



Mississippi
Alberta
North Portland

Vancouver
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A photo from a new traveling exhibit at the Oregon Historical Society called 'Fighting for the Right to Fight: African American Experiences in World War II,' shows the all-black World War II era U.S. Army 41st Engineers, assembled for a color guard ceremony at Ft. Bragg, N.C. Photo courtesy National Archives.

Fighting for the Right to Fight

Downtown exhibit tells story of African Americans in WW II

In the years leading up to World War II, racial segregation and discrimination were part of the daily life of many in the United States. For most African Ameri-

cans, even the most basic rights and services were fragmented or denied altogether. To be black was to know the limits of freedom – excluded from the opportunity, equality and justice on which the country was founded.

Yet, once World War II began, thousands of African Americans rushed to enlist, intent on serving the nation that treated them as second-class citizens. They

were determined to fight to preserve the freedom that they themselves had been denied.

A new traveling exhibit at the Oregon Historical Society tells the important stories of the thousands of African Americans who enlisted during the war. From the National WWII Museum in New Orleans, "Fighting for the Right to Fight: African American Experiences in World

War II, opened Friday with a reception attended by black veterans and officials of the museum, and runs through Jan. 12. The exhibit includes oral histories, profile panels and artifacts.

The centerpiece of the show is an original eight minute video about the Tuskegee Airmen, who in many ways became the

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