

56th United States Colored Troops (USCT) Infantry Remembrance

Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery

Friday, 20 October 2023, 11 a.m.



Keynote Speaker - Byron S. Bagby Major General, U.S. Army (Retired)

Byron Bagby, a native of Fulton, MO, is Managing Partner of BMB Solutions, LLC, an independent consulting firm specializing in: executive leadership development; diversity, equity, and inclusion; strategy development; and governance. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from Westminster College and a master's in education from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He served for over 33 years in the United States Army, transitioning off active duty at the rank of Major General.

He is a certified Leadership Facilitator and a Leadership Development Coach. He serves on: the Board of Directors for Management Support Technology, Inc.; the Boards of Trustees for William Woods University (Governance Committee) and Columbia Southern University; and the Defense Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion. He previously served on the Trustee Board of Westminster College.

General Bagby's key military service includes: Chancellor of Joint Forces Staff College; Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, Europe; a faculty/staff member at the United States Military Academy; and in the Pentagon on the Joint Staff and the Army Staff. He is a veteran of multiple combat deployments.

Byron is an Ordained Deacon at the Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, VA. He holds an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Lincoln College, and an honorary Doctorate of Laws from William Woods University. He is a life member of many organizations, including: Veterans of Foreign Wars; and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Byron is a 33° Scottish Rite Mason. He has been inducted into the Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels.

He has earned many honors and decorations, including: the Westminster College Lifetime Alumni Achievement Award; induction into the Fulton Public Schools Hall of Fame; the Ranger Tab; the Master Parachutist Badge; two Army Distinguished Service Medals; and four Defense Superior Service Medals.

Byron and his wife live in Alexandria, VA. He has two adult children and two grandchildren.



Program

Welcome Comments

**Procession & Posting of Colors of the United States
of America**

South St. Louis Detachment Marine Corp League
183 & Gateway STEM JROTC

Music during Procession: ~ *Rally 'Round the Flag* ~
Duncan Noack, Fletcher Camp 47, SUVCW

Prayer by Rev. Ryan Rupe, Command Chaplain,
USN Retired & Pastor Our Savior Lutheran Church,
Fenton, Mo

Star Spangled Banner – Walter Fox
Pledge of Allegiance – All Join In
Introduction of Special Guests by Camp
Commander Craig Mathews, Sr.

*The Importance of Memorializing African-
American History* –
Angela da Silva, Adjunct Professor – Lindenwood
College

Musical Interlude ~ **Lift Every Voice and Sing** –
Walter Fox



Keynote : *The 56th USCT, They Served Proudly*~
Major General Byron Bagby, USA Retired



Musical Interlude ~ *Minstrel Boy (Has Gone to War)* – Bagpipes Daniel Jackson, Past Camp
Commander – US Grant Camp SUVCW

Laying of Wreath(s) – led by Ceremonial Master
Monsignor Michael Witt, US Grant Camp Member
& Professor Kenrick Seminary

Military Salute – South St. Louis Detachment
Marine Corp League 183
Taps – Bugler PCC Daniel Jackson
Benediction – Monsignor Michael Witt

Official Photos
Reception at the Missouri Civil War Museum,
222 Worth Dr., Lemay, MO 63125
(parking in back)

History of the 56th USCT Infantry

The 56th United States Colored Infantry was an infantry regiment that served in the Union Army during the American Civil War. The regiment was composed of African American enlisted men commanded by white officers and was authorized by the Bureau of Colored Troops which was created by the United States War Department on May 22, 1863. The regiment was originally organized as the 3rd Arkansas Volunteer Infantry (African Descent) on May 22, 1863

The regiment was organized at St. Louis in August 1863 as the 3rd Regiment Arkansas Volunteer Infantry (African Descent) and assigned to the VII Corps (Union Army). The regiment was dispatched to Helena, AR, where it was initially utilized for garrison and guard duty. The regiment was re-organized at Helena, AR, on March 11, 1864, and re-designated the 56th United States Colored Infantry. The 56th was commanded by Col. Carl Bentzoni, a Prussian born officer who trained the troops for combat. The 3rd Regiment Arkansas Volunteer Infantry (African Descent) participated in the Expedition from Helena up the White River between February 4–8, 1864. and up St. Francis River between February 13–14.

On July 26, 1864, near Wallace's Ferry in Arkansas, the unit (now re-designated as the 56th United States Colored Infantry Regiment), along with the 60th Colored Infantry regiments and Battery E of the 2nd U.S. Colored Artillery were attacked by a superior force of Confederate cavalry

commanded by Col. Archibald S. Dobbins. Supported by about 150 men from the 15th Illinois Cavalry, the infantry regiments organized a fighting retreat and at a crucial moment in the battle made a counter charge into the enemy line.

The 56th Colored Regiment losses during service consisted of 4 officers and 21 enlisted men killed or mortally wounded; and two officers and 647 enlisted men by disease; for a total of 674 fatalities. The vast majority of the deaths due to disease occurred during a cholera epidemic that struck in August 1866 while the regiment was waiting to muster out at Jefferson Barracks Military Post near St. Louis. One hundred seventy-five African American enlisted men of the 56th U.S. Colored Infantry originally buried on a Cholera Island south of St. Louis are now together in a mass grave at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery.

In Memory of our Friend, Sarah Freeman Cato (1958-2023)

Genealogist, historian, documentarian, educator, and attorney. A native St. Louisan, she graduated with a law degree from Howard University in 1989 and then pursued a master's degree in American Culture Studies from Washington University, which she attained in 2011. She also received a Certificate in Public History from University of Missouri – St. Louis. She was a past president of the Association of African Ancestor Researchers of St. Louis.

Ms. Cato was instrumental in insuring that the names of the deceased were identified on their mass grave monument. She worked with us for many years and she is sorely missed.

**Special thanks to all our wonderful presenters
and supporters for making this a great event!**

Major General Byron Bagby, USA Retired

**Angela da Silva, Adjunct Professor, Lindenwood
College & President of the National Black Tourism
Network**

**Walter Fox, Legend Singers and in All Saints
Ascension Episcopal Church Choir**

Gateway STEM High School Airforce J-ROTC

South St. Louis Detachment Marine Corp League 183

**Reverend Ryan Rupe - Our Savior Lutheran Church,
Fenton, MO**

**Monsignor Michael Witt, Chaplain US Grant Camp 68
& Professor - Kenrick Seminary**

**Duncan Noack - Col. Thomas Fletcher Camp 47,
SUYCW, DeSoto, MO**

**Daniel Jackson, Past Camp Commander - US Grant
Camp 68, SUYCW**

The Missouri Civil War Museum

Joining a heritage group encourages volunteerism!

America needs its volunteers!

This event is sponsored by the U.S. Grant Camp 68, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War working in conjunction with the Julia Dent Grant Tent 16, Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, 1861-1865, in cooperation with the Veterans' Administration – Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery.

For more information on local history and our camp check out grantcamp.org . Our department website has a lot of information on Missouri Civil War Soldiers, the Missouri Grand Army of the Republic, and Missouri Sons of Union Veterans. Their website is www.suvcwmo.org . Our National Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War website is www.suvcw.org for more information on our organization dedicated to the memory of the Union soldiers who lived and fought to preserve our great Union.

The Julia Dent Grant Tent website is <http://www.juliadentgranttent16duvcw.org/> and the national website for the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, 1861-1865 is www.duvcw.org

