

## ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY DECEMBER 3



**Newton Diehl Baker, who served as secretary of war during World War I, was born in Martinsburg on December 3, 1871.**

**CSO: SS.8.24, ELA.8.1**

**Investigate the Document: (Correspondence Between Secretary of War Newton D. Baker and Congressman Howard Sutherland—Ms83-2)**

1. Newton Baker's inquiry was into *what* matter involving the "colored men?"
2. Using the date in the header, which war did Newton Baker preside over the United States Army as Secretary of War?

**Think Critically:** How do you think African American troops were treated during the war? Were African Americans still fighting for respect from their white comrades? Were African American units still segregated? Do you think the issues arising from Newton Baker's inquiry were common?

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
WASHINGTON.

January 31, 1918.

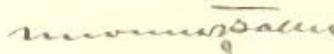
My dear Senator Sutherland:

Immediately after my return to my office from the Senate hearing on Monday, I caused inquiry to be made of General Nicholson at Camp Meade with regard to the report that certain of the colored men there had not been supplied with woollen underwear, and that some of them were required to receive and use cast-off clothing from other soldiers.

General Nicholson called on me yesterday, to say that he had made a personal inspection to determine the facts, and that every man in his command, white and colored, is adequately supplied with heavy woollen underwear, uniforms, and overcoats, and that there are no instances of cast-off clothing being taken from one soldier and given to another, except in one or two cases where men had drawn clothing obviously too large for them and were required to return it to the quartermaster for re-issue.

If you have the means of reaching your informant in this matter, I would be most happy to have him call on me so that I can endeavor to find out just what misleading report he relied on for his information.

Cordially yours,



Secretary of War.

Hon. Howard Sutherland,  
United States Senate.

February 6, 1918.

Hon. Newton D. Baker,  
Secretary of War,  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Secretary:-

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your favor of January 31st giving me the results of your inquiry of General Nicholson. The high character of your informant compels me to believe that he states a fact or what he clearly believes to be a fact.

I do not believe that anything would be gained by giving you the name of the man who told me that he had just returned from Camp Meade that morning, and that he had purchased woollen under-clothing for his boy who had not had any woollen underclothing at any time this winter, and that he personally knew by contact with the boys that the other colored troops were in the same predicament. He complimented the food arrangement for the men very highly indeed and said that they were well fed and otherwise well cared for.

He further stated that many of the colored men were wearing the cast-off suits of white soldiers. I told him that this was likely being done by some of the white soldiers, since it would be sinful to throw away a uniform that had been outgrown by the physical development of a soldier. The man who gave me this information was a colored preacher of good standing and who clearly was not attempting to make trouble or create false impressions.

The rank and file of the army believe that if they make complaints of any kind or character to outsiders punishment will be meted out to them by their commanding officers, and on this account I prefer not to disclose the name of my informant, who is not relying upon any reports whatever, but upon his personal investigations.

Very truly yours,