



## What They Say About the 92nd: Selected Quotes

1. A change in the disposition of allied troops made it necessary for the 368th Infantry to take over the sector opposite Binarville on the 25th of September...

The sector held by the 368th Regiment formed an irregular triangle projecting forward beyond the general line. In front of this position, vast stretches of enemy wire entanglement extended at intervals in all the intervening "no-man's-land." Beyond this wire entanglement were numerous concealed machine-gun emplacements. At this point the fighting was harder than anything the Division had experienced up to that time. At least two unsuccessful attempts were made to advance before the first objectives were reached. The total casualties exceeded 450 men killed, wounded and gassed. Among the casualties in this action, the following officers were killed: Lieut. Norwood C. Fairfax and Captain Walter Green of the 368th Infantry. During the five days in which the 368th held this position a total advance of five kilometers was made and the village of Binarville was taken.

*Source:* [Scott's Official History of The American Negro in the World War](http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/comment/Scott/ScottTC.htm)  
[<http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/comment/Scott/ScottTC.htm>] on the **EDSITEment** resource  
[Great War Primary Documents Archive](http://www.lib.byu.edu/%7Erdh/wwi/) [<http://www.lib.byu.edu/%7Erdh/wwi/>]

2. The first "trap" or "pocket" in which we were caught came about as the result of the 92nd Division (a negro unit) retiring a distance of from two to three kilometers after encountering stiff resistance from the Germans on September 28th. This left a large gap on our left flank, which they had formerly occupied, and the Germans immediately took advantage of this and closed in on us, cutting us off before we realized that the 92nd had fallen back.

The French Division which replaced the 92nd Division was unable to regain this captured ground as the odds against them were too great.

We were in that "trap" September 28th, 29th and 30th, and were reunited with the rest of the division on October 1st. On the night of October 2nd the battalion was again caught in another "trap," which lasted for a period of six days and nights. It is needless to say that the men suffered greatly during these periods until the balance of the division fought their way through to them.

*Source:* [L.C. McCollum. History and Rhymes of the Lost Battalion. 1918.](http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/memoir/Lost/LostBat2.htm)  
[<http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/memoir/Lost/LostBat2.htm>], a firsthand account from the  
**EDSITEment** resource [Great War Primary Documents Archive](http://www.lib.byu.edu/%7Erdh/wwi/)  
[<http://www.lib.byu.edu/%7Erdh/wwi/>]

3. Some criticism was hurled at this Division, which was no doubt more or less through prejudice. Mistakes were made and a few individuals failed, but in my opinion the 92nd Division under Colored Officers did as well as it was humanly possible to do under the circumstances

taking into consideration the limited experience they had in handling men under such conditions as existed during the war and the limited time they had in preparing for this great ordeal.

*Source:* [NCO Vance Marchbanks. World War I as Huachuca.](http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/comment/huachuca/HI2-07.htm)  
[<http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/comment/huachuca/HI2-07.htm>], a firsthand account from the  
EDSITEment resource [Great War Primary Documents Archive](http://www.lib.byu.edu/%7Erdh/wwi/)  
[<http://www.lib.byu.edu/%7Erdh/wwi/>]

4. ...military authorities, especially those within the 92nd Division...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.

*Source:* [Historic Context for the African-American Military Experience/World War I](https://www.denix.osd.mil/denix/Public/ES-Programs/Conservation/Legacy/AAME/aame3.html)  
[<https://www.denix.osd.mil/denix/Public/ES-Programs/Conservation/Legacy/AAME/aame3.html>], a link from the EDSITEment resource  
[Internet Public Library](http://www.ipl.org/) [http://www.ipl.org/]



## The 92nd Division

This handout provides basic background information on the 92nd Division, the primary segregated African-American division serving with the American forces during World War I. It also details the units in the 92nd, enabling students conducting research to identify the regiments, battalions, and batteries of the troops that may be mentioned by number only. For students who want to conduct research on their own, this handout indicates some potential starting places for Internet searches (for example: Camp Funston, 368th).

All of the information found here is from [92nd Buffalo Division Summary of Operations in the World War](http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/topics/afam/92div.htm) [http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/topics/afam/92div.htm]—a publication of the United States Government Printing Office, prepared by the American Battle Monuments Commission—available on the website of the [U.S. Army Center of Military History](http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/) [http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/], a link from the **EDSITEment** resource [Internet Public Library](http://www.ipl.org/) [http://www.ipl.org/].

THE 92D DIVISION, National Army, was organized in November 1917, from colored selective service men from the United States at large. The various units were assembled and received their preliminary training at Camps Funston, Kansas; Grant, Illinois; Upton, New York; Dix, New Jersey; Meade, Maryland; Dodge, Iowa; and Sherman, Ohio. The division was brought to full strength in May 1918. The principal units of the division were:

### *183d Infantry Brigade*

365th Infantry Regiment  
366th Infantry Regiment  
350th Machine-Gun Battalion

### *184th Infantry Brigade*

367th Infantry Regiment  
368th Infantry Regiment  
351st Machine-Gun Battalion

### *167th Field Artillery Brigade*

349th Field Artillery Regiment (75-mm guns)  
350th Field Artillery Regiment (75-mm guns)  
351st Field Artillery Regiment (155-mm howitzers)  
317th Trench-Mortar Battery

### *Divisional Troops*

348th Machine-Gun Battalion  
317th Engineer Regiment  
325th Field Signal Battalion



## Research Questions: The 92nd Division

DIRECTIONS: On your own paper, compile one master copy of answers to the following questions. In addition, include any other information you deem important.

1. What source(s) did your group use?
  
2. What might be the potential bias, if any, of the author(s)? Give examples of remarks you found that seemed to contain bias.
  
3. What significant positive statements, if any, about the 92nd Division did you find in your document(s)?
  
4. What significant negative statements, if any, about the 92nd Division did you find in your document(s)?
  
5. What information you found would contribute greatly to a discussion of the contradictions in the four quotes about the 92nd?
  
6. What information or opinions, if any, did you find about the following:
  - a. The performance of the 368th Regiment?
  - b. The Meuse-Argonne Offensive?
  - c. The Marbache Sector/Metz Offensive?
  - d. Officers of the 92nd?
  - e. Training of the 92nd?
  - f. Prejudice experienced by members of the 92nd?
  
7. What individuals of significance were discussed in your document(s)?
  
8. What were the conclusions of the author(s) about the performance of the 92nd Division? Based on what evidence?
  
9. How would the bias of the author(s) have been likely to affect the conclusions?