

*Mem. Gen. Neg*

NEGROES IN THE ARMED FORCES

There were 698,911 Negroes serving in the U. S. Army on June 30, 1944. These included, in the infantry, 44,869; coast and field artillery, 38,517; cavalry, 1,473; engineers, 128,789; air corps, 79,027 and all other branches, 406,236. Commissioned officers numbered 5,957; dental corps officers, 102; nurses 215; other medical corps officers 508 and chaplains, 239. Negroes serving overseas totaled 361,456.

The highest ranking Negro officer in the U. S. Army is Brigadier General Benjamin O. Davis of the Inspector General's Department, who rose to his present rank from a private in the Regular Army. General Davis has



served during three wars in which the United States fought.

Other high-ranking Negro officers in the U. S. Army include Colonel Howard D. Queen, commanding officer of the 366th Infantry, Fort Devens, Massachusetts; Colonel Edward O. Gourdin, commanding officer of the 372nd Infantry and former assistant U. S. Attorney at Boston, Massachusetts; Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., son of General Davis, a graduate of the U. S. Military Academy who now commands an all-Negro fighter group in Italy. Colonel Davis formerly led the famed 99th Fighter Squadron, the first all-Negro air unit to enter combat.

Lieutenant Colonel Midian O. Bousfield, now commanding officer of Station Hospital No. 1, Ft. Huachuca, Arizona; Lieutenant Colonel Wendell T. Derricks; Colonel Anderson F. Pitts; Colonel Chauncey M. Hooper; Lieutenant Colonel Benote H. Lee and Lieutenant Colonel Theophilus M. Mann are other leaders of Negro units in this country and overseas.

Showing utter contempt for "master race" divisions facing them, American Negro artillerymen, firing 155 mm. howitzers, are contributing to victory in France as the first colored combat artillery team in that sector. This outfit is the howitzer member of a four-unit artillery group that includes a battalion of 105's and two of 155 mm. "Long Toms."

Two U. S. Negro units have received special commendation from General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Allied Supreme Commander in France, for meritorious service in the landings in France.

A Negro infantry unit of the 93rd Infantry Division, fighting on Bougainville, in the Solomon Islands, was the first unit of Negro ground soldiers to enter action against the enemy in this war. Stories of gallantry in action abounded in this engagement of Negro troops.



From "Somewhere in India" herculean achievements of a battalion of U. S. Army Engineers in building B-29 Superfortress bases for the aerial offensive against Japan were reported. This was a "back-breaking assignment," but the job was accomplished by Negro soldiers within the one-month deadline.

According to the War Department, Negro Ordnance troops are handling considerably more than half the total Ordnance work in the European theater of operations.

When the history of the present war is written, a noteworthy chapter will include the exploits of the famed all-Negro 99th Fighter Squadron which flew its 500th combat mission on June 2, 1944, operating from an Italian base.

Between the years 1862 and 1926, Negro soldiers serving in the U. S. Army were awarded 31 Congressional Medals of Honor and 57 Distinguished Service Crosses.

In March of 1943, Private George Watson of the Quartermaster Corps, was awarded, posthumously, the Distinguished Service Cross for conspicuous gallantry in a combat area. Private Watson, of Birmingham, Alabama, lost his life in New Guinea after he had assisted several men to safety on a raft from their sinking boat.

For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the current global war the American Negro has won many honors in battle.

With 3,506 of their sex in the Women's Army Corps, women of the colored race are also contributing wholeheartedly to the war effort.

Major Harriet M. West, a branch chief, and Major Charity Adams are two Negro women who have already achieved high rank in the WACS.

Sixty-three Negro nurses, led by Captain Mary L. Petty, are in the Army Nurse Corps, now on duty in England and elsewhere in the European theater of war. Fifteen more are serving in the South Pacific area.

American Red Cross units overseas have 149 Negro workers, including 97 women and 52 men. Thousands more of America's Negro civilians are enrolled in Nurses' Aide and Red Cross home nursing courses, volunteering their services in the nation's hospitals and nurseries.

In the U. S. Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard are 162,095 Negroes, 21 of these officers. Six thousand are in the Seabees (Navy Construction Battalions) and 6,000 are serving at 12 Naval Ordnance Stations.

There are two U. S. Navy anti-submarine vessels manned predominantly by Negro crews. The Marine Corps includes 16,000 Negroes who, in the Saipan engagement, for example, were described by war correspondents as the "workingest men in the South Pacific, performing prodigious feats of labor both while under fire and after beachheads were well secured. Some unloaded boats for three days with little or no sleep, working in water up to waist deep."

Negro Marines did heroic work, too, at Guadalcanal. The Seabees also record the feats of the Negro construction workers in erecting structures under gunfire in the South Pacific.

The Second Marine Division on Saipan has Negroes serving with it for the first time in combat history.

Dorie Miller, first Negro Navy hero of this war, now listed as missing in action, was awarded the Navy Cross by President Roosevelt for heroism at Pearl Harbor.

Several thousand Negroes in the U. S. Coast Guard have distinguished themselves by seamanship. Proudly scores of America's Negroes in the Navy wear Presidential citations and have won high awards.