

Denise Dunbar
 Publisher & Executive Editor
 ddunbar@alextimes.com

Margaret Stevens
 Sales Director
 mstevens@alextimes.com

Caitlyn Meisner
 Managing Editor/Reporter
 cmeisner@alextimes.com

Wafir Salih
 Reporter
 wsalih@alextimes.com

Dylan Jaffe
 Intern

Laura Van Pate
 Intern

ADVERTISING

Margaret Stevens
 mstevens@alextimes.com

Marty DeVine
 mdevine@alextimes.com

Patrice V. Culligan
 pculligan@alextimes.com

Tina Franco
 Office Administrator
 tfranco@alextimes.com

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Jessica Kim
 graphics@alextimes.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Kerry Boyd Anderson

Kim Davis

Andrew Dunbar

Thompson Eskew

Mark Eaton

Kim Gilliam

Mae Hunt

Kim Jackson

Lexie Jordan

Louise Krafft

Jim McGrath

Kaitlin Murphy

Dr. Vivek Sinha

Dr. David Weintritt

Amy Will

ALEXTIMES LLC

Denise Dunbar
 Managing Partner

The Ariail family
 Suzanne Brock
 William Dunbar

HOW TO REACH US

1199 N. Fairfax St. Suite 401
 Alexandria, VA 22314
 703-739-0001 (main)
 www.alextimes.com

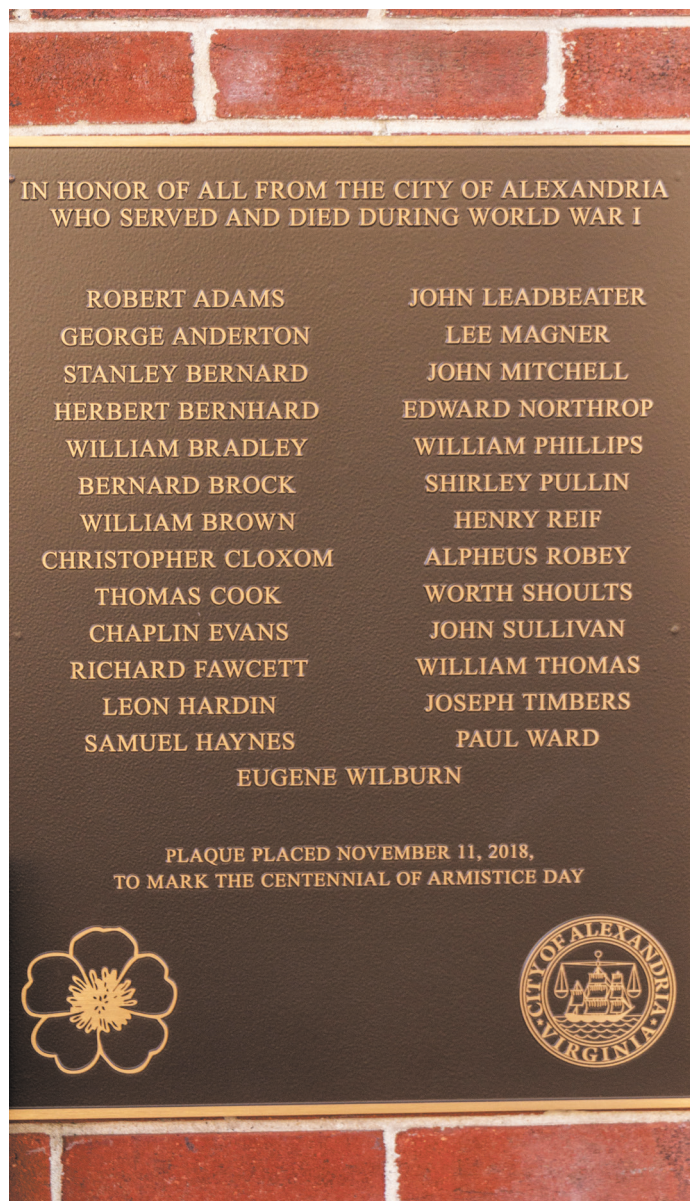
From Alexandria to the Meuse-Argonne

As we celebrate Veterans Day this week, Historic Alexandria wants to highlight the contribution of 52 African American locals drafted to fight in France during World War I. Two of them, William Thomas and Christopher Cloxom, gave their lives during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive and are buried in the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery in France. The Alexandria Gazette chronicled Alexandria's 1917 farewell parade for the 52 draftees and included some comments on the fighting capacity of African American soldiers that may have surprised some of its white readers.

The October 29, 1917, edition of the Gazette reported on the King Street parade given the day before to the African American men headed to Camp Lee for training. The parade included, "a local band" and "young and old of both sexes" as they escorted the draftees to Union Station.

The newspaper noted that the spectators included "many white residents of the city," as well as "old men and women, some representatives of the antebellum race of colored people." The paper followed its well-wishes from an apparently unified Alexandria with two paragraphs of interest.

First, it emphasized the



PHOTO/OFFICE OF HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA/JEFF HANCOCK PHOTOGRAPHY
 The American Legion Post 24 plaque, updated in 2018.

trustworthiness of African Americans during the Civil War, which was more than 50 years earlier. The

paper claimed:

"Farmers and planters at that time in the custody of negroes ... we have no recollection of hearing of any crimes perpetuated by the colored people upon the helpless ones they were left to guard."

The article concluded:

"The negro made a good soldier in the latter part of the war between the states. In the war with Spain they again manifested their nerve. There is every reason to believe they will again be found trustworthy in the greatest of all wars..."

African American soldiers had to fight with their own government to get the chance to serve as combat troops both in the Civil War and World War II. That fact makes this article's enthusiasm for the use of African American Alexandrians as combat troops all the more notable.

In 2018, the City of Alexandria and American Legion Post 24 updated the plaques at Union Station and in Old Town to include William Thomas and Christopher Cloxom among the names of Alexandrians who gave their lives in service of our country during the Great War.

Out of the Attic is provided by the Office of Historic Alexandria.