



The 784th Tank Battalion in World War II: History of an African American Armored Unit in Europe

Joe Wilson Jr., Foreword by Bill Smith, Afterword by First Sergeant Joseph E. Wilson Sr. USA (Ret.)

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With the onset of World War II, African Americans found themselves in a struggle just to be allowed to fight for their country. Individuals like Lt. General Leslie McNair and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt fought against the military's discrimination, arguing that the nation could little afford to overlook such an important source of strength. Their eventual success took the form of a military experiment designed to determine whether African Americans were as capable as white soldiers. The 784th was one tank battalion formed as a result.

Part of an effort to chronicle the history of the first African Americans to serve in armored units, this history recounts the service of the 784th Tank Battalion. Replete with observations and comments from veterans of the battalion, it paints a vivid picture of World War II as seen through the eyes of soldiers who had to confront second-class treatment by their army and fellow soldiers while enduring the horrors of war. It details the day-to-day activities of the 784th Tank Battalion, describing basic training, actual combat, occupation and, finally, the deactivation of the unit. Special emphasis is placed on the ways in which these war experiences contributed to the American civil rights movements of the 1960s.

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