

African American/Black History Month Facts of the Day

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Directorate of Research



DEFENSE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE
DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH

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Preface

SSgt William L. Boulware Jr., USAF (Reserves) currently serves as an Office Automation Clerk for the Research Directorate, Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI). SSgt Boulware is a native of Georgia and has 11 years of active duty Air Force service and one year reserve duty service. During his Air Force career, he was employed in various disciplines such as IT Project Management, Education, and Training and Maintenance. SSgt Boulware is currently attending Brevard Community College to receive an Associates of Science Degree in Nursing.

	February	
<u>Date</u>	<u>Fact</u>	<u>Source</u>
1	Black Civil War soldiers were initially paid \$10 per month, from which \$3 were automatically deducted for clothing, resulting in a net pay of \$7. In contrast, White soldiers received \$13 per month from which no clothing allowance was drawn.	archives.gov
2	In June 1864, Congress granted retroactive equal pay to the U.S. Colored Troops. Black soldiers received the same rations and supplies as White troops. In addition, they received comparable medical care.	archives.gov
3	Racial discrimination was prevalent even in the North, and discriminatory practices permeated the Union military. Segregated units were formed with Black enlisted men and typically commanded by White officers and Black noncommissioned officers.	archives.gov
4	News from Fort Sumter set off a rush by free Black men to enlist in Union military units. They were turned away, however, because a Federal law dating from 1792 barred Negroes from bearing arms for the U.S. Army (although they had served in the American Revolution and the War of 1812).	archives.gov
5	Gen. John C. Fremont in Missouri and Gen. David Hunter in South Carolina issued proclamations that emancipated slaves in their military regions and permitted them to enlist. Their superiors sternly revoked these orders.	archives.gov

6	By mid-1862, the escalating number of former slaves (contrabands), the declining number of White volunteers, and the increasingly pressing personnel needs of the Union Army pushed the Government into reconsidering the ban of Black soldiers.	archives.gov
7	On July 17, 1862, Congress passed the Second Confiscation and Militia Act, freeing slaves who had masters in the Confederate Army. Two days later, slavery was abolished in the territories of the United States, and on July 22, President Lincoln presented the preliminary draft of the Emancipation Proclamation to his Cabinet.	archives.gov
8	By the end of the Civil War, roughly 179,000 Black men (10% of the Union Army) served as soldiers in the Union Army and another 19,000 served in the Navy.	archives.gov
9	Black soldiers served in artillery and infantry units, as well as noncombat support functions. Black carpenters, chaplains, cooks, guards, laborers, nurses, scouts, spies, steamboat pilots, surgeons, and teamsters also contributed to the war cause.	archives.gov
10	Black women, who could not formally join the Army, nonetheless served as nurses, spies, and scouts, the most famous being Harriet Tubman, who scouted for the 2nd South Carolina Volunteers.	archives.gov
11	The July 1863 assault on Fort Wagner, SC, in which the 54th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers lost two-thirds of their officers and half of their troops, was memorably dramatized in the film <i>Glory</i> .	archives.gov

12	By war's end, 16 Black soldiers had been awarded the Medal of Honor for their valor.	archives.gov
13	The Black troops faced greater peril than White troops when captured by the Confederate Army. In 1863, the Confederate Congress threatened to severely punish officers of Black troops and to enslave Black soldiers.	archives.gov
14	In perhaps the most heinous known example of abuse, Confederate soldiers executed Black Union soldiers captured at the Fort Pillow, TN, engagement of 1864. Confederate General Nathan B. Forrest witnessed the massacre and did nothing to stop it.	archives.gov
15	High casualty rates were common for Black units – usually for two reasons. First, since they had not previously served in the U.S. Army, they were inexperienced fighters. Second, feeling social pressure to prove themselves as men, they often took more risks on the battlefield than their White counterparts.	pbs.org
16	Of the 180,000 Blacks who fought for the Union, 37,300 died.	pbs.org
17	On the march toward Saltville, VA, White troops verbally harassed the Blacks who would soon be fighting beside them. Such day-to-day prejudice was a common experience for Black soldiers – at least until Whites saw them perform under fire.	pbs.org

18	Among the troops who attacked Southern positions at Saltville on October 2 were soldiers of the 5th United States Colored Cavalry. Fighting with White soldiers from the 11th Michigan and 12th Ohio Cavalries, the colored cavalry charged, overran, and held the Confederate left. After holding their position for some time without receiving essential support, they were forced to withdraw.	pbs.org
19	Three Black regiments from New York offered to serve for the duration of the war, with their weapons, clothing, equipment, pay, and provisions all to be provided by the Black population of the state. These and other such requests to serve were rejected because the war was expected to be short.	highbeam.com
20	Despite strident public opposition and War Department policy unfavorable to the appointment of Black officers, nearly 100 Black men held commissions during the Civil War.	highbeam.com
21	On February 26, 1865, Martin R. Delany was commissioned a Major of Infantry, making him the highest-ranking Black field officer during the war.	highbeam.com
22	One Black officer, Robert Smalls, was commissioned in the U.S. Colored Troops, but served with the Navy. Smalls earned his commission by stealing the Confederate ship he was serving on as a slave-sailor.	highbeam.com
23	The first Black recipient of the Medal of Honor was Sergeant William H. Carney of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry for combat valor on July 18, 1863, at Fort Wagner, SC.	highbeam.com

24	The War Department had not yet given permission to recruit Black soldiers when Gen. Jim Lane organized and trained the 1st Kansas Colored Volunteers and sent them into action against Confederate troops near Butler, MO, in late October of 1862.	highbeam.com
25	The success of Black troops in their first engagements as part of the Union Army helped reduce opposition to their recruitment.	highbeam.com
26	Only weeks after the Confederate assault on Fort Sumter in 1861, which initiated the Civil War, Blacks from Ohio's Wilberforce College answered President Lincoln's call for volunteers to help subdue the Confederacy.	highbeam.com
27	The Confederacy realized early on that Black labor was an essential component of the war effort, and quickly established a program of military-related forced labor projects.	familyeducation.com
28	Nicholas Biddle, a Black man, is believed to be the first casualty in what became the bloodiest of all America's wars. Despite the seemingly limitless fascination with the Civil War, Biddle has remained a largely overlooked figure.	portal.state.pa.us