



## THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

*invites you to participate in the*

# BUFFALO SOLDIERS STUDY

*This year commemorates the 150th  
anniversary of the establishment of the  
Buffalo Soldiers*

## WHO WERE THE BUFFALO SOLDIERS?

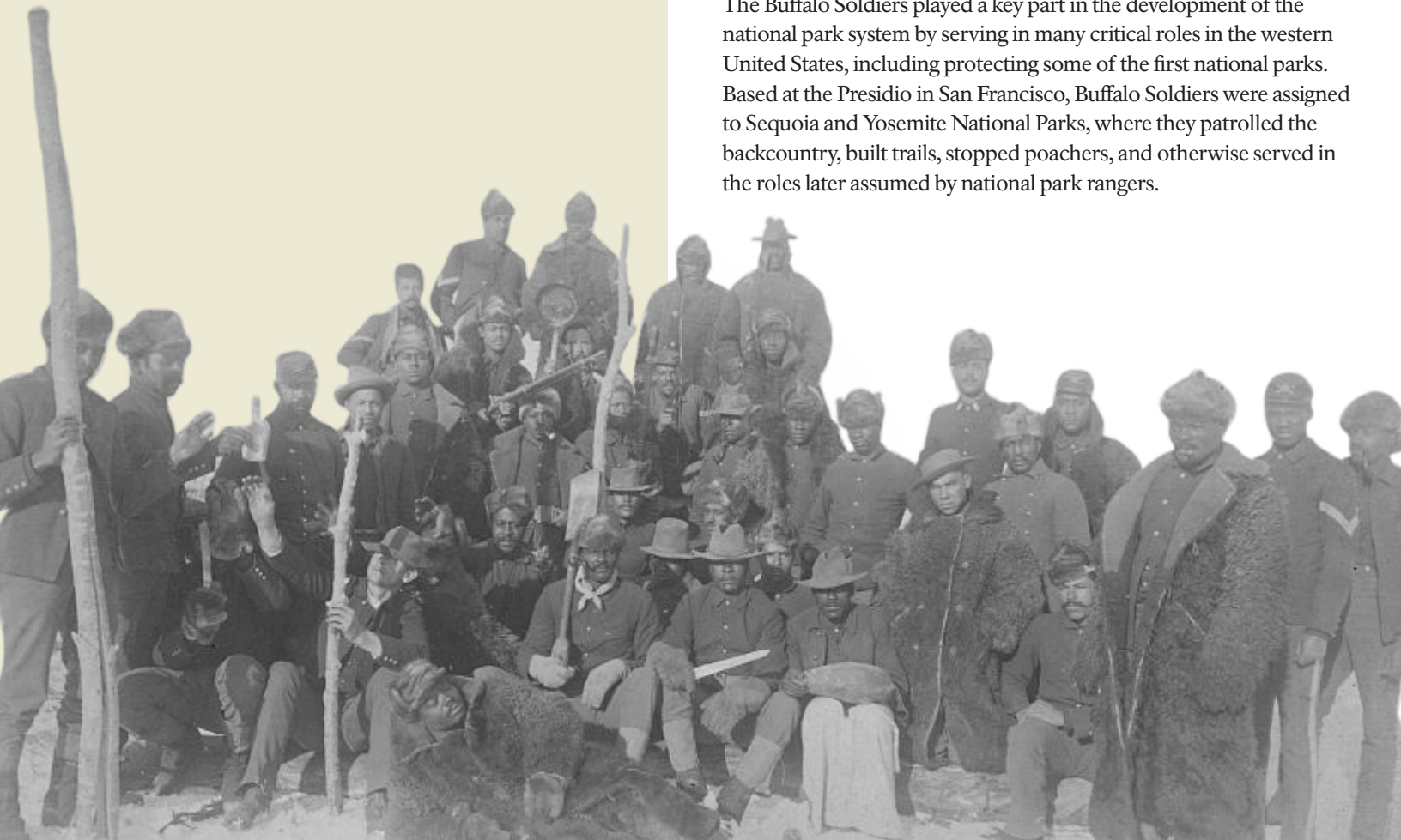
The Buffalo Soldiers were six all-black regiments established by Congress in 1866. Totalling 6,000, the Buffalo Soldiers helped rebuild the country after the Civil War and patrol the remote western frontier.

According to legend, American Indians called the black cavalry troops “buffalo soldiers” because of their dark curly hair, which resembled a buffalo’s coat. Aware of the buffalo’s fierce bravery and fighting spirit, African American troops accepted the name with pride and honor.

On the western frontier, Buffalo Soldiers protected settlers, built forts and roads, and mapped the wilderness as the United States settled and developed the West. Although the Buffalo Soldiers are best known for engaging in conflicts with the region’s native people, they also fought Mexican and Anglo bandits, escorted stagecoaches and paymasters, and on one occasion, stood between Indian peoples and Texas militia. By the 1890s black soldiers comprised 20% of America’s frontier cavalry and performed exemplary service within the military, which remained segregated until President Harry S. Truman finally integrated the US military in 1948.

## THE BUFFALO SOLDIERS AND THE NATIONAL PARKS

The Buffalo Soldiers played a key part in the development of the national park system by serving in many critical roles in the western United States, including protecting some of the first national parks. Based at the Presidio in San Francisco, Buffalo Soldiers were assigned to Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks, where they patrolled the backcountry, built trails, stopped poachers, and otherwise served in the roles later assumed by national park rangers.





## THE BUFFALO SOLDIERS STUDY

In December 2014, Congress authorized the Secretary of the Interior and the National Park Service to conduct a study to evaluate ways to commemorate and interpret the role of Buffalo Soldiers in the early years of the national park system, enhance historical research, education, and public awareness of their stewardship role in the national parks, and further connect the Buffalo Soldiers story to the national parks and African American military service following the Civil War.

### GOALS OF THE STUDY

- Increase public awareness and understanding of Buffalo Soldiers in the early history of the National Park Service.
- Promote awareness and relevancy of the National Park Service within African American communities.
- Enhance historical research, education and public awareness related to the Buffalo Soldiers.

The Buffalo Soldiers study is a nationwide study that will take place within the next two years. At the conclusion of the study, the National Park Service will forward its findings to the Secretary of the Interior, who will submit the study to Congress for its consideration.

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The NPS would like your help to enhance our understanding of the Buffalo Soldiers story, current efforts underway to tell the story, and potential opportunities to improve public awareness. Please share your thoughts about the following questions at

[http://parkplanning.nps.gov/Bufalo\\_Soldiers\\_Study\\_Scoping](http://parkplanning.nps.gov/Bufalo_Soldiers_Study_Scoping)

1. What are the most interesting aspects of the Buffalo Soldiers story to you?
2. How could the National Park Service enhance current efforts to commemorate and tell the story of the Buffalo Soldiers? (i.e., interactive online maps and other information, ranger-led tours, school programs, interpretive trails, etc.)?
3. What is being done outside the National Park Service to tell the story of the Buffalo Soldiers (i.e., reenactment groups, Buffalo Soldiers Motorcycle Club chapters, etc.)?
4. Do you have other ideas or comments you would like to share with us about what can be done to enhance current efforts to tell the Buffalo Soldiers story?

### UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

The National Park Service will hold additional meetings or events where you can share your thoughts and ideas. Please check the [Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monument Facebook page](#) or the study website at [http://parkplanning.nps.gov/buffalo\\_soldiers](http://parkplanning.nps.gov/buffalo_soldiers) for information.



*Please provide your comments by December 31, 2016. We look forward to hearing from you!*