

WELCOME TO

Clarence Hylan Beavers Memorial Trail Kings Park Unique Area



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

This trail honors longtime Huntington resident Sgt. Clarence Hylan Beavers (1921 - 2017). Beavers was a member of the U.S. Army's first all-African-American paratrooper platoon—the 17 valiant men of the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion, known as ‘Triple Nickles.’

The Triple Nickles, considered a “test platoon,” hoped to deploy to Europe during World War II, but military leaders, fearing racial tensions, had other plans for the paratroopers. The USDA Forest Service requested their help parachuting into northwestern U.S. forests to fight the fire threat caused by Japanese incendiary bombs as well as naturally-caused fires. In the summer of 1945, the secret “Operation Firefly” launched, with the Triple Nickles making hundreds of fire jumps.

Beavers and his platoonmates were true pioneers, blazing a trail that led to full integration of African-Americans into the military in 1948. The federal smokejumper program they helped advance is still a vital part of the nation's wildland firefighting efforts.

Accessibility: Parking and this trail are accessible to people with disabilities.



Visit **triplenickle.com** for more about the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion.

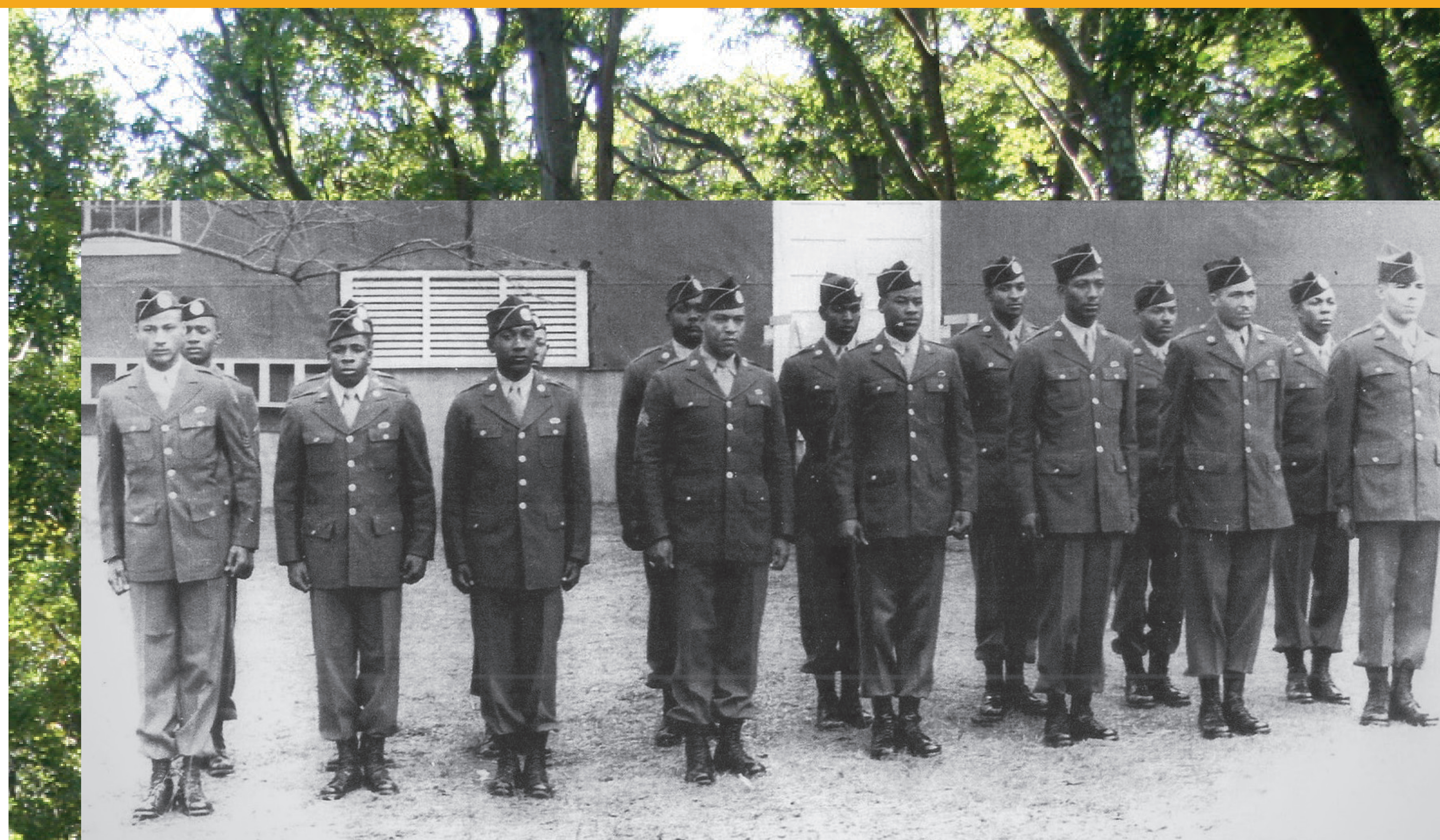
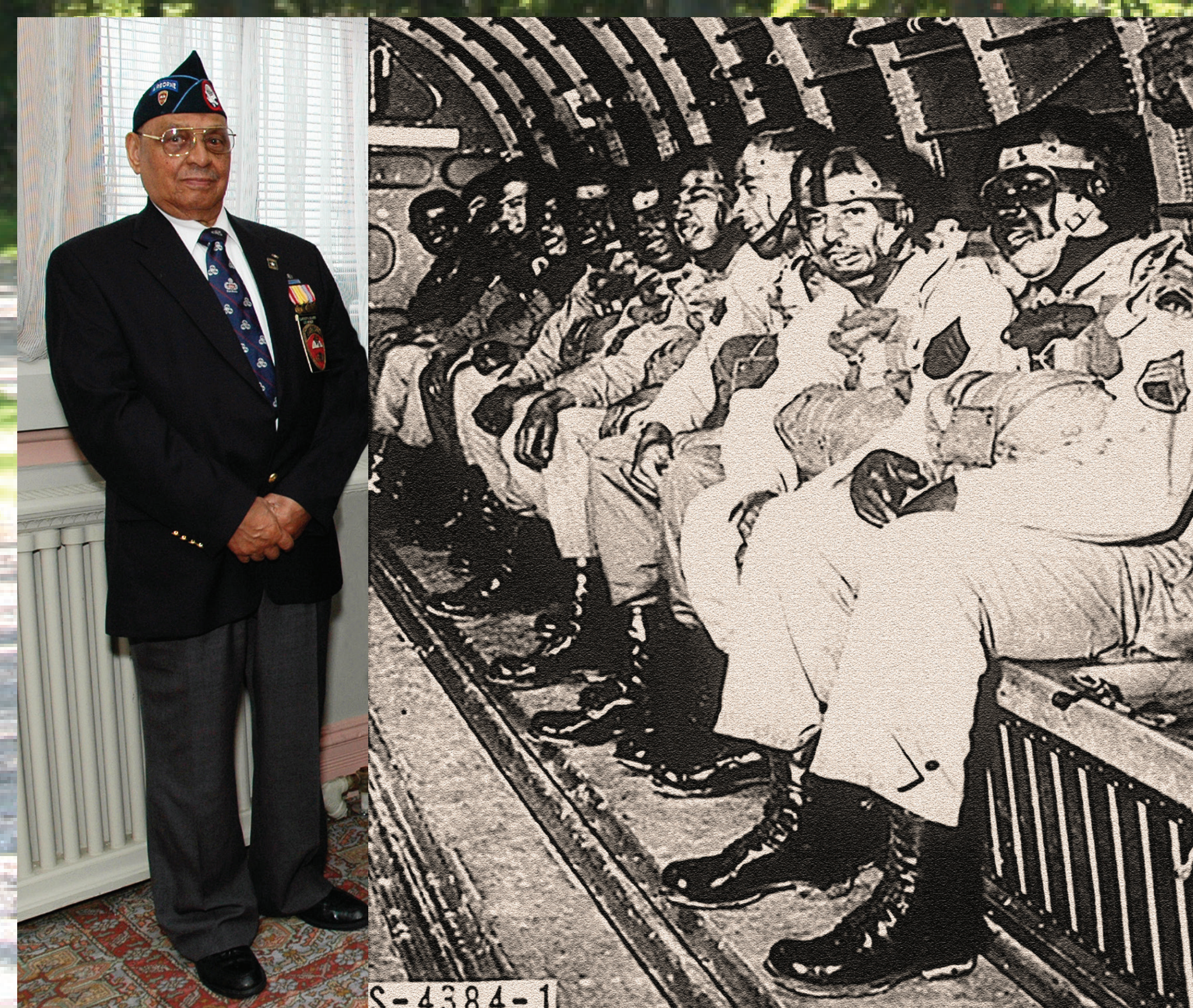
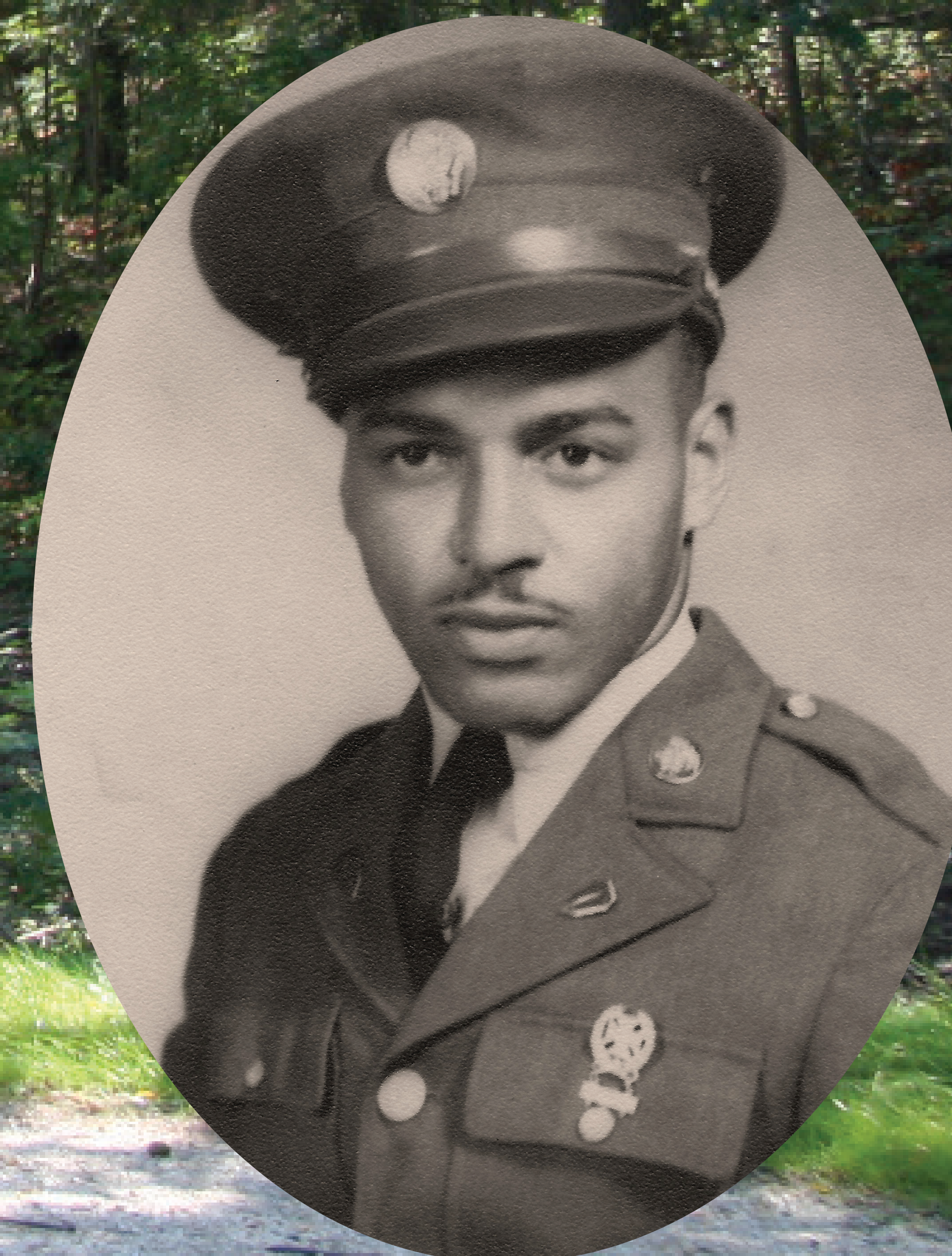


Photo of 16 of the first 17 African-American graduates from the 555th Parachute Infantry accepted for airborne duty in February 1944. Sgt. Beavers is pictured second from right in the back row. The 17th member of the test platoon, Carstell O. Stewart, was on emergency leave and earned his wings a week later. (Photo courtesy of Triple Nickle Association)



(L) Sgt. Beavers at a U.S. Forest Service recognition ceremony in Washington, D.C. in March 2010. (Photo courtesy of USDA Forest Service)

(R) Sgt. Beavers (second from right) awaiting a jump order. (Photo courtesy of Triple Nickle Association)



Sgt. Beavers puts on his helmet. (Photo Credit: U.S. Army)



The Triple Nickles jumped into Pacific Northwest forests. (Photo Credit: U.S. Army)

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