



The Brave Black Regiment: The Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Infantry Volunteers (colors), January 1863- September 1864 (The American Civil War)

Leodis T. Jennings, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College

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This book documents the inequality of pay of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Infantry Volunteers (Colored) from its inception on January 26, 1863, until the resolution of its pay inequity on September 29, 1864. The regiment achieved pay equity on June 15, 1864. This book also details elements of the early history of the regiment and its major campaigns.

The Fifty-Fourth was the first black regiment officially sanctioned in the North after President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. This study focuses on the creation, pay, and legacy of service of the regiment. The Fifty-Fourth underwent its initial training at Camp Meigs in Readville, Massachusetts. The enlisted soldiers were black and the officers white. The regiment's officers were proud to serve in the regiment and often stood by the black soldiers. Both the officers and the enlisted soldiers underwent strict screening requirements. The enlisted soldiers joined the regiment with the understanding their pay would be the same as their white counter parts. This did not occur. This book documents the reaction of the members of the regiment, and details their service, despite this injustice.

This book concludes that the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Infantry Volunteers (Colored) performed its missions successfully and served with honor and distinction despite its pay problems. The primary concern of the regiment was principle, and not money. Its success influenced the formation of other regiments during and after the Civil War. The conclusion includes suggestions and areas for further study.

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