

Black Heroes of WWII Recognized...at Last

More than a million black soldiers served in World War II — yet none received the nation's highest military honor. Now, more than a half-century later and after a three-year process, the Pentagon has forwarded the names of four black enlisted soldiers and three black officers as nominees to Congress and the White House.

A Shaw University study pointed out that the climate of the 1940s — primarily segregation of units by race and limited combat duty by blacks — precluded recognition of their heroism. No evidence was uncovered in that study to prove that any black soldier in WWII was ever nominated for the Medal of Honor. However, the archives and surviving comrades and commanders indicate that no fewer than four of the seven men who are now candidates *were* recommended.

The four enlisted soldiers nominated include PVT George Watson of Birmingham, AL; PFC Willy F. James Jr. of Kansas City, KS; SSG Edward A. Carter Jr., of Los Angeles, CA, and SSG Ruben Rivers of Tecumseh, OK.



Medal of Honor nominee
SSG Ruben Rivers

SSG Ruben Rivers, Co A, 761st Tank Bn, 3rd Army, was one of four enlisted soldiers nominated for the Medal of Honor in World War II.

When Rivers' tank hit a German mine in France, his right leg was laid open to the bone above the knee. Rivers refused medical help, commandeered another tank and fought on, refusing evacuation.

Three days later — even though ordered back — Rivers moved forward, attacking an enemy position. A German shell hit his tank turret and killed him. He was awarded the Army's Silver Star for valor.