

Unsung Heroes

Telling A Soldier's Tale

(NAPSA)—A new initiative lets Americans salute the contributions of some of the U.S. military's forgotten heroes.

There are currently over 17 million American veterans, with African Americans accounting for about 20 percent of those in active military service. That percentage is in stark contrast to a few decades ago, when barriers prevented opportunities to enlist. But even during the height of segregation, African Americans valiantly served the country in a variety of capacities.

Now a new program will collect their stories, as well as the stories of other African-American veterans. The initiative is part of the Veterans History Project (VHP) located at the Library of Congress American Folklife Center. VHP was established by the U.S. Congress to collect, preserve and share the personal accounts of American war veterans.

The project features the story of Walter Morris, who was one of the first African Americans assigned to the 555th Parachute Company—the first all-black parachute infantry test platoon, company and battalion during WWII.

Other stories include that of Rutherford Brice, an African American who enlisted in the Navy and went on to become the first Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) graduate from Morgan State University. Brice also served in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War—a military career that spanned over 30 years.

Oneida Miller Stuart, also featured by the project, enlisted in the Army Nurse Corps during WWII. She remained dedicated to



Photo courtesy of the Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.

African-American veterans are telling their story through a new national initiative.

all her patients—even those who would have preferred death rather than be treated by an African-American woman. She was frequently called the “n-word,” yet continued to serve with honor and respect.

Stories Needed

Officials at VHP say there is a timely need for interviews of veterans of World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. In addition, the project seeks interviews from African-American veterans from all conflicts, women veterans and veterans representing all minority communities, along with Merchant Marine, Coast Guard, National Guard and Reserve veterans.

To learn how you can record a veteran's story, visit www.loc.gov/vets, e-mail vohp@loc.gov or call (888) 371-5848.