

IN THE NEWS

The Proud Legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers

by PATRICE GIPSON

"What do daddies do all day? Daddies work while children play," explains the narrator of a 1950's picture book—As children Ivey and Lewis Gordon played among the stables and corrals as their dad and his fellow troopers made history.

On July 18, 1866 the United States Congress created an opportunity by passing an act including black soldiers in the regular army of this nation. Last month, at the La Quinta Inn in Tacoma, members of the 9th and 10th (Horse) Cavalry Association reflected and celebrated the exploits and achievements that occurred during the 127 years following the Congressional action.

About 300 veterans gathered with friends, family and admirers from around the country to remember the role they played in the settlement of the west and the defense of our nation. Their contributions have been considerable.

For over two decades, these regiments fought American Indians on the western frontier seeking action in Montana, Texas, and New Mexico. They served on the plains of the southwest and in Kansas and Oklahoma.

Their enemies included the great chiefs Victorio and Geronimo. When not engaged in combat or scouting for hostile, soldiers built forts and roads, installed telegraph lines, located water holes and rode "shotgun" on stagecoach and mail runs.

Historians say the term *Buffalo Soldier* was first used by the Plains Indians in recognition of trooper's courage and stamina under fire. Others suggest the Indians

saw a resemblance between the soldiers hair and the mane of the buffalo.

Since the Indians held the buffalo in such high esteem, the name was accepted by soldiers as a symbol of respect.

A dozen members of the 9th Cavalry ("We Can, We Will")

and 8 members of the 10th Cavalry ("Ready and Forward") won Congressional Medals of Honor. Members of both regiments fought in Cuba during the Spanish-American War, paving the way for Theodore Roosevelt and the "Rough Riders" charge up San

Juan Hill.

Troopers of the 10th Cavalry road with General John J. Pershing during the Mexican expedition in Search of Pancho Villa. In 1941, the two regiments formed the 4th Cavalry Brigade, commanded by the United States' first

African American General, Benjamin O. Davis, Sr.

In 1944, General George S. Patton's success against the Germans with motorized cavalry signaled the end for the mounted troops. Tanks became the technological successors to horse cavalry units.

After several reorganizations of the regiments, today the 1st and 2nd Tank Battalions of the 10th Cavalry Regiment at Fort Knox, Kentucky wear the buffalo symbol. The 9th Cavalry is a combined armor and helicopter regiment at Fort Hood, Texas.

The 9th and 10th (Horse) Cavalry Association was formed in 1967 by men who had served as far back as 1913. They were concerned that the contributions of the Buffalo Soldiers were slipping away. Often, black history is not adequately recorded. Last month in Tacoma, veterans did much to remedy that past neglect.

Patrice Gipson is a freelance writer living in Pasadena, California. Her writings about the Buffalo Soldiers will be published in her upcoming book due out

Photos by Kristie Powers next spring.



Buffalo Soldiers

Left to right: Trooper William Harrington, oldest conventioner and Trooper Robert Powell, association historian and another conventioner attending last month's convention in Tacoma.

Black Churches Provide Emergency Relief to Somalia

The Congress of National Black Churches (CNBC), a coalition of African-American churches from eight major denominations, has provided \$100,000 for emergency relief supplies to Somalia.

Bishop William H. Graves presented the check to Mr. C.

Payne Lucas, President of Africare. The funds will be used to support a much needed medical unit in Somalia.

A delegation of representatives from the CNBC and Africare also visited several emergency medical and feeding centers in Somalia and

refugee camps in Ethiopia during March 1993.

The International Medical Corps, which has been cooperating with Africare for some time, operates the medical facilities which the CNBC team visited in Baidoa and Mogadishu. The Irish Concern feeding center in Mogadishu, the capital, was unique because it demonstrated the important contributions local Somalia were making to their own relief effort by operating the kitchen.

In contrast to Mogadishu and Baidoa, there was less suffering and fighting in Belet Weyne, which the team also visited. The traditional elder system in Belet Weyne helped to preserve the community by delegating responsibility, commissioning a police force, and monitoring resources.

In Ethiopia, the team visited four refugee camps on the border between Ethiopia and Somalia. In addition, they visited the town of Dollosa, where they could see a grinding mill and water facility that Africare had helped to install.

The purpose of the 1993 visit was to identify areas where CNBC could further support Africare's emergency relief effort and its long-term development initiatives.

The CNBC visit to the Horn of Africa grew out of a meeting held at Africare House in September 1992, when CNBC made a commitment to raise money for the relief effort. At that meeting, the church leaders discussed the crisis in Somalia with officials from the U.S. Department of State, the Agency for International Development, the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations, and international human rights agencies.

CFA Coordinator Melvin P. Foote called the Somalia Summit and the follow-up activities "a huge success." He added, "CNBC has had a major role in galvanizing support in the African-American community for Africa. They are setting a great example for other African-American organizations to follow."

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