

During the **Revolutionary War**, more than 5,000 African-Americans served in either the State Militias or the Continental Army, often in integrated units.

In the **War of 1812** at the Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1815, one of the American units was that of a segregated unit of free African-Americans.

While there is no record of African-American units that served in the **Mexican-American War** (1846-1848), the senior officers had some of their slaves with them.

During the **Civil War**:

- In 1862, the federal government experimented with organizing African-Americans into units in Louisiana.
- 178,975 African-Americans served in the Union Army and served in 145 infantry regiments, 13 artillery regiments, 7 cavalry regiments and 1 engineer regiment. All these were segregated units. Most of these regiments were raised by the federal government.
- Several thousand served in the U.S. Navy.
- Only in March 1865 did the Confederate government authorize the enlistment of African-American soldiers into their military. While Confederate African-American soldiers were seen drilling in Richmond, VA, in late March 1865, there is no record of their enlistments from the Confederate government.
- 23 African-Americans were awarded the Medal of Honor. The first of these included Sergeant William Carney of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment (one of the few State-raised African-American units) for rescuing the regimental colors at the Battle of Fort Wagner, SC, on July 18, 1863. He received his medal in 1900.
- On Sunday, April 9, 1865, thanks to the efforts of a division of the 25th Corps of the Union Army, a segregated unit, they stopped the Confederates from moving westward from Appomattox Court House, VA. As a result, the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia was surrounded and Lee surrendered to Grant.

During the **Indian Wars** (1865-1890):

- African-Americans served in either the 9th or 10th Cavalry Regiment or the 24th or 25th Regiments of the U.S. Army, all segregated units.
- Native Americans called the African-American soldiers "Buffalo Soldiers" and preferred not to fight them. Some notable actions they participated in:
- A troop of the 10th Cavalry rescued another Army unit from being annihilated by several hundred Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho warriors at Beecher's Island on September 25, 1868.
- At the Battle of Wounded Knee, the last recorded battle during the Indian Wars, fought on December 29, 1890, the 9th Cavalry came to the rescue of another Army unit.

"Those troops had suffered second-class treatment after serving as first-class fighting men," an Army officer once wrote. "I was determined that the Buffalo Soldiers were finally going to go first-class." The officer began the process to see that the Buffalo Soldiers were honored and presented with a statue. The process took 10 years and was finally dedicated on July 25, 1992 at Fort Leavenworth, KS. The officer who made the remarks about the Buffalo Soldiers and strived to see that these soldiers were honored was then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (later Secretary of State) General Colin Powell.

The all-African-American 9th and 10th Cavalry and 24th and 25th Infantry served in the **Spanish-American War** in 1898. In the Battle of San Juan Hill in Cuba on July 1, 1898, the 10th Cavalry played a major role in a battle alongside Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders (1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry).

The 9th and 10th Cavalry and 24th and 25th Infantry served in **World War I**. Approximately 367,000 African-Americans served in the U.S. military during this war. 100,000 served in France along the battle front.

Some of the highlights of African-American involvement in **World War II**:

- More than a million served in all branches of the U.S. military in segregated units.
- On December 7, 1941, Mess Attendant Dorie Miller serving on the USS West Virginia ran up on deck and operated a machine gun until he ran out of ammunition. He later assisted the ship's Captain and other sailors. On May 27, 1942 he was presented the Navy Cross for his actions.
- Some of the noteworthy units included: the 92nd Infantry Division which served in Italy; the 761st Tank Battalion which served with the 101st Airborne Division during the siege of Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944; and the 332nd Fighter Group (flying P-40s, P-47s, and P-51s) aka "The Tuskegee Airmen."
- The 332nd Fighter Group established a solid reputation. In their 1,500 missions they never lost a bomber to enemy action they escorted, and on June 4, 1944, returning from a mission they spotted and sank a German destroyer. Wichita resident Don Jackson served as a pilot in the 332nd.
- In the 1990s the Department of Defense upgraded the awards of a half dozen African-Americans to that of the Medal of Honor.

The **Korean War** marked the beginning of the end of segregated units. Approximately 3,000 African-Americans died during the three year war.

During the **Vietnam War**, 275,000 African-Americans served in the U.S. military. Of these 5,681 died in Vietnam. Wichita resident Army Captain Riley L. Pitts won the Medal of Honor posthumously for his actions in Ap Dong, Republic of Vietnam on October 31, 1967 while serving as the company commander of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division.

In **Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm** (August 1990-March 1991), 104,000 African-Americans served in Southwest Asia, comprising 20% of all U.S. military personnel on duty there. African-Americans served in key positions for the first time in a war. At the top was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell. Lieutenant General Cal Walker served as deputy (second-in-command) to General Norman Schwarzkopf.