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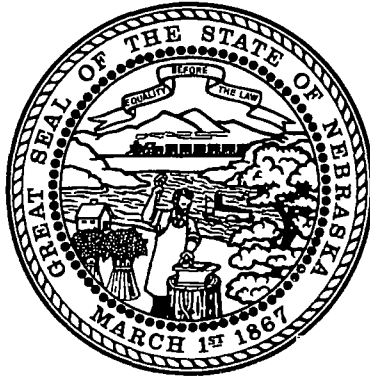
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27TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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U.S. News & World Report

May 6, 1996

SECTION: U.S. NEWS; Vol. 120 , No. 18; Pg. 41

LENGTH: 1227 words

HEADLINE: The war hero from the back of the bus

SERIES: Justice delayed;

BYLINE: By Jim Impoco

DATELINE: Idaho

HIGHLIGHT:

Army racism was no match for Vernon Baker;

BODY:

For seven years now, Vernon Baker has been waiting to hear whether the Distinguished Service Cross he won 51 years ago will be upgraded to a Medal of Honor. His hopes have been raised and dashed so often that he wonders half jokingly if the Army is waiting for him to die before making a decision. He is grateful for the DSC, which he gave to his grandchildren, and he doesn't think the Army owes him the military's highest honor. But after reading the Army's official allegations of black inferiority during World War II, he says that if he receives the Medal of Honor, it will be for "unrecognized black achievement."

Like other African-American men of his generation, Baker, 76, seems uncomfortable discussing racial tensions during his 28-year Army career. He remains loyal to superiors and subordinates, white and black alike, asking that certain tales not be told to avoid embarrassing them. But for all his uncommon valor, his story reflects the experience of blacks before the military was desegregated.

Surprise -- and anger. In 1989, Baker got a phone call at his home in St. Maries, Idaho, a declining logging town about 80 miles from Spokane, Wash. When he was told that he was being considered for an upgrade to the Medal of Honor, he replied: "This is impossible."

Baker's astonishment soon turned to anger. The Army showed him official evaluations of black performance during the war. The 45-year-old reports -- declassified just a month earlier -- describe blacks as unsuited for combat. What really rankled were generalizations about "black cowardice." "In my unit, there were no cowards," Baker snaps. "We fought and men in my platoon died, and I never had to shoot anybody in the back because they'd turned tail and run." As he recounts the charge up an Italian hill, his bitterness is obvious. "We went up enthusiastically," he says, adding with a grimace, "for a bunch of cowards."

Baker was born Dec. 17, 1919, in Cheyenne, Wyo., the son of a carpenter. His parents died in a car crash when he was 4, and he and his two older sisters moved in with their grandparents. Cheyenne was a railroad hub, and Baker's grandfather checked brakes as the head air inspector for the Union Pacific. Even during

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the Depression, there was food on the table.

Baker had his first brush with racism as a drummer for his high school band. After a parade in Omaha, the band went to a downtown cafe for a bite. But when the manager saw Vernon and the other black band member, he exchanged words with the white bandmaster. As the bandmaster led the band out of the cafe, the other black turned to Vernon. "You know why we can't eat here?" "No," came the response. "Because we're black."

Baker first tried to join the Army in early 1941. A recruiter told him "to get back to us because we don't have quotas for you people yet." Insulted, Baker resolved not to return. But jobless, he swallowed his pride. When he tried again, he was accepted -- by a different recruiter.

Company clerk. Nothing had prepared him for the ride to basic training in Texas. When he got on the bus and threw his duffel on the front seat, the driver said: "Hey, nigger, get up and go to the back." No one had ever called him that. He glowered at the driver and was about to pounce on him when an older black man intervened: "Come on, son," he said, escorting Baker to the back of the bus.

Negro basic training was in the southwest corner of Camp Wolters, outside Mineral Wells, Texas. Baker was assigned to the 25th Infantry Regiment, the second-oldest Negro unit in the Army, after the Buffalo Soldiers of the 10th Cavalry. On Baker's first day, the sergeant asked if anyone could type. Baker could -- and became company clerk. He was shocked that more than a third of the black soldiers could not read or write. One of his duties was to sign payroll receipts for at least 25 of them who marked the line with an X. Other blacks resented him, which puzzled and upset Baker.

On Dec. 7, 1941, Baker was at the movies when the company commander ordered the soldiers to report to their barracks. Pearl Harbor was smoldering. A few days later, the white regimental commander asked to see Baker. "Oh s---, what have I done?" Baker thought to himself. The commander had Baker's personnel file out and told him: "You're going to make an application to Officer Candidate School. Any questions?"

Baker joined a platoon of 32 blacks in his OCS class. One day, they learned they were headed overseas. "All the white boys are going there getting killed," the 92nd Division chief of staff told them. "Now it's time for the colored boys to go get killed." Baker hated the word "boy."

There were few black officers in the 370th Regiment, the combat unit to which Baker was assigned as a second lieutenant. He realized that for the white officers, leading blacks "was just a promotion thing. ... You'd see a new bunch of white officers come in, go out on a patrol once or twice, and next thing you knew, they'd be gone and in comes another batch." Half a century later, when he read the reports of black cowardice, he understood how the judgment might have been rendered: The white officers never got to know their men.

Segregation, military style, was getting to Baker. In October 1944, he saw the silhouette of a German beside a tree and fired at him. The German fired back, and the bullet pierced Baker's right forearm. It went numb and Baker lost a lot of blood. He awoke after surgery, and the first thing he noticed was that he was in a segregated ward of the hospital. "We were in the same war," he recalls thinking to himself, "yet were different."

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Baker never experienced much overt racism. It was more subtle than that. His suggestions were ignored by whites; he was never consulted by them. He could sense that to some, he was "lower than snake doo-doo." Still, no one called him "nigger." And he thinks he knows why: "When you have a weapon, people are cautious about what they say. But I knew what they were thinking."

After the war, Baker stayed on in Italy for three years. He had an Italian girlfriend but decided not to bring her home. He'd heard that blacks who had brought home white women were having a rough time. He came home alone and considered going to college on the GI Bill. But his aunt persuaded him to re-enlist.

Lieutenant Baker was at Fort Campbell, Ky., in 1951 when President Truman ordered an end to discrimination in the Army. For the first time, he had whites under his command. "It was hard not to crack a smile," he says. But the whites adjusted. A soldier, Baker notes, "follows orders no matter who gives them."

Other changes were hard to swallow. In 1968, when the Vietnam War was raging, Baker was stationed in Germany. Troops were deserting, and he found himself trying to rouse drugged-out soldiers from bed in the mornings, often brandishing a .45.

Baker decided to leave the Army. He went to California, married and found a job as a counselor at the Red Cross, where he remained until retirement. He loved hunting in Idaho, so when his wife died, he moved there in 1987. Two years later, he met Heidi, a German-born former taxi driver. The two, married since 1990, live in a two-story, brown house 18 miles from the nearest paved road. To his knowledge, he is the only black person in St. Maries (population 2,700).

GRAPHIC: Picture, Justice delayed (Charlie Archambault -- USN&WR); Picture, Home. In 1987, Baker moved to a small town in Idaho. Not long ago, he shot a mountain lion, now in his freezer. (Jim Lo Scalzo -- USN&WR); Picture, Still working. Trim and youthful looking at 76, Baker spends his time hunting and cutting wood. He and his wife, Heidi, married in 1990, live 18 miles from the nearest paved road. (Jim Lo Scalzo -- USN&WR)

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May 6, 1996

SECTION: U.S. NEWS; COVER STORY; Vol. 120 , No. 18; Pg. 28

LENGTH: 3266 words

HEADLINE: Debt of honor

SERIES: Justice delayed;

BYLINE: By Joseph L. Galloway; Peter Cary; Jim Impoco; Warren Cohen; Susan Headden; Missy Daniel; Jill Jordan Sieder; Michael Satchell; Tracy Lenzy; Richard J. Newman; Bruce B. Auster; James Fiedler Jr.

DATELINE: Idaho; Detroit; Atlanta; Clarksburg, Md.

HIGHLIGHT:

A half-century late, seven black heroes have been nominated for the Medal of Honor;

BODY:

The last act of a grateful nation's half-century commemoration of the Allied victory in World War II may be a simple and long-delayed act of justice: Seven black American soldiers, all but one now dead, will be awarded the Medal of Honor for their valor and self-sacrifice while fighting for a segregated country in a segregated Army.

While 1.2 million black Americans served in World War II, not one received the nation's highest military honor, and only nine were awarded the second-highest, the Distinguished Service Cross. Now U.S. News has learned that after a selection process nearly three years long, the Pentagon has forwarded seven names to Congress and the White House. Only the president may award the Medal of Honor, but in this case Congress must waive the time limit for awarding World War II medals, which expired in 1952. The waivers for the seven are contained in the 1997 defense authorization bill, and such measures ordinarily are not passed until October.

The seven Medal of Honor nominees were chosen from a list of nine soldiers whose heroic actions in combat met the rigorous standards of a special Army Senior Officer Awards Board. The board chose its candidates from a list of 10 black heroes who were identified in a 15-month study by professional military historians who combed the nation's archives and the memories of its veterans, black and white, to find out why no blacks received Medals of Honor during World War II and whether some deserved the honor.

The families and comrades of these World War II soldiers have grown old waiting for their government to do the right thing. "Oh, I just pray that they will hurry up so that I live to see it," says Grace Rivers Woodfork, 80, of Oakland, Calif., the elder sister of Staff Sgt. Ruben Rivers, one of the seven. Her son George Livingston, a former mayor of Richmond, Calif., adds, "I was 10 years old when my uncle was killed in action. It is time to do the right thing and it doesn't really matter who gets the credit." Former Army Capt. David J.

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Williams, 77, of Fort Pierce, Fla., says he has worked for so many years to get the medal he first recommended for Sergeant Rivers in 1944 that now only he and eight other veterans of Company A, 761st Tank Battalion are still alive (story, Page 40).

The seven whose names have been submitted to Congress and President Clinton are:

1ST LT. VERNON J. BAKER, 76, of St. Maries, Idaho, a platoon leader who won the DSC while fighting in Italy with Company C, 370th Infantry Regiment, 92nd Division. The only one of the seven still living, Baker is a lively 76 years old; he first heard he was up for the medal seven years ago, and says he assumed "they" had decided to wait until he, too, was dead before handing out any Medals of Honor to blacks (story, Page 41).

Lieutenant Baker earned his DSC in the predawn darkness of April 5, 1945, as an artillery barrage rained on "Hill X," a German mountain stronghold in Italy at Castle Aghinolfi. A platoon leader in the 92nd Division, he reminded himself of the things he had learned in the Negro section of Officer Candidate School a few months earlier: Keep going. Keep the men going. Set the example. Complete the mission.

The rest, he says, was pure reflex. Baker and his 25-man platoon reached the south side of a draw 250 yards from the castle. He saw a telescope pointing out of a slit in a bunker at the edge of the hill. The 5-foot, 5-inch, 139-pound former high school football halfback crawled to the opening, poked his M-1 into the slit, emptied it, then peeked inside. One of the two German soldiers he had killed was still sitting slumped in his chair.

Baker then stumbled upon a camouflaged machine gun nest and killed two more Germans. As he conferred with his company commander, Capt. John Runyon, who like all of his superiors was white, another German appeared out of nowhere and lobbed a "potato masher" hand grenade that hit Runyon in the helmet, bounced off and failed to explode. Baker shot and killed the German as he fled. Then he entered the canyon alone, blasted open the hidden entrance of another dugout with a grenade, dashed inside and killed two more Germans with a submachine gun he had picked up.

But his own men were being hacked to pieces. Despite Baker's protests, Runyon ordered a withdrawal and said: "Lieutenant Baker, I'm going to get reinforcements." The reinforcements never showed and Baker never set eyes on Runyon again. Half a century later, he was stunned to learn that Runyon had been put in by the white commanders of the 92nd Division for a Medal of Honor.

Seven of Baker's platoon's 25 men survived. But the platoon killed 26 Germans, destroyed six machine gun nests, two observer posts and four dugouts. At the bottom of the hill, Baker vomited.

STAFF SGT. EDWARD A. CARTER JR. of Los Angeles, Company No. 1 (provisional), 56th Armored Infantry, 12th Armored Division. He won the DSC for his actions in combat on March 23, 1945, and died in 1962.

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Sergeant Carter had been with Provisional Infantry Company No. 1 less than two weeks when he and his rifle squad were on a tank advancing toward Speyer, Germany. The tank began taking bazooka and small-arms fire from a large warehouse.

Carter volunteered to lead a three-man patrol across 150 yards of open field to check out the warehouse. Small-arms fire killed one of the men; Carter ordered the other two to pull back and provide covering fire. One was killed, the other wounded before they could reach cover. Carter pressed on, taking three bullets in his left leg, then another in an arm, and yet another through his hand. Near the warehouse, Carter dove for cover behind an earthen berm. About two hours later, eight German soldiers approached. Carter killed six of them, captured the other two and used them as a human shield to get back across the open field.

1ST LT. JOHN R. FOX of Boston, Mass., an artillery observer with Cannon Company, 366th Infantry, 92nd Division. He was killed in action in Italy on the day after Christmas 1944, and posthumously awarded the DSC.

On Christmas Day, Fox volunteered to serve as artillery forward observer in the village of Sommocolonia in the Serchio Valley. He chose the second floor of a house as his observation post (OP). The 366th was in a precarious position: The battalion, some 1,000 men strong, had been sent to face the Germans across 30 miles of battle front. They were stretched so thin, the German commander later recalled, that the Germans found they could easily push through the American line along with their Italian Fascist allies.

On the morning of December 26, Fox and his men woke to find themselves overrun and Germans trying to break into the house where they had set up their OP. Fox got on his radio and called in artillery fire on the Germans nearby. A friend of his, Lt. Otis Zachary, was posted in the fire direction control command post of the 598th Field Artillery, a unit of the 92nd Infantry Division to which Zachary's and Fox's Cannon Company was attached.

At 11 a.m. the fire control command post's radio crackled. Lieutenant Fox was calling again, this time asking for artillery fire directly on his own position. It was Zachary's job to give the order to Cannon Company's 105-mm gun battery, but Zachary balked. So did the colonel commanding the artillery battalion. He had never heard such a suicidal request. He radioed for clarification. Fox replied: "There are hundreds of them coming. Put everything you've got on my OP!"

The colonel, still balking, called up the chain of command to division for approval. When it came, a shaken Zachary gave the command to Cannon Company's artillery battery: "Converge, sheath" on Fox's post. That meant, says Zachary, that the four guns would walk their fire toward the post, converging until all the shells rained down on Fox. "That was with high explosive [shells], and that's the last I heard of John Fox," says Zachary. The unit later went into Sommocolonia and retrieved Fox's shattered body.

Although Fox was recommended for the DSC at the time, the paperwork was either lost or destroyed and it was not until April 15, 1982, that the medal was awarded to him. His widow, Arlene Fox, now lives with her daughter Sandra in

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Houston. She still cries when she speaks of her husband: "He was big and strong and handsome and very principled." Her daughter says the medal would be a great honor "but it also stirs up painful emotions. I'm 50-plus years old [and] still dealing with issues of abandonment."

PFC. WILLY F. JAMES JR. of Kansas City, Kan., Company G, 413th Infantry Regiment, 104th Division. He was killed in action in Germany on April 7, 1945, and posthumously awarded the DSC.

The 413th Infantry had established a bridgehead across Germany's Weser River and to secure that vital crossing was ordered to capture the town of Lippoldsberg. James, scouting ahead of the platoon, drew fire. He volunteered to move forward another 200 yards, observed the German positions, then returned to report. Again, he walked point in the assault. When his platoon leader was hit James went to his aid and was killed.

"They said us black troops weren't any good," says former Pfc. William S. Harden, 78, of Cincinnati, who was with James that morning. "The only thing we were good for was to dig latrines and bury the dead. I'm glad to see him get a Medal of Honor."

STAFF SGT. RUBEN RIVERS of Tecumseh, Okla., Company A, 761st Tank Battalion, 3rd Army. Rivers was killed in action and won a Silver Star, the Army's third-highest award for valor, in France on Nov. 19, 1944.

Sergeant Rivers had already gotten his "million-dollar wound" when his Sherman tank hit a German mine at a railroad crossing outside Guebling, France, on Nov. 16, 1944. His right leg was laid open to the bone above the knee. Rivers refused a morphine injection, refused medical evacuation and took command of another tank at the head of the column. He fought on, refusing evacuation even though personally urged to go by his commanding officer, Captain Williams.

Three days later, on November 19, Rivers's battalion was attacking toward the town of Bourgalstroff when its lead tank was hit by 88-mm antitank fire. Although ordered to pull back, Sergeant Rivers radioed that he had spotted the enemy positions -- "I see 'em; we'll fight 'em" -- moved forward and engaged in a duel that ended when a German shell hit his tank turret and killed him.

1ST LT. CHARLES L. THOMAS of Detroit was the commander of Company C, 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion, 103rd Division. He won a DSC for heroism in combat near Climbach, France, and died in 1980.

On Dec. 14, 1944, Lieutenant Thomas volunteered to lead one of his tank platoons as point and decoy for an armored and infantry task force attacking Climbach, 5 miles from the German border.

Thomas led the way in an armored M20 scout car. The Germans waited until the platoon was well advanced before they opened up with mortar and artillery fire. One blast shattered the scout car's window, spraying Thomas with glass and

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metal shards. The next round blew the tires off the car. Thomas was wounded but scrambled on top of the vehicle, grabbed a .50-caliber machine gun and kept shooting at German infantry although he was hit several more times in his arms, chest and legs.

Thomas then crawled under the scout car and directed the placement and firing of his troops' antitank guns, refusing to be evacuated until he was sure the survivors were well positioned and firing. Said Thomas in an oral history recorded before his death: "I know I hung on to one thought -- deploy the guns and start firing or we're dead."

When Lieutenant Thomas, recuperating from his war wounds, came home to Detroit in March 1945, he was hailed as a conquering hero, featured in glowing stories in the black press, depicted in comic books and feted at a big banquet at the Hotel Gotham. Thomas tried to play down his heroics. "I was sent out to locate and draw enemy fire, but I didn't mean to draw that much," he remarked. He was promoted to major, but when he died in 1980, the local newspapers didn't even print his obituary.

PVT. GEORGE WATSON of Birmingham, Ala., 29th Quartermaster Regiment. Watson drowned rescuing others when his ship was sunk by Japanese bombers near Porloch Harbor, New Guinea, on March 8, 1943.

Private Watson was the first black to receive the DSC during World War II. He was 28 years old, had been drafted into the Army and was assigned to the 29th Quartermaster Regiment.

Watson's ship was damaged so badly by Japanese bombs that everyone was ordered overboard. Watson remained in the water and helped other soldiers who could not swim reach the life rafts. Exhausted, Watson was unable to get clear of the turbulence when the ship went down, and he disappeared beneath the waves. His body was never recovered, and Watson is remembered on a memorial at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial in the Philippines and by George Watson Memorial Field at Fort Benning, Ga.

FIFTY YEARS LATER, it seems incredible that such heroes were never even considered for the Medal of Honor. The Army's review of its awards to blacks who fought in World War II did not begin until 1992, when Army leaders contracted with a team of military historians assembled by Shaw University in Raleigh, N.C., a historically black college, to search the records. They produced a closely held 272-page report titled "The Medal of Honor and African Americans in the United States Army During World War II," a copy of which was obtained by U.S. News.

The Shaw report proposed three other DSC winners for the Medal of Honor: 1st Lt. Robert Peagler of New Milford, Conn., who died on Okinawa on June 24, 1945; Pfc. Jack Thomas of Albany, Ga., who won the DSC in Germany on April 9, 1945; and Staff Sgt. Leonard Dówden of New Orleans, killed in the Pacific on July 17, 1945. Sources say the Army Senior Officer Awards Board deleted one of the three and the Joint Chiefs of Staff removed the other two from consideration.

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The Shaw study -- by Daniel K. Gibran, Elliott V. Converse III, Robert K. Griffith Jr., Richard H. Kohn and Army Col. John Cash (Ret.) -- found no evidence to prove that any black soldier in World War II was ever put in for the Medal of Honor, although commanders and comrades and the archives indicate that no fewer than four of the seven men who are now candidates were recommended. And the study could find no official document that proves racial bias affected the Army's award policies.

But the study's authors make it plain that the climate of those times, and common practices within the Army, guaranteed that no black could receive the military's highest award. "Segregating units by race complicated and slowed training, exacerbated relations between officers and enlisted men and between commanders and their units, and undermined the morale of these units in both subtle and obvious ways," the study concludes. The resulting failures were unfairly blamed on black soldiers, who were seen as inherently inferior warriors, to be used only reluctantly or in secondary roles. In fact, early in World War II, America's black community had to plead to send its sons into combat; had to demand that they be allowed to fight and die for a segregated America.

That meant blacks had a far smaller chance than white soldiers to win combat awards because fewer of them ever saw combat. "There weren't that many blacks in combat in the first place, let's not kid ourselves," says Maj. Dennette Harrod (Ret.), 78, of Washington, D.C., who won two Bronze Stars for valor while fighting in Italy with the all-black 366th Infantry Regiment.

Waverly Woodson Jr., now 73 and retired in Clarksburg, Md., grew up in Philadelphia and first encountered racism at Camp Tyson, Tenn. "The atmosphere was terrible," he recalls. "Everything was totally segregated. The feeling was that blacks were inferior to whites. Most of the officers were white. There were not many black officers, and they only made it to 1st or 2nd lieutenant."

Corporal Woodson received a Bronze Star for heroism on D-Day in France. "Four or five of us were recommended for higher honors, but we didn't get them," he says. "Our white superiors recommended us but the War Department didn't approve it. Silver Stars and Congressional Medals of Honor did not go to black officers or black enlisted men."

Maj. Dale Wilson, a historian who teaches at Valley Forge Military Academy in Wayne, Pa., blames three influences, which he says converged in the years leading up to the 1940s: the spread of Jim Crow laws and attitudes from the South to the North; the acceptance of eugenics and social Darwinism, which argued that blacks were inferior; and the increase in the power and prestige of Southern officers in the Army.

The Shaw study found that nowhere in the Army was racial prejudice and stereotyping more common than in the largest black combat unit, the 92nd Infantry Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. Edward (Ned) Almond, a native Virginian and a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute. Almond blamed the poor performance of the 92nd in combat not on its white leaders but on "the undependability of the average Negro soldier to operate to his maximum capability, compared to his lassitude toward his performing a task assigned."

"Ned Almond wasn't a sensitive man," recalls Lt. Gen. William McCaffrey (Ret.), a white officer who soldiered from captain to colonel in the 92nd

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Division under Almond. "Almond came out of Luray, Va., and he had the attitudes of that time and that place. Hell, everyone in the Army then was a racist."

When Maj. Gen. Cunningham Bryant (Ret.) arrived at the 92nd in Fort Huachuca, Ariz., in May 1944, he found that most of the officers commanding units were Southern whites, apparently because the Army believed Southern officers were better at "handling" black troops. "I've never seen a bunch of people with an attitude as bad as it was out there," Bryant remembers. The general feeling, he says, was: "Whatever we do, nothing good is going to come of it."

Something good, however, did come of it, albeit slowly. By the time the Vietnam War rolled around, Uncle Sam was an Equal Opportunity Employer. Black soldiers, in fact, saw so much action that some black activists complained about too many blacks in combat, not too few. And with the service almost paralyzed by racial tensions after Vietnam, then Chief of Staff Gen. Creighton Abrams began a series of reforms that helped make the Army one of the nation's most level playing fields for minorities and women. Still, delayed justice for seven heroes is a symbolic act, one that cannot recognize the countless other African-Americans who were denied the medals they earned, or got lesser ones than they deserved, because of the color of their skin.

Pattern of discrimination?

Black soldiers have won only a fraction of America's Medals of Honor
Medal of Honor recipients

	TOTAL	BLACKS
Vietnam War	239	20
Korean War	131	2
World War II	433	0
World War I	124	1
Spanish-American War	109	6
Civil War	1,520	24

USN&WR -- Basic data: Congressional Medal of Honor Society

GRAPHIC: Picture, Justice delayed (Charlie Archambault -- USN&WR); Pictures: Vernon Baker. The only one of the candidates still alive, Baker led a charge up an Italian hillside, single-handedly killing at least seven Germans. (Jim Lo Scalzo -- USN&WR; U.S. Army); Picture, John Fox. Overwhelmed by Germans, he ordered artillery fire on his own position. (Family photo); Picture, Charles Thomas. He volunteered to lead a charge against dug-in German positions. (UPI/Corbis -- Bettmann); Picture, Ruben Rivers. Wounded, he refused evacuation and died battling German tanks. (Family photo); Pictures: Memories. Ruben Rivers's sister Grace Woodfork and nephew George Livingston look over photos and letters he sent home from Europe. (Photos by David Butow -- SABA for USN&WR); Chart, Pattern of discrimination? (Congressional Medal of Honor Society); Picture, Unpopular leader. Many of the black troops in the 92nd Division despised their commanding officer, Maj. Gen. Edward (Ned) Almond, here reviewing his troops in Italy. (Archive Photos); Picture, Pass the ammunition. A mortar company in the 92nd Division rains shells on the Germans near Massa, Italy, Nov. 14, 1944. (UPI/Bettmann)

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**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRESIDENTS' SERVICE SUMMIT
THE WHITE HOUSE
JANUARY 24, 1997**

Acknowledgments: Hillary, Vice President Gore, President Bush, General Powell, Mrs. Romney, Bob Goodwin, Ray Chambers, Harris Wofford, distinguished guests....

This has to be the most extraordinary collection of citizen service that has ever been assembled at the White House. It is a vivid reflection of what I said in my inaugural address: Government is not the problem, and government is not the solution. The American people are the solution. Service to others and volunteering have always been the indispensable tools of American progress and the way we solve our problems. So many of the problems we face today require the one-on-one caring of a mentor, or the wisdom of a pastor, or the companionship of a Big Brother. All of us must do our part: parents, community groups, businesses, labor, schools, our great national civic and service organizations, our great religious institutions, every citizen.

One of my proudest achievements as President has been the creation of the Corporation for National Service and AmeriCorps. During the past three years, more than 50,000 Americans have earned aid for college by serving their communities, doing real work to address critical problems -- cleaning up rivers, working with the police to make neighborhoods safe, helping kids to read. These AmeriCorps members even larger numbers of senior service corps and student volunteers have helped revive the spirit of service in America.

These programs are, of course, just one part of the far larger mosaic of service. When President Bush held this office, he understood that there was no single solution to our country's most formidable problems. He talked about expanding volunteer service so we have not just 1000 points of light, but 1000 communities of light. Thank you, President Bush for your gift of light to America.

Every citizen should give something back to their community and their country. Today, I am pleased to announce that we are taking an important step to give more people the opportunity to fulfill that commitment. On April 27 in Philadelphia, with the help of the Corporation for National Service, the Points of Light Foundation and General Colin Powell, President Bush and I will convene the first Presidents' Summit for Citizen Service. Our goal is to launch an historic mobilization of citizen power. And there is no place we should focus our collective energies more than in helping our young people and getting them involved. That is why this summit will signal an all-out national assault against the most vexing social problems confronting our young people. Leaders from a broad spectrum will come with commitments in hand -- concrete pledges of resources and volunteers to solve their local problems. I am convinced that If we ask more of each other and expect more of ourselves, there is no problem in America that the American people can't solve.

*and my friend
Henry
Cisneros*

In preparation for this summit, some of our most prominent corporations and service

Acknowledgments:

Speaker Curtis Hertel, Governor Engler, Secretary Riley, Governor Blanchard, Lt. Governor Connie Binsfeld, Rep. John Dingell, Rep. Debbie Stabenow, Rep. Sander Levin, Rep. Carolyn Kilpatrick, Rep. John Conyers, Rep. Bart Stupak, Rep. Dave Camp, Rep. Peter Hoekstra, Rep. James Barcia ("Barsha"), state-wide elected officials.

And thank you Reverend Wendell Anthony for your invocation.

TERRY-

This list needs
to be shortened. (on
the plane) LAURA

**ATLANTA GAMES**

Norman's mighty voice sweeps Symphony Hall

By Charles Passy, for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

How to embrace a talent as vast and deep as Jessye Norman's?

You don't, really. Better to simply ride each sonic wave, becoming a blissful surfer in a surreally profound seascape.

There were many such voyagers Wednesday night at Symphony Hall, where Norman offered a small but revealing sampling of her art. Accompanied by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra under Music Director Yoel Levi, the Georgia native sang works by Ravel, Verdi, Bizet and Saint-Saëns, plus two encores.

The evening had an air of theatrical electricity even before Norman made her way to the stage, looking regal as ever in a flowing black-and-white gown. But when her voice finally was heard, the sense of occasion swelled. Here was one of the defining instruments of our century, varied in its color and tone, noble in its presentation, operatic in its attitude.

Norman began, however, on a more orchestral note with Ravel's "Sheherazade," the composer's symphonic ode incorporating three poems about faraway locales. Here, she became an intrinsic part of the instrumental fabric, sounding bell-like one moment, serpentine the next.

Later, Norman pulled out bigger guns. In "Ritorna vincitor!" from Verdi's "Aida," there was the raw, locomotive force of a woman torn between love and patriotic duty. In the "Habanera" from Bizet's "Carmen," the well-oiled charisma of a master seductress. With telltale performances like these, the lack of printed translations hardly mattered. Under Levi's alert stewardship, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra blended well with the mighty soprano.

The show repeats Friday and is sold out.



<http://www.atlantagames.com/olynews125jess.htm> | updated July 25, 1996 by rbaker@istudio.com | [write to us](#)

**REMARKS BY VERNON JORDAN
BLACK HISTORY MAKERS AWARD DINNER
JESSYE NORMAN AWARDEE
NEW YORK CITY**

FEBRUARY 5, 1997

The most powerful sounds in the universe emanate from silent, humble places. The plaintive call of an owl in the night. The sudden leap and splash of a fish in flight. The soaring arias and spirituals of Jessye Norman. In a career that has taken her from the quiet church choir lofts of Augusta, Georgia to the lofty heights of center stage at the finest opera houses and concert halls in the world, Jessye Norman has touched s powerful voice and has used her great talent to all over the world. and operasaid that

Ladies and gentlemen, I am not an expert in music or opera. But I do know something about power (after all, I do play golf with the President), and I do know something about soul. will not pretend to be an expert in music or opera. But I do know something about strength rising from adversity or am honored to have been chosen to present Powerful voices most often sing out from humble of souls. So it was with the great Marian Anderson who disclaimed any credit for those who followed in her pathbreaking footsteps. She once said, "I don't feel I am responsible for any of it, because if they didn't have in them, they wouldn't be able to get it out." Jessye Norman has it in her and my, how she has gotten it out.

**The Administration Announces Actions
Responding to President Clinton's Advisory Committee on
Human Radiation Experiments
March 28, 1997**

Background

In January, 1994 President Clinton established the Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments (ACHRE) to examine reports that the government had supported unethical human radiation experiments and releases of radiation during the Cold War. He asked ACHRE to uncover the truth, recommend ways to right past wrongs, and suggest ways to make sure the government will not repeat past mistakes.

In October, 1995 ACHRE issued its report. ACHRE found that the government had conducted several thousand human radiation experiments from 1945 to 1975 and that the majority advanced biomedical research. The Committee found, however, that some were conducted unethically. For example, scientists injected plutonium into 18 patients without their knowledge, and researchers conducted experiments on indigent patients and children. ACHRE made 18 recommendations to open the public record, protect human subjects of future research, and compensate those wronged by the government's actions.

In October, 1995 the President received the Advisory Committee's report and made it clear that the report would "not be left on a shelf to gather dust." He directed his Cabinet to "use and build on these recommendations." Over the past year and a half, the Administration has acted to implement ACHRE's recommendations to improve openness in government, strengthen ethics in human subjects research, and compensate individuals for the government's mistakes.

Today's Announcement

- The Administration released *Building Public Trust*, outlining its comprehensive response to the President's Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments (ACHRE). The report summarizes actions to address ACHRE's 18 recommendations.
- The Departments of Energy and Justice announced that the government has settled compensation claims with families of all of the known individuals ACHRE recommended for compensation. ACHRE recommended the government compensate the families of 18 subjects of plutonium injection experiments. The government has settled with all 16 families that came forward.
- President Clinton signed a memorandum to strengthen the rights and protections of people participating in secret, government-supported research. ACHRE recommended that subjects of secret experiments have special protections and information. Acting on that recommendation, the President directed agencies today to propose new rules for secret research that would require scientists to: obtain informed consent from all potential subjects of all secret experiments (current rules allow researchers to waive informed consent in certain cases); disclose the identity of the sponsoring agency to potential subjects; and tell potential subjects that an experiment is classified. The new rules

would also establish a more independent review process; require the head of the agency conducting secret human research to approve each project; and require permanent records of secret experiments. The President also directed federal agencies to report annually on the number of classified human research projects and the number of subjects in each project. A preliminary review by the Administration's human radiation Interagency Working Group indicates that the government is not supporting any classified human research at this time; today's directive initiates a formal, routine accounting of secret human studies.

- The Administration announced proposed amendments to the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act of 1990 to compensate hundreds of uranium miners who would not be compensated under current law. ACHRE found that some deserving miners do not qualify for compensation under the Act. The amendments would establish fairer, science-based criteria for compensation. The Administration will also propose regulatory changes to RECA to facilitate claims processing.

Previous and On-going Actions Described in *Building Public Trust* Include:

Actions to Improve Openness in Government.

- ACHRE transferred more than 4,000 cubic feet of documents to the National Archives. The Administration has made 300,000 fully searchable pages of documents available on the Internet, and will add an additional 200,000 pages shortly. The Departments of Energy and Defense have published document search guides.
- The President signed Executive Order 12958 directing Federal agencies to review and declassify thousands of documents, including documents on radiation experiments.

Actions to Protect human subjects in the future.

- President Clinton established the National Bioethics Advisory Commission (NBAC) to examine bioethical issues, including human research issues. A subcommittee of NBAC will address certain broad questions raised by ACHRE, including how to strengthen Institutional Review Boards -- the local ethics panels for Federally-sponsored research.
- In October, 1995 President Clinton directed agencies to develop plans to improve their oversight of ethics rules. The agencies have completed their review and upgraded protections, and NBAC will review agency procedures in the coming months.
- Agencies have undertaken nationwide education efforts to raise the profile of ethical considerations, and are funding research to improve our understanding of informed consent.

Actions to Right Past Wrongs.

- In October, 1995 President Clinton apologized to subjects of radiation experiments and their families on behalf of an earlier generation of American leaders and citizens; former Energy Secretary O'Leary made apologies in certain individual cases.
- The Administration will propose legislation to make veterans treated with nasopharyngeal radiation eligible for health care services under the Veteran's Administration's Ionizing Radiation Program.

INTERNET ACCESS TO HUMAN RADIATION EXPERIMENTS INFORMATION

Making Information available to the public via the Internet has been an important component of the Administration's effort to promote openness in government. The report, *Building Public Trust*, is available via the Internet's World Wide Web at The DOE Office of Human Radiation Experiments (OHRE) Homepage (<http://www.ohre.doe.gov>).

A listing of human radiation experiment and related information sources on the Internet is provided below.

- **Human Radiation Experiments Information Management System (HREX)**
(<http://hrex.dis.anl.gov>)

HREX was originally created by the DOE Office of Human Radiation Experiments to provide Internet access to the records it collected during the human radiation experiments project. In the spirit of openness, the other agencies involved in the human radiation experiments project (DoD, HHS, VA, NASA, and CIA) have joined DOE in this effort.

This new interagency version of the database contains over 300,000 pages of records collected by the agencies for the Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments. Upon completion later this year, it is expected that HREX will include half a million pages of historical documents from all agencies.

All agency documents have been imaged and the complete document text captured electronically via OCR (optical character recognition). Researchers are able to conduct searches of the full text of the document collection and to view the actual images of the relevant documents. Researchers may search the records of all agencies or may limit their searches to a particular agency of interest.

- **The DOE Office of Human Radiation Experiments (OHRE) Homepage**
(<http://www.ohre.doe.gov>)

The OHRE Homepage was made available to the public in February 1995. The Homepage, which is periodically updated includes:

-Link to HREX

-The report, *Building Public Trust: Actions to Respond to the Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments*

-OHRE's publications

- *Human Radiation Experiments: The Department of Energy Roadmap to the Story and the Records*, which includes project background, site histories, records series descriptions, topical essays, and a preliminary list of experiments.
- *Human Radiation Experiments Associated with the United States Department of Energy and its Predecessors*, which contains the summary of over 400 experiments identified by DOE.
- *Human Radiation Studies: Remembering the Early Years*, which consists transcripts of 29 oral histories of individuals important to this topic.

-The Final Report of the Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments

-Transcripts of the February 1996 Public Meeting to take comments on the Administration's response to the Advisory Committee Report (Stakeholders Workshop)

-Photographs and a sound bite

- **Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments Homepage at the National Security Archive (<http://www.seas.gwu.edu/nsarchive/radiation/>)**

The site includes information such as the transcripts and related materials for Committee meetings, the text of the Final Report, and the complete listing of the Research Document (Archives) collection, Publications (Library) collection, and ACHRE-identified experiments. Word searches can be performed using the capabilities of an Internet browser.

- **OpenNet (<http://www.doe.gov/html/osti/opennet/opennet1.html>)**

OpenNet is sponsored by the DOE Office of Declassification and was originally designed to provide public access to recently declassified documents. Its scope has been expanded to include many other publicly available documents from throughout the DOE complex, including the complete index of the collection at the Coordination and Information Center (CIC) in Las Vegas, which has a voluminous collection of AEC/DoD historical records from the Cold War period and of documents related to the health effects of ionizing radiation.

- **DOE Protecting Human Subjects Program Homepage (<http://www.er.doe.gov/production/oher/humsubj/index.html>)**

This site, sponsored by the DOE Office of Health and Environmental Research, includes general information resources such as a handbook containing detailed guidance for all research parties in protecting human research subjects. The site also

provides access to the DOE Human Subjects Research Projects Database, which provides information of all research projects funded by DOE which involve human subjects.

- **The FDA Homepage (<http://www.fda.gov>)**

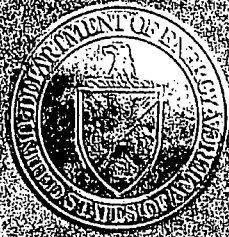
Copies of the FDA's Information Sheets for Institutional Review Boards and Clinical Investigators are available at this site.

- **The National Bioethics Advisory Committee (NBAC) Homepage (http://www.whitehouse.gov/wh/eop/ostp/html/ostp_home.html)**

This site provides information about the activities and meetings of the Committee.

- **The Office for Protection from Research Risks Homepage (<http://www.nih.gov:80/grants/oprr/oprr.htm>)**

This site provides information about protection of the rights and welfare of research subjects.



Building Public Trust:

ACTIONS TO RESPOND TO THE
REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON HUMAN RADIATION EXPERIMENTS



United States Government
Human Radiation Interagency Working Group
March 1997

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