Freedom Riders

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Period 2

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On Sunday May 14, 1961 a mob of angry white people blocked a Greyhound bus carrying black and white passengers through Alabama.The attackers threw rocks and bricks, slashed tires, and lobbed a firebomb through a smashed window. As smoke and and flames begin to fill the bus the attackers blocked the doorway screaming “Burn them alive!” Warning shots from arriving state troopers forced the mob back and allowed the riders to escape the fire. Though they were able to escape the flames, many were pummeled with baseball bats as they fled. The bus passengers assaulted that day were Freedom Riders, among the first of over 400 volunteers who traveled throughout the South regularly on buses for seven months in 1961. That night most of the injured and hospitalized Freedom Riders refused treatment.  At 2 AM the Freedom Riders were removed from the hospital because the staff feared the mob outside the hospital.The local civil rights leader Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth organized several cars to rescue injured Freedom Riders, angering the mob who had been waiting outside.When aTrailways bus reached pulled in at the terminal an hour after the Greyhound bus was burned, it was boarded by eight attackers. They beat the Freedom Riders and left them barely conscious in the back of the bus. A white man, James Peck, required more than 50 stiches.

The Freedom Riders were very brave people who risked their life to try to make a more equal life for blacks. They knew what they were up against and refused to take no for an answer or stop until the job was done. The selflessness of the riders inspired participation in other civil rights campaigns like freedom schools and the black power movement. In my opinion this showed cased the best just how determined some civil rights activists really were.

1. T of F, There was just under 400 total Freedom Riders (False)

2. On what date was the infamous attack on the Greyhound bus (May 14, 1961)

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