



# The Roughest Riders: The Untold Story of the Black Soldiers in the Spanish-American War

*Jerome Tuccille*

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Americans have long heard the story of Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Riders charging up San Juan Hill during the Spanish-American War. But often forgotten in the great swamp of history is that Roosevelt's success was ensured by a dedicated corps of black soldiers—the so-called Buffalo Soldiers—who fought by Roosevelt's side during his legendary campaign. Roosevelt admitted that the black troops actually spearheaded the charge, beating him to the top of Kettle Hill ahead of San Juan Hill, but later changed his story, claiming their performance was due to the superior white officers under whom the black troops served.

*The Roughest Riders* takes a closer look at common historical legend and balances the record. It is the inspiring story of the first African American soldiers to serve during the post-slavery era, first in the West and later in Cuba, when full equality, legally at least, was still a distant dream. They fought heroically and courageously, making Roosevelt's campaign a great success that added to the future president's legend as a great man of words and action. But most of all, they demonstrated their own military prowess, often in the face of incredible discrimination from their fellow soldiers and commanders, and rightfully deserve their own place in American history.

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