

“Those Who Paved the Way”: A Detailed Look into the Contributions of the USCT in Tennessee

Patrick Wells

ABSTRACT

This research paper discusses the significant yet often overlooked role of United States Colored Troops (USCT) in Tennessee during the American Civil War. As the Union Army faced manpower shortages due to heavy casualties, this led to the formation of USCT. Entirely composed of African American soldiers fighting for their freedom and the Union cause, these units were initially relegated to menial tasks, but through admirable efforts proved their capability in combat. In contrast, the Confederacy opposed arming Black individuals, fearing it would undermine their slave-based society. Despite the presence of approximately four million enslaved individuals in the South, the Confederacy's refusal to employ them as combat soldiers limited their military potential. This paper looks to highlight the vital contribution of USCT to the Union's success and the impact of their involvement in the war.

INTRODUCTION

When one thinks of the American Civil War, a few key thoughts may come to mind, such as soldiers in grey versus those in blue, battles like Antietam or Gettysburg, or most likely the thought of slavery. One topic that may or may not be brought up, is that of the United States Colored Troops (USCT). From 1861 to 1865, the United States saw the Confederacy of the South and the Union of the North wage war on each other, eventually resulting in an overall Union victory. While the Union Army initially had nearly twice the fighting power as its Southern counterparts, it suffered heavy casualties early in the war and as a result had a shortage of soldiers. This desperate need for men led to the creation of the United States Colored Troops (USCT). These troops, which were composed of African American soldiers, were willing to fight for their freedom and the Union cause. Though brought in to take care of menial and manual labor work, these soldiers eventually were able to prove themselves on the battlefield.

While the establishment of USCT led to an increase in manpower for the Union, the Confederacy was adamantly against arming Black individuals. Firmly believing that slavery was the cornerstone of their society, the Confederacy believed that if they allowed Black men to bear arms it would undermine the entire institution.¹ While they were not allowed to be combat soldiers, many slaves were forced to follow their masters or serve as cooks and manual laborers. Although they were helping with the Confederate war effort, they were not considered part of the army. With around four million enslaved individuals in the South compared to the five and a half million whites, using these men in combat roles would have severely increased the odds of a Confederate victory. Conversely, this action would be a last resort for the South. As the war progressed, and the Confederate armies began facing larger odds against the Union, Confederate President Jefferson Davis and General Robert E. Lee began to see the use of Black soldiers as one of their last available options. However, by the time they approved the use of Black troops on March 13, 1865, with a bill that did not free those who served from slavery, it was too late to make a difference. The destruction of the Confederacy was already in motion and the war would end less than a month later.

The USCT fought in thirty-nine major battles of the war, and in Tennessee, played a significant role in the Union Army's success; their contributions cannot be overlooked.² United States Colored Troops are a widely neglected chapter of Civil War history. Although their efforts have become more apparent in recent years, their impacts are still

1. Sam Smith, “Black Confederates: Truth and Legend” *American Battlefield Trust*, (February 2022). <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/black-confederates-truth-and-legend>

2. Joseph Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press), 1990.

widely downplayed in comparison to their white counterparts. However, what would the outcome of the Civil War have looked like if Black troops were never allowed to fight? Without the introduction of the United States Colored Troops and their placement in Tennessee, the overall Union victory might have been lost.

THE CIVIL WAR PRIOR TO 1863

Tennessee became the last state to secede from the Union in 1861, due to its split stance on the institution of slavery.³ The Southern economy was fundamentally fueled completely on the slave labor at the time. Although Tennessee fought for the Confederacy throughout the Civil War, the state was captured in 1863 and occupied by the Union until the end of the war. While the Union held the power advantage over the Confederacy, their hard-fought battles were quickly reducing these odds. Battles such as Shiloh and Fredericksburg saw the number of casualties rise above ten thousand for each side. With their numbers being hastily reduced, the Union acted in the only manner they had left.

Although Lincoln was opposed to the institution of slavery, he felt as President he lacked the authority to act against it in states where it was practiced.⁴ He initially assured the public that the war was strictly to keep the Union intact, not to abolish slavery. Additionally, Lincoln assured white Southerners that their property and peace would not be intruded upon. However, he also knew the implications that would arise from using Black soldiers and the social and political turmoil that would accompany such a move.⁵ President Lincoln's decision to use Black men in the war effort was one motivated by military usefulness rather than this concern. He feared emancipation would drive the border states, such as Kentucky, into the Confederate ranks. However, in a message to Congress, Lincoln asked legislators to fund gradual emancipation into loyal slave states, which would encourage those states not to rebel and cripple the South.⁶

In August of 1861, President Lincoln and Congress decided not to return runaway slaves to their owners.⁷ Prior to the Southern states' secession, federal law would have dictated that slaves would have been legally authorized to be returned under the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act. However, since these states considered themselves foreign nations, the laws of the United States did not apply to them, even the ones they saw

3. Charles Faulkner Bryan, Jr. *The Civil War in East Tennessee: A Social, Political, and Economic Study*, (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International), 1980, 19.

4. John David Smith, *Black Soldiers in Blue: African American Troops in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 9.

5. Smith. *Black*, 10.

6. Smith, *Black*, 13.

7. Noah Andre Trudeau. *Like Men of War: Black Troops in the Civil War 1862-1865* (Toronto: Little, Brown, and Company, 1998), 11.

beneficial. Labeled as “contraband,” the Union army took possession of any slaves that made their way North, classifying this as capturing enemy property. In May of 1861, three slaves showed up at Fort Monroe, a Union stronghold in Virginia, stating that they had been ordered to dig a Confederate battery position by their master.⁸ However, the commanding officer of the post, General Benjamin Franklin Butler, who had been a lawyer and politician before the war, had other ideas. When a Confederate officer came to demand his “property” back, Butler informed him that because the men were used against the United States government, legally they had become “contraband of war” and could be confiscated. This is the first instance of the use of “contraband” when referring to slaves. Many enslaved individuals began to set up camp around Union forts and towns in “contraband camps.” When President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, thousands of men from these camps enlisted.

Under the label of “capturing contraband,” some in the Union used this as an effort to promote arming Blacks. In March 1862, Major General David Hunter, the commander of the newly formed Department of the South, saw himself spread thin in regard to the men he commanded guarding the Sea Island cotton plantations. Seeing no reinforcements incoming any time soon, he knew one resource he could use that was flush at the moment: escaped slaves. On April 13, 1862, Hunter proclaimed that “all persons of color held by enemies of the United States were hereby confiscated and free.”⁹ Although this was a decision that should have been kept, Hunter did not have the authority to make it. Nonetheless, he embarked on recruiting missions, taking military aged Black men right out of the fields. These men were given uniforms and assigned to companies. In his defense, Hunter would later state that his intention was to “deprive the enemy of labor in their fields, forcing them to send white men, while also adding to our own forces.”¹⁰ When Hunter was asked if he had raised a troop of fugitive slaves, he denied the accusation. To this, he stated, “no regiment of fugitive slaves has been or is being organized in this department. There is, however, a fine regiment of persons whose late masters are “fugitive rebels.”” Although these emancipation actions occurred only a few months before President Lincoln delivered the real thing, his administration denied any knowledge of Hunter’s actions and condemned him.¹¹

8. Trudeau, *Like*, 10.

9. Dudley Taylor Cornish. *The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, INC, 1966), 35.

10. Trudeau, 15.

11. Cornish, *Sable*, 35.

Though Lincoln and his administration had suppressed Hunter's early emancipation speech, they still had mixed opinions about arming Black soldiers. Due to the Confederate states conducting what was essentially a rebellion against the United States, Congress passed the Confiscation Act in July 1862 which freed the slaves whose owners were in revolt against the United States. In direct support of this act, Congress almost immediately passed the Militia Act that empowered the President to use free Blacks and former slaves from the rebel states in any capacity in the army. This act promised a fair wage of ten dollars a month plus one ration to those who enlisted; however, several details regarding this act were viewed as negatives. The first, and most important detail, was that freedom was not guaranteed to those who served until the end of their term. Although they would be compensated for their efforts, the act did not specify what would happen to those individuals after the war ended. The second negative detail was that those enlisted would be as laborers, not combat soldiers. President Lincoln believed it was not yet time to arm the Blacks, and so accepted the Army using them as workers. These details infuriated Frederick Douglass, who stated in a speech given on July 4, 1862, regarding Lincoln, "[Lincoln's policies] had been calculated . . . to shield and protect slavery" and that Lincoln had "scornfully rejected the policy of arming slaves, a policy naturally suggested and enforced by the nature and necessities of the war."¹²

The decision to use Black volunteers as laborers to free white men for combat duties is one of necessity. While the overall need for more men was the decision driving this choice, the prejudice against Black people still played a crucial factor as they were seen as incapable of performing any other tasks instead of menial labor. Although the promise of freedom was uncertain for the Black men who enlisted, they still made the choice to do so.¹³ The thought of liberation and social uplift prompted those who may have been unsure to put their lives on the line for even the slight possibility that these ideals may pan out. The thought of fighting beside someone might encourage a shared appreciation for one another on the stage of war. The arrival of numerous Black men seeking to join the Union, and the peril in which they put themselves in to do so, should have been a key aspect to show the Union leaders their pledge to the cause and warranted them to be a larger part of the war efforts from the beginning.

INTO THE WAR AND INTO TENNESSEE

12. Smith, *Black*, 15.

13. Leah Binkovitz, "The Uncertain Promise of Freedom's Light: Black Soldiers in The Civil War." *Smithsonian Magazine*, (February 2013). <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/the-uncertain-promise-of-freedoms-light-black-soldiers-in-the-civil-war-9660675/>

On June 28, 1861, the Tennessee State General Assembly passed the first act in the country to draft Blacks for military service.¹⁴ Though the Confederacy used slaves and captured Blacks as servants, they did not trust them with handling supplies as they feared most were spies for the Union. Slave owners believed that they offered better care to them as slaves than they would get as free people in the North. The slave owners in Tennessee believed that their slaves would remain loyal to them during the war, a notion proved false by those who, when presented with an opportunity, fled to the North as fast as they could muster.¹⁵ These men saw the Union Army’s superior organization as a chance to better themselves, and improve their overall chances of survival.

Many of the Black regiments were employed in labor-oriented tasks and forced to do the menial work while the white regiments concentrated on combat. It was believed by Union commanders that they could use the influx of Black soldiers to take the place of any white laborers who could then be released for combat duty.¹⁶ Those who did not formally volunteer were coerced or intimidated into the labor divisions. Tasked to build forts or dig trenches, they once again saw themselves as tools to be used, rather than men fighting for their existence.

Following President Lincoln issuing the Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862, declaring that all slaves in rebellious states would be free as of January 1, 1863, recruits for Black regiments began flooding in. Black men from all sorts of disciplines enlisted; those who had been carpenters, shoemakers, field hands and farmers were now soldiers.¹⁷ On May 22, 1863, the War Department issued General Order No. 143 to establish a procedure for receiving African Americans into the armed forces. One hundred seventy-five regiments were recruited from all states of the Union and comprised more than 178,000 free Blacks who served during the last two years of the war.¹⁸ Their service strengthened the Union’s effort at a crucial time.

With the Emancipation Proclamation and General Order No. 143 both established in 1863, the Union Army gained the troops needed for the last years of the war. These Black soldiers that would eventually make up the USCT regiments gave the Union the edge over the Confederacy. Without these men being allowed to fight just as their

14. Bobby Lovett. “The Negro’s Civil War in Tennessee.” *The Journal of Negro History*, 61, no.1, (January 1976): 36-50. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3031531>

15. Lovett, “Negro’s,” 36.

16. Lovett, “Negro’s,” 38.

17. Trudeau, *Like*, 29.

18. Jacob Henry. “United States Colored Troops in the American Civil War” *National Museum United States Army*. <https://www.thenmusa.org/articles/united-states-colored-troops-in-the-american-civil-war/>

white counterparts, the North would have run out soldiers more quickly, and the battles that ended with Union victory would have had different outcomes, which could have revitalized the Confederate resolve to see the war through.

The USCT were at first used exclusively for labor and support roles, but as the war progressed, were given more complex duties. Black soldiers were used to guard forts, contraband camps, and prisoners of war before eventually seeing their way into combat. The first USCT units were organized in Tennessee in 1863, and General Lorenzo Thomas was appointed Commissioner for the Organization of Colored Troops for the Union army in Tennessee. Thomas began actively raising Black regiments in Memphis, growing to three thousand troops by June.¹⁹ While slave owners could receive a three hundred dollar incentive for allowing their slaves to enlist, fugitive slaves were typically signed up without permission and freemen joined on their own.²⁰ Initially, as was with all Black regiments, their arming was met with resistance from both Union and Confederate forces. Even though the end of slavery was a main topic during the war, not all those on the Union side were fighting for it to end. Many of the thirty thousand white Tennesseans who fought for the Union Army harassed and insulted the Black Union Army recruits.²¹ Trained and led by White officers, Black units were labeled as soldiers, but still viewed as less white soldiers. They were typically the first sent out in battle and often decimated in the process. Prejudice played a major role as whites had a hard time seeing Blacks on an equal footing.²² Additionally, Black soldiers were often paid less than their white counterparts and were given inferior equipment and supplies. Food, weapons, and even medical care were atrocious, they were constantly the victims of beatings, and occasionally the victims of shootings from their White “compatriots” who resented their presence. However, the Union Army eventually recognized the worth of USCT as soldiers and began to treat them accordingly.

While the USCT were able to fight for their freedom just as the white soldiers did, they still faced discrimination. However, their resolve and determination would change the opinion of many of these former discriminators. Their efforts in major battles would not only earn the respect of officers and fellow soldiers but reports of their actions would reach other Black men and lead them to enlist as well. The USCT aided recruitment of other African American soldiers helped to increase the overall occupation number of

19. Cornish, *Sable*, 114.

20. Lovett, “Negro’s,” 39-40.

21. Lovett, “Negro’s,” 40.

22. Joseph Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 177.

Union troops in Tennessee.²³ The 18th USCT expanded recruitment duty in Tennessee and traveled to Missouri, Kentucky, Alabama, and Kansas on various assignments, including building telegraph lines, erecting bridges, scouting, and guarding public property on Lookout Mountain.²⁴ Their willpower to keep fighting, even facing unwinnable odds, kept the Union morale high and their will to win strong.

USCT ACTIONS IN TENNESSEE

The USCT displayed their valor through many of the conflicts that took place in Tennessee. In December 1863, Moscow, Tennessee, saw the 61st USCT go up against General Stephen D. Lee’s Confederate cavalry after the Union caught them trying to burn the bridge which connected the railroad over the Wolf River. As the Confederates had orders to aid General Nathan Bedford Forrest in returning to Tennessee from Mississippi, the 61st USCT remarkably resisted Lee’s troops and halted them in their tracks.

One of the most infamous battles fought by the USCT occurred at Fort Pillow on April 12, 1864. Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest invaded West Tennessee and surrounded the Mississippi River Fort. General Forrest’s troops outnumbered the garrison, which contained a little over five hundred men, of which two hundred sixty two were colored troops. When the Confederate’s order to surrender the fort was refused, General Forrest’s troops stormed the ramparts, entered the fort, and massacred Union troops as they tried to yield. Blacks experienced casualties of more than sixty percent. Confederate forces have been accused of perpetrating the massacre of the Black troops. Yet the Fort Pillow massacre roused the USCT’s resolve to fight their way to freedom and General Forrest would be branded as a malicious invader.

The USCT involvement in the Battle of Nashville in December 1864 marks one of their most significant contributions of their efforts in Tennessee.²⁵ The USCT were instrumental in breaking the Confederate lines and securing a Union victory. After suffering defeat at Franklin, the Confederate Army of Tennessee under General John Bell Hood needed to recapture the capital of Nashville. Outnumbered two to one, the Confederate troops set up defensive lines and waited for the Union troops to attack. Two of these brigades—the 1st and 2nd Colored Brigades—consisted of eight regiments of USCT. Although these soldiers had some combat experience engaging in small-scale attacks, they were primarily involved in construction and guarding forts and railroads.

23. Glatthaar, *Forged*, 73.

24. Lovett, “Negro’s,” 42.

25. “The Assault of the 13th United States Colored Troops (USCT) at the Battle of Nashville December 1864.” *Iron Brigader*, <http://ironbrigader.com/2022/12/10/the-assault-of-the-13th-united-states-colored-troops-usct-at-the-battle-of-nashville-december-1864/>.

This battle would mark a completely distinctive combat experience for them. The brigades were ordered to attack the right side of the Confederate lines and eventually broke through. Although they suffered heavy casualties in the process, this maneuver drove the Confederate Army out of Tennessee. The bravery and determination of these soldiers were recognized by their commanding officers, and they were praised for their role in the battle.²⁶ Colonel Thomas Jefferson Morgan, who commanded a USCT brigade at Nashville, later wrote of his conviction that “history has not yet done justice to the share borne by colored soldiers in the war for the Union.” Without the breakthrough of the USCT, the Union would have lost control of Tennessee and, with it, a key edge in the war.

The USCT also played a crucial role in the Union Army’s occupation of Tennessee.²⁷ By late 1862, Tennessee had become crucial to the overall strategy of the Union Army. The Confederate armies in Tennessee consisting of General Nathan Bedford Forrest’s cavalry in West Tennessee and a larger army in the East Tennessee area, gave the Union cause to worry. General Ulysses S. Grant was tasked with raising a larger army in Tennessee to hold conquered territory and to pursue these rebel armies. When President Lincoln made a request for two hundred thousand new troops in 1863, the majority of recruits were Black men, with a significant percentage being signed up in Tennessee.²⁸ These newly-recruited Black troops from Tennessee would soon play a prominent part in containing and destroying the Confederate armies in their home state. As USCT made a name for themselves, they began to be seen as equals.

The majority of Black infantry units were organized and operated in the Middle Tennessee area. Formed in 1863, the 12th USCT Regiment, also known as the 3rd Tennessee Volunteers, performed manual labor and guarded the Nashville-Northwestern railroad. This regiment was composed mainly of contraband recruits but “showed an aptitude for drill and military duties”.²⁹ The 13th USCT under Colonel John A. Hottenstein, was formed around Nashville in 1863 as well, spending their entire military career protecting the railroads. Additionally, they fought at various engagements around Tennessee and suffered casualties of fifty-five dead, wounded, or missing at the Battle of Nashville in December of 1864.³⁰ The largest of the units from Middle Tennessee

26. Lovett, “Negro’s,” 48.

27. Henderson, Steward. “The Role of the USCT in the Civil War.” *American Battlefield Trust*. (February 2025). <https://www/battlefields.org/learn/articles/role-usct-war>

28. Lovett, “Negro’s,” 39.

29. Trudeau, *Like*, 337.

30. Lovett, “Negro’s,” 42.

was the 14th USCT, which was organized and commanded by Thomas J. Morgan at Gallatin during 1864-65. Colonel Morgan, who objected to the designation of “overseer for black laborers,” proceeded to make the 14th USCT one of the best fighting units in Tennessee. The 14th USCT also fought at the Battle of Nashville, helping dispel General Hood’s army out of Tennessee, but at the cost of sixty-five casualties.³¹ The 14th Colored Regiment ended its military service in East Tennessee at Greenville on March 26, 1866. Colonel Morgan would command two other units, the 42nd USCT. and the 44th USCT regiments, which were organized in Chattanooga in 1864. The 42nd served in East Tennessee until the end of its federal service on July 12, 1865. The 44th, however, was not so lucky, losing over half its regimental strength when its officers surrendered to the Confederates without a fight at Decatur in September of the previous year.

As increased numbers of slaves and free Blacks assembled to join the Union, the establishment of Black troops in Tennessee proceeded swiftly. The 15th USCT regiment was organized to guard the important Nashville-Chattanooga railroad and was stationed for most of its military career in Chattanooga, at the Department of Etowah.³² The 40th United States Colored Troops guarded the important supply routes of East Tennessee, including the Nashville-Louisville lines in the areas situated northeast of Nashville and southwesterly toward Memphis.

The United States Colored Troops were responsible for maintaining order and protecting Union sympathizers from Confederate guerrilla attacks in Tennessee, where attacks were especially severe. Southern guerrillas would attack Blacks who wanted to enlist, dishing out severe punishments in an attempt to push them away from the Union and back to the South.³³ These guerrillas operated to keep slavery alive and would whip and beat Black individuals they saw as offenders.³⁴ Four more regiments, the 101st, 106th, 110th, and the 111th USCT, were formed to secure the Union-held territory. The 101st Colored Regiment defended positions around Nashville in 1865 and saw a brief skirmish in Madison, Tennessee. The 106th USCT guarded the southern stretch of the Nashville-Decatur Railroad and was later consolidated with the 40th at Greenville, Tennessee, on November 7, 1865.³⁵ Both the 110th and the 111th USCT were formerly garrisoned in northern Alabama along vital rail lines but later redeployed to Pulaski,

31. Ronald S. Coddington, *African American Faces of the Civil War* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2012), 180

32. Lovett, “Negro’s,” 42.

33. Glatthaar, *Forged*, 69.

34. Ash, Stephen V. *Middle Tennessee Society Transformed 1860-1870: War and Peace in the Upper South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 150.

35. Lovett, “Negro’s,” 43.

Tennessee. Washington would send men from the 110th to join General Sherman's March to the Sea, and although they had proven themselves at the Battle of Nashville, Sherman would put them to work as laborers and servants.³⁶ Rebel guerrilla units continually harassed these four units, were positioned in the most susceptible positions near the deep South.

An additional six black infantry regiments were organized in West Tennessee for guard and guerrilla pursuit duties. The 55th, 59th, 61st, 63rd, 64th, and 88th USCT regiments were recruited from the heavy slave-holding counties of West Tennessee, such as Dyer, Shelby, and Fayette.³⁷ The 55th USCT saw combat at Moscow, Ripley, and Brice's Crossroads respectively, exemplifying their bravery in all three battles, most notably Brice's Crossroads where they blocked the Confederate forces so their white comrades could escape.³⁸ The larger of these forces, 59th USCT, additionally fought in these battles, although they suffered heavy casualties. The 61st and 63rd USCT regiments coordinated in Memphis and engaged in battle at Moscow, Memphis, and Ashwood, also participating in smaller encounters elsewhere. Their efforts in Brice's Crossroads, as well as a series of skirmishes with Confederate General Forrest's calvary, saw them gain admiration from the Union leaders with Colonel Edward Bouton who was a commander of the units, stating, "the work done by my brigade in the rear of column . . . was a severe test of the soldierly qualities and power of endurance of my men."³⁹ The 64th and 88th USCT regiments which were organized at Memphis and Island No. 10, served primarily in garrison duty at the Post Defenses of Memphis.⁴⁰ By the fall of 1864, all of these regiments had suffered immense losses at the hands of the rebel forces in defense of Tennessee.

CONCLUSION

The USCT played a significant role in the Union Army's success in Tennessee during the Civil War. By the end of the war, some 180,000 to 200,000 Blacks served

36. Smith, *Black*, 239.

37. Lovett, "Negro's," 43.

38. Glatthaar, *Forged*, 165.

39. Trudeau, *Like*, 181.

40. Historical Commission Tennessee. *Tennesseans in the Civil War* (Nashville: Civil War Centennial Commission, 1971), 403-405

in the United States Colored Troops and comprised ten percent of the US Army.⁴¹ The USCT fought in thirty-nine major battles of the war, including campaigns in Tennessee which took place in Stones River, Chattanooga, Nashville, and many other locations. The heroism and fortitude shown by these regiments, not only in the heat of battle but in the face of discrimination and mistreatment became a beacon for other Black troops and even their fellow white counterparts. Although the prejudiced nature against African Americans continued long after the Civil War ended, those who fought dedicated their lives to the thought that one day they might truly be free and no longer live as “property” but as people. The USCT paved the way for future generations of African American soldiers and shaped the course of American history forever. Despite the numerous casualties felt by the United States Colored regiments, the Army would not officially be desegregated until 1948, almost one hundred years after the end of the Civil War.⁴² The sacrifices of those who endured so much just to gain their own freedom can never be forgotten. Even though they were not the first, they will always be known as “those who paved the way.”

41. Steward Henderson. “The Role of the USCT.”

42. Harry Truman, “Executive Order 9981: Desegregation of the Armed Forces (1948).” *National Archives*. <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/executive-order-9981>

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