

M1823

COMPILED MILITARY SERVICE RECORDS OF VOLUNTEER UNION
SOLDIERS WHO SERVED WITH THE UNITED STATES COLORED
TROOPS: INFANTRY ORGANIZATIONS, 20TH THROUGH 25TH

Introduction by Budge Weidman.
Regimental histories and Table of Contents by Michael F. Knight.

Records prepared for microfilming by volunteers of
the Civil War Conservation Corps.

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INTRODUCTION

On the 98 rolls of this microfilm publication, M1823, are reproduced the compiled military service records of volunteer Union soldiers belonging to the 20th through 25th infantry units organized for service with the United States Colored Troops (USCT). The service cards are arranged by regiment and thereunder alphabetically by surname, followed by miscellaneous cards. These records are part of the Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group (RG) 94.

In all, the USCT consisted of 7 numbered cavalry regiments; 13 numbered artillery regiments plus 1 independent battery; 144 numbered infantry regiments; Brigade Bands Nos. 1 & 2 (Corps d'Afrique and U.S. Colored Troops); Powell's Regiment Colored Infantry; Southard's Company Colored Infantry; Quartermaster Detachment; Pioneer Corps, 1st Division, 16th Army Corps; Pioneer Corps, Cavalry Division, 16th Army Corps; Unassigned Company A Colored Infantry; and Unassigned USCT.

BACKGROUND

Since the time of the American Revolution, African Americans have volunteered to serve their country in time of war. The Civil War was no exception. Official sanction was the difficulty. In the fall of 1862, four Union regiments of African Americans were raised in New Orleans, LA: the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Louisiana Native Guard, and the 1st Louisiana Heavy Artillery (African Descent). The 1st South Carolina Infantry (African Descent) was not officially organized until January 1863; however, three companies of the regiment were on coastal expeditions as early as November 1862. The 1st Kansas Colored Infantry was not mustered into Federal service until January 1863, even though the regiment had already participated in the action at Island Mound, MO, on October 27, 1862. These early unofficial regiments received little Federal support, but they showed the strength of the African American soldier's desire to fight for freedom.

The first official authorization to employ African Americans in Federal service was the Second Confiscation and Militia Act of July 17, 1862 (12 Stat. 592). This act allowed President Abraham Lincoln "to employ as many persons of African descent as he may deem necessary and proper for the suppression of this rebellion, and for this purpose he may organize and use them in such manner as he may judge best for the public welfare." The use of African Americans met with varying reactions and treatment. In the trans-Mississippi West, they saw some combat, while in the Department of Tennessee and in the South they were frequently assigned fatigue work. In the East, they drew both combat and fatigue duty. The President did not authorize use of African Americans in combat, however, until issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863.

In late January 1863, Gov. John Andrew of Massachusetts received permission to raise a regiment of African American soldiers. Because the pace of organizing additional regiments was very slow, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton sent

Gen. Lorenzo Thomas to the lower Mississippi Valley in March to recruit free and contraband African Americans. Thomas was given broad authority. He was to explain the administration's policy regarding African American soldiers and recruit volunteers to raise and command them. Stanton wanted all officers of such units to be white, but that policy was softened to allow African American surgeons and chaplains. By the end of the war, in addition to the chaplains and surgeons, there were 87 African American officers. Thomas's endeavor was very successful, and on May 22, 1863, the Bureau of Colored Troops was established to coordinate and organize regiments from all parts of the country. Created under War Department General Order No. 143, the bureau was responsible for handling "all matters relating to the organization of Colored Troops." The bureau was directly under the Adjutant General's Office, and its procedures and rules were specific and strict. All African American regiments were now to be designated United States Colored Troops (USCT). At this time there were some African American regiments with state names and a few regiments in the Department of the Gulf designated as Corps d'Afrique. The Corps d'Afrique units ultimately became numbered regiments in the USCT. The 54th and 55th Massachusetts Infantries (Colored), the 5th Massachusetts Cavalry (Colored), the 29th Connecticut Infantry (Colored), the 6th and 7th Louisiana Infantries (African Descent), the 3rd Tennessee Volunteer Infantry (African Descent), and the 1st South Carolina Volunteers (Colored) retained their numbers and state designations, but served under the Bureau of Colored Troops.

To facilitate recruiting in Maryland, Missouri, Tennessee, and eventually Kentucky, the War Department issued General Order No. 329 on October 3, 1863. Section 6 of the order stated that if any citizen should offer his or her slave for enlistment into the military service, that person would, "if such slave be accepted, receive from the recruiting officer a certificate thereof, and become entitled to compensation for the service or labor of said slave, not exceeding the sum of three hundred dollars, upon filing a valid deed of manumission and of release, and making satisfactory proof of title." For this reason, some records of manumission are contained in the compiled service records reproduced in this publication.

The USCT fought in 39 major engagements and over 400 lesser ones. Sixteen African American soldiers received the Medal of Honor. As it was in other units, the death toll from disease was very high in the USCT. Deaths from disease and battle totaled approximately 37,000. The last regiment of the USCT was mustered out of Federal service in December 1867.

20th United States Colored Infantry

The 20th United States Colored Infantry Regiment was organized at Riker's Island, New York, in February and March, 1864. During March and April 1864 the regiment split its time between Matagorda Island, Texas, and Camp Parapet, Louisiana. The 20th USCT spent the balance of 1864 and 1865 stationed at various points in Louisiana and Mississippi. On October 7, 1865, the regiment was mustered out of service.

21st United States Colored Infantry

The 21st United States Colored Infantry Regiment was formed on March 14, 1864, by consolidation of the former 3rd and 4th Regiments, South Carolina Colored Infantry, at Jacksonville, Florida. The 3rd and 4th South Carolina Colored Regiments were stationed in Jacksonville in support of the failed Florida Campaign that effectively ended at the battle of Olustee, Florida. In April 1864, the newly formed 21st USCT was transferred to Morris Island in support of the siege of Charleston, South Carolina. The regiment was employed on fatigue, guard, and picket duty on Folly Island, South Carolina, for the remainder of 1864. The 21st USCT skirmished during the expedition to James Island in February 1865. It was one of the first regiments to enter Charleston, South Carolina, on February 18, 1865. The regiment was immediately engaged in fighting numerous fires set around the city. From August 1865 until it was mustered out in October 1866, the regiment served in garrison duty in South Carolina and Georgia.

22nd United States Colored Infantry

The 22nd United States Colored Infantry Regiment was organized in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, between January 10 and 29, 1864. It was then transferred to Yorktown, Virginia, where it was attached to the 18th Corps, Army of the James. The regiment marched to the Bermuda Hundred lines where it performed fatigue duty until participating in an expedition to King and Queen Counties, Virginia. On May 5, 1864, the regiment was assigned to guard transports at Wilson's Wharf before transferring to Fort Powhatan on May 17 and skirmishing against the enemy there on May 21. The 22nd took part in the attacks against fortifications before Petersburg, June 15–19, 1864. During the June 15, 1864, skirmish at Baylor's Farm, the 22nd was the first Union regiment to breach the Confederate rifle works. Advancing to the Dimmock Line of fortifications outside Petersburg, the 22nd spent the better part of the rest of the day pinned down by enemy artillery fire. At 7 p.m., June 15, 1864, the 22nd USCT, along with the 1st, 4th, and 6th USCT, were ordered to assault the Petersburg main works. The 22nd participated in the overrunning of batteries 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. The 22nd USCT fought in the second battle of Fair Oaks on October 27, 1864, and was subsequently transferred to the trenches before Richmond at the end of the year. The 22nd USCT marched into Richmond on April 3, 1865. On April 20, 1865, this regiment had the honor of leading President Lincoln's funeral procession through the streets of Washington DC. Transferred to Texas at the end of May, the 22nd was mustered out of service on October 16, 1865.

23rd United States Colored Infantry

The 23rd United States Colored Infantry Regiment was organized at Camp Casey, Virginia, between November 23, 1863, and June 30, 1864. During May and June of 1864, the regiment supported the Army of the Potomac's campaign to the James River. On May 15, near the Wilderness, the regiment experienced its first skirmish against Confederate cavalry. It assaulted the Petersburg fortifications on June 16, 1864, and participated in the siege of Petersburg until April 2, 1865. The 23rd also played a critical combat role during the explosion of the mine at Petersburg on July 30, 1864. The regiment was active in the pursuit of the Army of Virginia, May 3–9,

1865, and was present at the Appomattox Court House during the surrender by Gen. Robert E. Lee. The 23rd was transferred to Texas in May to patrol along the Rio Grande and mustered out of service on November 30, 1865.

24th United States Colored Infantry

Organized at Camp William Penn, Pennsylvania, from January to April 1865, the 24th United States Infantry Regiment was ordered to guard duty at Point Lookout Prison, Maryland, from May to June 1865. The unit was ordered to Richmond from July 16 to October 1865. The regiment was mustered out of service on October 1, 1865.

25th United States Colored Infantry

The 25th United States Colored Infantry Regiment was organized from January 3 to March 1864. Beginning April 1, the regiment was transported to New Orleans for duty. The regiment was split in half for the trip with five companies aboard each of the two assigned transports (designated left and right wings). Off Cape Hatteras, the transport *Suwanee*, with the right wing onboard, sprung a serious leak and was forced into port at Morehead City, North Carolina. The transport was condemned, and the right wing of the 25th USCT was stranded at Morehead City for 3 weeks while new transportation was arranged. The right wing finally reunited with the left wing of the 25th USCT in New Orleans on May 5, 1864. Shortly thereafter, the regiment was ordered to Florida where it was stationed at Fort Barrancas and Fort Pickens. The regiment served in Florida until mustered out of service December 6, 1865.

RECORDS DESCRIPTION

Compiled service records consist of a jacket-envelope for each soldier, labeled with his name, rank, unit, and card numbers. The compilation of service records of Union soldiers began in 1890 under the direction of Col. Fred C. Ainsworth, head of the Record and Pension Office of the Adjutant General's Office, Department of War. Clerks copied information from muster rolls, regimental returns, descriptive books, and other records verbatim onto cards. They created a separate card for each instance an individual name appeared on a document. The cards were numbered on the back, and these numbers were entered onto the outside jacket containing the cards. The carded information was verified by a separated operation of comparison; great care was taken to ensure that the cards were accurate.

A typical jacket contains card abstracts of entries found in original records relating to the soldier and original documents relating solely to that soldier. Examples of the latter include enlistment papers, substitute certificates, casualty sheets, death reports, prisoner-of-war memorandums, and correspondence. Unique to the records of the USCT are deeds of manumission, oaths of allegiance, proofs of ownership, certificates of monetary award, and bills of sale. These items appear most frequently in units recruited in the border states of Kentucky, Missouri, and Maryland. These states remained in the Union but were slave states. Jackets and cards include a section labeled "bookmark," which was reserved for cross-references to other

records relating to the individual or his unit. The service records in this publication are arranged numerically by regiment, and thereunder alphabetically by name of the soldier. Records for officers are interfiled alphabetically by name with the records of enlisted men. If an individual served in more than one unit, which was typical for USCT officers, there will be a separate service record for each unit in which he served.

The unjacketed miscellaneous cards were accumulated by the War Department with the expectation that they would be incorporated in individual compiled service records. The expectation was never fulfilled, however, because either insufficient or contradictory information made it impossible to associate the cards or papers with a particular soldier's service record.

RELATED RECORDS

Among the records of the Adjutant General's Office in the National Archives are many of the original records that were abstracted or "carded" by the Record and Pension Office. These include the individual unit's muster rolls, returns, and descriptive books. Other series in Record Group (RG) 94 that contain information relating to volunteer Union soldiers who served with the USCT include carded records relating to Union staff officers, carded medical records of volunteer Union soldiers, unbound and bound regimental records, and "record of events" cards.

The "record of events" cards include information copied from the unit's muster rolls and returns. They show the stations of the field and staff and of the companies of the regiment at the time the muster roll or return was prepared, and sometimes mention battles, skirmishes, or other activities in which the regiment participated. The cards have been reproduced as National Archives Microfilm Publication M594, *Compiled Records Showing Service of Military Units in Volunteer Union Organizations*.

A card index for the USCT, also in RG 94, has been reproduced as Microfilm Publication M589, *Index to Compiled Military Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served with U.S. Colored Troops*. It may be used to locate the regiment of USCT personnel. An index card gives the name of the soldier and his rank, as well as the unit in which he served; sometimes there is a cross-reference to his service in other units or organizations. The National Archives is continually producing microfilm publications of volunteer Union compiled military service records. A complete listing of finished publications can be found in the National Archives *Microfilm Resources for Research: A Comprehensive Catalog*, which is available online at www.archives.gov.

The Records of the Colored Troops Division, within RG 94, include division correspondence and records relating to recruiting, the appointment of officers, and the slave or free status of individuals, as well as a compilation of historical extracts and official papers concerning the military service of African Americans from the colonial period through the Civil War. This compilation, titled *The Negro in the Military Service of the United States 1639–1886*, is reproduced as Microfilm

Publication M858. The Records of the Bounty and Claims Division, also in RG 94, include correspondence of the division and records relating to bounties and claims paid to loyal owners of slaves by the Slave Claims Commissions of Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

If a soldier applied for a pension, the pension application case file may be among the Records of the Veterans Administration, RG 15. Indexes to the pension applications have been reproduced as Microfilm Publication T288, *General Index to Pension Files, 1861–1934*, and T289, *Organizational Index to Pension Files of Veterans Who Served Between 1861 and 1900*.

If a soldier or officer was tried before a general court-martial, or if an individual or his unit was the subject of a court of inquiry or military commission, transcripts of the proceedings may be among the Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General (Army), RG 153. The registers to the proceedings have been reproduced as Microfilm Publication M1105, *Registers of the Records of the Proceedings of the U.S. Army General Courts-Martial, 1809–1890*.

Other record groups having information pertaining to the USCT include Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, RG 105; Records of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau (Civil War), RG 110; Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury, RG 217; and Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1821–1920, RG 393.

Published Sources and Guides

Important sources for information about African American units in the Civil War are the War Department's *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, DC: 1880–1901; reprinted Harrisburg, PA, 1971 and 1985) and the Navy Department's *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies* (Washington, DC: 1874–1922; reprinted Harrisburg, PA, 1971 and 1985). These multivolume works contain reports of operations and other official correspondence.

Holdings of the National Archives relating to the Civil War are outlined in Kenneth W. Munden and Henry Putnam Beers, *Guide to Federal Archives Relating to the Civil War* (Washington, DC: National Archives, 1962), and Henry Putnam Beers, *Guide to the Archives of the Government of the Confederate States of America* (Washington, DC: National Archives, 1968), which were reprinted as *The Union* (1986) and *The Confederacy* (1986).

ROLL LIST

ROLL DESCRIPTION

20th United States Colored Infantry

- 1 Abbott, Richard A. – Benson, Benjamin
- 2 Benson, James H. – Brown William B.
- 3 Brown, William H. – Coles, Henry
- 4 Coles, James – Debrey, James
- 5 De Cato, Everett – Edwards, Charles
- 6 Edwards, Edward – Gibbs, Timothy
- 7 Gibson, Benjamin – Haywood, Samuel C.
- 8 Hazzard, James E. – Jackson Frank
- 9 Jackson, George – Johnson, Charles
- 10 Johnson, Charles H. – Kiser, William
- 11 Kissam, Charles H. – Martin, John
- 12 Martin, Norman R. – Morris, Joseph
- 13 Morris, Madison – Phillips, Channcey
- 14 Phillips, John – Rollin, Samuel
- 15 Rolling, James – Smith, Benjamin
- 16 Smith, Charles H. – Taylor, Henry
- 17 Taylor, Henry J. – Van Beuren, James F.
- 18 Van Boeren, James F. – Werns, Samuel
- 19 Wesley, Ely – Williams, Samuel
- 20 Williams, Solomon – Zeh, Daniel

20th United States Colored Infantry, Miscellaneous Cards

- 21 Adams, Charles – Zec, David

21st United States Colored Infantry

- 22 Abeel, Edgar – Blake, Robert
- 23 Blake, Stephen – Caraway, James
- 24 Carter, Anthony – Debrows, Isaac
- 25 Dungan, James S. – Garrison, Tong
- 26 Garrot, Charles – Grumble, Ceasar
- 27 Grumble, Taylor – Jacob, John E.
- 28 James, Christopher – Kirk, William
- 29 Kirke, Monday – Middleton, Lee
- 30 Middleton, London – Perry, Joseph
- 31 Peterson, Robert – Rivers, Abraham
- 32 Rivers, George – Simmons, John
- 33 Simmons, Joshua – Tisdale, Jarrett
- 34 Tolbert, Frank – Williams, Lewis
- 35 Williams, Peter – Young, Wright

21st United States Colored Infantry, Miscellaneous Cards

- 36 Allen, Lot – Young, Wright

ROLL DESCRIPTION

22nd United States Colored Infantry

- 37 Aaron, Levi Diller – Boyd, Jacob
- 38 Boye, Charles S. – Clarey, Bristow
- 39 Clark, Calvin – Denike, Thomas
- 40 Dennis, Elijah – Gills, Nimrod
- 41 Glasgow, George W. – Heiner, Robert G.
- 42 Henderson, Leonard – Johnson, George
- 43 Johnson, George W. – Little, John
- 44 Lloyd, A. B. – Moulson, Jacob
- 45 Mudd, Parish – Purnell, John
- 46 Purnell, Zadoc – Seward, Robert
- 47 Shamro, Edward – Stoner, John
- 48 Stoner, Robert – Walter, Isaac
- 49 Walter, William C. – Young, Thomas

22nd United States Colored Infantry, Miscellaneous Cards

- 50 Aaron, Levi D. – Johnson, W. R.
- 51 Jones, Anthony – Young, Richard

23rd United States Colored Infantry

- 52 Ackis, Smallwood – Bigfire, Charles
- 53 Bigfire, Chicken – Brown, Lewis
- 54 Brown, Nathan – Champ, Andrew
- 55 Champ, George – Dabney, William
- 56 Dade, Newton – Edwards, Caleb
- 57 Eglan, Richard B. – Gant, Charles
- 58 Gant, John H. – Harper, Richard
- 59 Harris, Addison – Holloway, Samuel
- 60 Holmes, Abraham – Johnson, Henry
- 61 Johnson, Isaac – King, Albert
- 62 King, Edward S. – McAlister, Robinson
- 63 McAtee, William – Palmer, Joseph
- 64 Palmer, Squire – Ricketts, Joshua
- 65 Reigle, Frank – Simms, Samuel
- 66 Simms, William – Taylor, George
- 67 Taylor, Harrison – Upshaw, James
- 68 Urquharet, Chelsea – Williams, Charles
- 69 Williams, David – Zimmerman, Columbus

23rd United States Colored Infantry, Miscellaneous Cards

- 70 Ackis, Smallwood – Kohn, H. H.
- 71 Lambkins, Beverly – Zimmerman, Columbus

ROLL DESCRIPTION

24th United States Colored Infantry

- 72 Abel, Jacob – Bradford, Albert
- 73 Bradley, Andrew J. – Connor, Andrew (Anderson)
- 74 Conover, Conover (Tylee) – Francis, Jeremiah
- 75 Francis, John – Harkless, Ferdinand
- 76 Heath, Thornton – Jones, Francis I.
- 77 Jones, George H. – McKinney, John E.
- 78 McLane, Walter – Price, George
- 79 Price, George H. – Smith, Benjamin
- 80 Smith, Everal S. – Townsley, David
- 81 Tranks, Benjamin – Wood, John
- 82 Wood, John D. – Young, William

25th United States Colored Infantry

- 83 Accoo, Charles – Blockson, William
- 84 Blockson, William Noah – Campbell, Albert
- 85 Campbell, Henry S. – Davis, Samuel
- 86 Davis, Thomas Y. – Gance, Charles
- 87 Gance, Cloyd – Haynes, Calvin A.
- 88 Heart, George E. – Humphries, Isaac
- 89 Humphries, Prince G. – Kocher, Daniel
- 90 Kullum, William H.H.S. – Maxwell, Abraham
- 91 Mayhew, James M. – Norcross, John E.
- 92 Norris, Eliphalet B. – Raemer, Alexander
- 93 Ramsey, Henry C. – Scott, Isaac
- 94 Scott, John – Stephens, William
- 95 Stevens, George – Turner, Henry J.
- 96 Turner, Isaac – West, Harrison
- 97 West, Manlove – Wright, William

25th United States Colored Infantry, Miscellaneous Cards

- 98 Accoo, Charles – Wright, Charles E.