

Primary Sources: *Senegalese Soldiers Images*

Introduction

French tirailleurs sénégalais, or Senegalese Riflemen, had long been recruited or forcibly enlisted into the French colonial forces from the region of the Senegal River. When World War I began in 1914, around 31,000 West Africans were already in the French Army, however this number was expanded dramatically after the French began to suffer catastrophic casualties on the Western Front. As recruitment intensified, Senegalese Riflemen were drawn from all French West Africa - from what is today Upper Volta, Guinea, Niger, and Mali.

Many of these troops were sent to fight in Europe - nearly 135,000 in total. Many fought in the Battles of Yser, Verdun, and on the Somme (1916) and in the Aisne (1917). They fought not only on the Western Front, but also in the south-eastern European Dardanelles campaign, which was launched in March 1915 by British and French forces in an effort to take control of the vital strait. When this failed, Allies launched further campaigns on the Gallipoli Peninsula and at Salonika.

Below are a series of images of Senegalese Riflemen, most of which were taken at Camp Robert in France in the year 1915. The final two images show troops in Amiens, in northern France and trench warfare, likely in the Dardanelles.

Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France, <https://gallica.bnf.fr>

Image 1

***Senegalese
Rifleman at
Camp Robert,
1915***



Image 2

***“Kitchen
Corner,”
Senegalese
Rifleman at
Camp Robert,
1915***



Image 3

***Senegalese
Rifleman
Eating at Camp***

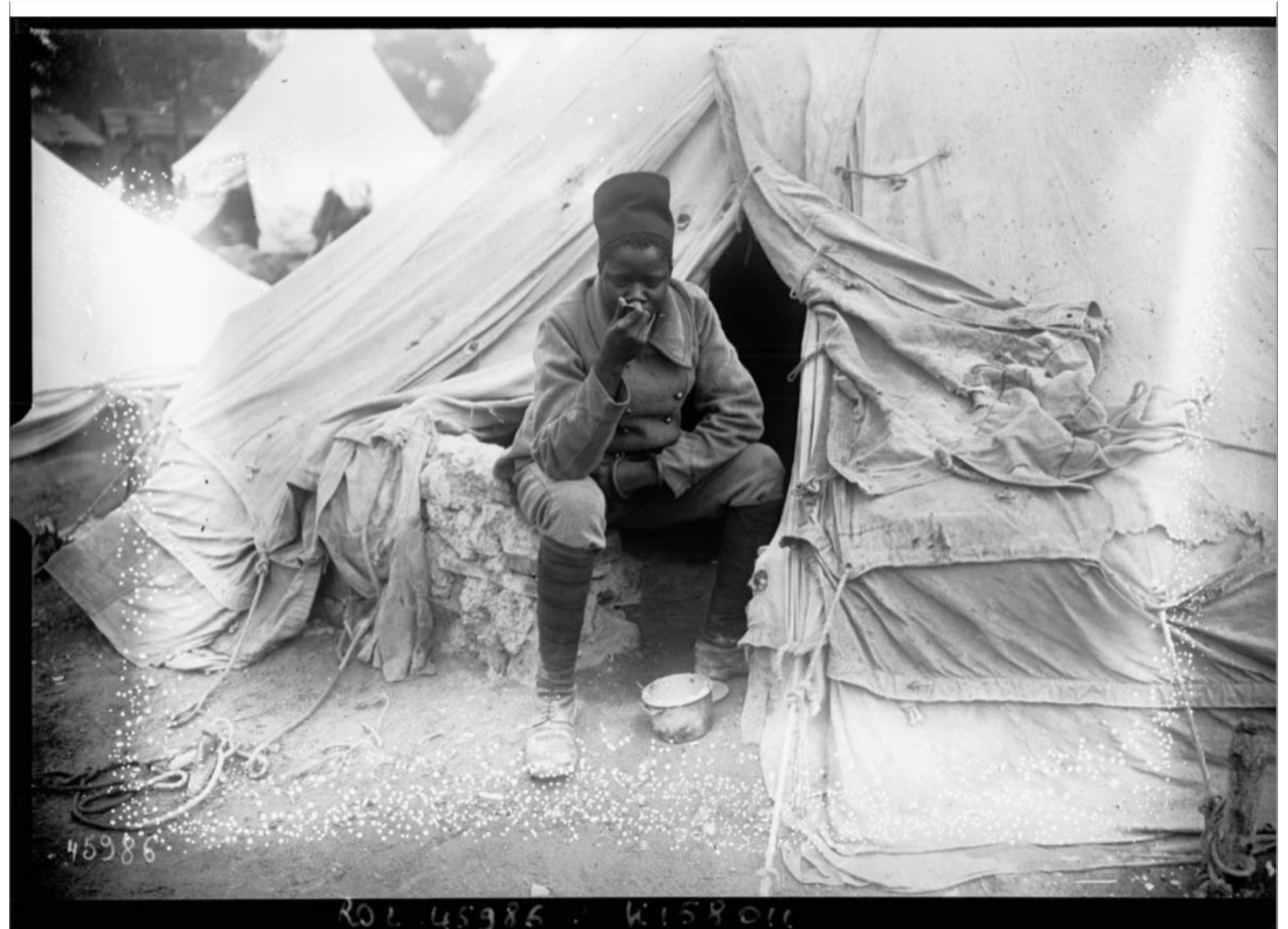


Image 4

***Senegalese
Riflemen Doing
Laundry at
Camp Robert,
1915***



Image 5

**Senegalese
Riflemen
Military Band
at Camp
Robert, 1915**

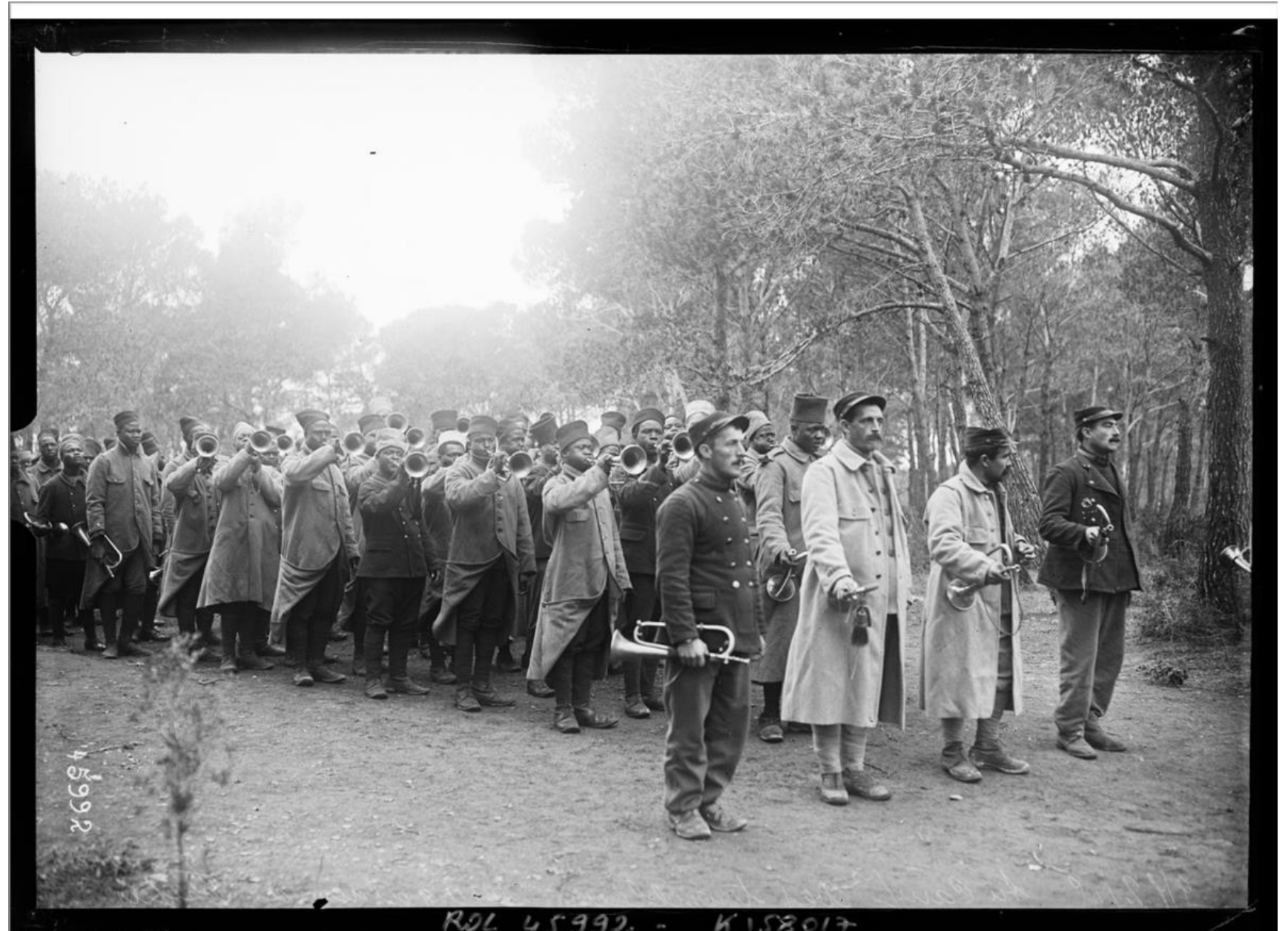


Image 6

*Troops in
Amiens*



Image 7

***Senegalese
Riflemen in
Trench,
Probably at
Dardanelles***

