

## COLONEL CHARLES D. YOUNG US Army, Retired (Deceased)



producing maps of much of the terrain.

COL Young was an African-American Cavalry officer who held important intelligence assignments in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. An 1889 graduate of West Point, Young was only the third black officer to graduate from Military Academy, and the only one of the three to endure the racial injustice of his times to make the Army a career. His entire tactical career was spent in black regiments – the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry. An accomplished linguist, (he spoke Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, and German), Young was also assigned to Military Intelligence duties as one of the Army's early Military Attachés. As the Military Attaché to Haiti from 1904 to 1907, Young made extended reconnaissance missions into that country and neighboring Santo Domingo,

In 1907, Young reported to the War Department's 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, the name given to the section of the new general staff responsible for collecting and disseminating Military Intelligence. He went to Liberia in 1912, for the first of two tours to that country as a Military Attaché.

As part of the 1916 Punitive Expedition, MAJ Charles Young led his 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, in a pistol charge at Agua Caliente, Mexico, which scattered Pancho Villa's forces led by GEN Beltran. Later in that campaign, MAJ Young rode with his squadron to the relief of the 13<sup>th</sup> US Cavalry that was besieged by Mexican forces. Upon the cessation of this campaign, Young returned to Fort Huachuca, Arizona wearing the rank of Lieutenant



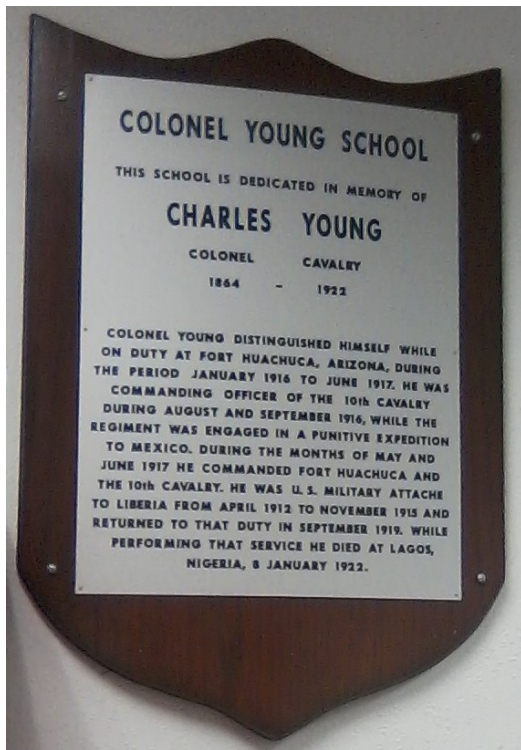
**Major Charles Young served with the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry during the 1916 Punitive Expedition.**

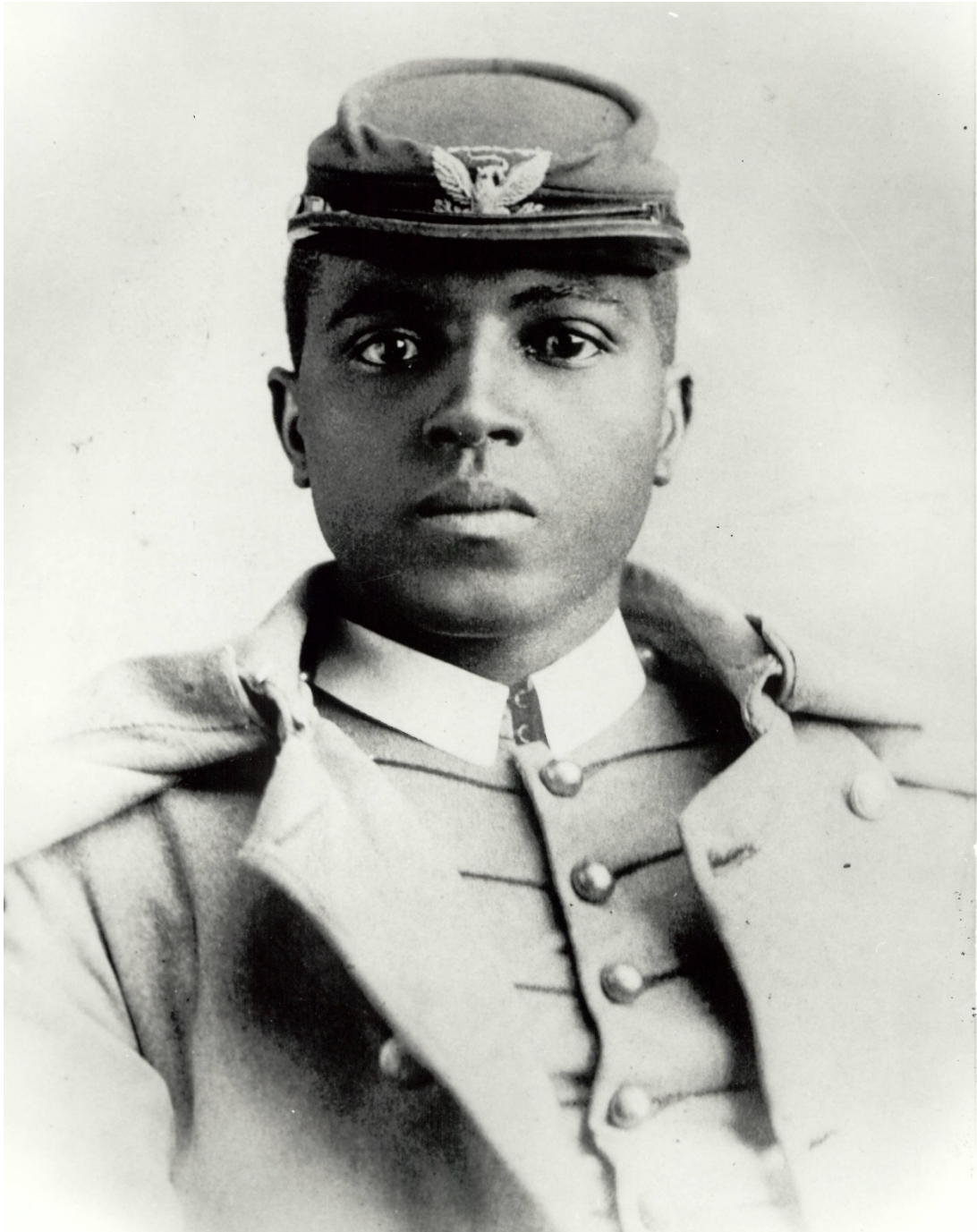
Colonel. Anticipating the need for more African-American officers if the US entered the war in Europe, Young opened an officers' training school for enlisted men in 1917 on Fort Huachuca. He was promoted to full Colonel a year later and served briefly as the Commander of the post. On the eve of World War I, COL Young was medically retired and sent home to Ohio.

Because of the color of his skin, COL Young was denied the automatic respect that comes with an officer's rank. Junior officers refused to salute him. He was taunted by bigots. COL Young was able to overcome this open hatred and disrespect by mastering his profession and leading by example. He was not made a leader by virtue of his commission in the US Army. He earned it by working harder than any other officer and by displaying courage and intelligence in combat.

When he was forced to retire, COL Young tried to demonstrate his fitness to lead troops in the coming war. The 53-year-old Colonel rode on horseback from Wilberforce, Ohio, to Washington, DC, some 500 miles. In Washington he offered his services, in his words, "gladly at the risk of life, which has no value to me if I cannot give it for the great ends for which the United States is striving." The War Department did not accept his offer. Instead he was sent off again on Attaché duties to Liberia, where he died of fever in January 1922 while on an intelligence mission.

COL Charles Young was inducted into the MI Hall of Fame in 1999. Building 21112 on Fort Huachuca's historic old post has been renamed Colonel Young School in his honor.





**Charles Young, USMA Class of 1889**