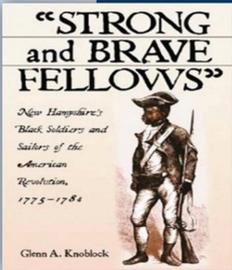




*“Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letters US, let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder, and bullets in his pocket, and there is no power on earth or under the earth which can deny that he has earned the right of citizenship in the United States” (Frederick Douglass)*

## Military History – Highlighting African American Veterans



From the time of the arrival of the very first enslaved to the American colonies in 1619, they were welcomed into the ranks of local militias to counter the threat from Native Americans. This practice remained, especially in the northern colonies, for more than a century and a half. (African Americans in the Revolutionary War by Michael Lee Lanning)

African Americans served in the Confederate Army – it is estimated that between 3,000 and 6,000 served as Confederate soldiers. Another 100,000 or so blacks, mostly enslaved, supported the Confederacy as laborers, servants, and teamsters. They built roads, batteries and fortifications, and manned munitions factories – essentially doing the Confederacy’s dirty work. (The Root.com – 2015)



“Contraband” was a term commonly used by the Union forces during the American Civil War, aka “The War of the Rebellion,” to describe a new status for escaped slaves. This term “Contraband” was invented by

General Benjamin Butler at Fort Monroe, Virginia in 1861. (Courtesy of Sons and Daughters of Ham 2016)

On September 27, 1862, the first regiment to become a United States Colored Troops (USCT) regiment was officially brought into the Union army. All the captains and lieutenants in this Louisiana regiment were men of African descent. The regiment was immediately assigned combat duties, and it captured Donaldsonville, Louisiana on October 27, 1862.



Soldiers with 25th Regiment of the United States Colored Troops (USCT) company during the Civil War.



Harlem Hell Fighters – The 369th Infantry Regiment, formerly known as the 15th New York National Guard Regiment, was an infantry regiment of the United States Army National Guard during World Wars I and II.



Eugene Jacques Bullard – the first black military pilot – was one of only two black combat pilots in World War I.



Robert Smalls, a former slave from Charleston, was the first and only African American to be commissioned captain in the U.S. Navy during the Civil War. Smalls fought as a pilot on both the CSS Planter, a ship he had commandeered to freedom, and the ironclad gunship, the USS Keokuk. He led the Union ships to deactivate mines he had helped plant while enslaved by the Confederacy and guided the Union forces to Confederate outposts. He also assisted in the destruction of railroad bridges in the harbor area.