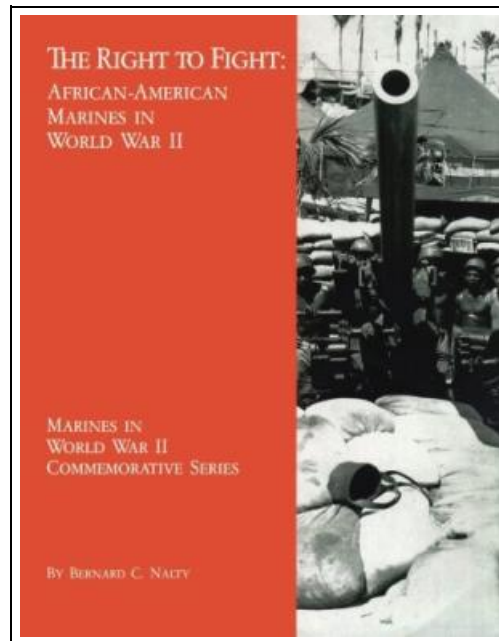


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THE RIGHT TO FIGHT: AFRICAN-AMERICAN MARINES IN WORLD WAR II



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Createspace, United States, 2013. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 279 x 41 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.When the United States began arming against aggression by the Axis powers - Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan, and Fascist Italy- the Marine Corps had a simple and inflexible policy governing AfricanAmericans: it had not accepted them since its reestablishment in 1798 and did not want them now. In April 1941, during a meeting of the General Board of the Navy - a body roughly comparable to the War Department General Staff - the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Major General Thomas Holcomb, declared that blacks had no place in the organization he headed. If it were a question of having a Marine Corps of 5,000 whites or 250,000 Negroes, he said, I would rather have the whites. Whereas General Holcomb and the Marine Corps refused to accept African-Americans, the Navy admitted blacks in small numbers, but only to serve as messmen or stewards. The forces of change were gathering momentum, however. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, after meeting in September 1940 with a panel of black leaders, offered African-Americans better treatment and greater opportunity within the segregated armed forces in return for their support of his rearmament program and his attempt to gain an unprecedented third term in the November Presidential election. Roosevelt won that election with the help of those blacks, mainly in the cities of the North, who could still exercise the right to vote, and he did so without antagonizing the Southern segregationists in the Senate and House of Representatives whose support he needed for his antiNazi foreign policy. By the spring of 1941, many black leaders felt that the time had come for the Roosevelt administration to make good its pledge to AfricanAmericans, repaying them...



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