



The Black Soldiers Who Built the Alaska Highway: A History of Four U.S. Army Regiments in the North, 1942-1943

John Virtue

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This is the first detailed account of the 5,000 black troops who were reluctantly sent north by the United States Army during World War II to help build the Alaska Highway and install the companion Canol pipeline. They were the first black regiments deployed outside the lower 48 states during the war. The enlisted men, most of them from the South, faced racial discrimination from white officers, were barred from entering any towns for fear they would procreate a "mongrel" race with local women, and endured winter conditions they had never experienced before. Despite this, they won praise for their dedication and their work. Congress in 2005 said that the wartime service of the four regiments covered here contributed to the eventual desegregation of the Armed Forces.

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