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Alexa joins the 12 News team after spending nearly six years as a television news reporter. Her last stop was at 12 News' sister-station in Spokane, Washington. She created content for both television and digital platforms.

HISTORY

Buffalo Soldiers Day: How Black Soldiers laid the foundation for Equality in America

The struggle for stability and prosperity in an America they were once enslaved to continued throughout their time in the military.

Proposed monument near Arizona's capitol would honor forgotten Buffalo Soldiers

Buffalo Soldiers AZ Territory Monument

Wesley Bolin Memorial Plaza downtown Phoenix, Arizona.



Commander Fred Marable and Deputy Commander Michelle London-Marable, founders of the Official Arizona Centennial Legacy Buffalo Soldiers of the Arizona Territory – Ladies and Gentlemen of the Regiment, Mesa, Arizona

7/29/2020

Buffalo Soldiers Day: How Black soldiers laid the foundation for equality in America | 12news.com

In 1948, President Harry Truman signed an executive order integrating the military. The last a Black military unit was disbanded in the 1950s.

"The history of the 9th and 10th Cavalry regiments is not only a part of the great military tradition of the United States but of the history of Black accomplishment. It is a distinct and unique history," wrote Walter Hill, an archivist with the National Archives and Records Administration.

Related: Buffalo Soldiers, segregation and spring training: How African American players shaped baseball in AZ

Buffalo Soldiers not only helped develop the west and the Grand Canyon state we call home but they laid a foundation for African Americans and other minorities to work toward their own American dream.

"To look at what these men did and what they stood for from slavery all the way up to right now. How they stood fast when trouble came. How they stood fast when racism came. How they stood fast at any part of that. We have a great foundation to stand on," Marable said.

Now, more than 150 years since the 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments were formed, an entirely different battle is being fought by those demanding social justice and equality.

As the soldiers marched on to the battle fields, fighting for a country that would not even give them adequate uniforms and equipment, people today take to the streets in protest for what they say are injustices still not corrected, for wrongs that have still not been righted.

Commander Fred Marable and his wife Deputy Commander Michelle London-Marable is fundraising for a Buffalo Soldiers monument at Arizona State Capitol Wesley Bolin Memorial Plaza. You can learn more and donate here.

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<https://www.12news.com/article/news/history/buffalo-soldiers-day-how-black-soldiers-laid-the-foundation-for-equality-in-american/75-d3105ddb-a97b-4eef-bf9e-05e32c112766>

Buffalo Soldiers was a name given to them by the Native Americans they fought across the western territory.

“They fought like the buffalo. Their hair was curly like the buffalo. Their skin as dark and black like the buffalo and they had the heart of a buffalo,” Commander Fred Marable, co-founder of the Buffalo Soldiers of AZ Territory organization.

In the early years, the Buffalo Soldiers’ ranks were made up of former slaves who fought in the Civil War. And the struggle for stability and prosperity in an America they were once enslaved to continued throughout their time in the military.

Marable explained Buffalo Soldiers mapped out what would become major highways, protected railroad lines, mail carriers, gold mines and settlers moving west.

In Arizona, they even helped developed small settlements that would grow into towns and cities. Towns and cities, they would not be welcomed in.

“They had racism they had to face. They were considered not really a soldier. When they were into the military it took a long time before they even got uniforms. When they went in, when they left home that’s what they wore when they went into battle. So, it took a while,” Marable said.

Despite the odds continuing to stack against them they educated themselves, picked up skill and fought valiantly.

“They were looked at as some of the best soldiers in the Army at the time,” Paul Pipik, the director of the Fort Huachuca Museums, told 12 News in an interview in February.

Previous: Forgotten Buffalo Soldiers played important role in Arizona history

“They were a very cohesive type of organization because their soldiers tended to stay longe gain experience.” said Pipik.