REMEMBERING

OUR VETERANS

THE KOREAN WAR

50TH ANNIVERSARY
African-Americans served in all combat and combat service elements during the Korean War and were involved in all major combat operations, including the advance of United Nations Forces to the Chinese border. In June 1950, almost 100,000 African-Americans were on active duty in the U.S. armed forces, equaling about 8 percent of total manpower. By the end of the war, probably more than 600,000 African-Americans had served in the military.
WILLIE PORTER
A 20TH CENTURY BUFFALO SOLDIER

Before his death, San Bernardino's Willie Porter noticed that Hollywood and other popular forms of entertainment focused on the Buffalo Soldiers of the late 1800's. These "all Black" army units, were the soldiers that "won the west" and set the standards for the Buffalo Soldiers that followed. But little has been said about the Buffalo Soldiers of the 20th century, the last soldiers to carry on the proud tradition.

"My life as a Buffalo Soldier started at Camp Lockett in 1943," said Porter. Camp Lockett is located east of San Diego and was first established as a cavalry camp in 1878. The location was chosen because it had a variety of terrain that include heavily wooded underbrush, one of the world's harshest deserts, and a variety of other geographic hazards that tested and developed a cavalry trooper's skills.

"It was at Camp Lockett that I had my first personal experience with a horse. Being from Detroit, I was considered a 'city slicker.' I was issued a beautiful horse that I named Eve. The first day of training was hard, but today I am considered an expert rider," boasted Porter in an interview before his death.

The Buffalo Soldiers trained intensely on horseback in anticipation of charging into battle overseas. He recalled his orders clearly, "The 9th and 27th regiments made up the 2nd Cavalry Division. The 2nd Cavalry Division was shipped to North Africa in 1943 by way of Camp Patrick Henry. We sailed on the USS Billy Mitchell on its maiden voyage. We were scared but ready and proud to fight as a division. Upon reaching North Africa we received the shock of our lives."

The Army Headquarters had decided to disband the 2nd Cavalry Division and it was divided up. "In the cavalry we were called troopers. After the change we were called soldiers. I was assigned to a tank battalion," recalled Porter. He received several commendations for his service including a Purple Heart, Combat Infantry Badge, and several citations for his participation in numerous invasions.

With the exception of a few white officers, the Buffalo Soldiers were composed entirely of African Americans. The name Buffalo Soldier was given to the 9th and 10th Cavalry units as a sign of respect by the Indians they fought against. Buffalo, according to historian David Allen, were worshiped and revered by the Indians. To place the title onto human beings was truly an act of respect and honor.

These early regiments achieved an outstanding record on the frontier. They reportedly patrolled from the Mississippi River to the Rockies, from the Canadian border to the Rio Grande and they occasionally crossed into Mexico in pursuit of outlaws.

However, Bill Porter regretted that he was unable to fight under the colors of the Buffalo Soldiers. "My success in combat can be traced back to the fine training that I received through a tradition handed down by these brave men. My heart fills with pride, having served as a Buffalo Soldier. Fifty-two years later, I returned to the small town of El Centro to visit Camp Lockett. I toured the historical landmark. As long as I live, I will be proud of the fact that I was one of the few Buffalo Soldiers," he concluded.

In Memory of Mr. Willie Porter
And Those Who Fought...
So That We May Live
In 1943 while still in high school, Ollie Jackson was drafted. The government was calling all young men, eighteen and over, to fight. Jackson was a good student and his principal petitioned for his deferment. It was granted.

When Jackson did join the military, he didn’t know what to expect. Upon his induction into the Tenth Cavalry (Buffalo Soldiers) Jackson went to Fort Seal in Oklahoma but was quickly sent out.

"When we found out we were going to Camp Lockett in El Centro, we were ecstatic. We were training with horses and training because we expected Japan to come invade from the west. They didn’t, however, and we were shipped to Newport News, Virginia before going to North Africa. From there we went to Tunisia and on to Italy," he said.

Jackson’s job was to prepare the landing fields and build a new runway for the B-17 and B-29 bombers. Jackson did not personally see combat, however he was part of the glue that held the war effort together. He was the unsung hero in the background, supporting the troops in the field.

As the war wound down, he was sent to the Philippines, his last stop before returning to Oklahoma. He holds the distinction of riding the Billy Mitchell troop transport ship on three occasions.

While back home, he went to work as a civil service employee at Tinker Air Force Base. While there he saw an opportunity for a tour of duty in Japan.

sadly, "after the war it was a different story, things were bad for Blacks here at home. Then we were ignored this entire 50th Commemoration. There are Blacks who should have been recognized," he said of last year’s commemoration activities.

And just in case someone asks, he saved personal items from the war. Just last year he found his "enlisted pass." The history will be here, he concluded, no one will succeed in erasing it.

James Mitchell was a member of the Army 953 Quarter Master Service Corps during World War II. "We landed in Scotland in the bombing area, before going to Cherbourg and Paris," Mitchell said.

His unit served under General Patton and they handled supplies in the segregated army. When he went to England, he went to school to learn how to be a cook and that was his job for the duration of the war.

As a result of his duty in the army he has a Northern France campaign ribbon, Bronze Star, a service stripe, four overseas service bars and sharp shooter recognition.

"When I came back to Texas to be discharged, Fort Sam Houston had not changed. It was still segregated. We didn’t just fight for ourselves (in Europe) we were fighting for everybody," he said.

Mitchell saw first hand the devastation of the war. After the war he saw the remains of Jews who starved to death. He was an eyewitness to the gas chambers and the furnaces.

"When I found out that my family probably could not follow and the recruiter explained how the facilities were not really set up for ‘Coloreds’, I abandoned the idea. The recruiter quickly added, ‘...but there is Norton AFB in San Bernardino, California,’ he explained.

Jackson’s sister lived here. He said, "So like the Beverly Hillbillies or the movie The Grapes of Wrath, my wife Bernice and five sons came to San Bernardino, California in 1956.”

As he reflected back on the war effort he said it was a time when Black people were truly equal. He explains, "In combat all men are equal. White men who were wounded didn’t care whose blood they used if they needed a blood transfusion. A bullet knows no color.”

However, he recounted sadly, “after the war it was a different story, things were bad for Blacks here at home.

He understood the magnitude of the devastation caused by Hitler. It was so devastating he still does not want to talk about it.

Thinking California was a better place to live, he left Texas. Soon he found out “it was better but there were still places we couldn’t go to (restaurants) that were slow serving you. One place was located on Fourth and E streets in downtown San Bernardino. However, the city of Tustin was strictly like down south,” he said.

Mitchell is concerned about how the Black servicemen were treated then and now. He believes that racism was a major problem during his years of service and continues to be for current service men and women.

"The Red Ball Express, hauled gasoline and supplies, they would get through when the whites couldn’t. The Stars and Stripes (a military publication) would report on it, but would never give the details," he concluded.

He believes things really haven’t changed.
In 1939, Europe was in flames. President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared that the United States would be "Fortress America," the last bastion of freedom for all people. We were on the brink of entering the war.

The newly-formed Army Air Corps was quite sure that no Black man could learn to fly or even service a combat aircraft, however, the Black Press, NAACP, members of Congress, and even the White House disagreed with his position.

Under considerable pressure, the War Department relented and undertook what was called the "Noble Experiment." It was tacitly considered to be doomed to failure, especially by those who initiated a separate and supposedly equal part of the Army Air Corps. Equal in rank, but not equal in privilege.

Due to the rigid pattern of racial segregation that prevailed in the United States during World War II, the War Department selected Tuskegee, Alabama for the base site.

In spite of a lack of official confidence and support, and a remote location, 992 pilots were graduated from Tuskegee Army Air Corps Flying School, which also trained and developed some of the support personnel that would ultimately be needed to form combat units. Some of the technical and other support personnel were also trained at other locations, primarily Chanute, Illinois.

Thus, the "Noble Experiment" resulted in the capability of forming a totally segregated unit of the Air Corps - pilots, navigators, bombardiers, gunners, and technical support. Again, the arrangement - separate but supposedly equal - as was the then governing status of all the U.S. military organizations. This "Noble Experiment" group turned out to be as good as any, and better than most.

Four hundred and fifty Black fighter pilots under the command of Col. Benjamin O. Davis (the fourth African-American to graduate from the U.S. Military Academy, also a Lt. General with many major commands during his 38 years of service), fought overseas in North Africa, Sicily, and Europe, flying P-40, P-39, P-47, and P-51 type aircraft. These gallant men flew 15,553 sorties in 1,578 missions with the 477th Medium Bombardment Group, and therefore many months were required to properly man the group. The imbalance in the production of pilots and air crewmen, followed by a shortage of trainees, accounted for the difficulties inherited from Air Corps command. It became generally felt that the integrated "qualified" white command personnel were in many cases using the 477th as a stepping stone for speedy promotions, and were found in many instances to be sharpening their own inadequacies.

Fighting the adversities of a segregated military from the inside and an awesome enemy from the outside, the "Black Air Force" became a cohesive, motivated, and dedicated group. Nearly thirty years of anonymity were ended in 1972 with the founding of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. as a non-political, non-military, and non-profit entity.

**Saluting O. Oliver Goodall**

O. Oliver Goodall entered the service in February 1943, and volunteered to go to the Tuskegee Army Airfield. After some small obstacles, Oliver began his training in 1944. He graduated in class 44K as a Multi-Engine Pilot. He had his first pilot's rating in six months, after joining the 447th bomber group at Goodman Field in January 1945.

In the interim, he was involved in the Freeman Field Mutiny for going into an Officers Club against a commanding officer's orders. Oliver was ejected along with 161 other officers.

The war in the Pacific continued and General D. MacArthur asked for all available soldiers to fight in the South Pacific. Goodall's squad was joined with the 99th fighter squadron to make up the 477th composite group.

But the President gave the permission to drop the bomb that ended the war.

After the surrender of Japan, all officers who were involved in the Freeman Field matter were the first to be discharged.

After trying to get back into the service on flying status for one year with no success, he took advantage of the Veteran's Act and returned to school.

After earning his degree, he went back to work for the U.S. government and worked for over 20 years, before retiring and going into the photography business.

Oliver worked in that field until the Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Fund was developed in 1978. He decided to make the fund his lifelong project. Through the fund, he helps give disadvantaged youth a helping hand in their quest for a better life.
SARAH JACKSON 1ST BLACK WAC, REMINISCES

By Cheryl Brown

Sarah Emmett-Jackson celebrated Veterans Day at her home in the Victor Villa retirement community surrounded by Veterans. Last year, her community decided since there were such a large number of veterans from WWII, Korea, and Vietnam residing there they would erect a memorial.

The granite rock with a bronze plaque simply says "In Memory of All Veterans of all Wars" and is surrounded with emblems from all branches of service. It was a longtime dream of Martin Pickett, a resident of the senior living community. He enlisted help from Eileen Seaberg and Betty Arnold who started to raise money by selling homemade candy. With the support of the management and others who chipped in, the monument was ready and Veteran's Day was fast approaching. The unveiling was a huge success with over 150 of the residents in attendance. They sat swapping war stories.

Mrs. Jackson reminisced about her own days in the Army. It was 1942 she was 21 years old earning 31 cents an hour working part time for Walgreens. Being good at math and being born and raised in Chicago she could always get a job. Prior to Walgreens she worked for 30 cents an hour at Woolworth Five and Dime. She was also in her last year of college. Upon graduation Jackson could look forward to a salary of $6 a day working as a substitute teacher, only when she was needed.

The war had broken out, the Army was allowing women into auxiliary platoons, and she answered the call and her life changed. She was among the first group of 600 women to go into the Army. She joined 38 others in the 3rd Platoon of the 1st Company of the 1st Training Regiment. She is a part of American history and especially African American history. She was being paid $50 a month, had uniforms, a place to stay, hot meals three times a day, and life was good.

At first glance looking at Mrs. Jackson you can't distinguish her race. She is brawny her mother, a brown skinned African American woman married a German man. Life was good for the Young family until at the age of five, when her father just disappeared. The family believes it was foul play because a search of the family history in Germany finds that no one ever heard of him after he disappeared.

"Can you imagine what it was like for them to be married," she said.

Mrs. Jackson however doesn't dwell on the negative. She says being in the Army with all of the good and bad, was still the best time of her life.

Everything about the service was segregated. "All of our classes were segregated for the six weeks. Once we were getting our lunch in the common lunchroom but when we sat at the table someone had put the sign "For Colored" on the table. We went on a three day hunger strike we were so insulted," Jackson said. She admits she didn't know anything about protesting but she followed the more experienced women.

We were in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. I'm proud to be. On August 29, 1942 Jackson was commissioned as a 3rd officer equivalent to a 2nd Lieutenant and one year later the WAAC became the Women's Army Corps.

Jackson was a Captain, travelling all over the United States and teaching property accounting at the Officer's Candidate School. "Many of the women went on to training companies, jobs in the motor pool, cooks and bakers, some of them held high powered jobs in Washington D.C. and New York before enlisting," she said.

Born and raised in Chicago, Jackson was used to a different type of segregation. But in the South, it was clear and "Jim Crow" signs were unmistakable. "The Army must have made a mistake because I was re-assigned to Virginia for quarter master training. There were seven Whites and me. We traveled by train but I had to sit in the segregated train as soon as we got into the south. It was humiliating but the girls with me made me feel better by attempting to join me," she said. By the time I got to the Post it was all over that there was a Colored girl with the others.

Months passed and Jackson met and married her husband and father of her six children. But an example of her tenacity is shown in a story she tells before she left the Army. "It was one of the weekly Saturday marches, I had the Captain bars and I faced the Adjutant who gave me orders to give to the three Captains behind me. As the directions were given my Army training would not let me faint. It was blistering hot weather and I had morning sickness I thought I would die, but I marched anyway," said Jackson.

COLONEL RALPH SMITH
HONORED WITH PURPLE HEART - SERVED WITH PRIDE

The Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. National Scholarship Fund has awarded a $600,000 scholarship to his two injuries, he was awarded a Purple Heart.

"The thing I never liked was the prejudice I encountered in Georgia. They would make remarks to me that they would never make to other junior officers. But I was well prepared by my mother, father, and grandmothers. One of my uncles was killed and his throat was cut during election time. They wouldn't let him vote so he made a remark and they were going to lynch him but decided to just cut his throat instead," Smith told the Black Voice News in a recent interview in an attempt to explain how prepared he was for the racism he encountered.

Smith continues to remain an active member of the Riverside community.
In 1959, fresh out of a Kansas City high school, Winston Ellison was ready to get away from home and explore the world. A decision he never regretted.

“All of my expectations were met. I got a chance to travel all over the world,” Ellison explained.

As an aircraft mechanic and a flight engineer, Ellison operated the system in the C-141 airplane and monitored the take-off and landing data.

Ellison decided this is the way he would spend the next twenty years of his life. Three years later the U.S. became involved in the Vietnam War.

“My job was flying and my station was Norton Air Force Base,” he said. But after 20 years he saw his children were growing up and he had not been there to see it happen, so he retired with an honorable discharge.

In 1966-67 he spent his time in Vietnam. In 1968-69 he attended flight school and upon graduation, he was in Vietnam every month until the war ended. In fact, he was on the next to the last C-141 flight that left Vietnam airlifting refugees. He even picked up ground fire in the tail end of the airplane.

“We had a date to get them out of Vietnam and we did just what we were told,” he said.

While his travels allowed him to meet people from all over the world, his years of military service exposed a tremendous level of institutional racism.

“Racism is the American way and it is apparent everywhere we went. Ask the men from World War I and II,” he continued.

His thoughts on racism in our society elicited more of a response than his battle with cancer that caused the removal of his lung. It is believed that his cancer is a result of his contact with Agent Orange, the infamous foliage removal chemical used during the Vietnam War.

“I am not bitter over the loss of the lung, I am pleased that the government is owning up to the damage the chemical caused,” he told the Black Voice News before his death.

However, he is still not pleased with the racism he experienced and continues to see in the military.

In 1979 he retired with an honorable discharge. He says, in spite of everything, “I still loved the service.”

NATHANIEL GRANT - WORLD WAR II HERO AND BUFFALO SOLDIER

Nathaniel Grant was one of many Black soldiers who fought valiantly in World War II. He is a second generation Buffalo Soldier. His father was Master Sergeant John Grant, 10th Cavalry.

Grant was a modern day Buffalo Soldier in the 9th Cavalry, who also served and retired from the U.S. Air Force. His duty began January 29, 1941, in Fort Riley, Kansas. He was soon transferred to Camp Funston, Kansas.

“We began preparing for war, but we did not have the proper equipment. We practiced with wooden guns and used broomsticks to watch guard,” said Grant. In 1941 he was sent to perform maneuvers in Louisiana. There Black soldiers were not allowed to go near the white community.

In 1942, he was sent with a cadre to form the 93rd Infantry Division at Fort Wachuka, Arizona. He was a platoon sergeant in the 93rd Cavalry Recon Troop.

By 1944, the 92nd Division was sent into combat. Grant’s outfit was sent to Italy, where he received two Battle Stars - one from the Battle of Povalley and another from the Arnold River Battle.

It was in Italy that Grant’s life was saved by an Italian woman. He was in the field and the enemy began shelling their retreat when a woman “threw me down and laid on top of me protecting me from a shell that landed 10 feet away.”

Neither of them were hurt, but the idea that the woman risked her own life to save his, haunts him to this day. “I am so grateful to a person I didn’t know and who I never saw again,” he said.

When Grant was given his orders to go to Alaska, not wanting to be in such a cold isolated place, he left the Army and joined the Air Force. This proved to be one of the best moves in his life. His first assignment was sunny California’s March AFB, “we (Blacks) were all assigned to Squadron C or F, most performed housekeeping duties (cooking and cleaning).” Grant was assigned to the sket range because of his experience with weapons.

Between the years of 1946-49, all the “Colored” troops were sent to Lockburn, Ohio (near Columbus) to serve under the leadership of Col. B.O. Davis, Jr. in the 617 Bombardment Squadron Light, which was a support group of the Tuskegee Airmen. Grant was relocated and worked as an armament man, servicing guns. “We were the first base to integrate the Air Force,” he said.

The Korean War took him overseas to France for three years. When he returned in 1954, he was sent to George AFB. In 1958, Grant volunteered to return to France. His career ended in 1961, when he retired from Glasco AFB in Montana. He currently resides in San Bernardino, California.
From the American Revolution through the present, African-Americans have always volunteered to fight for their country. The first official authorization to use Black men in the military was the Second Confiscation and Militia Act of July 17, 1862. Section 12 authorized the president to receive into the service of the United States, for the purpose of constructing entrenchments or performing camp duty, or any labor, or any military or naval service for which they were found to be competent, persons of African descent, and provided that such persons should be enrolled and organized, under such regulations not inconsistent with the constitution and laws as the president might prescribe.

Section 15 of the act provided that persons of African descent (of any rank) who under this law shall be employed, shall receive $10 a month, and one ration, $3 of which monthly pay may be in clothes. White privates received $13 per month plus $3.50 in clothing allowance. By March 1865, the pay and bounty discrepancy was rectified.

Before the Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, 1863, five colored regiments were in service. They were the 1st South Carolina Volunteer Infantry Regiment (African Descent), the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Regiment Louisiana Native Guards and the 1st Regiment Kansas Colored Infantry. The latter has the distinction of being the first colored troops to have engaged the enemy in October 1862 with a raiding party in Missouri. These five regiments were redesignated into U.S. Colored Troops, respectively becoming the 33rd, 73rd, 74th, 75th, and 79th (new) regiment U.S. Colored Troops.

Ironically, in order for Black men to fight for their freedom, they would first have to fight for their right to join the military. The leading Black abolitionist of the period, Frederick Douglass, felt by fighting for the cause the Black man would earn his right to the citizenship that was denied to him: “Once let the Black man get upon his person the brass letters “U.S.”, let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, and there is no power on earth which can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship in the United States.”

The bureau was responsible for recruiting colored soldiers, commissioning officers to com-
Civil War: A Call to Arms

All Black soldiers from the State Volunteers, Corps d’Afrique, or the U.S. Colored Troops were entitled to the Grand Army of the Republic Medal.

mand them, organizing regiments, and maintaining their records. The first regiment of the U.S. Colored Troops was mustered into the federal service at Washington, D.C., on June 30, 1863. The last regiment, the 125th, was not mustered out of service until December 1867.

The history of the African-American soldier in the Civil War involves more than the plight of the soldier, although he certainly is the key figure. The Black soldier’s participation was due to the efforts of both the white and colored man, politicians, Congress, military and religious leaders, abolitionists, and just plain folks of the nation. And as the number of colored soldiers increased, their participation expanded in the war. For most soldiers — North and South — the war was over with the surrenders of Lee and Johnston, but not for those of the U.S. Colored Troops. The last colored regiment was mustered out of service in December 1867, one and a half years after the war was over.

54th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry

The 54th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry is perhaps the most recognized of all the Black regiments of the Civil War. Perhaps the next best known regiment is the 1st Regiment South Carolina Volunteer Infantry (African Descent). The latter was the first Black regiment, while the 54th was the first Black regiment from the North. However, they both had their origins as state volunteers; the 1st South Carolina was redesignated the 33rd Regiment U.S.C.T., and the 54th kept its original state identification throughout the war. Even though they were colored troops, on the 33rd became part of the U.S.C.T.

15th Regiment Corps d’Afrique Soldiers

The 15th Regiment was organized early in August 1863, and was mustered into U.S. service on the 27th of that month. The regiment was reviewed on September 8th by General Banks, Adjutant General Thomas, and Brigadier General Charles P. Stone, their respective staff members, and a large number of spectators. They received the praise of all for their extraordinary proficiency in drill during the short time they had been in the service. The organization of the regiment was superior to that of any other in the Corps. A regimental school was established under the immediate supervision of the chaplain, in which the noncommissioned officers were first taught. The members of the regiment received their arms on September 12 and two days later, they received orders to report to Brashear City, Louisiana, for duty. The regiment left New Orleans with full ranks which numbered 1100 men, thus equaling the number required by the General Orders from headquarters.

The designation of the 15th Regiment, Corps d’Afrique was changed to the 5th Regiment Engineers, Corps d’Afrique on February 10, 1864 and to the 99th U.S.C.T. on April 4, 1864. It was consolidated into a battalion of five companies in December 1865 and retained in service until April 23, 1866, when it was mustered out of service. The regiment engaged in two battles, Natural Bridge and Steamer Alliance.

THE MINOR POST 418
SERVING THE INLAND EMPIRE

The Riverside American Legion Post 418, named for Edward Minor, was formed in 1962. It is named for Minor, a former Riverside resident, who lost his life in a drowning accident in Lincoln Park in 1944. Originally from Atlanta, Minor was considered an upright service man.

"Mr Minor was known by many as a clean living and decent man and we named the Post after him," said the late Christopher George "CG" Sanders before his death. Sanders, along with Minor, were two of the original Post founders. The Post is an active group, hosting fundraisers, helping other service organizations raise money for important causes, and helping other veterans with employment problems.

The Post has also been instrumental in attracting important institutions to the Inland Empire. For instance, the Minor Post helped locate the Pettis Memorial Veteran's Hospital to Loma Linda. After the debates were over as to where the hospital should be located, the group was responsible for three deciding votes in support of the Loma Linda site.

The Post was additionally instrumental in the placement of the National Cemetery in Riverside. "Land had been donated for the cemetery somewhere in Los Angeles. The hotly contested battle finally ended in court. For five years we attended meetings and gave our input. Oregon was in line and lobbied hard for it," said Sanders. However, the Post helped show that the Riverside location was the best option, because the land formerly housed Camp Hann and was already owned by the government.

(Photograph); Minor Post 418 members: (front row) John McHenry, the late C.G. Sanders, and T.C. Glen.

LOCAL VETS REMEMBER WORLD WAR II

DR. WILL ROBERTS

Recently, local WWII vets reflected on the war and their treatment as Black soldiers, both at home and abroad.

Dr. Will Roberts, President of Company B 1402nd Engineer Battalion, believes that we have done an injustice by not documenting and disseminating information on the role Blacks played during that war. His unit supplied more ammunition to the front line infantry than any other group, but the contribution was barely noted. If the infantry couldn’t get the ammunition, they couldn’t fight," he said.

Carl Clemons, who was enlisted in the Navy, said that he remembers returning home to San Bernardino to limited jobs and economic opportunities. "The only jobs available were as elevator operators, maids, or janitors. Except for Kaiser, Santa Fe, or Norton, there was nowhere for Blacks to work," he said.

The late Benton P.K. Blakely, retired as a major after serving 23 years in the service. He fought in both WWII and the Korean War. "Blacks were a major part of the war, the coverage in the news does not tell to the fullest extent what we did," he said. Blakely was a corpsman in the Army Corps of Engineers. He helped to build roads, bridges, and dams.

Jack Hill was also concerned that the time he spent serving in WWII will go unrecorded. "With all the contributions made by our people, there is very little written," he said.

"When I was in the service, the governor of Mississippi had guns taken away from the Black soldiers. We couldn’t bear arms. In the local town of Centerville, a Black soldier was killed by some whites. The soldiers were very angry and for three months, we couldn’t come out of the camp," he said.

Roberts remembers hearing about a similar situation in Riverside. "At March Air Force Base, soldiers broke out fighting. The Black airmen rebelled when they set-up a segregated theater," said Roberts. He also remembers the event being glossed over in the local newspaper.

All the men said they continue to feel betrayed after unselfishly serving their country. Carl Clemons indicated that he was struck by the irony of the Black soldier's identity. According to Clemons, these men and women fought for freedom for Europe, but did not experience freedom or respect when they returned home.

"We served in the military to preserve freedom for other countries while the real ability to achieve equality in our own country was still our number one war," he concluded.
First there was Desert Shield, then there was Desert Storm, and in the heat of it all, there was Rev. Bernell Butler.

For six years Butler was enlisted in the Navy: four years in the Mediterranean and two years in Westpac. During his years of service he helped feed Bosnians and Somolians as part of his duties. He was an airframe hydraulic mechanic. However, the best job he had, was one he volunteered faithfully for, serving as a Pentecostal lay service coordinator.

"There was no one to carry on a Pentecostal service and on an aircraft carrier that housed 5,000 soldiers, I became the person to plan and structure the tri-weekly services. I reported to the command chaplain weekly on what we were doing," he said.

Butler said it was that experience that helped prepare him for public speaking and the ministry.

Butler originally joined the military to escape a life he believed he was destined for...drugs and crime. After leaving Rubidoux High School, he moved first to Oakland and then to Oklahoma. He had his share of contact with the law and had to receive a waiver to enlist. It proved to be a wise move.

He loved to travel and enjoyed his stint in the military. He enjoyed everything, except the overt racism. For instance, when he worked on the brig he noticed disparities in the treatment of Black and white soldiers. "Whites who were drunk were taken to the barracks to sleep it off, Blacks were thrown in the brig."

"Another racist incident was when my parents were sick and I believed it was better for me to be stationed closer to home. I took back-to-back sea duty in order to be stationed in San Diego. I received special permission to go home on the weekends, but one petty officer made my life a nightmare," Butler recalled.

"He wasn't fond of Black people and treated us bad," he told the Black Voice News.

"One weekend he called me back to duty because there was a rule you had to be no more than 50 miles from the base at any time unless you were on leave. I explained I had special permission to go home because of my parents' condition. He didn't believe me and began displaying intolerant behavior. He treated Blacks one way and whites another. He accused me of being drunk and disorderly and wrote me up. Just before the official hearing the command master chief came and cleared up the matter. He had to apologize to me and indicated that all of his dealings with Blacks had been negative. I explained that I was a preacher and was trying to set a good example for the younger men. He started coming to our Pentecostal services and we became friends. He learned to respect me," said Butler.

"I beg to differ with some people who say the armed forces are not for Black people. We need to promote the service, so people there will learn tolerance," Butler concluded.

His fondest memories are of his travels to different ports. He believes the military taught him responsibility and leadership. He served in the Navy Reserves until August 2000 and has honorable discharges for both active and reserve duty.

**SALUTING JOHN L. McHENRY**


During that time he served in combat at the rank of staff sergeant.

In that capacity he received the Korean War Commemorative Medal, two Bronze Stars, and United Nations Service Medal.

He is currently serving as first Vice Commander of Post 418 of the American Legion. Post 418, named in honor of Edward J. Minor, is located in Riverside.

**SALUTING MYRON E. THOMAS**

Myron Thomas, retired Air Force major, served his country for 22 years in various capacities, but primarily as a Personnel Officer.

While in military service, he performed duties at a number of military bases around the world, including: Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines, Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands, Selfridge Air Force Base in Michigan, Bergstrom Air Force Base in Texas, Sampson Air Force Base in New York, Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, March Air Force Base in Riverside, CA, and K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base in Michigan.

His honors include: Air Force Commendation Medal, First Oak Leaf Cluster, and Joint United States Military Advisory Group to the Republic of the Philippines Certificate of Achievement. He is presently a Conrad of the American Legion Post 418 in Riverside.
REV. ALVIN SMITH

SERVING THE COUNTRY AND THE LORD

When Pastor Alvin Smith graduated from Los Angeles’ Dorsey High School in 1973, the Vietnam War was a year from being over. Smith had no intention of going into the military and went to Wilberforce University to further his education. But, not soon after he arrived, one of Ohio’s most damaging tornadoes hit and he almost became a casualty. So, he made his way back to Los Angeles where he was accepted to USC. He eventually graduated from Azusa Pacific College.

Pastor Al believed the tornado was a wake-up call, however a trip to the African Methodist Episcopal Church General Convention in Atlanta, Georgia changed his life. While in a meeting, he was overcome by the “Holy Spirit” and started crying uncontrollably, “I did not want to follow in my grandfather’s footsteps,” he explained.

His grandfather, Rev. T.L. Scott was a former pastor of Allen Chapel AME in Riverside and Bethel AME in Los Angeles. “I didn’t want to go (into the ministry) and if it was not for God, I was coming out,” he said.

He enrolled in and graduated from the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, the only Black accredited theological seminary in the nation. While in seminary, recruiters attempted to sell him on the benefits of the Navy. “I was not ready to pastor, but I wanted to serve the Lord, explore other options and serve my country,” he said. He entered the Navy as a lieutenant junior grade.

His spiritual growth came when he had the opportunity to serve under Barry Black, the highest ranking African-American in the Navy, and the first Black Chief of Chaplains.

Growing up in a non-military household, Smith was uncomfortable when Black men, who were old enough to be his father, saluted him. “I used to tell them don’t salute me,” he said. But they were quick to take him aside and explain to him that they worked long to get someone in his position and they were proud of his achievement. They explained that their gesture was also a sign of respect.

“I didn’t know the Navy was among the last of the armed forces to integrate. I didn’t know the highest Blacks could go was steward,” he explained in answering a question about race and the military.

Smith lists his most positive experience as the chance he was given to witness in a diverse ministry not based on color. In the Navy, he was a chaplain for everyone. The most difficult experiences he had during his six years of service in the Navy involved other chaplains.

“A lot of chaplains are theologically conservative people...I’ve had Chaplains who refused to serve with me because of overt racism. I wasn’t mature enough to handle the pressures of the racism...After three years of active duty I left the Navy,” he concluded.

Smith served in the reserves for five years. He was honorably discharged and attained the rank of lieutenant. He is the former pastor of St. Paul AME Church in San Bernardino and has been assigned to a new church in St. Louis, Missouri.

WILLIE BARTEE

BEAUTICIAN TO SOLDIER TO BUSINESSMAN

Willie Bartee was a reluctant soldier. In October 1936 he enrolled in Bernetta’s Beauty Academy in New York. The Academy was founded earlier that year by his sister, Bernetta West. In July 1937, he graduated, and was the only male in his class. He went to work for his sister and worked his way up to manager before taking over the business. He ran the shop until February 1942, when he moved to Detroit.

As World War II escalated abroad, he worked in a Detroit Cadillac plant that had been retrofitted to make tanks and airplane parts for the growing war effort. The following year he was drafted, and sent to March Field, just outside Riverside (now known as March Air Reserve Base).

He was set to be shipped overseas with an outfit of aviation engineers, when a physical exam revealed a blood disorder. After receiving treatment for the disorder, where he was both the first Black student and the first male student in the cosmetology department.

After receiving his California State Cosmetology License, he worked at the Laura Jackson Beauty Salon. When the opportunity arose to purchase the shop, he jumped at the chance.

Bartee’s Beauty Salon was established in October 1946 and has continued to operate at that same Eleventh Street location successfully for 55 years.
Rev. B.W. Inghram

A Quest To Find Lost History

Rev. B.W. Inghram was drafted out of San Bernardino in 1942 and sent to Fort Wachuka, Arizona where he and a battalion of men trained for the World War II effort. During the news coverage of the war through the years he never heard about the 780th police battalion. However, they didn't know either. His quest continued until he located the information at the McClellan Base in Georgia. Inghram wants the record to reflect the contributions of the 780th to the war effort.

When Inghram left Fort Wachuka, he was sent to Fort Devens, Massachusetts and shipped out to Newport News, Virginia, from there he took a nine day boat trip to Morocco.

Once he arrived in northern Africa, the troops were deployed to France where he and others in his company regulated the traffic of military vehicles going to the front line of the war.

“We were as essential as any of the support troops. Without the 780th, the troops could not be serviced and the war would have suffered. General Patton advanced so fast, he outran his supply support.” Inghram was shipped back to Fort McArthur in Long Beach and was honorably discharged. “I felt I did my duty. I got out of the service. I came home. We won the war.”

Marvin Minter

TELLS HIS WORLD WAR II STORY

Before his death, Marvin Minter, broke his silence and spoke to the Black Voice News about the days following the assault on Normandy during World War II.

Minter recounted that two million troops were still in England on D-Day waiting to go into Normandy as a part of the second wave.

He was in the Third Army commanded by General Patton, supporting field artillery.

Minter said everyone was scared. “It was the most frightening experience in my life, but I remember thinking as I was trapped in the fire...in fifty years none of this will matter,” he said. Little did he know that he would be alive to talk about it fifty years later.

“We marched into the concentration camp at Dachau, there were thousands of bodies left like sacks of flour. The smell was horrible,” Minter recalled. “Hitler was an absolute lunatic, an animal. He not only killed Jews, he killed Russians, gypsies, gays, cripples, and the mentally impaired. When we arrived everyone was not dead, some of the people were dying from starvation. The Germans in Hitler’s army ran away before we met,” he concluded.

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Colonel Paul Green, a 33 year veteran of three wars, scored so high on his pilot's exam that his honesty was questioned by his commanding officer. How did a child who grew-up in a Xenia, Ohio orphanage become a Full Bird Colonel in the U.S. Air Force? His story is one of tenacity and courage.

Green was fresh out of the orphanage working at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio when he saw a poster recruiting men for pilot training. What happened when he passed the three-part test in the highest category marked him for a later time when Blacks would be trained to fly.

Green didn't listen to the Army recruiter who told him to tell the draft board that he was on hold for pilot training. "I saw the opportunity to leave the state of Ohio and jumped at it," he said. For three long days he rode the train. "I was ecstatic I was going to California where the sunshine and beautiful people were."

He was excited, that is, until he arrived 30 miles east of Indio. "All I saw was sand. I figured they made a mistake," he remembers. But, there was no mistake.

After two months, his commander called him into the office. He sternly said, "You must know someone in Washington...You're going to pilot training..." Before long Green was on his way to Tuskegee, Alabama.

He had tremendous courage as he climbed the ranks. He exceeded each challenge. Soon he was shipped to Italy where he flew combat with the 99th Fighter Squadron in the 332nd Fighter Group. He's proud to say that the famous Col. Benjamin O. Davis was his commander. Green spoke of the time Davis scolded him for buzzing the airfield. "I couldn't help it, I was young and flying close to the ground was a thrill," he said.

Leaving military service for a year, Green went to work as a civilian at Wright Patterson AFB. However, when the Korean War began, he returned to active duty and flew support missions out of Japan until the war ended.

In 1948, after integration, Green was accepted into electronics officers' school in Biloxi, Mississippi. He became dual qualified and added electronics maintenance officer to his resume. He worked on airborne and ground electronic equipment.

In 1970, he was sent to Alaska and worked for a while on an ice island. "There were only three people there and the work we accomplished was spectacular." The success of that mission, earned him the rank of captain.

For the next five years he flew B-29s. He received several missions during that time which took him from Biloxi, Mississippi to Tokyo, Japan. After that, he went to Carvallas, Oregon for two years before going to Eglin AFB in Florida.

During the Vietnam War, he served as a C-130 mission commander. He recalls the time he thought he wasn't going to make it, "The jeep I was sitting in went 10 feet off the ground," he said, as he sat in the middle of Viet Cong fire.

During his assignment at McGuire AFB in New Jersey, he became a Full Colonel and then left for Germany for four years. For his next assignment, he requested the place of sunshine and beautiful people, the state of California.

In 1974 he arrived at Norton Air Force Base in San Bernardino as deputy chief of logistics. After the unexpected death of the base commander, Green was placed in that position. In 1976, Green retired as a full bird colonel with thirty years of service.

He told the Black Voice News, "I've seen slaves in two African countries in the gold mines. I lived in rice fields. I've seen the gas chambers in Germany. And I've come to the conclusion that this country has more to offer than any other in the world. This is the promised land. We must love, hope, and work hard."

HENRY S. COX
A TRIBUTE TO A CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER

Chief Warrant Officer Henry S. Cox served 34 years in the United States Army.

His service began in July 1944 and ended in September 1978.

In between those years he served on campaigns such as Rhineland, Central Europe, Second Korean Winter, FEC Japan, FECOM Korea, and also trained troops for Vietnam.

He was awarded a Korean Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal, and a National Defense Service Medal.

Throughout his entire military career he was a great asset to the Army. His fellow officer and colleagues have called him a very dedicated officer.

According to his fellow military servicemen, during his years of service, he was always mild-mannered and polite, but considered very adamant about performing his duties. He worked hard to maintain the unit's equipment at a high level of functionality.

He is the husband of Olga Cox and the proud father of one son, Henry, and two daughters, Regina and Debbie.

WILLIAM HULSEY
A WORLD WAR II HERO

William Hulsey is a native of Los Angeles, California and has been a resident of San Bernardino since 1961.

After graduating from Jefferson High School, he joined the United States Army and served in the European Theater of Operations during World War II. On "D" Day he was one of the troops who landed at Omaha Beach.

At the end of World War II, he left the standing army and joined the U.S. Army, Reserves. He retired in 1982.

Hulsey worked in federal civil service for the United States Post Office for 10 years, and after moving to San Bernardino in 1961, he continued in government service as an inspector at the Marine Corps Logistics Base in Barstow.

Locally, Hulsey is well-known for his work with young people in San Bernardino from 1961 to 1983, including his stint as director of the state champion Pacesetters Drill Team.

In addition, he coached two girls' softball teams, and won league championships for two years. And he has been responsible for the choreography and continuity of the Beautillion since its inception almost 30 years ago.
FOUR GENERATIONS OF HOWARD'S: SERVING OUR COUNTRY WELL

By Cheryl Brown

There is a long-standing commitment to the military in the Howard family of the Inland Empire. The military service starts with World War I, when maternal uncle Judge Watson died in the Army.

One thing the four generations had in common is that the experiences are unforgettable, starting with the elder Crockett Howard in WWII who reminisced over some of the experiences he had before and during and after the War. Ultimately each experience dealt with race as somehow the centerpiece of the interviews. Crockett spoke of his military life beginning in his home in Louisiana in the CC Camps. "I went with my younger brother and a friend not to sign up but to just go along," he said in an interview. His brother was too young but soon the recruiter turned to him and asked him if he wanted to sign up. Not really knowing what he was signing up for he said sure. The CC Camp was where the Army recruited from and after they learned the basics the Army beckoned them to join and see the world. Before he knew it he was assigned to the 98th Engineers, sent to Mississippi for Boot Camp, and on a train for New York and after reporting to supply for his uniforms and duffel bags, he shipped out to sea for England. Once in England, Crockett was surprised at the freedom of the people. "English women talked with us or in the clubs. They danced with us and nobody said anything. It would have never happened at home." Aboard the ship they were segregated by race and not allowed up on deck for quite sometime. Finally a few men at a time were allowed to go on deck. They said it was because the Navy guys ran the ship. Although he was in Europe he didn't have to fire his gun. Once back home things were different. "Upon my return I was on my way to New Orleans when White service friends grabbed me, put me in a car, and told me to come with them to have a drink," he said. "But really he set in when the owner said h--- no, and would not serve me. I told them I'd rather be on the streets than stay, and took off and went home," said Crockett.

It was the stories that were passed down from Crockett and from Dovard, his son and a Vietnam vet, that made Dovard Kwame, want to be in the Army.

Dovard was an Army Paratrooper with the 173rd Airborne Brigade and the 88th Airborne out of Fort Bragg. He was a 30-jump career. Dovard volunteered in 1965 right out of high school. And since he and his friends were not doing anything and he had a chance to travel he signed on following the footsteps of his father Crockett.

No sooner than he enlisted, the Vietnam War escalated. Like his dad, Dovard says he wouldn't trade his military experience for anything. "I don't have my father's credentials. He saved a White man's life and he was to get the Bronze Star but they let him go home early and he never received the Star," said Dovard. "He never received his award but it is listed on his DD14 papers."

Of his Vietnam experience he said, "I loved the people. They were good to me. Some of them even looked like us with their hair cut close. I don't think our government was really trying to win that war. I spent time in the homes of the Vietnamese I'd take food and medical supplies to them or we'd hire them to do laundry," he said. Dovard indicated that race has always been an issue with the military. "I could see the racism, mostly after King was shot and off duty I'd take food and medicine to the Vietnamese. I'd take food and medicine to the Vietnamese."

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Over 50% of the units in the Gulf were African American. A far cry from Crockett's war where Black troops were really just being put in place. "The distance between the enemy and us was not far. Only a minefield and barbed wire fence separated us. Even the tanks were on the other side of us they said they were too expensive to get destroyed. They would fire the first shot with the enemy," he said. They were so close you could see the enemy's name on his shirt through binoculars. If that wasn't enough Kwame talked about them finding a young boy whose body was cut in half and he had a note in his mouth telling the Americans to go home.

Kwame's detail was to be the advance team. "We built the Tent City," he said. One of the positives was that he didn't get a chance to take advantage of was the hospitality in Saudi Arabia. "As a Muslim we were assigned a house family for Muslims in the war." However, it was so hectic that he could never leave to take advantage of the opportunity.

No matter the war experience, the results were the same. Each of the Howard men said they would do it over in a heartbeat.