Click here for a picture to color

"Against the Flow"

Courage

On July 18, 1863 twenty-three year old, William Carney was a soldier in the 54th Massachusetts Colored Infantry. As the troops marched on Fort Wagner, the Confederate artillery bombarded their line, cutting down soldiers left and right. Before long, the flag-bearer was hit and without hesitation William Carney released his rifle to ensure that their flag was lifted high. As most of his officers and comrades fell, he was forced to hunker down and hold his position after making sure the flag was planted firmly for his men to see.

Dedication

As Carney looked ahead he saw men advancing toward him and quickly realized that they were enemy soldiers. Although his first instinct was to run as fast as his legs would carry him, he determined to return the flag with honor. As he went to retrieve the flag, pain shot through his left leg. Forging through a water-filled ditch, burning pain shot through his left arm and then his chest. Grabbing hold of the flag to make his retreat, a bullet grazed his head. When reunited with his regiment, Carney held the flag high and proclaimed, "Boys, the flag never did touch the ground."

Glory

Although the siege of Fort Wagner raged for nearly 7 weeks, costing the lives of half of the brave men that made up the 54th, finally on September 7 the fort was captured. The bravery and discipline demonstrated by the men of the 54th proved them worthy soldiers.
As a result of his bravery, William Carney was the first African-American soldier to earn the Medal of Honor. Sometimes called the Congressional Medal of Honor, it is the highest award bestowed upon a member of the armed forces for valor in action against an enemy force. In 1861, Congress instituted the Medal of Honor, and only 3,400 individuals in 15 wars and conflicts have received such an honor.

Duty

When the Union Army began accepting black soldiers, Carney set aside his dreams of becoming a minister and enlisted in the 54th Massachusetts in February 1863. He believed all humans truly are created equal and answered the call to serve his country and his oppressed brothers.

Adaptation by Kelly Sorge

Concept by : Character First