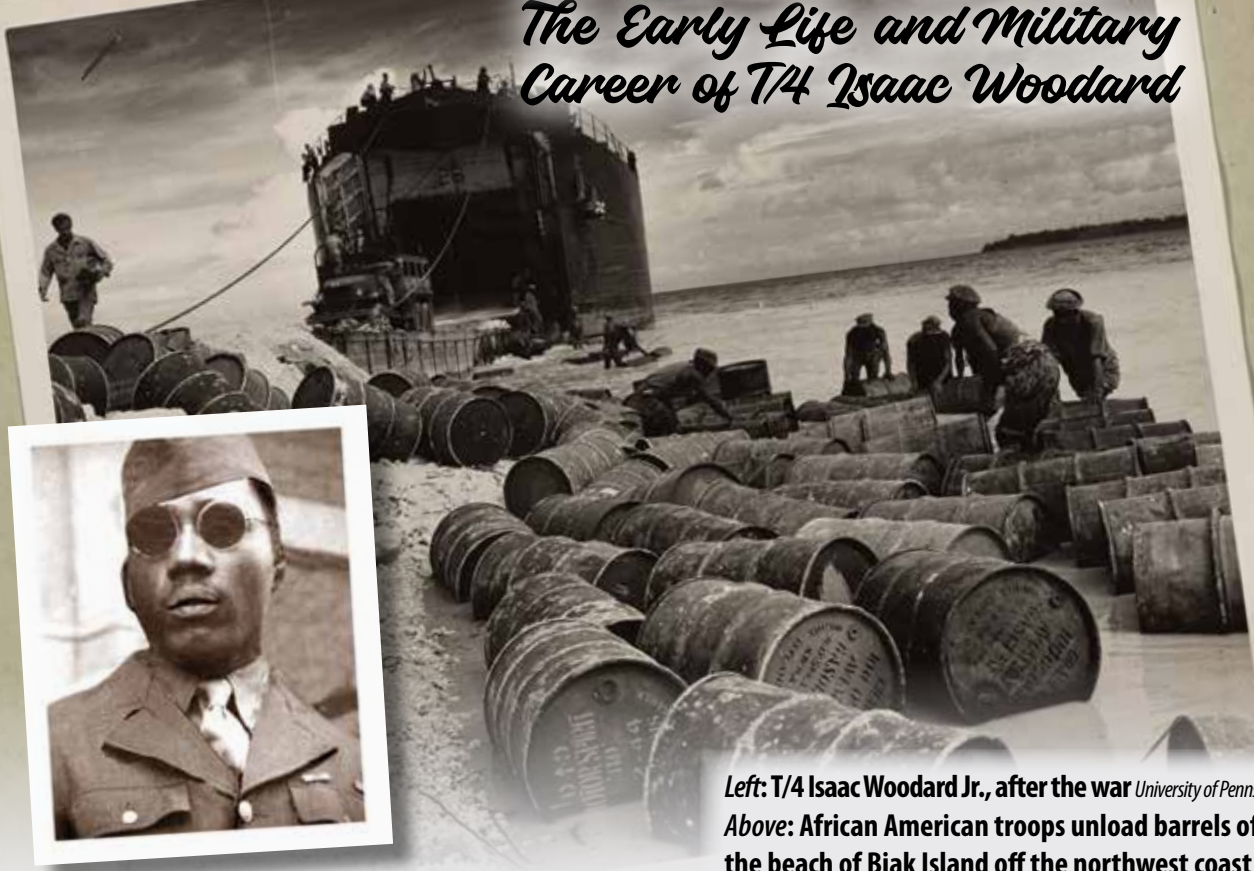


WHAT DID HE SEE?

The Early Life and Military Career of T/4 Isaac Woodard



Left: T/4 Isaac Woodard Jr., after the war *University of Pennsylvania Library*
Above: African American troops unload barrels of oil on the beach of Biak Island off the northwest coast of New Guinea, ca. August 1944. *National Archives*

By Andrew H. Myers

T/4 Isaac Woodard Jr., an African American World War II veteran, played a seminal role in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.¹ The story of his blinding at the hands of a White South Carolina policeman on 12 February 1946, which resulted in the loss of both eyeballs, received widespread publicity in newspapers across the United States and on an American Broadcasting Company news radio show hosted by Orson Welles. It moved Woody Guthrie to compose a song. It set in motion a series of events that contributed to President Harry S. Truman's 1948 decision to issue Executive Order 9981, which desegregated the armed forces. It changed the racial views of Judge J. Waties Waring, a Southerner whose 1952 dissent in the case *Briggs v. Elliott* foreshadowed *Brown v. Board of Education* by marking the first time a federal jurist declared segregation to be inherently unequal.²

Accounts of the incident involving Woodard appeared in dozens of subsequent histories. The story was turned into a 2010 off-Broadway play.³ It drew national attention in 2019 when a historical highway marker was dedicated at the site of the blinding.⁴ It received book-length treatment that same year when Federal District Judge Richard Gergel published *Unexamined Courage*.⁵ In 2021, it became the central subject of a two-hour, nationally broadcast film on the series *American Experience*.⁶ It was also a main topic in a widely streamed 2022 documentary about Orson Welles.⁷

Despite this attention, little is known about Woodard's background or what he did during the war. He told the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in 1946 that he had spent fifteen months in New Guinea and the Philippines with the 429th Port Battalion and earned a battle star.⁸ His discharge paperwork from Camp Gordon, Georgia, says that he had undergone basic training as an antiaircraft artillery gunner; that he served overseas as a military longshoreman; that he was authorized a single battle star for the New Guinea Campaign; and that he received the American Campaign Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, and the Asia-Pacific Theater Campaign Medal.⁹

Earlier books stuck reasonably close to this basic information. Lee Nichols described him in 1953 as a "Negro veteran of Pacific jungle fighting," and Richard M. Dalfume in 1969 called him a "newly discharged veteran."¹⁰ In their respective volumes on armed forces integration and Black service members, published in 1981 and 1986, Department of Defense historians Morris J. MacGregor Jr. and Bernard C. Nalty each mentioned Woodard's fifteen months of Pacific service, but neither elaborated further.¹¹ Tinsley E. Yarborough said in 1987 that the veteran was a "black" who "was discharged from the Army at Camp Gordon."¹² In 1994, John Egerton called him a "combat veteran" who was "just back from fifteen months in the South Pacific."¹³ Kari Frederickson said in 2001 that Woodard "had served fifteen months in the Pacific" and that "he had earned a battle star."¹⁴ Robert F.



An image from the children's book *I Am Sergeant Isaac Woodard, Jr.: How My Story Changed America* by Laura M. Williams, illustrated by Victor Tavares

Courtesy of Laura M. Williams

Jefferson Jr., who earlier had written about African American infantry soldiers in the Pacific, provided arguably the most concise, accurate summary of Woodard's career in his 2019 book.¹⁵

Woodard never claimed to have been anything more than an ordinary soldier. "I am a man just like you," he had told the bus driver in 1946 on the night of his blinding.¹⁶ With the exception of Jefferson, however, contemporary works often provide unnecessarily vague, inaccurate, or misleading details as to what he did during the war. Many hail him as a "decorated war veteran" without specifying what awards he received or what he did to merit them.¹⁷ A children's book portrays him as a "forgotten, decorated, African American Hero" and contains a drawing of him with the rank of private helping to evacuate a wounded soldier from a battlefield.¹⁸ His character in the off-Broadway show wears a Combat Infantryman Badge. Richard Gergel says in *Unexamined Courage* that "Isaac Woodard was part of a segregated support unit during the major New Guinea maritime landing operations, and his unit took intense enemy fire and casualties as they performed critical operations," when, in reality, all the American landings on the island had ended months before Woodard arrived.¹⁹ A 2022 book claims that Woodard "served in

the Philippines, a member of a segregated support unit during New Guinea maritime landing operations."²⁰ Given that the United States did not invade the former until it established a foothold in the latter, such action in enemy-held territory would have been an impressive feat had it occurred.

The narrator for the 2021 documentary says that Woodard earned a "battle star for bravery under fire."²¹ The film then shows a graphically enhanced photograph in which an artist has drawn onto the soldier's uniform a campaign ribbon with two battle stars instead of one. Compounding this error, the ribbon depicted is the one given for service in Europe, Africa, or the Mediterranean rather than the one for Asia or the Pacific. The artist also added a ribbon for a Good Conduct Medal that was not on Woodard's discharge paperwork.²²

Although Gergel says correctly in the film's voiceover that Woodard served with a port unit, the accompanying visual footage shows African American soldiers firing artillery, preparing for infantry operations, piloting aircraft, lugging machine guns, carrying casualties, and liberating towns. None of them depict Black soldiers loading or offloading ships, even though clips of these activities easily could have been taken from the 1944 documentary *The Negro Soldier*. This film is in the public domain and

has been available for decades on videotape cassettes, digital video disks, and streaming services.

An artwork of Woodard displayed on the official Public Broadcasting Service companion website for the 2021 documentary implies that he received the Bronze Star Medal.²³ The 2022 documentary contains numerous errors of fact, including a statement that Woodard "earned four medals—one was a battle star—for unloading battleships under enemy fire."²⁴

These efforts to enhance Woodard's career are somewhat explainable. Military history as a field of study has declined precipitously at civilian institutions of higher learning despite its broad popularity elsewhere. In addition, most academics have never spent time in uniform. The result is that relatively few historians have much understanding of the structure and culture of the armed forces.

Moreover, during the initial years of the twenty-first century, a scholar stymied research into the details of Woodard's life by paying money to his adopted son for exclusive access to information. The person then did not finish the project. The son, who became frustrated that his father's full story was not being told, died in 2009 without having the opportunity to share what he knew.²⁵ What records he possessed were lost.²⁶

Retrospective efforts to burnish Woodard's record are legacies of a conflict that arose during World War II between military policymakers and civil rights leaders. The former questioned the courage and competency of African Americans under fire and sought to exclude them from the combat arms. The latter believed that service on the frontlines would help undermine civilian segregation and pushed for the establishment of all-Black fighting organizations like the Tuskegee Airmen, the 761st Tank Battalion, and the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion. The struggle between these two ideological forces contributed to a perception that soldiers who worked on the docks and drove trucks were menial laborers who made lesser contributions to the war. Historians, filmmakers, playwrights, and others have perpetuated, if not also strengthened, this distorted notion.²⁷

More than a million African Americans joined the armed forces during World War II. The vast majority were assigned to support units. They included people like the Reverend Hosea L. Williams, who drew

upon the logistical skills he learned as a sergeant in the Quartermaster Corps to plan the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama.²⁸ National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) leader Medgar W. Evers took pride in having driven a truck as a sergeant assigned to a port battalion in Europe. He gained inspiration from this experience to attend college and fight segregation in his home state of Mississippi following his return. He was buried with military honors at Arlington National Cemetery after his assassination in Jackson, Mississippi, in June 1963.²⁹ His brother J. Charles Evers, who served as a sergeant in the Corps of Engineers and later became the first Black person to be elected mayor of a biracial town in Mississippi, valued the opportunities he had in uniform to learn new things and travel to New Guinea and the Philippines.³⁰

Aside from the 1946 incident, Isaac Woodard's experiences reflected the norm for African Americans during World War II. His record needs no embellishment. Building him up as a tragic hero or making him a proxy for larger debates about Black soldiers in the combat arms dehumanizes him in ways not dissimilar to his treatment by the police officer who blinded him. As a longshoreman, Woodard enhanced the lethality of the American armed forces by having a direct hand in bringing the industrial might of the United States to bear against Japan. That he was an average soldier reinforces the point that horrific things can happen unexpectedly to anyone, especially during wartime, and even on the way home. Furthermore, an accurate recounting of his background and military career provides a useful context for understanding larger issues and events pertaining to armed forces segregation. What did he see in the years, weeks, days, and hours before he lost his eyesight?



Isaac Woodard Jr. was a native of Fairfield County, South Carolina, located about 25 miles to the north of the state capital between the Broad and Wateree Rivers. During the American Revolution, Lt. Gen. Charles, 2nd Earl Cornwallis, had established his winter quarters at its seat and central town of Winnsboro in 1780 following the Battle of Kings Mountain. The British commander is said to have given



A historical marker in Winnsboro, South Carolina, where General Cornwallis and the British forces under his command spent the winter of 1780–1781

Author's Photo

the district its name after admiring, as he described, its “fair fields.”³¹

Before the Civil War, the rich soil and the labor of thousands of enslaved people helped this region of the Lower Piedmont to become a major producer of cotton. African Americans outnumbered White people by a 3:1 ratio until the 1920s and 1930s, when many of them took advantage of the Charlotte and South Carolina Railroad to migrate elsewhere. Fairfield remained rural as many of the plantations grew over with trees to become commercial timber tracts.³²

Woodard spent his early childhood about 8 miles to the west of Winnsboro. His family lived on a farm along Jackson Creek in the vicinity of the Lebanon Presbyterian Church.³³ His father, Isaac Sr., worked on land rented from a White neighbor.³⁴ He earned enough to allow his wife, Elizabeth Arnold Woodard, to stay out of the fields.³⁵ Isaac Jr. was born on 8 March 1919, only a few months after the fighting of World War I had ended and the influenza epidemic of 1918 had subsided. He had five older siblings and would have four younger ones by the end of the 1920s.

Young Isaac received an elementary education from 1925 to 1930.³⁶ Although the 1930 census lists him as having attended school, it says that he could neither read

nor write. Unlike his brothers and sisters, who lived with their mother and father, he was listed in the household of his paternal grandparents, Alex Woodard and Nannie Cook Woodard.³⁷ The reason for this arrangement is unknown.

The elder Woodards were unusual among local African Americans in that they owned their land instead of renting it.³⁸ Alex stood out further because he gave an oral history to the Federal Writers' Project in 1937. This interview was part of a New Deal effort to collect information about formerly enslaved people.³⁹ This grandfather's memories provide a glimpse into the world of Isaac's family.

Born before the Civil War, Alex grew up on the plantation of Robert Simonton.⁴⁰ This place was in Fairfield District, about 3 miles to the north of Lebanon Presbyterian Church along Dumpers Creek.⁴¹ At least fifteen of the fifty people enslaved by Simonton were relatives. Alex attended services as a child at the Concord Presbyterian Church, which still stands about 8 miles away from Lebanon in the present-day community of Woodward. White people worshipped on the main floor while Black people occupied the gallery. Alex apparently joined another church later during his life because his grave is located at Sweet Prospect Baptist, about 4 miles from Lebanon.⁴²

He had personal recollections of the left wing of Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman's army group passing through Fairfield District in February 1865, burning Winnsboro, and foraging for food. He told his interviewer that enslaved people persuaded the Federal soldiers not to burn down the Simonton mansion. The northerners encamped nearby on the land of Dr. Walter Brice, whose house and physician's office also were spared. Alex said that “they made me run after chickens and I had to give up the onliest blue chicken dat I had.”⁴³ His father—Isaac's great grandfather, who also was named Isaac—left the plantation and went with Sherman's soldiers to Raleigh, North Carolina. He eventually returned.⁴⁴

Alex explained that he and other members of his family decided to take the surname of “Woodard” when his father registered to vote in 1868 during the first year of congressional Reconstruction.⁴⁵ He said that “its been a kind of 'tection [protection] to us at times, and none of our immediate family has ever dragged it in a jail or chaingang, Bless God! And I hope us never will.”⁴⁶ He made this statement in 1937, when the state



A sketch of U.S. Army troops burning Winnsboro, printed in *Harper's Weekly* magazine on 1 April 1865

University of Michigan Library

of South Carolina operated a labor camp within the township where the Woodards lived.⁴⁷ In 1930, it had forty Black inmates and twenty-five White ones.⁴⁸ Shackled prisoners working on the roads would have been part of the everyday landscape for young Isaac. Alex lived until 1950.⁴⁹ It is not recorded whether he ever learned about or was aware of his grandson's 1946 encounter with the police or the choice given to him by the judge to pay a fine or serve thirty days on the chain gang.

Grandmother Nannie died in 1931, and Grandfather Alex lost ownership of his farm sometime between 1937 and 1940.⁵⁰ Teenaged Isaac joined the more than 7,000 African Americans who left Fairfield County during the first four decades of the twentieth century by moving to Salisbury, North Carolina, in 1934.⁵¹ Other members of his family had already moved to Asheville and Charlotte, so he possibly had relatives or friends in Salisbury to welcome him.⁵² According to one secondary source, he did construction work, installed railroad ties, and delivered milk.⁵³

In 1939, Woodard enrolled in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).⁵⁴ He was assigned to Camp Alamance, located a mile northeast of Burlington, North Carolina. All the 190 workers in the company were African Americans. They had the mission of controlling erosion on local farms.

Assigned tasks included building dams, terracing gullies, digging drainage ditches, seeding grass, and planting trees.⁵⁵

CCC workers lived under quasi-military discipline, which meant they slept in barracks, followed a daily routine like that of soldiers, and were supervised by U.S. Army officers. Failure to follow their lieutenant's orders meant not court martial, but being sent home and losing the thirty-dollar monthly paycheck that most of the workers desperately needed. Woodard's commander was Lt. John Wendell Sample, a White South Carolinian who had graduated from Clemson University in 1931, received an Army Reserve commission, and taught in the public schools before entering active duty in 1935.⁵⁶ Segregated regiments of the Regular Army often were led by White southern officers, so Sample's background was hardly unusual.

CCC workers typically were restricted to their encampments during off-duty hours. They played sports and learned skills like electrical wiring, carpentry, photography, typing, and woodworking. They attended meetings focusing on safety, first aid, and sanitation. In addition, they could take remedial classes to improve their reading and writing abilities. A teacher from a nearby Black high school volunteered at Camp Alamance, as did a local minister

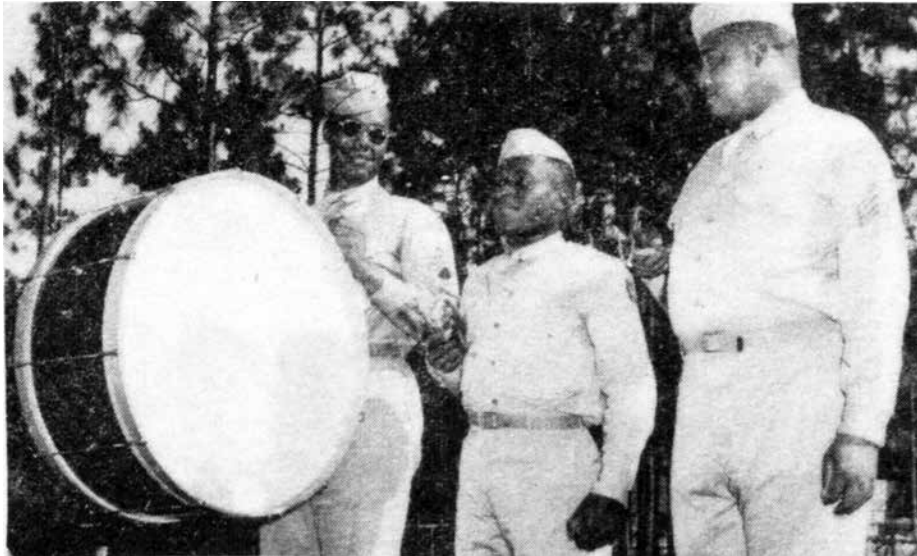
and a camp enrollee who had experience instructing math and English.

In 1940, the camp was moved about 7 miles from Burlington to a new site near Gibsonville.⁵⁷ Congress passed the Selective Service Act that same year, which resulted in Woodard registering for the draft on 16 October. Lieutenant Sample signed the paperwork. The word "Juniah," written in the blank for the middle name, echoes Woodard's spoken accent and suggests confusion with either the form or the instructions given.⁵⁸

Woodard left the CCC in 1941. Returning home, he found a job as a log turner for the Doolittle Lumber Yard.⁵⁹ He married Rosa Scruggs, a Fairfield County native from the White Oak community.⁶⁰ Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawai'i, he was drafted into the U.S. Army on 29 September 1942.⁶¹ He entered service about two weeks later at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, which was about 30 miles away from Winnsboro. From there, he traveled by train or bus to a reception station at Fort Benning, Georgia, where he underwent a medical examination, was issued uniforms, swore an oath of allegiance, and took a classification test to help determine his occupational specialty. He stayed there for nine days.⁶²

The Army did not have enough segregated training facilities or cadre to handle all the incoming African Americans. The Selective Service Act prohibited call-ups by race, and War Department policy mandated that the number of Black people in uniform reflect their proportion in the civilian population.⁶³ Priority during 1942, however, went to creating all-White combat arms divisions and preparing them for overseas deployment as rapidly as possible. Consequently, Woodard did not undergo basic training immediately but instead was assigned to Bainbridge Army Airfield.

At this installation, located in southwestern Georgia, White soldiers learned the rudiments of flying airplanes.⁶⁴ African American soldiers worked on the support staff. They were organized into an unknown number of squadrons. Their commander, Capt. Gatewood R. Bridges, was a White Georgian who, during the 1930s, had led an all-Black CCC company in Alabama.⁶⁵ He apparently enjoyed good relations with his subordinates given the favorable coverage he received in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, an African American-owned newspaper where unflinchingly negative stories about



African American members of the drum and bugle corps at Camp Bainbridge, ca. 1943

Southwest Georgia Regional Library

race relations in the armed forces often appeared.⁶⁶

Camp Bainbridge celebrated its first anniversary during June 1943 while Woodard was there. In the fifteen-page pamphlet published to commemorate the occasion, White aviation cadets predominated, with photographs of them undergoing training, participating in sports, and enjoying off-duty activities. An entire page is devoted to the White women of the installation's 6th Sub Depot. These women sewed the fabric that covered the exteriors of many World War II aircraft. African American soldiers appear in three pictures. One is of a dance, possibly at a United Services Organization facility in the town of Bainbridge. The other two show soldiers from the seventeen-member drum and bugle corps that Captain Bridges had organized to perform at base ceremonies. Their facial expressions, erect posture, crisp uniforms, and disciplined formation reflect pride in their roles.⁶⁷

Precisely what Woodard did at Camp Bainbridge is unknown, but his military occupational specialty was 590 (Duty Soldier Third Class). According to the technical manual for enlisted personnel classifications, such people performed "various non-specialized and routine duties requiring no special physical qualification and little or no responsibility, skill or initiative." These included "organizational details such as housekeeping and maintenance of utilities, buildings, and airdromes." They could also serve "as

helper to technicians" and do "other general unskilled laboring tasks." Typical jobs listed in the book for this category included "airplane handler" and "base maintenance man" as well as "furnace fireman," "bath attendant," "dining-room orderly," and "kitchen helper."⁶⁸ Woodard presumably did this kind of work from late 1942 until early 1944.

While at Camp Bainbridge, Woodard likely had some disciplinary problems—or

at least was accused of them—and was punished. His 1946 discharge paperwork says that he lost seventy-six days under Article of War 107. This meant that he did not receive credit for two-and-a-half months of enlisted service, but the paperwork does not specify when in his career he lost these days nor what the specific circumstances were. Possible explanations for his lost service time include having been placed under confinement for some sort of infraction, drunkenness that hindered performance of duties, hospitalization for an act of personal irresponsibility such as contracting a venereal disease, or being absent without leave.⁶⁹ Something happening at Camp Bainbridge—as opposed to later in his career—would explain why he was not promoted during this period as well as why his discharge records do not mention him receiving a Good Conduct Medal.

During the first half of 1944, Woodard was scheduled to begin basic training as a member of the 819th Anti-Aircraft Artillery (AAA) Battalion (Automatic Weapons).⁷⁰ The War Department had come under increasing pressure from civil rights activists to assign African Americans to frontline combat units. Woodard transferred to Camp Stewart, Georgia, which was the Army's primary installation for teaching soldiers how to shoot down enemy planes.⁷¹ The post and the nearby city of Savannah had experienced significant unrest among the



Troops from Company A of the all-Black 452d Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion as part of a convoy in the European theater of operations, 9 November 1944.

National Archives

fourteen all-Black battalions stationed there during 1943, but the worst of it had subsided by the time Woodard arrived.⁷²

The 819th AAA Battalion consisted of four batteries and a headquarters totaling 39 officers, 159 sergeants, and 637 junior enlisted soldiers. The battalion had thirty-two 40-mm. Balfour guns and thirty-two quad-mounts.⁷³ The latter weapon consisted of four .50-caliber machine guns rigged to fire in tandem. It could be aimed not only at planes in the skies, but also at human targets on the ground. Because of the latter purpose, it gained the nicknames “Krautmower” and “meatchopper” by the war’s end.⁷⁴

During World War II, soldiers assigned to new units typically did their training together. They started with the initial four weeks of basic individual training, followed by a period in which they learned their specialized weapons.⁷⁵ In addition, they learned to identify enemy aircraft and distinguish them from friendly ones. They then practiced and conducted exercises in progressively larger groups. The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Oswald J. Lacerte, was a White French Canadian who had moved to Indiana as a child. He successfully commanded another all-Black AAA battalion at Camp Stewart before taking over the 819th.⁷⁶

Woodard belonged to Battery B. Had he completed the training, he would have become qualified for military occupational specialty 597 (Antiaircraft Artillery

Machine Gun Crewman). His duties would have included firing the guns, loading ammunition, spotting aircraft, moving the turret, driving the vehicle, operating a radio, and conducting maintenance. However, he and the soldiers of the 819th never finished their training and never saw action because the U.S. Army redesignated the battalion in May 1944.⁷⁷ The soldiers were needed to unload ships.

Many civilian activists were outraged to learn that Black soldiers had been diverted from combat units and relegated to what they perceived as menial labor. This work, however, was critical to the war effort. The planned D-Day landings in Europe would require vast amounts of supplies to be moved across the English Channel to support the fighting in France. Meanwhile, in the Pacific, the Allies had made progress with the “island hopping” strategy of advancing toward Japan. General Douglas MacArthur, the theater commander, had been using cargo ships as floating warehouses. This practice resulted in a shortage of vessels, which were needed elsewhere. The general was ordered to establish logistics bases on shore.⁷⁸ He needed soldiers with the skills to do this important and often dangerous job.

Woodard received a new assignment to the 429th Port Company. His FBI affidavit of 1946 would say, erroneously, that he belonged to the 429th Port Battalion. By the time he became a longshoreman, however, the U.S. Army Transportation Corps had stopped creating port battalions in favor of

smaller port companies.⁷⁹ These were given the specific tasks of loading and unloading cargo ships. Moving freight off or onto trucks or smaller watercraft was the job of soldiers in the Quartermaster or Engineer Corps.

A standard port company consisted of 213 enlisted soldiers and 6 officers, organized into a headquarters, a service section, and two operating platoons. The company commander, first sergeant, supply sergeant, mess sergeant, and their assistants made up the headquarters. The members of the service platoon included the cooks, vehicle mechanics, carpenters, welders, blacksmiths, and the executive officer. The two operating platoons had the most direct role in accomplishing the company’s mission. Each was led by two lieutenants and divided into five hatch sections. According to a Transportation Corps handbook, these ten hatch sections were “the very heart of the company.”⁸⁰

Each hatch section was broken into three crews. Positioned on the deck, the first was composed of the foreman, the winch or crane operators, and the signalman. The latter was always supposed to use his hands and never his voice because of the noisy conditions. The second crew contained four longshoremen who worked on the dock along with the assistant foreman. They kept clear the area around the winch or crane. The third crew, which did the heaviest labor, consisted of eight longshoremen. Split into two gangs, they functioned in tandem on the



The mock wharf with “land ships” used for training stevedores at Fort Indiantown Gap.

National Archives

starboard and port sides of the ship's hold to make certain that the cargo remained balanced and level. A checker from the platoon headquarters kept track of items on the manifest. Ideally, the soldiers of a single hatch section could move 50 to 80 tons of cargo during a ten-hour shift.

To perform these jobs safely and efficiently, Woodard underwent stevedore training at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. This post was situated in the rolling hills of the Keystone State and nowhere near the ocean. The U.S. Army Transportation Corps compensated by building a full-scale mock wharf with docks, warehouses, railroad sidings, cranes, and three "dry land" Liberty ships on which soldiers could gain hands-on experience.⁸¹

A description of Woodard's duties as a longshoreman, taken from War Department Technical Manual 12-147, appears in his records. It says that he, "as a member of a crew, loaded and unloaded military supplies and equipment from ships. Removed hatch cover and beams and placed them on deck. Used various types of gear, lifted draft into and out of hold. Used hand signals to direct winchman. Knows knots, splices, riggings, and correct methods of stowing various types of cargo."⁸² Being taught these kinds of skills turned soldiers into assets while raising their sense of self-worth. Truman Gibson, a special civilian aide to the secretary of war for racial affairs, visited Fort Indiantown Gap in early 1945, about half a year after Woodard left. "The stevedore training which the men receive is very arduous," he observed. "In talking with the enlisted men, I was impressed with their high morale. Never in the four years that I have visited Army installations have I seen more trust and confidence placed in officers by enlisted men."⁸³

The commander of the 429th was 1st Lt. Philip Locke, a White northerner and native of White Plains, New York. He had graduated from Dartmouth College in 1942 and attended Officer Candidate School in 1943.⁸⁴ His views on racial matters are unknown, but the fact that he remained with the company throughout its training in the United States and deployment overseas, that he was promoted to captain, that he subsequently was selected to become part of a war crimes tribunal, and that he left the service as a major suggests that he had a successful command.⁸⁵

The post commander of Fort Indiantown Gap, a White career infantryman named



The land ships SS Manda and SS Swatara, at the mock wharf at Fort Indiantown Gap, ca. 1942

Pennsylvania State Archives

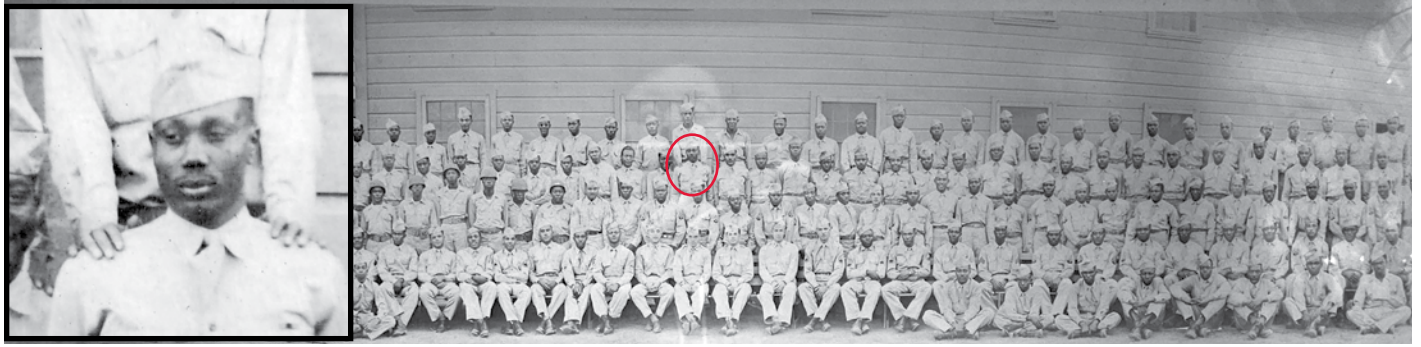
Col. Forrest E. Ambrose, tried hard to foster positive race relations. He mandated that all new trainees undergo an orientation program that included briefings about the contributions of African Americans in previous wars. He met personally with each incoming group. "Prejudice, discrimination, and segregation on the basis of color at this camp will not be tolerated," he told them, "and if there are any such cases, I personally want to know about them at once."⁸⁶ Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, who came to the post with Gibson, said that "it is a great pity that the Army does not have a couple hundred more men like him."⁸⁷

Woodard's time at Fort Indiantown Gap coincided with a larger effort by the War Department to fix problems that had led to a countrywide spate of racial unrest at places like Camp Stewart.⁸⁸ Policies were strengthened to stop local commanders from segregating government-run buses, service clubs, and other facilities.⁸⁹ Frank Capra, the famous film director who had received a commission as an Army officer and worked directly for General George C. Marshall, produced a documentary designed to raise the fighting spirit of African Americans. Titled *The Negro Soldier*, it was released during the spring of 1944 to military and civilian audiences.⁹⁰ Woodard might well have watched it as part of his orientation at Fort Indiantown Gap.⁹¹

In May 1944, the soldiers of the 429th Port Company distinguished themselves and demonstrated their military discipline when they participated in a ceremony for thirty-eight state governors who had come to the nearby town of Hershey, Pennsylvania, for a national conference.⁹² An entry in Lieutenant Locke's scrapbook says that his unit "received [an] award for best drilled company in review and for inspection merits received top honors."⁹³

After becoming qualified as a military longshoreman, Woodard was sent with the 429th to Norfolk, Virginia. He arrived on 4 July 1944.⁹⁴ The Transportation Corps typically assigned newly trained port companies to seaboard installations like the Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation, where they had opportunities to practice working together as a unit before deploying overseas. Proximity to the ocean also permitted training in tasks like conducting beach landings using Higgins boats.⁹⁵ At some point, possibly earlier in Pennsylvania or in Georgia, Woodard would have learned how to fire an individual weapon, the M1 carbine, which typically was issued instead of long rifles to stevedores because of its lighter weight and greater usefulness at close quarters should fighting become necessary aboard a ship or dockside.⁹⁶

Woodard's time in the Norfolk area coincided with the second anniversary



A unit photo of the 429th Port Company taken at Norfolk, Virginia, ca. October 1944. Woodard is in the second row from the top, just to the right of the second window.

Courtesy of the Woodard Family

of the Transportation Corps, which had been created on 31 July 1942, and was headquartered at nearby Fort Eustis, Virginia. A parade was held that summer to celebrate the role this organization played in the war effort. One of the floats featured “demonstrations of many training phases, including port company work, loading and unloading ships, and handling of equipment.”⁹⁷ As with the orientation efforts made at Fort Indiantown Gap, this event stressed that African American longshoremen did important jobs.

On 5 October 1944, Woodward and the rest of the 429th began moving across the United States from Virginia to California.⁹⁸ He almost certainly made the journey by railroad on a troop train. Enlisted soldiers typically rode in modified steel boxcars manufactured especially for the armed forces by the Pullman Company. Each one had ten rows of bunks stacked three high. The lower two beds could be converted to daytime seating. Ten windows on each side of the car provided light and ventilation when the blackout shades were not in use. Bathrooms with hot- and cold-water taps were located at the ends. Each car accommodated twenty-nine soldiers and a porter. They entered and exited from doors at the center. Meals came from kitchen cars. This arrangement permitted the train to move twenty-four hours per day if necessary.⁹⁹

As the timetables permitted, troop trains stopped to allow the soldiers chances to stretch, exercise, or bathe while the steam locomotive was refueled and filled with water. They could eat meals at nearby restaurants or have doughnuts and coffee provided by volunteers from the local Red Cross or United Services Organization. In the South, these amenities usually were

offered only to White soldiers, including German and Italian prisoners-of-war in transit, while at the same time denied to African Americans. Bitter stories about this kind of disparate treatment would become common among Black veterans.¹⁰⁰ Whether Woodard suffered such indignities is unknown. Given, however, that the only Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad lines leading out of Norfolk went through Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky, he would have made stops at segregated stations.¹⁰¹

The trip westward exposed Woodard to a landscape alien to anything he had seen east of the Appalachians. He crossed the Mississippi River—more than a quarter-mile wide at this point—at St. Louis. Following

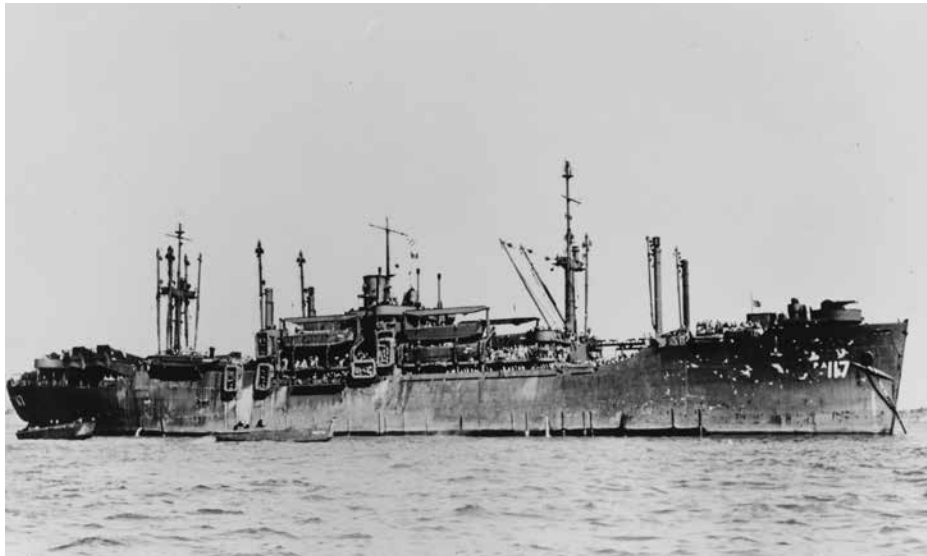
mainlines of the Union Pacific, he viewed the vast prairies of the Great Plains in Kansas or Nebraska and then the Rocky Mountains in Wyoming. One of the most interesting human-made sights he would have encountered in Utah—depending, of course, on the time of day when his train went over it—was a 12-mile-long trestle spanning the Great Salt Lake. He then followed the Humbolt River, which never reaches the ocean, before passing over the Sierra Nevada Mountains and through the valleys of the American and Sacramento Rivers to his destination at the edge of San Francisco Bay.

Woodard spent three weeks in California. He likely stayed at the Oakland Army Base,



A troop train hauling specially designed sleeper cars travels through mountainous terrain. Woodard would have traveled on a similar train while moving to California with his unit.

National Archives



The USS *Haskell* anchored off San Francisco in late 1945

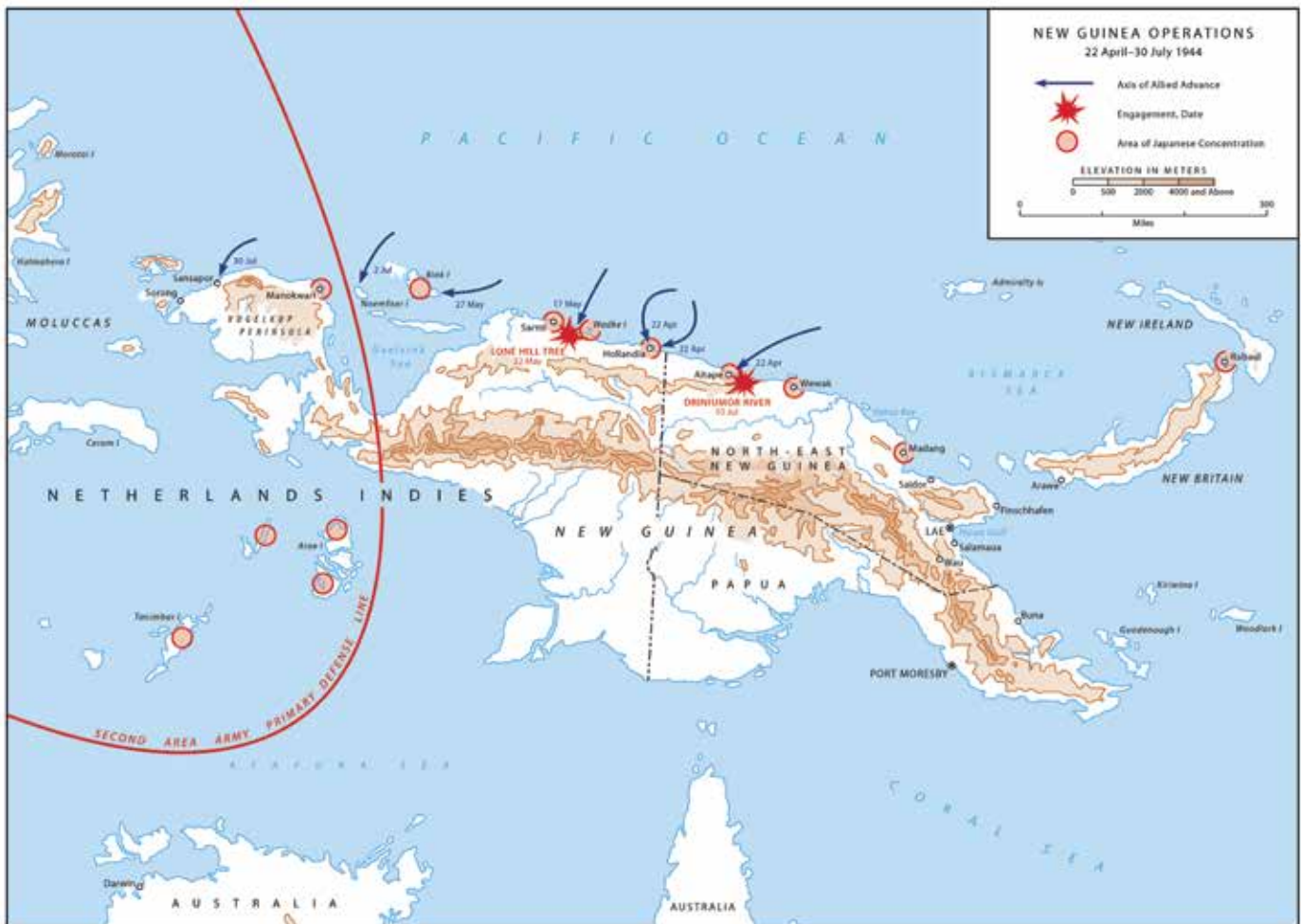
Southwest Georgia Regional Library

Naval Magazine in Concord, California. On 26 July 1944, an accidental explosion there had obliterated one ship and torn a second into pieces. Of the 320 people killed, 202 had been Black sailors engaged in loading bombs and other ammunition from the dock. Many of the survivors blamed the disaster on unsafe working conditions and, in August, they refused to load sea mines onto another ship. Fifty of them—all Black—were charged with mutiny, which carried a possible death penalty. The courts martial began on 14 September and ended with convictions for all of them on 26 October.¹⁰⁴ Whether Woodard had any awareness of these events is unknown. Given that Port Chicago was only 20 miles away from Oakland, that the proceedings received widespread publicity, and that the sailors shared similar duties with him, he probably knew.

which was the main port of embarkation for soldiers heading to the Pacific theater.¹⁰² Port company soldiers sometimes had the opportunity here to receive specialized training from experienced civilian steve-

dores, but records do not say if he did.¹⁰³ For certain, Woodard arrived during a period of heightened racial tensions brought about by the courts martial of African American dockworkers at the Port Chicago

Woodard did not remain in California long enough to learn what sentences the sailors would receive.¹⁰⁵ On 27 October, he boarded the USS *Haskell* (APA-117). This vessel was the first attack transport ship of its class. Armed with ten 20-mm.





An aerial view of the dock area at Biak Island, where Woodard and other soldiers of the 429th Port Company loaded and unloaded ships

National Archives

The *Haskell* spent nineteen days at sea before reaching Finschhafen, on the island of New Guinea, on 15 November.¹¹¹ Some of the soldiers debarked there. Woodard and the other members of his company continued sailing westward for another four days until they anchored near Biak Island in Geelvink (now Cenderawasih) Bay on 19 November. The U.S. Army had captured this place in August after three months of fighting. The 950-square-mile island was significant because its airfields, port facilities, and proximity made it a staging point for invading the Philippines. It became the site of Supply Base H. By February 1945, according to the official Transportation Corps history, it had a total of “five Liberty docks, seven jetties, four small dry docks, two 30-ton floating cranes, six 5-ton shore cranes, sixteen landing craft, two refrigerated barges, and 80,000 cubic feet of refrigerated space.”¹¹² It could accommodate 70,000 people.¹¹³

and eight 40-mm. guns, it had a crew complement of 536 sailors and a troop capacity of 1,561.¹⁰⁶ It had just completed its shakedown cruise. For its maiden voyage across the Pacific, it carried the 427th and 429th Port Companies as well as the 1315th Engineering Construction Battalion.¹⁰⁷ One of the White naval officers who made the trip said that the ship was overloaded with 2,500 passengers, almost all of them Black. “They were stacked four or five high,” he remembered. “White people were stacked only three high in the hold—they were the permanent people. The mess people were all colored people and a couple of Filipino.”¹⁰⁸ The tropical heat and lack of air conditioning made the cramped quarters even more miserable. (No U.S. Navy ship had air conditioning until 1947.)

The ship began its voyage on 28 October, steaming past Alcatraz Prison and beneath the Golden Gate Bridge before heading into open waters. It encountered a storm near the Hawai’ian Islands, so the hatches were battened down for days as the *Haskell* pitched back and forth. Many soldiers became ill. The officer said that “there was an inch of vomit in the colored people’s compartments the full length of the ship.” A White crewman wrote in his diary that “those troops puked all over the ship, passageways, ladders. . . . It smelled like hell, making the crew sick.”¹⁰⁹ The soldiers also endured a lack of fresh vegetables. A moment of levity occurred on 6 November when they crossed the equator. The sailors

celebrated in accordance with maritime tradition by paying homage to Neptune (the Roman god of the sea) and hazing comrades who never had ventured into the southern hemisphere. Lieutenant Locke was inducted into the “Ancient Order of the Deep,” but whether Woodard or any of the soldiers participated in or watched the ritual is unknown.¹¹⁰ On 13 November, the lights flickered, bells clanged, and sailors went to battle stations after an underwater explosion shook the ship. Some people thought a Japanese torpedo had struck. Everyone learned later that a depth charge had been dropped after a reported sighting of an enemy submarine.

Japanese naval and air forces no longer had the ability to support large-scale ground operations on Biak. On 22 March 1945, however, they mounted a bombing and strafing raid on the island’s Sorido Airfield that killed forty people.¹¹⁴ In addition, scattered groups of enemy soldiers hid in caves. Stranded and starving, these battle-hardened survivors posed lethal threats when they emerged on occasion to steal food.¹¹⁵ Parts of the all-Black 93d Infantry Division had been tasked to work alongside the port companies as stevedores, but a small detachment received the mission of patrolling the surrounding cliffs and ridges to root out their remaining opponents. During the



Living quarters on Biak for the 429th Port Company

Courtesy of Philip Locke’s grandson, Philip Shear



Philip Locke, shown here as a captain

Courtesy of Philip Shear



Two soldiers in a jeep from the 429th Port Company. The H below the windscreen indicates that they are on Supply Base H.

Courtesy of Philip Shear

period of November 1944 to March 1945, the African American infantry soldiers on Biak killed 74 Japanese and captured 34.¹¹⁶ As one of the sergeants observed in a 1945 interview, “We killed quite a few on Biak . . . and it was declared secured before we got there.”¹¹⁷

Woodard did not go on foot patrols, but he did face other dangers. Many of the ships, arriving from places like Port Chicago, carried explosives and fuel. A disturbing example of what could happen occurred on 29 January 1945 at Guadalcanal when the USS *Serpens* was blown apart after 5,000 tons of ammunition in its hold accidentally exploded. Nothing recognizable of the ship remained except the bow. The explosion killed more than 200 sailors and 50 stevedores.¹¹⁸

The natural environment posed continual problems. Daily high temperatures averaged 110°F throughout the year, and the rays of the sun at one degree from the equator were direct and intense.¹¹⁹ Biak had a limited water supply. Precipitation fell frequently, but the overflow drained into underground tunnels instead of collecting in streams or lakes. These circumstances forced soldiers to ration what they drank and to use salt water for bathing and laundry. Sufficient surface liquids did remain, however, to breed mosquitos and spread malaria. Also widespread were mites whose larvae—commonly called chiggers—infested the undergrowth and carried a lethal disease called scrub typhus.

“Climatic conditions can be a big headache, as the men who served in the southwest Pacific will attest to,” said a Transportation Corps handbook. “During the rainy season all work was greatly hampered, both aboard ship and on the shore.” Muddy road conditions and blocked beaches “caused a bottleneck” that slowed work “to almost a standstill.” In addition, “heat and humidity caused much damage, sometimes more than enemy action. Another thing that worried the men handling cargo was mildew.”¹²⁰

According to photographs preserved by Lieutenant Locke, Woodard and the other soldiers spent their off-duty hours and slept on cots in wood-framed longhouses with raised platforms for floors, massive sheets of canvas for roofs, and netting stretched down the sides for ventilation and protection from mosquitos. Screened doors at the ends permitted entry and exit. The buildings were situated on sandy soil with limited shade. Another photograph indicates that the company had at least one jeep for transportation and that the soldiers wore standard issue, herringbone twill coveralls made of cotton.¹²¹

The local inhabitants of Biak lived in primitive huts, fished from outrigger canoes, and wore scant clothing. According to Charles Evers, “New Guinea had no civilization. Just the bush people. And no women in sight.” He said that the “natives were almost as dark as Africans and had no education, spoke no English. So we couldn’t talk to them.” He added that “the army

forbid us from fraternizing with them and told us some of them had diseases or were ‘cooperating with the Japs.’”¹²²

Woodard and his comrades at Biak had plenty of work to keep them occupied. The invasion of the Philippines had commenced during October 1944. Bombers took off from three different airstrips to support landings in the southern part of the archipelago. Fighters from these bases patrolled the skies around New Guinea so that carrier-based aircraft could advance closer to Japan. Casualties were evacuated from the front lines for treatment at the hospital on Supply Base H. Replacement soldiers, ammunition, equipment, and other supplies arrived from the United States to be pushed forward to places like Okinawa. The relentless pace of operations continued as plans were made to invade the main islands of Japan during the fall of 1945. The dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August rendered this final campaign unnecessary.

Woodard must have performed his job well because he received three promotions while serving with the 429th: one to private first class, a second to technician fifth grade, and a third to technician fourth grade. He assumed greater responsibilities with each advancement.¹²³

After the Japanese formally surrendered on 2 September 1945, Woodard had a lengthy wait before he could go back to the United States. The armed forces had a system based on points accumulated for



The USS *West Point* passing the Statue of Liberty, 11 July 1945.

Naval History and Heritage Command

determining the order by which people would return.¹²⁴ Service members received one point for each month in uniform; two for each month spent in a combat zone; twelve for each dependent under the age of 18; and five for each personal decoration, wound, or battle star. Those with the highest “Adjusted Service Rating Score” were supposed to go home first. The minimum total needed to go home when Germany surrendered in May 1945 was eighty-five. It dropped to fifty by the end of the year. Woodard had only forty-two points when Operation MAGIC CARPET, the name for the mass repatriation of U.S. military personnel from overseas theaters, commenced in the Pacific on 6 September. He would have had forty-five, but he lost three as a result of disciplinary actions taken against him, likely earlier in his service. He was not authorized five points for a battle star until February 1946 when the War Department published general orders awarding campaign credit to the 429th Port Company for operations in Western New Guinea.¹²⁵ Records indicate that Woodard went home not because of points, of which he had forty-seven, but because he had reached his maximum months of service.¹²⁶

He moved during December from Biak to the Philippine Island of Mindanao, which placed him closer to the ship that would transport him home. According to Charles Evers, “the land looked like Florida, with beaches, palm trees, thick heavy bush.” Unlike New Guinea, “the Philippines had real cities.”¹²⁷ Woodard did not have much time, if any, to take advantage of his new

surroundings. Early on 15 January 1946, he stepped off Mindanao’s Britania Beach to begin his journey eastward.¹²⁸

He boarded the USS *West Point* (AP-23), the country’s largest and fastest troop transport. Known before the war as the SS *America*, the liner had been called for military service during 1941 and in 1946 was making its final transoceanic voyage with the armed forces. It had an exterior paint scheme of gray camouflage and carried machine guns, 5-inch artillery pieces, and

weapons to defend against aircraft.¹²⁹ In its civilian configuration, it boasted luxurious accommodations. As a naval vessel, its furnishings featured metal bunks stacked three to five high with only 16 inches separating the occupants. It held nearly 8,500 people when it departed the Philippines.¹³⁰ Despite military modifications, it retained touches of its previous, streamlined elegance with many of the Modernist murals, bas-relief sculptures, and Art Deco design elements remaining on the interior walls, floors, and ceilings.¹³¹

The *West Point* traveled 4,952 miles to reach Pearl Harbor early on 29 January.¹³² It stayed in Hawai’i for less than a day.¹³³ If Woodard had the chance to go ashore briefly or to take in the surrounding view from a deck or through a window, he might have seen the aircraft carrier USS *Bennington* (CV-20) moored at Ford Island, its crew preparing for a change of command ceremony.¹³⁴ Astern of the *Essex*-class flattop, occasional blobs of fuel oil floated into its berth from nearby Battleship Row. The stripped-down hulk of the USS *Oklahoma* (BB-37), righted after being capsized by Japanese torpedoes and with more than 400 unidentified corpses having been extracted from it, awaited towing to a West Coast scrapyard.¹³⁵ Although salvage crews had removed the superstructure and several turrets and guns of the USS *Arizona* (BB-39), enough of its wreckage remained



An aerial photograph of Pearl Harbor in January 1946. The aircraft carrier USS *Bennington* is in the background docked, at Ford Island.

Naval History and Heritage Command



A postcard depicting the main gate and bus stop at Camp Gordon, Georgia

Boston Public Library

above water for people to stand over the more than 1,000 dead sailors and marines entombed below.¹³⁶ No official memorials had yet been erected.

The trip resumed that afternoon. After steaming an additional 4,723 miles over ten days, the *West Point* arrived off the coast of Panama on 3 February.¹³⁷ The ship had transited the isthmian canal multiple times—including once as the *America*, with two German spies aboard—but the experience was a new one for soldiers like Woodard. Passengers and crew had opportunities to admire the Central American flora and fauna and to marvel at the engineering of the locks.

The final leg of the journey took four days and covered 2,030 miles.¹³⁸ On 7 February, the *West Point* entered New York Harbor, passing by the Statue of Liberty and going up the Hudson River to moor at Pier 88 at the edge of Hell's Kitchen between Central Park and the Empire State Building.¹³⁹ Woodard's mother and father had moved to the Bronx during the early 1940s, but whether they came to greet the ship is unknown.

After debarking the *West Point*, Woodard boarded a troop train that carried him and the others about 40 miles to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.¹⁴⁰ The postwar mission of this facility was to sort out incoming shiploads of soldiers and send them to separation centers located nearest to their homes. Civilian visitors were not allowed except in cases of emergency, and service members could not have passes to leave the installation, so Woodard would not have been able to spend any time with his parents in New York City.

He would, however, have been able to call them by phone. At some point, possibly then, he made plans to meet his wife in South Carolina and return with her to the North.¹⁴¹

After two days at Camp Kilmer, Woodard traveled by train to Camp Gordon near Augusta, Georgia, for another two days of outprocessing. There, a personnel clerk typed his discharge form, which detailed his qualifications and the awards to which he was entitled. These included the World War II Victory Medal, which went to all veterans of this period, and the American Campaign Medal, which recognized the time he spent



A postwar photograph of Woodard and his mother Elizabeth

Georgia State University

in the United States. In addition to earning the Asia-Pacific Campaign Medal for being in the overseas combat zone, he had the honor of affixing a bronze, five-pointed, three-sixteenths-of-an-inch star to its ribbon for having participated in the battle for New Guinea.¹⁴²

He also settled his financial accounts. During all or part of his time in uniform, he had deposited a portion of his monthly salary into an Army-sponsored savings program. The balance had grown to \$450 by 1946. In addition, he had due to him a total of \$300 that the federal government had granted tax-free to departing veterans to help them resume their civilian lives. He collected another six dollars and sixty cents to cover the costs of traveling to his home of record in Winnsboro. He may have owed money for lost or damaged equipment or uniform items, because instead of \$761.60, he was paid \$744.73. This amount was still substantial; adjusted for inflation, it would be equivalent to \$13,333.30 in December 2025. He accepted fifty dollars of the total in cash and a check for the remainder.¹⁴³

Woodard left Camp Gordon around 1800 on 12 February 1946 aboard an Army-operated bus that carried him 10 miles eastward to the city of Augusta, Georgia. There, on the eve of his fateful encounter, he would purchase ten hot dogs and a Greyhound Bus ticket.¹⁴⁴ The azaleas and dogwoods for which the local golf course would become famous had not yet blossomed, but the pine trees and sandy soil would have reminded him of home. The sun dropped below the horizon at 1810. Whether he thought to watch it set is unknown.



A few short hours later, still in uniform, Woodard was removed from his bus at a stop in Batesburg, South Carolina, for causes that remain unclear. Lynwood Shull, a local police officer, ruptured both of the soldier's eyeballs with a blackjack during his subsequent arrest. The next day, a judge gave Woodard the choice of paying a fifty-dollar fine or spending thirty days on a chain gang. Shull later was tried in federal court for civil rights violations but was acquitted by an all-White jury.

T/4 Isaac Woodard Jr. had survived the dangers and hardships of war and had been exposed to many interesting sights along the way. Although he would live another

forty-six years, he never again would see the sunrise.

Dr. Andrew H. Myers is a professor of American studies at the University of South Carolina Upstate in Spartanburg and holds a PhD in history from the University of Virginia. He served a total of twenty-two years in the Regular Army and Reserves, retiring as a lieutenant colonel. His publications include the book *Black, White & Olive Drab: Racial Integration at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and the Civil Rights Movement* (University of Virginia Press, 2006) as well as the chapter “An American Professor with the Iraqi Army” in *Military Culture and Education* (Routledge, 2010). He is presently finishing a book about the Union Army occupation of South Carolina at the end of the Civil War.

Editor's Note

The spelling in quotations from transcriptions of WPA interviews, chosen by the original transcriber(s) to represent a person's manner of speaking, has been retained.



Notes

1. Technicians Fourth Grade were addressed informally as sergeant but, as of November 1943, were not considered noncommissioned officers.

2. Andrew Myers, “The Blinding of Isaac Woodard,” in *Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association 2004*, eds. Robert Figuera and Stephen Lowe (Columbia: South Carolina Historical Association, 2004), 63–73; “Isaac Woodard,” in *Ethnic and Racial Minorities in the U.S. Military: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Alexander M. Bielakowski (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2013).

3. Christopher G. Roberts, *Reflections of the Heart*, dir. Christopher G. Roberts, Clurman Theatre, New York City, NY, Jun 2010.

4. For examples of national coverage, see Christina L. Myers, “Civil Rights Historians Tell Little Known Story of WWII Vet,” 27 May 2018, Associated Press, <https://apnews.com/article/5510a1a3d28344568164de3419e0d747>; Audra D. S. Burch, “Why a Town Is Finally Honoring a Black Veteran Attacked by Its White Police Chief,” *New York Times*, 8 Feb 2019; “Town

Honors an African-American WWII Veteran Blinded in a 1946 Police Beating,” CNN, 11 Feb 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/11/us/isaac-woodard-blinded-historical-marker-trnd/index.html>. The effort to erect a historical highway marker was led by Don North, a retired U.S. Army officer.

5. Richard Gergel, *Unexampled Courage: The Blinding of Sgt. Isaac Woodard and the Awakening of America* (New York: Picador, 2019).

6. *American Experience*, season 33, episode 3, “The Blinding of Isaac Woodard,” written and directed by Jamila Ephron, aired 30 Mar 2021 on PBS, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/blinding-isaac-woodard/>.

7. *American: An Odyssey to 1947*, directed by Danny Wu, (Vancouver, Canada: Maple Road Pictures, 2022), Amazon, https://www.amazon.com/American-Odyssey-1947-Orson-Welles/dp/B0CBNSZCPV/ref=sr_1_2.

8. Affidavit, Isaac Woodard with Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), New York City, 23 Apr 1946, microfilm, reel 28, frames 1012–13, NAACP Papers, Case Files for Woodard, Library of Congress, Washington, DC (hereinafter NAACP Papers).

9. War Department (WD) Adjutant General's Office (AGO) Form 53–55, Enlisted Record and Report of Separation, Honorable Discharge, for Isaac Woodard, 12 Feb 1946, microfilm, reel 29, frame 178, NAACP Papers. A widely used website about Isaac Woodard was available online from 2002 until 2023, when the site host removed it from public view. Parts of it can still be found on the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine under the URLs <http://faculty.uscs.edu/amyers> and <http://faculty.uscupstate.edu/amyers>. For example, see <https://web.archive.org/web/20050302031329/http://faculty.uscupstate.edu/amyers/discharge.html>.

10. Lee Nichols, *Breakthrough on the Color Front* (New York: Random House, 1954), 73; Richard M. Dalfiume, *Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces: Fighting on Two Fronts, 1939–1953* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 134.

11. Morris J. MacGregor Jr., *Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940–1965*, Defense Studies Series (1981; repr., Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2001), 129; Bernard C. Nalty, *Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military* (New York: Free Press, 1986), 204.

12. Tinsley E. Yarborough, *A Passion for Justice: J. Waties Waring and Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 48.

13. John Egerton, *Speak Now Against the Day:*

The Generation Before the Civil Rights Movement in the South (New York: Alfred P. Knopf, 1994), 362, 404.

14. Kari Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932–1968* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 54.

15. Robert F. Jefferson Jr., *Black Veterans, Politics, and Civil Rights in Twentieth-Century America: Closing Ranks* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 35. His earlier book is *Fighting for Hope: African American Troops of the 93rd Infantry Division in World War II and Postwar America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008). Andrew Myers, this writer, referred to Woodard as a “military longshoreman” in his book *Black, White & Olive Drab: Racial Integration at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 59.

16. Testimony, Isaac Woodard, *Isaac Woodard Jr. v. Atlantic Greyhound Bus Company*, Circuit Court, Kanawha County, West Virginia, Nov 1947, microfilm, reel 30, frames 121–33, NAACP Papers.

17. For examples, see Claudia Smith Brinson, *Stories of Struggle: The Clash over Civil Rights in South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2020), 14; Jane Dailey, *White Fright: The Sexual Panic at the Heart of America's Racist History* (New York: Hachette, 2020); James N. Gilmore and Sidney Gottlieb, eds., *Orson Welles in Focus: Texts and Contexts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018), 215; Enid Gort and John M. Caher, *A Bridge to Justice: The Life of Franklin H. Williams* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2022); Elisabeth Griffith, *Formidable: American Women and the Fight for Equality, 1920–2020* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2022); Jolene Mathieson, Marius Henderson, and Julia Lange, eds., *The Public Mind and the Politics of Postmillennial U.S.-American Writing* (Boston, MA: Walter de Gruyter, 2022), 263; Heather Cox Richardson, *Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America* (New York: Penguin, 2023); Kenneth J. Saltman and Nicole Nguyen, *Handbook of Critical Approaches to Politics and Policy of Education* (New York: Routledge, 2022).

18. Laura M. Williams, *I Am Sergeant Isaac Woodard, Jr.: How My Story Changed America* (Chicago, IL: Ema Management, 2020), 3, 7.

19. Gergel, *Unexampled Courage*, 12.

20. Jeffrey Frank, *The Trials of Harry S. Truman: The Extraordinary Presidency of an Ordinary Man, 1945–1953* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2022), 153.

21. *American Experience*, “Blinding of Isaac Woodard,” minute 7:46.

22. Several black-and-white photographs of Woodard show him wearing two ribbons, one of which represents the World War II Victory Medal, which could have been mistaken for a Good Conduct Medal if the image was of low resolution.

23. Kirstin Butler, “Seeing Isaac Woodard,” *American Experience*, PBS, 25 Mar 2021, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/blinding-isaac-woodard-seeing/>. The star shown is clearly that of a Bronze Star Medal, not a battle or service star.

24. *American: An Odyssey to 1947*, minute 1:16:08.

25. Telecons, Andrew H. Myers with George Woodard, 2002–2005, author’s private collection.

26. Conversation, Andrew H. Myers with Robert Young, Feb 2020, Fort Jackson, SC, author’s private collection.

27. Jefferson provides an excellent analysis of the situation in *Fighting for Hope*. See also the first chapters of Ulysses Lee, *The Employment of Negro Troops*, United States Army in World War II (1966; repr., Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2001).

28. Rolundus Rice, “Hosea Williams: The Tactical Mastermind of the Selma to Montgomery March,” *SCLC National Magazine*, Spring 2022, 19–22.

29. Charles Evers and Andrew Szanton, *Have No Fear: The Charles Evers Story* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997), 47–48. See also Myrlie Evers-Williams and Manning Marable, eds., *The Autobiography of Medgar Evers: A Hero’s Life and Legacy Revealed Through His Writings, Letters, and Speeches* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 6–7.

30. Evers and Szanton, *Have No Fear*, 46–49.

31. Walter Edgar, ed., *The South Carolina Encyclopedia* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 312.

32. Fitz Hugh McMaster, *History of Fairfield County, South Carolina: From “Before the White Man Came” to 1942* (Columbia, SC: The State Commercial Printing Company, 1946).

33. The exact location of the houses for Isaac Woodard’s parents and grandparents is unknown. According to the 1920, 1930, and 1940 censuses, they lived in Township 12 (Lebanon). According to the 1930 census, they lived near a White man named James Thomas Lemmon, whose house is on the National Register of Historic Places. The structure remains standing at 9989 Newberry Road (South Carolina Highway 34), Winnsboro, South Carolina. According to the 1940 census, they lived on Harden Road, which intersects Highway 34 less

than a mile from the Lemmon house. U.S. Dept. Interior, Nomination Form, n.d., <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/fairfield/S10817720020/S10817720020.pdf> (accessed 9 Feb 2026); U.S. Census Bureau, Dept. Commerce, Fourteenth Census of the United States 1920, Population Schedule, South Carolina, Fairfield County, Township 12, sheet 1B, microfilm publication T625, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD (hereinafter NACP); U.S. Census Bureau, Dept. Commerce, Fifteenth Census of the United States 1930, Population Schedule, South Carolina, Fairfield County, Township 12, sheets 5B and 6A, microfilm publication T626, NACP; U.S. Census Bureau, Dept. Commerce, Sixteenth Census of the United States 1940, Population Schedule, South Carolina, Fairfield County, Township 12 (Lebanon), sheet 1A, microfilm publication T627, NACP.

34. The 1917 draft card for Isaac Woodard Sr. misspells his first name and lists his employer as Haskell Carroll, who appears on the 1920 census within Township District 12 in an adjacent house. “Isac Woodard,” *World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917–1918*, microfilm publication T625; U.S. Census Bureau, Dept. Commerce, Fourteenth Census of the United States 1920, Population Schedule, South Carolina, Fairfield County, Township 12, sheet 1B.

35. A birth certificate for Isaac is not extant. The 1917 birth certificate for Bessie Woodard, a sister of Isaac, provides occupational information for the parents. Isaac’s mother’s occupation is listed as “house wife,” and his father’s is listed as “farming.” Birth certificate, Bessie Woodard, Ancestry, n.d., <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed 11 Feb 2026).

36. Woodard’s military qualification record says that his five years of grade school education ended in 1930. WD AGO Form 100, Army Separation Qualification Record for Isaac Woodard, n.d., microfilm, reel 29, frames 231–32, NAACP Papers.

37. U.S. Census Bureau, Dept. Commerce, Fifteenth Census of the United States 1930, Population Schedule, South Carolina, Fairfield County, Township 12, sheets 5B and 6A.

38. Alex Woodard, the grandfather of Isaac Jr., is listed on the manuscript censuses for 1920 and 1930 as a landowner. He said in his 1937 Works Progress Administration (WPA) interview that he owned the property on which he lived and farmed. He does not, however, appear in any of the county deed books or mortgage books. The only Alex Woodard who does is a different, unrelated person. See *Fairfield County Deed Book NG*, n.d., 52, 53, Fairfield County Courthouse, Winnsboro, SC.

39. WPA Interv, W. W. Dixon with Alex Woodard [spelled “Aleck Woodward”], ca. 1937, in *Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States from Interviews with Former Slaves*, vol. 14, pt. 4 (Washington, DC: Federal Works Project, 1941), 253–56. The actual interview is undated, but all others for Fairfield County were done in 1937.

40. The census records, death certificate, gravestone and WPA interview provide inconsistent birth years for Alex Woodard ranging from 1842 to 1856. He died in 1950. His death certificate says he lived to 108 years. Certificate of Death, Alex Woodard, n.d., File No. 50-01340 in *South Carolina Death Records* (Columbia, SC: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, n.d.); “Alex Woodward” Find a Grave, n.d., <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/238454125/alex-woodward> (accessed 9 Feb 2026).

41. Before 1868, South Carolina was divided into districts and parishes instead of counties.

42. He is buried at Sweet Prospect Baptist Church, which is near the site of the Simonton Plantation. His wife is buried at Red Hill Baptist Church, which is a few hundred yards from Concord Presbyterian. Certificate of Death, Nancy Cook Woodard, n.d., File No. 13265, in *South Carolina Death Records* (Columbia, SC: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, n.d.).

43. WPA Interv, Dixon with Woodard, 1937, 255.

44. Alex Woodard said in his WPA interview that the soldiers “took off” with his father. This is unlikely. General William Tecumseh Sherman tried to discourage African Americans from following his columns.

45. Isaac’s name appears in “Abstract of Voter Registrations Reported to the Military Government, 1868, Fairfield County,” South Carolina Secretary of State, 1868, <https://digital.tcl.sc.edu/digital/collection/voterreg/id/1167/rec/12>.

46. WPA Interv, Dixon with Woodard, 1937, 256.

47. Senate Doc. 494, 63d Cong., 22 May 1914 in *Federal and State Laws Relating to Convict Labor* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1914), 18.

48. The inmates of a convict labor camp are listed on the 1930 census for Fairfield County, Township 12, which is the same district in which the Woodard family lived. U.S. Census Bureau, Dept. Commerce, Fifteenth Census of the United States 1930, Population Schedule, South Carolina, Fairfield County, Township 12, sheets 1A and 1B.

49. Certificate of Death, Alex Woodard, n.d., File No. 50-01340.

50. Certificate of Death, Nancy Cook Woodard, n.d., File No. 13265. Alex Woodard said in his 1937 WPA interview that he was a landowner, but he is listed as a renter on the 1940 census. The deed books at the Fairfield County Courthouse in Winnsboro contain no records of him.
51. Testimony, Woodard, *Isaac Woodard Jr. v. Atlantic Greyhound Bus Company*, Nov 1947.
52. WPA Interv, Dixon with Woodard, 1937, 256.
53. Gergel, *Unexamined Courage*, 12.
54. WD AGO Form 100, Woodard, n.d.
55. "History of Work Done by Civilian Conservation Corps Reported," *Daily Times-News* (Burlington, NC), 27 Mar 1936; Nelson Teal, "Camp Alamance Baseballers Hard-Hit by Ordered Exodus," *Daily Times-News*, 2 Apr 1938; Wesley Hayden, "Negro Boys in Camp Alamance Take Advantage of Schooling Offered for Improvement," *Daily Times-News*, 22 May 1939.
56. Obituary for John Wendell Sample, *Rock Hill Herald*, 18 Mar 1988; *Taps 1931* (Clemson, SC: Clemson University, 1931).
57. "Soil Conservation Camp May Be Given to Gibsonville Area," *Daily Times-News* (Burlington, NC), 12 Mar 1940; "Officials of Camp Alamance Will Be Held Wednesday," *Daily Times-News*, 2 Apr 1940; "Gibsonville C.C.C. Camp Is to Have White Personnel," *Daily Times-News*, 2 Apr 1940; "C.C.C. Personnel from Here Await Transfer Command," *Daily Times-News*, 20 Apr 1940; "CCC Camps North Carolina," CCC Legacy, n.d., <https://ccclegacy.org/ccc-camp-lists/ccc-camps-north-carolina/> (accessed 14 Jan 2026).
58. Department of Selective Service (DSS) Form 1, Registration Card, Isaac Junnia Woodard, 16 Oct 1940, National Archives Identification Number (NAID) 7644750, Series: WWII Draft Registration Cards for North Carolina, 10/16/1940–03/31/1947, Record Group (RG) 147: Records of the Selective Service System, 1926–1975, National Archives at Atlanta, Atlanta, GA.
59. WD AGO Form 100, Woodard, n.d.
60. Testimony, Woodard, *Isaac Woodard Jr. v. Atlantic Greyhound Bus Company*, Nov 1947; U.S. Census Bureau, Dept. Commerce, Sixteenth Census of the United States 1940, Population Schedule, South Carolina, Fairfield County, Township 12 (Lebanon), sheet 6A; Marriage License, Isaac Woodard and Rosie Scruggs Woodard, 23 Aug 1941, no. 6794, "South Carolina, County Marriage Licenses, 1911–1953," <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:89NQ-2HN2?lang=en>, (accessed 3 Feb 2026). They divorced after his blinding.
- Rosie remarried and died in 2005 at 85 years of age.
61. "Detail, Isaac Woodard Jr in the U.S., World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938–1946," Ancestry, n.d., <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed 11 Feb 2026).
62. Testimony, Woodard, *Isaac Woodard Jr. v. Atlantic Greyhound Bus Company*, Nov 1947.
63. Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, chs. 2–5.
64. "Fond Memories of Bainbridge," *Post Searchlight* (Bainbridge, GA), 3 Apr 2009.
65. Robert Pasquill Jr., *The Civilian Conservation Corps in Alabama, 1933–1942: A Great and Lasting Good* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008), 57.
66. "Speedboat King at Bainbridge," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 6 Feb 1943.
67. Southwest Georgia Regional Library, "One Year, June 15, 1943, First Anniversary, Bainbridge Army Air Field," 15 Jun 1943, in Southwest Georgia Regional Library Collection, Digital Library of Georgia, https://dlg.usg.edu/record/zhs_sas_sas009.
68. WD Technical Manual (TM) 12–427, *Military Occupational Classification of Enlisted Personnel* (Washington, DC: War Department, 12 Jul 1944), 76.
69. WD, *United States Articles of War* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1920), 27–28. See also Aaron Hiltner, "Discipline & Military Justice," *American Soldier in World War II*, ed. Edward J. K. Gitre, 2021, <https://americansoldierww2.org/topics/discipline-and-military-justice>.
70. Woodard says in his 1947 civil trial testimony that he spent eighteen months at Bainbridge and that he went from there to Camp Story, Georgia. His discharge paperwork says that he belonged to Battery B of the 819th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion (Auto-Weapons).
71. The transcript for Woodard's 1947 civil trial testimony says that he went to Camp Story, Georgia. No installation of this name existed in this state. All other evidence indicates that Woodard went to Camp Stewart, Georgia, and that the testimony contains a transcription error. Testimony, Woodard, *Isaac Woodard Jr. v. Atlantic Greyhound Bus Company*, Nov 1947.
72. Army Ground Forces Study No. 36, Maj. Bell I. Wiley, 1 Sep 1945, *The Training of Negro Troops*, 50–52, https://www.governmentattic.org/4docs/TrainingNegroArmyTroops_1946.pdf.
73. The 898th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion (Auto-Weapons) had a similar table of organization and equipment. See Table of Organization and Equipment 44–25, 898th Antiaircraft Arty Bn, Apr 1944, <https://web.archive.org/web/20110610054109/http://100thww2.org/support/898/898org.html> (website discontinued; accessed 11 Feb 2026).
74. Bryon Greenwald, "Learning to Fight from the Ground Up: American Antiaircraft Artillery in World War II," *On Point: The Journal of Army History* 24, no. 1 (Summer 2018): 43.
75. Greenwald, "Learning to Fight," 41.
76. "Soldiers Kill M.P. at Georgia Camp," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 19 Jun 1943; "Retires after Thirty Years," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 14 Aug 1943.
77. "American Anti-Aircraft Artillery, Barrage Balloon, and Coast Artillery Battalions, 1941–1945," in Shelby L. Stanton, *Order of Battle: U.S. Army, World War II* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1984), 508, <https://usacac.army.mil/sites/default/files/documents/carl/nafziger/941UXAD.pdf> (accessed on 3 Feb 2026).
78. Jefferson, *Fighting for Hope*, 193–94.
79. Chester Wardlow, *The Transportation Corps: Movements, Training, and Supply, United States Army in World War II* (1956; repr., Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1990), 433. The movements and campaign credits for the 429th Port Company track with those of Woodard. In addition, a collection of headstone applications for U.S. military veterans lists five African American soldiers who belonged to the 429th Port Company and none from any 429th Port Battalion. "U.S., Headstone Applications for Military Veterans, 1861–1985," Ancestry, n.d., <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2375/> (accessed 3 Feb 2026).
80. *Transportation Corps Handbook, 1950–1951* (Fort Eustis, VA: U.S. Army Transportation School, 1950), 155–62. Although this book was printed after the end of World War II, it specifically references Table of Organization and Equipment 55–117, dated 1944, which specified the structure of a port company. This same table is referenced in Wardlow, *Transportation Corps*, 433.
81. Wardlow, *Transportation Corps*, 431–38.
82. WD TM 12–427, *Military Occupational Classification of Enlisted Personnel*, 12 Jul 1944, 52; Grace and Knickerbocker Davis, "Training Transport Corps," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 15 Aug 1943.
83. Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, 346.
84. "Philip Locke Gets Second Lieutenantcy," *Mount Vernon Argus* (White Plains, NY), 3 May 1943; "Philip Locke Now Lieutenant," *Mount Vernon Argus*, 11 Feb 1944; "Fort Dix Releases," *Mount Vernon Argus*, 1 Mar 1946. 1st Lt. Philip Locke attained the rank of major before leaving

military service, earned a law degree, and became a vice president for Sikorsky, where he played a role in developing the UH-1 Black Hawk helicopter. His obituary appears in the *Hartford Courant*, dated 31 January 2004. His stepmother kept a scrapbook of his World War II service, which survived and remains in the possession of his grandson. Scrapbook, Louisa Tilton Locke, n.d., sub: Philip Locke's World War II Service, in the private collection of Philip Shear (hereinafter Locke scrapbook).

85. The Locke family has a group photograph of the 429th Port Company that is in the possession of Brainard Locke, the son of the commander. Handwriting on the back says that it was taken on 18 October 1944 while the company was at Newport News, Virginia. (This conflicts with the published dates for the unit's departure for California.) The handwriting indicates that the company was divided into three platoons and had five officers: 1st Lt. Philip Locke, Lt. Raymond O'Hearn, Lt. Art Lipski, Lt. Mike Hanson, and Lt. Emory Custance (who was absent from the picture). All the officers were White men. A total of 162 enlisted soldiers, all Black men, appear in the photograph. First names of the noncommissioned officers do not appear, but the last name of the first sergeant was Dupree, and the last names of the platoon sergeants were Moran, Chapman, and Mapp. The last name of the supply sergeant was Moses. A private who closely resembles Woodard is also there.

86. "Color Prejudice Ruled Out at Army Center by Colonel," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 8 Apr 1944.

87. Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, 346.

88. Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, 348-79.

89. WD Ltr, 10 Mar 10, 1943, sub: Restricted Facilities; WD Ltr, 8 Jul 1944, sub: Recreational Facilities; both in War Department Decimal File System doc. AG 353.8, RG 319: Records of the Army Staff, NACP.

90. *The Negro Soldier*, directed by Stuart Heisler (Washington, DC: Frank Capra for the War Department, 1944), posted 22 Jan 2013 by the U.S. National Archives, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dln2dQyLNVU>.

91. Advertisements for local theaters showing *The Negro Soldier*, in *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 13 May 1944; *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 23 May 1944; *Harrisburg Telegraph*, 5 Jun 1944; *Gazette and Daily* (York, PA), 17 Jul 1944.

92. "38 Governors Open Sessions; Reviews Troops," *Patriot-News* (Harrisburg, PA), 29 May 1944.

93. Louisa Tilton Locke, quoted in Locke scrapbook.

94. "Port Plays," *Daily Press* (Newport News, VA), 4 Sep 1945. The Locke scrapbook says that

the 429th departed Indiantown Gap on 3 July 1944.

95. Wardlow, *Transportation Corps*, 458.

96. WD AGO Form 53-55, Woodard, 12 Feb 1946.

97. "HRPE Completes 3 Parade Floats," *Daily Press* (Newport News, VA), 21 Jul 1944.

98. According to "Port Plays," 4 Sep 1945, the company "cleared the port" on 5 October 1944. The Locke scrapbook says that the company arrived in California on 5 October 1944. The back of the group photograph of the 429th Port Company says that the picture was taken on 18 October 1944 while the unit was still in Newport News.

99. Wardlow, *Transportation Corps*, 11-83.

100. Federal District Judge Matthew Perry, who served in the U.S. Army during World War II, later became a lawyer, and played a major role in desegregating Clemson University, told one such story involving Italian prisoners in Alabama. Interv. Andrew H. Myers with Matthew Perry, 12 Feb 1997, author's private collection.

101. According to railroad maps of the 1940s, the only line leading out of Newport News was the Chesapeake and Ohio. The only one going directly to Oakland from the east was the Union Pacific. The Transportation Corps insisted that civilian railroads transport soldiers using the most direct route possible.

102. Testimony, Woodard, *Isaac Woodard Jr. v. Atlantic Greyhound Bus Company*, Nov 1947. The Locke scrapbook gives an address as Army Post Office, San Francisco.

103. Wardlow, *Transportation Corps*, 434.

104. Rodney Guilfoil, "Negro Sailors Refused to Work on Ammunition after Explosion Which Took Lives of 327 People," *Nevada State Journal* (Reno, NV), 1 Oct 1944; "Sailors Convicted of Mutiny Charge," *News and Record* (Greensboro, NC), 26 Oct 1944.

105. None of the sailors was executed, but all spent time in prison. They were fully exonerated by the secretary of the Navy in 2024.

106. "Haskell (APA-117), 944-1946," Naval History and Heritage Command, 7 May 2021, <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/h/haskell.html>. The Locke scrapbook corroborates this date.

107. Memoir, Smn. Howard Leslie Carroll, "My Personal Experiences on the USS *Haskell*," 27 Oct 1944, posted 22 Oct 2009 by Jennie Sprouse under "WWII on the USS *Haskell* APA 117," Ancestry, <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed 4 Feb 2026).

108. Account, Lt. Cdr. Robert Drysdale Carter, "Putting Around in the Ocean," n.d., posted by Jennie Sprouse under "WWII on

the USS *Haskell* APA 117," Ancestry, 22 Oct 2009, <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed 4 Feb 2026).

109. Memoir, Carroll, "My Personal Experiences on the USS *Haskell*," 28 Oct 1944.

110. "Ancient Order of the Deep" certificate, Locke family private collection.

111. The Locke scrapbook contains photographs of New Guinea tribesmen. The handwritten captions indicate that they were taken at Milne Bay, which is adjacent to Finschhafen.

112. Joseph Bykofsky and Harold Larson, *The Transportation Corps: Operations Overseas, United States Army in World War II* (1957; repr., Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1990), 464.

113. Robert Ross Smith, *The Approach to the Philippines*, United States Army in World War II (1953; repr. Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1996), 280-396.

114. "Personnel Profile: Service Member PFC. Edward H Benson," Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, n.d., <https://dpaa-mil.sites.crmforce.mil/dpaaProfile?id=a0Jt0000000XfjbEAK> (accessed 11 Feb 2026); "Pvt. Robert Werley Is Wounded on Biak," *Morning Call* (Allentown, PA), 11 Apr 1945.

115. "Jap Eats Jap When Hungry," *Oregonian* (Portland, OR), 3 May 1945.

116. Lee, *Employment of Negro Troops*, 524.

117. "Hero Reveals 93rd Exploits," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 15 Sep 1945.

118. Chris Mayer, "Mystery Surrounds Coast Guard Disaster That Claimed Hazelton Man," *Citizens' Voice* (Wilkes-Barre, PA), 29 Jan 2024.

119. Dera Menra Sijabat and Richard C. Paddock, "Call Me Dog Tag Man': Pacific Island Is Full of War Relics and Human Remains," *New York Times*, 2 Dec 2021.

120. *Transportation Corps Handbook, 1950-1951*, 160.

121. Locke scrapbook.

122. Evers and Szanton, *Have No Fear*, 49.

123. Woodard's WD AGO Form 100 indicates that he remained at the rank of private until he joined the 429th Port Company. In the group photograph of the company, taken weeks before overseas deployment, the soldier who appears to be Woodard is not wearing any stripes on his sleeves.

124. Tyler Bamford, "The Points Were All That Mattered: The US Army's Demobilization After World War II," National World War II Museum, 27 Aug 2020, <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/points-system-us-armys-demobilization>; John C. Sparrow, *History of Personnel Demobilization in the United States Army* (Washington, DC:

U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1952); WD Readjustment Regulation 1-1, *Plan for Readjustment of Military Personnel after the Defeat of Germany* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 30 Aug 1944).

125. WD GO 12, 1 Feb 1946, Units Entitled to Battle Credits, 31, 48, posted on the website of the 727th Amphibian Tractor Battalion Association, <https://727atb.com/Documents-Operations.htm>; Department of the Army Pamphlet 672-1, *Unit Campaign Participation Credit Register* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, Jul 1961), 285, https://www.hrc.army.mil/wcmt-api/sites/default/wcmtfiles/files/26982_0.pdf.

126. "Personnel Roster No. 1133 (Readjustment or Discharge Personnel) For Separation Center No. 46, Cp. Gordon, Ga.," Ancestry, n.d., <https://www.ancestry.com> (accessed 4 Feb 2026).

127. Evers and Szanton, *Have No Fear*, 49.

128. Testimony, Woodard, *Isaac Woodard Jr. v. Atlantic Greyhound Bus Company*, Nov 1947. Britania Beach in the Philippines is spelled with a single letter *n*. Lieutenant Locke went on another ship, the USS *General Brewster*, which departed Manila on 30 January 1946 and arrived in San Francisco on 16 February 1946. "Dischargees," *Stewart County Times* (Tennessee), 28 Feb 1946.

129. Roland Charles, *Troopships of World War II* (Washington, DC: Army Transportation Association, 1947), 146.

130. "West Point Carrying 7,500 Troops from Manila to New York," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* (HI), 12 Jan 1946.

131. The artwork and design elements appeared throughout the ship, not just in the first-class areas, so African Americans would have seen them even if they were relegated to less-desirable parts of the ship.

132. Mileage and dates provided in table on the SS *America* web page, "Passages from July 1944 to February 1946," n.d., <https://united-states-lines.org/uss-west-point/> (accessed on 15 Jan 2026).

133. "West Point Here with 8,500 Men Due for Discharge," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 25 Jan 1946.

134. Ray Coll Jr., "Spruance Strikes Flag, Towers in Command of Pacific Fleet," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 2 Feb 1946.

135. "USS Oklahoma Set for 1 P.M. Start for Coast," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 10 May 1947. The *Oklahoma* capsized under tow and sank deep in the Pacific during the voyage. Most of the sailors and marines would not be identified until the twenty-first century.

136. "Tribute to Heroes' Memory," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 21 Nov 1946.

137. "Passages from July 1944 to February

1946," n.d.

138. "Passages from July 1944 to February 1946," n.d.

139. "Snappy Comeback," *Daily News* (NY), 8 Feb 1946.

140. Testimony, Woodard, *Isaac Woodard Jr. v. Atlantic Greyhound Bus Company*, Nov 1947.

141. Booklet, Special Services Branch, sub: Camp Kilmer, Dec 1945, <https://www.marshallfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/CampKilmerbooklet.pdf>.

142. His paperwork did not list a Good Conduct Medal, which was awarded during World War II for three years of stateside service without disciplinary problems or for a single year in combat. Woodard lost seventy-six days under Articles of War 107 and three points on his Adjusted Service Rating Score, which could have disqualified him for the Good Conduct Medal. Another possibility is that Woodard left his company before the commander could initiate paperwork.

143. Woodard said in his September 1946 statement and in his 1947 civil trial testimony that he had a check for \$694.73 and forty-four dollars in cash when the blinding took place.

144. Statement, Isaac Woodard to the FBI, 25 Sep 1946, microfilm, reel 28, frame 911, NAACP Papers.

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