

# WORLD WAR I (1914-1918)

## AFRICAN AMERICAN MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS



# INTRODUCTION

- Blacks heroically fought in the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, the American-Indian Wars, and the Spanish-American War before they served in World War I.
- More than 380,000 blacks served in World War I.
- Approximately 200,000 troops were sent to Europe.
- France awarded more than 240 blacks the Croix de Guerre medal.
- Only two black Americans received the Medal of Honor for their heroism in World War I, Corporal Freddie Stowers and Sergeant Henry Johnson.



## **HIGHLY- DECORATED ALL- BLACK REGIMENT, THE 369TH INFANTRY**

- The 369<sup>th</sup> infantry known as the Harlem Hellfighters.
- Assigned to the French Army in April 1918.
- They fought in the Second Battle of the Marne.
- They fought in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive.
- 171 members of the 369<sup>th</sup> were awarded the French medal, the Croix de Guerre.

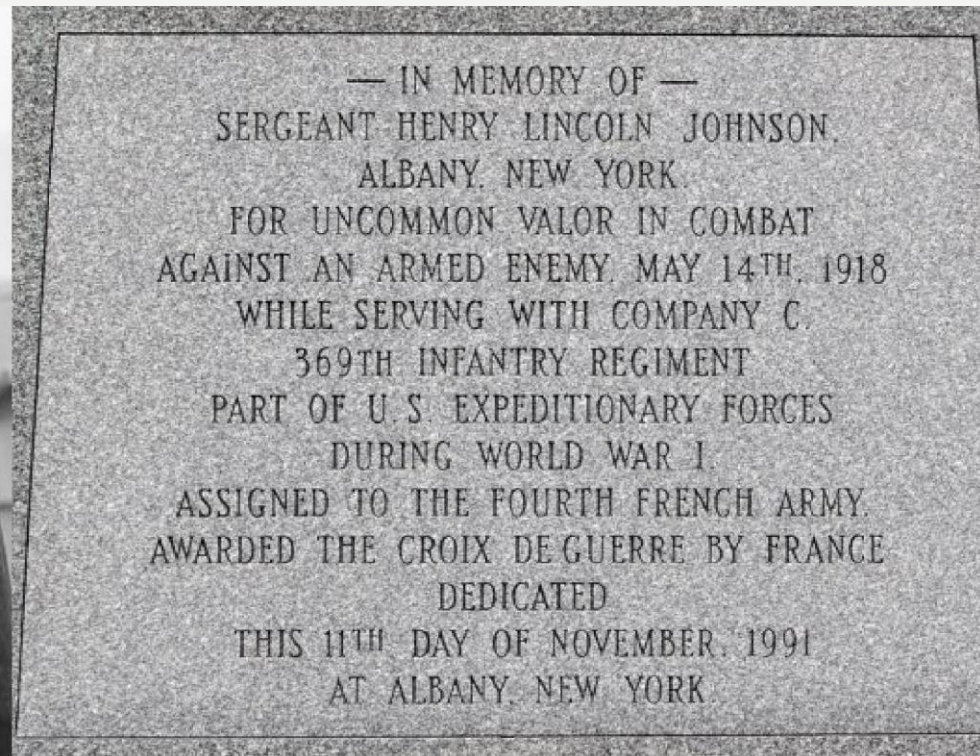




# SERGEANT HENRY L. JOHNSON

## 369<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT

### AWARDED THE CROIX DE GUERRE AND THE MEDAL OF HONOR



## HIGHLY- DECORATED ALL- BLACK REGIMENT, THE 369<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY

- This photo taken on board the USS Stockholm on February 12, 1919, waiting for disembarkation in NYC.
- Nine winners of the French Croix de Guerre medal.
- Front row, left to right: Pvt. Ed Williams, Pvt. Herbert Taylor, Pvt. Leon Fraiter, & Pvt. Ralph Hawkins.
- Back row left to right: Pvt. Henry Primus Sr., Sgt. Daniel Storms Jr., Pvt. Joe Williams, Pvt. Alfred Manley, and Cpl. Tyler Taylor.





## **HIGHLY-DECORATED ALL-BLACK REGIMENT, THE 370<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY, KNOWN AS THE “BLACK DEVILS”**

- The only regiment in entire army with black officers.
- Unit fought in France & Belgium along side French soldiers.
- They achieved 21 Distinguished Crosses, 1 Distinguished Service Medal, 68 Croix de Guerre medals.
- They fought so hard; the Germans called them the “Black Devils.”



## **HIGHLY- DECORATED ALL- BLACK REGIMENT, THE 371<sup>ST</sup> INFANTRY**

- The South Carolina draftees arriving in France.
- The 371<sup>st</sup> Infantry received 146 citations for bravery.
- The family of Freddie Stowers received his Medal of Honor posthumously from President H.W. Bush on April 24, 1991.



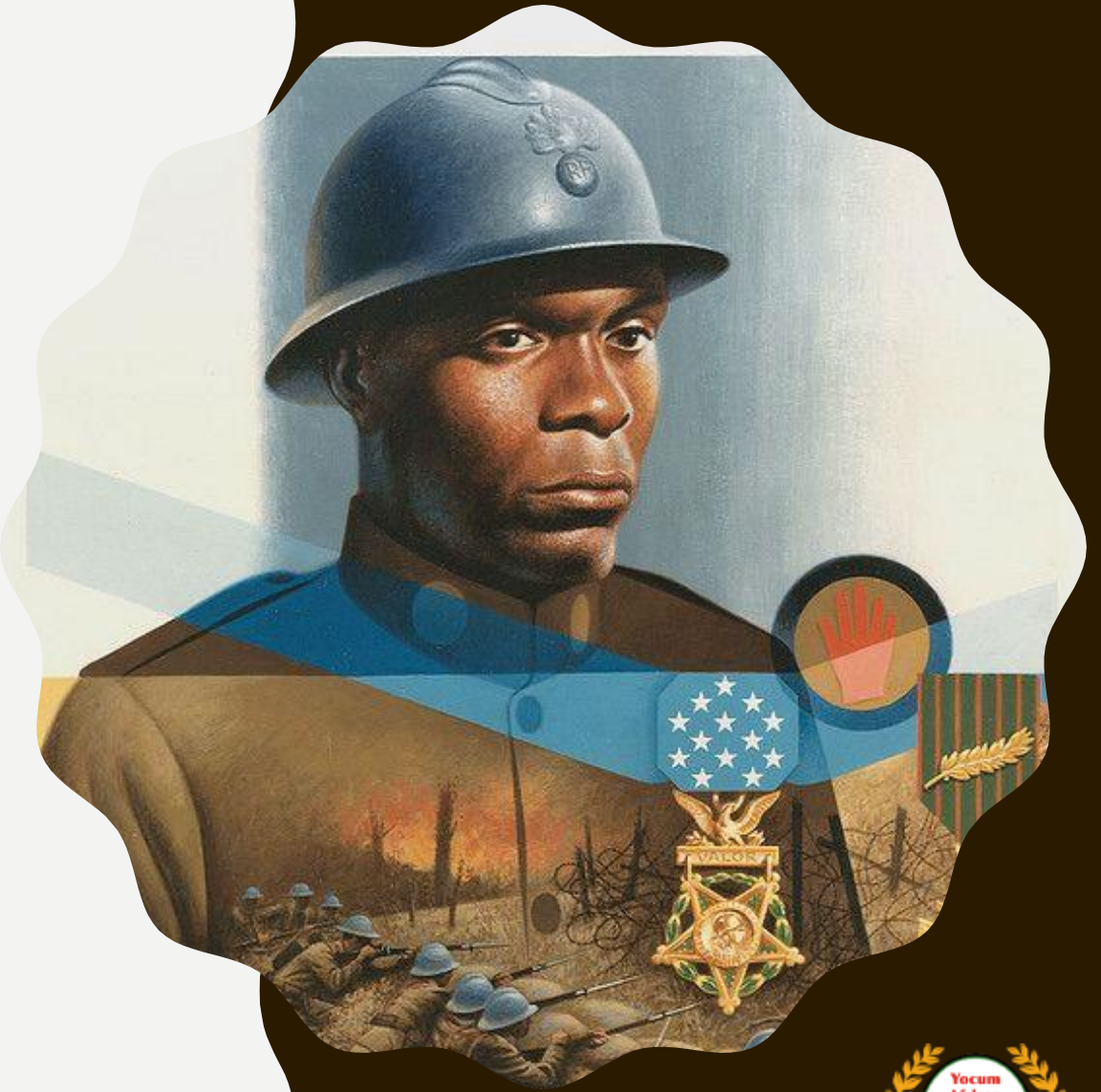


# **CORPORAL FREDDIE STOWERS**

## **371<sup>ST</sup> U.S. INFANTRY**

### **(1896-1918)**

- His unit Arrived on Western Front in April 1918 to a grateful French nation.
- Twenty-one-year-old Corporal Stowers charged into no-man's land to capture German positions.
- After feigning surrender, the Germans opened-up with machinegun fire and killed half of Stowers unit.
- Stowers rallied the men and led them to knock out one machinegun nest and although mortally wounded, captured a second trench line.
- His commanding officer recommended him for the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award for valor.





# SUMMARY

- Blacks fought in every major war in American history and demonstrated loyalty to the nation as soldiers and citizens.
- They received unanimous praise for their combat performance in WWI.
- WWI transformed America and brought the nation together with patriotism but left its black citizens disenchanted.
- Blacks served in WWI with the hope to make democracy safe in the world and a hope they would be rewarded with greater civil rights.
- Even when black citizens did not reap all the benefits of American democracy, most still chose to support America.

