

M1992

COMPILED MILITARY SERVICE RECORDS OF VOLUNTEER UNION  
SOLDIERS WHO SERVED WITH THE UNITED STATES COLORED  
TROOPS: INFANTRY ORGANIZATIONS, 31ST THROUGH 35TH

Introduction by Budge Weidman.  
Regimental histories by Michael F. Knight.  
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Records prepared for microfilming by volunteers  
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## INTRODUCTION

On the 86 rolls of this microfilm publication, M1992, are reproduced the compiled military service records of volunteer Union soldiers belonging to the 31st through 35th 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 Orders 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 Orders 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 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.

### **31st United States Colored Infantry**

The 31st United States Colored Infantry (USCI) Regiment was organized from April to September 1864 by combining the men of the 30th Connecticut Infantry (Colored) with recruits from the 31st USCI (by Special Orders No. 180, Adjutant General's Office, May 18, 1864). The 31st USCI began organizing in April at Fort Schulyer and Willet's Point, New York Harbor, before completing training near Prince George Court House, Virginia, in September. Even before the regiment approached full strength, it participated in attacks on the fortifications at Petersburg, VA, from June 15 to 19, as part of the 9th Corps, Fourth Division, 2nd Brigade, and was heavily engaged at the Battle of the Crater, near Petersburg on July 30, 1864. In November and December, some companies of the 31st

USCI were engaged in the siege of Petersburg while others were encamped in the front lines near Bermuda Hundred, VA. In January 1865, the regiment was again engaged in the siege of Petersburg, entering the city on April 3, 1865. From April 4 to 9, the 31st USCI participated in the Appomattox Campaign. Through the end of May, the regiment remained in the Petersburg area before transferring to Brazos Santiago, Texas. The regiment remained in Texas until it was mustered out of service on November 7, 1865.

### **32nd United States Colored Infantry**

The 32nd United States Colored Infantry Regiment was organized at Camp William Penn near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, during February and March 1864. From April to June, the regiment was on station at Hilton Head, South Carolina, where it supported operations against the defenses of Charleston, SC. On November 30, 1864, the 32nd USCI Regiment fought at the Battle of Honey Hill, SC. On February 14, 1865, the regiment skirmished with the enemy in support of the attacks on Charleston and entered that city on February 18. For the rest of the war, the 32nd USCI performed garrison duty at Hilton Head, Charleston, and Beaufort, SC, before mustering out of service on August 22, 1865.

### **33rd United States Colored Infantry**

The 33rd United States Colored Infantry was originally organized at Beaufort, South Carolina, in January 1863 as the 1st South Carolina Volunteers Infantry Regiment. From January 23 to February 2, the 1st South Carolina engaged in an expedition to Florida under the command of Col. Thomas W. Higginson. From February to July, the regiment was stationed at Camp Saxton, Port Royal Island, SC. On July 10 and 11, the regiment joined an expedition up the South Edisto River and participated in a number of skirmishes with the enemy. In August the regiment was ordered to Beaufort, SC, and for the rest of 1863 alternated between that station and Camp Saxton. On February 8, 1864, the regiment's designation was changed to the 33rd United States Colored Infantry Regiment. The 33rd USCI occupied several stations in South Carolina and Georgia during the remainder of the war and was mustered out of service on January 31, 1866.

### **34th United States Colored Infantry**

The 34th United States Colored Infantry was originally organized at Beaufort and Hilton Head, South Carolina, in May 1863, as the 2nd South Carolina Volunteers Infantry Regiment. In March the regiment was ordered to participate in the expedition against Jacksonville, Florida, where on March 11 it engaged in a heavy skirmish against enemy cavalry. Throughout the rest of March, the regiment undertook numerous operations in the area surrounding Jacksonville. In July 1863, the 2nd South Carolina was ordered to Morris Island in support of operations against Battery Wagner and the defenses of Charleston, SC. The regiment returned to Jacksonville in support of Gen. Truman Seymour's Florida Campaign in February and March 1864. On February 8, 1864, the regiment's designation was officially changed to the 34th United States Colored Infantry. From August to November, the 34th USCI was again involved in expeditions between Jacksonville and Gainesville, FL. On November 28, the regiment joined the Boyd's Neck, SC, expedition, and on November 30, 1864, participated in the Battle of Honey Hill. Following the Boyd's Neck expedition, the regiment was again stationed in Florida, and it mustered out of service on February 28, 1866.

### **35th United States Colored Infantry**

The 35th United States Colored Infantry was originally organized at New Berne, North Carolina, as the 1st North Carolina Colored Infantry in June 1863. From July to December, the 1st North Carolina (Colored) was ordered to Folly Island, South Carolina, to participate in operations against Battery Wagner and the defenses of Charleston. On February 8, 1864, the regiment's designation was officially changed to the 35th United States Colored Infantry. The 35th USCI was ordered to join Gen. Truman Seymour's Florida Campaign, and on February 20 the regiment suffered heavy casualties at the Battle of Olustee. Following the retreat from Olustee, the 35th USCI remained stationed at Jacksonville, FL, until November when it was ordered to join the Boyd's Neck, SC, expedition. The 35th USCI was heavily engaged at the Battle of Honey Hill, SC, on November 30, 1864. For most of the remainder of the war, the regiment was stationed at Jacksonville. After the war, the regiment occupied various posts throughout the Department of the South before mustering out of service on June 1, 1866.

### **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 those 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 the cards or papers could not be associated with particular soldiers' service records due to insufficient or contradictory information.

## 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 Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served with U.S. Colored Troops*. This index has also been reproduced digitally by the National Park Service and can be accessed at their Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System web site: <http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/>. It may be used to locate the regiment of USCT personnel. Each 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 locator, which is available online at [www.archives.gov](http://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* (1998) and *The Confederacy* (1998).



## ROLL LIST

ROLL	DESCRIPTION
	<b>31st United States Colored Infantry</b>
1	Adams, John – Berfit, Morris
2	Berhl, Richard – Bryant, Albert
3	Buck, James – Cojay, James H.
4	Cole, George – Derickson, Alfred
5	Derritt, Pompey – Franca, Antonio
6	Francis, George – Grimes, John
7	Grogart, Henry – Howard, William
8	Howe, John A. – Johnson, George
9	Johnson, George W. – Lee, James
10	Lee, Lindsay – Morris, John
11	Morris, John R. – Peterson, James H.
12	Peterson, John – Robinson, Frank
13	Robinson, Henry – Singleton, John
14	Singleton, Thomas – Steward, Sanford
15	Stewart, David – Treadwell, Edward
16	Treadwell, Wood – White, John
17	White, Johnson – Young, William
	<b>31st United States Colored Infantry, Miscellaneous Cards</b>
18	Adams, King – Young, William
	<b>32nd United States Colored Infantry</b>
19	Aaron, James – Bostick, Spencer
20	Bothier, Charles – Chiverton, James
21	Chorman, Joseph – Dickson, William
22	Didymus, Nathaniel Y. – Geary, Edward C.
23	Geise, Franklin – Hart, George R.
24	Hart, Isiah – Jeter, Henry
25	Johns, James – Lloyd, Edward
26	Lloyd, Thomas – Napper, Robert
27	Naylor, Thomas – Rice, John
28	Rice, Josiah – Smith, Sandy
29	Smith, Theodore – Turner, Abraham
30	Turner, John – Young, William
	<b>32nd United States Colored Infantry, Miscellaneous Cards</b>
31	Aaron, James – Young, William
	<b>33rd United States Colored Infantry</b>
32	Abbott, Randolph – Binyard, Stephen
33	Bird, Daniel – Campbell, Frank

ROLL	DESCRIPTION
	<b>33rd United States Colored Infantry (cont.)</b>
34	Canada, Hampus – Davis, Robert W.
35	Davis, Samuel – Floyd, Jack
36	Floyd, Jerry – Grant, Robert
37	Grant, Simon – Haywood, Abraham
38	Haywood, Adam – James, William
39	Jenkins, Caine – Lawrence, Jacob
40	Layem, John – McKnight, Paul
41	McKnight, Toby – Munro, James
42	Murray, Andrew – Pope, Cezar
43	Pope, Edward – Ryals, John
44	Sammis, Albert – Snow, Israel
45	Spaulding, Daniel – Vandross, Robert
46	Vandyke, William – Williams, Higgins
47	Williams, James – Young, Wilson
	<b>33rd United States Colored Infantry, Miscellaneous Cards</b>
48	Abbott, Randolph – Young, Thursday
	<b>34th United States Colored Infantry</b>
49	Abbott, Samuel – Blake, Simon
50	Blaze, Frank – Connolly, James
51	Cantline, Adam – De Coster, Isaac
52	Delancey, Charles – Frazer, Charles
53	Frazer, Elijah – Green, Anthony
54	Green, Ben – Hines, Samuel
55	Hitchcock, Samuel – Jones, Jacob
56	Jones, James – Manego, Samuel
57	Manego, Shadrick – Murrey, Ned
58	Murry, Moses – Richards, Larry
59	Richardson, Andrew – Shepard, Gilbert
60	Shepard, Aaron – Stevenson, James
61	Stewart, Abram – Washington, Smart
62	Washington, Solomon – Young, William
	<b>34th United States Colored Infantry, Miscellaneous Cards</b>
63	Abbott, Samuel – Young, William
	<b>35th United States Colored Infantry</b>
64	Aaron, John – Batts, Issac
65	Baum, David – Bogle, Archibald
66	Bogues, Miles – Burse, Jackson
67	Burton, Henry E. – Coleman, Issac
68	Collins, Caesar – Drayton, Richard

ROLL      DESCRIPTION

**35th United States Colored Infantry (cont.)**

69      Dudley, Heywood – Furbey, Alfred  
70      Furby, Edmund – Greene, George  
71      Gregory, Benjamin – Harvey, Kit  
72      Harvey, Willis – Hugh, Champ  
73      Hugh, Isaac – Jones, Owen  
74      Jones, Peter – Lawrence, John  
75      Lawrence, John R. – McKay, Julius  
76      Maclease, Sampson – Middleton, Hardy  
77      Middleton, Thaddeus – Newberne, Rafe  
78      Newberry, Richard – Pew, Frank  
79      Pew, Freeman – Ross, William  
80      Roundtree, Edmund – Simmons, Willis  
81      Simpson, David – Spencer, David  
82      Spencer, Eli – Taylor, William J.  
83      Terry, John D – Washington, John  
84      Washington, John B. – Williams, Edward  
85      Williams, Eli – Young, John

**35th United States Colored Infantry, Miscellaneous Cards**

86      Abbott, John – Young, John