

## One of many Medals of Honor

Sgt. Thomas Boyne is honored for his actions during the Indian Wars

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Thomas Boyne  
 Born 1849  
 Prince George's County, Maryland  
 Died April 21, 1896 (aged 46-47)  
 Washington, D.C.  
 Place of burial United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery, Washington, D.C.  
 Allegiance United States of America  
 Service/branch United States Army  
 Rank Sergeant  
 Unit 9th Cavalry Regiment  
 Battles/wars Indian Wars  
 Awards Medal of Honor

Thomas Boyne (1849 - April 21, 1896) was a Buffalo Soldier in the United States Army and a recipient of America's highest military decoration—the Medal of Honor—for his actions in the Indian Wars of the western United States.

In 1879, Boyne was serving as a Sergeant in Company C of the 9th Cavalry Regiment in New Mexico. He was cited for "Bravery in action" at the Mimbres Mountains on May 29, 1879, and at the Cuchillo Negro River near Ojo Caliente on September 27, 1879. For those actions, Sergeant Boyne was awarded the Medal of Honor on January 6, 1882. He retired from the army in 1889.

Boyne died in 1896 and was buried at the United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

"Of the three blacks qualifying for the Medal of Honor in 1879, from the state of Maryland, a native of Prince Georges County Thomas Boyne was the first. A sergeant of Company C, 9th Cavalry, Boyne was one of the few men to earn the award for action in two encounters. They were both with a band of Mescalero and Chiricahua Apaches led by Chief Victorio. The medal was presented to him for "bravery in action" at the Mimbres Mountains, New Mexico on May 29th, 1879, and at the Cuchillo Negro River near Ojo Caliente, New Mexico on September 27 of the same year.

When Victorio and his followers fled from their New Mexican reservation and headed for old Mexico, 9th Cavalrymen commanded by Captain Charles D. Beyer were sent from Fort Bayard to intercept the runaways. Captain Beyer with Second Lieutenant Henry H. Wright, 31 enlisted men of Company C, 15 enlisted men of Company I, and two Navaho scouts. On the third day out the command struck a two-day old trail which was headed towards the Mimbres Mountains. Early in the morning on the 20th of May the troops descended into a canyon and were deployed in a skirmish line to continue the search. Finally they sighted the Indians atop a peak, busily erecting a breastwork. While engaged in this activity, one of the Indians raised a white flag and in Apache asked to talk with the officer commanding the troops. Captain Beyer proposed that Victorio meet him halfway, but the suggestion was rejected.

Then according to Beyer the Indians made a "harangue" and all that could be gathered from this was that his people wanted to be left alone. Growing suspicious Capt. Beyer directed his skirmishers under Lieut. Wright to move halfway up the peak within 200 yards of the breastwork. After instructing the skirmishers on the right to move slightly forward and to the right in order to flank the Indians, Beyer gave the order to advance. The soldiers opened fire; the Indians responded. Thomas Boyne, among others was specifically mentioned by Captain Beyer "for gallantry and bravery displayed." Lieutenant Wright took "pleasure in certifying as an eyewitness to the gallant conduct of Sergeant Boyne. Wright also wrote that "I was engaged in bringing in a wounded man with a few men and was surprised by the Indians, my horse was killed and corralled by hostiles when Sergeant Thomas Boyne commanded a detachment sent to my assistance, flanked and gallantly charged the Indians driving them off." Lieutenant Wright recommended Boyne for the Medal Of Honor and his recommendation was heartily endorsed by Major Albert P. Morrow, who stated that "I have seen him repeatedly in action and in every instance he distinguished himself." Morrow also wrote that "I cannot speak too highly of his conduct" and expressed the belief that "if any soldier ever deserved a ..... Medal of Honor Sergeant Boyne does and I hope he may be so rewarded."

Thomas Boyne's western experience began early - earlier than that of any other black Medal of Honor winner in the West. A member of a light artillery regiment activated during the Civil War, he served in Texas for several months after that conflict and was discharged in Brownsville early in 1866. Less than a year later he joined the Regular Army, serving for many years in the 25th Infantry before transferring to the 9th Cavalry. After almost 25 years of service the native of Prince Georges County, Maryland, was discharged in 1889 because of a disability. He was admitted to the U.S. Soldiers Home in Washington, D.C. in 1890, where he remained until his death in 1896."

<http://www.9thcavalry.com/history/boyne.htm> (<http://www.9thcavalry.com/history/boyne.htm>)

