

BLACK HISTORY MONTH SPECIAL SECTION. PART III

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Chappie James, Brigadier General in the Air Force

WW I, Colonel Charles Young, the only surviving black West Point graduate, was sixth in line for elevation to the rank of Brigadier General. Although recommended for promotion by the

board of examiners, he was declared medically unfit for combat service and was forced to retire. To prove the physicians wrong, he rode horseback from his home in Ohio to Washington, D.C. Nevertheless, he was retired on June 30, 1917.

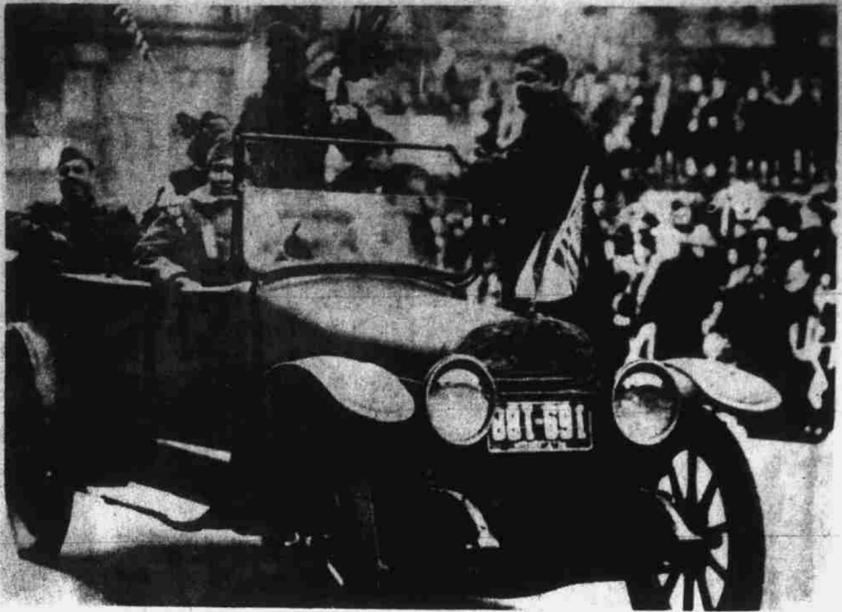
Five days before the Armistice, he was recalled and placed in charge of trainees (at his old rank). He then was sent by the government to Liberia to organize that country's army. Colonel Young died of a fever while vacationing in Nigeria in 1922.

Prejudice was also evident in the manner of the handling of the two black combat divisions, the 92nd and 93rd. (Interestingly, the four Regular Army Regiments, who were seasoned veterans, did not see combat duty. The question as to "why" has never been effectively answered.)

The normal procedure in preparation for war is to train combat divisions as a unit. In the case of the two black divisions, this was not done. The reason: Given the attitude of the white population living near the training area, plus the influx of 27,000 black soldiers, the potentiality for another Brownsville of gigantic proportion was not to be risked. Consequently, the soldiers were not united as a Division until they reached Europe. When they landed at France, the 92nd (composed of the 365th through 368th Regiments) was under American command. The 93rd (composed of the 369th through the 372nd Regiments) was separated into its various regiments and placed under French command.

The most famous of the eight regiments was "The Fighting 369th" which grew out of the 8th Illinois and well-stocked with New Yorkers from the 15th. Also part of this unit was their band, led by Captain James Reese Europe and with Noble Sissle as drum major.

Landing in Brest, France they remained in the



Sgt. Henry Johnson in a Victory Parade aboard a troop ship

front lines in the Champagne section for 191 consecutive days without losing a trench, retreating an inch, or surrendering a prisoner. The entire regi-

ment was awarded the Croix de Guerre, and sixteen Distinguished Service Crosses.

The 371st and 372nd were brigaded with the (Continued On Page 20)

The Nation's Security Depends On Black Soldiers

The military prowess of a country obviously determines its position as a world power and a strong military is vital to a country's security. "In this context, black Americans have played a significant role in securing the nation's future as a world leader. But not without a long, controversial struggle," says Tony Brown on "The Other Battle," the coming edition of Tony Brown's Journal, the nation's top-ranked black affairs television program.

The series, the longest running national program of its kind, has been funded by Pepsi-Cola Company for seven consecutive years, and can be seen on public television (PBS). It will start in this area on Channel 4 on March 2.

"The Other Battle" recounts the evolution of the black soldier and his historic battle to fight — and die — in America's defense. The program details the exploits of the all black 369th Infantry during WWI; the 92nd Division during WWII; the only black WAC unit to serve overseas during WWII; and the black fighting men of the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

The program also details black participation in the nation's armed forces from the pre-Revolutionary period to the Vietnam War. "The country historically, up until WWII, resisted the recruitment of blacks in the armed services. It was feared that men who waded through blood to victory would become more militant. This attitude has also prevented an adequate and accurate presentation of the combat performance of black military units and their contributions to America's security," explains Tony Brown.

The absence of this outstanding record in America's history books is voiced by Novella Auld, one of the women who served in the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion during WWII: "We are a part of history and if you look back through history, you'll find that the black has been omitted from history. We too served in the war. It's just like they forget the 92nd. They forget the 93rd. They forget all of those

considered one of the best units in the women's army, it was the only overseas unit that did not and has not — until this date — received a citation.

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