

ment, the First South Carolina Volunteers, with the Boston abolitionist, Thomas Wentworth Higginson in command. Higginson's record of his experiences, *Army Life in a Black Regiment*, provides one of the most insightful and passionate descriptions of the performance of blacks as fighting men. It was only in 1863 that the enlistment of black troops began in earnest, and by the end of the war about 200,000 blacks—free Negroes from the North and escaped or freed slaves from the South—had served in the Union army and navy. Naval vessels were integrated, but in the army blacks served in segregated units, and at first received a reduced rate of pay. One of the most famous of these all-black regiments was the 54th Massachusetts Volunteers, organized by Governor John Andrew early in 1863. A committee of black leaders, including Martin Delany, Henry Highland Garnet, and Frederick Douglass, traveled throughout the North urging blacks to enlist in the 54th. In its first engagement, the 54th was ordered to attack an entrenched Confederate position and suffered severe losses,—247 killed or wounded of 600 men engaged, and the death of its commander, Boston aristocrat Robert Gould Shaw. But the 54th had proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that blacks could become good fighting men.

The contribution of the mass of southern blacks to the Union cause is a more difficult subject to investigate than the service of blacks to the Union army. One controversial interpretation is the following section from W. E. B. Du Bois' classic *Black Reconstruction*, a book which helped alter historians' perceptions of the postwar years, but also contains much information on the war itself. Some historians, pointing out that there were no major slave rebellions during the Civil War despite the drain on southern white manpower, had concluded that southern blacks were relatively passive and even loyal to their masters. That many—particularly house servants—were loyal is beyond question; yet Du Bois points out that, as the war progressed, whenever a Union army entered southern terri-