

## **Last but Not Forgotten: Black Union Soldiers at Camp Nelson**

**Description:** Black leaders like Frederick Douglas pleaded with Lincoln to allow Blacks to join the Union and fight for their freedom. Many Kentucky Blacks enlisted in Union Armies outside of Kentucky until Lincoln opened sites to allow Blacks, enslaved or free, to enlist. Officially, 23,703 men were credited to the state, ranking Kentucky second to Louisiana in the number of Black men provided to the Union army. Unofficial estimates that attempt to account for the many Kentuckians that enlisted in other states push the total to as high as 29,000. Approximately 60% of all Black men of military age within the state would serve in the U.S. Colored Troops, giving Kentucky the largest percentage of any slave-holding state. Louisville raised six regiments and Camp Nelson raised eight regiments, making it the third largest recruitment center for Black soldiers in the nation.