

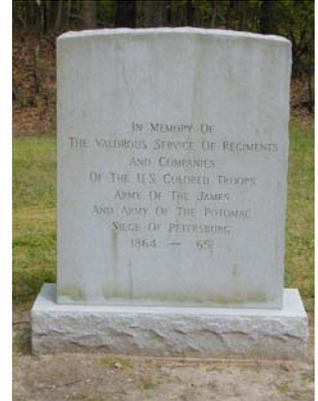
# Petersburg National Battlefield VirtualCache Program

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## Site 4: USCT Monument

N 37° 13'57.551  
W 77° 21'13.787



Placed at Confederate Battery #9 which USCT's captured on June 15, 1864, this monument is dedicated to African-American soldiers who served the Union armies here at Petersburg. Their presence and contribution can be measured in several ways - of the 200,000 USCTs who fought for the Union nearly 10% saw service here at the siege; of the sixteen Medals of Honor earned by African-American troops during the Civil War fifteen of them were earned during the siege, and the first all-black corps of the US Army was created here in December 1864.

On the fields of the Opening Assaults, the Crater, New Market Heights, and the Boydton Plank Road, these men proved themselves equal as soldiers and just as willing to die for the America they believed in.

USCT regiments fought in all theaters of the war, but mainly served as garrison troops in rear areas. The most famous USCT action took place at the Battle of the Crater during the Siege of Petersburg, where regiments of USCT troops suffered heavy casualties attempting to break through Confederate lines. Other notable engagements include Fort Wagner and the Battle of Nashville. USCT soldiers often became victims of battlefield atrocities, most notably at Fort Pillow. The prisoner exchange cartel broke down over the Confederacy's position on black prisoners of war. Confederate law stated that blacks captured in uniform be tried as slave insurrectionists in civil courts—a capital offense. Although this rarely, if ever, happened, it became a stumbling block for prisoner exchange. USCT soldiers were among the first Union forces to enter Richmond, Virginia, after its fall in April 1865. The 41st USCT regiment was present at the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox. Following the war, USCT regiments served as occupation troops in former Confederate states.

**Visit Instructions:** What does the acronym USCT stand for? What do you think was one reason that African Americans joined the Union Army?