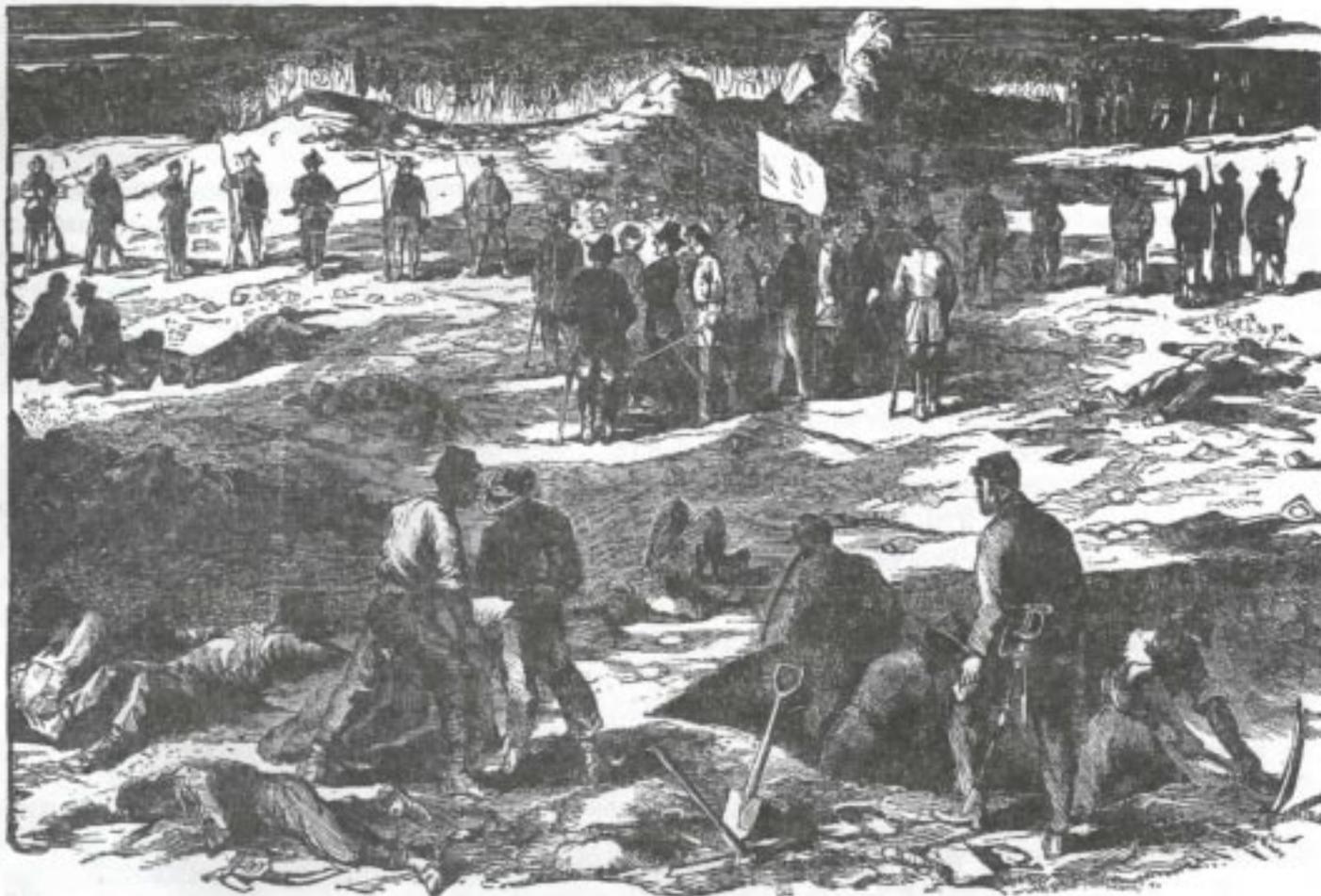


# INDIANA'S 28TH REGIMENT: BLACK SOLDIERS FOR THE UNION

Willsam, The Black Phalanx, between pp. 430-21.



After the battle of the "crater" near Petersburg, Virginia on July 30, 1864. The next day, Union General George G. Meade wrote to Confederate General Robert E. Lee requesting a cease-fire to rescue the wounded and bury the dead. General G. T. Beauregard responded for General Lee: ". . . Your proposition is acceded to, and hostilities will be suspended for the purpose to-morrow morning at 5 o'clock. The cessation will continue for four hours." War of the Rebellion, Ser. 1, Vol. 40, part 3, pp. 691, 821.



## THE INDIANA HISTORIAN EXPLORING INDIANA HISTORY

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# Focus

The Civil War is fascinating to many people. There is still much debate among historians about most aspects of the war. The stories of people—the individuals who took part—provide information about some of the most interesting episodes of the war.

As we prepared this issue focusing on black soldiers in the Civil War, we found an individual who brought the human element to the experience—Chaplain Garland H. White of the 28th Regiment U.S. Colored Troops. This regiment was the only black regiment organized in Indiana.

Chaplain White came to Indianapolis from Toledo, Ohio, to enlist. He had been a slave; he escaped to Canada, where he became an African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) minister.

During his service with the 28th, Chaplain White wrote letters from the field to an AME newspaper called the *Christian Recorder*. We have used excerpts from these letters, along with official records and engravings from publications about the Civil War, to

follow Indiana's 28th Regiment through its service.

On page 3, there is an overview of some of the activities of black troops in the Union army.

On page 4, the story of the 28th begins. It continues through page 13. Pages 8 and 9 include maps and listings of the 28th's tour of duty.

Page 14 includes 2 activities based on the content of this issue.

The "Apple" on page 15 provides selected resources for further investigation.

Research for this issue has reemphasized how few non-official resources there seem to be about Indiana black soldiers. Perhaps, you can follow-up in your own community and help make available more information about the black soldiers who served the Union so admirably.

## Sources for This Issue

Unless otherwise noted, the information in this issue is based on the records and correspondence in the *War of the Rebellion* and Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General*.

This engraving depicts the quarters of the black soldiers of the Union Army of the James in March, 1865. The 28th Regiment was assigned to the 25th Corps of the Army of the James at this time.

Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General*, p. 383.



Quinn and Alden, Harper's Pictorial History of the Great Rebellion, p. 752.

# Black Men Fight for Freedom

On April 12, 1861, Confederate soldiers fired on Fort Sumter beginning the Civil War. President Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 volunteers to defend the Union. In a burst of patriotism, white men of all ages answered the call. Black men offered their services, too.

Blacks hoped that once they proved themselves in battle, a grateful nation would grant them full citizenship. Frederick Douglass, a black activist of the day, kept this issue before the doubtful public.

Blacks had fought in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. A 1795 law, however, prohibited blacks from serving as soldiers. In this war, the law was followed. Many whites were only interested in preserving the Union, not abolishing slavery. Some whites were afraid to arm black men. Others believed that blacks would make poor soldiers.

Southern free blacks offered their services to the Confederate army. They hoped to gain some equality with whites and receive better treatment. Not allowed to serve as soldiers, blacks in the Confederate army built fortifications, made guns and powder, maintained the railroads, and worked in hospitals. Whenever possible, they deserted across Union lines.

By 1862, war-weary and disillusioned, fewer white men were joining the Union army. Lincoln finally acknowledged the need to use blacks as soldiers. On July 17, 1862 Congress passed an act which allowed the president to use as many persons of African descent as he thought necessary to end the war. In addition, the act repealed the 1795 law which prohibited blacks from serving as soldiers. Blacks could then fight for their freedom.

There was a total of 166 black regiments in the Union army: 145 infantry, 7 cavalry, 12 heavy artillery, 1 light artillery, and 1 engineers. The number of black soldiers was approximately 179,000.

Sources: William F. Fox, Lt. Col., U.S.V., *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War 1861-1865* (Albany, N.Y.: Albany Publishing Company, 1889), pp. 52-56; James M. McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), pp. 24, 25, 161; Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana*, p. 193.

## Blacks Fighting for the Union

### 1862

- April 12** Beginning of Civil War when Confederates fired on Fort Sumter.
- April 25** Union Navy captured New Orleans from the Confederates.
- July 17** Black soldiers authorized by Congress.
- August** Organization of a black regiment in Kansas began.
- September** Black volunteers organized for construction of earthworks and fortifications around Cincinnati.
- September 27** 1st Louisiana Native Guard (also known as the Corps d'Afrique) mustered. First free black regiment to join the Union army.
- October 12** 2nd Louisiana Native Guard mustered.
- October 28** 1st Kansas Colored Volunteers attacked at Island Mounds, Missouri, becoming the first black unit to engage in action.
- November 24** 3rd Louisiana Native Guard mustered.

### 1863

- January 1** Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves in Confederate states.
- January 31** 1st South Carolina was first former slave regiment to be organized.
- May** 54th Massachusetts was first black regiment from a northern state.
- May 27** Black troops were used for the first time in a formal battle at Port Hudson, Louisiana.
- November 30** Black regiment requested by Indiana Governor Morton was authorized.
- December 3** Call to arms for Indiana black regiment. Later became 28th Regiment U. S. Colored Troops.

### 1864

- Spring** Black regiments prominent in the Richmond, Virginia campaigns.
- June 15** Black troops captured front lines and artillery at Petersburg, Virginia.
- June 15** Congress provided that black troops receive same uniforms, equipment, arms, rations, and pay as whites.
- July 30** Black troops fought gallantly at the battle of the "crater" at Petersburg, Virginia.

### 1865

- April 9** Black troops distinguished themselves at Fort Blakely, Alabama, the final battle of the war.
- April 9** Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia ending the Civil War.

# The Call to Arms

Indiana fulfilled its obligations to raise Union troops throughout the war. Indiana's first black troops were not enlisted until late 1863.

In a letter to Governor Oliver P. Morton dated November 30, 1863, the War Department authorized the state of Indiana "... to raise one Regiment of infantry to be composed of Colored men . . . ."

The orders to the left began the organizational process of Indiana's first black fighting unit.

Blacks from Indiana had been enlisting in other states in order to fight in the Civil War. After the December orders, out-of-state recruiters were banned from working in Indiana.

*This War Department letter of January 12, 1864 informed Governor Morton that Indiana's black troops would be the 28th Regiment U.S. Colored Troops.*

War Department,  
ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
Washington, D. C. *January 12<sup>th</sup> 1864*

*Mrs. G. M. ...*  
*J. P. ...*  
Governor of the State of Indiana,  
Indianapolis, Ind.

I am instructed by the Secretary of War to inform you that the regiment of colored troops which you were authorized to raise by Executive Order of Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> 1863 with the honorably designated as the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment U. S. Colored Troops.

I have the honor to be  
Very Respectfully,  
Your Obedt Servant  
Clerk of War

Archives Division, Indiana Commission on Public Records.

Archives Division, Indiana Commission on Public Records.

## ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,

INDIANA VOLUNTEER MILITIA,

Indianapolis, Dec. 3, 1863.

### GENERAL ORDER

Authority having been received for the organization of a battalion of colored troops in this State, enlistments therefor will be accepted from this date.

The recruitment of colored troops in this State for companies or regiments organizing in other States, is herewith positively prohibited and must cease.

Authority to recruit for the battalion will be granted upon presentation of satisfactory recommendations showing the applicants to possess the requisite qualifications to discipline and command such troops.

By order of Governor Morton.

L. A. NOBLE,  
Adjutant-General Ind.

### ADDENDA.

The Regiment will be designated as the "First Regiment, Indiana Colored Troops," and when organized, will be credited on the State's quota as troops for the United States service.

All good and loyal citizens, it is hoped, will encourage enlistment and aid in its organization.

WILLIAM F. FERRISS, Esq., of Indianapolis, has been appointed Adjutant of the Camp of Recruiters and charged with the organization of the Regiment, to whom all applications relating to it will be referred for consideration.

There will be a general enrollment for recruits established at Indianapolis. The Regiment will consist of Ten Companies, and the following Officers:

- 1 Colonel.
- 1 Lieutenant-Colonel.
- 1 Major.
- 1 Regimental Adjutant. (extra Lieut.)
- 1 Regimental Quartermaster. (extra Lieut.)
- 1 Surgeon.
- 1 Assistant Surgeon.
- 1 Chaplain.
- 1 Regiment-Major.
- 1 Reg'l Quartermaster Sergeant.
- 1 Reg'l Commissary Sergeant.
- 1 Hospital Steward.
- 1 Principal Musician.

Companies will consist of—

- 1 Captain.
- 1 First Lieutenant.
- 1 Second Lieutenant.
- 1 First Sergeant.
- 4 Sergeants.
- 8 Corporals.
- 2 Musicians.
- 1 Wagoner.

and not less than 40 nor more than 80 privates.

The commissioned officers will be appointed by the Governor as the companies are raised and organized. The regulations require that the commissioned officers shall be white men; but the non-commissioned officers will be selected from the best men of the companies, in the usual mode of appointing them.

In appointing company officers, they will be selected with special regard to their qualifications and fitness to command such troops. None will be appointed unless they are strictly sober, moral, diligent and of tried loyalty.

As present the law provides that the pay shall be Ten Dollars per month, Three dollars of which monthly may be in clothing. Application will be made to Congress, and it is confidently believed that provision will be made by law, to increase the pay and compensation to such troops, and place them on a similar footing with others in the service as to pay and allowances.

Inasmuch as a number of counties have agreed to pay bounties to volunteers, and as they will receive credit on their quotas for the colored men who enlist, it is presumed they will pay the bounty to colored as well as other volunteers. This will be but justice to the colored men.

Persons authorized to recruit for the Regiment, except commissioned officers, will be paid six dollars for each man enlisted by them and transferred into the United States service.

None but stout, healthy, active able-bodied men, at least five feet four inches high, over eighteen years and under forty-five years of age, will be accepted. Particular attention must be bestowed on these points by recruiting officers.

When men have been enlisted and are ready to report to the Camp of Recruiters, a copy of the enlistment roll must be forwarded to the Adjutant General's office, giving their names, ages, when, where and by whom enlisted—upon the flag of which, passes will be furnished for their transportation.

Recruiting officers may contract for the subsistence of such recruits as will necessarily pass inspection, for a period of not exceeding seven days, at not exceeding thirty-five cents per day for boarding and lodging; bills for which, made out and approved in the proper form, will be paid without unnecessary delay.

Weekly reports must be made by recruiting officers, showing their progress in recruiting.

By order of the Governor.

L. A. NOBLE,  
Adj't General Ind.

# The First Months

The men of the 28th Regiment began their training at Camp Fremont in Indianapolis, near the present southside neighborhood of Fountain Square. Captain Charles S. Russell was named commanding officer.

Like all new recruits, the men were issued clothing. They were instructed on the use and care of their weapons and equipment; taught how to drill, or march; and trained in military tactics, courtesy, and discipline.

Special orders from the U.S. War Department, dated March 14, 1864 assigned the 28th Regiment to the 9th Army Corps under Major General A. E. Burnside. An April 16 telegraph indicated that officers were being sent to escort the 28th to the east coast. The Indiana Adjutant General's office was to make transportation arrangements. The 28th Regiment left Indiana on April 24, 1864.

*Morning report of the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment United States Colored Infantry, March 17<sup>th</sup> 1864.*

Co.	Present			Absent				Total	Remarks	
	Privs	Sick	In Camp	Privs	Medical	Sick	In Camp			
A	12	5	2	69	6	4	2	5	88	
B	64	5		69	9	6	1		85	
C	11	7		68	9	5	5	1	2	90
D	70	8	2	80	4	2	6			92
E	58	14		72	3	3				78
F	15	8		73	3	5				81
		47	4	431	34	27	13	2	7	514

*Camp Fremont  
In care of Adjutant Gen. H. H. H. H.*

*Chas. S. Russell  
Capt 11<sup>th</sup> U.S. Inf 7  
1864*

The document above lists the numbers of men present and absent for the 6 companies of the 28th Regiment on March 17, 1864. The regiment was still in Indianapolis on this date. Archives Division, Indiana Commission on Public Records.

## You're in the Army Now!

Camp life for any soldier was uncomfortable and often times miserable. Rationed army food was far from tasty. Hardtack, a hard cracker, was given such names as tooth duller, worm castle, or Lincoln pie. Dehydrated milk and vegetables were also provided. Salt horse was heavily salted beef or pork. The company bean boiler, or cook, would occasionally serve slow deer, slang for a pig.

Dog or pup tents, so named because of their small size, provided some shelter. During cold or wet weather, the little tents were very uncomfortable. The sink, or latrine pit, provided toilet facilities.

When not drilling or on duty, soldiers often wrote letters home to their families. Many kept diaries or

journals. Others provided entertainment by playing musical instruments. The mood of the camp could be swayed by the type of music. Political songs could be funny and frivolous. Songs of battle could stir pride. Songs of home and family could sadden.

Cards and dice were played to relieve the constant boredom and homesickness. Always in the minds of the men was the coming battle and the threat of injury or death. For many soldiers, devotion to preservation of the Union was a force that kept their courage high.

Sources: John Elting, Dan Cragg, and Ernest Deal, *A Dictionary of Soldier Talk* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984); Hargrove, *Black Soldiers in the Civil War*.

# Who Were the Men of the 28th?

The muster roll (a page of Company D is reproduced below and on page 7) for the 28th Regiment records who joined the regiment. A copy of the muster roll travelled with the troops so that remarks could be added as needed.

Over 500 men were initially enrolled for the regiment, forming 6 companies. After July 1864, 4 more companies were raised in Indiana to bring the regiment to full strength. The chart on page 7 provides summary figures on personnel for the 28th's service.

Most officers of black units were white men. An exception with the 28th was the chaplain, Garland H. White.

The muster roll provides information about him; he is number 72 on the roll for Company D. White is listed as 25 years old, 5 feet 6 inches tall, with black hair and eyes. He was married. He was enrolled in Indianapolis on December 14, 1863 and mustered in on January 7, 1864.

## You Be the Historian

- Working in groups, transcribe the 37 entries on the muster roll reproduced below.
- Putting together all of the transcribed information, determine similarities and differences between the 37 recruits. For example, compare age, occupation, nativity, and residence.

Archives Division, Indiana Commission on Public Records

MUSTER-ROLL, Continued.

No.	NAME (Indicate race by initials)	RACE	DESCRIPTION					NATIVITY			Occupation	ENROLLMENT			MUSTERED	
			Age	Ht.	Wt.	Complexion	Hair	Eyes	Place of Birth	Place of Enroll.		When Enrolled	When Mustered	By Whom		
1	Flam, George	White	44	5	4	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
2	Green, George	White	44	5	5	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
3	Green, George	White	44	5	6	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
4	Green, George	White	44	5	7	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
5	Green, George	White	44	5	8	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
6	Green, George	White	44	5	9	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
7	Green, George	White	44	5	10	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
8	Green, George	White	44	5	11	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
9	Green, George	White	44	5	12	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
10	Green, George	White	44	5	13	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
11	Green, George	White	44	5	14	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
12	Green, George	White	44	5	15	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
13	Green, George	White	44	5	16	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
14	Green, George	White	44	5	17	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
15	Green, George	White	44	5	18	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
16	Green, George	White	44	5	19	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
17	Green, George	White	44	5	20	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
18	Green, George	White	44	5	21	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
19	Green, George	White	44	5	22	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
20	Green, George	White	44	5	23	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
21	Green, George	White	44	5	24	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
22	Green, George	White	44	5	25	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
23	Green, George	White	44	5	26	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
24	Green, George	White	44	5	27	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
25	Green, George	White	44	5	28	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
26	Green, George	White	44	5	29	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
27	Green, George	White	44	5	30	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
28	Green, George	White	44	5	31	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
29	Green, George	White	44	5	32	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
30	Green, George	White	44	5	33	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
31	Green, George	White	44	5	34	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
32	Green, George	White	44	5	35	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
33	Green, George	White	44	5	36	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
34	Green, George	White	44	5	37	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
35	Green, George	White	44	5	38	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
36	Green, George	White	44	5	39	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.
37	Green, George	White	44	5	40	Gen	Dark	Blue	Irish	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.	Ind. & Ill.

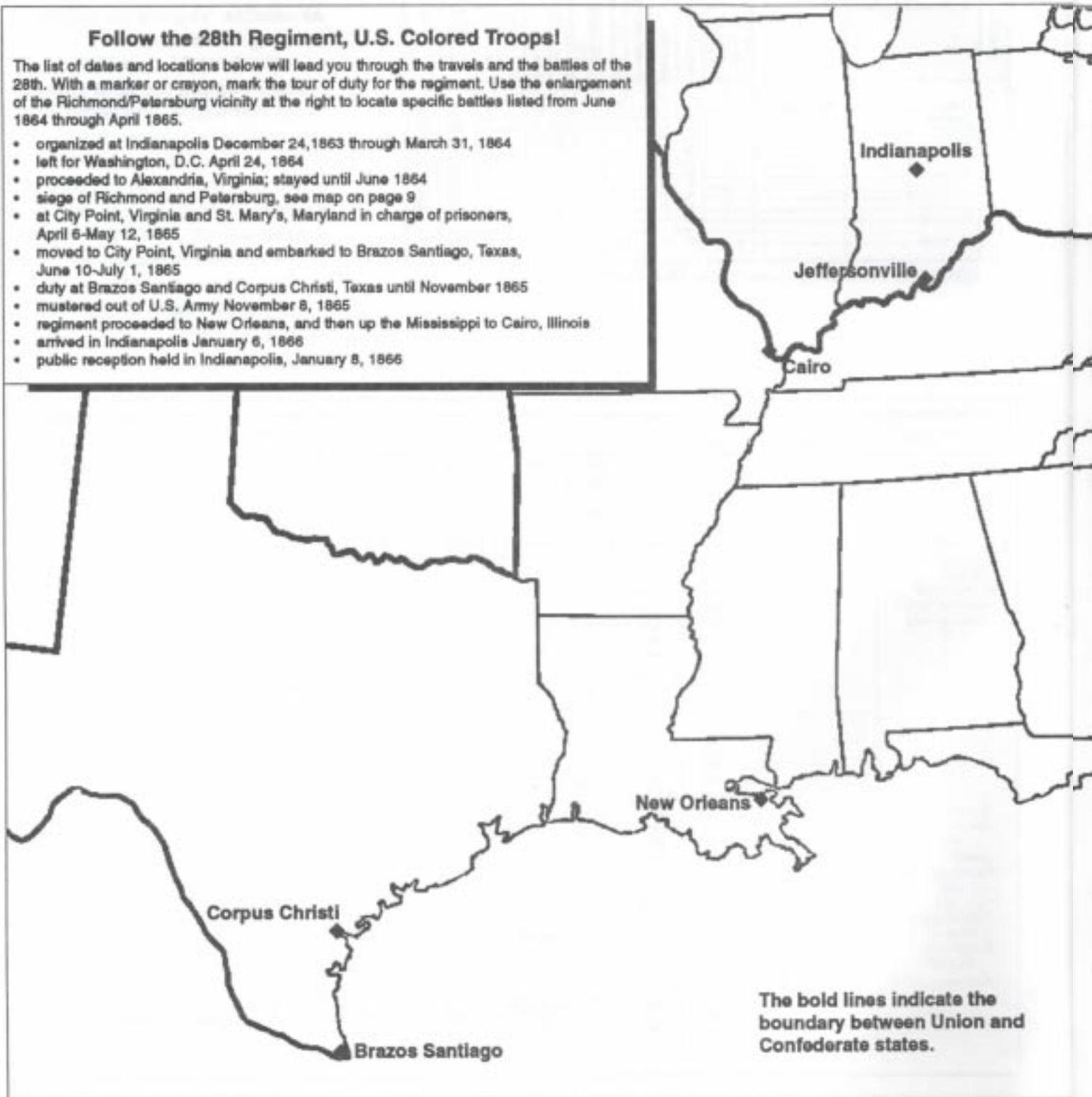


# Tour of Duty with

## Follow the 28th Regiment, U.S. Colored Troops!

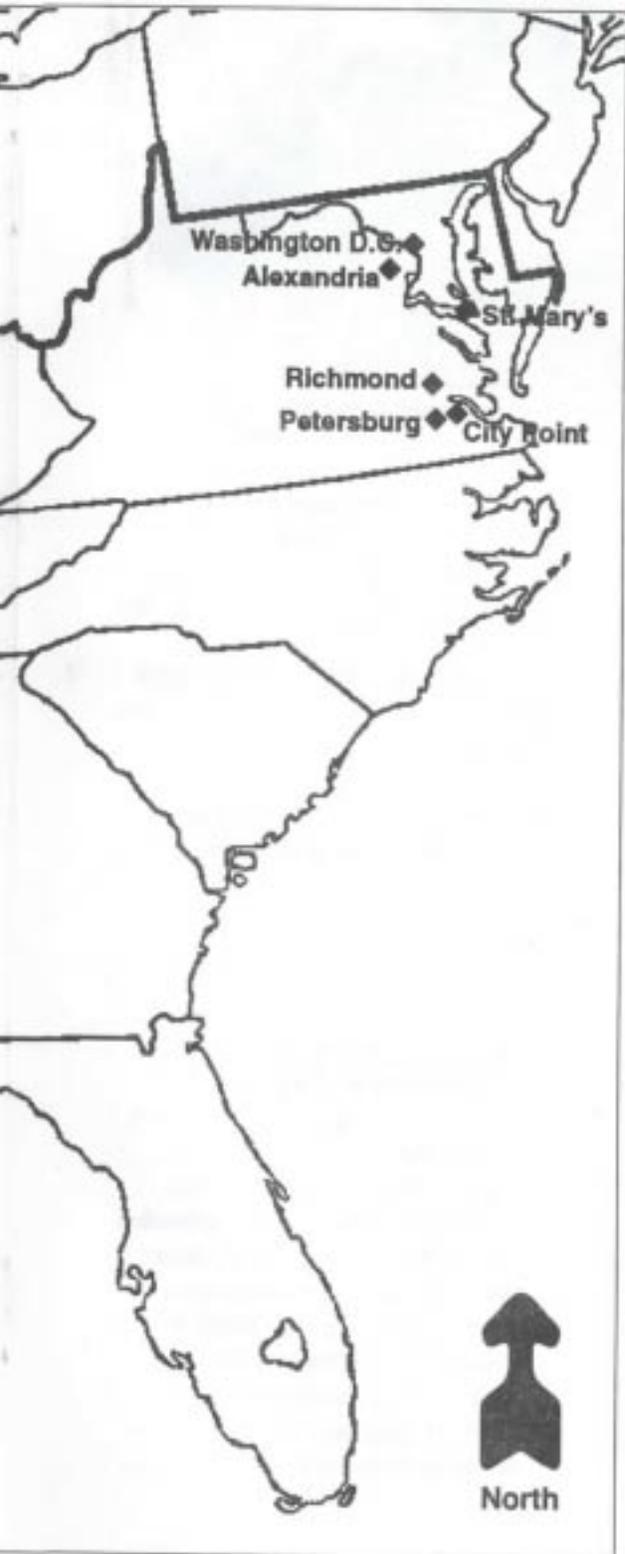
The list of dates and locations below will lead you through the travels and the battles of the 28th. With a marker or crayon, mark the tour of duty for the regiment. Use the enlargement of the Richmond/Petersburg vicinity at the right to locate specific battles listed from June 1864 through April 1865.

- organized at Indianapolis December 24, 1863 through March 31, 1864
- left for Washington, D.C. April 24, 1864
- proceeded to Alexandria, Virginia; stayed until June 1864
- siege of Richmond and Petersburg, see map on page 9
- at City Point, Virginia and St. Mary's, Maryland in charge of prisoners, April 6-May 12, 1865
- moved to City Point, Virginia and embarked to Brazos Santiago, Texas, June 10-July 1, 1865
- duty at Brazos Santiago and Corpus Christi, Texas until November 1865
- mustered out of U.S. Army November 8, 1865
- regiment proceeded to New Orleans, and then up the Mississippi to Cairo, Illinois
- arrived in Indianapolis January 6, 1866
- public reception held in Indianapolis, January 8, 1866



The bold lines indicate the boundary between Union and Confederate states.

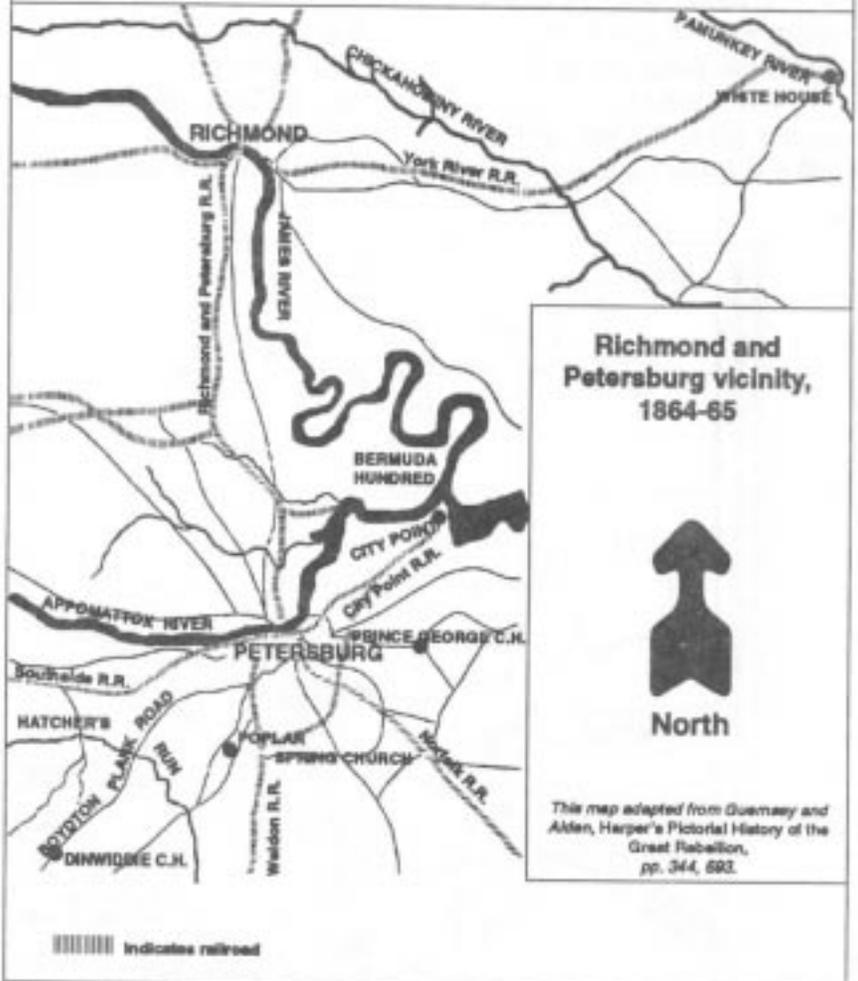
# the 28th Regiment!



## The siege of Richmond and Petersburg

The 28th was heavily engaged in the siege of Richmond and Petersburg, mark its movements during that nine month period.

- moved from Alexandria to White House, Virginia, June 2, 1864; engaged in battle on June 21
- accompanied General Sheridan's cavalry through Chickahominy swamps to Prince George Courthouse suffering frequent skirmishes with the enemy
- participated in siege operations against Petersburg and Richmond from July 1864 through April 1865, including the following battles:
  - Mine Explosion (the "Crater"), Petersburg, July 30, 1864
  - Weldon Railroad, August 18-21, 1864
  - Poplar Spring Church, September 29-30, October 1, 1864
  - Boynton Plank Road, Hatcher's Run, October 27-28, 1864
- stationed on the Bermuda Hundred front lines and before Richmond until April 1865
- marched into Richmond, April 4, 1865



# What Was the Battle of the "Crater"?

On July 30, 1864 a battle, known as the "crater" or "mine explosion" took place. It was part of the Union siege of Petersburg, which was held by the Confederate army. The capture of Petersburg was necessary in order to capture Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy.

The 28th was assigned to the 2nd Brigade of the 4th Division. Nine regiments of black soldiers made up the 4th Division of Burnside's 9th Army Corps. During the siege at Petersburg/Richmond, regiments consisting of 55,178 men (both black and white) were added to the forces of the Union Army of the Potomac.

The Union carried out a unique plan. Troops tunneled 585.8 feet under a Confederate

fort. They carried 8,000 pounds of gunpowder into the "mine." The explosion of the gunpowder was to destroy the Confederate position to allow the Union forces an important victory by clearing a path to Richmond.

Instead of victory, there was disastrous defeat. When the mine explosion created the "crater," there was great disorder, and many Union soldiers were killed or wounded.

President Lincoln ordered a



*Soldiers carrying gunpowder into the mine near Petersburg.*

Gummay and Allen, *Harper's Pictorial History of the Great Rebellion*, p. 697.

hearing to investigate what had taken place. The hearing lasted seventeen days, and an official report was issued containing the testimony.

Chaplain White of the 28th Regiment read newspaper reports blaming the black troops for the "crater" defeat. He wrote on August 8 to the *Christian Recorder*, which published the letter on August 20:

.....

At a given hour all the officers of the colored troops were notified to have their men in readiness and at a certain place. This order was carried out to the crossing of a T. Afterward a charge was made, every officer heading his men. . . . I was with the boys, and intended to follow them to the last. Just at this juncture the earth began to shake, as though the hand of God intended a reversal in the laws of nature. This grand convulsion sent both soil and souls to inhabit the air for awhile, and then return to

Colston D. Coulter, *Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Washington D.C.: G.P.O., 1891-1895, Vol. 1, plate 64, number 1.



be commingled forever with each other. . . .

. . . when the [Second] Division of Colored Troops went into the action, they charged over the First, and carried two lines of rifle-pits. They made [no] stop there; for our Colonel (Charles S. Russell, of Indiana,) who led the gallant Twenty-eighth, told the boys, that he intended leading them to Petersburg that day. . . .

. . . the victory of that day was as certainly ours as any thing could be. . . . When I saw our colors waving over the enemy's works, I, with numbers of others, said: "Boys, the day is ours, and Petersburg is sure."

For several rods the dead lay thick, both white and colored, Union and rebel. It was a sad sight. Recollect, the colored troops went as far as they were ordered to go, and did just what they were told to do, both in going in and remaining there; and, in coming out, the brave officers who led them in, when they saw that bad management had taken place somewhere, and thinking that remaining longer would endanger that portion of the army, through wisdom and good policy, ordered the retreat.

Testimony by Brigadier-General Edward Ferrero, from the official record of the battle investigation, indicates that black troops entered the battle "in the most gallant manner . . . without hesitation . . ." The black troops captured Confederate "prisoners and a stand of colors . . ." The troops were forced to retreat under heavy fire.

The inquiry found that leadership and planning were the key factors in the defeat.

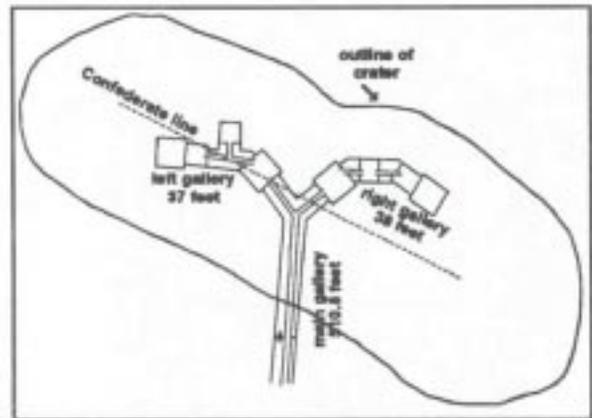
	Killed.		Wounded.		Captured or missing.		Aggregate.
	Officers.	Men.	Officers.	Men.	Officers.	Men.	
<i>Second Brigade.</i>							
Col. HENRY G. THOMAS.							
18th U. S. Colored Troops . . . . .	1	20	1	85	3	3	115
23d U. S. Colored Troops . . . . .	1	71		108		115	110
28th U. S. Colored Troops . . . . .		9	1	82		11	88
29th U. S. Colored Troops . . . . .		19	0	41		45	124
31st U. S. Colored Troops . . . . .		28	0	26		64	135
Total Second Brigade . . . . .	10	145	25	330	13	249	772
Total Fourth Division . . . . .	14	195	41	656	29	491	1,327
RECAPITULATION.							
Ninth Army Corps . . . . .	50	423	124	1,523	79	1,217	3,475
Tenth Army Corps (Second Division) . . . . .	5	39	18	217		51	223
Grand total . . . . .	55	449	142	1,739	79	1,268	3,798

The official inquiry report included statistics on losses. This excerpt includes the 28th Regiment.

War of the Rebellion, Ser. 1, Vol. 40, Part 1, pp. 246-49.

### The Engineer's Report

Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Pleasants was the engineer who planned and directed the construction of the mine. His report described the size of the crater and the activity after the explosion.

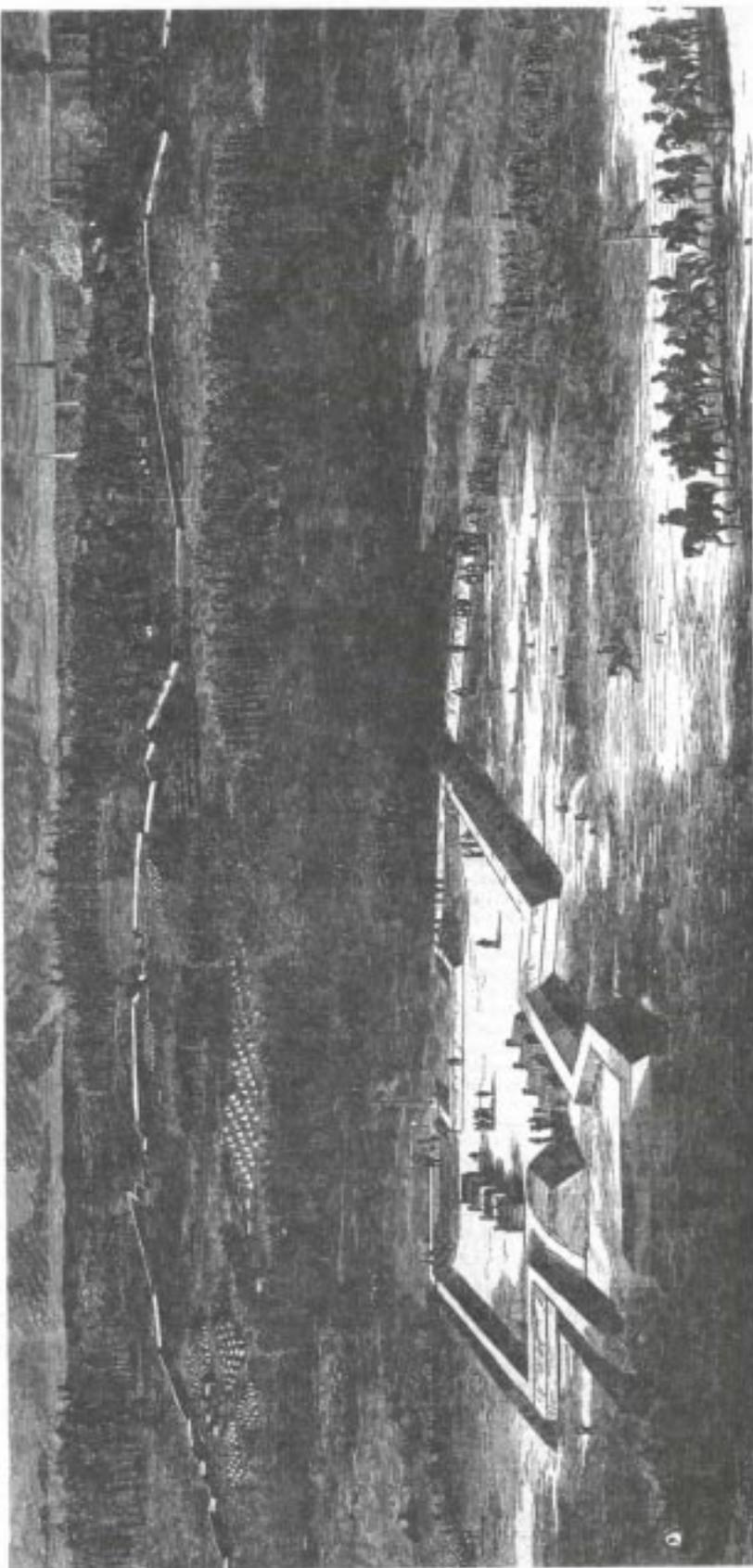


The War of the Rebellion, Ser. 1, Vol. 40, Part 1, p. 55a.

. . . The size of the crater formed by the explosion was at least 200 feet long, 50 feet wide, and 25 feet deep.

I stood on top of our breast-works and witnessed the effect of the explosion on the enemy. It so completely paralyzed them that the breach was practically 400 or 500

yards in breadth. The rebels in the forts, both on the right and left of the explosion, left their works, and for over an hour not a shot was fired by their artillery. There was no fire from infantry from the front for at least half an hour; none from the left for twenty minutes, and but few shots from the right . . . .



## Richmond Falls

The final assault against Petersburg was April 2, 1865. Confederate forces withdrew from Petersburg and Richmond on April 2 and 3.

The Union army—including the 28th Regiment—took possession of the city on April 4. Chaplain White wrote to the *Christian Recorder* on April 12. His letter, excerpted below, was published on April 22. It begins with the entry of troops into the city:

... After which the doors of all the slave pens were thrown open, and thousands came out shouting and praising God and father or master Abe, as they termed him. . . .

Among the densely crowded concourse there were parents looking up children who had been sold south of this state in tribes, and husbands came for the same purpose. . . .

... Among the many broken-hearted mothers looking for their children who had been sold into Georgia and elsewhere, was an aged woman, passing through the vast crowd of colored inquiring for a man by the name of Garland H. White . . . . Some of the boys knowing that I lived in Ohio, soon found me, and said: "Chaplain, here is a lady that wishes to see you." . . .

"This is your mother, Garland, whom you are now talking to, who has spent twenty years of grief about her son." I cannot express the joy I felt, at this happy meeting of my mother and other friends. . . . I have witnessed several such scenes among the other colored regiments. . . .

Among the first to enter Richmond, was the 28th U. S. C. T. . . .

*The engraving shows the camps and lines of the Union army near Petersburg in March 1865.*



As pictured in this engraving, President Lincoln visited Richmond on April 4, 1865 after its fall.

Garland H. White's impressions were included in his letter of April 12 to the *Christian Recorder*: "... we were honored with his Excellency the President ... and other gentlemen of distinction. We made a grand parade through most of the principal streets of the city ... The excitement at this period was unabated ..."

President Lincoln died from an assassin's bullet on April 15, 1865, just six days after General Lee surrendered to General Grant on April 9.

Letter from Garland H. White, *Christian Recorder*, April 22, 1865, p. 62.

# The War in the West

The surrender of General Lee to General Grant on April 9, 1865 marked the end of the war. There was still, however, much unrest in the West, especially in Texas.

The 25th Corps—including Indiana's 28th Regiment—sailed to Texas, arriving July 1, 1865 to help keep order.

Chaplain White wrote from Corpus Christi on September 19. The letter appeared in the *Christian Recorder* of October 21, 1865.

.....  
No set of men in any country ever suffered more severely than we in Texas. Death has made fearful gaps in every regiment. Going to the grave with the dead is as common to me as going to bed, for I also attend on such occasions, in other regiments. . . . Chaplains are very scarce out here. . . .

I have spent a great portion of my time at the hospitals, and I never witnessed such fearful mortality in all my life. I have not seen a lemon, peach, apple or pear, nor corn enough over all that part of the country through which we have passed, to fatten a six months' pig. . . .

We hear<sup>d</sup> of the rebels still holding their slaves, and treating them more cruelly than ever. . . .

. . . I am pleased to say that the health of the troops is decidedly better, and mortality greatly abating. All the troops have just been paid off. . . .

Our relatives should not look for us before our time is out. We send our love to all our friends at home, and beg them to be of good cheer, as the worst is over.

# Home Again

On November 8, 1865 the 28th Regiment was mustered out of service in Texas. The troops proceeded to New Orleans and up the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. The regiment arrived in Indianapolis on January 6, 1866 with 33 officers and 950 men. There was a public reception on January 8. The regiment was discharged on January 9.

The public ceremony on January 8 was briefly described in the Indianapolis *Daily Journal*,

January 9, 1866. The paper concluded: "The occasion was a very pleasant one, and was a large nail in the great platform of equal justice."

Chaplain White was the final speaker. His remarks have apparently not been preserved. In his letter of September 19, 1865 from Corpus Christi, Texas, Chaplain White had much to say about why blacks were fighting:

. . . We left our wives and little ones to follow the stars and stripes from

the Lakes to the Gulf, with a determination never to turn back until it should be proclaimed from Washington that the flag of the Union waved over a nation of freemen. Yes, freemen upon the battle field; freemen in Texas, as in Ohio, and freemen at the ballot box, as at the cartridge box. . . .

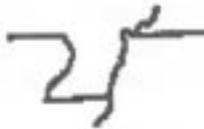
White's hopes were not totally achieved by the end of the Civil War. The battle for civil rights was a much longer one.

## Map Activity

### Border Identification

Each group of lines below is an "aerial view" showing parts of the borders between states. Using the map on pages 8 and 9, identify the states represented by

each group. Name the state capital for each of the identified states. We've completed the first one for you.



## Solve the Rebus

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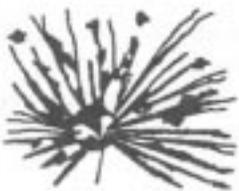
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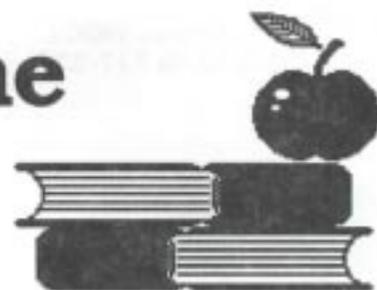


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\* represents the highest level of government in the United States

# An Apple for Everyone



**A Note Regarding Resources:** Items are listed on this page that enhance work with the topic discussed. Some older items, especially, may include dated practices and ideas that are no longer generally accepted. Resources reflecting current practices are noted whenever possible.

## Selected Resources

### Student Reading

• Cox, Clinton. *Undying Glory: The Story of the Massachusetts 54th Regiment*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1991.

Excellent intermediate to advanced student reading on this black Civil War regiment. Includes a good index and very good bibliography for students and adults.

• Miller, Major Donald L. *An Album of Black Americans in the Armed Forces*. New York: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1969.

Simple and informative reading.

• Smith, Carter, ed. *The Road to Appomattox*. Brookfield, CT: The Millbrook Press, 1993.

This is volume four of the *Sourcebooks on the Civil War Series*. The series includes documents, photographs, and illustrations from the Library of Congress. Highly recommended for students and adults.

### General Sources

• Cornish, Dudley Taylor. *The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1956.

Using primary sources, Cornish weaves together an overview of black soldiers' activities during the Civil War.

• Gladstone, William A. *United States Colored Troops, 1863-1867*. Gettysburg, PA.: Thomas Publications, 1990.

Reproduces several documents and photographs of black soldiers during the Civil War.

• Glatthaar, Joseph T. *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers*.

New York: The Free Press, 1990.

Discusses relationships between white officers and black soldiers from recruitment through aspects of the war experience.

• Guernsey, Alfred H., and Henry M. Alden. *Harper's Pictorial History of the Great Rebellion*, 2 parts. New York: Harper & Bros., 1866, 1868.

Includes numerous sketches drawn during the war and historical accounts of events.

• Hargrove, Hondon B. *Black Union Soldiers in the Civil War*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1988.

Informative look at the black experience during the war.

• Leslie, Frank. *Scenes and Portraits of the Civil War*. New York: Mrs. Frank Leslie, Publisher, 1894.

Collection of Civil War sketches that appeared in Leslie's paper.

• Quarles, Benjamin. *The Negro in the Civil War*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969.

Interesting history which examines blacks' roles in the Civil War and in the general political climate as they moved toward freedom.

• Redkey, Edwin S., ed. *A Grand Army of Black Men*. Cambridge: University Press, 1992.

Personal look at the Civil War through black Union soldiers' letters.

• Terrell, W. H. H. *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana*, 8 volumes. Indianapolis: Alexander H. Conner, State Printer, 1869.

Valuable statistical information and reports.

• Thornbrough, Emma Lou. *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1850-1880*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau and Indiana Historical Society, 1965; reprinted, 1992.

Standard source on Indiana history during this period.

• \_\_\_\_\_. *The Negro in Indiana*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1957; reprinted 1993.

This valuable volume includes the "Civil War Years." It provides important context about attitudes and activities with regard to blacks and black soldiers.

• *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 volumes. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1893.

Essential resource for the comprehensive study of the Civil War.

### Early Histories

• Brown, William Wells. *The Negro in the American Rebellion*. New York: The Citadel Press, 1971. First published in 1867.

• Higginson, Thomas Wentworth. *Army Life in a Black Regiment*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1984. First published in 1869.

• Wilson, Joseph Thomas. *The Black Phalanx*. New York: Arno Press, 1968. First published in 1892.

These books provide valuable early perspectives but are generally undocumented.

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