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African Americans in Times of War

African Americans have contributed tremendously in times of war and have added to our collective history. They have sacrificed so many things in their lives to defend America. Also, they did not get the respect that they deserved for joining the Army. The Buffalo Soldiers, Hellfighters, and the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion are just a few examples of the many African Americans who risked so much for their country.

To begin, the African Americans have risked much in order to serve America. For example, the Hellfighters, like so many others, had to give up seeing their family everyday. In *Harlem Hellfighters*, the author writes, “The *Pocahontas*, a German-built troopship seized in war, hauled away its cargo of men and innocence”(Lewis 10). This explains that the black men had to be cut off from their family and not have any communication except for letters. Soldiers did not just sacrifice family contact, of course. Following the U.S. Civil War, Buffalo Soldiers sacrificed their lives, but they had greater chances of dying than other kinds of soldier at the time. According to *Buffalo Soldiers and Their Western Frontier*, “Riding rough road trails in the West was full of dangers. Soldiers who got hurt did not have doctors to help them. Doctors were often hundreds of miles away”(Raabe 15). This shows that they risked injury daily and then if they did get hurt, they could not get attention for their injury from a doctor because it was too far away. All of this means that Hellfighters and Buffalo Soldiers alike had to risk something others often take for granted.

Another thing African Americans in times of war had to sacrifice sometimes was being viewed as an equal and having equal involvement in the actual war. For example, Walter Morris

and the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion, America's first black paratroopers, were segregated from white soldiers. The author of *Courage Has No Color: the True Story of the Triple Nickles, America's First Black Paratroopers* states, "Most black soldiers World War II were kept out of combat. Instead, the military often assigned them to service duties such as building roads, driving trucks, sweeping up, unloading cargo, cooking, doing laundry, serving meals, or guarding facilities"(Stone 8). These qualified soldiers were held back from serving in other ways. Instead, for example, "The 10th Cavalry built more than 300 miles of new roads and laid over 200 miles of telegraph lines," which while important, was unfair that they could not choose to serve in combat (Raabe 14).

In conclusion, African Americans in times of war have contributed tremendously and have added to our history. The Buffalo Soldiers, Hellfighters, and the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion are just a few examples of the many African Americans who have risked their lives for America despite a lack of respect from the government. Although there were rough times for African Americans during war, they have greatly impacted our history of war and contributed greatly.

Works Cited

- Raabe, Emily. *Buffalo Soldiers and Their Western Frontier*. New York: Powerkids Press, 2003.
- Lewis, Patrick J. *Harlem Hellfighters*. Mankato, MN : Creative Editions, 2014.

Stone, Tanya Lee. *Courage Has No Color: the True Story of the Triple Nickles, America's First Black Paratroopers*. Somerville, MA. : Candlewick Press, 2013.