

the other libraries. Have you got any plans yet?

The President. Well, I expect to have one, but that's all I can say about it. I mean, I like the idea of them; I think they've served the country well. I've been at President Nixon's for his service. I've been at President Carter's. I've been at President Johnson's. And I strongly support the concept.

I did talk briefly to President Ford about that at the golf course; it was, I guess, the only substantive thing. He just mentioned to me that he sure thought the Archivist ought to be somebody that supported the Presidential library system. So I like them. But I'm worried about doing this job, and then I'll worry about what's in the library when I finish the job. But I believe in the system, and it's served the country well.

Of course, I've been to the Truman Library and the Roosevelt Library, so I guess I've been to most of them.

Mr. Lamb. We're out of time, and I thank you.

The President. Thank you. I enjoyed it.

NOTE: The interview began at 12:45 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House and was embargoed for release until 12:01 a.m. on February 19. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Salute to African-American Veterans

February 17, 1995

Ladies and gentlemen, Secretary Perry, Secretary Brown, General Shalikashvili, General Powell, General Davison, Admiral Gravelly, Ossie Davis, Colonel Earley.

I hate to throw any cold water on this magnificent night, but I'm just sitting here thinking whether as Commander in Chief I should dismiss or simply demote whoever it was who arranged for me to speak after Colonel Earley. [Laughter] If ever there was an embodiment of what we came here to celebrate tonight, if ever there was evidence that this celebration is occurring at least 50 years too late, it is Colonel Earley.

Tonight we celebrate the extraordinary history of patriotism of our Nation's African-American citizens, whose courage and devo-

tion to country helped to raise the consciousness of a nation, and through years and decades and centuries to reverse a tragic legacy of discrimination. History records their great deeds, and we have honored them tonight.

We can only marvel at the dedication that they manifested year-in and year-out, war-in and war-out, from the first days of the Republic, in spite of all that they were denied under the Constitution and laws. In spite of being treated as second-class soldiers, segregated from their peers, with second-class training, too often with rifles that jammed or misfired, sometimes shamefully harassed by comrades, still they served.

Peter Salem, who fired the shot that killed the leader of the British forces at Bunker Hill served in the Revolutionary War. Sergeant Alfred Hilton, under the withering fire outside Richmond during the Civil War, picked up the Union flag from its fallen bearer and carried it further into battle until he, too, fell, mortally wounded. You should know that today that soldier's great-grandnephew, Steve Hilton, upholds his tradition of service to the country as a Captain in the Army Reserve and a member of the White House senior staff. The 369th Infantry Regiment in France during the First World War, whose French commander said they never lost a prisoner, a trench, or a foot of ground.

But it was during World War II, as we saw tonight, when our country was forced to marshal all its resources, to call forth every ounce of its strength, that African-Americans in our Armed Forces made contributions that would literally save the world from tyranny and change the course of our Nation at home.

Time and again, from the far reaches of the Pacific to the very heart of Europe, the more than one million African-Americans in uniform distinguished themselves as P-40 fighter pilots and Navy Seabees, Sherman tank drivers, orderlies, and engineers.

You've heard the stirring story of Dorie Miller, a steward aboard the USS *Arizona* at Pearl Harbor, who saw his captain fall wounded and pulled him to safety. And then despite the fire, he manned a machine gun and downed two enemy planes.

At Iwo Jima, the African-American Marines of the 16th Field Depot, working as

stretcher bearers, braved shells and bullets and mines to pull their comrades back from the frontlines when they were wounded.

At the Battle of the Bulge the men of the 3496th Truck Company hauled weapons, soldiers, and prisoners down roads that the rain had turned into rivers of mud and ice. They unloaded their 2.5 ton trucks as mortars fell all around them. And even today, 50 years later, their commander, Colonel Benjamin Layton, says he can still feel the driving snow and the deadening cold of the Ardennes. He's with us tonight, and we honor him and those like him who served their Nation so well. Thank you, Colonel Layton.

And I, too, must say just a word about the legendary Tuskegee Airmen, who flew over 1,500 combat missions and never lost a single bomber under their escort. Some of them are here with us tonight, including Second Lieutenant Luther Smith, who was forced to bail out over Yugoslavia after a successful attack on an ammunition dump, where he was captured and interned as a POW in Austria. He entered that camp weighing 150 pounds. Six months later when the British forces liberated him, he was down to 70 pounds. But he survived, and he's here. God bless you, sir.

After the war, after winning the victories over fascism and intolerance, these heroes came home to a nation that still could not shed its habits of hatred and bigotry. A mayor and a city marshal pulled a young black sergeant from a bus in South Carolina and beat him blind. A mob gang in Georgia dragged a newly returned veteran and his wife from their car and shot them so savagely they could scarcely be identified. These and other horrible acts of violence done to our African-American veterans moved President Truman to desegregate the military and put forward the most sweeping civil rights legislation our country had then known.

So it was that in Korea and Vietnam, African-Americans were able to serve shoulder to shoulder with soldiers of all races for the first time. Beamed by television into America's living rooms, images of their camaraderie and shared sacrifice helped our Nation to act on a truth too long denied: that if people of different races could serve as brothers abroad, putting their lives on the line to-

gether for this country, surely, surely at last they could live as neighbors at home.

It is a measure of the progress we have made as a people that today many of our most revered military leaders are African-Americans. Admiral Gravely and General Davison came in with me tonight. I was proud to look up here at the beginning of the program and see the Commander of our district here, General Gorden. And of course, we heard the 220-year saga tonight that led from Crispus Attucks to General Colin Powell.

Today I say to you, ladies and gentlemen who have served us in uniform, at last our children, without regard to their race, see in you nothing more and nothing less than what you are: American heroes in the proud tradition of George Washington, John Pershing, and George Marshall. You have earned their way into the Nation's hearts, and you are there now forever and ever.

Tonight let me salute you for many things but most of all for never giving up on America. Finally, finally, in the military your country is worthy of you, worthy of the words of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, worthy of the sacrifice that you and your forbearers have given. Let us never forget it. And let us now say: Wouldn't it be nice if the rest of America worked together as well as the United States military?

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:13 p.m. at Constitution Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Colin Powell, USA, Ret.; Maj. Gen. Frederick Davison, USA, Ret.; Vice Adm. Samuel L. Gravely, Jr., USN, Ret.; Ossie Davis, narrator of the salute; Mrs. Charity Adam Earley, former Lieutenant Colonel, Women's Army Corps; and Maj. Gen. Fred Gorden, Commander, Military District of Washington. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address *February 18, 1995*

Good morning. I'm joined today by the Houston Rockets, last year's National Basketball Association champs. I'm glad they're here to have their recognition and take their tour of the White House, not only because