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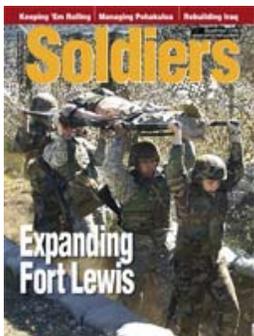
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MEDAL OF HONOR CEREMONIES FOR WWII AFRICAN AMERICAN VETERANS

January 13, 1997

The nation honored seven African American veterans of World War II today with its highest military decoration for heroism, the Medal of Honor. The seven men, one of whom is still living, are the only African American soldiers who have received the Medal of Honor for World War II.

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The President of the United States presented the medals to First Lieutenant Vernon Baker of St. Maries, Idaho, and family members of the six deceased soldiers in a White House ceremony. General Dennis J. Reimer, Army Chief of Staff, then inducted the seven Medal of Honor recipients into the Hall of Heroes at the Pentagon in a ceremony attended by the soldiers' family members and Secretary of the Army Togo D. West, Jr.

The veterans honored were:

Vernon Baker, St. Maries, ID.

Edward A. Carter, Jr. (Deceased) Home of record, Los Angeles, CA; Family lives in Cerritos, CA.

John R. Fox (Deceased) Home of record, Cincinnati, OH; Family lives in Houston, TX

Willy F. James, Jr. (Deceased) Home of record, Kansas City, MO

Ruben Rivers, (Deceased) Home of record, Oklahoma City, OK; Family lives in Oakland, CA

Charles L. Thomas (Deceased), Home of record and family, Detroit, MI

George Watson, (Deceased), Home of record, Birmingham, AL

These awards are the result of an Army study and recommendation to the President. No African American soldier was awarded the Medal of Honor in World War II. Contracted by the Army, Shaw University researched the issue and recommended the Army consider a group of 10 soldiers for the Medal of Honor. Of those 10, seven were recommended to receive the Medal of Honor. In October of 1996 Congress passed the necessary legislation which allowed the President to award these Medals of Honor since the statutory limit for



presentation had expired.

Due to space constraints, a media pool was used to cover the Induction Ceremony. Media not part of the DoD Press Pool may obtain video footage and still photos of the ceremony from Army Public Affairs. Photos, biographical information and citations are available on ARMYLink (see address below). Point of contact for the Induction Ceremony is Major Natalie T. Perkins, Army Public Affairs, 703-697-7550. For information on the White House Ceremony contact Office of Media Affairs, 202-456-7150.

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