THE 369TH EXPERIENCE:

A RESOURCE STUDY GUIDE FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

By David Taft Terry, Ph.D.
Morgan State University

OVERVIEW

This Resources Guide for College Students supports scholarly engagement of the themes explored in "The 369th Experience." It is hoped that undergraduate and graduate students will use the primary sources and secondary literature identified in this brief guide to explore the lives and experiences of the men of the 369th Regiment and their broader historical moment. This guide is organized into thematic sections. The themes are by no means exhaustive, and should be read merely as examples of the broad possibilities for historical research and study of this important topic.

Following a brief introductory statement, the first section of this guide addresses the long historical context out of which the 369th emerged. A second section engages the 369th and its contemporaneous combat and noncombat units in wartime. Section Three approaches some of the meanings blacks on the homefront drew from World War I. A final concluding statement offers perspective upon the uses to which the legacies of black participation in World War I were put through the remainder of the Jim Crow era. Within each of these thematic sections, a brief essay provides broad contexts. This is followed by a subsection of suggested exploratory questions drawn from the stated themes. It is not proposed that a reading of the brief thematic essays would provide insights sufficient to answer the respective proposed questions. Rather, these questions simply guide deeper investigation of those thematic topics. Finally, toward that end, each thematic section also includes an overview of selected primary and secondary resources for research on the themes and questions of each respective section.

With regard to archival materials, in only a few instances have personal manuscript collections been noted, a preference instead going to large institutional collections. Also excluded from mention here are non-textual archives (photographs, artifacts, textiles, recordings), though a number of extensive collections exist including that of the National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri. Similarly, it should be noted that book lists here generally exclude general surveys in favor of topic-specific works, although many fine general surveys could be mentioned (not the least of which are Astor's The Right to Fight: A History of African Americans in the Military, 1998, and any edition of Franklin's enduring From Slavery to Freedom: A History of the African Americans, 2010 [1947]). As an overview document, the resources referenced here are, by intention, cursory and represent only suggestions toward sound starting points for more thorough academic investigations.

"Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letters U. S.," Frederick Douglass insisted in 1863 during a pivotal moment in the American Civil War, ". . . and there is no power on Earth or under the earth which can deny that he has earned the right of citizenship in the United States." With the formation of the United States Colored Troops (USCT) – an organization of over 178,000 freed slaves and free blacks fighting in 175 regiments – black soldiers helped to preserve their nation and kill slavery once for all in America.

After the war, blacks pursued opportunities for continued military service as their civic duty and birthright. Given the turmoil of those times, they also expected their sacrifices to continue making the case, as Douglass prophesied, for their full and equal opportunities in American life. Indeed, through service, sacrifice, and achievement in the face of doubt and adversity, black soldiers became icons for their race in the new era soon to begin. The post-bellum nineteenth century saw black men across the nation drawn with great enthusiasm into military service -- enthusiasm for the sense of duty military service offered, and for the opportunity represented by military service to "advance the race." Indeed, as much as any other claim, going into the World War I era, and for decades thereafter, black Americans held out their military sacrifice as evidence of patriotism, and justification for full and equal citizenship rights.

A plethora of primary and secondary resources are available to student researchers on this topic. For those interested simply in textual records, for example, not only are such records available, but many collections have been digitized, making access and use more possible than ever before. Greater access will lead to new and better nuanced investigations, as there are many more questions to ask, more perspectives and experiences to incorporate into our narrative interpretation of the period. This is especially true for the African American experience during WWI where the impact of military participation on unfolding black history has only just begun to be appreciated by the field. Rich and rewarding investigations await student researchers.

AN HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR THE 369TH

In the fifty years between the end of the Civil War and the outbreak of the First World War, the United States expanded its hegemony over the western hemisphere. In the first steps of this empire-building, the U.S. resumed a program of trans-continental expansion, dislodging Native Americans from western lands. Toward this purpose, the Army Reorganization Act of 1866 redesigned the American military. The new structure included opportunities for African Americans to serve in the "regular" (or peacetime) army. While black military service would continue as it had during the Civil War, under strict racial segregation, black men – including some three thousand USCT veterans – eagerly enlisted to serve in the regular units nonetheless.

Ultimately designated as the 9th and 10th cavalries, and the 24th and 25th infantries, these units patrolled the southwest and the Great Plains. They protected American settlers, escorted stage coaches, guarded supply lines, built roads and telegraph systems. They also engaged Comanche, Kiowa, Sioux, Cheyenne, and other Native Americans nations on the battlefields during the last "Indian Wars." Highly regarded for their mental toughness, tenacity in battle, and skills on the trail, the black regulars came to be popularly known as "The Buffalo Soldiers."

By the turn of the twentieth century, with the Indian Wars largely brought to close, a second phase of empire-building began. As European nations had commenced a hotly contested "scramble for Africa" in other areas of the world, military force facilitated significant expansion of American geopolitical influence over the Western Hemisphere. The United States came to dominate foreign peoples in Cuba, the Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and elsewhere. Joining a fighting force that already included the regular army's Buffalo Soldiers, America's imperial wars also brought several regiments of black "citizen-soldiers" into service. Citizen-soldier models of service allowed Americans opportunities to meet their desire and duty to serve while otherwise living civilian lives. In peacetime, state and local militia organizations offered such opportunities. In times of war, the various state organizations often volunteered as a body and served together as a unit, or individual civilians answered calls-to-arms through United States Volunteers (USV) units. In the Spanish-American War (1898), for example, the 8th Illinois Volunteer Infantry, the 23rd Kansas Volunteer Infantry, and the 9th USV Infantry saw combat in Cuba. In the Filipino-American War (1899 – 1902), the 48th and 49th USV Regiments joined the nation's fighting force.

Interestingly, because the enemy combatants in these foreign theatres were other peoples of color who themselves fought in the name of freedom, many African Americans experienced great moral dilemma in helping to suppress such efforts. The black print media was filled with debate over the issue – fighting for freedom at home, while helping to deny it to other peoples of color abroad. What was more, for example, Filipino combatants vocally challenged African American soldiers on the battlefield to confront the conflicted nature of their service. African American troops stood firmly, nonetheless (save for a few notable exceptions). However, as they continued to fight bravely for their country, these encounters strengthened black resolve to demand racial justice and full participation in American life.

Throughout the closing decades of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, the black press kept military service fresh in the popular black imagination. Black public awareness and interest in the doings of the black regulars and volunteer citizen-soldiers, in wartime and peace, remained consistent. For many, soldiers came to represent some of the best examples of black resilience and achievement in the face of southern Jim Crow and pervasive anti-black discrimination elsewhere. Meanwhile, global racism, heightened economic competition, and failures in international leadership hurtled the nations of Europe toward war by the 1910s. The United States only begrudgingly joined them. The regular army's Buffalo Soldier units did not participate in "The Great War." Yet, there is no doubt that those African Americans who did fight, including the men of the 369th Infantry Regiment

from Harlem, New York, understood the long tradition of military service they carried forward with them to the trenches of Europe.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

For students seeking to explore and analyze these themes at greater depth, a number of organizing questions may serve such investigations.

1. Why at the time of the Civil War did military service and soldiering play such a crucial role for African American seeking greater claims to freedom, citizenship, and duty?
2. With slavery dead, freedom taken, and citizenship won, what paths to desired social, political, and economic destinies did soldiering illuminate for blacks after Emancipation?
3. Did military service function as prerequisite for civilian leadership during the post-Emancipation decades in any way, and if so to what impacts?
4. By the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, what varying perspectives did black soldiers, intellectuals, and public opinion-makers hold about their participation in the subjugation of other peoples of color through military service?
5. What do these perspectives tell us about the breadth of black social justice thought and strategy at the dawn of the Jim Crow era, and how might black experiences prior to WWI have shaped black expectations of service in that conflict?

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY RESOURCES

Any original research on American military history must consider the vast holdings of the federal government's National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Materials in NARA's collections include manuscript and documents, maps, images, and graphic material, sound and image recordings, artifacts and objects. While a range of agencies represented in NARA's holdings offer materials relevant to the study of the Civil War and post-Emancipation nineteenth century, a number of entities -- organized here by Record Group (RG) -- should be considered essential for any such investigations. These include:

- Records of the Veterans Administration, 1773-1985, Record Group 15 (especially Records of the Bureau of Pensions and its Predecessors 1805-1935, RG 15.2);
- Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, 1774-1985, RG 92; Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, RG 94;
- Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, 1791-1947, RG 107; Records of the Headquarters of the Army, 1828¬1903, RG 108;
- Records of United States Regular Army Mobile Units, 1821-1942, RG 391; and,
- Records of United States Army Continental Commands, 1821-1920, RG 393

To better grasp the organization of NARA materials, researchers should consult the Guide to Federal Records in the National Archives of the United States, "The Web Version of the Guide," on-line at https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records. The Library of Congress (LOC), Manuscripts Division (https://www.loc.gov/rr/mss/), also houses a comprehensive of collection of primary source material, much of which lends itself to rewarding research on topics referenced in this guide.

THE GREAT WAR

Urbanization and inter-regional migration had dramatic impacts on the nature of American society during the era of World War I. Responding to employment opportunities and other impetuses, black and white southerners began large scale relocation to northern and midwestern cities by the 1910s. New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, Chicago and others received hundreds of thousands of newcomers from the South. Possessing a profound reverence for the traditions of military service brought with them from the South – USCT, Buffalo Soldier, USV, and even militia traditions – a number of African American men among the urban migrants embraced citizen-soldier opportunities in their adoptive homes.

When the United States entered the Great War as a combatant in early 1917, the 10,000 African American men in the regular army were not sent to Europe. Having recently participated in the "Punitive Expedition" against the forces of Mexican revolutionary Francisco "Pancho" Villa, some of the Buffalo Soldier units were instead kept in domestic service, protecting the nation's southern border. Others were sent to posts in the Pacific. In their place, the black men who served and fought in World War I were composed of a quota-limited number of volunteers, several federalized National Guard (NG) units, and hundreds of thousands drafted under the new Selective Service Act.
In the end, more than 400,000 African Americans went to war. The overwhelming majority of these were never deployed overseas, however. Instead, they served at domestic posts. Furthermore, of those blacks that did reach Europe, most were designated as non-combat troops. These men worked in "Service of Supply" support units – signal corps, medical and hospital staff, stevedores and laborers, and transportation, mechanics, and supply staff. These, in fact, were the first black soldiers to reach the theatre of war, arriving as early as June 1917. Also noteworthy are the several battalions of African American soldiers putatively in the role of pioneer infantry, trained as both combat engineers (building shelters, bunkers, gun emplacements, roads, bridges, as well as various demolition tactics) and infantry fighters, though their actual use has been debated.

As to formal combat troops, four infantry regiments – the 365th, 366th, 367th, and 368th – along with several units of field artillery, machine gunners, trench mortars, and field signals debarked separately in France as the 92nd Infantry Division. The entire division was drawn from drafted men. Draftees were also part of regiments with the 93rd Infantry Division (369th, 370th, 371st, and 372nd). However, the 93rd drew mainly from African American NG units. A number of the infantry regiments in the 93rd traced their respective lineages to all-black state and local militia organizations formed in the post-Emancipation nineteenth century. In the early-1870s, for example, black Chicagoans organized several local militia units, including the Hannibal Guards. By the 1890s, after several iterations of organization, this unit became part of the state system as the 8th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment. For World War I the 8th Illinois was designated as the 370th Infantry Regiment. Similarly, the 372nd Regiment drew in part from Baltimore's Monumental City Guard, an all-black organization established in 1879, and operated under the racially segregated "separate company" system of the Maryland NG since 1882. Other "separate" battalions and companies from NG units in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Ohio and the District of Columbia were also part of the 372nd.

The most celebrated all-black NG unit to serve combat duty in WWI, however, was New York's 15th Regiment, which fought as the 369th Infantry. If black New York had a heritage with citizen-soldier models of service dating back to antebellum years, for a variety of reasons it did not gain a unit of the state's NG until 1913. The New York 15th adopted "The Rattlers" as its official nickname, and with it the motto "Don't Tread on Me." However, as news of their warfront valor in Europe began to reach back home to New York, the 369th became most popularly known by an appellation the press bestowed, "Hellfighters."

During this era, black New York had expanded rapidly – perhaps more dramatically than any northern terminus of the southern Great Migration. If their children would be native New Yorkers, members of this first generation were migrants; their worldview reflected a southern tradition as much as a northern situation. Thus, while it is true that many in WWI-era New York drew a sense of duty from that city's citizen-soldier heritage, it is also true that the men of the 369th included many who saw themselves carrying forward broader traditions from before and beyond simply New York. These included, for example, men like William Butler who came to New York from rural Maryland the same year he volunteered with 369th. The black soldiers of Butler's imagination would have likely been Buffalos, or perhaps the thousands of USCT from his native state that fought in the Civil War. Even as his valor (French Croix de Guerre, American Distinguished Service Cross) was rightly associated with the 369th, and black New Yorkers celebrated Butler as one of their own, back home in black Maryland where his family still lived he became a favorite son all the same.

At least as much can also be said for William Henry Johnson – born in North Carolina, and only migrated north in his teens – another of the 369th's decorated members (Medal of Honor, Croix de Guerre). The regiment's most culturally significant member, Lt. James Reese Europe – leader of the regimental band – was from the South, too (Mobile, Alabama; Washington, D.C.). He only arrived in New York as an adolescent. Thus, southern blacks were not simply coming to the North, they were remaking it, including the narrative sources of its history and traditions. Hailing from all across the rural South, these men doubtlessly knew their military inheritance to be rooted deeply and broadly in the fertile past of the USCT, the Buffalo Soldiers, the United States Volunteers and the National Guard.

The 369th was the first black combat unit to move to the front lines, doing so by spring 1918. To appease white Americans' racial mores, the United States assigned it and all other regiments upon arrival to French Army command. While the units of the 92nd Division would fight under American Command by war's end (and be unfairly disparaged by leadership), the 369th and the other regiments of the 93rd remained with the French for the duration of the war. The 369th fought fiercely against the Germans and spent many months at the front. In the course of their experience in France and with the French, African American soldiers would remark upon the open social atmosphere, and non-segregated environment. Soon, however, white American military leadership pressed their French allies toward more restrictive policies, and Jim Crow came to France in a number of ways.

Racial animosity and racism continually worked to test black morale. Playing upon such tensions behind Allied lines, German propagandist tempted and taunted black soldiers, raising questions about why blacks fought. On leaflets dropped behind Allied lines they asked black soldiers, "Do you enjoy the same rights as the white people in America, the land of Freedom and Democracy, or are you rather not treated over there as second-class citizens?" These were similar questions to those the Filipinos revolutionaries had invoked two decades earlier on the other side of the world. The response of black soldiers in WWI was also the same; they continued to fight valiantly and were deservingly decorated for their efforts, with many receiving France's highest military honor, the Croix de Guerre. Upon returning to the United States after the Armistice of Compiègne ended hostilities, African Americans and others welcomed their soldiers home with grand parades -- none, perhaps, more spectacularly that the 369th's march up New York's Fifth Avenue to Harlem.

The 369th Infantry would be remembered for more than battlefield valor, however. The ragtime and early "jazz" arrangements of Lt. James Reese Europe and the 369th Regimental Band not only boosted morale for troops, but have been credited by many with the early introduction of jazz to the French (though, according to Scott, other units also had excellent bands, such as the 350th Field Artillery). "How Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down on the Farm," and "On Patrol in No Man's Land," were huge successes for the 369th Regimental Band.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

A number of interesting and complex historical questions may be investigated regarding black soldiers roles in World War I. For example, James Flagg's iconic "I Want YOU for U.S. Army" poster debuted in 1917. Others specifically targeting potential African American recruits, like "Colored Man Is No Slacker" by E.G. Renesch (1918) appeared soon after.

1. What factors shaped the success (or lack thereof) of military recruiting for World War I?
2. Did regional, economic, social, or other factors influence outcomes?
3. What role did black leaders and media play?
4. Similarly, one might ask what role had black "citizen-soldier" organizations like the National Guard played in the various communities across the nation prior to WWI?
5. How was military education and training part of larger socialization systems within these communities?
6. To a different point, what can be said about the contest between American blacks and whites over the importation of Jim Crow culture to Europe during the war? By what methods did blacks resist and whites insist?
7. How did blacks – soldiers in the theatre of war, and civilians on the homefront – respond to Jim Crow's ultimate triumph?
8. What explains the degree to which black combat soldiers, in particular the 369th Regiment, became icons of black resistance and capacity during the war years and their aftermath?
9. Finally, Lt. Europe believed his music to be a profound statement of African American culture – a transformative opportunity to demonstrate the greatness of his race. How might the early

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY RESOURCES

Most of the NARA record groups mentioned in the previous section are also critical to investigations of Section Two subject matter. To this should be added:

- Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, RG 165 (see esp. M[icrofilm]1440, Correspondence of the Military Intelligence Division Relating to "Negro Subversion," 1917-1941).
- A number of collections related to New York's 15 Regiment NG (including WWI muster rolls) are maintained at the New York State Archives (http://www.archives.nysed.gov/).
- Additional primary documents will be found in the following collections:
- Newton D. Baker Papers, LOC;
- James Reese Europe Collection, The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, New York (https://www.nypl.org/about/divisions/manuscripts-archives-and-rare-books-division);
- Kathryn M. Johnson Papers. Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts (http://guides.library.harvard.edu/schlesinger african american women);
- Emmett J. Scott Papers, Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland (http://www.morgan.edu/university); Woodrow Wilson Papers, LOC.

Among the more widely read and influential black newspapers publishing during the years of World War I (beyond those listed in previous sections of this guide) were: Amsterdam News, Baltimore Afro American, Boston Guardian, California Eagle, Chicago Defender, Cleveland Gazette, Norfolk Journal and Guide, Philadelphia Tribune, Pittsburgh Courier, St. Louis Argus, and Savannah Tribune.

For secondary work, a voluminous reference book on black soldiers and civilians during World War I is widely available online as Scott's Official History of the American Negro in the World War (1919). Written by War Department official Emmett J. Scott (1873 - 1957), this work provides comprehensive reference materials on most African American units involved in the war effort, as well as valuable homefront contextualization. A similar work, also widely available online, is Addie W. Hunton and Kathryn M. Johnson, Two Colored Women with the American Expeditionary Forces (c. 1920). Hunton and Johnson worked under the auspice of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) to provide for black soldiers a range of support services otherwise available to whites under racially segregated administration.

Beyond these secondary works produced contemporaneously with the war, a number of writers and scholars have since produced secondary material worthy of consideration for any research effort on related topics. These include:

- Arthur E. Barbeau and Florette Henri, The Unknown Soldiers (1996);
- Robert J. Dalessandro, Willing Patriots: Men of Color in the First World War (2009);
- Arthur P. Davis, Here and There with the Rattlers (1979); Robert H. Ferrell, Unjustly Dishonored: An African American Division in World War I (2011); James N. Gregory, The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America (2005);
- Eleanor L. Hannah, Manhood, Citizenship and the National Guard: Illinois 1817 – 1917 (2007);

- Bill Harris, The Hellfighters of Harlem: African American Soldiers Who Fought for the Right to Fight for their Country (2002);
- Stephen L. Harris, Harlem's Hell Fighters: The African-American 369th Infantry in World War I (2005);
- Charles Johnson, Jr., African American Soldiers in the National Guard: Recruitment and Deployment during Peacetime and War (1992);
- Jennifer Keene, Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America (2001);
- Amy Helene Kirschke, "For the Privilege of Dying: The Crisis Takes On the War," in World War I and American Art, Robert Cozzolino, Anne Classen Knutson, et al., eds. (2016);
- Adriane Lentz-Smith, Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I (2009);
- Arthur W. Little, From Harlem to the Rhine: the Story of New York's Colored Volunteers (1936);
- David M. Lubin, Grand Illusions: American Art and the First World War (2016);
- Nina Mjagkij, Loyalty in Time of Trial: The African American Experience during World War I (2014);
- Anne Monahan, "Witness: History, Memory, and Authenticity in the Art of Horace Pippin," in Horace Pippin: The Way I See It, Audrey Lewis, Judith F. Dolkart eds. (2015);
- Peter N. Nelson, A More Unbending Battle: the Harlem Hellfighters' Struggle for Freedom in WWI and Equality at Home (2009);
- Frank E. Roberts, The American Foreign Legion: Black Soldiers of the 93d in World War I (2004);
- Jeffrey T. Sammons and John H. Morrow, Jr., Harlem's Rattlers and the Great War: The Undaunted 369th Regiment and the African American Quest for Equality (2014);
- Richard Slotkin, Lost Battalions: the Great War and the Crisis of American Nationality (2005);
- Adam P. Wilson, African American Army Officers of World War I: A Vanguard of Equality in War and Chad L. Williams, Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era. (2013).

SOME MEANINGS OF THE WAR AT HOME

Between the close of America's wars for empire and the U.S. entry into World War I, within a broader context of political gelding and economic exploitation, numerous African American communities endured murderous race riots and a general climate of racist brutality. More than 1,400 African Americans were murdered, for example, by white lynch mobs during these years. Violent white racism had even notably entangled the black soldiers directly at Houston in 1917. In spite of this climate, African Americans once more stepped forward with a cautious patriotism when their nation went to war again.

In this way, American entry into World War I had arrived as a signal moment during a transformative decade that witnessed great and durable shifts in the black struggle for equality. The years immediately preceding, like those immediately following, contributed to this transformation as well. Even as his program of accommodation had been subjected to ideological and strategic challenge in these years, or example, the death of the influential Booker T. Washington in 1915 was significant. In his final years, Washington had been one of several southern voices futilely attempting to discourage what turned out to be only the beginnings of a significant demographic re¬location. In only a few decades, millions of southern blacks would leave rural areas for urban ones, especially outside of the region.

Having moved beyond Washington's reform program of gradualism (and his region), rapidly urbanizing blacks pursued many different approaches to resistance in these years, enduring both the violent anti-black "Red Summer" that followed the war, the and the persecutions of a "red scare" only just beginning. At one end of this spectrum, for example, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People advocated an integrationist program of protest rhetoric and litigation. Concurrently, however, through his Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities Leagues, racial separatist Marcus Garvey's program of Black Nationalism, economic self-sufficiency and pan-African political alliance also enjoyed great support. Eventually, black intellectuals, artists, and cultural critics witnessing these developments sought to interpret the arrival of a "New Negro" in the years to come. Indeed, veterans of the 369th Regiment, Noble Sissle (music), and Horace Pippin (visual art) would make tremendous contributions. Veterans of other combat units, including the lawyer Charles Houston (368th), and the scholar Rayford Logan (372nd), would make tremendous contributions as well.

Therefore, as a potential catalyst toward accelerating changes already underway, many in the national black leadership agreed with W.E.B. Du Bois when in 1917 he advised African Americans to temporarily set aside their legitimate, far-reaching grievances – to "close ranks" with their fellow citizens. If ultimately this view prevailed, there were nonetheless prominent dissenting voices. The activist editor of the Boston Guardian, William Monroe Trotter, for example, advised that the war offered an opportunity to demonstrate the otherwise devalued black worth to the nation. By withholding support for the war, that is, blacks might leverage the national emergency to win

concessions toward their long-held grievances against American oppression, exploitation, and injustice. In the end, not only did black men go off to war, but black civilians experienced the war as participants in the massive home front mobilization effort. They worked in the industrial plants of the domestic war effort, and with the money they earned, blacks did their patriotic duty purchasing "Liberty Bonds" and war savings stamp subscriptions.

Meanwhile, military service continued to play a role in the black resistance strategy. Although American military organizations observed strict racial segregation, black advocates prioritized access to military leadership opportunities. In fact, since Emancipation, a small but celebrated number of blacks had been trained at West Point. However, by the time of the nation's entry into WWI, the handful of black officers in the regular army, and in the federalized National Guard units, were denied battlefield opportunities to lead. White officers viewed black soldiers with malice and disdain. This leadership style amounted to unfair treatment generally punctuated by an unrelenting stream of epithets -- tolerating and even encouraging other whites (soldiers and civilians) to treat blacks in the uniform of the United States Army with racist derision. The inevitable occurred in summer 1917, when a racially charged melee between a Buffalo Soldier regiment stationed at Camp Logan near Houston, Texas, and local white racists exploded. Twenty people died including sixteen civilians; court marshals condemned six black soldiers to death and more than forty to life sentences. Not a single white person was even charged. "Houston" became a watchword among military commanders, and efforts were made to avoid the next conflict. Indeed, portents of a similar outcome looming over the 369th after confrontations between the soldiers and resentful whites in South Carolina saw the unit hurriedly deployed overseas.

Thus, as an exercise in equal measures of self-determination and racial pride, young black college men pressed for access to officer training. In 1917, the government conceded to a Provisional Officer Training School for blacks organized at Des Moines, Iowa. Some blacks derided the program as just another iteration of Jim Crow. The college men pushing for the opportunity, however, refused to demur. They pointed out that the army would segregate blacks anyway; some measure of leadership therefore represented an opportunity to disprove Jim Crow's accusations against black capacities. Black officers might serve rank and file black soldiers positively in the same way other segregated institutions -- black churches, black colleges, black businesses -- served the black community, while acting as an anchor of resistance. Ultimately, twelve hundred African American men drawn from recruiting stations across the country reported to the camp. By October 1917, 639 African American soldiers received commissions in the United States Army as officers. These graduates went on to serve as junior officers in the 92nd Infantry Division, enduring degradation and abuse from the ritual racism of white senior officers.

For a fuller contextualization of themes introduced in this section students may pursue and research a number of questions. For example, the broad-based imposition of racial segregation received constitutional sanction with Plessy v. Ferguson (1896). African Americans' first response was to demand equality at least within this system – to accept, that is, blacks-only schools if racially integrated ones were not allowed, or blacks-only army regiments, if integrated ones were not allowed.

1. How do we understand this approach of working within segregation to ultimately defeat it as resistance?
2. In this same sense, how did efforts like The Fort Des Moines Training Camp for Colored Officers constitute resistance to white supremacy and the Jim Crow system?
3. How can a resistance strategy seemingly reinforce segregation's structure while simultaneously undermining its premise?

Women generally, and black women pointedly, were restricted in their ability to participate in the theatres of war in Europe. Notable exceptions were Kathryn M. Johnson and Addie W. Hunton, who worked together under the auspice of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). What does the published account of their experiences, Two Colored Women with the American Expeditionary Forces (1920), tell us that conventional interpretation do not? How does the consideration of black women's experiences directly or indirectly with the military impact the interpretation of the era?

In another classic work of history, The Betrayal of the Negro (1969), the scholar Rayford W. Logan – and WWI veteran of the 93rd Provisional Division's 372nd Infantry Regiment -- cast the time period between Plessy (1896) and at least the Versailles Peace Conference (1919) following World War I as the "nadir" of the African American historical experience. He drew his conclusions largely in view of the rapid deterioration of constitutional rights in the name Jim Crow, and brazen anti-black violence with which the imposition of these circumstances was ultimately achieved. Accepting Logan's "nadir" thesis, what ways might we interpret the two episodes most directly involved blacks in the military: the Brownsville Affair (1906), and the Houston Mutiny (1917)?

Finally, the "Great Migration" of blacks out of the South – the massive exodus out of the region toward urban industrial centers in the North and Midwest – ebbed and flowed across most of the twentieth century. However, mobilization for World War I is credited as its primary beginning. What connections might we draw between industrial urbanization (particularly outside of the South) and ways by which African American military circumstances became increasingly part of the black struggle for equality in the early decades of the twentieth century?

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY RESOURCES

Many of the primary sources listed in the sections above remain relevant to Section Three. Additions to these, however, include:

- W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts (http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/collection/mums312);
- Rayford Logan Papers, LOC; Papers of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, LOC; National Urban League Records, LOC; Joel E. Spingarn Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center (MSRC), Howard University, Washington, D.C. (http://library.howard.edu/MSRC);
- Jesse Edward Moorland Papers, MSRC. Also useful are the edited and bound The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, vols. I - XIII (published 1983 - 2011) edited by Robert A. Hill. Similarly, the list of black newspapers from the period noted in Section Two should be regarded as critical for study of themes here as well.
- The most significant material not yet mentioned fall in the category of secondary works. The number of monographs and edited volumes of scholarship produced each year on topics referenced here has been strong for some time. A sampling that reflects some classic works, as well as the best of more recent offerings, includes:
- Eric Arnesen, Black Protest and the Great Migration: A Brief History with Documents (2002);
- Davarian L. Baldwin, Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, and Black Urban Life (2007);
- Celeste-Marie Bernier, Suffering and Sunset: World War I in the Art and Life of Horace Pippin (2015);
- Susan D. Carle, Defining the Struggle: National Organizing for Racial Justice, 1880-1915 (2013);
- Hayward Farrar, The Baltimore Afro-American: 1892-1950 (1998);
- Jeffrey B. Ferguson, The Harlem Renaissance: A Brief History With Documents (2007);
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CONCLUDING STATEMENT: "WE RETURN FIGHTING":

Black participation in World War I marked a transformative moment in American history, and in the history of the African American struggle for equality. Most visibly, it coincided with, and then greatly accelerated, a massive demographic shift in the nation's black population, from rural to urban, South to North, which persisted and expanded through the subsequent half-century. Socially, economically, politically, and culturally, this shift shaped the course of twentieth century America in the most fundamental ways. More dramatically, however, black participation in World War I also produced a unifying momentum toward greater social justice and civil rights activism.

The soldiers of the 396th Infantry Regiment, and all the other soldiers who went off to war, came to embody these transformations. They had returned home, in Du Bois's word, "fighting" to ensure democracy's ultimate triumph in their own native land. Joining the USCT veterans, Buffalo Soldiers, and citizen-soldier volunteers before them, the Doughboys of the 92nd and 93rd Divisions during WWI would be the folk heroes upon whose heroism blacks drew in future times for inspiration. Thus, Douglass had been right all those decades before; thanks to the sacrifices of a people through military service, no power on Earth would convince African Americans that they had not earned the right of citizenship in the United States. With that, the interpretive information above, the corresponding exploratory questions, and the general resources overviews should provide sound points of entry to any student interested in further research.