

## **Donnie W. Brown Chapter**

### **9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> (Horse) Cavalry Association “The Buffalo Soldiers”**

#### **National Visits El Paso, Texas**

On 10 January, 2014 the National President Trooper Willie Edley visited the Donnie W. Brown Chapter of the Buffalo Soldiers, the purpose of Trooper Edley’s visit was to attend the installation banquet of the chapter’s new officers.

Trooper Edley’s visit started with a tour of The Buffalo Soldiers Monument, located just inside of the Robert E. Lee gate on Fort Bliss. The monument is a statue of a mounted buffalo soldier on his horse. This monument was built from local donations and it stands guard over the entrance to Fort Bliss (see picture). The good news for the community of El Paso is that on 20 February, 2014 at 12:30PM, the gate’s name will be changed from Robert E. Lee to “Buffalo Soldiers Gate”.

The Donnie W. Brown Chapter celebrated its Biannual Installation of Officers at the Centennial Club on Fort Bliss, Texas 10 January, 2014. One hundred and fifty guests were treated by our keynote speaker, National President of the Buffalo Soldiers Trooper Willie Edley. The installation ceremony was a candle lighting event which symbolically challenged each incoming officer to support the Constitution and Bylaws and each subsequent incoming officer was required to light their candle from the president’s candle and pledge their support to the same.

The highlight of the event was the National President’s speech. He gave a brief history of the association and some of the national programs. His speech challenged each member to help promote community service and the spirit of the Buffalo Soldiers. His major concerns were recruiting new members; informing the public of the deeds of these brave men; and the visibility of the Buffalo Soldiers in our communities. Finally, he talked about attracting young people to the National Forestry Service. Trooper Edley thanked the chapter and the people of El Paso for their hospitality.

On Saturday January 11, 2014 Trooper Edley was given a tour of Fort Bliss and the surrounding El Paso area, highlighted with a tour of Concordia Cemetery. On or about ten years ago an extensive research project was launched to explore the possibility of Buffalo Soldiers grave sites in the El Paso area. Forty seven buffalo soldiers were discovered to be interred in Concordia Cemetery, four grave sites were found at Fort Bliss National Cemetery, and an additional eight grave sites were located in the Mexican State of Chihuahua.

The local community came together with one goal, to build a memorial for the buffalo soldiers buried in Concordia Cemetery. Several local groups volunteered to support this major endeavor. The Donnie W. Brown Chapter Buffalo Soldiers, Buffalo Soldiers Motorcycle Club, Probation Department and the Concordia Heritage Association came together to build this tribute to these brave soldiers with one common mission, build a memorial which would reflect the pride of El Paso.

The forty seven headstones represent the forty seven soldiers interred in the cemetery (see picture). The names of the soldiers buried in other locations, were placed on a plaque which is a living memorial. Future grave site names will be placed on this plaque. Each headstone has the name of the soldier that is buried in the cemetery with the name of the individual who sponsored the headstone on the opposite side of the stone.

The last stop on our tour was the Neighborhood Mc Call Center which housed local artist Bob Snead's Gallery. Bob Snead's Buffalo Soldiers paintings, drawings, prints, and lithographs have been sold all over the world. His gallery not only houses buffalo soldier's exhibits, but other black history art and painting as well. For example, paintings of The Tuskegee Airmen and the Black Cowboy. Each of his paintings is numbered with a certificate of authenticity.

El Paso is a treasure chest of Buffalo Soldier's history and all of these sites are located within ninety miles of El Paso. For example, Fort Davis, Fort Stanton, Fort Wingate, Fort Selden, Fort Stockton, Fort Hancock, Fort Bliss, and Camp Concordia, just to name a few. We really appreciate the National President's visit and we look forward to our fellow troopers visiting some of these wonderful historical sites.



Picture 1: Buffalo Soldiers Gate



Picture 2: Mc Call Center



Picture 3: Left to Right Troopers Green, Thomas, Lyons, Edley, Brown, Taylor



Picture 4: National President Trooper Edley



Picture 5: Trooper Edley



Picture 6: Living memorial Trooper Edley