



These Truly Are the Brave: An Anthology of African American Writings on War and Citizenship

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“Powerfully connects the history of war and peace with the long black freedom struggle in the United States, illuminating as never before the relationship between war and citizenship in the African American experience.”—Timothy Patrick McCarthy, coeditor of *The Radical Reader: A Documentary History of the American Radical Tradition*

“A rich, provocative compilation that will stimulate important discussions on African Americans’ fraught relationship with the military.”—Venetria Patton, editor of *Background Readings for Teachers of American Literature*

From enslaved people who joined Washington’s Continental Army to Buffalo Soldiers in the Indian Wars, from the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II to black men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, African Americans have been an integral part of the country’s armed forces—even while the nation questioned, challenged, and denied their rights, and oftentimes their humanity.

These Truly Are the Brave collects three centuries of poems, stories, plays, songs, essays, pamphlets, newspaper articles, speeches, oral histories, letters, and political commentaries, richly contextualizing them within their specific historical moments. This anthology offers perspectives on war, national loyalty, and freedom from a sweeping range of writers including Phillis Wheatley, James Weldon Johnson, Natasha Trethewey, W.E.B. Du Bois, Frederick Douglass, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, James Baldwin, Lucille Clifton, Vievee Francis, Michael S. Harper, Ann Petry, Yusef Komunyakaa, Gwendolyn Brooks, and many more. Some selections reveal African Americans embracing wartime service as a way to express citizenship; others show black people remaining steadfast in quiet civilian work. Courageously wrestling with their disputed place in American democracy, these writers expose and reexamine the foundations of U.S. citizenship.

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