

# From slavery to freedom, edition 9, chapter 14, odyssey part 6 2

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## **From Slavery to Freedom, Edition 9, CHAPTER 14, ODYSSEY PART 6/2**

From Slavery to Freedom John Hope Franklin's, ' From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans' clearly unveils the status of the African Americans, especially the black soldiers during the first World War in 1914. During the first phase of the war, the president Woodrow Wilson declared his country's neutrality in the World War. The Americans stood on the sidelines though they directly faced the blazing fire of the World war with enormous death, mutilation and other casualties. However, the increasing death rates in the war and the German attacks on the American ships forced the President, Wilson to call for a joint session of the Congress and seek the permission for engaging in the war. The United States joined with the Allied Powers and about 370, 000 African American men answered Wilson's exhortation to array for democracy by serving the U. S army.

One of the major issues in the American army during that time was racial segregation. The Black soldiers had to confront with severe physical and mental harassment from the white American soldiers and citizens. They were frequently assigned some menial jobs and overly laborious jobs by the white officers disregarding their rank in the army. But this segregation never affected them in executing their duties as soldiers and as such they fought with valor and patriotism on the European frontline. As the government was in need of more soldiers to strengthen the army by the beginning of 1917, it was presented in the Congress. The Congress the rejected the idea of "whites-only draft" and passed the Selective Service Act in May 1917 which ensured the service of the black men in the American army without racial

discrimination.

Therefore, on July 5, 1917, the first day of registration, more than 700, 000 black men signed up for Selective Service. It has been identified that approximately 31 percent of all blacks who registered were accepted, compared to 26 percent of registered whites.

Though many white newspapers in the North and the South supported the inclusion of the blacks in the army, the blacks could not obtain their moral rights completely. It is quite visible that the blacks were not evaded from farming and they were not allowed the marriage exemption. They got the marriage exemption depending on the wife's status, that is, only if his wife was a white woman he would get the exemption. Even the black officers were not excluded from segregation. Charles Young, a black Lieutenant Colonel also had to face serve segregation. As such, once he had to prove his physical fitness by riding horseback from Ohio to the nation's capital. Even lynching was common during that time. In 1919 the NAACP published *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States*. This report indicated that 3, 224 people were lynched in the thirty year period. Of these, 702 were white and 2, 522 black<sup>1</sup>. The interracial National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) fought for equality in the military by severely criticizing the "whites-only" policy. As a result of it separate training camps for the black officers were conducted. Such organizations took initial steps which really paved the way for the equality of the African Americans in the U. S. army and therefore, it was their rise from slavery to freedom.

## Bibliography

<https://assignbuster.com/from-slavery-to-freedom-edition-9-chapter-14-odyssey-part-62/>

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