

WHAT THE NEWSPAPERS SAY

—OF THE—

NEGRO SOLDIER

—IN THE—

Spanish-American War.



—COMPILED BY—

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## PREFACE.

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We have no other ambition in collecting these newspaper reports of Negro soldiers in the Hispano-American war than that of putting before the public in a condensed form an array of unsolicited comments which prove beyond a doubt the patriotism, heroism, bravery and excellence of the Negro as a soldier in terrific and deathful warfare.

If the words uttered here, coming, as most of them do, from the lips of those who have heretofore been considered our enemies, serve to lift the veil of prejudice from the eyes of some erring brother, to make some disgusted and discouraged brother feel proud that he is a son of Ham, to prove to our young men and women, boys and girls, that no accomplishment is so high they cannot reach it, so broad they cannot span it, so deep they cannot fathom it, we shall feel that our time and trouble have been more than compensated.

HIRAM H. THWEATT.



# What the Newspapers Say.

[From The Christian Recorder.]

## A PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF OUR COLORED SOLDIERS.

It is a great privilege and pleasure to present to the readers of the Recorder a few facts as gathered from the combatants in the present war relative to the operation of the Negro troops around Santiago, for few people know that the 9th and 10th Cavalry and 24th and 25th Infantry are there.

With a desire that the deeds of these brave black warriors should be known, I chose to summer awhile among the camps of the South, where the wounded soldiers would be brought for treatment.

It was at Fortress Monroe, where about two thousand soldiers were quartered, that a quickening interest in the war is felt. To one unaccustomed to sights of horror it was sad indeed to witness the light tenders bringing to the dock of Old Point Comfort, last week, from the large vessels anchored out in the bay, the wounded and dying from the field of Santiago.

The soldiers from the fort marched to the dock to receive their fortunate comrades, both black and white. Some with heads bandaged; some with arms in slings or on crutches were moved away in ambulances, while others, shot almost to death by Spanish bullets, were tenderly borne away on stretchers. By far the most severely hurt were colored soldiers. Old Point Comfort that night was ablaze with interest. Groups of people could be seen here and there interviewing those not so badly hurt. My pleasure and interest were heightened by the loud praise given the black soldier by his white comrade.

To the question: "What about the colored troops?" a comrade of the 71st New York, answered: "A fine body of soldiers. They are fearless and aggressive. In every contest," said he, "they were at the front and in the thickest of battle."

"Were many Negroes killed?"

"Quite a large number," said he; "you see they were, for the most part, Regulars, and had fought in Indian campaigns. The 9th and 10th Cavalry are composed of the bravest lot of warriors I ever saw. They covered the retreat of Roosevelt's Rough Riders and saved them from annihilation."

To a Massachusetts soldier in another group of interviewers the same question was put: "How about the colored soldiers?"



"They fought like demons," came the answer. "Before El Caney was taken the Spaniards were on the heights of San Juan with artillery. All along the line an assault was made and the enemy was holding us off with terrible effect. From their blockhouse on the hill came a magazine of shot. Something had to be done or the day would be lost. The colored cavalry moved across into a thicket near by. The Spaniards rained shot upon them. They collected and like a flash swept across the plains and charged up the hill. The enemy's guns were used with deadly effect. On and on they went, charging with the fury of madness. The blockhouse was captured, the enemy fled and El Caney became ours."

In another group a trooper from an Illinois regiment was explaining the character of the country and the effect of the daily rains upon the troops. He said: "Very few colored troops were sick; they stood the climate better and even thrived under the severity of army life." Said he, "I never had much use for the nigger until I saw him fight. He makes a good soldier and deserves great praise." He then related the story of a cavalry lieutenant who, with a party, reconnoitered a distance from camp. "The thick growth of grass and vines made ambuscading a favorite pastime with the Spaniards. With smokeless powder they lay concealed in the grass. As the party rode along the sharp eye of a colored cavalryman noticed the movement of grass ahead; leaning over his horse with sword in hand he plucked up an enemy whose gun was leveled on the officer and ready to shoot. The Spaniard was killed by the Negro who, himself, fell dead from his horse, shot by another. He had saved the life of a lieutenant and lost his own." Said he, "I never shall forget that fight on the 24th of June. For bravery and military exploits it was the greatest battle fought. At one time in the engagement the 21st Infantry Volunteers were completely surrounded. A superior force engaged our lines on the right. The infantry of colored troops seeing the peril of the 24th, furiously charged and routed the enemy, thereby saving the ill-fated regiment."

The trophies of war brought to Old Point Comfort were a machete, the captured property of a colored trooper, and a little Cuban lad about nine years old, whose parents had bled for Cuba. His language and appearance made the little Negro the cynosure of all eyes.

It would be impossible in this communication to give an account of every brave deed of the colored troops as I heard them from the lips of their white comrades. They recognize in him a soldier worthy of his steel and far surpassing his white brother many times in deeds of valor.

One white regular testified that often he had seen some white troops turn back, but never a Negro; that Roosevelt's Rough Riders and New York dudes sought to be supported on the right or left by colored cavalry; that the papers are misguided and justice miscarried in bestowing merit; "but the boys in the trenches," said he, "will tell the true story when all is over." Such were the fragments gathered from the white regulars here and there and confirmed by the colored comrades in the hospitals.

A. E. MEYZEEK, Louisville, Ky.



[From the Richmond Planet.]  
**NO PREJUDICE THERE.**

It seems that the prejudice against the colored brother exists mostly among those Negro-haters who did not go to the front. The following is from a correspondent at Fort Monroe, Va.:

"In the hospital the blacks alternate on cots in the rows with white soldiers. The latter, especially the Rough Riders, never tire in telling of the heroism of their black comrades. They say they fought like demons, and in making charges gave terrific yells that were calculated to frighten their enemies. When they were ordered to charge entrenchments they seemed to think that they were to keep right on into the city of Santiago, and their officers had trouble to restrain them.

When the wounded were asked what they thought of the Cubans as soldiers they shook their heads, and the invariable comment was: 'No good.' But for the Spaniards they had great respect and declared that they were fighters.

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"There are a number of colored troopers among the wounded. They belong to the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry and the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Infantry.

"Another white soldier' was asked what sort of account the colored men gave of themselves in battle.

"'Them niggers fought like h—l,' was his terse remark."

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**GOVERNOR TANNER'S SPEECH TO THE EIGHTH ILLINOIS REGIMENT, DELIVERED SATURDAY, JULY 9, 1898.**

"My fellow citizens! You do not know, it is impossible for you, in your individual capacities, to realize the importance of your individual citizenship here to-day. You represent a race of people who are now citizens under organic law of the United States. Unfortunately, in this country there is an existing prejudice against your race on account of your color. You are not responsible for your color, neither are you responsible for your citizenship here to-day.

"You are not responsible for being here. You were brought here under different conditions than those which exist in this country to-day. You were brought here as chattels and slaves, but thank God to-day you stand before the world as free American citizens. You have had the right of citizenship guaranteed to you by the fundamental law of the land but, on account of this unfortunate prejudice which I have just mentioned, that full right, in its full measure of citizenship, has not quite been guaranteed to you in this country.

"I stand here to-day, my fellow citizens, under the present conditions, as chief executive of the state of Illinois, the old rocking cradle of liberty, to offer to you that full measure of citizenship which has been guaranteed



Company F, in a short time, had only its captain left, and no other commissioned officer.

It is said that the Twenty-fourth really bore the brunt of the San Juan fight, the Spaniards directing their main attack upon them on the theory that Negroes would not stand the punishment. Yet companies remained steady without a single officer. As a final display of their remarkable discipline and nerve, this regiment of Negroes, under the hottest fire of the day, "changed front forward on its tenth company," which is called a manœuvre not altogether easy on a peaceful parade ground home.

The value of a Negro as a soldier can hardly be doubted after that day's work. While we are distributing cards of merit to generals and commodores, let us not forget the colored soldiers of the Twenty-fourth infantry.

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[From the Philadelphia Record.]

### NEGRO TROOPER'S SHOT:

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#### Killed a Sharpshooter Who Said He Was "Americano."

NEW YORK, July 22.—"You should have seen the soldiers of the Eighth and Thirteenth Infantry and the Tenth Cavalry pick the Spanish sharpshooters out of the trees after the capture of the San Juan hill," said Lieutenant Bryan, one of Santiago's wounded brought up on the Seneca.

"They hunted for them as we used to hunt coons in the south. Few of those chivalrous Spaniards who shot on the Red Cross flag from trees lived to brag about it.

"And that reminds me of a story of one of the members of the Tenth Cavalry. Every man in that regiment, with the exception of the commissioned officers, is a Negro.

"Well, this private was hunting for sharpshooters who were hidden in the trees. He soon discovered a man perched on a low branch. He was white and was clad in a United States cavalry uniform.

"'Who is you?' inquired the Negro trooper.

"'Americano,' answered the man in the tree.

"The trooper was suspicious. 'What regiment does you belong to?' he asked.

"'The Tenth,' came the answer.

"'Well, ef yo' b'longs to the Tenth, and yo' is a white man,' said the trooper, slowly, 'you'se jest de gemmen Ise lookin' fur,' and the next minute, according to the Negro, 'he was the deadeest spaniel dat ever breathed.'

"'A very touching incident happened during the fight,' said one of the men. 'Captain McClintock was struck in the left leg, two Mauser bullets entering his leg just above the ankle. A private, who had been sick for some days, seeing Captain McClintock lying on the field, crawled up to him and, lying alongside of the captain, between the latter and the firing line, said: 'Never mind, captain, I am between you and the firing line. They can't hurt you now.''"



[From the Richmond Planet]

Some of the officers who accompanied the wounded soldiers on the trip north give interesting accounts of the fighting around Santiago.

"I was standing near Captain Capron and Hamilton Fish," remarked a corporal to-night, "and saw them shot down. They were with the Rough Riders, and ran into an ambushade, though they had been warned of the danger. Captain Capron and Fish were shot while leading a charge. If it had not been for the Negro cavalry, the Rough Riders would have been exterminated. I am not a Negro lover. My father fought with Mosby's rangers, and I was born in the south, but the Negroes saved that fight, and the day will come when General Shafter will give them credit for their bravery."

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[From Times-Enterprise.]

### **FRESH FROM THE BATTLE.**

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#### **A Wounded Officer From Santiago Passes Through Here.**

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The figure of a stout, gray-moustached man, with sun-burned face and wearing a United States cavalry uniform, with his left arm in a sling, seated at a window of the Tampa sleeper when train 33 pulled in yesterday, attracted the attention of nearly everyone at the depot, and soon a big crowd of curious spectators gathered in front of the window. Inquiry developed the fact that the person about whom so much interest centered was Capt. J. B. Kerr, of the Sixth United States Cavalry. Captain Kerr was wounded in the arm at Santiago a few days ago, and is on his way home. As soon as he can use his arm he will return to his regiment. He states that he had been nearly talked to death since he landed on American soil but, notwithstanding this, he was pleasant with all who approached him. He says that unless the Spaniards surrender the Americans have a great deal of hard fighting ahead of them before Cuba is freed from Spanish rule. The Spaniards have plenty of troops there and they will fight to the last ditch.

Captain Kerr said that the Negro troops were in the thickest of the fight and that notwithstanding they were mowed down before the terrible fire of the Spaniards, they fought throughout like demons.

Captain Kerr remained in Thomasville only ten minutes and did not leave his car.

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[From Thomasville Times-Enterprise.]

An old colored citizen who was trying to dissuade his son from enlisting in the army said: "Now lemme tell you somepin. Ef you makes up yo' min' ter go, en you gits blowed up by one er dem Spanish torpedoes, don't yo' come back hear ter me—don't yo' show yo' face heah no mo'! Mind dat, now!"—Atlanta Constitution.



[From the Baltimore (Md.) Morning Herald.]

### **COLORED SOLDIERS IN BATTLE.**

It did not need the demonstration which took place at the brief but desperate battle of La Quasina to prove the valor of the colored troops. Even as far back as thirty-five years ago, during the civil war, it was satisfactorily shown that colored men, under proper discipline, made efficient soldiers, and the memorable report of General Butler that "the colored troops fought nobly" was not an empty compliment.

According to authentic accounts of the La Quasina engagement, it was the gallant interposition of the Tenth United States Cavalry, colored, which probably saved the Rough Riders from annihilation, and which enabled them to drive the Spaniards from their strong ambushed position.

The testimony of the commanding officers and of all observers was to the effect that the Tenth Cavalry made a brilliant dash and stood to its colors manfully, manifesting conspicuous evidence of personal courage and splendid training.

Whatever may be the racial prejudices against the colored segment of our population, they are not strong enough in any quarter to obscure the public appreciation of the fact that the colored citizen makes an admirable soldier in many respects. In physical development he meets every military requirement, his powers of endurance are in no wise inferior, and he has the adventurous spirit which fits him for life on the tented field.

Of the 70,000,000 people of our great republic over 7,000,000 are colored, and it is gratifying to know that this formidable element is proving its value in periods of public peril.

The American people are fair-minded, and they delight to give honor where honor is due. They applaud the valor of the Tenth Cavalry as heartily as the heroic dash of the Rough Riders.

In this free and enlightened country the paths of glory are open to all alike.

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[From the Tuskegee Student.]

### **FROM THE FRONT.**

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**A Tuskegee Student, Now With the Famous Ninth Cavalry of Regulars, Writes.**

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Twenty-seven of our students enlisted at the close of school in the regular army. Twenty-six of them are with the famous colored cavalry regiment, the Ninth, and one with the Twenty-fifth Infantry of Regulars, also a colored company of renown. Both of these commands were in the Santiago conflict.

### **PREPARING FOR THE FRONT:**

"PORT TAMPA, FLA., June 9, 1898.  
"MY DEAR PRINCIPAL:—I am well and getting along all right. I think it my duty to write and inform you how our boys, who left school



the day after commencement, are faring. We are all sticking together, and keeping well the wise admonitions so often given the students of Tuskegee by you. When we reached Fort McPherson, at Atlanta, and drilled the first time, the sergeant congratulated us and told the captain that we were the best drilled and best controlled of all the recruits that had come in. Your name, and the school's, is highly honored in the army. We receive especial consideration, I think, on that account. Our best regards to the loyal teachers of Tuskegee, and to all of our school-mates.

"Yours respectfully,

"BROOKS JOHNSTON"

Our prayers are with the valorous young fellows who have gone forth to serve their country.

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[From Atlanta Constitution.]

### **TRIBUTE TO THE COLORED TROOPS.**

It was peculiarly appropriate that the Twenty-fourth should be selected for that place, because it was one of unquestionable honor, and at that time there was nothing that could be done for the colored troops in paying tribute to their work as soldiers that ought not to be done. In all the disputes that historians will indulge in as to who did and who did not do their duty at the siege of Santiago, no one will ever question the service of the dark-skinned regulars who, from the time the Tenth fought with the Rough Riders in the first day's fight until the Twenty-fifth Infantry participated in the actual surrender, did their whole duty as soldiers. All that can be said in praise of any regiment that participated in the campaign can be said of those regiments which were made up of colored troops, and I am glad to quote General Wheeler as saying:

"The only thing necessary in handling a colored regiment is to have officers over them who are equally courageous. Give them the moral influence of good leadership and they are as fine soldiers as exist anywhere in the world. Put them where you want them, point out what you want them to shoot at and they will keep on shooting until either their officers tell them to stop or they are stopped by the enemy."

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[From the New York Journal.]

### **NEGROES WIN COMMISSIONS.**

WASHINGTON, July 30.—Six colored non-commissioned officers, who rendered particularly gallant and meritorious services in the face of the enemy in the actions around Santiago on July 1 and 2, have been appointed second lieutenants in the two colored immune regiments recently organized under special act of congress.

These men are Sergeants William Washington, Troop F, and John C. Proctor, Troop I, of the Ninth Cavalry, and Sergeants William McBryar,



Company H, Wyatt Hoffman, Company G, Macon Russell, Company H, and Andrew J. Smith, Company B, of the Twenty-fifth Infantry, commanded by Colonel Daggett.

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[From the Florida Sentinel.]

### COLORED TROOPS RETAINED.

An official report was issued on Saturday, September 3, by the war department announcing that the following colored regiments would be retained in service: Third Alabama, Eighth Illinois, A and B First Indiana, Twenty-third Kansas, Third North Carolina, Seventh United States Volunteers, Eighth United States Volunteers, Ninth United States Volunteers, Tenth United States Volunteers.

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[From the New York World.]

### THE ROUGH RIDER "REMARKS:"

"I was raised way up in the Pecos Valley;  
They call me now the Texas lamb;  
I was in Hell Caney in Roosevelt's rally,  
If I was not may I be dam,"

Said the Rough Rider.

"I never had no use for a nigger,  
A yellow mulatto I didn't admire;  
But I lay that day with finger on trigger  
And watched the colored cavalry fire,  
And thought out loud, as we waited for orders,  
'If them there darkies should break on our right  
'Twould be good-bye to the First Rough Riders!'  
And I wished to God them niggers was white,"

Said the Rough Rider.

"'Twas a red-hot time, and a dam tough place,  
That there same fight at the Hell Caney;  
And the language we used wasn't saying grace—  
It doesn't matter what folks may say;  
There was bullets from front, and rear, and flank,  
And nary other support in sight  
Save them nigs of the Tenth, in single rank;  
And them there darkies, they acted white!"

Said the Rough Rider.



"Up the hill, through bramble and briar,  
Leaving killed and wounded there in the brush,  
They pushed straight ahead in the face of the fire,  
Then lined up true for the final rush;  
Straight in front was the barb-wire fence;  
Over they went it, hellity split;  
You should have seen the greasers git from thence;  
I swear, I reckon they're running yit."

Said the Rough Rider.

"All that was some days ago, but I haven't forgot;  
And here we are now on this cussed hill,  
In just a similar kind of a spot;  
And there's them niggers, a fighting still,  
Right in the nastiest part of the mess;  
I swear, when it comes to a stand-up fight,  
Or to stay by a comrade in distress,  
You bet your sweet life them darkies is white!"

Said the Rough Rider.

"There is plenty of sand in troops that stand  
Such a rain of bullets as comes this way;  
In this kind of a game I'll fill my hand  
With them black devils that fight for play.  
For beauty they don't show up very much;  
For color, they're off a little bit,  
But the way they git there beats the Dutch;  
They may lack beauty, but they dont lack grit,"

Said the Rough Rider.

"Here's a darkey now with an artery cut;  
Say, doc, can't you put a compress on?  
There ain't no time to be fooling about,  
If you do the cuss will surely be gone.  
I've seen such before; I'll grip that hole  
And stop the blood as long as I can;  
A nigger! Who says it? Blast my soul  
If that there darkey ain't a MAN!"

Said the Rough Rider.

"The cowboys always pay their debts;  
Them darkeys saved us at Hell Caney;  
When we go back on the colored vets,  
Count Texas Bill as out of the play,"

Said the Rough Rider.

—W. A. B., Washington, D. C.



**GREAT SAYINGS OF THE WAR WHICH SHOW TO THE WORLD  
THE BRAVERY, PRESENCE OF MIND, AND PERSONNEL  
OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY AND NAVY..**

"Excuse me, sir, I have to report that the ship has been blown up, and is sinking."—Bill Anthony, of the Maine.

"We will make Spanish the court language of hades."—Fighting Bob Evans when war was declared.

"Don't hamper me with instructions; I'm not afraid of the entire Spanish fleet."—Captain Clark, of the Oregon, to the board of strategy.

"Through with breakfast, let's finish 'em now."—Yankee gunner to Dewey.

"Don't get between my guns and the enemy."—Dewey to Prince Henry, of Germany.

"I've got them; they'll never get home."—Schley on guard at Santiago harbor.

"There must be no more recalls; iron will break at last."—Hobson to Admiral Sampson.

"Expect to take the place as soon as I can move; reinforcements will not reach me."—Captain Shafter before Santiago.

"Don't swear; shoot!"—Colonel Wood to the Rough Riders.

"Don't mind me boys; go on fighting."—Wounded Capt. Allen Capron, of the Rough Riders.

"Shafter is fighting, not writing."—General Corbin to Secretary of War Alger.

"Afraid I'll strain my guns at long range; I'll close in."—Lieutenant Wainwright.

"Remember the Maine."—Schley's signal to his fleet.

"Don't cheer just now, those poor devils are dying."—Captain Phillips.

"War is not a picnic."—Dying Hamilton Fish.

"The Maine is avenged."—Lieutenant Wainwright after the destruction of Cervera's fleet.

"I want to make public acknowledgment here that 'I believe in God the Father Almighty.'"

*Capt. Phillips.*