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General Roscoe Robinson, Jr.: He Overcame the Hurdle of Segregation to Become the Army's First Black General

It was in this environment that General Robinson arrived in Korea in late 1952. The 7th Infantry Division had just been involved in two fierce battles; Triangle Hill and King Company Outpost. The Division had sustained a great number of casualties-, especially among the officers,. He said that most of the lieutenants coming into the theater were being assigned to the 7th Division because of the casualties. General Robinson was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment. All but one of the officers in the company he was assigned to had joined the battalion since the Triangle Hill battle. This included his company commander. All of them had been there for less than three weeks. Thirty days after being assigned to the 1st Battalion, his company commander, Major George Wear, called him and two other 1st Lieutenants into his tent and told them they would each be given command of a company. General Robinson was given Charlie Company. He had just recently been promoted to 1st Lieutenant. When I asked him how this happened he said, "We had a sudden infusion of older captains who had been in World War II. They had been called up for the Korean War. Major Wear said he had to have some company commanders who could hump the hills. He told us that he knew we didn't have an awful lot of experience, but he would give us as much help as he could in commanding our companies. It was quite an interesting experience. Major Wear kind of led us by the hand to make sure we did what we were supposed to do. He was there with us to give us good counseling---as much as you could get in a combat situation."

The most significant aspect of this assignment was not that he had just recently been promoted to 1st lieutenant, but that he was one of only two black officers in the entire 7th Infantry Division to "command integrated units during this period in the Korean War. Major General Arthur Trudeau who commanded the 7th Infantry Division during this period, later said, "This was the first time that we had been integrated in combat. Some of the negro soldiers did a great job. I had two company commanders who were negroes and there was no problem with my soldiers at all."