



National Archives and Records Administration

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Records Pertaining to the Military Service of Buffalo Soldiers

On the July 28, 1866, Congress passed an act that authorized the Army to raise six regiments of African-American soldiers. These six regiments later became known as the Buffalo Soldiers, men who served with distinction on the Western frontier of the United States. The U.S. Army organized the African-American soldiers into four infantry regiments and two cavalry regiments. The newly organized cavalry regiments were designated the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry. The infantry regiments were designated the Thirty-eighth, Thirty-ninth, Fortieth and Forty-first Infantry. In late 1869, the U.S. Army reorganized the infantry regiments. The Thirty-eighth and Forty-first Infantry regiments became the Twenty-fourth Infantry regiment. The Thirty-ninth and Fortieth Infantry regiments became the Twenty-fifth Infantry regiment.

Pensions

A veteran's pension file can include his rank, place of residence, age or date of birth, and time of service. A widow's application can also include her place of residence, her maiden name, the date and place of marriage, the date and place of her husband's death, and the names of children under 16. A child's or heir's file contains information about both the veteran and the widow, as well as the child's place of residence, date of birth, and the date and place of the widow's death.

___T288, *General Index to Pension Files, 1861–1934*. 544 rolls. Arranged alphabetically by soldier's surname.

___T289, *Organization Index to Pension Files of Veterans Who Served Between 1861 and 1900*. 765 rolls. Arranged alphabetically by state or territory, then by type of unit (cavalry, artillery, or infantry), followed by militia, reserves, sharpshooters, and other organizations, and finally alphabetical by name. The publication concludes with records of units not limited to geographic location, such as the U.S. Colored Troops, U.S. Volunteers, and U.S. Veteran Reserve Corps. See Rolls 705–706 for the Ninth Cavalry; Rolls 706–707 for the Tenth Cavalry; Rolls 669–671 for the Twenty-fourth Infantry; Rolls 671–672 for the Twenty-fifth; Roll 677 for the Thirty-eighth and Thirty-ninth; Rolls 677–678 for the Fortieth; and Roll 41 for the Forty-first.

___M850, *Veterans Administration Pension Payment Cards, 1907–1933*. Arranged alphabetically by surname. The Pension Payment Cards document amounts and dates of pension payments.

Registers of Enlistments

___M233, *Registers of Enlistments in the United States Army, 1798–1914*. 81 rolls. DP. Arranged chronologically and then alphabetically by the first letter of the soldier's surname. These records were created from enlistment papers, muster rolls, and other sources. With the exception of pensions, these records may be the only source on enlisted men during the 19th century. The registers may show when and where the soldier enlisted, the period of enlistment, the place of birth, the age at enlistment, civilian occupation, a physical description, and the unit to which he was assigned.

Officer Commissions

___M1395, *Letters Received by the Appointment, Commission, and Personal Branch, Adjutant General's Office, 1871–1894*. This microfiche publication reproduces selected files from the Adjutant General's Appointment, Commission and Personal (ACP) Branch Files. There is a list of officers documented in the publication available in the microfilm reading room.

Cavalry and Infantry Returns

The unit returns are monthly returns of the U.S. Army regiments. These returns list the post to which a regiment may have been assigned. The returns may also list possible company commanders and the strength of that particular company. Some other information that may be furnished in this series includes absences, illness, arrests, and soldiers confined to quarters or detailed to another assignment.

___M744, *Returns from Regular Army Cavalry Regiments, 1833–1916*. See Rolls 87–94 for the Ninth Regiment and Rolls 95–102 for the Tenth.

___M665, *Returns from Regular Army Infantry Regiments, June 1821–December 1916*. For the years 1866–1869: see Roll 293 for the Thirty-eighth; Roll 294 for the Thirty-ninth; Roll 295 for the Fortieth; and Roll 296 for the Forty-first. For the years 1869–1916 see: Rolls 245–253 for the Twenty-fourth Regiment; Rolls 254–261 for the Twenty-fifth.

Post Returns

Post returns identify the units stationed at a particular post and their strength. They provide the names and duties of officers, the number of officers present and absent, and a record of events.

___M617, *Returns from United States Military Posts, 1800–1916*. 1,550 rolls. DP. Arranged alphabetically by post and then chronologically by date.

Courts Martial

___M1105, *Registers of the Records of the Proceedings of the U.S. Army General Courts-Martial, 1809-1890*. The records in this publication provide information about proceedings or testimony of cases brought before a court martial.

Medal of Honor

___M929, *Documents Relating to the Military and Naval Service of Blacks Awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor from the Civil War to the Spanish American War*. The documents reproduced on this publication consist mostly of copies of letters sent, letters received, and reports. A small number of court-martial case files and log entries are also included.

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