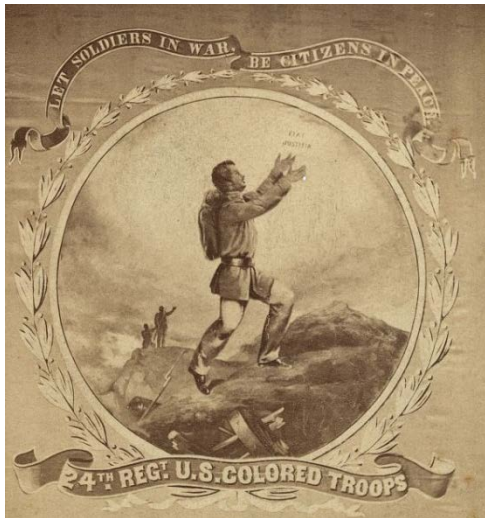


# African Americans in Military Service

## *Civil War Through World War I*

National cemeteries were created in the 1860s to honor those who serve in America's armed forces, a mission that continues today. The NCA system and its memorial features have expanded over more than 150 years, and reflect the diversity of demographic groups who answered the call. At many locations segregation in life meant segregation in death; but the Army was insistent that white or black, U.S. veterans deserved burial in a national cemetery. The struggles and injustice endured by African-American service members in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries echoed the social and political climate of civilian life. African Americans served in all U.S. conflicts: but the years between the Civil War and the Korean War -- after desegregation was mandated in 1948 -- were the most contentious. The fight for racial equality is evidenced through the recognition of veteran activists, pilots, heroes, artists, journalists, and sadly, victims. Their inspirational stories helped advance American civil rights, and what follows are some accounts of African-American service from the Civil War through World War I, as reflected in VA national cemeteries.

### U.S. Colored Troops in the Civil War



Detail of carte de visite of a US Colored Troops regimental flag and motto, ca. 1862. Library of Congress.

*During the Civil War, 179,000 African Americans are estimated to have served as part of six units of U.S. Colored Troops (USCT), segregated into 175 regiments. These were the first organized units for black soldiers and these men, many formerly enslaved, enthusiastically volunteered to fight for the Union. As soldiers they fulfilled combat and labor functions. By the war's end, black soldiers represented 10 percent of the Union Army and about 25 percent of the naval force.*

*Today, approximately 36 national cemeteries managed by NCA contain almost 24,000 African-American troops; just over half were buried as "unknowns." The rate of lost identities among the fallen USCT, almost 60 percent of all Union troops, overshadows the nearly 44 percent of white soldiers buried as unknown as of 1870. After the war, the army established National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers to care for Union veterans, black and white. Here are some of their stories, including the first admitted to the Dayton Home in 1867.*

**Wilson Brown** was born into slavery in 1841 at Natchez, MS. During the Civil War, Brown escaped to the Navy gunboat USS *Hartford* and enlisted in 1863. Landsman Brown served until 1865, including aboard the *Hartford*, and returned to Natchez at war's end. During the Battle of Mobile Bay (AL) on August 5, 1864, Brown was knocked unconscious in the ship's hold by a shell burst. He regained consciousness and returned to supplying cannon ammunition. Brown was awarded the Medal of Honor for bravery. He died in January 1900 and is buried in Natchez National Cemetery (Section G, Grave 3152).

Born in Kentucky around 1820, **Joshua Dunbar** enlisted in the army in 1863 in Boston. Pvt Dunbar joined the all-black 55<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, was medically discharged

later that year, and re-enlisted with the 5<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts cavalry for the duration of the Civil War. Dunbar married and divorced in the 1870s and entered the Central Branch of the National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers at Dayton in 1882. His young son, Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906), became “one of the first influential black poets in American literature.” His father’s experiences as a former slave and a soldier influenced his writing about black life at the turn of the century. Joshua Dunbar died August 16, 1885, and is buried in Dayton National Cemetery (Section E, Row 14, Grave 8).

**William (Willis) H. Furbush** was born in Kentucky ca. 1840, and little is known of his childhood. He was literate and an accomplished photographer. Furbush enlisted in the army in February 1865, joining the 42<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Colored Troops Infantry. Sgt. Furbush was honorably discharged in October, and in 1866, he went with the American Colonization Society to Liberia. Furbush returned to the United States when Reconstruction offered political and economic opportunities to African Americans. He was elected to the Arkansas General Assembly in 1872. Furbush’s career received mixed reviews because he supported civil rights and was a conservative collaborator with white Democrats during this period. Furbush entered the Marion Branch of the National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers in October 1901 and died September 3, 1902 (Section 1, Grave 774).

**Alfred B. Hilton** was about 21 years old when he enlisted in the army on August 11, 1863, in Baltimore, MD. Hilton served in Company H, 4<sup>th</sup> U.S. Colored Troops (USCT), as a bearer of the flag, or national standard. At the Battle of Chaffin’s Farm (Fort Harrison, VA) on September 29, 1864, he seized the regimental colors when the color-sergeant fell. Sergeant Hilton struggled forward with both flags until severely wounded at the enemy’s inner line. Hilton’s right leg was amputated and he died at Fort Monroe hospital on October 21, 1864. Hilton received the Medal of Honor posthumously, in April 1865, and he is buried in Hampton National Cemetery (Section E, Grave 1231).

**Charles Veale** was born in 1838 at Portsmouth, VA. He enlisted in Company D, 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment, U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) in 1863 and served under General Benjamin Butler. He received the Medal of Honor for bravery during the Battle of Chaffin’s Farm (Fort Harrison, VA) on September 29, 1864, after which he was promoted to sergeant. Veale was wounded at Fort Fisher, NC, in January 1865 and he mustered out in May 1866. Veale’s health was compromised, and in 1872 General Butler helped admit him to the Southern Branch, National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers at Hampton. Veale died of chronic bronchitis on July 27, 1872, and is buried in Hampton National Cemetery (Section FI, Grave 5097).

Pennsylvanian **Joshua Williams** was born ca. 1840 and he enlisted in the army in 1864. Pvt. Williams served in Company G of the 22<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Colored Troops Infantry. He mustered out in October 1865 and entered the Central Branch of the National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers in March 1867. Williams was the first black veteran to be admitted to the Dayton, Ohio, facility. He died on August 31, 1872. Williams is buried in Dayton National Cemetery (Section A, Row 10, Grave 56).

## “Buffalo Soldiers” on the Western Frontier

*In 1866 the Army Reorganization Act authorized the formation of 30 new regiments. Based on the outstanding U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) performance in the Civil War, it included six all-black units: the 9th and 10th Cavalry, and the 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st Infantry regiments. A consolidation in 1869 reorganized the four units of foot soldiers into the 24th and 25th infantry regiments. Cavalry*



Buffalo Soldiers (9th Cavalry) at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, 1889. National Archives .

*units were nicknamed “Buffalo Soldiers” by the Plains Indians with whom they engaged in battle for control of the West. The reason for the term remains speculative: the black soldiers’ hair resembled buffalo and they wore buffalo hides for warmth, but it may refer to the fierceness of a buffalo with which black soldiers fought. For definitive historic accuracy, “Buffalo Soldier” is confined to the units that served during the years immediately after the Civil War and during the Indian Wars. “Buffalo Soldier” soon became an honorific term for black heroism and service, especially since the segregated cavalry and infantry units remained into the mid twentieth century.*

*Between 1865 and 1870, as African Americans sought opportunity in the military, three U.S. Constitutional amendments abolished slavery, addressed citizenship, and guaranteed the right to vote. In practice, however, equal rights were not quickly realized. The 1896 “separate but equal” decision in Plessy v. Ferguson further entrenched segregation. Advocates for civil rights organized, lobbied, and fought to end racial discrimination. W.E.B. DuBois and William Trotter organized the Niagara Movement in 1905, the first significant organized black-protest campaign in the twentieth century. The group sought economic and educational opportunities for black Americans, as well as voting rights as promised by the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment. After a race riot in Springfield, IL, in 1908, leaders of the Niagara Movement joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The NAACP took up civilian and military cases and pressed for judicial action to enforce constitutional rights, and addressed the stubborn, persistent prejudices.*



Ford. Westfordlegacy.com

**George W. Ford** was a career national cemetery superintendent and civil rights activist whose headstone at Camp Butler National Cemetery, IL, reads “Supt. of this cemetery for 24 years,” reveals nothing of his remarkable life. Born a free black in 1847, he became one of the first African Americans appointed as a national cemetery superintendent, a career that spanned over a half century.

Ford’s grandfather was President George Washington’s personal attendant, and as a boy he sold pictures to tourists outside Mount Vernon. At 20 he joined the 10<sup>th</sup> U.S. Cavalry. Ford later reflected: “[I] am the only living survivor of the original regiment...who marched away

toward the Rio Grande, 1,225 strong in 1867.”

First Sgt. Ford was honorably discharged in 1877 with high praise. His commander recommended him for a civilian job as an assistant at Chattanooga National Cemetery, TN. His duties, allegedly, were limited to burial sections of black soldiers. He was soon transferred to Beaufort National Cemetery, SC, as superintendent after white predecessors complained about the unhealthy climate. Ford and his family lived there until 1894. He subsequently worked at Fort Scott, KS, and Port Hudson, LA, before settling in Illinois in 1905. He retired from Camp Butler National Cemetery in 1930.

Ford left his cemetery post once, to fight in the Spanish-American War. Major Ford went to Cuba with the 23<sup>rd</sup> Kansas Volunteers, commanded by Teddy Roosevelt. As a result he was a delegate to the Republican National Convention of 1899, where Roosevelt was nominated as vice president. In 1905, Ford lobbied for civil rights as a charter member of the Niagara Movement. He died on June 20, 1939, and is buried in Camp Butler National Cemetery.

**Alphonse Girandy** was born in the French West Indies and he immigrated to the United States. In 1896 he enlisted in the navy and received naturalized citizenship. Seaman Girandy served on the USS *Brooklyn* during his first tour, and in 1899 he re-enlisted. Between 1900 and 1904 Girandy was on the USS *Petrel* when, in 1901, the ship caught fire. His actions, “fearlessly exposing his own life to danger for the saving of others,” were recognized in March 1902 when Girandy received the Medal of Honor. After leaving the military he lived in Philadelphia, where he died on April 3, 1941. He is buried in Philadelphia National Cemetery (Section N, Grave 66).

**George Jordan**, born about 1850 in Tennessee, enlisted in the U.S. Army in Nashville in 1866. Illiterate at the time, he learned to read and write while in service. Private Jordan transferred to the 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry in 1870 and, posted to the Indian Territories; he fought hostile Apache and Sioux tribes. He was promoted to corporal in 1874. In 1890 Sergeant Jordan received the Medal of Honor for holding ground against greater numbers of the enemy in 1880 and 1881. He was the first African American so recognized in two decades. After retiring in April 1897, Jordan remained in Nebraska and, as a landowner, lobbied for the right to vote. In fall 1904 he sought medical attention at the Fort Robinson hospital but he was denied admission; he died that October. Jordan was buried at Fort Robinson and in 1947 his remains were transferred to Fort McPherson National Cemetery (Section F, Grave 1131).

**Emanuel Stance** was born in Louisiana in 1848 and he enlisted in the army in 1866. Stance joined Troop F, 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, and spent most of his career on active frontier duty in the Southwest. Sergeant Stance received the Medal of Honor in May 1870 for unquestioned courage. However, he had a volatile personality and drove his men hard. Stance was demoted to private and restored to rank several times. In 1885 Troop F was posted at Fort Robinson, NE. There, Stance was murdered on Christmas Day 1887, likely by his own men. In 1947, his remains were transferred from Fort Robinson to Fort McPherson National Cemetery (Section F, Grave 1040).

Kentucky-born **Brent Woods** enlisted in the army in Louisville by 1878. He was a career soldier who served until 1902; he retired as a sergeant and returned to Kentucky. Woods saw action during the Indian Wars fought in the western territories, and on August 19, 1881, he saved the lives of his detachment there. In July 1894, that bravery was recognized



Woods. Library of Congress.

with the Medal of Honor. Woods died August 20, 1906, and he is buried in Mill Springs National Cemetery, KY (Section A, Grave 930).

## Spanish-American War

*The 10-month-long Spanish-American War of 1898 resulted in Spain relinquishing its claim on Cuba, and ceding Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines to the United States. Significant battles were waged, but the best known in popular history is the charge up San Juan Hill that took place July 1, 1898, in Cuba, because of Teddy Roosevelt and his "Rough Riders." Yet an estimated 200,000 volunteers and National Guard units fought in the Spanish-American War, including 3,339 African-American regulars and about 10,000 volunteers.*



African American soldiers at Camp Meade, PA, 1899. Library of Congress.

*The Army sent its Buffalo Soldier cavalry and infantry regiments to Tampa, FL, to prepare for the invasion of Cuba. The move provided new visibility to the black soldiers' service relative to the obscurity of their tours of duty in the western territories. Once in Cuba, the color line broke down during the heat of battle for San Juan Heights. The battle included Roosevelt's legendary charge up San Juan Hill and an assault on Kettle Hill by unsegregated black and white soldiers. Over 200 soldiers were killed on San Juan Heights and around thirty of them were Buffalo Soldiers. Less known is the other battle fought that day at El Caney, east of Santiago. In that campaign, ten soldiers and two officers of the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry were killed. At the war's end, the troops' performance in Cuba received acclaim alongside that of Roosevelt and his "Rough Riders." The reception of the Buffalo Soldiers at home encouraged the many black Americans who faced institutionalized segregation and racial discrimination in everyday life.*

**Fitz Lee** was born in June 1866, in Dinwiddie County, VA. In 1889 he enlisted in the U.S. Army and served with Troop M, 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry. At the beginning of his third enlistment, the United States declared war on Spain and Private Lee was among those in Tayabacoa, Cuba, in 1898. On June 30 that year, Lee and four others volunteered to rescue wounded men stranded on the Cuban beach. For his bravery Lee was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1899. He received the medal while hospitalized in Fort Bliss, TX. Discharged in July, he went to Leavenworth, KS, where a supportive community of black veterans lived. They cared for Lee until his death on September 14, 1899. Lee was buried with full military honors at Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery (Section G, Grave 3183).



Thompkins.  
[www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com).

**William H. Thompkins** was born in 1872 at Paterson, NJ. By June 1898, Private Thompkins had enlisted in the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and was serving in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. At Tayabacoa, Thompkins led an effort to rescue stranded troops. For his actions, Thompkins was awarded the Medal of Honor. While in Company D, 25<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, he was promoted

to sergeant, but he died later that year, on September 30, 1916. He is buried in San Francisco National Cemetery (Section WS, Grave 1036-A).



Two unidentified African American soldiers, 1917-1918. Library of Congress.

## Segregation and Racial Uneasiness Serving in World War I

*During World War I, African-Americans made up nearly 11 percent of the army in the form of 404,000 officers and enlisted men, in part through segregated drafts. Racial bias was so strong that most blacks worked on vital but generally unskilled tasks, including construction. The exception was the 92<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, and four regiments of the 93<sup>d</sup> Infantry Division (369<sup>th</sup>, 370<sup>th</sup>, 371<sup>st</sup>, 372<sup>nd</sup>), which fought with France's 4<sup>th</sup> Army. Blacks in these units were considered local heroes. Yet after the war ended in 1919, some whites at home feared that African-American veterans would demand civilian equality based on their military experience. Racial tension spiked. During summer and fall 1919, twenty-five American cities endured major anti-black race riots in which white mobs lynched at least 10 black veterans in uniform. The Houston Riot of 1917 foreshadowed these tragic events. VA's national cemeteries contain an estimated 300,000 World War I veterans.*

## Houston Riots of 1917

When World War I broke out in April 1917, the War Department ordered two military installations built at Harris County, TX. Black soldiers in the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry were sent to protect the construction work despite the area's reputation for racial discrimination. African-American troops guarding Camp Logan outside Houston were embroiled in the Houston Riots of 1917 -- one of largest race riots in U.S. history to that point and one where only black soldiers were condemned in a lapse of procedure and miscarriage of justice. Of the 19 African-American soldiers executed for their role, 17 are interred at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, TX.

The Third Battalion of the 24th Infantry, composed of 654 black soldiers, arrived at Camp Logan on the outskirts of Houston in July 1917. The segregated military echoed life in the South under "Jim Crow." The soldiers endured daily racial slurs and taunting by local citizens.

On August 23, 1917, city police arrested a black soldier for interfering in the arrest of a black civilian woman. When Charles Baltimore, a black corporal stationed at the Camp, inquired about the infantryman's arrest, the situation escalated. A white officer then assaulted Baltimore and took him to the police station. Baltimore was soon released, but rumors to the contrary spread.

False reports that Baltimore had been killed at the hands of white police incited some soldiers from the 24<sup>th</sup> to demand his release. That evening, the rumors led an estimated 150 men of the 24th Infantry to march two hours into Houston. The riot that ensued left sixteen white civilians dead, including four policemen and two National Guardsmen. Four black soldiers died, two of whom were accidentally shot by their comrades.



Courtroom scene during the first trial of those charged in the riots of August 23, 1917. National Archives.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1918.

### HABEAS CORPUS FOR RELEASE OF MEN IN THE HOUSTON RIOT

KANSAS DEFENSE SOCIETY TO  
TAKE UP CASES OF SOLEIRED  
SOLDIERS SENTENCED  
BY THE MILITARY  
TRIBUNAL.

The Kansas Defense Society is an organization instituted for the purpose of testing the constitutional rights of the race along civil, political and other lines that may be necessary to bring about justice and sentiment in behalf of the race in this country. This organization was formed because of the conviction and local lynching of the thirteen soldiers of the 24th Infantry at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, last December, 1917, for participating in a riot at Houston, Texas, in August of the same year. It will be remembered that these soldiers were acting in self defense from the fact that they had been mistreated and assaulted by the police of Houston and it had been reported to them that a mob of white men had threatened to sweep down upon their camp and drive them out. Acting on this information the soldiers prepared themselves, and receiving orders from non-commissioned officers that the mob was descending upon them, they began to fire and at the same time marching upon the town which action resulted in the death of several persons.

They were taken to Fort Sam Houston, disarmed and through the policy of Texas officers investigation was started, and some weak minded soldiers from the South who had been in the service only a few months were induced to turn state's evidence on a promise of immunity. From what we have read of the trial it seems that this was a kangaroo court and the men were never fairly tried.

There have been three court martials. Sixty-three soldiers were tried in the first, which resulted in the hanging of thirteen without their cases ever being reviewed by President Wilson. Forty others were sent to the Federal prison for life, and the remaining ten were disposed of in various ways. Three or four were sent to military prisons, a few were given jail sentences. A second court martial resulted in the conviction of sixteen, which sentences President Wilson has just approved. This makes a total of nineteen brave colored soldiers to be executed for participation in the Houston riots.

The evidence shows that this riot at Houston occurred in the night when it was very dark and it was impossible to tell who were taking part. These soldiers were convicted upon circumstantial evidence given by soldiers forced to testify as they did on account of fear or promises made them for their own safety.

Under rules of the court martial all evidence and findings must be submitted to the President of the United States, and this was not done in the case of these soldiers, but their sentences were approved by the commander of the southern department. This being true, these men are being illegally held in the federal prison and should be given their liberty.

The Kansas Defense Society, of which Nick Chiles is president, has employed three colored attorneys to bring habeas corpus proceedings in the United States District Court, and if necessary will carry this case to the highest court in the land. Attorney T. W. Bell, one of the best lawyers of Kansas, located at Leavenworth; E. T. Harbour of El Reno, Oklahoma, and Eliza Scott, a young attorney of Topeka, have been employed and the case, No. 1933 was filed at Topeka, Kansas in the United States District Court, Friday, October 4, 1918.

We are now asking the public and friends of the race to contribute as much as they can afford to assist us to properly prosecute this case. We have consulted several lawyers of prominence, and they all agree that this case can be won, and the Kansas Defense Society, believing this to be true, has employed these attorneys. As editor of the Topeka Plaindealer, a newspaper published in the interest of the race, we feel that it is our duty to take up all matters of this kind. Our people have been bartered, bargained, and sold by members of the race, and cruelly, unmercifully, and maliciously assaulted by the white race long enough.

When we think of the East Saint Louis riot, the hanging of these thirteen soldiers, and the brutal lynching of a colored woman by a Georgia mob a few weeks ago, it is enough to make the beasts of the forest frown, to say nothing of the effect it would have upon a human being. This woman, who was so heartily treated, was about to become a mother, and she was hanged by her feet and split open with a sharp instrument, and the babe dropped from her and was strangled to death by some member of the mob. It is a shame and disgrace upon Christian civilization to have such things exist in this country, and some methods should be used to hire detectives and officers to run down these lynchings and bring them to justice.

As aforesaid, the Kansas Defense Society is soliciting funds to be used in this case and any one desiring to help will write NICK CHILES, President of the Kansas Defense Society, Editor and Owner of The Topeka Plaindealer, Topeka, Kansas.

Response was swift. The army charged 118 men; only eight were found to be innocent. Most were sentenced to life in prison, but 19 “mutinous soldiers” were hanged.

Three court martials were held between November 1917 and March 1918. In the first held during the month of November, 63 men were tried; 13 men were condemned to death without an opportunity to address their appellate rights. They were hanged on December 11, 1917. Public outcry ensured subsequent verdicts would be reviewed. After the second trial that took place December 17-22 resulted in five death sentences, petitions for clemency flooded the White House. More protests followed the last tribunal, February 18-March 26, 1918, in which another eleven death sentences were made. President Woodrow Wilson commuted the sentences for only ten soldiers; no civilians were punished for their roles in the riot. Only these black soldiers were charged with any wrongdoing.

The executed soldiers were buried near Salado Creek in San Antonio. Between 1917 and 1937, the graves were marked with headstones and enclosed by an iron fence. Two bodies were later claimed by family members. In May 1937, military authorities reinterred the seventeen remains in the Post Section of the newly designated Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery (Section PA, Graves 20-36). The reinterment was later criticized by whites, and the Secretary of War defended the reburials in the national cemetery because of the number of visitors to the fort the burials had attracted.

#### Men of Company I, 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry

*Twelve of the thirteen men who were hanged December 11, 1917, are buried at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery:*

- Charles Baltimore enlisted in September 1914. He was a regiment policeman.
- William Breckenridge enlisted in March 13, 1913.
- Ira B. Davis was born in Georgia in 1889. He served in Company D from November 1911 to November 1914. Davis reenlisted in November 1914.
- James Divins enlisted on February 12, 1915.
- Thomas C. Hawkins enlisted in October 1914.
- Frank Johnson enlisted on April 14, 1917.
- Patrick McWhorter, born in Georgia in 1893, enlisted in the Army in April 1913. After April 1916, he served with I Company.
- Jesse Moore attended the U.S. Army Service School Detachment from October 1910 to October 1913. He joined I Company in January 1915, and was promoted to corporal that summer.
- William C. Nesbit joined the Army in September 1911; he reenlisted in August 1914 with the rank of corporal, later promoted to sergeant.
- Carlos Snodgrass enlisted in July 1912, and reenlisted in July 1915.
- Cpl. James Wheatley enlisted in May 1913, first serving with Company C, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry; in April 1916 he reenlisted.
- Risley W. Young enlisted in October 1916.

*Five men were convicted in the death of Houstonian E. M. Jones; appeals for clemency from President Woodrow Wilson were unanswered and they were hanged on September 17, 1918 (Section PA, Graves 30-32, 34). After the third court martial convicted 11 soldiers, President Wilson commuted the sentences for 10. The eleventh, William Boone, was hanged on*



*September 24, 1918 (Section PA, Grave 21). Of the six who died in 1918, five are interred at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery:*

- Georgia-born Babe Collier enlisted at Fort Oglethorpe in February 1915.
- Thomas McDonald enlisted at a recruiting depot, likely in fall 1914, and was a cook.
- Pvt. James Robinson
- Pvt. Albert Wright
- PFC William D. Boone



Graves of 17 Houston Riot victims buried at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

*While African-Americans continued to face discrimination at home, in their civilian and military lives, on the battlefields abroad their service was recognized and appreciated. Established regiments of black soldiers – the cavalry and infantry honorifically known as Buffalo Soldiers – were posted to the U.S.-Mexican border in the 1910s, but individuals from those regiments and new enlistees joined the war effort in Europe in other divisions. Members of the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, for example, fought with French troops on the front lines as part of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division.*

*At home, during the Mexican Revolution, the U.S. Army stationed troops along the border and several skirmishes took place, most notably in 1916 when General John J. Pershing pursued Pancho Villa into northern Mexico after an attack on Columbus, New Mexico. Border conflicts continued until the U.S. victory in the Battle of Ambos Nogales in August 1918; however, the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry and 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry remained in the southwest to 1922.*

First Lieutenant **Aurelious P. Alberga** was one of the first black army officers in World War I. He trained at Fort Des Moines, IA, the only facility for black officers. He was acting captain of Company A, 365th Infantry, responsible for the organization of recreational activities for his barracks. Following the war he helped establish the Booker T. Washington Community Center in San Francisco, aimed at improving the lives of African American youth in the city, and helped found the Northern California branch of the NAACP. Alberga died September 22, 1988, and is buried in Golden Gate National Cemetery.

**William Bash** was born in St. Louis in 1896. Private First Class Bash enlisted in the army in April 1917 and served with the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry until March 1919. The 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry was one of the original all-black regiments formed in 1866 that became known as Buffalo Soldiers. In the 1910s, the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry patrolled the U.S.-Mexican border. Despite the military's expansion

during World War I, the 10<sup>th</sup> cavalry remained in Arizona. Buffalo Soldiers were not called to fight in Europe as a regiment. Individuals from the 10<sup>th</sup> mobilized for war while others garrisoned at the border took part in the Battle of Ambos Nogales in August 1918. The 10<sup>th</sup> cavalry remained there until 1922. PFC Bash died October 27, 1951, and is buried in Fort Logan National Cemetery (Section H, Grave 353).

**Otis Beverly Duncan** was born on November 18, 1873, in Springfield, IL. His grandfather, William Fleurville, was President Abraham Lincoln's barber and honorary pallbearer at his funeral. The false arrest of his grandson, Duncan's cousin, helped spark the Springfield Race Riot of 1908 which in turn led to the establishment of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Duncan worked for the Illinois Superintendent of Public Instruction, and he joined the National Guard in 1902. He served with the 8<sup>th</sup> Illinois during the 1916 Mexican Border conflict and the 370<sup>th</sup> Infantry (8<sup>th</sup> IL) during World War I. At the war's end, Lt. Col. Duncan was the American Expeditionary Forces' highest-ranking African-American officer and he received the French Croix de Guerre. Back in Springfield, he became commanding officer of the 8<sup>th</sup> Illinois National Guard and the American Legion Post is named for him. Duncan died May 17, 1937, and is buried in Camp Butler National Cemetery (Section 3, Grave 835).



Duncan. U.S. Army.

**Sam Hall** was born in February 1895 and he enlisted in the army in April 1914. Private First Class Hall served in Company K, 24<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry. This regiment was long known as Buffalo Soldiers from its origin on the western frontier during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hall and the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry spent World War I years patrolling the U.S. border with Mexico. He was discharged in August 1923 and died December 12, 1924. He is buried in Natchez National Cemetery (Section B, Grave 3538).

Indianan **Arthur McDonald** was born in 1889. He enlisted in the army in June 1919 and served as a mechanic in Company D, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry until July 1920. McDonald's company was among those formed for black soldiers in 1866. These segregated regiments became known as Buffalo Soldiers. By World War I, the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Buffalo Soldier had come to represent all African-American soldiers. Race influenced where regiments were deployed. Some 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry troops spent the war months in Hawaii; others in Arizona fought in the Battle of Ambos Nogales, August 1918 during the border conflict with Mexico. After World War I, they remained on the U.S.-Mexican border and by January 1920 McDonald was stationed at Camp Little, AZ. He died October 11, 1951, and is buried in Fort Logan National Cemetery (Section H, Grave 197).

South Carolinian **Joseph Simmons** was born in 1899 and attended the Penn School on St. Helena Island, one of the country's first schools for freed slaves. He enlisted in the army on February 18, 1918. Master SGT Simmons fought with the French during World War I, attached to the 5<sup>th</sup> Marines in three campaigns--including Belleau Wood, where the Marines halted the German offensive in June 1918 in one of the bloodiest battles of World War I. During World War II, Simmons served with the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry. An interest in music led to his becoming assistant bandleader, 92<sup>nd</sup> Division, in 1944. Simmons served for 34 years in all. He received the French Legion of Honor Medal for his World War I service, just a few weeks before his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. He died September 24, 1999, and is buried in Beaufort National Cemetery.

Born in Indiana in 1896, **William F. Walker** graduated from Pendleton High School in 1915 and enlisted in 1918. During the First World War, Private First Class Walker performed as an Army

singer and bandleader in France. Following military service, Walker became an actor and he appeared in a number of films during Hollywood's golden era, most notably as Reverend Sykes in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Walker was elected to the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) board of directors in 1952. Frustrated with discrimination African Americans faced in the film industry, he presented a report about the limited and stereotypical roles offered to black performers to the union with then-SAG President Ronald Reagan. Involved with SAG for two decades, Walker continued to push for greater integration in the movie industry. He died January 27, 1992, and is buried at Riverside National Cemetery (Section 32, Grave 631).