

AFRICAN AMERICAN SOLDIERS
IN THE NATIONAL GUARD

RECRUITMENT AND DEPLOYMENT
DURING PEACETIME AND WAR

Charles Johnson, Jr.

Contributions to Afro-American and African Studies, Number 148



GREENWOOD PRESS
Westport, Connecticut • London

AFRICAN AMERICAN SOLDIERS IN THE NATIONAL GUARD

Recent Titles in Contributions in Afro-American and African Studies

The Poet's Africa: Africanness in the Poetry of Nicolás Guillén and Aimé Césaire
Josaphat B. Kubayanda

Tradition and Modernity in the African Short Story: An Introduction to a Literature in Search of Critics
F. Odun Balogun

Politics in the African-American Novel: James Weldon Johnson, W.E.B. DuBois, Richard Wright, and Ralph Ellison
Richard Kostelanetz

Disfigured Images: The Historical Assault on Afro-American Women
Patricia Morton

Black Journalists in Paradox: Historical Perspectives and Current Dilemmas
Clint C. Wilson II

Dream and Reality: The Modern Black Struggle for Freedom and Equality
Jeannine Swift, editor

An Unillustrious Alliance: The African American and Jewish American Communities
William M. Phillips, Jr.

From Exclusion to Inclusion: The Long Struggle for African American Political Power
Ralph C. Gomes and Linda Faye Williams, editors

Mental and Social Disorder in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Sierra Leone, 1787–1900
Leland V. Bell

The Racial Problem in the Works of Richard Wright and James Baldwin
Jean-François Gounard; Joseph J. Rodgers, Jr., translator

Renaissance Man from Louisiana: A Biography of Arna Wendell Bontemps
Kirkland C. Jones

A Struggle Worthy of Note: The Engineering and Technological Education of Black Americans
David E. Wharton

AFRICAN AMERICAN SOLDIERS IN THE NATIONAL GUARD

RECRUITMENT AND DEPLOYMENT DURING PEACETIME AND WAR

Charles Johnson, Jr.

Contributions in Afro-American and African Studies, Number 149



GREENWOOD PRESS
Westport, Connecticut • London

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Johnson, Charles.

African American soldiers in the National Guard : recruitment and
deployment during peacetime and war / Charles Johnson, Jr.
p. cm.—(Contributions in Afro-American and African studies,
ISSN 0069-9624 ; no. 149)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-313-20706-2 (alk. paper)

1. United States—National Guard—Afro-Americans—History.
2. United States—Militia—Afro-Americans—History. I. Title.
II. Series.

UA42.J64 1992

355.37'08996073—dc20 91-44510

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data is available.

Copyright © 1992 by Charles Johnson, Jr.

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be
reproduced, by any process or technique, without the
express written consent of the publisher.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 91-44510

ISBN: 0-313-20706-2

ISSN: 0069-9624

First published in 1992

Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881

An imprint of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

Printed in the United States of America



The paper used in this book complies with the
Permanent Paper Standard issued by the National
Information Standards Organization (Z39.48-1984).

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

To Charles, Rosetta, and Alma

This page intentionally left blank.

Contents

Acknowledgments	ix
Abbreviations	xi
Introduction	1
1 Establishing African American Militia Organizations	19
2 National Disaster, Civil Disturbance, and National Crisis	55
3 Military Service in World War I	97
4 African American Guardsmen between Wars, 1919–1939	119
5 African American Guardsmen during World War II	139
6 Postwar Reorganization and Realignment	165
Bibliography	185
Index	203

This page intentionally left blank.

Acknowledgments

It is my extreme pleasure to acknowledge the numerous individuals who encouraged this study. Harold Lewis initially influenced my interest in the military and Willis Lofton recommended the expansion of my original theme to include all African Americans who served in the National Guard. Adjutants general in several states, especially Major General Bryant Cunningham of the District of Columbia National Guard, opened their files to facilitate my research. I am indebted to all persons who graciously availed themselves for interviews: Ruth Nicholson in the Library of Congress Manuscript Division for her helpful assistance and the knowledgeable librarians and archivists in state libraries and archives who located invaluable records concerning African American guardsmen.

Among the National Archives and National Records Center archivists and technicians who untiringly provided assistance are Harris Andrews, Larry Ashton, Albert Blair, Lawrence Byrd, Dorinda Cartwright, Sylvan DeBow, Elaine C.Everly, Ann Fayson, Linda Johnston, Thomas C.Lipscomb, Mary McBride, Charles Miller, Michael Musick, Timothy K.Nenninger, John Nolen, Frederick W.Pennell, John Pontius, Mary Simms, Aline G.Skinner, William Stewart, John Taylor, James Walker, and Dee M. West. I am grateful for the encouragement of Charles and Rosetta Johnson and the analytical skills of Iolas Drake, Aurelia J.Fagan, Pauline J. Harris, and Alma Johnson. I will never be able to repay the patience of Willigean, April, and Hausalynn, who sometimes complained about the enormous time I spent writing this manuscript but understood the significance of my efforts and rendered invaluable research.

This page intentionally left blank.

Abbreviations

AEF	American Expeditionary Forces
AG	Adjutant General
AGO	Adjutant General's Office
AGRAL	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of Alabama
AGRCA	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of California
AGRCT	Annual Reports of the Adjutant General of Connecticut
AGRFL	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of Florida
AGRGA	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of Georgia
AGRIL	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of Illinois
AGRIN	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of Indiana
AGRIO	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of Iowa
AGRKS	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of Kansas
AGRLA	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of Louisiana
AGRMA	Annual Reports of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts
AGRMD	Annual/Biennial/Quadrennial Reports of the Adjutant General of Maryland
AGRMN	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of Minnesota
AGRMO	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of Missouri
AGRMS	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of Mississippi
AGRNC	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of North Carolina

AGRNJ	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of New Jersey
AGRNY	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of New York
AGROH	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of Ohio
AGRPA	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of Pennsylvania
AGRRI	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of Rhode Island
AGRSC	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of South Carolina
AGRTN	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of Tennessee
AGRTX	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of Texas
AGRVA	Annual/Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of Virginia
AGRWA	Biennial Report of the Adjutant General of Washington
1LT	First Lieutenant
2LT	Second Lieutenant
BG	Brigadier General
CMB	Chief of the Militia Bureau
CNGB	Chief of the National Guard Bureau
COL	Colonel
CPT	Captain
GEN	General
GO	General Order
HQ	Headquarters
LTC	Lieutenant Colonel
LTG	Lieutenant General
MAJ	Major
MG	Major General
NA	Naitonal Archives
NG	National Guard
NGB	National Guard Bureau
RG	Record Group
SO	Special Order
WO	Warrant Officer

Introduction

Military historians researching National Guard organizations have seldom presented the achievements of African American guardsmen. The efforts to establish organizations, problems confronted by personnel during peacetime, and adverse conditions encountered during combat have seldom been emphasized. The objectives of this study are to stress the establishment of African American militia organizations after 1877 and the impact of reorganizations, realignments, and reductions between 1877 to 1949. The involvement of African Americans in the Spanish-American War and the conditions confronting them during the war will be emphasized. Additional attention will focus on the expansion of the National Guard during the twentieth century and the formation of relatively few additional units for minority personnel; however, their accomplishments during each world war are significant and will be emphasized as well as the efforts to maintain their separate companies, battalions, and regiments between the two world wars. The movement to integrate the National Guard after World War II to 1949 is also emphasized.

Virginia established the precedent that defined and restricted African American status in the colonial militia. The colony on January 6, 1639, forbade freedmen and slaves from carrying firearms and ammunition, holding any militia office, or serving in the militia. Subsequent legislation further prevented them from possessing defensive weapons, but in the event of invasion, insurrection, or rebellion, they were permitted to march with the militia and perform pioneer duty. Colonial officials believed their militia service would influence insurrections, encourage manumission without compensation to owners, and influence freedmen and slaves to join the enemies of the British.¹

Similar legislation was implemented by other British colonies, but the shortage of manpower forced some modifications in their militia laws. Massachusetts revised its militia policy to eliminate the

exemption of African American men who were placed in the same militia category reserved for clergy, public officials, and other distinguished persons. The militia law required their performance of specific work annually, which equalled the amount of military training performed by others. The fatigue assignments usually included street cleaning, highway maintenance, or any service that benefited their communities. Failure to perform such duties resulted in a fine of five shillings. During periods of crisis, the fines were raised to 20 shillings. Although other colonies instituted similar provisions, the need to protect the frontier from foreign invasion and Indian attacks forced English colonies to deviate from their established militia policies.²

The perceived threat of Black-Red alliances prompted the colonists to institute measures to preclude African and Indian relationships and to prevent fugitives from seeking protection from Indians. Legislation was revised or conveniently ignored by English colonists who aggressively sought to protect their settlements. Nathaniel Bacon in 1676 promised freedom to approximately 80 fugitives who had joined his force. South Carolina officials in 1705 authorized the arming of Africans during the war against the Yamasee Indians. African soldiers recruited in South Carolina constituted one-third of the 1,200 standing army established by the colonial assembly. However, Carolinians were aware that Africans were assisting the Indians as well as serving with the colonists. Their concern was not whether Africans were capable of using certain weapons effectively, such as the musket and lance, but whether they could maintain control of their African soldiers who had become experts in the use of their weapons. Undoubtedly, some of the Africans had been warriors before their arrival in the English colonies. Peter Stuyvesant, who served as the director of New Amsterdam, also advocated the military employment of Africans against Indians in 1660. Utilizing the half freedom system, which provided for the conditional release of individuals from bondage, the company used Africans to construct fortifications and public works. The French in New Orleans organized Africans for military duty in response to an attack by the Natchez on a French settlement in 1729, and Governor Etienne Perier promised to emancipate all enlisted Africans who provided courageous and faithful service. To further negate the possibility of Black-Red alliances, colonists employed Indians as slave catchers, but their actions did not discourage Africans from escaping and joining the Yamasee, Cherokee, Creek, Seminole, and other Indian nations.³

Increased hostility between England and France created additional opportunities for service in militia units. Adam was recruited for a company formed in New London, Connecticut, by Captain Elisha Hall, and in Massachusetts, Cubbee, Samuel, and Will were

in a company that participated in a Canadian expedition in 1747. By October 8, 1754, in Granville County, North Carolina, seven were in Colonel William Eaton's company, three in Captain John Glover's company, and five in Captain Osborn Jeffrey's company. On August 29, 1755, Virginia attempted to improve its militia by employing personnel of African descent as drummers, trumpeters, and pioneers, measures already practiced by other colonies. African personnel were recruited and used by both the French and the English during the Seven Years' War.⁴

The precarious military presence of African American soldiers in colonial organizations continued into the American Revolution. Having served in the initial engagements in Massachusetts where they distinguished themselves in combat, African American soldiers were recruited by militia companies throughout New England. However, the Continental Army was reluctant to employ them. General Horatio Gates, Adjutant General of the Continental Army, on July 10, 1775, instructed recruiters to refrain from enlisting personnel of African descent. Edward Rutledge of South Carolina presented a resolution to the Continental Congress on September 26, 1775, requiring their discharge, but his resolution was rejected. The Council of War convened on October 8, 1775, at Cambridge, Massachusetts to discuss manpower requirements for the siege of Boston. Generals William Heath, Charles Lee, Israel Putnam, Joseph Spencer, John Sullivan, John Thomas, Artemas Ward, and George Washington unanimously agreed to exclude African American personnel from the Continental Army. General Washington and ten civilian leaders, including Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Lynch, met with the deputy governors of Connecticut and Rhode Island to discuss recruiting methods for the new army, and they unanimously confirmed the decision reached by the Council of War. In November 1775 General Washington issued instructions prohibiting African Americans' enlistment, but a protest by freedmen at the Continental Army headquarters in Cambridge influenced General Washington to modify the ban on December 30, 1775, and permit their reenlistment. This reversal in policy was also influenced by a British proclamation issued by Lord Dunmore of Virginia on November 7, 1775, which accepted African soldiers.⁵

Ironically, a Massachusetts restriction preceded the policy established by the Continental Army. The Committee of Safety, which included John Hancock and Joseph Ward, recommended to the executive branch on May 20, 1775, the elimination of all Africans from the Massachusetts militia. This resulted in the passage of legislation on January 22, 1776, that forbade African and Indian enlistment into the militia. In April 1776 the New Jersey Shrewsbury Committee of Observation and officials in Pennsylvania passed similar legislation. The Council of Safety in

Delaware had enacted its restrictive law on January 13, 1776. Therefore, the exclusion of African American personnel from militia organizations at the local and continental levels became the norm in 1776.⁶

The difficulty of enlisting and retaining militia organizations influenced a reversal of the established policy. General James M. Varnum stressed the acute manpower shortage in Rhode Island and requested General Washington to permit the state to eliminate its deficiency through recruiting a regiment for African American soldiers. Maryland abandoned its restrictive policy and became the only southern state to authorize slave enlistment into its militia in 1777. However, the legislature revised this policy on May 10, 1781, to provide for the enlistment of freemen. African Americans were also employed as substitutes, even in states where policies forbade their enlistment. The Continental Congress also recommended on March 29, 1779, that Georgia and South Carolina enlist and organize 3,000 Africans into separate battalions for frontier service. John Laurens of South Carolina was selected to persuade the legislatures of the states to support this major policy revision, but the fear of having armed battalions composed of freeman and slaves prevented an alteration of the policies enacted by the states. Southerners were familiar with the utilization of African soldiers by the British and were afraid their trained African soldiers would escape to join British organizations or join Indians to attack U.S. settlements. Many Americans were concerned about the impression given to foreign nations that the services of African personnel were required to gain their independence from England. Others felt that they would not receive adequate compensation for the use and possible loss of a portion of their labor force. This issue was never considered favorably by Georgia or South Carolina.⁷

Americans were influenced by British efforts to recruit African American soldiers in Virginia. The Earl of Dartmouth, Lord Dunmore, on May 1, 1775, stressed the necessity of enlisting slaves as soldiers. Although he had refused to enlist slaves who had volunteered their services a month earlier, the intensity of colonial opposition and the military desire of British officers to recruit personnel led Lord Dunmore to publish a proclamation on November 14, 1775, granting freedom to all slaves of rebellious colonists who joined his force. General Nathaniel Greene discovered British plans to organize a regiment in Long Island and two regiments in South Carolina with personnel of African descent. The Americans were further alarmed when General Charles Cornwallis formed a military force of 600 soldiers while stationed in Augusta, Georgia. This military corps, known as the King of England's Soldiers, was so effective that the British transferred several forts to them after their withdrawal from Georgia.⁸

U.S. efforts to form organizations with African American soldiers were successful in some states. Rhode Island authorized the formation of a regiment in 1778 that served in the defense of the state and in the Battle of Yorktown before it was disbanded on June 13, 1783, at Saratoga, New York. In Massachusetts, Colonel Thomas Kench's request to enlist African American soldiers resulted in serious debates and physical violence. Although his effort was unsuccessful, the state formed a company under Major Samuel Lawrence and Bucks of America under Colonel Middleton. Bucks of America, the oldest African American militia company in the United States, was presented its colors by Governor John Hancock at the state capitol as a tribute to its courage and devotion in the cause of U.S. liberty. Captain David Humphreys raised a company in Connecticut, and in Virginia freemen served as drummers, fifers, and pioneers. New Jersey rescinded its exclusion policy in May 1777. New York revised its policy on March 20, 1781, in an attempt to organize two regiments for frontier duty. In Pennsylvania, African American soldiers served in the 3rd Artillery, and Edward Hector was awarded \$40 for valor while saving animals, equipment, and ammunition. However, the majority of the 5,000 soldiers served in integrated companies with different terms of enlistment. Some were promised pay, land, or freedom for acts of valor or extreme bravery. Many soldiers, such as those who served in the Rhode Island battalions, never received their tracts of land or payment for their service. Others fought desperately to avoid reenslavement while their sacrifices were quickly forgotten by an ungrateful nation they had helped to establish.⁹

The Militia Act passed by Congress on May 8, 1792, established the militia based entirely on the service of white male citizens between the ages of 18 and 45. This restrictive legislation superseded a law, which did not contain a racial clause, enacted on April 30, 1790, that was designed to organize a volunteer army. After the Indians in the Northwest Territory defeated the forces of General Josiah Harmar in 1790 and Governor Arthur St. Clair in 1791, attempts were made to amend the Militia Act. A proposal to remove the restrictive clause that limited service to qualified white citizens was defeated. States enacted similar legislation, but some permitted African American service as pioneers or musicians.¹⁰

Territorial militia policies sometimes varied from the policy established by Congress. Governor William Hull of Michigan formed a company composed entirely of Africans to assist in protecting the frontier against a British invasion. Some residents claimed that the company was composed of fugitives from Canada and that the governor did not have the authority to commission Captain Peter Denison, Lieutenant Burgess, and Ensign Bosset. A committee investigating allegations revealed that many of the soldiers had

resided in the territory as freedmen and were subject to the Michigan Territory Militia Act, which stated that all qualified free males were eligible for military duty.¹¹

Militia service of African soldiers in Louisiana was significantly different from that in other territories and states. Two companies were brought to Louisiana from Cuba by Lieutenant General Alesandro O'Reilly to expand the existing organization of African soldiers. They were organized further by Bernardo de Galvez and distinguished themselves in the campaigns at Baton Rouge, Mobile, Natchez, and Pensacola during the American Revolution. In 1792, the militiamen were organized into four infantry and two grenadier companies. The acquisition of Louisiana by the United States in 1803 should have automatically extended recognition to its black militia.

When William C. Claiborne, a former congressman from Tennessee and territorial governor of Mississippi, was appointed governor of the Louisiana Territory, a primary concern was gaining the support of the various ethnic groups, including many Africans from Cuba and Santo Domingo. The presence of a militia composed of free people of color requesting recognition of its corps in January 1803 presented another problem for the governor. He was fearful of having a revolt in the territory similar to the Haitian Revolution, and he did not want to antagonize white settlers and other state officials by extending territorial recognition to the African American militia. Disbanding and disarming the militia would have displeased the entire community of People of Color. Therefore, Claiborne requested federal instructions on the disposition of the militia. Secretary of War Henry Dearborn suggested continuing the battalion in a diminished state and presenting a standard, which the governor accomplished on January 21, 1804. In response to protest by white citizens, the legislature enacted a militia law that restricted service to white male citizens between the ages of 16 and 50.¹²

Following statehood on April 8, 1812, a series of events influenced the Louisiana legislature to enact legislation providing for the recognition of a battalion for People of Color. A significant consideration was the participation of African militiamen in suppressing a slave revolt in January 1811. The United States had declared war against Great Britain on June 12, 1812. Governor Claiborne regarded the acquisition of Pensacola and Mobile in Spanish Florida as essential to the protection of New Orleans. After a new Spanish governor arrived at Pensacola with a force that included 150 African soldiers, General James Wilkinson urged the state to raise a force of 2,200 volunteers. The necessity of enlisting soldiers to protect the state made more attractive the desirability of deploying Black soldiers in defense of New Orleans.

Governor Claiborne encouraged the passage of a militia law on September 7, 1812, that authorized the formation of a corps composed

of four companies, each with 64 militiamen. Enlistment was restricted to Creoles of Color who paid state taxes and owned property worth at least \$300. This represented the first time in the United States that a state had granted the authority for the formation of an organization for Black soldiers. Composed entirely of minority personnel except for the commander and officially designated as the Battalion of Chosen Men of Color, it was generally referred to as the Battalion of Free Men of Color.

Isidore Honore became the first African American officer commissioned in a state militia when he accepted appointment as a second lieutenant. He served in the War of 1812 and was promoted to the rank of captain. After his death on August 11, 1850, his widow, Maria Aime St. Armand, received his land bounty, located in Council Bluffs, Iowa, on September 18, 1855. She sold the land seven days later to George Woodruff of Mahoning County, Ohio.¹³

General Andrew Jackson commanded the Seventh Military District during the War of 1812. He requested the governor to assemble the entire state militia at New Orleans for muster into the Federal Army. The Battalion of Free Men of Color under Major Pierre Lacoste, a planter from New Orleans, served during the battle at Chalmette Plains near New Orleans in December 1814. Attempting to extend their corps, Joseph Savary, a Dominican refugee who had served with distinction as a commissioned officer with the French, organized another battalion of Dominican immigrants. It was commanded by a white Dominican refugee, Major Louis Daquin of the Second Militia Regiment, but Savary served as a captain in the organization. Colonel Michel Fortier commanded these battalions in addition to Listeau's Free Men of Color. Provisions were also made for forming an 84 man auxiliary force in Natchitoches Parish in 1815. All of the soldiers who participated in defense of New Orleans until January 1815 were publicly commended by General Jackson on January 21, 1815. Major Daquin's battalion was released from federal service on March 29, 1815; Major Lacoste's battalion was released five days later.¹⁴

The zeal that had fostered recognition and expansion of the African American militia did not reoccur after the war in Louisiana. Governor Claiborne in September 1816 requested the battalion to muster twice each month and to recruit volunteers for its vacancies. Several commanders, including Major Jean Francois Chatry who assumed command on March 28, 1818, had little success in bringing the battalion to its authorized strength.

Several factors were responsible for the decline of the organization. Interest in militia participation had declined throughout the state, and each governor who served between 1818 and 1831 cited the disorganized state of the militia and recommended improvements in the force. Some individuals who supported the movement for African

American militiamen had died or were beyond the age for militia service. African American citizens were disappointed by their loss of political rights, and they were displeased with the growth of slavery in the state. Economic growth with the introduction of the steamship and a new variety of sugar had made New Orleans a major focal point of the area. African American veterans shared in this new prosperity to some degree because many of them were skilled craftsmen and businessmen. The opportunity to acquire personal wealth and employment made service in the militia less attractive.

The expansion of Black codes and the fear of slave insurrections together with an increased African population in Louisiana caused many planters to fear the possibility of having an armed African American militia. A slave revolt in 1829, the rise of the antislavery movement, and Nat Turner's insurrection in Virginia confirmed the worst fears for the planters. The state legislature was convinced in 1834 that a new militia law was required to restrict enlistment to white citizens. However, many African American veterans were eligible for state pensions and land under legislation subsequently passed by their states and Congress.¹⁵

African Americans in other states were considered for militia service or for pioneer duty. A militia hastily formed to defend the District of Columbia had African American personnel from Virginia and Maryland. Louis Boulagh and John B. Vashon from Leesburg enlisted into Virginia organizations. Boulagh later joined the regular army but transferred into the naval squadron. Free Men of Color assisted the Baltimore Vigilance Committee in preparing defensive breastworks and were paid 50 cents daily in addition to a soldier's food ration. Businessman and abolitionist James Forten and founders of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and African Protestant Church, Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, respectively, at the request of the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee assembled 2,500 men to construct fortifications at Gray's Ferry. Captain Johnathan Tudas also commanded a battalion of 500 men in constructing protective barriers.

In New York City where a labor force of 2,000 constructed fortifications in Brooklyn without pay, the state legislature, on October 24, 1814, was encouraged to authorize the formation of two regiments of Free Men of Color for the duration of the war. Each regiment was authorized to grant its 1,008 soldiers a bounty of \$25 and provide the same pay, rations, equipment, and allowances as others in similar grades in the regular army. The state had also planned to form the regiments into a brigade and offer their services to the federal government. Any slaves joining the regiments would have been manumitted upon their discharge. The war ended before the Philadelphia battalion or the New York regiments were committed to combat.¹⁶

Officials in other states did not attempt to organize militia companies for African American personnel and restricted Black enlistment to service as musicians. William Florville, John Ives, and Amos Camp were musicians in the Springfield Artillery Band in Illinois, but the most famous musician was Jordan B. Noble who enlisted into the United States 7th Regiment as a drummer during the War of 1812. Jordan served as the drummer for General Jackson and later served with the Louisiana militia in the Seminole War of 1836 and with the 1st Louisiana Volunteer Regiment during the Mexican War. For his service in the Mexican War, Noble received a 160-acre land grant. The Columbus Dragoons of Mississippi enlisted a trumpeter, and the state adjutant general maintained muster rolls of African American free men in Bolivan, Noxumbee, and Lowndees counties who were liable for militia service.¹⁷

The only civil disturbance involving African American militia occurred in Rhode Island during the Dorr Rebellion. The Rhode Island Suffrage Association proposed the extension of suffrage to all native-born, white male citizens in March 1840. This proposal was further extended to include all foreign-born residents during the People's Convention in October 1841. Before the revision was voted on, Alexander Crummell presented a petition signed by James Hazard, Ransom Parker, Ichabod Northup, Samuel Rodman, and George J. Smith protesting passage of the proposal. Their petition emphasized that denying suffrage was a violation of the U.S. principle of equality and was based on racism.

Frederick Douglass and other supporters of equal suffrage joined the protest for universal manhood suffrage. Freeholders organized the Law and Order Party and sought allies against the increasing population of foreigners in the state. When Thomas W. Dorr attempted to seize the power of government in June 1842, Governor Samuel Ward King declared martial law and requested assistance from local citizens. Responding to the request for militia assistance were African Americans in Providence who raised two companies of nearly 200 men that were incorporated into the Providence Home Guard, who participated in arresting violators in addition to patrolling city areas. Their militia involvement gained for them immediate suffrage and encouraged state officials to authorize the recruitment of a militia company for their enlistment in 1855.¹⁸

Delegates at national African American conventions included militia service among their objectives. Emphasizing the necessity for military training at the Troy convention in 1847, their demand for militia participation became more vocal after the implementation of a new fugitive slave clause in the Compromise of 1850. Agents attempting to enforce the fugitive slave law encouraged delegates who met at the Shiloh Presbyterian Church in New York City in April 1851 to urge the formation of militia companies in Brooklyn and

Williamsburg. This proposal was strongly endorsed by William J. Wilson, president of the convention and a resident of Brooklyn, who stressed the importance of learning military tactics. Frederick Douglass also affirmed that knowledge of firearms was a necessity, and Henry W. Johnson demanded that the delegates learn military strategy and tactics not only for their defense but also for the defense of the nation.

By August 1, 1851, a company of cadets was organized in New York City. It participated in a New Bedford, Massachusetts, celebration recognizing the independence of the British West Indies. In Massachusetts, the New Bedford Attucks Guard and the Liberty Guards in Boston were formed. The Attucks Guards, Hannibal Guards, and Free Soil Guards were formed in New York City, and the Loguen Guards was organized in Binghamton. The New York *Tribune* reported that the companies in New York performed their weapon drills like professionals and appeared to be ready for militia service if their organizations were needed by the state. In Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the Henry Highland Garnet Guards was formed in 1859, and in Cincinnati, Ohio, the Attucks Blues was organized.¹⁹

State recognition was the objective of the personnel who enlisted into independent organizations. Delegates at the Cincinnati convention in 1852 and Rochester convention in 1853 supported the movement to include independent companies into militia of the respective states. This was a significant issue in Massachusetts and was a significant issue for William C. Nell, Robert Morris, and Charles Lenox Remond who petitioned the state legislature to form an independent militia company. William J. Watkins, who presented a petition to the Legislative Committee on the Militia on February 24, 1854, had received his law degree from Oberlin College in 1847 and had assisted Charles Sumner in the controversial case of *Sarah Roberts v. The City of Boston* in which the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled that the doctrine of separate but equal facilities was legal.

The committee did not approve the petition, but Boston residents organized the Massasoit Guards. Robert Morris requested arms and equipment for the company from Governor Henry J. Gardiner. The governor considered arming an African American company, but this was contrary to federal and state laws. The state legislature during the administration of Governor Nathaniel F. Banks approved legislation for enlistment into the militia, but the governor vetoed the bill because he felt it was unconstitutional.²⁰ An affirmative reply by the governor would have given the state an opportunity to organize all the independent companies, then consisting of the Massasoit Guards, the Liberty Guards of New Bedford, and the New Bedford Attucks, into a battalion.

Participants at a Joy Street Church meeting in Boston on May 30, 1860, expressed their gratitude to J. Sella Martin, Robert Morris,

William C.Nell, and John S.Rock for urging the repeal of the Massachusetts Militia Law before the state legislature. The reluctance of state officials in Massachusetts was attributed to the activities of John Brown. Two days after the raid at Harpers Ferry, Pennsylvania Adjutant General E.C.Wilson disarmed the state's only African American company, which had been provided equipment by the state, and disbanded the organization. Similar action was taken by officials in Michigan where the Detroit Military Guards was formed in May 1860. In Louisiana where Free Men of Color and slaves were demanding civil rights, the adjutant general complained that their demands made it necessary to authorize more ammunition to curtail rebellions.²¹

The advent of the Civil War provided the opportunity for the federal government to revise its military policy. The Union commander in the field recognized the value of granting slaves their freedom under the Confiscation Acts and utilizing them for fatigue duty. Some commanders realized their potential use as soldiers and formed regiments without federal approval. The 1st Kansas Colored Infantry Regiment and the 1st South Carolina Colored Volunteer Regiment were the first organizations formed by Union officers. Their aggressive action and the necessity of states to recruit personnel to meet their quotas influenced Congress to enact the Militia Act on July 17, 1862, which extended military service to men of African descent. President Abraham Lincoln was authorized to emancipate all enlisted slaves and their families. All regiments formed were assigned to the Bureau of Colored Troops, which was organized on May 22, 1863. They were not considered as part of the militia establishment.²²

The major problem in the northern states was whether or not to organize regiments for its African American personnel. Governors realized the intense opposition that existed concerning their enlistment. Policemen in New York ordered African Americans to disband their military clubs, and Governor Edwin D.Morgan rejected their petitions to serve in the Home Guard. The Association for Promoting Colored Volunteers raised the 20th, 26th, and 31st Infantry Regiments, which formed the 1st Brigade of New York State Colored Volunteers, but Governor Horatio Seymour, who won the gubernatorial election in 1862, refused to accept the 4,125 volunteers in the brigade. Fearing an invasion was imminent, officials in Cincinnati, Ohio, authorized the formation of a Home Guard Labor Brigade in 1862.

Governor John A.Andrew of Massachusetts received permission from Secretary of War Edwin Stanton on January 26, 1863, to raise an organization for men of African descent. Because the state had a small African American population and only 100 eligible men were recruited during the first six weeks, a committee raised \$5,000 and