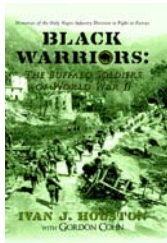




## **BLACK WARRIORS: THE BUFFALO SOLDIERS OF WORLD WAR II** A Memoir by Ivan J. Houston with Gordon Cohn about the Only Negro WWII Infantry Division to Fight in Europe



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Eso Won Books Commemorates D-Day with First Book Signing of "Black Warriors: The Buffalo Soldiers of World War II" by Ivan J. Houston Recounting His Experience in WWII's First Black Infantry Combat Unit**

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LOS ANGELES – On Saturday, June 6th at 1 pm in commemoration of D-Day, acclaimed independent bookstore, **Eso Won Books** will hold the first book signing for the highly-anticipated new memoir, **Black Warriors: The Buffalo Soldiers of World War II** (iUniverse). Written by one of the nation's African American business icons, Ivan J. Houston, **Black Warriors** is his riveting account of serving in World War II with the U.S. Army's segregated Black 92<sup>nd</sup> Infantry -- also known as the legendary Buffalo Soldiers -- that went on to become WWII's first African American Infantry Combat Unit in Europe. While the 92<sup>nd</sup> was profiled in Spike Lee's recent film, "Miracle at St. Anna," Houston hopes to expose even more people to the true story of the 92<sup>nd</sup> with **Black Warriors**.

Released nearly 65 years after D-Day, **Black Warriors** is the first book by Houston, who is the former Chairman/CEO of Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company, one of the largest Black-owned businesses in the country. He is also renowned for having been Chair of the Los Angeles Urban League, President of the L.A. Human Relations Commission, and sitting on a myriad of corporate boards -- from other Black companies, such as Broadway Federal Bank to Fortune 500 entities, such as Kaiser Aluminum. However, he will now also be renowned for something not too many people knew about him -- that he is a decorated WWII veteran. In fact, Houston's father was one of the few Black officers in World War I, his great grandfather served in the Civil War, and his great-great grandfather was a member of the British Monarchy's famed Life Guards. In 1943, Houston became the fourth generation of his family in the armed forces when he enlisted while a student at UC Berkeley.

At only 17 years old Houston was one of the youngest members of the 3rd Battalion in Combat Team 370 of the 92<sup>nd</sup> that entered combat in August 1944. On the enthralling pages of **Black Warriors**, Houston reveals his personal journey as a Black infantryman and the 370<sup>th</sup>'s odyssey as a Black infantry regiment. Based in Italy, the Combat Team's assignment was to cross the Arno River and break through the Germans' deeply fortified, "Gothic Line," which stretched 170 miles across Italy's "spine." This assignment countered how the U.S. Armed

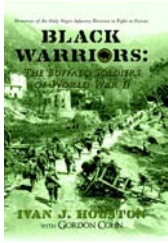
(MORE)

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Forces usually relegated most of its Black military personnel to service units as drivers, cooks, and laborers in support of the combat forces, such as the Red Ball Express driving munitions to the front line. However, it was clear by limiting African Americans to those positions there was never any intention to place them in direct combat. Eventually the exceptions included the Tuskegee Airmen flying their escort missions and the 92<sup>nd</sup> Infantry fighting on the ground. For nine months until the German surrender in May 1945, the Buffalo Soldiers bravely fought the Nazis and the Italian Fascists, but suffered hundreds of casualties.

Combat Team 370 was comprised of 4,000 men, predominantly with African Americans from the South. Most of the junior officers were African American, but the senior officers were mostly white southerners. This made for tense situations, but despite that Houston and his fellow 92<sup>nd</sup> soldiers were victorious in the end and defeated their German and Italian foes. They were actually greeted with flowers, hugs and kisses by Italian citizens. Houston would go on to receive a Purple Heart and a Combat Infantrymen's Badge.

Unfortunately, despite the victory, Houston and the over one million other African American men and women who served in WWII, still faced segregation and discrimination back in the United States. They had won the hearts and the minds of those in Italy, yet, could not get the same support from many of their fellow white U.S. citizens. Houston returned to UC Berkeley, eventually became a three-year letterman in track and field, and graduated in 1948 to begin an illustrious business career that spanned over 40 years. He is still a member of the *Military Order of the Purple Heart, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Disabled American Veterans.*

In 1948, President Truman finally banned segregation in the military, but segregation was not illegal nationwide until 1954's Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court ruling. Civil rights were not legally protected nationwide until the 1964 Civil Rights Act – over twenty years after Houston and others served America with distinction.

While the country's made progress, it is important that people of all races – especially young people -- know how people of color contributed to the United States' victory over Hitler's army all those years ago, and to remember the bravery of the unsung heroes of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Division, who fought and gave their lives in defense of freedom...

The book signing is being held at **1 pm on Saturday, June 6, 2009** at Eso Won Books during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Leimert Park Book Fair. Eso Won Books is located at 4331 Degnan Blvd., L.A, CA 90008 (ph. 323-290-1048). Parking available in lot behind the bookstore. For further information on *Black Warriors: The Buffalo Soldiers of World War II* or Mr. Houston, please email [info@blackwarriorsbook.com](mailto:info@blackwarriorsbook.com) or go to [www.blackwarriorsbook.com](http://www.blackwarriorsbook.com)

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