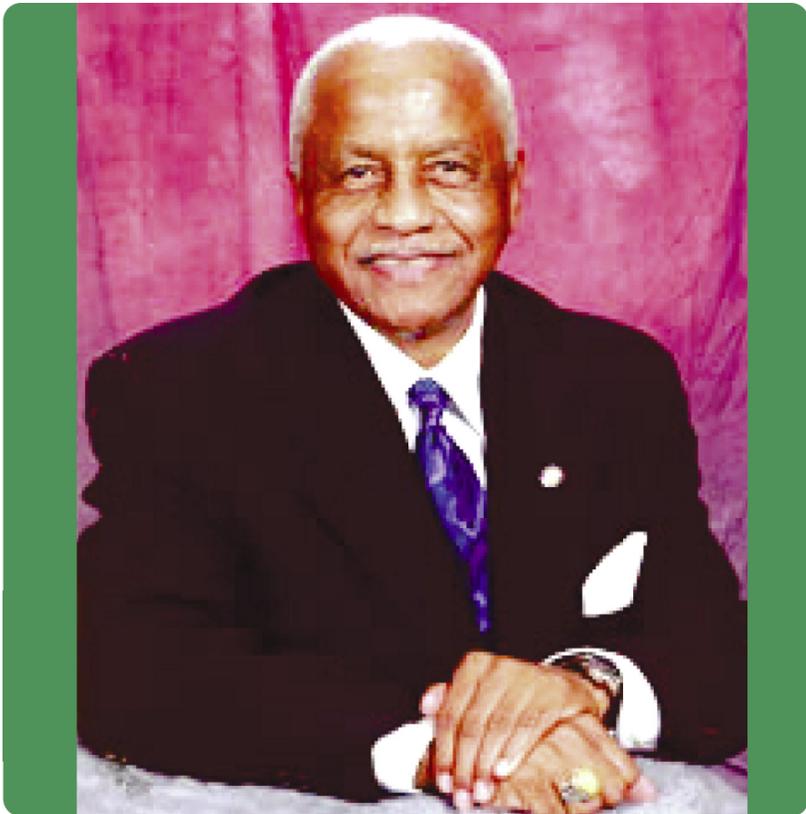


HONORING Veterans Day

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Soldier and Legislator

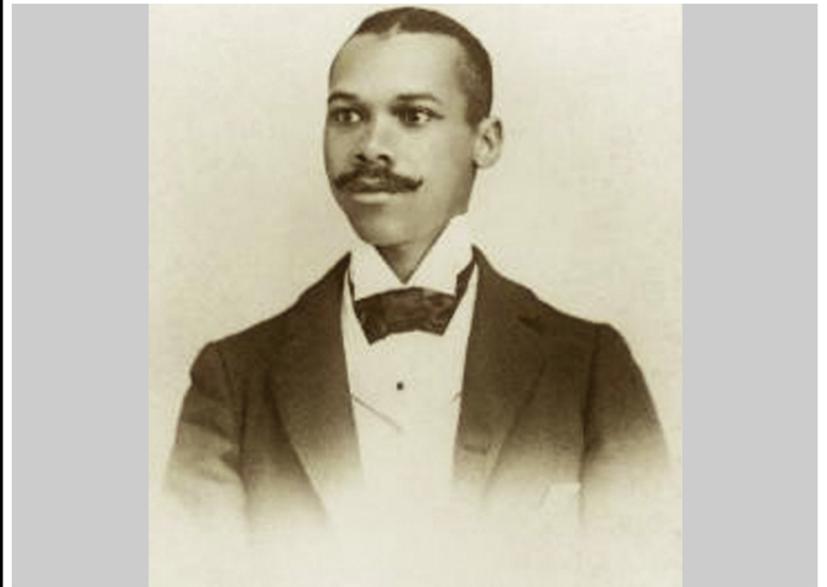


Edward Vaughn Of Dothan Alabama Served in the United States Army in Nurenberg, Gernany 7th Army artillery during the cold war, from 1957 to 1959.

After military service he lived in Detroit, Michigan and was elected to the

Michigan House of Representative. He has also served as the Alabama President of the NAACP. He continues to support veterans in need of his advice and expertise. He has distinguished himself as a fighter for civil rights.

Dr. John A. Kenney



VA WW1 African-American Veterans Health Care Provider

At a time when patriotic duty was challenging racial discrimination, Dr. John A. Kenney was a leader for the African-American health care providers in the former Veterans Administration (VA).

Dr. Kenney began his career as a practicing physician in the backwoods of Alabama at the turn of the 20th century.

When VA put plans in place to build a separate hospital for African-American Veterans returning from the First World War, Dr. Kenney was a strong advocate

for an all-African-American staff — from the doctors to the groundskeepers.

Conflicts over the race of the hospital staff escalated. In 1923, the Ku Klux Klan set a burning cross in Dr. Kenney's lawn and the doctor fled Tuskegee with his family.

From his new home in New Jersey, Dr. Kenney worked with members of the National Medical Association and National Association for the Advancement
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Isaac Woodard World War II Veteran

Isaac Woodard, Jr., often written just **Isaac Woodard**, (March 18, 1919 – September 23, 1992) was an African American World War II veteran who was attacked by South Carolina police in 1946, while still in uniform, hours after being honorably discharged from the United States Army. His attack and injuries sparked national outrage and galvanized the civil rights movement in the United States.

The attack by South Carolina police left Woodard completely and permanently blind. Due to South Carolina's reluctance to pursue the case, President Harry S. Truman ordered a federal investigation. The sheriff was indicted and went to trial in federal court in South Carolina, where he was acquitted by an all-white jury.

Beginning shortly after this in 1946, President Harry S. Truman embarked on several major civil rights initiatives: he established a national interracial commission, made a historic speech to the NAACP and the nation in June 1947 describing civil rights as a moral priority, submitted a civil rights bill to Congress in February 1948, and issued Executive Orders 9981 and 9980 on the same day to desegregate the armed forces and the federal government.

Early life and education

Isaac Woodard was born in Fairfield County, South Carolina, and grew up in Goldsboro, North Carolina. He attended local segregated schools, often historically underfunded for African Americans during the Jim Crow years.

World War II service

At age 23, Woodard enlisted in the U.S. Army on October 14, 1942 at Fort Jackson in Columbia, South Carolina. He served in the Pacific Theater in a labor battalion as a longshoreman and was promoted to sergeant. He earned a battle star for his Asiatic-Pacific Theater Campaign Medal by unloading ships under enemy fire in New Guinea, and received the Good Conduct Medal, as well as the Service medal and World War II Victory Medal awarded to all American participants. He received an honorable discharge.

Attack and maiming

On February 12, 1946, former U.S. Army Sergeant Isaac Woodard Jr. was on a Greyhound Lines bus traveling from Camp Gordon in Augusta, Georgia, where he had been discharged, en route to rejoin his family in North Carolina. When the bus reached a rest stop just outside of Augusta, Woodard asked the bus driver if there was time for him to use a restroom. The driver grudgingly acceded to the request after an argument. Woodard returned to his seat from the rest stop without incident, and the bus departed.

The bus stopped in Batesburg (now Batesburg-Leesville, South Carolina), near Aiken. Though Woodard had caused no disruption, the driver contacted the local police (including Chief of Police Linwood Shull), who forcibly removed Woodard from the bus. After demanding to see his discharge papers, a number of policemen, including Shull, took Woodard to a nearby alleyway, where they beat him repeatedly with nightsticks. They then took Woodard to the town jail and arrested him for disorderly conduct, accusing him of drinking beer in the back of the bus with other soldiers.

Newspaper accounts vary on what happened next (and accounts sometimes spelled his name as "Woodward"), but author and attorney Michael R. Gardner said in 2003:

In none of the papers is there any suggestion there was verbal or physical violence on the part of Sergeant Woodard. It's quite unclear what really happened. What did happen with certainty is the next morning when the sun came up, Sergeant Isaac Woodard was blind for life.

During the course of the night in jail, Shull beat and blinded Woodard. Woodard also suffered partial amnesia as a result of his injuries.

In his court testimony, Woodard stated that he was punched in the eyes by police several times on the way to the jail, and later repeatedly jabbed in his eyes with a billy club. Newspaper accounts indicate that Woodard's eyes had been "gouged out"; historical documents indicate that each globe was ruptured irreparably in the socket.

The following morning, the police sent Woodard before the local judge, who found him guilty and fined him fifty dollars. The soldier requested medical assistance, but it took two more days for a doctor to be sent to him. Not knowing where he was and suffering from amnesia, Woodard ended up in a hospital in Aiken, South Carolina, receiving substandard medical care.

Three weeks after he was reported missing by his relatives, Woodard was discovered in the hospital. He was immediately rushed to a US Army hospital in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Though his memory had begun to recover by that time, doctors found both eyes were damaged beyond repair.

National outcry

Though the case was not widely reported at first, it was soon covered extensively in major national newspapers. The NAACP worked to publicize Woodard's plight, campaigning for the state government of South Carolina to address the incident, which it dismissed.



On his ABC radio show *Orson Welles Commentaries*, actor and filmmaker Orson Welles crusaded for the punishment of Shull and his accomplices. On the broadcast July 28, 1946, Welles read an affidavit sent to him by the NAACP and signed by Woodard. He criticized the lack of action by the South Carolina government as intolerable and shameful.

Woodard was the focus of Welles's four subsequent broadcasts. "The NAACP felt that these broadcasts did more than anything else to prompt the Justice Department to act on the case," wrote the Museum of Broadcasting in a 1988 exhibit on Welles.

Musicians wrote songs about Woodard and the attack. A month after the beating, calypso artist Lord Invader recorded an anti-racism song for his album *Calypso at Midnight*; it was entitled "God Made Us All", with the last line of the song directly referring to the incident.

Later that year, folk artist Woody Guthrie recorded "The Blinding of Isaac Woodard," which he wrote for his album *The Great Dust Storm*. He said that he wrote the song "...so's you wouldn't be forgetting what happened to this famous Negro soldier less than three hours after he got his Honorable Discharge down in Atlanta..."

Federal response

On September 19, 1946, seven months after the incident, NAACP Executive Secretary Walter White met with President Harry S. Truman in the Oval Office to discuss the Woodard case. Gardner writes that when Truman "heard this story in the context of the
(Continued on page 11A)