

## **ROBERT BELL INTRODUCTION**

Robert (Bob) Bell is a 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant of the 12<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Heavy Artillery Regiment.

He is an amateur historian focusing on African American soldiers and those that supported them, during the Civil War. He began with an initial interest in the “Buffalo Soldiers” until 2000 when he visited the Spirit of Freedom monument in Washington, D.C. and Camp Nelson Heritage Park in Nicholasville, Kentucky.

In 2001, he became a charter member of the 12<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Heavy Artillery Regiment, this reactivated and strengthened his interest in the United States Colored Troops soldiers of the Civil War. The 12<sup>th</sup> Regiment serves as the educational outreach arm of the Camp Nelson Education and Preservation Foundation. He is a Life member of the Foundation and has served on its Board.

Later, he became a charter member of the United States Colored Troops Living History Association which is a national group dedicated to the preservation and presentation of the history of the African American men that served during the Civil War. In 2010, he was appointed to serve as a member of Kentucky’s State Commission of the Civil War Sesquicentennial.

He has presented talks on the United States Colored Troops, on Camp Nelson and the artillery used during the Civil War across Kentucky and several states. His talks have been presented to various school groups from elementary to high school, Jefferson Community Technical College, Western Kentucky University, Simmons College and to the general public in various venues, including radio and television. He has worked with the Kentucky Humanities Council’s Chautauqua Program performing as Reverend Newton Bush of the 5<sup>th</sup> USCC for four years. He has done research on the military services of USCT members for various individuals and for one book.

He is also a life member of the NAACP and of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. Over the years he has worked with the Oldham County History Center and is currently doing research as this year’s recipient of the Morris Mount Roberts Family Fellowship.

Bob is a native of Louisville, growing up in the Newburg area and attended Seneca High School and then went on to the University of Louisville. He still resides in Louisville with his wife Carolyn. They have two adult sons and three grandchildren. He enjoys reading non-fiction books on the African American presence during the Civil War. He also enjoys hunting and fishing and spending time with his grandchildren. He retired in 2008 from DuPont Performance Elastomers where he served as the site’s Quality Manager.

Robert has a strong interest in African American history, especially that of Kentucky. The Underground Railroad played a major part in that history and is often overlooked in the study of history today. The history of Kentucky’s Civil War soldiers that served in the United States Colored Troops is not well known. By participating today, Robert is bringing the story of one of these men to the attention of the general public.