African American contributions.



Most importantly for this context, the Civil War established the policy of segregated units. This policy would not change until the Korean War. Despite their overall lack of civilian skills such as reading, the state volunteer units and the United States Colored Regiments performed to the best of their ability despite poor treatment and inadequate training and equipment, and assisted the North in ending the war. It is fortunate that the increased interest in the Civil War in recent years has included an explosion of scholarship regarding the black Civil War soldier. This scholarly interest has dramatically increased the average American citizens' exposure to the remarkable history of the black soldier.

Sites and buildings highlighting the contributions of African Americans in the Civil War are much more numerous than the pre-Civil War period. Much of this has to do with the recent explosion of interest in the Civil War and the recognition by scholars and preservationists that African Americans played a significant role in battlefield victories. Furthermore, since African Americans participated in a large number of campaigns and battles, almost all state and Federal battleparks across the nation could recognize or have already recognized the contributions of black soldiers. As noted in Chapter 3, African American units participated in 251 battles. Table 9.2 lists the more prominent recruiting camps. Most sites associated with African American units in the Civil War are not on DoD land.

**Table 9.2 U.S.C.T. Draft and Recruiting Camps.**

State	Camp or Location	Regiments
Alabama	Decatur	106th Infantry (4th AL)**
	Selma	137th Infantry
	LaGrange	6th, 7th U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery (1st Ala. Siege Artillery)
Georgia	Atlanta	136th and 138th Infantry
Connecticut	Fair Haven	31st Infantry (30th and 29th CN)
Indiana	Indianapolis	29th Infantry (also Quincy, Illinois, (28th Infantry)
Iowa	Keokuk	60th Infantry (1st Iowa)
Virginia	Camp Casey	23rd Infantry
	Arlington	2nd Infantry
	Camp Hamilton	1st Cavalry

\* Most from Dyer 1908; Gladstone 1990:109.

\*\* Original unit designatiuon in parenthesis.

State	Camp or Location	Regiments
	Fort Monroe***	2nd Cavalry, 2nd Heavy Artillery Battery B
	Portsmouth	35th Infantry (1st NC see also New Bern), 36th Infantry (2nd NC)
	Norfolk	37th Infantry (3rd N.C.), 38th Infantry
New York	Hart's Island, NY City	31st Infantry
	Rikers Island, NY City	20th and 26th Infantry
Louisiana	Camp Holy Springs	64th Infantry
	Camp Parapet	95th Infantry
	New Orleans	1st, 2nd, 3rd LA Native Guards (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Corps D' Afrique), 95th through 97th Infantry (1st, 2nd, 3rd Corps D' Afrique Engineers), 4th Cavalry (1st Cav), 73rd t- hrough 76th Infantry (1st through 4th C.D'A.) 85th, 86th, 5th Engineers, 87th (13th through 16th C.D'A.), 1st Heavy Artil- lery (1st C.D'A. artillery)
	Lake Providence	2nd Brigade, 1st Division Infantry (8th LA), 48th Infantry (10th LA)
	Miliken's Bend	49th Infantry, 5th Infantry (1st MS)
	Madisonville	91st Infantry (19th Corps D' Afrique)
Missouri	Camp Jim Lane (Wyandot, MO)	1st Kansas Colored
	Benton Barracks	60th, 62nd Infantry, 65th, 67th 68th Infantry (2nd, 3rd, 4th MO)
	St. Louis	56th Infantry (3rd Ala.), 62nd Infantry (1st, 2nd Battalion MO)
Mississippi	Vicksburg	3rd Cavalry (1st MS), 4th and 5th Heavy Artillery (1st Heavy MS) 63rd Infantry (9th LA), 50th Infantry (12th LA), 52nd Infantry (2nd MS), 58th Infantry (6th MS)
	Natchez	5th and 6th Heavy Artillery (2nd Heavy MS), 70th and 71st Infantry
	Corinth	55th Infantry (1st AL)
	Hebron's Plantation	1 Brigade, Infantry (1st battery, LA)
	Black Bridge	2nd Light Artillery (2nd Battery LA)
	Warrenton	53rd Infantry (3rd MS)
Maryland	Camp Birney (Baltimore)	4th, 7th, 39th, 118th Infantry
	Camp Stanton (Bryanton)	9th, 19th, and 30th Infantry

State	Camp or Location	Regiments
Arkansas	Fort Scott	79th and 83rd Infantry
	Pine Bluff	2nd U.S.C. Light Artillery (1st AK Battery Light Artillery), 69th Infantry
	Fort Smith***	11th Infantry
	Little Rock	57th Infantry (4th AK), 112th and 113th Infantry (5th and 6th AK)
	Helena	2nd Light Artillery (3rd Battery LA)
Pennsylvania	Camp William Penn (Cheltam Township), Camptown Historic District, National Register Site.	3rd, 6th, 8th, 22nd, 24th, 25th, 32nd, 41st, 43rd, 45th, 127th Infantry and Independent Company (30 days)
Kentucky	Camp Nelson	5th, 6th Cavalry, 114th, 116th, 119th, 124th Infantry, 12th and 13th Heavy Artillery
	Columbus	4th Heavy Artillery (2nd TN Heavy)
	Paducah	8th Heavy Artillery
	Maysville	121st Infantry
	Henderson	120th Infantry
	Convington	72nd, 117th Infantry
	Louisville	107th, 108th, 109th Infantry, 100th (?)
	Bowling Green	115th Infantry
Kansas	Fort Scott	1st Colored Infantry
	Fort Leavenworth***	2nd Colored Infantry, Independent Battery
Ohio	Camp Delaware	5th, 27th Infantry
Massachusetts	Readville	54th and 55th Massachusetts, 5th Cavalry
Michigan	Detroit	102nd Infantry (1st MI)
Tennessee	Knoxville	1st Heavy Artillery, 3rd Heavy Artillery
	Nashville	9th Heavy Artillery, 2nd Heavy Artillery Battery A, 12th, 13th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 40th Infantry
	Pulaski	110th and 11th Infantry (2nd and 3rd AL)
	Memphis	3rd Heavy Artillery (1st TN Heavy Art.), Battery I, 2nd Heavy Artillery, 88th Infantry
	Chattanooga	42nd, 44th Infantry
	La Grange	59th and 61st Infantry (1st and 2nd TN)
	Gallatin	14th Infantry
Florida	Fernandina	21st Infantry (4th SC)

State	Camp or Location	Regiments
North Carolina	New Bern	1st North Carolina (35th U.S.C.T.), 14th Heavy Artillery (1st NC Heavy Artillery)
	Goldsboro	135th Infantry
Rhode Island	Providence	8th, 11th Heavy Artillery (14th CN Heavy)
Washington D.C.	Washington D.C.	1st Infantry
South Carolina	Hilton Head	34th Infantry (2nd SC) 21st Infantry (3rd SC), 2nd Heavy Artillery Battery G, 103rd and 128th Infantry
	Beaufort	33rd Infantry (1st SC), 104th Infantry

\*\*\* Currently owned by DoD.

***Important Sites.*** The following is an annotated list of selected sites associated with African Americans during the Civil War.

**Fort Pillow State Park.** This site near Henning, Tennessee, contains ruins of Civil War works, which are maintained. There is an interpretive center. It is a National Historic Landmark.

**Petersburg National Battlefield Park.** This park is the location of the Battle of Crater and Siege of Petersburg, where blacks played prominent roles in both. The park contains a museum and interpretive center on these two engagements.

**Port Hudson Siege Marker.** This site is located in Port Hudson, Louisiana. It is a National Landmark site.

**Folly Island, South Carolina.** This is the site of archaeological excavations of an abandoned cemetery of the 55th Massachusetts and 1st North Carolina (35th U.S.C.T.) by the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (Smith 1993). The site is now within a residential housing development.

**Fish Haul Archaeological Site.** This Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, site was the location of Mitchellville, a village of freed slaves. Many freed slaves entered the Army as contraband or U.S.C.T.s. It is a National Register site.

**Olustee State Historic Site.** Located in Olustee, Florida, this battle site is where the 8th United States Colored Troops and 54th Massachusetts engaged Confederates. The 8th U.S.C.T. lost over half its men in this fruitless engagement. It is a National Register site.

Richmond National Battlefield Park. This site is where nine black regiments participated in fighting around this city in 1864.

Fort Scott National Historic Site. Located at Fort Scott, Kansas, this is the site where the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry was raised. The unit was the first black unit to see action in war. The fort is restored to its 1840s condition and contains a museum with Civil War exhibit.

Robert Small's House. Located in the lowcountry town of Beaufort, South Carolina, this site was named as a National Historic Landmark in 1973.

Frederick Douglas House. This site is a National Historic Landmark in Washington DC.

Robert G. Shaw and 54th Massachusetts Memorial. This memorial was erected in 1897 at the entrance to Boston Common at Beacon Street and Park Street in Boston.

Black Confederate Memorial. This 20-foot obelisk was erected in 1894 in Canton, Mississippi, as a tribute to the black slaves who went to battle with Confederate forces.

Kentucky Military History Museum. Located in Frankfort, Kentucky, this museum has a special section devoted to black units recruited during the Civil War.

Camp Nelson Archaeological Sites. This series of archaeological sites in Jessamine County, Kentucky, contain the remains of Camp Nelson, a large recruiting camp for African American Soldiers. There is also a national cemetery at this location.

Fort Gaines. This site of the Battle of Mobile Bay (August 1862) is located in Mobile, Alabama.

Sulphur Trestle Fort Site. This site near Elkmont, Alabama, commemorates the stand by the 11th U.S.C.T. against General Nathan Bedford Forrest's attack. Later the fort was surrendered by Colonel J. B. Minnis after Forrest killed 200 and captured 800 soldiers of the 11th, 3rd Tennessee, and 9th Indiana Cavalry. Forrest had the fort burned. It is now a National Register site.

Battle of Helena. In July 1863, the 2d Infantry Regiment of African Descent fought here in Helena, Arkansas, to repulse a Confederate siege of the city.

John Mercer Langston House. This Oberlin, Ohio, site was the home of John Mercer Langston. One of Langston's achievements was as a recruiter for the 54th and 55th Massachusetts. The site is a National Historic Landmark.

African American Civil War Memorial. This memorial in Washington DC memorializes the 186,000 African American soldiers who fought in the Civil War. An unveiling ceremony was scheduled for March 1998.

### ***Buffalo Soldiers (1865-1897)***

Intense scholarship in recent years is resulting in the history of the West being rewritten. One area that has seen increased attention is the history of the U.S. Cavalry — especially the Buffalo Soldiers of the 9th and 10th Cavalry, and the 24th and 25th Infantry. Wherever there was a need for the United States Army in the West, Buffalo Soldiers participated in some capacity. While the performance of some African American regiments in the Civil War was subpar, the long outstanding performance of the Buffalo Soldier should have put an end to discussion of a black soldiers' ability to fight.

With this increased attention has come an effort to preserve and acknowledge the role of the Buffalo Soldiers. This has been a difficult endeavor because troops were stationed sparsely across the West in small garrisons, usually created in response to particular problems. The men did not construct permanent installations; they used logs, mud, or any other available materials. Consequently, most frontier posts had a short lifespan (Goodwin 1992: 23). Many of the forts where Buffalo Soldiers were stationed are on lands that no longer belong to the DoD. However, some major installations including Fort Huachuca, Arizona, and F.E. Warren AFB, Wyoming, have made significant efforts to preserve the memory of the Buffalo soldiers. Others locations are now state parks.

Tables 9.3 through 9.6 list forts and camps occupied by African American troops during their sojourn in the American West. When known, the authors have indicated those garrisons which also served as regimental headquarters (RH).

Table 9.3 Forts Occupied by the 9th Cavalry Regiment, 1865-1897\*

Site	Date
New Orleans, LA (RH)	9 Sept 1866-9 Mar 1867
Carrollton, LA (RH)	9 Mar 1867-27 Mar 1867
San Antonio, TX (RH)	Apr 1867-Jun 1867
Camp Stockton, TX (RH)	Apr 1868-9 Sept 1868 7 Jul 1867-Apr 1868
Fort Davis, TX (RH)	3 Oct 1868-21 Jan 1871
Fort Stockton (RH)	23 Jan 1871-16 Apr 1872
Fort Clark, TX (RH)	27 Apr 1872-23 Jan 1873 1 Jul 1875-19 Oct 1875
Ringgold Barracks, TX (RH)	7 Feb 1873-10 Jun 1875
Fort Union, NM (RH)	3 Dec 1875-15 Feb 1876
Sante Fe, NM (RH)	18 Feb 1876- 6 Nov 1881
Fort Riley, KS (RH)	8 Nov 1881- 14 Jun 1885
Fort McKinney, WY (RH)	17 Aug 1885- May 1887
Fort Robinson, NE (RH)	16 May 1887- 2 Apr 1898

\* (Schubert 1995:516-519).

*Detachments*

Fort Garland, NM  
 Fort Elliott, KS  
 Fort Hays, KS  
 Fort Quitman, TX  
 Fort Supply, OK  
 Fort McRae, NM  
 Fort Wingate, NM  
 Fort Stanton, NM  
 Fort Union, NM

Fort Lancaster, TX  
 Fort Duncan, TX  
 Fort Sill, OK  
 Fort Reno, NE  
 Fort Bayard, NM  
 Fort Duchesne, UT  
 Fort McKinney, WY  
 Fort Niobrara, NE  
 Fort Seldon, NM

Table 9.4 Forts Occupied by the 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1865-1897\*

Site	Date
Fort Leavenworth, KS (RH)	24 Sept 1866-5 Aug 1867
Fort Riley, KS (RH)	7 Aug 1867-17 Apr 1868
Fort Gibson (RH)	4 May 1868-31 Mar 1869 11 Jun 1872-5 Jun 1872
Camp Wichita/Fort Sill, OK (RH)	12 April 1869-5 Jun 1872 4 May 1873-27 Mar 1875
Fort Concho, TX (RH)	17 Apr 1875-18 Jul 1882
Fort Davis, TX (RH)	29 Jul 1882-11 Apr 1885
Whipple Barracks, AZ (RH)	20 May 1885-11 Jul 1886
Fort Grant, TX (RH)	22 Jul 1886-28 Nov 1886 27 Sept 1890-25 Apr 1892
Sante Fe, NM (RH)	Nov 1886-6 Dec 1888
Fort Apache, AZ (RH)	11 Dec 1888-21 Sept 1890
Fort Custer, MT (RH)	5 May 1892-Nov 1894
Fort Assiniboine, MT (RH)	21 Nov 1894-19 Apr 1898

\*(Most from Schubert 1995:517).

#### *Detachments*

Fort McKavett, TX	Fort Stockton, TX
Fort Arbuckle, KS	Fort Hays, KS
Fort Harker, KS	Fort Larned, KS
Fort Richardson, TX	Fort Verde, AZ
Fort Duncan, TX	Fort Bowie, AZ
Fort Cobb	Fort Thomas, AZ
Fort Lyon	Fort Dodge
Fort Supply, OK	Fort Griffin, TX
Fort Keogh, MT	Fort Bayard, NM



Table 9.5 Forts Occupied by the 24th Infantry Regiment, 1865-1897.\*

Site	Date
Fort McKavett, TX (RH)	1 Nov 1869-7 Aug 1872
Fort Brown, TX (RH)	1 Sept 1872-18 Jul 1873 30 Oct.. 1874-1 Jun 1876
Fort Duncan, TX (RH)	1 Aug 1873-15 Oct. 1874 19 Sept 1876-14 Dec 1876 11 Feb 1878-13 Mar 1879 3 Apr 1879-29 Apr 1880
Fort Clarke, TX (RH)	16 Dec 1876-9 Feb 1878 14 Mar 1879-2 Apr 1879
Fort Davis, TX (RH)	18 Jun 1880-15 Oct. 1880
Fort Supply, OK (RH)	16 Dec 1880-5 Oct. 1887 17 Apr 1888-1 Jun 1888
Fort Sill, OK (RH)	17 Oct. 1887-9 Apr 1888
Fort Bayard, NM (RH)	4 Jun 1888-19 Oct. 1896
Fort Douglas, UT (RH)	22 Oct. 1896-20 Apr 1898

\*(Most from Schubert 1995:518).

#### *Detachments*

Fort Apache, NM  
 Fort Grant, AZ  
 Fort Huachuca, AZ  
 Fort Ringgold, TX  
 Fort Duncan, TX  
 Fort Elliot, TX

Fort Stockton, TX  
 Fort Concho, TX  
 Fort San Carlos  
 Fort Thomas, AZ  
 Fort Bowie, AZ

**Table 9.6 Forts Occupied by the 25th Infantry Regiment, 1865-1897.\***

Site	Dates
New Orleans, LA (RH)	20 Apr 1869-May 1870
Fort Clark, TX (RH)	2 Jul 1870-6May 1872
Fort Davis, TX (RH)	26 May 1872-17 May 1880
Fort Randall, SD( RH)	29 Jun 1880-17 Nov 1882
Fort Snelling, MN (RH)	20 Nov 1882-23 May 1888
Fort Missoula, MT (RH)	26 May 1888-10 Apr 1898

\*(Most from Schubert 1995:519).

*Detachments*

- |                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Fort Hale, SD    | Fort Meade, SD       |
| Fort Quitman, TX | Fort McKavett, TX    |
| Fort Duncan, TX  | Fort Stockton, TX    |
| Fort Shaw MO     | Fort Bliss, TX       |
| Fort Custer, MO  | Fort Sam Houston, TX |
| Fort Keogh, MO   | Fort Gibson, OK      |
| Fort Buford, ND  | Fort Sill, OK        |

Four infantry units were eventually consolidated into the 24th and 25th Infantry. These units were the 38th, 39th, 40th, and 41st Infantrys. The 38th Infantry was briefly stationed in New Mexico and Kansas (garrisons unknown). The 39th Infantry was briefly stationed in Louisiana and Mississippi (garrisons unknown) before the consolidation. The 40th was stationed mostly in the Southeast (Table 9.7) and the 41st was stationed at Fort McKavett, Texas.

**Table 9.7 Posts and Regimental Headquarters for the 40th Infantry.**

Fort Kuston	Camp Distribution, VA
Fort Plymouth	Sullivan's Island, SC
Fort Goldsboro	Smithville, NC (RH)
Raleigh, NC (RH)	Castle Pinckney, SC
Fort Macon	Walterboro, SC
Fort Hatteras	Orangeburg, SC
Fort Fisher	Hilton Head, SC
Fort Caswell	

***Important Sites.*** The following is a list of known sites that are either DoD lands, state parks, have been recognized by the National Register, or at least have a historical marker.

**Battle of the Caves.** This site at Tortilla Flats, Arizona, commemorates a battle fought during General Cook's campaign to wipe out Apache bands in the mountains in 1872 and 1873. Black troops played a key role in capturing the Indians.

**Buffalo Soldier Monument.** This monument, recently erected at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, recognizes the contributions of the Buffalo Soldiers.

**Fort Bowie.** Located in Bowie, Arizona, this is a National Historic Site.

**Fort Davis.** Located in Fort Davis, Texas, this is an excellent re-creation of a frontier military post. Displays include a museum of restored living quarters, and a commissary.

**Fort Dodge.** In Dodge City, Kansas, the 10th Cavalry frequently used this fort as a base of operations during the Indian Wars of 1868 and 1869.

**Fort Douglas.** In Fort Douglas, Utah, this site was once the home of the 24th Infantry.

**Fort Grant.** This fort is located in Bonita, Arizona.

**Fort Huachuca.** Today Fort Huachuca is a major active military base. It has numerous buildings and sites related to African American soldiers, including the Buffalo soldiers, and contains exhibits on black military history in the West. Many of the 19th century buildings are still standing. A museum displays the role of the military in development of the Southwest.

**Fort Larned National Historic Site.** Buffalo soldiers were stationed at this fort during the Indian Wars of 1868 and 1869.

**Fort Leavenworth.** This modern military base was the home of the 10th Cavalry and is located in Leavenworth, Kansas.

**Fort Missoula.** This site in Missoula, Montana, was home of the 25th Infantry. The unit tested bicycles to replace horses. Twelve buildings remain from the historic fort, with permanent exhibits, including material related to the black bicycle corps.

Fort Concho. This fort near San Angelo, Texas, is the best preserved of all the Texas frontier forts, with 11 original buildings still standing. As home of the 10th Cavalry, there are exhibits on the fort's role in the frontier.

Fort Russell. Fort Russell is now called F.E. Warren Air Force Base. The Wyoming cantonment area contains many well preserved barracks and officers quarters buildings.

Fort Scott National Historic Site. This site is located in Fort Scott, Kansas.

Fort Shaw. This Montana fort was home of the 25th Infantry.

Fort Sill. Units of the 10th Cavalry and 24th Infantry served at Fort Sill in Lawton, Oklahoma.

Fort Union National Monument. This monument, located in Watrous, New Mexico, celebrates elements of the 9th Cavalry that were stationed here.

Fort Wallace. There is a roadside marker designating the site where this post once stood in Wallace, Kansas.

Fort Washakie Blockhouse. In Wyoming, this was at one time the headquarters for the 9th and 10th Cavalry.

Beecher Island Battlefield. This battlefield is located in Wray, Colorado. In 1868 the 10th Cavalry defeated Indians and rescued 50 desperate troops and scouts at this site. This action is regarded as a turning point in the Plains Indian Campaign. There is a memorial erected on the riverbank.

Archaeological Site 41HZ227. Near Sierra Blanca, Texas, is the site of a 10th Cavalry camp and a possible site where soldiers were ambushed by Apaches on 28 October 1880. It is a National Register Site.

Archaeological Site 41HZ228. Near Sierra Blanca, Texas, is a possible burial site of soldiers killed in the 28 October 1880 ambush. It is a National Register Site.

Archaeological Site 41HZ439. This site also located near Sierra Blanca, Texas, was the campsite of the 10th Cavalry. It is a National Register Site.

Bullis Camp Site. From 1877 to 1879, this site near Dryden, Texas, was the camp of the Black-Seminole Indian Scouts. It is a National Register Site.

### ***African American Soldiers From The Spanish American War To 1917***

The twilight of the Buffalo Soldier's long service in the West began with the Spanish American War. Eventually the four regular Army units — the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry — had their opportunity to fight overseas. On the San Juan Heights of Cuba, African American soldiers once again proved their bravery. But most of the state guard units and Immune Units never traveled out of the United States. Few saw combat.

Training and duties stateside for African American soldiers were very tense situations. For many years the only black troops stationed with whites were those Buffalo Soldiers in remote areas of the far West. Concentrations of black soldiers were being formed in the East, coinciding with the peak of racial tension as blacks reacted to the Jim Crow treatment at the turn of the century. Riots and lynchings resulted.

Opportunities for blacks in the Navy slowly decreased as black units were phased out after the Civil War. The blacks that stayed in the Navy were servants and cooks.

When the United States declared war against Spain in 1898, the Army was in desperate need of recruiting and training installations. Consequently, the War Department hastily established 29 temporary camps across the United States. The debarkation point at Tampa, Florida, and holding station in Chickamauga Park, Georgia, were the best known. After the war these camps were disbanded and never used again. Tables 9.8 through 9.13 list the encampments where black troops were either trained or stationed between 1898 and 1917.

**Table 9.8 Regimental Headquarters for 9th Cavalry 1898 to 1917.\***

Site	Date
Chickamauga Park, Georgia	23 Apr 1898-30 Apr 1899
Port Tampa, FL	2 May 1898-13 Jun 1898
Cuba	20 Jun 1898-14 Aug 1898
Camp Wikoff, NY	20 Aug 1898-27 Sep 1898
Fort Grant, AZ	5 Oct 1899-28 Jul 1900
Philippines	5 Oct 1899-28 Jul 1900 6 Oct 1900-20 Sep 1902 2 Jun 1907-15 May 1909 6 Feb 1916-31 Dec 1916
Fort Walla Walla, WA	24 Oct 1902-19 Oct 1904
Fort Riley, KS	23 Oct 1904-29 Apr 1907
Fort D.A. Russell, WY	15 Jun 1909-11 Mar 1911
San Antonio, TX	15 Mar 1911-9 Jul 1911
Douglas, AZ	13 Sep 1912-25 Dec 1915

\* (From Schubert 1995:516).

**Table 9.9 Regimental Headquarters for 10th Cavalry 1898-1917.\***

Site	Date
Chickamauga Park, GA	25 April 1899-14 May 1898
Lakeland, FL	16 May 1898-7 Jun 1898
Tampa, FL	7 Jun 1898-14 Jun 1898
Cuba	23 Jun 1899-13 Aug 1899 7 May 1899-24 Apr 1902
Camp Wikoff, NY	21 Aug 1898-6 Oct 1898
Camp Forse, AL	11 Oct 1899-29 Jan 1898
Fort Sam Houston, TX	4 Feb 1899-28 Apr 1899
Fort Robinson, NE	4 May 1902-1 Mar 1907
Phillippines	3 Apr 1907-15 May 1909
Fort Ethan Allen, VT	28 Jul 1909-5 Dec 1913
Fort Huachuca, AZ	19 Dec 1913-9 Mar 1916

\* (From Schubert 1995:517).

**Table 9.10 Regimental Headquarters for 24th Infantry 1898-1917.\***

Site	Date
Chickamauga Park, GA	24 Apr 1898-30 Apr 1898
Tampa, FL	2 May 1898-9 Jun 1898
Cuba	25 Jun 1898-26 Aug 1898
Camp Wikoff, NY	3 Sept 1898-23 Sept 1898
Fort Douglas, UT	1 Oct 1898-5 Apr 1899
Presidio of San Francisco, CA	7 Apr 1899-15 Jul 1899
Phillippines	19 Aug 1899-28 Jun 1902 24 Feb 1906-8 Feb 1908 1 Jan 1912- 14 Sept 1915
Fort Harrison, MT	16 Aug 1902-23 Dec 1905
Madison Barracks, NY	25 Mar 1908-28 Nov 1911
San Francisco, CA	14 Nov 1915-25 Feb 1916
Fort D.A. Russell, WY	28 Feb 1916-23 Mar 1916
Mexican Border	26 Mar 1916-5 Oct 1922

\*(From Schubert 1995:518).

**Table 9.11 Regimental Headquarters for 25th Infantry 1898-1917.\***

Site	Date
Chickamauga Park, GA	15 Apr 1898-6 May 1898
Tampa, FL	7 May 1898-6 Jun 1898
Cuba	22 Jun 1898-13 Aug 1898
Camp Wikoff, NY	22 Aug 1898-29 Sept 1898
Fort Logan, CO	3 Oct 1898-27 Jun 1899
Phillippines	31 Oct 1899-6 Jul 1902 17 Sept 1907-6 Sept 1909
Fort Niobrara, NE	27 Aug 1902-23 Jul 1906
Fort Bliss, TX	28 Jul 1906-12 Jun 1907
Fort Lawton, WA	5 Oct 1909-1 Jan 1913
Schofield Barrack, HI	15 Jan 1913-18 Aug 1918

\* (Schubert 1995:519).

**Table 9.12 Posts or Camps of State Volunteer Units During the Spanish American War.**

3rd Alabama	Mobile, Alabama
Companies A & B of 1st Indiana	Fort Thomas, KY
Companies A & B of 1st Indiana	Chickamauga Park, GA
3rd North Carolina	Camp Roland, Knoxville, TN
9th Ohio	Camp Russell A. Alger, Falls Church, VA
9th Ohio	Camp Meade, Middleton
9th Ohio	Summerville, SC
6th Virginia	Camp Corbin, VA
6th Virginia	Camp Roland, VA

**Table 9.13 Posts or Camps of State Volunteer "Immune" Regiments, Spanish American War.**

7th Volunteer Regiment	Lexington, KY
	Macon, GA
10th Volunteer Regiment	Lexington, KY
8th Volunteer Regiment	Fort Thomas, Newport KY
10th Volunteer Regiment	Augusta, GA

There are few locations where the contributions of African American soldiers have been recognized. However, many sites associated with the Western period and World War I also are associated with the Spanish American War. The following two sites are known historic sites.

Charles Young Home. Located in Xenia, Ohio, this is a registered National Historic Landmark.

Allensworth Historic District. Located in California along Route 43, this district recognizes Allen Allensworth, a chaplain in the Army, who served in the 24th Infantry.

### ***African American Soldiers in World War I***

The treatment of African Americans in the military during World War I was similar to their treatment during the Civil War with some significant differences. One difference was the influence of the draft. Although there was a draft during the Civil War, the Selective Service Act of 1917 did not exclude African Americans.



Discrimination was carried out by almost exclusively white draft boards. For instance, married black men owning their own farms were often drafted while young black men who worked on white farms were exempted.

African Americans in the Army during World War I saw greater opportunity for advancement. Blacks served in almost every branch except for the Aviation Corps. World War I also saw the opening of a black officers training center in Des Moines, Iowa. Segregated divisions were formed, increasing the number of blacks in the armed forces. Overseas, the black divisions had a mixed performance, but the causes were clearly due to segregation policies and treatment as opposed to lack of ability. This was proven by the excellent performance of blacks under French authority.

The following pages contain a list of military establishments where black troops were stationed during World War I. With the United States' entrance into World War I, cantonment construction became a critical factor in the war effort. The Army's expansion depended on an ability to shelter soldiers while training and organizing them. The War Department constructed thirty-two training camps, each capable of housing 40,000 soldiers. A remarkable number of these World War I camps (10 of 32) became permanent Army installations (Goodwin 1992: 29). These permanent sites are recognized with an asterisk.

**Camp Alexander**  
(Newport News, VA)

Pioneer Infantry Battalions: 801st, 808th, 813th, 816th.

Labor Battalions: 313th, 316th, 317th, 319th, 320th, 325th, 339th, 340th, 341st, 342nd, 343rd, 346th, 347th.

Engineer Service Battalions: 508th, 511th, 516th, 520th, 522nd, 543rd, 549th.

**Camp Beauregard**  
(Alexandria, LA, now on U.S. Forest Service land)

**African American Enlisted Men**  
1918

January	0	May	6	September	86
February	0	June	13	October	998
March	0	July	13	November	769
April	0	August	14	December	241

**Camp Bowie**  
(Fort Worth, TX)

**African American Enlisted Men**  
1918

September	310	November	1,671
October	2,808	December	1,354

**Camp Cody**

Infantry: 24th (2nd Battalion).

**African American Enlisted Men**  
1917

September	1	November	100
October	100	December	100
1918			
October	6	December	1

**Camp Custer\***

(Battle Creek, MI)

Labor Battalion: 324th.

Engineer Service Battalion: 536th.

African American Enlisted Men

1917

December 380

1918

January	383	May	926	September	1,702
February	142	June	1,427	October	2,033
March	161	July	827	November	1,053
April	180	August	3,670	December	295

**Camp Devens\***

(Ayer, MS)

Engineer Service Battalions: 519th, 520th, 534th, 537th.

African American Enlisted Men

1918

January	1	May	1,976	September	3,252
February	3	June	4,367	October	3,244
March	0	July	600	November	1,588
April	249	August	3,959	December	2,933

**Camp Dix\***

(Wrightstown, NJ)

Field Artillery: 167th F.A. Brigade (less 351st Field Artillery), 349th Field Artillery, 350th Field Artillery.

Pioneer Infantry Battalions: 807th, 811th, 813th.

Engineer Battalions: 541st, 542nd.

African American Enlisted Men

1917

September	671	November	1
October	642	December	0

1918

January	1,374	May	2,712	September	7,162
February	1,416	June	1,601	October	6,280
March	1,415	July	5,236	November	5,379
April	1,649	August	8,084	December	2,533

**Camp Dodge**

(Des Moines, Iowa, Now a National Historic Landmark)

Infantry Battalion: 366th (mobilizing).

Pioneer Infantry Battalions: 804th, 809th.

Officers Training School for African American Candidates.

African American Enlisted Men

1917

September 0      November 3,659

October 238      December 3,917

1918

January 4,905    May 6,378    September 6,802

February 3,636    June 3,184    October 4,682

March 3,697    July 6,772    November 3,867

April 3,597    August 7,354    December 2,053

**Camp Fremont**

(Palo Alto, CA)

African American Enlisted Men

1918

May 4    September 4

June 4    October 1

July 5    November 1

August 4    December 1

**Camp Furlong**

(Columbus, NM)

Infantry: 24th.

**Camp Gordon\***

(Augusta, GA, Now Fort)

Engineer Service Battalion: 514th, 516th, 517th, 518th, 527th, 528th, 539th, 548th, 550th.

Pioneer Battalion: 802nd, 804th.

Labor Battalions: 308th, 312th, 313th, 314th, 315th, 324th, 327th, 342nd, 345th.

African American Enlisted Men

1917

September 0 November 1,700

October 1,676 December 700

1918

January 3,936 May 8,793 September 6,624

February 820 June 7,078 October 5,769

March 3,574 July 6,962 November 5,123

April 5,154 August 10,494 December 1,944

**Camp Grant**

(Rockford, IL)

Headquarters: 183rd Infantry Brigade.

Infantry Battalions: 365th, 370th (demobilizing).

Machine Gun Battalion: 350th, (mobilizing for overseas).

Pioneer Infantry Battalion: 803rd.

Labor Battalions: 323rd, 329th.

African American Enlisted Men

1917

September 0 November 951

October 0 December 1,048

1918

January 1,041 May 3,543 September 10,124

February 1,159 June 3,285 October 13,898

March 3,081 July 5,769 November 12,851

April 7,865 August 6,026 December 6,595

**Camp Greene**  
(Charlotte, NC)

Labor Battalions: 344th-348th inclusive.

African American Enlisted Men

1918

January	4	May	1	September	7,142
February	2	June	1	October	14,336
March	1	July	87	November	8,012
April	37	August	5,875	December	4,59

**Fort Hancock**  
(Highlands, New Jersey)

African American Enlisted Men

1918

January	0	May	0	September	3,168
February	0	June	532	October	2,564
March	0	July	1,274	November	2,778
April	0	August	1,594	December	3,041

**Camp Hill**  
(Newport News, VA)

Labor Battalions: 306th, 308th, 309th, 310th, 311th, 312th, 313th, 315th, 318th, 319th, 322nd, 327th, 331st, 332nd, 334th, 336th, 337th, 338th, 343rd.

Stevedore Regiments: 301st, 302nd, 303rd.

**Fort Huachuca\***  
(Tombstone, AZ)

Cavalry Regiment: 10th.

**Camp Humphries**

(Alexandria, VA)

Service Engineer Battalions: 516th, 520th-524th inclusive, 540-550 inclusive.

African American Enlisted Men

1918

January	0	May	3,148	September	6,051
February	0	June	2,767	October	5,511
March	0	July	2,174	November	3,956
April	114	August	5,306	December	2,732

**Camp Jackson\***

(Columbia, SC, Now Fort)

Headquarters: 186th Infantry Brigade.

Infantry Battalions: 371st (mobilizing for overseas and demobilizing).

Engineer Battalions: 520nd, 524th, 534th, 536th, 546th.

Pioneer Infantry Battalions: 807th.

Labor Battalions: 305th, 309th, 321st, 328th, 329th, 330th, 331st, 335th, 346th.

Labor Companies: 301st-305th inclusive.

African American Enlisted Men

1917

September	15	November	1,017
October	2,642	December	2,266

1918

January	62	May	2,819	September	3,633
February	3,562	June	3,295	October	3,667
March	3,240	July	6,704	November	3,951
April	788	August	7,795	December	4,590

**Camp Kearney**

(Linda Vista, CA)

African American Enlisted Men

1918

November	4	December	1
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**Camp Lee\***

(Petersburg, VA, Now Fort)

Pioneer Infantry Battalion: 808th.

Labor Battalions: 304th, 320th, 321st, 323rd, 330th, 338th, 339th, 344th, 347th, 348th.

Engineer Service Battalions: 505th, 506th, 510th, 511th, 535th, 540th, 543rd, 547th, 549th.

African American Enlisted Men

1917

September 0 November 4,179

October 20 December 4,255

1918

January 4,899 May 1,919 September 7,433

February 5,772 June 4,740 October 6,637

March 4,230 July 8,988 November 5,663

April 477 August 6,303 December 5,455

**Camp Lewis**

(Washington DC)

This military installation held 400 Negro troops during the early part of the war.

**Camp Lewis\***

(Tacoma, WS, Now Fort)

African American Enlisted Men

1917

September 0 November 489

October 518 December 444

1918

January 862 May 61 September 880

February 425 June 75 October 566

March 21 July 14 November 537

April 11 August 1,093 December 250



**Camp Stephen Little**

(Nogales, AZ)

Infantry: 25th.

**Camp Logan**

(Houston, TX)

Headquarters: 185th Infantry Brigade.

Infantry Battalions: 370th (mobilizing for overseas), 24th (3rd Battalion).

African American Enlisted Men

1917

September	177	November	2,189
October	1,722	December	0

1918

January	2,555	May	0	September	0
February	2,516	June	0	October	731
March	0	July	0	November	734
April	0	August	0	December	746

**Camp MacArthur**

(Waco, TX)

Labor Battalion: 331st.

Infantry: 24th (1st Battalion).

African American Enlisted Men

1918

January	0	May	341	September	1,388
February	0	June	1,164	October	1,376
March	3	July	1,163	November	959
April	3	August	2,347	December	1,059

**Camp McClellan\***

(Anniston, AL)

Labor Battalions: 326th.

African American Enlisted Men

1917

September	0	November	99
October	0	December	140

1918

January	0	May	0	September	1,861
February	0	June	0	October	8,338
March	0	July	0	November	6,352
April	0	August	2,480	December	3,404

**Camp Meade\***

(Baltimore, MD, Now Fort)

Infantry: 368th.

Field Artillery: 351st (training and mobilizing for overseas), 325th F.A. Signal Battalion.

Headquarters: 184th Infantry Brigade (DHQ), 167th Field Artillery Brigade, 317th Train Headquarters and Military Police.

African American Enlisted Men

1917

September	0	November	2,154
October	0	December	3,336

1918

January	6,082	May	7,969	September	6,169
February	5,951	June	8,971	October	7,921
March	7,946	July	10,596	November	3,586
April	4,799	August	5,126	December	3,033

**Camp Merritt**

(Jersey City, NJ)

Headquarters: 184th Infantry Brigade.

Field Signal Corps: 325th (staging).

Infantry Battalions: 369th (preparing to embark).

Pioneer Infantry Battalions: 801st, 812th, 815th.

Engineer Service Battalions: 505th, 506th, 545th, 547th-550th inclusive.

Labor Battalions: 318th, 321st.

**Camp Mills**

(Long Island, NY)

Headquarters: 167th Field Artillery Brigade.

Field Artillery: 351st (staging).

Engineer Service Battalions: 515th, 532nd, 537th, 548th, 550th.

Pioneer Infantry Battalions: 802nd, 804th, 806th, 809th, 811th, 813th, 814th.

African American Enlisted Men

1918

January	0	May	50	September	2,044
February	0	June	636	October	748
March	0	July	636	November	1,476
April	0	August	673	December	1,472

**Norfolk, VA\***

(establishments in vicinity)

Engineer Service Battalions: 525th, 526th, 546th, 547th.

Pioneer Infantry Battalions: 803rd, 807th.

Labor Battalions: 316th.

**Fort Oglethorpe**

(Rossville, GA, Chicamauga Park)

Infantry Battalion: 366th (demobilizing).

**Camp Pike**

(Little Rock, AR)

Engineer Service Battalions: 508th, 512th, 523rd, 524th, 525th, 526th, 533rd.

Labor Battalions: 309th, 322nd, 334th, 335th.

African American Enlisted Men

1917

September	0	November	2,932
October	1,432	December	2,959

1918

January	1,955	May	11,288	September	9,484
February	3,229	June	10,014	October	11,267
March	5,479	July	9,381	November	10,399
April	5,205	August	9,504	December	5,363

**Fort Riley\***

(Junction City, KS, Now Fort)

Headquarters: 349th Machine Gun Battalion.

Trains: Trains (less the 317th Engineering), mobilizing for overseas.

Engineer Service Battalions: 529th, 530th.

Pioneer Infantry Battalions: 805th, 806th, 815th, 816th.

Labor Battalion: 325th.

African American Enlisted Men

1917

September 7      November 7

October 7      December 2

1918

January 2,707      May 2,050      September 9,459

February 2,661      June 3,706      October 9,134

March 2,454      July 9,765      November 7,576

April 2,671      August 9,969      December 3,974

**Schofield Barracks\***

(Oahu, Hawaii)

Infantry: 25th.

**Camp Sevier**

(Greenville, SC, parts still exist)

Labor Battalion: 321st.

African American Enlisted Men

1918

January 0      May 0      September 4,786

February 0      June 4      October 5,327

March 0      July 0      November 2,895

April 0      August 1,747      December 2,795

**Camp Shelby\***

(Hattiesburg, MS)

Field Artillery: 317th Trench Mortar Battery (demobilizing).

Pioneer Infantry Battalions: 805th, 806th, 816th.

Labor Battalions: 310th, 318th, 319th, 325th, 326th, 329th, 334th, 335th, 340th.

African American Enlisted Men

1918

January	0	May	307	September	3,378
February	0	June	115	October	2,332
March	0	July	1,469	November	1,536
April	49	August	2,225	December	1,779

**Camp Sheridan\***

(Montgomery, AL, Now Maxwell AFB)

National Guard: 9th Separate Battalion of Ohio.

African American Enlisted Men

1918

January	0	May	0	September	1,680
February	0	June	56	October	941
March	0	July	1,000	November	984
April	0	August	3,109	December	975

**Camp Sherman**

(Chillicothe, OH)

Engineer: 317th (mobilizing for overseas, and demobilizing).

Field Signal Battalion: 325th (mobilizing for overseas).

Train: 317th Engineer (mobilizing for overseas).

Infantry Battalions: 372nd (demobilizing).

Pioneer Infantry Battalions: 802nd, 809th, 813th.

African American Enlisted Men

1917

September	4	November	2,032
October	0	December	3,314

1918

January	3,521	May	2,819	September	6,070
February	3,933	June	3,777	October	7,817
March	2,414	July	3,695	November	7,868
April	2,219	August	5,884	December	3,779

**Fort Sill\***

(Lawton, OK)

A few Negro officers trained at this installation.

African American Enlisted Men

1918

January	1	March	1	July	2
February	1	April	1	August	2

**Camp Stuart**

(Newport News, VA)

Headquarters: 185th Infantry Brigade (less 369th Infantry), preparing to embark.

Engineer Service Battalion: 513th, 514th, 523rd, 524th, 532nd.

Pioneer Infantry Battalions: 815th.

Labor Battalions: 314th, 335th, 339th, 347th.

**Camp Stotsenburg**

(Luzon, Philippines)

Cavalry: 9th.

**Camp Taylor**

(Louisville, KY)

Machine Gun Battalion: 349th.

Trains: 317th Ammunition, 317th Supply, 317th Sanitation (demobilizing).

African American Enlisted Men

1917

September	0	November	15
October	0	December	34

1918

January	81	May	2,101	September	5,258
February	137	June	2,544	October	4,934
March	206	July	6,308	November	4,490
April	3,262	August	8,267	December	3,601

**Camp Travis\***

(San Antonio, TX)

Engineer Service Battalions: 507th, 509th, 513th, 531st, 537th.

Pioneer Infantry Battalions: 815th.

Labor Battalions: 322nd, 331st, 332nd.

African American Enlisted Men

1917

September 0      November 7,623

October 0      December 7,100

1918

January 3,964      May 5,790      September 7,139

February 1,645      June 5,111      October 7,065

March 1,414      July 8,067      November 2,929

April 5,301      August 7,765      December 3,120

**Camp Upton**

(Yaphank, NY)

Headquarters: 183rd Infantry Brigade, 366th Infantry Brigade.

Infantry Brigades: 184th (less 368th), 183rd (less 366th).

Infantry Battalions: 367th, 368th, 369th (demobilizing), 370th, 371st, 372nd (latter three staging).

Field Signal Battalion: 325th.

Trains: 317th Tr. Hq. and Military Police, 317th Ammunition, 317th Supply (preparing to embark), 317th Sanitary (staging), 317th Engineering (demobilizing).

Field Artillery Brigades: 349th, 350th, 317th Trench Mortar Battery.

Machine Gun Battalion: 349th.

Engineer Service Battalions: 509th, 512th, 513th, 514th, 527th- 531st inclusive, 534th, 535th, 536th, 539th, 540th, 542nd.

Pioneer Infantry Battalions: 803rd, 804th, 805th, 806th, 809th, 814th, 816th.

Labor Battalions: 307th, 312th, 321st, 323rd, 325th, 329th, 333rd, 344th, 345th.

African American Enlisted Men

1917

September 606      November 604

October 604      December 0

1918

January 3,345      May 4,431      September 4,833

February 3,351      June 2,657      October 3,072

March 3,409      July 7,193      November 2,289

April 3,591      August 7,721      December 1,403

**Camp Wadsworth**  
(Spartanburg, SC)

Labor Battalion: 330th.

African American Enlisted Men

1917

September	0	November	0
October	1,258	December	0

1918

January	0	May	0	September	1,734
February	0	June	0	October	2,687
March	0	July	3,299	November	1,401
April	0	August	5,664	December	1,347

**Camp Wheeler**  
(Macon, GA)

Labor Battalion: 327th.

African American Enlisted Men

1918

January	0	May	1,392	September	2,352
February	0	June	1,467	October	5,426
March	199	July	872	November	3,394
April	190	August	3,884	December	986



***Recognized Sites.*** The following is a list of recognized sites associated with this context.

Victory Monument ("Black Doughboy Monument"). Erected in 1927 and located on 35th Street and South Park Way in Chicago, this monument salutes the 369th Infantry Regiment, comprised originally of natives of Illinois.

Eighth Regiment Armory. This Chicago, Illinois, site was the first armory structure to be erected for a regiment commanded by African Americans. It is a National Register site.

369th Regiment Armory. This Art Deco Style Armory was built around 1933 for the African American National Guard outfit, 369th Regiment (founded in 1918). It is a National Register site.

Monument to 371st Regiment. Near Ardeuil, France.

Monument to 372d Regiment. Near Monthois, France.

Fort Des Moines. Located in Des Moines, Iowa, the fort is a registered National Historic Landmark that is being transferred to a non-federal agency.

W.E.B. DuBois Memorial. Located in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, this memorial is the site of W.E.B. DuBois' home.

### ***African Americans in World War II and Korea***

World War II was the beginning of the end of the all-black segregated military unit. But these units would not be completely eliminated until 13 years later. During this long transition to integration the segregated units compiled a grand record of achievement.

World War II and its aftermath brought about a series of firsts for African Americans in the military. For the first time, African American pilots contested control of the air with America's enemies. For the first time, the Navy trained black officers. For the first time, the United States Marines officially accepted African Americans in enlisted ranks, and later into officer training.

Unlike previous periods, there are many DoD-owned installations related to this theme. Many of the camps and forts of this period are still within DoD ownership.

The large number of installations is due to several factors. First, the number of all-black units in this period increased greatly. In December 1941, there were 99,206 blacks in the Army. By December 1945 there were 372,369 (Lee 1963:425). Second, housing all these troops was such a problem that the only solution was to post or train them at many installations and temporary camps. Ulysses Lee sums up the housing problem that plagued the Army during this period. "Finding suitable camps for training Negro troops was to vex the War Department — and Negro soldiers — throughout the war ... Purely military considerations played but a small part in determining the location of Negro troops in the early period of mobilization. The main considerations were: availability of housing and facilities on the posts concerned; proportions of white and Negro troops at the post; proximity to civilian centers of Negro population with good recreational facilities that could absorb sizable numbers of Negroes on pass; and the attitude of the nearby citizen community to the presence of Negro troops" (Lee 1963:100). Third, large units were divided into smaller units and trained at different bases. The Navy resources are listed by training category. The Army resources are listed by units. The list for the Army has been culled from Stanton (1984) and Osur (1977). Current DoD resources are marked with an asterisk. Overseas action is not reported.

## NAVY

### Educational and Training Facilities

Great Lakes Training Center,\* Illinois (Camps Robert Smalls, Moffett, and Laurence — all segregated).

Hampton Institute,\* Virginia (Specialized Training).

Navy Technical Training Station, Memphis, Tennessee (Aviation Machinist School).

Camp May, New Jersey (Soundman School).

Messman' School, Bainbridge, Maryland.

### Construction Battalions

Camp Bradford, Norfolk, Virginia.

Camp Allen, Norfolk, Virginia.

### Shoreman

African Americans worked on numerous shore stations along both coasts. The most infamous of these is Port Chicago, where over 300 black shoreman were killed in a massive explosion while loading explosives on board ships.

### Officers

Great Lakes Training Station,\* Illinois (segregated class).

Vessels (manned predominately by African American crews).

*USS Mason* (destroyer escort).

*PC-1264* (submarine chaser).

## MARINES

Camp Montford Point,\* New River, North Carolina (training center).

Camp Lejeune,\* New River, North Carolina.

Marine Corps Base, Quantico,\* Virginia.

## COAST GUARD

Coast Guard Training Center, Manahattan Beach, New York.

Vessels

*USS SEA Cloud.*

*USS Hoquan.*

## MERCHANT MARINE

Vessel

*USS Booker T. Washington* (first merchant vessel captained by black).

## WOMEN'S RESERVE CORPS

Women's Naval Training Station, Hunter College (New York City).

## ARMY

2nd Cavalry Division (Horse). Activated at Fort Clark (Spofford, Texas) and staged at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia.

Organizations

4th, 5th Cavalry Brigades HHT

HHB Division Artillery

Hqs & Hqs Troop

3rd Medical Squadron

Maintenance Company

20th Cavalry Quartermaster

Squadron

9th, 10th, 27th, 28th Cavalry Regiments

77th, 79th, 159th Field Artillery Battalions

162nd Engineer Squadron

35th Cavalry Recon Squadron, Mecz

114th Ordinance Medium

Military Police, 2nd Cav

92nd Infantry Division

Activated at Fort McClellan,\* Alabama, and moved to Fort Huachuca,\* Arizona.  
Staged at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia.

**Organizations**

365th, 370th, 371st, Infantry Regiments (442nd, 473rd attached)

597th, 598th, 599th, 600th Field Artillery Battalions

HHB Division Artillery

92nd Recon Troop

317th, Engineer Combat Battalion

317th Medical Battalion

Hqs Special Troops

Hqs Company

Military Police Platoon

792nd Ordnance Light Maintenance Company

92nd Quartermaster Company

92nd Signal Company

**93rd Infantry Division**

Activated at Fort Huachuca,\* Arizona, staged Camp Stoneman, California.

**Organizations**

25th, 368th, 369th Infantry Regiments

593rd, 594th, 595th, 596th, Field Artillery Battalions

HHB Division Artillery

93rd Recon Troop, Mecz

318th Engineer Combat Battalion

318th Medical Battalion

93rd Counter Intelligence Corps

Hqs Special Troops

Hqs Company

Military Police Platoon

793rd Ordnance Light Maintenance

93rd Quartermaster Company

93rd Signal Company

**24th Infantry Regiment**-Stationed at Fort Benning,\* Georgia.

**25th Infantry Regiment**-Stationed at Fort Huachuca,\* Arizona; attached to 3rd Army, then to 93rd Division (see above).

**364th Infantry Regiment**-Formerly the 367th, activated at Camp Clairborne, Louisiana. Moved to Phoenix, Arizona; staged at Fort Lawton, Washington.

366th Infantry Regiment-Activated at Fort Devens,\* Massachusetts, moved to Fort A.P. Hill,\* Virginia, and Camp Atterbury, Indiana. Staged at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia.

367th Infantry Regiment-Activated at Camp Clairborne, Louisiana; staged in Charleston, South Carolina. Redesignated the 364th.

368th Infantry Regiment-Activated at Fort Huachuca,\* Arizona, and assigned to 93rd Infantry (see above).

369th Infantry Regiment-Activated at Fort Huachuca,\* Arizona, and assigned to 93rd Infantry (see above).

370th Infantry Regiment-Activated at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, and assigned to 92nd Infantry Division (see above).

371st Infantry Regiment-Activated at Camp Joseph T. Robinson, Arkansas, and assigned to 93rd Infantry Division (see above).

372nd Infantry Regiment-Inducted into Federal service from Washington DC; New Jersey; Columbus, Ohio; and Boston, Massachusetts; and moved to Fort Dix,\* New Jersey. Transferred to Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, and to Fort Huachuca,\* Arizona. Staged at Fort Lawton, Washington.

367th Armored Infantry Battalion- Formed at Camp Davis, North Carolina.

555th Parachute Infantry Battalion-Formed at Camp Mackall, North Carolina.

5th Armored Group- Activated at Camp Clairborne, Louisiana, as 5th Tank Group. Moved to Fort Hood,\* Texas. Moved to Fort Huachuca,\* Arizona, and returned to Fort Hood,\* Texas. No overseas participation.

758th Light Tank Battalion- Formed at Fort Knox,\* Kentucky.

761st Tank Battalion- Formed at Camp Clairborne, Louisiana.

748th Tank Battalion- Formed at Camp Clairborne, Louisiana. Moved to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

4th Cavalry Brigade- Activated at Fort Riley,\* Kansas. Moved to Camp Lockett, California. Staged at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia.

5th Cavalry Brigade- Activated at Fort Clark, Texas, and staged at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia. Elements became the 6400th Ordnance Ammunition Battalion.

9th Cavalry Regiment- Stationed at Fort Riley,\* Kansas. Transferred to Fort Clark, Texas, then staged at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia. Under 2nd Cavalry Division.

10th Cavalry Division- Stationed at Fort Leavenworth,\* Kansas. Moved to Fort Riley,\* Kansas. Moved to Camp Lockett, California, and then staged at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia. Also under 2nd Cavalry Division.

27th Cavalry Regiment- Activated at Fort Clark, Texas. Transferred to 2nd Cavalry (see above).

28th Cavalry Regiment- Activated at Camp Lockett, California, as part of 2nd Cavalry (see above).

U.S. Military Academy Cavalry Squadron- At West Point, New York.

5th Recon Squadron- Formed at Fort Clark, Texas. Assigned to 2nd Cavalry (see above).

35th Cavalry Recon Squadron (Mecz)-Formed at Fort Clark, Texas. Assigned to 2nd Cavalry (see above).

614th Tank Destroyer Battalion- Formed at Camp Carson,\* Colorado; moved to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

649th Tank Destroyer Battalion- Formed at Camp Bowie, Texas.

659th Tank Destroyer Battalion- Formed at Camp Hood,\* Texas.

669th Tank Destroyer Battalion- Formed at Camp Hood,\* Texas.

679th Tank Destroyer Battalion- Formed at Camp Hood,\* Texas. Moved to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

795th Tank Destroyer Battalion- Formed at Fort Custer,\* Michigan, as Heavy S-P.

827th Tank Destroyer Battalion- Formed at Camp Forrest, Tennessee. Moved to Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia.

828th Tank Destroyer Battalion- Formed at Fort Knox,\* Kentucky, and moved to Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

829th Tank Destroyer Battalion- Formed at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, as Heavy S-P and moved to Camp Hood,\* Texas.

846th Tank Destroyer Battalion- Formed at Camp Livingston, Louisiana, and moved to Camp Swift, Texas.

46th Field Artillery Brigade- Activated at Camp Livingston, Louisiana, and assigned to 3rd Army. Redesignated HHB, 46th Field Artillery Group.

333rd Field Artillery Group (Motorized)- Redesignated from HHB 333rd Field Artillery Regiment at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma. Staged at Camp Shanks, New York. 1st and 2nd Battalions redesignated 333rd and 969th Field Artillery Battalions.

349th Field Artillery Group (Motorized)- Redesignated from 349th Field Artillery Regiment at Fort Sill,\* Oklahoma. Moved to Camp Hood,\* Texas. Staged at Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts. 1st and 2nd Battalions redesignated 349th and 686th Field Artillery Battalions.

350th Field Artillery Group (Motorized)- Redesignated from HHB 350th Field Artillery Regiment at Camp Livingston, Louisiana. 1st and 2nd Battalions redesignated 350th and 971st Field Artillery Battalions.

351th Field Artillery Group (Motorized)- Redesignated from HHB 351th Field Artillery Regiment at Camp Livingston, Louisiana. Moved to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and Camp Gruber, Oklahoma. Staged at Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts. 1st and 2nd Battalions redesignated 351st and 973rd Field Artillery Battalions.

353th Field Artillery Group (Motorized)- Formed at Camp Livingston, Louisiana. 1st and 2nd Battalions redesignated 353rd and 993rd Field Artillery Battalions.

184th Field Artillery Regiment- Inducted into Federal Service from Illinois National Guard at Chicago, Illinois. Moved to Fort Custer,\* Michigan, and assigned to 2nd Army. 1st and 2nd Battalions redesignated 930th and 931st Field Artillery Battalions.

578th Field Artillery Regiment (Motorized)- Activated at Fort Bragg,\* North Carolina. Redesignated HHB, 578th Field Artillery, 1st and 2nd Battalions redesignated 578th and 999th Field Artillery Battalions.

77th and 79th Field Artillery Battalions- Formed at Fort Clark, Texas. See 2nd Cavalry.

159th Field Artillery Battalion- Formed at Fort Clark, Texas. See 2nd Cavalry.

593rd, 594th, 595th, 596th, Field Artillery Battalions- Formed at Fort Huachuca,\* Arizona. Moved to Camp Stoneman, California.

597th Field Artillery Battalion- Formed at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. Moved to Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts.

598th Field Artillery Battalion- Formed at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, and staged at Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts.

599th Field Artillery Battalion - Formed at Camp Joseph T. Robinson, Arkansas. Staged at Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts.

600th Field Artillery Battalion - Formed at Fort McClellan, Alabama; staged at Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts.

732th Field Artillery Battalion - Formed at Fort Bragg,\* North Carolina. Redesignated 1695th Combat Engineer Battalion.

777th Field Artillery Battalion- Formed at Camp Beale, California.

795th Field Artillery Battalion- Formed at Fort Bragg,\* North Carolina. Redesignated 1700th Combat Engineer Battalion.

54th Coast Artillery Regiment- Activated at Camp Wallace, Texas. Moved to Camp Davis, North Carolina; Fort Fisher, North Carolina; and back to Davis. Transferred to Fort Cronkhite, California, and Fort Ord,\* California. HHB unit redesignated HHB 152nd Coast Artillery Group then 1st-3rd Battalions redesignated 606th, 49th, 607th Coast Artillery Battalions.

76th Coast Artillery Regiment- Activated at Fort Bragg,\* North Carolina. Transferred to Burbank, California, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. HHB



redesignated HHB 76th AAA Group, 1st and 2nd Battalions redesignated 76th and 933rd AAA Battalions.

77th Coast Artillery Regiment- Activated at Fort Bragg,\* North Carolina, and moved to Hartford, Connecticut. Staged at Fort Dix,\* New Jersey. HHB redesignated HHB 77th AAA Group, 1st through 3rd Battalions redesignated 77th AAA Gun, 938th AAA Auto-Wpns, and 374th Searchlight Battalion.

90th Coast Artillery Regiment- Activated at Camp Stewart,\* Georgia, and staged at Fort Dix,\* New Jersey. HHB redesignated HHB 90th AAA Group, 1st through 3rd Battalions redesignated 90th AAA Gun, 897th AAA Auto-Wpns, and 334th Searchlight Battalions.

99th Coast Artillery Regiment. Activated at Camp Davis, North Carolina. 1st through 3rd Battalions redesignated 99th AA Gun, 871st AAA Auto-Wpns, and 338th Searchlight Battalions.

100th Coast Artillery Regiment- Activated at Camp Davis, North Carolina, and moved to Fort Custer,\* Michigan. Also moved to Fort Brady, Michigan, and Fort Stewart,\* Georgia. 1st and 2nd Battalions redesignated 100th AAA Gun and 538th AAA Auto-Wpns Battalions.

369th Coast Artillery Regiment- Inducted into Federal service in New York. Moved to Fort Ontario, New York, and then transferred to Camp Edwards, Massachusetts, and Los Angeles, California. HHB redesignated HHB 369th AAA Group, 1st and 2nd Battalions redesignated 369th AAA Gun and 870th Auto-Wpns Battalions.

612th Coast Artillery Regiment- Activated at Fort Stewart,\* Georgia. HHB redesignated HHB 121st Coast Artillery Group, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Battalions redesignated 741st, 207th, and 234th Coast Artillery Battalions.

613th Coast Artillery Regiment- Activated at Fort Stewart,\* Georgia. HHB redesignated HHB 122nd Coast Artillery Group, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Battalions redesignated 742st, 208th, and 235th Coast Artillery Battalions.

318th, 319th, 320th, 321st Balloon Battalions- Formed at Camp Tyson, Tennessee.

361st AAA Searchlight Battalion- 1st Platoon, Battery A, formed at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

450th AAA Auto Wpns Battalion- Formed at Camp Davis, North Carolina.

452th, 458th, 466th, 477th, 484th, 492nd, 493rd, 538th AAA Auto Wpns Battalions-  
Formed at Camp Stewart,\* Georgia.

846th AAA Auto-Wpns Battalion- Formed at Camp Stewart,\* Georgia.

41st Engineer General Service Regiment- Activated at Fort Bragg,\* North Carolina.  
Designated parent unit of 358th Engineer regiment.

45th Engineer General Service Regiment- Activated at Camp Blanding, Florida.

91st Engineer Battalion- Formed at Camp Shelby,\* Mississippi. Redesignated a  
regiment at Camp Forrest, Tennessee.

92nd Engineer Battalion- Formed at Fort Leonard Wood,\* Missouri. Redesignated  
a regiment at Camp Forrest, Tennessee.

93rd Engineer General Service Regiment- Redesignated from the 93rd Engineer  
Battalion (Separate) at Camp Livingston, Louisiana.

94th Engineer General Service Regiment- Redesignated from the 94th Engineer  
Battalion (Separate) at Fort Custer,\* Michigan. Moved to Fort Dix,\* New Jersey.

95th Engineer General Service Regiment- Redesignated from the 95th Engineer  
Battalion (Separate) at Fort Belvoir,\* Virginia, and moved to Fort Bragg,\* North  
Carolina.

96th Engineer General Service Regiment- Not in the United States. Formerly 96th  
Battalion formed at Fort Bragg,\* North Carolina.

97th Engineer General Service Regiment- Redesignated from the 97th Engineer  
Battalion (Separate) at Elgin Air Field, Florida.

98th Engineer General Service Regiment- Redesignated from the 98th Engineer  
Battalion (Separate) at Camp Clairborne, Louisiana.

224th Engineer General Service Regiment- Formed from the 366th Infantry.

226th Engineer General Service Regiment- Formed from the 366th Infantry.

350th Engineer General Service Regiment- Activated at Camp Shelby,\* Mississippi.

352nd Engineer General Service Regiment- Activated at Camp Gordon,\* Georgia. Transferred to Indiantown Gap,\* Pennsylvania.

354th Engineer General Service Regiment- Activated at Camp Maxey, Texas. Staged at Camp Shanks, New York.

356th Engineer General Service Regiment- Activated at Camp Shelby,\* Mississippi. Staged at Camp Shanks, New York.

357th Engineer General Service Regiment- Activated at Camp Pickett, Virginia. Transferred to Camp Clairborne, Louisiana.

362nd Engineer General Service Regiment- Activated at Camp Clairborne, Louisiana.

364th Engineer General Service Regiment- Activated at Camp Swift, Texas. Transferred to Camp Clairborne, Louisiana. Staged at Camp Shanks, New York.

365th Engineer General Service Regiment- Activated at Camp Campbell,\* Kentucky. Transferred to Clairborne, Louisiana. Staged at Camp Shanks, New York.

366th Engineer General Service Regiment- Activated at Camp Phillips, Kansas. Transferred to Camp Forrest, Tennessee. Staged at Camp Shanks, New York.

374th Engineer General Service Regiment- Redesignated from the 374th Engineer Battalion (Separate) at Camp Hood,\* Texas, and assigned to Eighth Service Command. Staged at Camp Shanks, New York. Battalion formed at Camp Gordon,\* Georgia.

375th Engineer General Service Regiment- Redesignated from the 375th Engineer Battalion (Separate) at Fort Knox,\* Kentucky. Staged at Camp Shanks, New York. Battalion formed at Camp Sutton, North Carolina.

376th Engineer Battalion- Formed at Camp Polk,\* Louisiana. Staged at Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts.

377th Engineer General Service Regiment- Redesignated from the 377th Engineer Battalion (Separate) at Fort Knox,\* Kentucky, and assigned to Fifth Service Command. Staged at Camp Shanks, New York. Battalion formed at Camp Pickett, Virginia.

378th, 379th, 383rd Engineer Battalion- Formed at Camp Shelby,\* Mississippi. The 383rd became the 1349th Engineer Regiment.

382nd, 386th Engineer Battalion- Formed at Fort Knox,\* Kentucky. Staged at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

384th Engineer Battalion- Formed at Fort Bragg,\* North Carolina.

385th Engineer Battalion- Formed at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts, and staged at Camp Myles Standish.

387th Engineer Battalion- Formed at Fort Meade,\* Maryland.

388th Engineer General Service Regiment- Redesignated from the 388th Engineer Battalion (Separate) at Waterways, Alberta, Canada. Transferred to Camp Sutton, North Carolina. Staged at Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts. Battalion formed at Camp Clairborne, Louisiana.

389th Engineer General Service Regiment- Redesignated from the 389th Engineer Battalion (Separate) at Camp Young, California, and transferred to Camp Butner, North Carolina. Staged at Camp Shanks, New York. Battalion formed at Camp Gordon,\* Georgia.

390th Engineer General Service Regiment- Activated at Camp Clairborne, Louisiana, and staged at Camp Shanks, New York.

392th Engineer General Service Regiment- Activated at Camp Joseph T. Robinson, Arkansas, and moved to Camp Clairborne, Louisiana. Staged at Camp Shanks, New York.

393rd Engineer General Service Regiment- Activated at Camp Clairborne, Louisiana, and returned after a short stay at Camp Robinson. Staged at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia.

398th Engineer General Service Regiment- Activated at Camp Clairborne, Louisiana, and staged at Camp Shanks, New York.

810th, 812th, 838th, 847th, 849th Engineer Aviation Battalions- Formed at MacDill,\*Florida. The 847th was staged at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

811th, 822nd, 823rd, Engineer Aviation Battalions- Formed at Langley Field,\* Virginia.

827th Engineer Aviation Battalion- Formed at Savannah, Georgia.

828th, 839th Engineer Aviation Battalion- Formed at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma. Staged at Fort Lewis,\* Washington.

829th, 870th Engineer Aviation Battalion- Formed at Dale Mabry Field, Oklahoma. Staged at Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts.

837th, 848th Engineer Aviation Battalions- Formed at Greenville, South Carolina. 848th staged at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

855th, 856th Engineer Aviation Battalions- Formed at March Field, California, and staged at Camp Stoneman.

857th, 867th Engineer Aviation Battalions- Formed at Eglin Field,\* Florida.

858th Engineer Aviation Battalion- Formed at Avon Park, Florida.

923rd Engineer Aviation Regiment- Activated at Eglin Field,\* Florida. 1st Battalion redesignated the 859th Engineer Aviation Battalion, 2nd redesignated as the 1882th and the 3rd redesignated as 1883rd. Staged at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

868th, 869th, 927th Engineer Aviation Regiment- Activated at MacDill Field,\* Florida.

929th Engineer Aviation Regiment- Activated at Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona. Staged at Camp Stoneman, California.

932nd Engineer Aviation Regiment- Activated at Eglin Field,\* Florida.

1310th, 1311th, 1312th, 1313th, 1314th, 1315th, 1316th, Engineer General Service Regiments- Activated at Camp Clairborne, Louisiana. 1310th, and 1314th staged at Camp Shanks, New York. 1311th, and 1312th staged at Camp Stoneman, California. 1313th staged at Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts. The 135th transferred to Camp Sutton, North Carolina. The 1316th transferred to Camp Sutton and Fort Huachuca.\* Staged at Fort Lawton, Washington.

1317th Engineer General Service Regiment- Activated at Camp Ellis, Illinois. Staged at Camp Shanks, New York.

1318th, 1319th, 1321st Engineer General Service Regiments- Activated at Camp Butler, North Carolina. The 1318th staged at Camp Shanks, New York. The 1319th staged at Vancouver Barracks, Washington. The 1321st staged at Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts.

1320th, 1322nd, 1323rd Engineer General Service Regiments- Activated at Camp Swift, Texas. The 1320th and 1322nd were staged at Camp Stoneman, California. The 1323rd was staged at Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts.

1324th, 1325th, 1326th, 1327th, 1329th, 1330th, 1331st Engineer General Service Regiments- Redesignated as battalions at Camp Clairborne, Louisiana. The 1324th, 1329th, 1330th, and 1331st were staged at Camp Shanks, New York. The 1325th and 1326th were staged at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. The 1327th divided into units from Los Angeles and Miami Port.

1332nd, 1333rd Engineer General Service Regiments- Redesignated battalions at Camp Ellis, Illinois. The 1332nd staged at Camp Shanks, New York. The 1333rd departed New York.

1334th, 1553rd, 1554th Engineer Construction Battalions- Not in United States.

1349th Engineer General Service Regiment- Redesignated from 383rd Engineer Battalion in England.

1749th, 2822nd Engineer General Service Regiments- Activated at Fort Lewis,\* Washington.

317th Engineer Combat Battalion- Formed at Fort McClellan,\* Alabama.

318th Engineer Combat Battalion- Formed at Fort Huachuca,\* Arizona, and moved to Camp Stoneman, California.

1692nd Engineer Combat Battalion- Formed at Camp Livingston, Louisiana.

1693rd, 1694th Engineer Combat Battalions- Formed at Camp Livingston, Louisiana.

1695th Engineer Combat Battalion- Formed at Camp Pickett, Virginia.

1696th Engineer Combat Battalion- Formed at Camp Swift, Texas.

1697th Engineer Combat Battalion- Formed at Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi.

1698th Engineer Combat Battalion- Formed at Camp Gordon,\* Georgia.

1699th Engineer Combat Battalion- Formed at Camp Butner, North Carolina.

1700th Engineer Combat Battalion- Formed at Camp Jackson,\* South Carolina.

1862nd, 1863rd Engineer Aviation Battalion- Formed at Gulfport Army Airbase, Mississippi.

1864th, 1870th Engineer Aviation Battalion- Formed at Drew Field, Florida.

1865th Engineer Aviation Battalion- Formed at Avon Park Army Airfield, Florida.

1866th Engineer Aviation Battalion- Formed at Columbia Army Airbase, South Carolina.

1867th Engineer Aviation Battalion- Formed at Key Field, Mississippi.

1868th, 1871st, 1882nd, 1895th, 1908th Engineer Aviation Battalions- Formed at Greenville Army Airbase, South Carolina.

1869th, 1909th Engineer Aviation Battalions- Formed at Dale Mabry Field, Florida.

1872th, 1873rd, 1889th Engineer Aviation Battalion- Formed at Davis-Monthan Field.

1883rd, 1898th Engineer Aviation Battalions- Formed at Eglin Field,\* Florida.

1887th, 1890th Engineer Aviation Battalions- Formed at March Field, California.

1888th, 1894th, 1899th, 1916th, 1917th Engineer Aviation Battalions- Formed at MacDill, Florida.

1890th Engineer Aviation Battalion- Not in United States.

6486th, 6487th, 6495th, 6496th Engineer Construction Battalions- Not in United States.

## ARMY AIR FORCES

332nd Fighter Group-Tuskegee Air Field, Alabama; Selfridge,\* Michigan, and Oscoda, Michigan. Squadrons included 99th, 100th, 301st, 302nd.

477th Composite Group (Bombardment Group [Medium])- MacDill Field,\* Florida; Selfridge,\* Michigan; Godman Field, Kentucky; Lockbourne AAB,\* Columbus, Ohio. Squadrons included 99th Fighter Squadron, 616th Bombardment, 617th Bombardment, 618th Bombardment, 619th Bombardment. (The 553rd Fighter Squadron formed to provide replacement for the 477th trained at Walterboro Air Field, South Carolina.)

The majority of African Americans in the Army Air Corps served in numerous Aviation Squadrons (Separate) that performed service functions. In 1941 there were 9 Aviation Squadrons of 250 men each serving in the following locations: Langley Field, Virginia; Maxwell Field, Alabama; Daniels Field and Savannah, Georgia; Barksdale Field, Louisiana; Camp Livingston, Louisiana; Dale Mabry and MacDill Fields, Florida; Jackson, Mississippi (Osur 1977:25). As more African Americans joined, Air Base Defense Units were formed. In September 1942, some 37,223 black men and officers were in the Army Air Forces. This population reached a peak of 145,025 in December of 1943 and at the end of the war (December 1945) there were 69,016 (Osur 1977:137).

## Installation Survey

In an attempt to measure the DoD's awareness of potential cultural resources within its ownership, a survey was conducted of installations within the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force. During the fall of 1993, a survey questionnaire (Appendix C) was mailed to the four main branches of the Armed Forces, inquiring about any known African American resources located on DoD properties. Of the 99 Army installations receiving the survey, 31 replied. Nine responded positively with African American resources — six buildings, two archeological sites, and one monument. Some of these features are already nominated as National Historical Landmarks. The remaining respondents either declared no African American resources or were uncertain if any existed. (Appendix D lists the survey data.)

Those Army installations that responded positively included: Aberdeen Proving Ground (Building); Armor Center and Fort Knox, Kentucky (monument and building); Fort Carson, Colorado (building); White Sands Missile Range (archeological); and Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri (World War II black Officer's Club). Forts



Monroe and Sill, and the Presidios of Monterrey and San Francisco have resources related to black troops already listed as National Historic Landmarks. Several of the respondents remarked that historical/cultural resource surveys were being conducted; many others replied that they were trying to obtain Legacy funding to conduct such a survey. Cultural resource managers at Fort Carson, Fort Bliss, and White Sands Missile Range have attempted to get facilities or features related to the African American military experience nominated as historic landmarks, but the facilities were considered ineligible by the National Park Service. Fort Monroe, the Presidio of Monterrey, the Presidio of San Francisco, and Fort Sill have had greater success in nominating African American resources to the register of National Historical Landmarks. Many installations reported a history of buildings associated with black troops, but these buildings have since been destroyed.

The Marine Corps did not officially admit blacks until World War II. Since their training was limited to Camps Lejune (Montford Point), North Carolina, and Quantico, Virginia, we only contacted these two installations. The Marine Corps base at Quantico, Virginia, contains a significant number of structures once used exclusively by African American troops during World War II. In 1943, Quantico constructed Chopawamsic Annex, a planned, self-supporting, segregated site for African American Marines. The annex was located away from other barracks, administrative and Marine School buildings, and the main entrance. The 11 buildings in this complex consist of 3 barracks, a bachelor enlisted quarters, an NCO club, 4 administrative offices, a mess/band facility, and a dispensary. These structures were constructed of inferior material (unlike other buildings on the base) and are structurally substandard. Nevertheless, they are still in fair condition and are eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A. With desegregation, the buildings were no longer used exclusively by blacks.

In the survey of the Department of the Navy, inquiries for points of contact were sent to each of the six Naval Divisions. Only the Northern Division provided names and addresses of 29 installation commanders. Seven of these individuals answered the survey. They all replied that their installations had no facilities or features related to the African American naval experience. Neither did they claim any resources already listed as National Historic Landmarks. The respondents explained that their installations either had no history associated with African Americans, or that the buildings have been radically altered since the end of World War II. Many of these installations had either recently completed a Cultural Resource Survey or were attempting to obtain funds to do so.

The questionnaire was sent to 13 Air Force command centers. Seven responded. All replied that they were aware of no existing features relevant to the survey. The

questionnaire was also sent to 9 bases; all of whom replied. Again, they stated there were no features relevant to African American military participation on their base. Some of the bases have either complete or partial historical/cultural resource surveys of their installation, or plan to conduct surveys. Randolph AFB in Texas, in fact, provided documentation (a 1943 map) of its installation designating separate "Negro Barracks." However, the air base provided no information stating whether or not these structures are extant. Altus AFB in Oklahoma had similar structures from World War II, which have since been demolished. No respondents claimed to have any site or feature already listed as National Historic Landmarks. However, F.E. Warren Air Force Base has done an exemplary job placing buildings associated with African Americans in the military on the National Register and preserving them.

## Summary

History will continue to debate the impact of African Americans on American military history. Regardless of the level of significance, it can be argued that the impact was ultimate to those black soldiers who gave their lives in America's wars. For this reason alone, it is important that their contribution not be forgotten. The DoD can be proud that despite resistance within and without, in many instances it led the way in achieving an integrated society.

Finally, modern students of war are once again recognizing the importance of tradition and *esprit de corps* in keeping the armed forces strong and ready. Part of this spirit is cherishing ties to past victories and acts of bravery through long lines of regimental history. Recognizing the contributions of the African American military units is one important way of building spirit in today's armed forces.

## Appendix A: Contributors to the Progress of Civil Rights in the Military

### Military

**Charity Adams.** Born in Columbia, South Carolina. During World War II, she was supervisor of plans and training at the Des Moines training center, and commander of the 688th Central Postal Battalion, the only black WAC unit assigned to overseas duty.

**Alexander T. Augusta (1825-1890).** Born in Norfolk, Virginia, and educated in Baltimore, Philadelphia, California, and Canada, he eventually received a medical degree from Trinity Medical College in Toronto. While practicing his profession in Washington DC, he was appointed surgeon of the Seventh U.S. Colored Troops, which was part of the expedition to Beaufort, South Carolina. Later he was in charge of an army hospital in Savannah, Georgia. At the end of the war he was breveted a lieutenant colonel for meritorious and faithful service, one of the few blacks to achieve field grade rank in the Civil War. He later practiced medicine in Washington DC and served on the faculty of Howard University Department of Medicine. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

**Ensign Jesse L. Brown (1926-1950).** Brown was the first black American to become a naval aviator and the first naval officer killed in action during the Korean War. Born in Hattiesburg, Pennsylvania, he earned his wings in October 1948 joined the 32nd Fighter Squad, and quickly rose to section leader. He earned the Air Medal for daring attacks on enemy transportation facilities at Wonsun, Songjin, and Sinanju. He earned the Distinguished Flying Cross for flying air support for the Marines fighting near Chosin Reservoir. He was killed when his low-flying craft was hit while strafing enemy positions. In 1973 he was honored as the first African American to have a naval vessel named after him, the *USS JESSE L. BROWN*, commissioned at Boston Naval Yard.

**Wesley A. Brown.** Born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland. In 1949 he became the first African American to graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy.

**Eugene Jacque Bullard** (1894-1961). Born in Columbus, Georgia, he went to Europe while he was a teenager and lived in Scotland, England, and France. He was the only African American to fly an airplane in the First World War. He moved to Harlem after the war.

**Oliver Cromwell** (1753-1853). Born in Columbus, New Jersey, Cromwell served in the American Revolutionary forces in the Second New Jersey Regiment for nearly 7 years. He fought at the battles of Trenton, Princeton, Brandywine, Monmouth, and Yorktown, and was one of the valiant soldiers who crossed the Delaware River with Washington on Christmas night in 1776.

**Brigadier General Benjamin I. Davis Sr.** (1877-1970). In 1940 Davis became the first African American to become a general in the United States Army. Born in Washington DC, he joined Army in 1898, and remained in the military until his retirement in 1948. During his half-century of military service, Davis won numerous awards including Distinguished Service Medal, Bronze Star medal, Grade of Commander of the Order of the Star of Africa from the Liberian government, and the French Croix de Guerre with Palm.

**Lieutenant General Benjamin O. Davis Jr.** (1912- ). Born in Washington DC, he was the first African American to graduate from West Point in nearly 50 years in 1936. He was among the first six black air cadets to graduate from the Advanced Army Flying School in 1942. During the Second World War he commanded the 99th Fighter Squadron (and later the all-black 332nd Fighter Group) and flew 60 missions, winning several medals, including the Silver Star. He became the first black Air Force General in 1965, he now lives in Arlington, Virginia.

**Lieutenant Henry O. Flipper** (1877-1940). Born in Thomasville, Georgia, Flipper was the first black American to graduate from West Point and first to be assigned to a command position in a black unit following the Civil War. A controversial court-martial cut short a very promising career in the military. He lived in Atlanta, Georgia, during last years of his life.

**W. Hallett Greene.** No biographical is information available. Greene was the first African American to enter the Signal Corps.

**Leonard Roy Harmon.** He served aboard the *USS SAN FRANCISCO* in World War II. He received the Navy Cross.

**Edward Hector** (1744-1834). One of the few black men to serve in the artillery regiments, a private in Captain Hercules Courtney's company of the Third Pennsylvania Artillery. He served valiantly in the Battle of Brandywine, where he was in charge of an ammunition wagon. At this battle the Americans were forced to retreat, and the wagons were ordered abandoned. But Hector refused the order, saving his team, wagon, and cargo from capture by the enemy, and also managing to gather weapons hastily discarded by retreating soldiers.

**General Daniel James Jr.** (1920-1978). Born in Pensacola, Florida, James attended Tuskegee Institute where he took the Army Air Corps program and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in 1943. During the Korean War he flew over 100 missions and shot down over six enemy aircraft, earning him the distinction as an Ace pilot. He also received numerous civilian and military awards, including Legion of Merit with one oak leaf cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross, Presidential Unit Citation, and Distinguished Unit Citation. In 1975 he became first black American Four-Star General, and was appointed commander of NORAD.

**Henry Johnson** (1897-1929). Born in Albany, New York. A member of the 369th Infantry, Johnson became the most famous black soldier in World War I for single-handedly fighting off an entire German patrol one night. He not only rescued a comrade from certain capture, but also killed four of the enemy, wounded more, and captured a stockpile of weapons. He, along with Needham Roberts, were the first Americans to receive the Croix de Geurre from the French government.

**James Armistead Lafayette.** Born a Virginia slave, Lafayette served as a spy for American forces during the Revolution. His numerous reports to the Marquis de Lafayette enabled the French commander to check the troop advances of British Cornwallis, setting the stage for Washington's victory at Yorktown in 1781. Nearly 45 years later on a return visit to the United States, Lafayette paid the black spy a visit.

**Dorie Miller** (1919-1943). Born near Waco, Texas, Miller served as messman aboard the *USS ARIZONA* when it was attacked at Pearl Harbor. He manned a machine gun and brought down four Japanese planes. For his actions he was awarded the Navy Cross. He was killed in action in South Pacific aboard the aircraft carrier *LISCOME BAY* in 1943. The *USS MILLER* is named in his honor.

**Hugh Mulzac** (1886-1971). Born in Kingston, St. Vincent, British West Indies, Mulzac resided in Baltimore, Maryland. During World War II he became the first black to captain a merchant vessel, the *BOOKER T. WASHINGTON*.

**Elbert H. Oliver**. He served aboard the *USS INTREPID* during Second World War. He received the Silver Star for his actions.

**William Pinckney**. He served aboard the *USS ENTERPRISE* during World War II, earning the Navy Cross.

**Vincent Populus**. He became the ranking black officer in the 1st New Orleans Battalion of Free Men of Color. He was the first African American recognized by the United States government as an officer of field grade status. He lived in New Orleans.

**Needham Roberts**. Born in Trenton, New Jersey. He served in Company C, 369th Infantry Regiment. He was one of first Americans (along with Henry Johnson) to receive the Croix de Guerre from French government. Born in Trenton, New Jersey.

**Peter Salem**. A slave from Framingham, Massachusetts, who manned the breastworks at the Battle of Bunker Hill, he was credited as the marksman who fatally shot British Major Pitcairn. His owners gave him his freedom so he could continue to fight when Congress early in the war decided to use only free men to fight the British.

**Clarence Samuels**. Born in Bohio, Panama. He served aboard the *USS SEA CLOUD* during Second World War, commanded Lightship no. 115 in the Navy Local Defense Forces in the Canal Zone, and later commanded the cutter *SWEET GUM* also in the Canal Zone.

**Joseph Savary**. Born in Santo-Domingo, he lived in New Orleans by 1809. He commanded the 2nd New Orleans Battalion of Free Men of Color, and was appointed a Major in December 1814.

**Tack Sisson**. A commando who made numerous raids behind enemy lines in New England. On one of these raids, he captured British Major General Prescott in his own headquarters and brought him back through enemy lines to American held territory. Prescott was used to exchange for captured American general Charles Lee.

**Harriet West.** Born in Washington DC. During World War II, she was chief of the planning bureau control division at WAAC headquarters in Washington.

**Colonel Charles Young (1864-1922).** Born in Mayslick, Kentucky, he was raised in Ripley, Ohio. Young became third black American to graduate from West Point in 1888. He served in the Philippines and the Punitive Expedition, eventually rising to rank of Colonel. He was expected to become the first black general during the First World War, but was declared physically unfit to serve overseas. He resided in Xenia, Ohio, and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. His home in Ohio is a registered National Historical Landmark.

### **Civilians**

**Lester B. Granger (1896-1976).** Born in Newport News, Virginia, he was raised in New Jersey. As Director of the National Urban League he conducted a personal survey of racial attitudes and practices throughout the Navy and provided recommendations for change to Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal.

**William Hastie (1904-1976).** Born in Knoxville, Tennessee, lived in Washington DC. Dean of Howard University Law School, the first black to be appointed a Federal judge, appointed civilian aide to Secretary of War Stimson to help coordinate policy on black troops during World War II.

**Mary Louvestre.** Lived in Norfolk, Virginia. Slave and spy for Union whose information on Confederate ironclad Merrimac encouraged the Union to increase production of its own ironclad and thus thwart rebel attempt to destroy Union Navy.

**A. Philip Randolph (1889-1979).** Born in Crescent City, Florida. President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Vice-President of the AFL-CIO. Helped convince Roosevelt to increase opportunities for black military personnel in World War II.

**Emmet Scott.** Born in Houston, Texas, lived in Tuskegee, Alabama, and Washington DC. Special advisor to Secretary of War Newton Baker on matters regarding black troops during First World War.

**Walter White (1893-1955).** Born and raised in Talanta, Georgia. Lived in New York. Leader in NAACP. Helped convince President Roosevelt to increase opportunities for black military personnel in Second World War.

## Appendix B: Congressional Medal of Honor Recipients, 1863-1953

The following is a list of African Americans who have received Medals of Honor for heroism above and beyond the call. Readers should beware that sources are conflicting on names and dates; this list was compiled from references listed in the References Cited section.

### Civil War

#### *Army*

**Private William H. Barnes.** Company C., 38th U.S. Colored Troops. He was cited for valor during the battle of New Market Heights, Virginia, September 29, 1864.

**First Sergeant Powhatan Beaty.** Company G., 5th U.S. Colored Troops. He was cited for valor during the battle of New Market Heights, Virginia, 29 September, 1864.

**First Sergeant James H. Bronson.** Company D, 5th U.S. Colored Troops. He was cited for valor during the battle of New Market Heights, Virginia, 29 September, 1864.

**Sergeant William H. Carney.** Company C, 54th Massachusetts Colored Infantry. He was cited for valor during the battle of Fort Wagner, South Carolina, 18 June 1863.

**Sergeant Decatur Dorsey.** Company B, 39th U.S. Colored Troops. Dorsey was cited for bravery at the Battle of Petersburg, Virginia on 30 July 1864.

**Sergeant-Major Christian A. Fleetwood.** 4th U.S. Colored Troops. He was cited for valor during the battle of New Market Heights, Virginia, 29 September, 1864.

**Private James Gardiner.** Company I, U.S. Colored Troops. He was cited for valor during the battle of New Market Heights, Virginia, 29 September, 1864.



**Sergeant James H. Harris.** Company B, 38th U.S. Colored Troops. He was cited for valor during the battle of New Market Heights, Virginia, 29 September, 1864.

**Sergeant-Major Thomas R. Hawkins.** 6th U.S. Colored Troops. He was cited for valor in the Battle of Deep Bottom, Virginia, on 21 July 1864.

**Sergeant Alfred B. Hilton.** Company H, 4th U.S. Colored Troops. He was cited for valor during the battle of New Market Heights, Virginia, 29 September, 1864.

**Sergeant-Major Milton M. Holland.** 5th U.S. Colored Troops. He was cited for valor during the battle of New Market Heights, Virginia, 29 September, 1864.

**Corporal Miles James.** Company B, 36th U.S. Colored Troops. He was cited for valor during the battle of New Market Heights, Virginia, 29 September, 1864.

**First Sergeant Alexander Kelly.** Company F., 6th U.S. Colored Troops. He was cited for valor during the battle of New Market Heights, Virginia, 29 September, 1864.

**Sergeant Robert A. Pinn.** Company I, 5th U.S. Colored Troops. He was cited for valor during the battle of New Market Heights, Virginia, 29 September, 1864.

**First Sergeant Edward Radcliff.** Company C, 38th U.S. Colored Troops. He was cited for valor during the battle of New Market Heights, Virginia, 29 September, 1864.

**Corporal Charles Veal.** Company D, 4th U.S. Colored Troops. He was cited for valor during the battle of New Market Heights, Virginia, 29 September, 1864.

### ***Navy***

**Landsman Robert Blake.** a Contraband slave from South Carolina. He was cited for valor on board the U.S. Steam Boat MARBLEHEAD, in an engagement off John's Island, South Carolina on 25 December 1863.

**Landsman William H. Brown.** He was cited for valor aboard the USS BROOKLYN during its attack against Fort Morgan Confederate gunboats and the ram Tennessee in Mobile Bay, on 5 August 1864.

**Landsman Wilson Brown.** He was cited for valor aboard the USS HARTFORD, in the attacks against Fort Morgan, Mobile Bay, 31 December 1864.

**Landsman John Lawson.** He was cited for valor during Battle of Mobile Bay in attacks against Forts Gaines and Morgan, 31 December 1864.

**Engineer's Cook, James Mifflin.** He was also aboard the USS BROOKLYN during the Battle of Mobile Bay, 31 December 1864 and cited for valor in that battle.

**Seaman, Joachim Pease.** He was cited for valor aboard the USS KEARSARGE when that vessel destroyed the ALABAMA off Cherbourg, France on 19 June 1864.

## Indian Wars (1870-1898)

### *Army*

**Sergeant Thomas Boyne.** Troop C, 9th U.S. Cavalry. Cited for bravery under heavy fire in Las Animas Canyon, Mexico, on 8 September 1879.

**Sergeant Benjamin Brown.** Company C, 24th Infantry Regiment. Brown thwarted an attempted robbery in Arizona on 11 May 1889.

**Sergeant John Denny.** Company C, 9th Cavalry. Cited for valor in an engagement at Las Animas Canyon, New Mexico, 18 September 1879.

**Corporal Clinton Greaves.** Troop C, 9th U.S. Cavalry. Cited for valor in the Battle of Florida Mountain, New Mexico on 24 January 1877.

**Sergeant Henry Johnson.** Troop D, 9th U.S. Cavalry. Cited for valor in the Battle of Milk River, Colorado on 25 October 1879.

**Sergeant George Jordan.** Troop K, 9th U.S. Cavalry. Cited for bravery in two battles: one at Fort Telersu, New Mexico, on 14 May 1880; the other at Carrizo Canyon, New Mexico, on 12 August 1881.

**Corporal Isaiah Mays.** Company B, 24th Infantry Regiment. He was cited for valor in thwarting attempted robbery in Arizona on 11 May 1889.

**Sergeant William McBryar.** Troop K, 10th U.S. Cavalry. McBryar was cited for bravery in an engagement against Apache Indians in Arizona on 7 March 1890.

**Private Adam Payne.** Seminole Indian Scout. Cited for valor in an engagement at Staked Plains, west Texas, 20 September 1874.

**Trumpeter Isaac Payne.** Seminole Indian Scout. Cited for valor in an engagement at Eagle Nest, Texas.

**Sergeant Thomas Shaw.** Troop K, 9th U.S. Cavalry. He was cited for valor in Carrizo Canyon, New Mexico on 12 August 1881.

**Sergeant Emanuel Stance.** Troops F, 9th U.S. Cavalry. He was cited for valor in Battle of Kickapoo Springs, Texas on 20 May 1870.

**Private Augustus Walley.** Troop I, 9th U.S. Cavalry. He was cited for bravery in action in the Battle of Cuchillo Negro Mountains, New Mexico, on 16 August 1881.

**Sergeant John Ward.** Seminole Indian Scout. Cited for valor in an engagement at Eagle Nest, Texas.

**First-Sergeant Moses Williams.** Troop I, 9th U.S. Cavalry. He was cited for valor in the Battle of Cuchillo, Negro Mountains, New Mexico on 16 August 1881.

**Corporal William O. Wilson.** Troop I, 9th U.S. Cavalry. Wilson was cited for bravery in a Sioux campaign engagement on 30 December 1890.

**Sergeant Brent Woods.** Troop B, 9th U.S. Cavalry. He was cited for valor in New Mexico on 19 August 1881.

***Navy (1865-1898)***

**Ship's Cook First Class Daniel Atkins.** He was cited for valor aboard the USS CUSHING on 11 February 1898.

**Seaman John Davis.** He was cited for valor aboard the USS TRENTON February 1881.

**Seaman John Johnson.** Cited for valor aboard the USS KANSAS, 12 April 1872.

**Seaman William Johnson.** Cited for valor aboard the USS ADAMS 14 November 1879.

**Seaman Joseph B. Noil.** Cited for valor aboard the USS POWHATAN, 26 December 1872.

**Seaman John Smith.** Cited for valor aboard the USS SHENANDOAH, 19 September 1880.

**Seaman Robert A. Sweeney.** Cited twice, once for valor aboard the USS KEARSARGE, 26 October 1881, and again aboard the USS JAMESTOWN, 20 December 1882.

## Spanish-American War

### *Army*

**Sergeant-Major Edward L. Baker.** Band, 10th U.S. Cavalry. He was cited for bravery for at Santiago, Cuba on 3 July 1898.

**Private Dennis Bell.** Troop H, 10th U.S. Cavalry. He was cited for bravery at Tayabacoa, Cuba on 30 June 1898.

**Private Fitz Lee.** Troop M, 10th U.S. Cavalry. he was cited for bravery at Tayabacoa, Cuba on 30 June 1899.

**Private William H. Thompkins.** Troop G, 10th U.S. Cavalry. He was cited for bravery at Tayabacoa, Cuba on 30 June 1898.

**Private George Wanton.** Troop M, 10th U. S. Cavalry. He was cited for bravery at Tayabacoa, Cuba on 30 June 1898.

### *Navy*

**Robert Penn.** Fireman, First Class. Born in 1872, City Point, Virginia. He served aboard the USS IOWA off Santiago, Cuba, when on 20 July 1898 he risked being boiled alive to continue performing his duties when a manhole gasket blew off releasing boiling water throughout his work area.

## World War I (No awards during the war)

### *Army*

**Frederick Stowers.** Squad leader of Company C, 371st Infantry regiment. On 28 September 1918, he led his squad through heavy machine-gun fire and destroyed

gun positions on Hill 188 in Champagne Marne, where he was mortally wounded. He was recommended for the Congressional Medal of Honor, but never was approved. On 24 April 1991, President George Bush belatedly presented Stowers' award to surviving sisters in a ceremony at the White House.

## **World War II (No awards during the war)**

As part of the 1997 defense authorization bill, seven African Americans were nominated for the Medal of Honor during World War II. These men were: **1st Lieutenant Vernon J. Baker, 1st Lieutenant John R. Fox, 1st Lieutenant Charles L. Thomas, Private George Watson, Staff Sergeant Edward A. Carter, Jr., Private First Class, Willy F. James, Jr., and Staff Sergeant Ruben Rivers.**

## **Korean War**

### ***Army***

**Sergeant Cornelius Charlton.** Company C, 24th Infantry. On 2 June 1951 he was killed while leading a platoon attack on an enemy-held ridge.

**Pfc. William Thompson.** Company M, 24th Infantry. He was killed on 6 August 1950 after fighting off the enemy single-handedly during a withdrawal operation.

## Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire

### The African American Military Experience in the United States, 1619-1953 Survey Questionnaire

Name of Installation: \_\_\_\_\_.

Location (nearest city, and state): \_\_\_\_\_.

Branch of Service: \_\_\_\_\_.

POC: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_.

1. Buildings, structures, objects or sites on my installations which are on the National Register of Historic Places for their significance to or relation to the African American military service. Please list.
2. Buildings, structures, objects or sites on my installation which may be eligible under the African American military service context but are not currently on the National Register.
3. Buildings, structures, objects or sites on my installation which should be eligible for nomination under this context, but I do not have additional data.
4. I would welcome further research or attention regarding this context on my installation, including the possibility of an on-site visit.
5. Other comments.

## Appendix D: Survey Data

Installation	Responded	Known Resources
<b>AIR FORCE</b>		
<b>COMMAND CENTERS</b>		
Air Combat Command	N	
Air Educational & Training Command	Y	
A.F. Base Conversion Agency	N	
A.F. Material Command	Y	
A.F. Reserve	N	
A.F. Space Command	N	
A.F. Special Operations Command	N	
Air Mobility Command	Y	
National Guard Bureau	Y	
Pacific Air Force	Y	
U.S. Air Force Academy	Y	No
A.F. District of Washington	N	
Air National Guard	Y	No
<b>BASES</b>		
Altus AFB, Altus, OK	Y	No
Arnold Engineering Dev. Cen., TN	Y	No
Columbus AFB, Columbus, MS	Y	No
Goodfellow AFB, San Angelo, TX	Y	No
Hickam AFB, Honolulu, HI	Y	No
Lackland AFB, San Antonio, TX	Y	No
Laughlin AFB, Del Rio, TX	Y	No
Randolph AFB, San Antonio, TX	Y	No
Vance AFB, Enid, OK	Y	No
<b>ARMY</b>		
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD	Y	Building
Anniston Army Depot, AL	N	
Armor Center and Ft. Knox, KY	Y	Monument
National Training Center, CA	N	

Badger Ammunition Plant, WI	Y	No
Blue Grass Army Depot, Ky	Y	No
Carlisle Barracks, PA	Y	No
Cornhusker Amm. Plant, NE	N	
Detroit Arsenal, MI	N	
Dugway Proving Ground, UT	N	
Environmental Division, CA	N	
Ethan Allen F.R., VT	N	
Fort A.P. Hill, VA	Y	?
Fort Belvoir, VA	Y	No
Fort Ben Harrison	Y	No
Fort Benning, GA	N	
Fort Bliss, TX	Y	No
Fort Bragg, NC	N	
Fort Campbell, KY	N	
Fort Carson, CO	Y	Building
Fort Chaffee, AR	N	
Fort Devens, MA	N	
Fort Dix, NJ	N	
Fort Drum, NY	Y	No
Fort Eustis, VA	N	
Fort Gordon, GA	N	
Fort Hamilton, NY	N	
Fort Hood, TX	N	
Fort Huachuca, AZ	N	
Fort Jackson, SC	Y	No
Fort Knox	Y	Buildings
Fort Leavenworth, KS	N	
Fort Lee, VA.	Y	No
Fort Leonard Wood, MI	Y	Buildings
Fort McClellan, AL	N	
Fort McCoy, WI	N	
Fort McNair, Washington DC	N	
Fort McPherson, GA	N	
Fort Meade, MD	N	
Fort Monmouth, NJ	N	
Fort Monroe, VA	Y	Buildings



Fort Polk, LA	Y	No
Fort Richardson, AK	N	
Fort Riley, KS	Y	No
Fort Rucker, AL	N	
Fort Sam Houston, TX	N	
Fort Shafter, HI	N	
Fort Sheridan, IL	N	
Fort Sill, OK	Y	Archeol.
Fort Stewart, GA	Y	No
Fort Story, VA	N	
Fort Totten, NY	N	
Fort Wainwright, AK	N	
Hawthorne Amm. Plant, NV	N	
Holston Amm. Plant, TN	N	
HQ, USAG, Fort Pickett, VA	N	
I Corps & Ft. Lewis, WA	N	
Indiana Ammunition Plant	Y	No
Iowa Ammunition Plant, IA	N	
Jefferson Proving Ground, IN	Y	No
Joliet Ammunition Plant, IL	N	
Kansas Ammunition Plant, KS	N	
Lake City Amm. Plant, MO	N	
Letterkenny Depot, PA	N	
Lima Army Tank Plant, OH	N	
Lone Star Ammunition Plant, TX	N	
Longhorn Ammunition Plant, TX	N	
Louisiana Ammunition Plant, LA	N	
Milan Ammunition Plant, TN	N	
Mississippi Ammunition Plant	N	
New Cumberland Depot, PA	N	
Newport Ammunition Plant, IN	N	
Omaha Quartermaster Corps, KS	N	
Picatiny Arsenal, NJ	N	
Pine Bluff Arsenal, AR	N	
Presidio of Monterey	Y	Buildings
Presidio of San Francisco	Y	Buildings
Pueblo Depot Activity, CO	N	

Radford Ammunition Plant, VA	Y	No
Ravenna Ammunition Plant, OH	Y	No
Red River Depot, TX	N	
Redstone Arsenal, AL	N	
Riverbanks Amm. Plant, CA	N	
Rock Island Arsenal, IL	N	
Rocky Mountain Arsenal, CO	Y	No
Sacramento Depot, CA	N	
Savanna Depot Activity	N	
Seneca Army Depot, NY	Y	
Scranton Ammunition Plant	Y	No
Sharpe Depot, CA	N	
Sierra Depot, CA	N	
St. Louis Ammunition Plant, MO	N	
Sunflower Ammunition Plant, KS	N	
Twin Cities Amm. Plant, MN	Y	No
U.S. Military Academy, NY	N	
Vint Hill Farms Station, VA	Y	No
Volunteer Ammunition Plant, TN	N	
Watervliet Arsenal, NY	N	
White Sands Missile Range, NM.	Y	Archeol.
<b>MARINE CORPS</b>		
Camp Lejune, NC		
Quantico, NCY Buildings		
<b>NAVY</b>		
ATLANTIC DIV., Norfolk, VA	N	
NORTHERN DIV., Lester, PA	Y	
ASO, Philadelphia, PA	N	
CBC, Davisville, RI	N	
COMNAVBASE, Philadelphia	N	
COMNAVRESREDCOM REG ONE, Newport RI	N	
COMNAVRESREDCOM REG ONE, Scotia NY	N	
COMNAVRESREDCOM REG FOUR, Philadelphia	N	
COMNAVSHIPYD, Philadelphia	N	
COMNAVSHIPYD, Portsmouth, NH	N	

COMNETC, Newport, RI	Y	No
FIRST MCD, Garden City LI, NY	N	
FOURTH MCD, Philadelphia, PA	N	
NAVADMINU, Scotia, NY	Y	No
Naval Air Propulsion Center, NJ	N	
Naval Air Station, Brinswick, ME	Y	No
Naval Air Station, S. Weymouth MA	N	
Naval Air Station, Willow Grove, PA	Y	No
Naval Hospital, Newport, RI	N	
Naval Station, New York, NY	N	
Naval Station, Philadelphia	N	
NAVCOMMU, Cutler, ME	N	
NAVSECGRUACT, Winter Harbor ME	N	
NAVSOC DET ALFA, Prospect Harbor, ME	N	
NAVWARCOL, Newport RI	N	
NAWCACDIV, Lakehurst, NJ	N	
NAWCACDIV, Warminster, PA	Y	No
NUSC, Newport, RI	Y	No
SPCC, Mechanicsburg, PA	N	
Subase, New London, CT	N	
Weapons Station Earle, Colts Neck, NJ	Y	No
PACIFIC DIV., Pearl Harbor, HI	N	
SOUTHERN DIV., Charleston, SC	N	
SOUTHWEST DIV., San Diego, CA	N	
WASHINGTON NAVY YARD, D.C.	Y	No
WESTERN DIV., San Bruno, CA	N	

During the Fall of 1993, we mailed a survey questionnaire (Appendix C) to the four main branches of the Armed Forces, inquiring about any known African American resources located on Department of Defense properties. Of the 99 Army installations receiving our survey, 31 replied. Nine responded positively with African American resources — six buildings, two archeological and one monument. Some of these features are already nominated as National Historical Landmarks. The remaining respondents either declared no African American resources or were uncertain if any existed.

Several of the respondents remarked that historical/cultural resource surveys were being conducted; many others replied that they were trying to obtain Legacy funding to conduct such a survey. Cultural resource managers at Fort Carson, Fort Bliss, and White Sands Missile Range have attempted to get facilities or features related to African American military experience nominated as historic landmarks, but the facilities were considered ineligible by the National Park Service. Fort Monroe, the Presidio of Monterey, the Presidio of San Francisco, and Fort Sill have had greater success in nominating African American resources to the register of National Historical Landmarks. Many installations reported a history of buildings associated with black troops, but these buildings have since been destroyed.

The Marine Corps did not officially admit blacks into its services until World War II. Since their training was limited to Camps Lejune (Montford Point), North Carolina, and Quantico, Virginia, we only contacted these two installations.

The Marine Corps base at Quantico, Virginia, contains a significant number of structures once used exclusively by African American troops during World War II. In 1943, Quantico constructed Chopawamsic Annex, a planned, self-supporting, segregated site for African American Marines. The annex was located away from other barracks, administrative, and Marine School buildings, and the main entrance. The 11 buildings in this complex consist of 3 barracks, a bachelor enlisted quarters, NCO club, 4 administrative offices, a mess/band facility, and a dispensary. These structures were constructed of inferior material (unlike other buildings on the base) and are structurally substandard. Nevertheless, they are still in fair condition and are eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A. With desegregation the buildings were no longer used exclusively by blacks.

In our survey of the Department of the Navy, we sent inquiries for points of contact to each of the six Naval Divisions. Only the Northern Division responded, providing us with names and addresses of 29 installation commanders. Seven of these individuals answered our survey. Unfortunately, they all replied that their installations had no facilities or features related to the African American naval experience. Neither did they claim any resources already listed as National Historic Landmarks. The respondents explained that their installations either had no history associated with African Americans, or that their buildings have been radically altered since the end of World War II. Many of these installations had either recently completed a Cultural Resource Survey or were attempting to obtain funds for one.

The questionnaire was sent to 13 Air Force command centers. Seven responded. All replied that they were aware of no existing features relevant to our survey. We also sent our questionnaire to nine bases; all of whom replied. Again, they stated there were no features relevant to African American military participation on their base. Like the Army, some of the bases have undergone complete, partial, or plan to have historical/cultural resource surveys of their installation. Randolph AFB in Texas, in fact, provided documentation (a 1943 map) of its installation designating separate "Negro Barracks." However, the air base provided no information stating whether or not these structures are extant. Altus AFB in Oklahoma had similar structures from WWII, but have since been demolished. No respondents claimed to have any site or feature already listed as National Historic Landmarks.

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