

The Black Volunteers In The Spanish-American War

THE Spanish-American War occurred during a period of increasing discrimination, segregation, and despair for Black Americans. Blacks saw the war as an opportunity to fight for their country and as a chance to regain some of their recently lost rights. However, their efforts to join the volunteer units were impeded by the changing plans of the federal government and the virulent racial prejudice of the late 1890s. In the end, the experiences of the Black volunteer soldiers in the Spanish-American War were very similar to those of Blacks in civilian life.¹

The promise of the Civil War—freedom from slavery—was by the late 1890s further from reality than in 1865. All around them Blacks saw evidence of increasing discrimination and violence. Legally enforced segregation in all aspects of life, both in the North and in the South, was prevalent. An early example of legal segregation was the racial separation which began in the transportation industry and received judicial sanction in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), just two years before the outbreak of the Spanish-American War. At the same time methods were developed to exclude Blacks from the electoral process. If a Black man tried to oppose what the white majority wanted, he faced the possibility of lynching. The economic situation of Black Americans was also quite bad and in some instances getting worse. Share-cropping, which continued the tradition of landless Black peasants, became increasingly widespread in the late 1800s.

In this era of increasing legal and economic discrimination, many Blacks saw the Spanish-American War as an opportunity to change their downtrodden position. They remembered that the Civil War had resulted, almost in spite of many whites, in ending slavery. They recalled that the fighting ability of the Black soldiers in the Union Army had been a compelling reason for granting freedom and equality to Blacks. They hoped, in 1898, that similar gallant service in the war would reawaken the conscience of the nation. In the first weeks of the war the Black community's attention focused on the four Black regiments in the Regular Army, but as time went on interest shifted to the various state and federal volunteer regiments made up of Blacks.

With the news of the sinking of the U.S.S. *Maine* in February 1898, people anticipated a war with Spain. Black veterans of the Civil War were among the first to offer their services to the War Department, declaring, "We are all inured to war and know what it is and could render effective service in the tropical clime of Cuba, Porto Rico, or elsewhere." Such offers were generally ignored because the military authorities did not feel they would need additional manpower. By early April, however, the War Department had decided to stage a small scale invasion of Cuba, and began preparations. At the request of President William McKinley, and under urging by the National Guard, Congress authorized the expansion of the Regular Army, and also gave the President the authority to request the states to recruit volunteers (i.e., National Guardsmen) for the federal government. Quickly taking advantage of this legislation, President McKinley issued a call for 125,000 volunteers. On 25 May 1898, about a month after the first call, he issued a second call, this time for 75,000 men.²

Most of the Black volunteer units that served in the Spanish-American War were created as a result of these two calls. Very few Blacks were mustered in under the first call. Most governors mustered in only their National Guard regiments, and few states had any Black regiments. As a reward to his Black supporters, North Carolina's Governor Daniel L. Russell got permission to include a battalion of Black infantrymen as part of his state's quota in the first call. When the second request came in May, the battalion was expanded to regimental size—the Third North Carolina. Similarly, the Governor of Alabama first created a battalion of Blacks and then expanded it into the Third Alabama. Additional units raised as a result of the second call were: the Eighth Illinois; the Twenty-third Kansas; the Sixth Virginia; two companies from Indiana; the Ninth Ohio Battalion; and Company L., Sixth Massachusetts. However, some state governors ignored Black pleas to volunteer. A number of Black Texans offered their services to the governor, but he turned them down. These Blacks eventually became the nucleus for a company in one of the regiments later organized by the federal government.³

A key issue in the creation of these Black

regiments was whether they should have Black officers. At that time whites believed that Black soldiers could not follow the orders of a Black officer and that Black troops needed close supervision that only whites could provide. The presence of Black officers also raised the possibility of an integrated officers' mess. For these reasons the professional officer corps was opposed to a break in the color line and wherever they had influence their views prevailed. Blacks also felt strongly about the officer issue. Many Black newspapers questioned whether Blacks should serve in regiments commanded by whites. One Black paper in Kansas editorialized that if Blacks could not have their own officers, "then the country needs not their services...No officers, no soldiers is our motto." On the other hand, *The Colored American* [Washington, D.C.] felt that such a policy could lead to no good end. Duty to one's country came before the objections raised by prejudiced men. Most Blacks took this latter view. The Third Alabama, commanded by a white Regular Army officer, Robert L. Bullard, had only a Black chaplain, but no real difficulty in filling its ranks. In most other states Blacks were important enough politically to pressure the governors into accepting an officer corps composed mainly of Blacks. For example, the Third North Carolina was commanded by Col. James H. Young, born a slave, who had attended Shaw University, had been a collector of customs for the port of Wilmington, and had served two terms in the state legislature. While he had no previous military experience, which was not uncommon for white volunteer officers, he had good political connections. The Ninth Ohio got the benefit of the experience of the only Black Regular Army officer, Lt. Charles Young, who at the outbreak of the war had been serving as an instructor in Military Science at Wilberforce University, Ohio.⁴

AS the invasion of Cuba became more imminent, many leaders feared that the American troops would be decimated by yellow fever. It was commonly believed that once a person contracted yellow fever, he was relatively immune to it. This belief eventually influenced Congress to establish additional Black regiments. On 23 April 1898 Representative Joseph Wheeler of Alabama, former general in the Confederate Army and soon to be appointed a major general in the Volunteers, introduced a bill [H.R. 10069] to allow the War Department to recruit 3,000 men for special purposes, because it was felt that the Regular Army could not provide

enough engineers for the Cuban campaign. The bill was reported out of committee several days later with a few changes. Secretary of War Russell Alger had requested a large force of men who were immune to yellow fever, and the committee modified the bill to add 13,000 such troops. For some unknown reason the bill was ignored in the House but was revived in the Senate several days later in a slightly modified form. This new bill [S.R. 4266] was introduced by Senator Redfield Proctor, head of the Military Affairs Committee. The bill contained provisions for the 3,000 engineers, and now for 10,000 volunteers who possessed "immunity from diseases incident to tropical climates." The proposal passed easily with little debate. This time the House examined it much more closely. Many representatives opposed the bill because they felt that it gave the President too much power to appoint the officers in the units authorized by the legislation. This was a sore point at the time because it was feared that the Regular Army would dominate the volunteers by monopolizing most of the officer positions in the volunteer units. At the same time federal appointments would deny this form of patronage to the state political leaders. Some representatives also questioned how the army could determine immunity from tropical diseases. Despite the lengthy debate, the bill passed easily.

Over the next few months several representatives and senators introduced bills to create a separate force of Black immunes. On 21 June Senator Joseph B. Foraker of Ohio, later the defender of the Black soldiers discharged from the Army as a result of the Brownsville affray, introduced S.R. 2797. This would have created a five-regiment division of Black immunes. Secretary Alger, who believed in the "special adaptability of colored troops for service under the conditions of a tropical climate," got into the act. The day after the battle of San Juan Heights, 2 July, he sent to Congress a bill calling for the enlistment of 25,000 Blacks. Another proposal, with a different slant, was House Joint Resolution 288, introduced 27 June 1898 by Representative John McDonald of Maryland. He called for the creation of one regiment of Blacks, whose twelve companies were to come from various states, including four from his home state. This plan was an echo of an earlier suggestion put forward by The [Springfield] Illinois Record, a Black newspaper. The paper had also suggested Henry O. Flipper, the first Black graduate of West Point, as the colonel. These suggestions were not followed. The only federally raised volunteer regiments in which Blacks served were those authorized under the

Immune Bill.⁵

Many Blacks expected the Immune Bill to lead to the creation of about ten Black regiments. Some claimed that the War Department had intended that all of the 10,000 authorized men were to be Black. They further maintained that the War Department had kept this decision secret as a means of insuring the bill's passage. A more realistic report was issued by The Bee [Washington, D.C.] in mid-May as the result of a meeting of prominent Blacks, including Pinckney B. Pinchback, former governor of Louisiana, with Secretary Alger. The Black leaders reported that the War Department intended to enlist five or six Black regiments.⁶ Shortly thereafter the War Department issued General Order #55, Series of 1898, which detailed the number of Immune regiments, how they were to be recruited, and the standards for enlisting soldiers. This order stipulated that at least five of the regiments were to be white. All of the regiments were to be made up of officers and men who, because of their place of birth or present residence, possessed "immunity...from diseases incident to tropical climates." Several days later the War Department made it clear that there were to be only four Black Immune regiments and six white. In General Order #60, the Army specified recruiting areas for the four Black regiments. The Seventh Volunteers were to be recruited in Missouri, Arkansas, and part of Tennessee; the Eighth in the rest of Tennessee, Kentucky, and the Ohio Valley; the Ninth in Louisiana; and the Tenth in Virginia and North Carolina.

The War Department next had to decide on the racial composition of the officer cadre of the four Black regiments. Military leaders had to consider white and Black sentiment on the issue. The Times-Democrat [New Orleans, Louisiana], a paper received by the War Department, editorialized that white soldiers would be quite opposed to saluting Black officers. The paper felt that the Black officers represented the beginning of an attempt at social equality. Blacks were also very sensitive on this point and wanted the regiments to have all Black officers. They felt that the federal government should treat both races equally. The War Department compromised; it gave the Blacks a semblance of what they wanted, yet made sure that whites retained control over the regiments. This meant in practice that all the lieutenants assigned to companies were Black, while other officers (the staff and captains) were white.⁷

The appointment of Black lieutenants had another purpose: to partially reward those Black Regular Army men who had done well in Cuba. Edward Baker, winner of a Medal of Honor in Cuba, was ap-

pointed a first lieutenant in the Tenth Volunteers. He was but one of twenty-five Black regulars to receive such commissions. However, their service as officers in the Immune regiments did not lead to permanent officer rank. When their tour of duty ended they had to return to the Regular Army as enlisted men or leave the service altogether. This practice rankled many Blacks. The Bee thundered, "This is discrimination pure and simple...They could have been promoted in their own companies instead of sending them to colored regiments." Theophilus Steward, the Black chaplain of the Twenty-fifth Infantry, commented that these promotions were only "a lively tantalization to be remembered with disgust...Cruel, indeed, was the prejudice that could dictate such a policy to the brave black men of San Juan." However, as usual, there were defenders of this discriminatory action. The Colored American commented that these promotions showed that President McKinley "esteems bravery and ignores color." In the Immune regiments themselves there were protests against the white officers. One Black soldier of the Ninth Volunteers said these protests would continue "until justice is done them and the color line is wiped out." The War Department tried to stop the agitation when it stated that protest was not "advisable and should be discouraged in every way possible, as it can only have injurious results." It ceased.⁸

THE Black community displayed a tremendous interest in and enthusiasm for the Black soldiers as they departed for the training camps. It was an occasion for speeches and parades. In late May 1898 the Ninth Ohio marched to the State House in Columbus, where they were presented with a stand of colors by a Grand Army of the Republic veteran. The commander of the unit, Major Young, gave a speech in response to this symbolic gesture. He assured the crowd that the men of his command would do their duty, as representatives of both the state and the Black population. This last point was the major one emphasized in the departure speech that Governor John Tanner gave to the Eighth Illinois. The regiment, he said, and especially its Black officers, were an experiment. If they all succeeded the credit would go to the officers, the men, and the race. Since they were fulfilling the duties of citizenship, success might mean the rights of citizenship also.⁹

Given the racial situation at the time and efforts to obtain Black officers, the white officers in the black regiments were under pressure. The Black company of the Sixth

Massachusetts was quite unusual; the Regular Army was not to see such a bold experiment in integration until the last years of World War II. While the regimental officers accepted this situation, other officers would not. The commander of the brigade to which the Sixth Massachusetts was assigned did not like to see Black soldiers included among his troops. Brigadier General George A. Garretson first tried to convince the head of the regiment, Colonel Charles F. Woodward, that the Black company should be transferred to the Ninth Ohio. When Woodward objected, Garretson dropped the idea. Later, en route to Puerto Rico as part of the invasion force, Garretson again urged transfer of the Black company. In the end Colonel Woodward resigned. However, there were two different explanations given for this action. According to the Army, Woodward resigned rather than face an examining board to explain why he pretended to be sick before a battle. Lieutenant Colonel George Chaffin also resigned rather than explain why he stayed in his tent during combat. On the other hand Blacks and whites at the time attributed Woodward and Chaffin's actions to reactions to the hostility of the white command structure to the presence of the Black company. The Black press praised them and blasted the attitudes which they claimed forced Colonel Woodward to resign. "Their noble conduct should bring a blush of shame to the snobs who disgrace Uncle Sam's uniform by sneering at their dark-skinned brethren and compatriots."¹⁰ Despite the pressures, Company L did participate in the invasion of the island.

A more involved but equally blatant case of hostility between whites and Blacks in the state volunteer regiments involved Colonel Richard Croxton and the Sixth Virginia. Croxton, who before the war had been a first lieutenant in the Regular Army, behaved in a manner that reflected long-standing opposition to Black officers. Two battalions of Black militia had existed in Virginia before the war. The governor first proposed to muster them into federal service without the pre-war Black officers. When the Black Virginians protested, the governor partially relented. All of the Black officers were mustered in, but Croxton, a white, was made colonel. The white man found this situation intolerable and began to search for a way to get rid of the Black officers. He felt that "more than half" of the Black officers were "absolutely incompetent." The Blacks had also formed a hostile opinion of their commander. John H. Allen, a member of the regiment, recalled that Colonel Croxton was "haughty, arrogant and inexperienced." He pointed out that

Croxton reprimanded the Black officers in front of enlisted men, an action designed to humiliate the Blacks. The simmering conflict was brought to a head when Colonel Croxton ordered a board of examination for those officers he claimed were the least competent. It was obvious to the Blacks that the hearing was a sham and that Croxton planned to replace them with whites. Shortly before they were to appear before the board, the Black officers overheard the board, meeting inside a tent, decide that they were all incompetent. The Black officers (one major, five captains, and three lieutenants) immediately resigned their commissions.¹¹

Croxton probably believed that the resignations of the Blacks would end the affair, but the First Sergeant of G Company organized a revolt. The Black soldiers refused to obey the orders of the new white officers. The soldiers lined up for drill but refused to move when commands were given. An officer from an Ohio regiment came and tried to drill the recalcitrant Blacks, but no one moved. For the white officers this was a shocking experience. "I have been in the service twenty years and have never had an order disobeyed," commented one white. This strike was treated as a mutiny. The camp of the Sixth was surrounded by three white regiments, and the Blacks had to surrender their rifles. For several days the men were forced to drill under the guard of the whites. But this forced acceptance of the white officers did not really work. It led to the resignation of two of the new white officers and the return of the men's rifles. The hostility continued to simmer beneath the surface.¹²

The Black press supported these militant actions while the white press, by its statements, reflected the causes. The Richmond [Virginia] *Planet* blasted Croxton's efforts to remove the Black officers. "If inefficiency is the basis of this action [the dismissal of the Black officers], why is it that the white companies, battalions, and brigades have not been subjected to a similar inspection?" In the face of such hostility, said the *Planet* in a later issue, the regiment as a whole should ask for a discharge from the service. The general attitude of whites toward Black officers, which caused this Black reaction, was reflected in an editorial in *The New York Times*. "It is pretty well known that the colored race has, as a rule, much more confidence in white men than in black."¹³

DURING the brief career of the Black volunteer regiments the day-to-day concerns of the officers and men were not race prejudice—though it often in-

truded—but training, drill, and fatigue duty, just as in the white regiments. When the Blacks were mustered in there was great enthusiasm, for most felt that they would be sent to Cuba to fight the Spanish. A typical training camp day began with reveille at 6:00 A.M., and then came roll call and breakfast, camp clean-up and fatigue details, drill, practice marches and target practice. After the volunteers learned the basic military skills, their instruction became more complicated and more closely simulated actual warfare. A mock battle resulted when the Eighth and Ninth Ohio met while out on a practice march. The men fired from behind trees, using blank cartridges, and attacked each others' positions. The camp routine was also broken by parades. One of the most notable was a Presidential review of the troops stationed at Camp Haskell, near Macon, Georgia. The Sixth Virginia, Third North Carolina, and the Seventh and Tenth Volunteers were among the units which took part. Sports also occupied part of their daily life. In an unusual interracial event, the two Black companies from Indiana beat a company from a white Kentucky regiment in baseball, 9 to 8. As time went on, however, the life of a soldier began to pall for the Blacks as for the whites. One common complaint centered on the strict discipline by their officers. Such grumblings were especially numerous in the Ninth Ohio, where Major Young brought his Regular Army experience to bear. Desertions grew as he tightened discipline. The Blacks claimed that Young was imposing too harsh a regime on them. Major Young ignored the protests, for he felt that discipline was part of the process of shaping raw recruits into soldiers.¹⁴

After the fighting in Cuba ended, discrimination and violence against the Black troops increased. Difficulties were generated by white aversion to armed Blacks and to the presence of Blacks in positions of authority. Aversion had already been demonstrated by the incidents involving the Sixth Massachusetts and the Sixth Virginia. In addition, since most of the training camps were located in the South racial hostility from the white civilian population was almost guaranteed to be virulent and open.

One form of discrimination was manifested in the statements and actions of the white troop commanders. The commander of the Seventh Army Corps, Major General Fitzhugh Lee, feared that the white regiments in his area, Jacksonville, Florida, "would be averse to performing the same duties with colored soldiers." The Third Brigade, First Division, was formed in order to physically separate the Seventh, Eighth,

and Tenth Volunteers from contact with white regiments. The commander of the First Division, First Corps, did not want his Black units to participate in the "delicate duties" the troops were to have in garrisoning Cuba. There was a fear on the part of white officers that the Black soldiers would "demoralize" the Cubans, "and we have to educate these people to a higher standard in every way." They meant the Cubans should accept and practice American race prejudice. Major General James H. Wilson, involved in the invasion of Puerto Rico, felt that Black soldiers were not suited for duty with people "entitled to be regarded as friendly allies, instead of alien enemies." The statements and actions of the white officers made it clear that they regarded Blacks as inferior to whites, whether in the United States, Cuba, or Puerto Rico. Segregation was their response.¹⁵

Segregation led to further violence. White soldiers sensed that the commanding officers would not really object to attacks upon Black troops. The First Georgia first verbally and then physically assaulted the Third North Carolina. Epithets were followed by rocks and bullets. Though the Second Ohio was detailed to protect the Black soldiers, the Georgians were not punished. More extensive and long-lasting were the abuse and insults directed at the men of the Third Alabama. At one point a member of the regiment was detailed to the division headquarters. When the Black soldier tried to cross the guard line in front of the headquarters, the guard halted him. The white sentry loaded his gun, cursed the Black, and threatened to shoot him. Colonel Bullard's protests about the verbal abuse of his men were ignored. When the Blacks were allowed to go into nearby Anniston, white soldiers assaulted them. On several occasions the regiment's sentries were fired upon. One Black soldier, Private James Caperton, was shot in the back by members of the Third Tennessee. This reign of terror was encouraged by the citizens of Anniston, who went so far as to supply the white soldiers with arms and ammunition from their militia's armory. Colonel Bullard tried to avoid such friction by sending only his best behaved men into town, but even this did not help. "I find that these men have been subjected to even greater indignities than those less worthy," he wrote. One such incident occurred when two men from the Third Alabama met the son of a lieutenant of the Fourth Kentucky. The boy was dressed in a lieutenant's uniform and demanded that the Blacks salute him. When they rightly refused to do so, the boy called upon waiting soldiers of the Fourth to beat up the Blacks. The commander of

the Eighth Volunteers summed up the situation in a report to the Adjutant General. "My colored officers and men have quietly submitted to slights and insults which would not patiently be borne by white troops and I hope they will continue to do so in the future."¹⁶

The patience of the Black troops in the face of this discrimination did not last indefinitely. Boredom with army life, especially after the fighting in Cuba ended, increased the chances of a violent reaction. Many Blacks had weapons at their disposal. They were organized for action. Camp Haskell, Georgia, was near a segregated park in which there was a tree used to lynch Blacks. The soldiers of the Sixth Virginia entered the park, chopped down the tree, and thrashed the park keeper. In retaliation for being forced to ride in a Jim Crow car, men of the Eighth Volunteers went to the train station, stoned two passenger and three freight trains and broke many windows in the station. On another occasion the provost guard in Macon, Georgia, arrested several members of the Seventh Volunteers, but the white civilian police took the prisoners away. Fearing white justice, reinforcements from the regiment freed the prisoners, knocked down several whites, took the police lieutenant's pistol away, and returned to nearby Camp Haskell. The New Orleans *Times-Democrat* stated the Southern view of such behavior:

Wherever they [the Black soldiers] went riots and murder followed in their footsteps. Their camps were constant sources of danger to the surrounding country and it took almost as many white men to keep the negro soldiers in order as there are negroes in the army. . . All points where they were stationed, there was riot and bloodshed.

Resistance was something the whites were not used to and could not tolerate.¹⁷

MOST of the Black units, as well as most of the white volunteers, did not see combat. They never left the country and were mustered out in early 1899. However, three of the Black regiments did see post-combat duty in Cuba: the Eighth Illinois, Twenty-third Kansas, and Ninth Volunteers. In early August 1898, about a month after the end of actual fighting, Major General William R. Shafter, commander of the Fifth Corps, the invasion force, ordered the Second Volunteers out of Cuba. He requested Adjutant General Henry C. Corbin to send him some Black troops, which he felt could replace the incompetent white soldiers. The Eighth Illinois was sent.

The trip to Cuba was as eventful for the regiment as duty on the island later proved

to be. Shortly after the troop train left Illinois, two sentinels fell off the train. Though they survived their fall, they were not able to make the trip to Cuba. The train ride ended in Jersey City, New Jersey, and things became more lively. As the troops marched through town from the train to the ferry slip, the Black citizens gave them a tumultuous reception, including offers of food and drink. The regiment's officers had a difficult assignment rounding up the inebriated men, putting them on the ferry, marching through New York City, and finally reaching the steamer which was to take them to Cuba. In New York City they again met a wild reception. Most of the men finally made it aboard the *Yale* and set sail for Cuba and hard work.¹⁸

All three regiments arrived in Santiago Province about the end of August 1898. The first task assigned to the Ninth Volunteers was to guard Spanish prisoners in a camp near San Juan Hill. During this assignment many of the Black soldiers contracted malaria. The experience of Company M in the early days of September was typical for the regiment. Not a soldier could report for duty, few were able to prepare meals, and many were quite sick. By the end of October this company and the rest of the regiment had immunized themselves through contracting the disease, though a number died in the process. While the men were convalescing, the military authorities decided to move the regiment to a healthier location. San Luis, a city about thirty miles outside of Santiago, was chosen, and here the troops really began the daily routine of garrisoning the occupied territory. One soldier described this as "keeping in check the treacherous and thieving proclivities of the idle, lazy, and indolent Cuban." Their duties as occupation troops also included the usual work details assigned to Black troops such as building roads and making other necessary repairs. In addition, patrols were sent out to track down the bandits of the area as well as to guard telegraph lines.¹⁹

As the demands of occupation duty decreased, fraternization and conflict with the Cubans increased. The Black soldiers of the Twenty-third Kansas were the most active in this. Several of the men took Cuban sweethearts, each thinking his own was "the prettiest, and most Americanized." Many talked about the economic opportunities open to them in Cuba. However, all was not sweetness and light, and conflict with the civilian population did occur. The worst problem arose in the regiment with the most white officers, the Ninth Volunteers. After a pay day in November 1898, a drunken Black soldier of the Ninth created a disturbance and Jose Ferrera, a Cuban policeman,

tried to arrest him. Later several Black soldiers returned and shot up Ferrera's house. A riot ensued; two Black soldiers and four Cubans, including Ferrera, were killed. At the heart of the disturbance, at least according to the white commander of the occupation region, was the hatred of Cubans for American Black soldiers. "I have received many protests from citizens of San Luis against these regiments remaining there," the commander wrote. He at first dismissed these grumblings, then moved the Blacks out of town, and finally, several months later, ordered them returned to the United States. Shortly thereafter they were mustered out.²⁰

The mistreatment of Black volunteer soldiers by white officials and citizens throughout their brief military career did not end when they were mustered out. The Macon, Georgia, police made a special point of harassing the discharged men of the Third North Carolina. In addition, they warned the Atlanta police of the Black soldiers' imminent arrival and claimed that trouble would erupt in Atlanta unless something was done to prevent it. The Atlanta law men waited for the soldiers' train and then subdued the Blacks with clubs. The Eighth Volunteers, similarly,

incurred the wrath of the white population of Nashville. The arrival of a train load of discharged Blacks from that regiment upset the whites. The local newspapers had for months been publishing reports about the "turbulent misconduct of negro soldiers wherever and whenever they had opportunity." Again the white citizens saw a chance to teach the Blacks a lesson. The police of Nashville as well as a large number of armed citizens formed a welcoming committee at the train station. First they detached the locomotive, and "armed men stood at the car windows whilst others armed with revolvers and police clubs entered the cars and beat the men, most of whom were asleep, over the heads and bodies, and robbed some of them of money and tickets." Whites had experienced enough of "uppity" Black soldiers and now were making sure that Blacks, as they went back to civilian life, would resume their former servile attitude.²¹

THE history of the several thousand Black volunteers in the Spanish-American War tells a great deal about Black aspirations, white attitudes, and the racial situation in 1898. Blacks saw the war

as a chance to show their valor and to regain their rights. Whites, by their actions, made it clear that the Blacks' status had not changed. Local political conditions had a great deal to do with how many Blacks could serve, and at what level in the command structure. A comparison between North Carolina and Alabama clearly illustrates this point. On the national level Blacks had less influence. The Black desire to serve was accepted by whites when it was to the whites advantage, but acceptance in the service did not mean equality. The presence of armed Blacks stirred the passions of the white population, especially in the South, and the Southern discrimination in turn led to retaliation by the Blacks. The mutiny of the Sixth Virginia was symptomatic of a new feeling on the part of the Black soldiers and a segment of the Black population. The war experience also highlighted the attitudes which determined the policies adopted about Blacks in the service. They were accepted for service for such reasons as the their supposed resistance to yellow fever and malaria. Yet, they were generally denied positions of authority even in their own regiments.

REFERENCES

Dr. Marvin Fletcher is Assistant Professor of History at Ohio University, Athens. His dissertation, on "The Army and Black Soldiers and Officers, 1891-1916," to be published by the University of Missouri press, has established him as a leading specialist in black military history. He has had several journal articles published and presently is working on a study of characteristics of white and Black enlistees in the 1870s, and a biography of General Benjamin O. Davis, Sr. This article was accepted for publication in March 1973.

1. Most works on Black history contain a great deal of misinformation about the Black volunteer regiments in the Spanish-American War. For example, John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans* (3rd ed.; New York, 1967), p. 419, claims that Congress authorized ten Black volunteer Immune regiments. Lerone Bennett, Jr., *Before the Mayflower: A History of the Negro in America, 1619-1964* (Rev. ed.; Baltimore, Maryland, 1966) claims that there were sixteen Black volunteer regiments (p. 386).

2. Document File #78875, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, *Document File 1890-1917*, National Archives, Record Group 94. (Hereafter documents in this series will be cited as AGO #). See also AGO #102149; Graham A. Cosmas, *An Army for Empire: The United States Army in the Spanish-American War* (Columbia, Missouri, 1971), pp. 80-102.

3. Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., "North Carolina's Negro Regiment in the Spanish-American War," *North Carolina Historical Review*, 48 (October, 1971), 373-75; *Biennial Report of the Adjutant General of Alabama, 1898* (Montgomery, 1898), pp. 12-13; William H. Coston, *The Spanish-American War Volunteer* (2nd ed.; Middletown, Pennsylvania, 1899), p. 54.

4. *The American Citizen* [Kansas City, Kansas], 17 June 1898; *The Colored American* [Washington, D.C.], 2 July 1898; Miles V. Lynk, *The Black Troopers, or, The Daring Heroism of the Negro Soldiers in the Spanish-American War* (Jackson, Tennessee, 1899), p. 105; *The Colored American*, 21 January 1899; Gatewood, 373.

5. AGO #97678; *The [Springfield] Illinois Record*, 14 May 1898.

6. *The Bee* [Washington, D.C.], 17 September 1898; *Ibid.*, 21 May 1898.

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9. *The Gazette*, 28 May 1898; Hiram M. Thweatt, *What the Newspapers Say of the Negro Soldier in the Spanish-American War* (Thomasville, Georgia, n.d.), p. 5.

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12. John Allen, letter to author, 24 January 1967; *The Planet*, 19 November 1898.

13. *Ibid.*, 15 October 1898; *Ibid.*, 29 October 1898; *The New York Times*, 13 July 1898.

14. *The Recorder* [Indianapolis, Indiana], 11 February 1899; Regimental Return, August, 1898, *Regimental Records, Tenth United States Volunteer Infantry, 1898-1899*, NA, RG 94; *The Colored American*, 2 July 1898; *The Planet*, 31 December 1898; *The Freeman* [Indianapolis, Indiana], 10 September 1898; *The Gazette*, 21 May 1898.

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DAVID CURTIS SKAGGS
Bowling Green State University

The KATUSA Experiment: The Integration Of Korean Nationals Into The U.S. Army, 1950-1965

GENERAL Douglas MacArthur's desperate manpower situation in the opening weeks of the Korean War led to the assignment of Republic of Korea (ROK) soldiers into American Army units. Known as the Korean Augmentation to the U.S. Army or KATUSA, this experiment constituted one of history's most unusual socio-military programs.

In mid-August, 1950, the 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions and the 1st Cavalry Division received several hundred KATUSAs each and over 8,600 went by boat from Pusan to Yokohama for augmentation to the 7th Infantry Division, by then merely a cadre unit, having been extensively levied for fillers to the other three divisions when they embarked for Korea. Most American commanders were appalled at what they received. Many of the recruits were simply dragged off the streets of Pusan and Taegu by impressment teams. Major Spencer P. Edwards, Jr., the 7th Division's replacement officer, saw the Koreans disembark dressed "in their native civilian clothes, white baggy cotton pants, small white jackets, rubber shoes and all." The division received not the 8,000 recruits with basic equipment and training they expected, but half-a-division of civilians who could not understand a word of English, who quickly exhausted the

quartermaster stock of small size clothing, and who had never fired a rifle. As the division prepared for its complicated, dangerous, and secret invasion at Inch'on during maneuvers on Mount Fujiyama the KATUSA experiment bordered on chaos. The stock of the U.S. standard M1 (Garand) rifle was too long for the smaller Koreans to shoulder easily, but they had to use it because the supply of carbines was limited and the Garand had harder hitting power. Into each company and battery 100 KATUSAs had to be integrated. Lieutenant Colonel Charles R. Scherer, Assistant G-4 of the 7th Division, wrote later: "These men had no idea of sanitation, let alone the more complicated activities of military life. Yet high-level policy dictated that we treat them as our equals in every respect. They were to receive the same clothing and equipment, the same treatment, the same rations. Later they even had to have chocolate bars and 'comic' books." After only three weeks' training the division embarked on an amphibious operation—the most difficult of military maneuvers save for a parachute landing. This was to be undertaken by the greenest of troops—both American and Korean—in a unit where nearly half the soldiers were unable to understand the language of their commanders.

The 7th Division was fortunate. The 1st U.S. Marine Division secured a beachhead deep enough for the Army troops to land without the usual confusion of amphibious landings. A few additional hours of

shakedown time elapsed before combat. Then, according to Major Edwards' recollections: "Some of the ROK's participated heroically and some of them disappeared at the first sign of danger. The great majority behaved just as any other troops with less than three weeks' training would have—they just didn't know what was going on." Still the division successfully secured the beachhead that opened the path to Seoul. Their welcome was tumultuous. Citizens stood amazed as thousands of Koreans marched through the streets proudly wearing the patch of a division that only a few months earlier had been worn by Americans in the role of military occupiers.¹

No division received as many KATUSAs as the 7th. However, throughout the summer and fall KATUSAs went to all major U.S. units; by mid-October they totaled 26,021. Various systems of integration were tried. The most common was the so-called "buddy system" whereby an American was responsible for training a "counterpart" recruit in the use of weapons and equipment, in unit drill, and in personal hygiene and conduct. This system was used by the 1st Cavalry, 2d and 7th Infantry, and two regiments of the 25th Infantry Division. In the other 25th Division regiment and in the 24th Division all the Koreans went into separate platoons. Those in the 25th Division were commanded by American officers and noncommissioned officers. These Korean units were then attached to American companies. The 3rd Infantry Division both augmented its companies and created separate KATUSA platoons commanded by Americans.²

None of the plans seemed to work very well. Lt. Robert K. Sawyer's observations were typical: "Mere recruits, they simply had not had time to become soldiers, and I used them for little more than carrying ammunition and rations. . . Invariably they fell asleep when on guard, requiring constant checking by the Americans. And