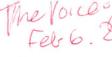
The blinding of Isaac Woodard





Isaac Woodard and his mom.

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Barbara Ball Publisher

Winnsboro native, Army Sergeant Isaac Woodard, a World War II veteran who was savagely beaten at the hands of a callous, intolerant sheriff, helped inspire civil rights in America.

WINNSBORO - Isaac Woodard, Jr. was born in Fairfield County, but grew up in Goldsboro, North Carolina. He enlisted in the U.S. Army on Oct. 14, 1942, at Fort Jackson, and served in the Pacific as part of a labor battalion. Woodard received an Honorable Discharge

at Camp Gordon, GA, in early February, 1946.

Along with a contingent of other discharged soldiers, black and white, Woodard boarded a Greyhouse bus on Feb. 12 to travel back home to North Carolina.

A conflict was triggered when the bus driver belittled the Army veteran for asking if there would be enough time for a bathroom break during a scheduled bus stop. It is reported that Woodard argued back. At the next stop, Woodard

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sticks.

was met by Chief of Police Linwood Shull

30 minutes.

Woodard

of Batesburg who, along with his deputies, beat Woodard savagely with their night-Woodard was later charged with drunk

and disorderly conduct before finally being taken to a veteran's hospital in Columbia. The NAACP took up Woodard's case in the spring of 1946, pressing military of-

ficials to provide assistance to the gravely injured veteran while also calling for legal action against Chief Shull.

By September of that year, NAACP officials met with President Harry Truman

but released after the jury deliberated only

who expressed outrage over this assault on a veteran. Shull was tried in federal court

larger conflicts of Jim Crow emerging after World War II. The public's response to the

vicious attack upon Woodard, as well as the response of President Harry Truman,

As news of the attack circulated in the

national media, President Harry Truman

created the first President's Committee on

new federal attention to racial inequality as

a matter of both domestic justice and out of

For many Americans, Isaac Woodard be-

came a sympathetic figure representing the

cure These Rights' in 1947.

concern for Cold War politics.

civil rights during the 1940's.

signaled a major shift in public support for

lace Oswald.

The Town also moved to dismiss the charges against Woodard. In February, 2019, Batesburg-Leesville

officials held a ceremony commemorating

Christian Spradly and Chief of Police Walwho, through his pain and suffering, made so much possible for the rest of us.

Goins said.

the crime, the injustice or the injury, but it brought well-deserved honor to this man

ful ceremony," Goins said. "It did not undo

Gaddy said. "It was a beautiful, emotional, meaning-

edge Isaac Woodward, Jr.'s life and service,"

"It is with great honor that we are proud

speak to Woodard's place in history.

to see this historical marker be placed in

Batesburg-Leesville to honor and acknowl-

"It was a privilege to be part of it,"

and honoring Woodard with a plaque that

now stands in the town. Winnsboro Mayor

Roger Gaddy and Fairfield County Coun-

cilwoman Bertha Goins were on hand to

This groundbreaking report led to the desegregation of the military in 1948 and

Civil Rights (PCCR) which published, 'To Se-

legacy.

But Woodard's death was not the end of his

On June 7, 2018, Robert M. Cook II,

Municipal Court Judge for the Town of

Batesburg-Leesville, issued an order

re-opening the case against Woodard

and subsequently dismissed all charges

against him. The order was granted upon

receiving a request from Town Attorney

Isaac Woodard died in September, 1992

in the Bronx. New York where he lived with

his nephew, Robert Young, and his family.