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Review of "Buffalo Soldiers in the West: A Black Soldiers Anthology." Edited by Bruce A. Glasrud and Michael N. Searles

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Buffalo Soldiers in the West: A Black Soldiers Anthology. Edited by Bruce A. Glasrud and Michael N. Searles. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007. vi + 319 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$40.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

During the Civil War, some 180,000 African Americans served with courage in the Union Army, and more than 40,000 died. Following the war, as the United States moved to secure its Western territories, African American infantry and cavalry, whom the Cheyennes and Comanches of the Plains called "Buffalo Soldiers," helped in this endeavor. The Army Reorganization Act of 1866 approved the formation of the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry and

Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Infantry. In *Buffalo Soldiers in the West*, Bruce A. Glasrud and Michael N. Searles collect previously published essays on these intrepid servicemen. The collection describes how Buffalo Soldiers participated in “every major conflict on American soil, but [under] a muted call: serve with little recognition, serve for less pay, serve under white leadership, and serve only under dire circumstances.”

This volume, the most comprehensive study of the Buffalo Soldiers, corrects a historical omission. Moreover, unlike most monographs that focus on the battles between Buffalo Soldiers and Indians, its essays analyze black soldiers’ service in the West. Their authors’ research explains how Buffalo Soldiers prepared the western frontier for white settlement: escorting trains and stagecoaches; staffing garrisons; guarding railroad construction; and protecting military supply lines and survey teams.

The editors divide the collection into four chapters: “The Officers and the Troops,” “The Black Soldier,” “Discrimination and Violence,” and the “Community of Soldiers.” Some essays describe the hostility Buffalo Soldiers encountered from whites in frontier towns such as Hays City, Kansas, and in the Houston Riot of 1917. Others detail the successes of the Buffalo Soldiers. Charles M. Dollar in “Putting the Army on Wheels” explores the achievements of the Twenty-fifth Infantry Bicycle Corps in Montana. Marvin E. Fletcher’s “The Black Soldier-Athlete in the U.S. Army, 1890-1916” examines interracial athletic competition between black soldiers and white soldiers and civilians. Another article describes the African American chaplains who ministered to the Buffalo Soldiers’ spiritual and educational needs. In the literature review, Glasrud and Searles reevaluate the efforts of scholars such as William H. Leckie, Monroe Billington, and Arlen Fowler.

Researchers and black history enthusiasts will find these essays, chapter introductions, and the literature review a rich theoretical foundation for researching and writing about

the Buffalo Soldiers. The volume ought to be required reading for anyone interested in westward expansion, military history, and black patriotism.

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