

# VALOR

VETERAN ★ ALLIANCE

February 2022

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Colleagues and friends,

I hope this month finds you settled into the new semester with all the requisite items to keep you warm. There really is nothing quite like the weather we get around here. A weather query is the number one question I get at the top of every call or Zoom meeting with others in “warmer” states (and let’s face it, that is most other states). I am always quick to explain that the frigid weather is balanced out by the warm hearts of the folks in this region, it is that which keeps me (and so many others) here. Not that a -32 degree day isn’t good for house-cleaning, baking, and other sorts of inside activities. It just the going outside part that creates a bit of weather bitterness.



Thankfully, we are a resilient lot that well understand the joys and challenges of each season. I am always happy to find myself in February because it does mean we are that much closer to spring and a whole new color palette from nature. February is also the month of [Giving Hearts Day](#) (February 10<sup>th</sup> this year), I am consistently amazed at the level of charity this region is committed to - we live in a special place.

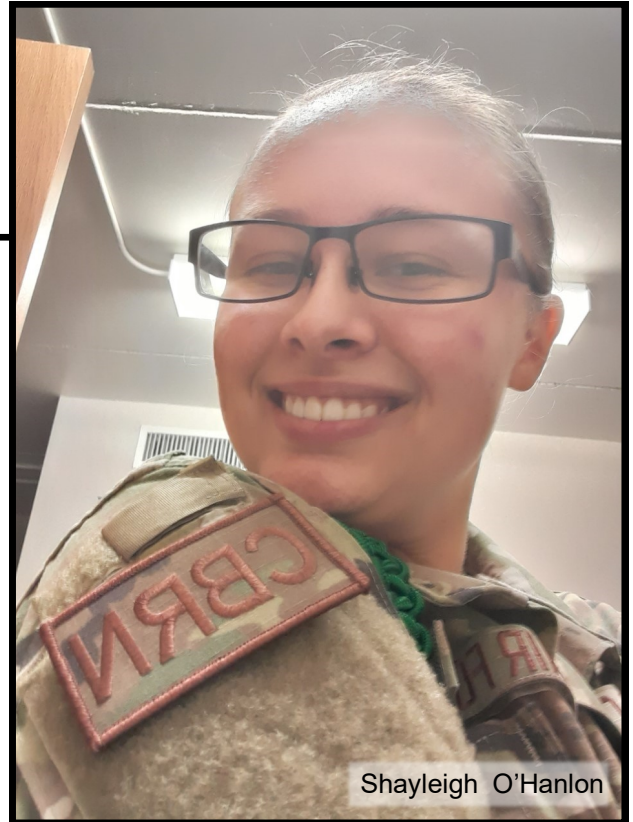
This month, the *Call to Action* asks you to reach out and say thanks to veteran patients at the Fargo VA with valentine cards (or letters) and donated items (see their [page](#) for needed items) in recognition of National Salute to Veteran Patients Week (the week of February 14<sup>th</sup>). This year I donated 40 valentine packets that included cards and wool socks to the Fargo VA to be distributed as they see fit. It wasn’t a lot, but with it went my sincere appreciation for what our veterans have given of themselves for others. I hope that you too will make the time to convey your sincere appreciation to veteran patients and other veterans this Valentine’s Day. You can also do this through contributions to veteran serving organizations on Giving Hearts Day.

I hope you will read Craig Schwinden’s piece on Black History Month at the end of the newsletter. Craig pulled together information from resources such as the *National World War II Museum* and the *National Archives* to help us understand Black Americans’ long history of service to our country. VALOR honors and commemorates that service.

And on that note, our enduring gratitude to all of you for what you do to support student veterans at NDSU, you are sincerely appreciated. Have a lovely February filled with all the things that make your heart happy.

Carol Cwiak, J.D., Ph.D.  
VALOR Faculty Liaison

**“The time is always right to do what is right.” ~Martin Luther King, Jr.**



Shayleigh O'Hanlon

Name: Shayleigh O'Hanlon

Major/Minor: Emergency Management

Originally from: Turtle Lake, ND

Current city: Fargo, ND

Career plans after college: I plan to pursue a basic emergency management job while also gaining some skills I need to work in cybersecurity, which I will transition to when ready.

Military Service/Awards: Air Force Reserve working as a 3E951 - Emergency Management Journeyman in Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN), which includes teaching CBRN defensive skills to other airmen and providing CBRN response, decontamination, and detection capabilities. The photo shown here is from the first time I was allowed to put on the patch.

NDSU activities/engagement: Public Information Officer for the Emergency Management Student Association (EMSA) and Resident Assistant for MLLC

Community activities/engagement: International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) Region 8 Student Engagement Representative

College scholarships, awards, etc.: NDSU Emergency Management Scholarship, Association of Minnesota Emergency Managers (AMEM) 2021 Conference Scholarship, IAEM Region 8 2021 Conference Scholarship

An interesting tidbit about the veteran: I've got four younger siblings that range from 8 to 16 in age.

Favorite experience/memories/etc. at NDSU: 2 AM Perkins runs with friends after late night barn dances, movies, etc.



### CALL TO ACTION: **SAY THANKS**

The week of February 14<sup>th</sup> is National Salute to Veteran Patients Week. There are many things you can do this week to say thanks to veteran patients. We ask that you make the effort to reach out to patients at the Fargo VA via valentine cards or letters. You can also send donations (see <https://www.va.gov/fargo-health-care/work-with-us/volunteer-or-donate/> for what is currently needed). Your cards, letters, and donations can be delivered (or mailed) to: **Fargo VA, 2101 Elm St N, Fargo, ND 58102; Attn: Voluntary Service**. Please see the [website](#) for guidance regarding item drop-off. If you have any additional questions, you can call the Fargo VA Voluntary Service Department at 701-239-3700 extension 3395. Please send your items early, it may be a day or two before they can be distributed to the patients. Thank you for reaching out and saying thanks.

**Fire Watch***Brennan Lemar and Devon Patton, BSV*

It is difficult to believe that we are already into our second month of spring semester. It may not seem like it with our recent weather, but spring is just around the corner. Our next meeting is Tuesday, February 1<sup>st</sup> at 5:30 PM in the Meadow Lark room of the Memorial Union. We do not have a featured speaker this month, but are working to organize one for the remainder of the meetings this semester. If you or someone you know is interested in speaking at one of our upcoming meetings, we encourage you to contact us.

We will be holding elections for BSV officer positions in April for students interested in running. We will outline the election process during our February meeting and an email will be sent out for those that cannot make it to the meeting.

We look forward to continuing this semester with our fellow student veterans, staff, faculty, and allies.

Connect with BSV via [email](#) or [Facebook](#).



## Military Times

### Even with GI Bill, many student vets still need loans to afford college

By Leo Shane III (from [Military Times](#), January 10, 2022)

Despite getting generous tuition and housing stipends through the Post-9/11 GI Bill, many veterans still need student loans to cover personal expenses, potentially setting them up for financial problems in the future, according to a new analysis.

“Older students, such as veterans, often have to juggle other financial obligations, including possibly caring for children or other family members,” according to a [new report from the Pew Charitable Trusts](#) released on Friday.

A separate report from the group released last year found that about one quarter of veterans in undergraduate programs took out a student loan during the 2015-2016 academic year, despite having access to Veterans Affairs education benefits.

On average, those loans totaled \$8,000 for veterans.

The new survey of nearly 3,200 veterans found that money most often goes to things like housing costs, groceries, and child care. Nearly six in 10 veterans who took out a loan said the money was needed to cover living expenses, rather than extra school-related costs.

“For many, these results may be surprising, in part because the Post-9/11 GI Bill offers a monthly housing allowance designed to cover — or significantly defray — the cost of housing while veterans are enrolled in a college or university,” the report states.

That housing stipend can top more than \$2,000 a month, depending on where students are attending classes. The non-tuition money is designed to provide students with a sufficient financial safety net to avoid having to work a full-time job while finishing course work.

But researchers said the results show that the stipend does not cover all expenses for all students. Of veterans who took out loans, 21 percent said they needed the money just to cover the full cost of their housing.



GI Bill recipients still need to borrow to afford college, new study finds. (Airman 1st Class Lawrence Sena/Air Force)





### VCO Update Jim Stoddard

You can visit Jim on campus at the Veterans Educational Training Office in Ceres 329; or by phone at 701-231-9706; or by email at [james.stoddard@ndsu.edu](mailto:james.stoddard@ndsu.edu).



Are you interested in being a pen pal to a serving military member? There are a number of reputable organizations that facilitate such pen pal connections - check out this list and connect today (<https://militarybenefits.info/military-pen-pals/>).

If you want to do something closer to home, consider connecting with Fargo's VA Health Care System to donate your time or other items. You can connect with them here (<https://www.va.gov/fargo-health-care/work-with-us/volunteer-or-donate/>).

In just a few days, we'll already be one month into this semester that seems like it just started yesterday! This means the Career and Advising Center will soon send out the term's first requests to instructors for academic progress reports on all our military students. They also do this for student athletes, and other special populations to help facilitate their academic success.

I encourage instructors to invest a few moments in completing those feedback requests. Every progress report submitted will be assessed by my office for appropriate follow up, so you're not wasting your time. And students, if there are any concerns noted by an instructor about your status in a course watch for a call or message from the Veteran Programs office with some suggestions that can help you get back on track.

Common recommendations we give that should almost go without saying are: make sure you're attending class; read the syllabus; keep in communication with your instructor; coordinate unavoidable absences or late work in advance; let instructors know if you are sick; and make some time to check out the ACE Tutoring Center ([https://www.ndsu.edu/ace/tutoring/individual\\_tutoring/](https://www.ndsu.edu/ace/tutoring/individual_tutoring/)), which can help you grasp the material and keep you from struggling! We try to troubleshoot any special situations.

Short notice active duty activations are becoming pretty common for our students that serve in the National Guard and Reserve components of the military services. The traditional expectation of serving a predictable "one weekend a month, and two weeks a year" is no longer the reality for many Guardsmen and Reservists. These experts in their fields have been increasingly called upon to assist civilian medical, law enforcement, and logistics workers to respond to national emergencies and disasters at home and abroad. The activations often come with little advanced notice, and are of undetermined duration. Who can predict what will happen next with COVID, issues in Ukraine, civil protests, or potential spring flooding here in the Red River Valley?



Sgt. Chase Bode, left, and Spc. Isaac Bolton of the 816th Military Police Company, North Dakota National Guard, collecting data at a COVID-19 mobile testing site. Photo credit: Sgt. Michaela C.P. Granger

It is almost a certainty that an NDSU student serving in the National Guard or Reserve will be tasked with unexpected military duty at least once during their college career, and possibly several times depending on their military job. Typically, NDSU has about 200 students each semester serving in the Guard or Reserve. When/if an activation happens, it's NDSU policy to consider absences due to military duty as "excused", meaning the student must be given a reasonable amount of time to make up any missed work. Students are responsible for planning completion of any missed coursework directly with their instructors, and should always inform the faculty member as far in advance as possible, or as soon as reasonably possible.

Many instructors and students are comfortable coordinating this informally and directly, and that's fine; you're all encouraged to keep doing it that way as long as it's working for both parties. If an instructor desires some kind of supporting documentation, the student should be prepared to provide that. To streamline the process for both sides (and because it can sometimes be difficult for instructors to decipher military orders), we want to remind both instructors and students that students can simply provide their military orders to the Dean of Students' Office to arrange for an [Excused Absence Notification](#) message to be sent to all the student's instructors in a single message. More information on that option is here, but it basically begins with just a phone call or e-mail: [https://www.ndsu.edu/deanofstudents/student\\_advocacy/excused\\_absence\\_policy\\_and\\_notifications/](https://www.ndsu.edu/deanofstudents/student_advocacy/excused_absence_policy_and_notifications/).

Whenever called to active duty, students should also notify NDSU's Office of Military and Veterans Certification. Adjustments to GI Bill benefit payments need to be made to avoid overpayments of Housing Allowances while on military duty (<https://www.ndsu.edu/veterans/activation/>).



## Veteran's Voice

*Craig Schwinden*

*VALOR Student Veteran Representative*

Greetings fellow students and allies,

Another month is upon us, and I am mostly through the transition and the mild confusion of another semester. One thing that is not mild is the temperature. I am ready for spring. Alas, the semester goes on no matter how cold or warm it is. This month I want to point out some important information included in this column and throughout this newsletter.

First, the new requirements for Chapter 33, Post 9/11 G.I. Bill students is in effect as of December 17<sup>th</sup> of last year. You must now verify your enrollment monthly to continue to receive your housing allowance and any 'kicker' payments you may have coming. According to the VA, "this new requirement is designed to protect GI Bill entitlement and reduce

student debts by catching changes in enrollment, which may result in overpayments. Students are required to verify their enrollment to continue receiving payments." In addition, non-verification already has in place some penalties. "Students who fail to verify their enrollment for two consecutive months will have their MHA/kicker payments put on a temporary hold. For payments to resume, students must contact the ECC to re-verify. It is strongly encouraged to opt into email or text for automatic monthly reminders to ensure enrollment changes are recorded timely and expected MHA/kicker payments continue uninterrupted." You can read more about this [here](#).

I share below some of the free outreach programs and training available from the VA and its partners in early February.

### [Effective Communication](#)

2/2/22, 3-4 PM EST

### [Stress Solutions](#)

2/3/22, 6-7 PM EST

### [VA S.A.V.E.-Suicide Prevention Training](#)

2/8/22, 2-3 PM EST

### [Creating Calm in Stressful Times](#)

2/15/22, 5:30-6:30 PM EST

### [Wellness Wednesday Financial Education: Student Loans](#)

2/16/22, 12-1 PM EST

I am sure you have seen this in your NDSU email, but do not forget to attend one (or all) of the career activities that are planned for February. You can read more about these free activities [here](#). I also encourage you to register for [Handshake](#) (another great free service provided to NDSU students). VALOR Ally Jerry South and the crew over at the Career and Advising Center, do fantastic work in putting these events together.

Remember friends, it is cold out there and there is still more dark than light out. Keep an eye out for each other. Talk to your fellow veterans and those students who are still balancing school, military duties, social lives, and family. It is not always easy to get through another day, but we can do it together.

Lastly, do not forget to check out the profile of our Student Veteran of The Month. She is an Air Force Reservist (awesome), and she works at a C-130 'Hercules' Wing (more awesome!). Shayleigh O'Hanlon is an Emergency Management Technician and a senior here on campus. Another go-getter graces the pages of the VALOR newsletter!

If you have questions or article suggestions you can reach me at [craig.schwinden@ndsu.edu](mailto:craig.schwinden@ndsu.edu). Thank you for reading, see you next month.



There are many organizations that you can donate time, money, and resources to that support members of the military and veterans. We try and highlight a variety of these organizations in each month's newsletter. In addition to our *Call to Action* which encourages you to thank veteran patients and donate to the Fargo VA, we encourage you to think about the below organizations in your charitable giving.



K9s For Warriors is the largest provider of service dogs for veterans. Their mission is to end veteran suicide. They provide "highly-trained service dogs to military veterans suffering from PTSD, traumatic brain injury and/or military sexual trauma. With the majority of dogs coming from high-kill rescue shelters, this innovative program allows the K9/Warrior team to build an unwavering bond that facilitates their collective healing and recovery." Learn more [here](#).



[Giving Hearts Day](#) is a well-established charitable giving event in our area. This year, please consider giving to one of the charities that supports military members or veterans. You can donate [here](#).



# Career Corner

Jerry South, Assistant Director, Career Coaching, NDSU Career and Advising Center



One semester ends and another begins, bringing you that much closer to graduating! Hopefully, after all that classroom education, you have had time to develop a plan on how to put it to good use. The typical plan is to graduate and get a job; ideally doing something you will enjoy doing. But if you haven't ever tried out that line of work, how will you be sure it is a good fit? That is where an internship comes in.



An internship or co-op experience give you a chance to 'test out' a particular aspect of the degree and perhaps a career path you have been working toward. Often, this experience solidifies your plan and provides hands-on training that will help prepare you for a full-time career in that field of work after graduation. However, there is also the chance it will show you that it isn't the right career choice for you, or at the least you will learn that a particular area of your major isn't a good fit (which allows you time to make any needed adjustments to pursue a new, slightly altered path). Internships and co-ops also give you some great resume building material that directly relates to your future career. Employers love to see relevant experience like this, it sets you apart from others.

So how do you go about finding an internship? There are several ways actually: you can ask your upper classmates if they know of any opportunities; you can reach out to a company to introduce yourself and ask them if they would be willing to meet with you to discuss a potential internship opportunity; you can search the departmental website for your major, sometimes faculty have connections they list there; you can search the internet, on company websites, or on job boards; or, you can look in [Handshake](#), the NDSU job board, for internship opportunities as well as career opportunities.

Your career journey begins on day 1. Take your first steps in Handshake.

## Handshake

The Career and Advising Center is once again hosting an in-person [Spring Career Expo](#) in the FargoDome on February 9<sup>th</sup>. Currently, there are over 250 employers registered to attend. We are also hosting a virtual spring career fair on February 15<sup>th</sup>. You can find information on these and other events in Handshake. To best prepare for these events you should research employers, their positions, find their booth number, and the location for in-person events, or schedule a virtual meeting during the virtual fair.

## Career Closet

As always, if you need help translating your military experience on your resume, searching for opportunities, or practice interviewing, we are here for you. And if you don't have professional interview clothes readily available, we have a [Career Closet](#) where you can sign something out for up to two weeks, free of charge. You can also

drop in on our zoom or physical studio Monday thru Friday, 10 AM through 4 PM for assistance. If you would prefer to schedule an appointment, just reach out via Navigate.

### Upcoming Events:

#### MARKETING & SALES HIRING FAIR

Marketing & Sales Hiring Fair  
Wednesday, February 2nd, 2022  
9:00am - 12:00pm  
Barry Hall



Spring Career Expo  
Wednesday, February 9th, 2022  
11:00am - 3:00pm  
FARGODOME

#### VIRTUAL SPRING FAIR

Virtual Spring Career Fair  
Tuesday, February 15th, 2022  
1:00pm - 4:00pm  
Handshake

#### PART-TIME & SUMMER JOBS FAIR

Part-Time & Summer Jobs Fair  
Thursday, March 31st, 2022  
1:00pm - 4:00pm  
Memorial Union





Todd Yackley

I hope your semester is off to a great start. I wanted to take a moment and address the Army National Guard Students in reference to Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) and State Tuition Assistance/Reimbursement (STA/R). FTA is currently run by the program Army Ignited. Army Ignited is in its infancy with a lot of headaches and problem areas that are being worked out. Because of this, payments sent to the school are several months behind. This doesn't mean that you can use just STA/R. You must still have an account and receive FTA prior to applying for STA/R.



The State Tuition Assistance program is not funded to handle the entire tuition for all soldiers. If you have not signed up for Army Ignited, please stop in to see me so we can get it started. Once the file is loaded for FTA to pay out, then the State Education STA/R monitor will look to see if you have tuition and fees that warrant STA payment. As it is, most everyone will have their tuition paid for by FTA, especially North Dakota Guardsmen since they receive a NG tuition waiver. North Dakota Guardsmen will not receive the NG Tuition waiver unless they sign up for STA. I understand I just provided a lot of information. If you have questions, please let me know. The best way to reach me is by email at [ndsuveterans@ndsu.edu](mailto:ndsuveterans@ndsu.edu).



**MEMBERS OF  
THE MILITARY  
AND VETERANS,  
  
FROM OUR HEARTS  
TO YOURS  
THIS VALENTINE'S DAY,  
WE THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR SERVICE.**



## COMING UP

**Local Events**

On **Wednesday, January 9<sup>th</sup>**, from **10 AM-12 PM**, veterans and their families can visit the **Fargo Air Museum's Veterans Coffee Hour** for free Sandy's Donuts and coffee. This event is held every second Wednesday of each month at 1609 19<sup>th</sup> Ave. N., Fargo.

The impactful **Warriors in the North - Healing Through Art** exhibit hosted by the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County is still open to the public at the **Hjemkost Center** (202 1st Ave. N., Moorhead, MN) during operational hours (see more [here](#)).

On **Monday, January 21<sup>st</sup>** (and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of every month), from **1-4 PM** visit the **free, walk-in legal clinic** for help for low-income veterans with civil legal matters at **Fargo VA's Community Resource and Referral Center (CRCC)**. The CRCC is on 1st Avenue N. in downtown Fargo, next to the Federal Courthouse.

**Tuesday nights, 6:30 – 9:30 PM** from **February 22<sup>nd</sup> - April 5<sup>th</sup>** (except for March 15<sup>th</sup>), **free individual income tax preparation assistance** is available from volunteers from NDSU's College of Business at the **NDSU Library**, Computer Clusters 14A, B, and C (basement). Find more information [here](#).

**Connect Locally via Facebook****NDDVA**

[facebook.com/NDDVA/](https://facebook.com/NDDVA/)

**DAV North Dakota**

[facebook.com/davnorthdakota/](https://facebook.com/davnorthdakota/)

**American Legion Post 2**

[facebook.com/americanlegionpost2/](https://facebook.com/americanlegionpost2/)

**American Legion Post 21**

[facebook.com/legionpost21/](https://facebook.com/legionpost21/)

**North Dakota American Legion**

[facebook.com/NDAmericanLegion/](https://facebook.com/NDAmericanLegion/)

**Dilworth VFW Post 1223**

[facebook.com/VFW-Post-1223-106022496155155/](https://facebook.com/VFW-Post-1223-106022496155155/)

**Fargo VFW Post 762**

[facebook.com/fargovfwclub/](https://facebook.com/fargovfwclub/)

**West Fargo VFW Post 7564**

[facebook.com/VFW7564.org/](https://facebook.com/VFW7564.org/)

**North Dakota Veterans Educational Training**

[facebook.com/VeteransEducationalTraining/](https://facebook.com/VeteransEducationalTraining/)

**Bison Student Veterans**

[facebook.com/BisonVeterans](https://facebook.com/BisonVeterans)

**VALOR**

[facebook.com/valor.veteran.alliance.organization/](https://facebook.com/valor.veteran.alliance.organization/)

**February**

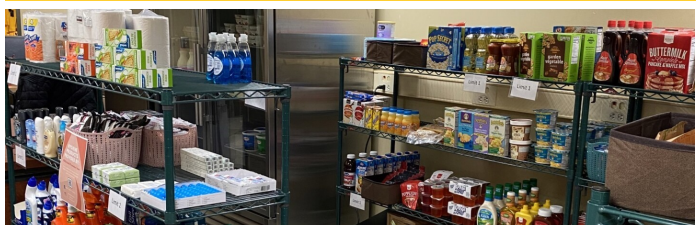
Black History Month	Month of February
Four Chaplains Day	February 3
USO Birthday	February 4
National Salute to Veteran Patients	Week of February 14
Coast Guard Reserve Birthday	February 19

**March**

Women's History Month	Month of March
Navy Reserve Birthday	March 3
Hug a GI Day	March 4
Seabee Birthday	March 5
K9 Veterans Day	March 13
American Legion Birthday	March 15
Rosie The Riveter Day	March 21
Medal of Honor Day	March 25
National Vietnam War Veterans Day	March 29

**April**

Month of the Military Child	Month of April
Military Saves Month	Month of April
Gold Star Spouses Day	April 5
National Former POW Recognition Day	April 9
Air Force Reserve Birthday	April 14
Purple Up! Day	April 15
Army Reserve Birthday	April 23
National Military Brats Day	April 30



Do you need **money** for an emergency or **food** to get you through a rough patch? Check out **NDSU's Emergency Fund** and the **NDSU Food Pantry**.





Some of the most famous units in American military history were comprised of all Black Americans. The most famous of those units is, of course, the Tuskegee Airmen, who flew fighter and bomber-escort missions in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations from their locations in North Africa and later, Europe. However, there were other less well-known units that also distinguished themselves with courage and honor. Some were infantry, some tank units, and some provided maintenance or other support functions. As VALOR celebrates Black History Month in America, we salute some of those military units with brief summaries of some of their contributions.

### The 784<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion – “It Will Be Done”

The 784<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion proved to be one of the finest weapons in the American arsenal in 1945. The 784<sup>th</sup> came late to the fight but hit the enemy hard when it arrived. Activated in April 1943 as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Tank Group alongside the Black American 758<sup>th</sup> and 761<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalions, the 784<sup>th</sup> trained at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana. In camp, Black American soldiers were subject to discrimination and ill treatment by white military policemen and bus drivers. In town, they were subject to being bullied, beaten up, or murdered by racist civilians.

In October 1944, the 784<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion shipped to Europe, staying in England before moving to France at Christmas. The unit then moved to the front in the vicinity of Aachen, Germany. In camp, Black soldiers frequently faced racism from their white comrades in uniform. Under fire, though, things were often different. The officers and men of the 104<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, to which the 784<sup>th</sup> initially was attached, welcomed the Black American unit and helped prepare the tankers for combat under harsh winter conditions.

In February 1945, the 784<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion furnished support for 35<sup>th</sup> Division infantry operations along the Roer River. At the beginning of March, the tankers finally moved out as part of Task Force Byrne, slashing through the German defenses, and liberating the Dutch town of Venlo. Dutch civilians welcomed their Black liberators. Some tankers formed relationships with local women and others, who were killed in action, would be buried in the Netherlands American Cemetery in Margraten.

Past Venlo and moving back into Germany, the tankers faced rapidly increasing enemy opposition. German infantry knocked out American tanks and the mines also took a heavy toll. In the town of Sevelen, the Germans sprung a trap on the tankers by blowing up a bridge. This forced the tankers to halt and they were then subjected to anti-tank, mortar, and small arms fire. But the Americans fought back fiercely, eventually shattering the German defenses and capturing the town. Sergeant Bill Hughes, who had fired his machine gun until the barrel was too hot to touch, recalled that “Our morale was very high. The force had blasted its way out of a trap that was designed to seal its doom. The Battalion motto ‘It Will Be Done’ became so clear and we were proud.”

Still, German resistance continued to stiffen as the tankers advanced. Enemy anti-tank weapons took a grim toll. The 784<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion support personnel, who were cut off, were beaten, and murdered by their Nazi captors.

In combat, the bonds between White infantrymen and Black tankers grew stronger. In March 1945, the 784<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion crossed the Rhine River and drove deep into Germany, the tanks often carried squads of 35<sup>th</sup> Division infantrymen. By this point, the battalion, with an original complement of almost 700 men, had suffered about 200 casualties including 20 killed in action.

### The 369<sup>th</sup> Infantry – The “Harlem Hellfighters” – World War I

The 369<sup>th</sup>, born out of the New York National Guard’s 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, arrived in France at the perfect time. The Russians had just signed an armistice with Germany thus allowing the Germans to move more troops to the Western Front and launch a major offensive focused on defeating British, French, *(continued on page 10)*



*War correspondent Ted Stanford of the Pittsburgh Courier interviews 1st Sgt. Morris O. Harris of the 784<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion. Photo courtesy of the National Archives.*

## All-Black Military Units Faced Tremendous Obstacles, Yet Prevailed *(continued from page 9)*

and American forces. The 369<sup>th</sup> helped to repel the German offensive and to launch a counteroffensive. General John J. Pershing assigned the 369<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> Division of the French Army. With the French, the Harlem Hellfighters fought at Chateau-Thierry and Belleau Wood. All told they spent 191 days in combat, longer than any other American unit in the war. "My men never retire, they go forward, or they die," said Colonel Hayward. Indeed, the 369<sup>th</sup> was the first Allied unit to reach the Rhine.

The extraordinary valor of the 369<sup>th</sup> earned them fame in Europe and America. Newspapers headlined the feats of Corporal Henry Johnson and Private Needham Roberts. In May 1918, they were defending an isolated lookout post on the Western Front, when they were attacked by a German unit. Though wounded, they refused to surrender, fighting on with whatever weapons were at hand. They were the first Americans awarded the Croix de Guerre, and they were not the only "Harlem Hellfighters" to win awards; 171 of its officers and men received individual medals and the unit received a Croix de Guerre for taking the French town of Sechault.

In December 1917, when Colonel Hayward's men had departed from New York City, they had not been permitted to participate in the farewell parade of New York's National Guard, the so-called Rainbow division. The reason Hayward was given was that "black is not a color

in the rainbow." Colonel Hayward pulled every political string he could to assure his men would be rewarded with a victory parade when they came home in February 1919. Crowds lined New York City's Fifth Avenue as the 369<sup>th</sup> marched to the music of their now-famous regimental jazz band leader, James Reese Europe. After the parade, city officials honored the troops at a special dinner.



*Members of the 369th Infantry Division return home from serving on the Western Front in World War I. Photo courtesy of the National Archives.*

### **10th Cavalry Regiment – The “Buffalo Soldiers” – Civil War & Beyond**

“Buffalo Soldiers” originally were members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment of the United States Army, which was formed on September 21, 1866, at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The nickname, “Buffalo Soldiers”, was given to the Colored Cavalry (how Black soldiers were known at the time) by Native American tribes who fought in the Indian Wars. The term eventually became synonymous with all the Black American regiments formed in 1866.

During the Civil War, the U.S. government formed regiments known as the United States Colored Troops (USCT), composed of Black soldiers and Native Americans. The USCT was disbanded in the fall of 1865. In 1867, the Army was set at ten regiments of cavalry and 45 regiments of infantry. The Army was authorized to raise two regiments of Black cavalry (the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Colored Cavalry) and four regiments of Black infantry (the 38<sup>th</sup>, 39<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup>, and 41<sup>st</sup> Colored Infantry), who were mostly drawn from USCT veterans. The first draft of the bill that the House Committee on Military Affairs sent to the full chamber on March 7, 1866, did not include a provision for regiments of Black cavalry, however, this provision was added by Senator Benjamin Wade (OH) prior to the bill's passing on July 28, 1866.

The Buffalo Soldiers served with distinction in the Indian Wars, the Spanish American war, the Philippine American War, and the Mexican Expeditions. There was strong opposition to the war in the Philippines among Black Americans. Many Black soldiers established a rapport with "the brown-skinned natives on the islands," and an unusually large number of Black troops deserted during the campaign, some of whom joined the Filipino rebels.

A little-known contribution of the Buffalo Soldiers involved eight troops of the 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment and one company of the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment who served in California's Sierra Nevada as some of the first national park rangers. In 1899, Buffalo Soldiers from Company H, 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment briefly served in Yosemite National Park, Sequoia National Park, and General Grant (Kings Canyon) National Parks. U.S. Army regiments had been serving in these national parks since 1891, but until 1899, the soldiers serving were white. Beginning in 1899, and continuing in 1903 and 1904, Black American regiments served during the summer in the second and third-oldest national *(continued on page 11)*



## All-Black Military Units Faced Tremendous Obstacles, Yet Prevailed *(continued from page 10)*

parks in the United States (Sequoia and Yosemite). Because these soldiers served before the National Park Service was created in 1916, they were "park rangers" before the term was coined.

A legacy of the soldiers as park rangers is the Ranger hat (popularly known as the Smokey Bear hat). Although not officially adopted by the Army until 1911, the distinctive hat crease, called a Montana peak, (or pinch) can be seen being worn by several of the Buffalo Soldiers in park photographs dating back to 1899. Soldiers serving in the Spanish American War began to "recrease" the Stetson hat with a Montana "pinch" to better shed water from the torrential tropical rains. Many retained that distinctive crease upon their return to the United States. The park photographs, likely show Buffalo Soldiers who were veterans from that 1898 war.



*Buffalo Soldiers. Photo courtesy of Encyclopedia Britannica.*

Regardless of where or how they served, Black servicemembers frequently had to deal with terrible treatment even while they wore the uniform of their country. That treatment too often came from their fellow American servicemembers. At VALOR, we recognize that all Americans who served, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or identity, have an equal place of honor in the annals of America's military history. We honor the courage, commitment, and contributions of all Black Americans who have served, are serving, and will serve our country

*This piece relied heavily on information from the National World War II Museum, the National Archives, Wikipedia, and other sources as noted.*



Learn more about the powerful stories of Black Americans' military service at [Fighting for the Right to Fight](#) (sponsored by the National World War II Museum).