

**Complete history of the colored soldiers in the world war: Authentic story of the greatest war of civilized times and what the colored man did to uphold democracy and liberty.**

New York, New York, 1919.

Book, 159 pages.

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*[draft excerpt of page 157]*

“One of my men came to me several days ago,” [an officer] said, “and asked me why I had joined the army. He reminded me that I was above draft age and he wanted me to tell him what I was fighting for. I told him I was fighting for what the flag meant to the Negroes in the United States. I told him I was fighting because I wanted other oppressed people to know the meaning of democracy and enjoy it. I told him that millions of Americans fought for four years for us Negroes to get it and now it was only right that we should fight for all we were worth to help other people get the same thing.

“We are supposed to have had equal rights for fifty years now, but many times we have thought that those rights have been denied us, and many times it has been held that we have never done anything to deserve them.

“I told him that now is our opportunity to prove what we can do. If we can’t fight and die in this war just as bravely as white men, then we don’t deserve an equality with white men, and after the war we had better go back home and forget about it all. But if we can do things on the front; if we can make ourselves felt; if we can make America really proud of the Ole——th, then I am sure it will be the biggest possible step toward our equalization as citizens. That is what I told him, and I think he understood me. The whole (censored) has the same spirit.”

And so the strife for distinction has been inculcated to the ranks of the Old (censored). The men are looking forward to being known as the “Black Devils,” the same as the Chasseurs have earned the right to the “Blue Devil” nickname.

These Negro officers and men have tasted a new equality since arriving in France. In the village square of a small hamlet serving as headquarters I saw them mingling on the easiest terms with the most cultivated French officers. And as officers they carry out their

bearing in their personal appearance. Among no American officers in France now, even the nattiest, whose habitat is at G. H. Q., far from the dust and mud of the camps, have I seen more highly polished shoes and leathers or better pressed uniforms. Pride in the wearing of clothes is something which these Negro officers did not have to learn from orders.

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Notes: From "How Negro Officer Felt about Fighting," Complete History of the Colored Soldiers in the World War: Authentic Story of the Greatest War of Civilized Times and What the Colored Man Did to Uphold Democracy and Liberty (Bennett & Churchill, New York, 1919), p. 157: