

The Buffalo Soldiers

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The Buffalo Soldiers are one of the examples in history where African-Americans showed their contribution towards a time of war. Following the U.S. Civil War, the Buffalo Soldiers were regiments of African-American men who fought Indians and protected settlers on the western frontier. These men consisted of former slaves, freemen and United States Colored Troops of the Civil War. After the Indian Wars ended in the 1890s, the Buffalo Soldiers fought in Cuba in the 1898 Spanish-American War. They encountered problems in the frontier due to racial prejudice.

The Buffalo Soldiers consisted of the 9th and 10th cavalry unit. Their duties were performed in some of the most terrible posts in America. The horses supplied to them by the Army were inferior. They were given low-standard food. The frontier outpost life was especially lonesome for the Buffalo Soldiers because the towns neighboring their post did not welcome the Buffalo Soldiers. Even when faced with these hardships they contributed by garrisoning forts, protecting settlers and railroad crews, guarding mail and stage routes, building roads and forts, stringing telegraph lines, and generally keeping the peace. Without the two Cavalry units' protection the railroad crews would be at the mercy of outlaws and hostile Indians. They built and repaired frontier outposts around which future towns and cities bloomed to life. They mapped and explored vast areas of the southwest. They would also confront many hostiles.

They performed expeditions against the Apache leaders Victorio and Nana. The Buffalo Soldiers also fought against Mexican outlaws and border desperadoes, and helped to control bandits, cattle thieves, and bootleggers in the sometimes lawless west. Their accomplishments led to eighteen African-Americans were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for deeds of valor between 1866 and 1898, a very high percentage representing a legacy of courage and patriotism. This was a show of gratitude to the Buffalo Soldiers for their bravery, tactical skill, and fighting prowess.

In 1898, when war was declared with Spain, the Buffalo Soldiers were called eastward to fight in the Caribbean. The elements of the 9th and 10th Cavalry assisted the Rough Riders when they made their famous charge up Kettle and San Juan Hills in Cuba. After the battle, their contributions to the success of the charge were acknowledged by Theodore Roosevelt. Five Medals of Honor were awarded to African-Americans during the Spanish-American War.

In conclusion, the Buffalo Soldiers' contributions even during times of hardship were many and great. Even though they gained little respect from the rest of the army, they were proud because of the invaluable service they all delivered. They wore their nickname, Buffalo Soldiers that was given to them by the Native Americans they fought, with pride and valor.