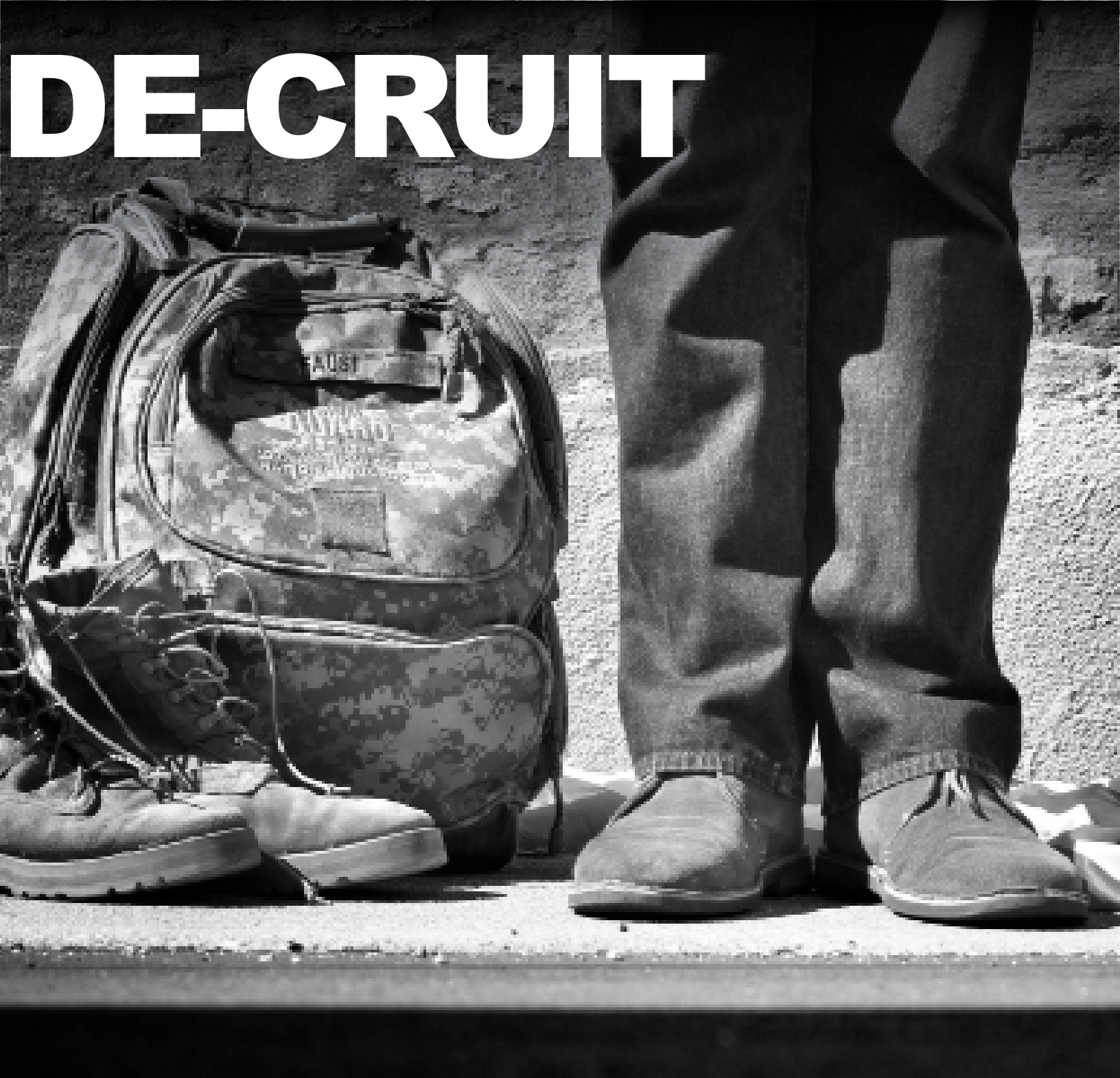


DE-CRUIT



Trauma & Military Veterans

Interview with Stephan Wolfert



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INTRODUCTION

1. What’s PTSD in the case of veterans?

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) explains that PTSD is “a disorder that develops in some people who have experienced a shocking, scary, or dangerous event.” When veterans are in the military, they may see combat. Veterans may have been on missions that exposed them to horrible and life-threatening experiences. These types of events can lead to PTSD. Other factors in a combat situation can add more stress to an already stressful situation. This may contribute to PTSD and other mental health problems. These factors include what veterans do in the war, the politics around the war, where the war is fought, and the type of enemy veterans face.

2. How Common is PTSD in Veterans?

The number of Veterans with PTSD varies by service era:

- Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Enduring Freedom (OEF): About 11-20 out of every 100 Veterans (or between 11-20%) who served in OIF or OEF have PTSD in a given year.
- Gulf War (Desert Storm): About 12 out of every 100 Gulf War Veterans (or 12%) have PTSD in a given year.
- Vietnam War: About 15 out of every 100 Vietnam Veterans (or 15%) were currently diagnosed with PTSD at the time of the most recent study in the late 1980s, the National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study (NVVRS). It is estimated that about 30 out of every 100 (or 30%) of Vietnam Veterans have had PTSD in their lifetime.

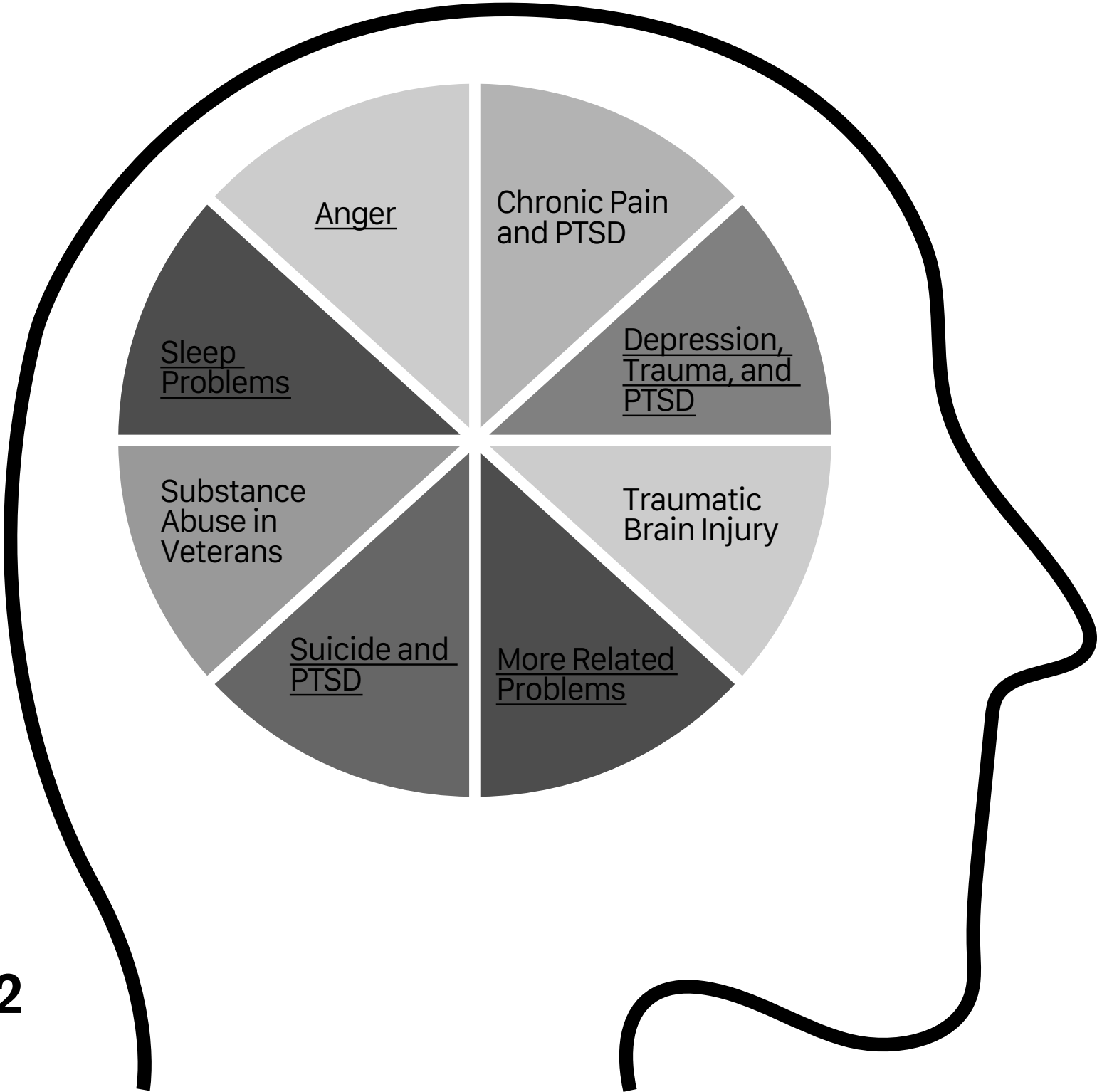
Reference: Veteran Affair
https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/common/common_veterans.asp

3. “soldier’s heart”*

Medical historians have documented many early accounts of what would now be classified as PTSD. There’s Herodotus’ description of an Athenian soldier who became blind after witnessing the Battle of Marathon in 490 B.C., and a Shakespearean monologue in Henry IV, Part 1 in which Lady Percy describes her husband’s sleeplessness and inability to enjoy life after fighting a battle. Then there are more modern descriptions, like accounts of Civil War combatants who developed what their doctors called “soldier’s heart.

**<https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/history-and-civilisation/2020/06/how-ptsd-went-from-shell-shock-to-a-recognised-medical-diagnosis>*

WHAT ARE VETERANS WITH PTSD SUFFERING FROM...



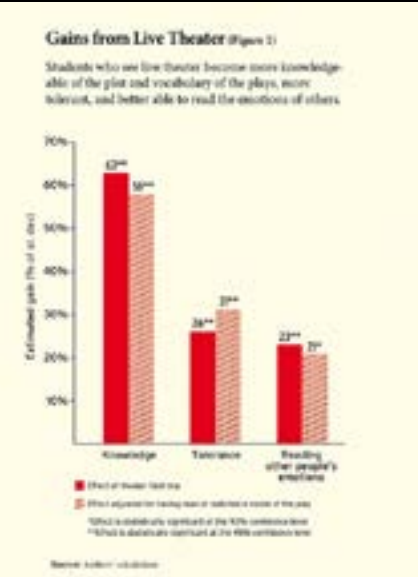
VETERANS PTSD IN THEATER



Cry Havoc! is a one-person play that unites veterans with civilians using Shakespeare's timeless words, and a few of his own, actor/veteran Stephan Wolfert in Cry Havoc! leads us on an interactive journey to meet Shakespeare's veterans. It shows us that the military men and women of Shakespeare's time wrestled with the same hopes and worries that occupy our modern lives. Stephan also brings us face to face with one of the most vexing military – and civilian – problems of our time. It explores the difficulties that our veterans and their families face.

A research finding of Learning from Live Theater

This experiment on the effects of field trips to see live theater demonstrates that seeing plays is an effective way to teach academic content; increases student tolerance by providing exposure to a broader, more diverse world; and improves the ability of students to recognize what other people are thinking or feeling.



BERSERKER

HISTORY

They are a legend and people still don't know if they existed in Medieval Scandinavia.

They were animalistic and, through their origin in animism, the lines between materialism and spiritual realms are blurred. Believing themselves to take on the form and powers of wild beasts, berserkers would often adorn themselves in animal skins and embody behaviors seen in animals like wolves and bears. In reality, these soldiers would voluntarily utilize psychedelic drugs to dull their sense of pain and fuel their hallucinogenic rages. Their potential for destruction made them valuable for war strategy, but at the cost of the soldier's own mental stability, often leaving them ostracized from their communities with severe signs of PTSD.

PTSD IN BERSERKERS:

In the time of the berserkers, their calling was on the battlefield, making any time spent off the battlefield almost as difficult as combat. Between side-effects from the drugs they would use before battle to the isolation imposed upon them by soldiers on their side fearing their outbursts, berserkers were largely withdrawn from society as a whole. Though to be a berserker was to accept a short life, that is no longer the case in more modern examples of the berserk state which have more lasting consequences on survivors. In Johnathan Shay's Achilles in Vietnam, an American veteran describes his time after coming back from Vietnam: "Every three days I would totally explode, lose it for no reason at all. I'd be sitting there calm as could be, and this monster would come out of me with a fury that most people didn't want to be around."

POP CULTURE

Turning anger into strength is a trope that is very much alive and well today.

In the popular role playing game Dungeon's & Dragons, the role of the berserker is depicted as "an avatar of war", attacking any who are in their path, friend and foe alike. There are hints of the actual history as they are shown to draw strength from beasts as they embody their fighting style and bloodlust, though embellished with magical mechanics. Assuming the role of the berserker, players are encouraged to emulate a strong, nomadic warrior in a "constant state of battle" that gains strength from their pain. The Incredible Hulk is an iconic example of the spirit of the berserker living on in modern media. The Hulk, an embodiment of Dr. Bruce Banner's rage, gets stronger the angrier he gets. This rage completely blinds The Hulk as he proceeds to wreak havoc on enemies and friendlies alike as he loses control of himself.



HARLEM HELLFIGHTERS

WHO WERE THE HARLEM HELLFIGHTERS?

Authorized in 1913, the 369th Infantry Regiment, formerly known as the 15th Infantry of the New York National Guard, was the first African American regiment of the New York National Guard. The regiment based in Harlem had no prior combat experience, and consisted of African American men from all over New York State and Puerto Rico.

After serving 191 days of combat in France, longer than any American regiment of World War I, the German army gave the soldiers a nickname "Hellfighters" due to their actions on the battlefield. However, despite their courage, sacrifice and dedication to their country, they returned home to face racism and segregation from their fellow countrymen.

Citation/Information resources:

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<https://empirestateplaza.ny.gov/legacy-harlem-hellfighters>



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(n.d.). [Certificate for French Croix de Guerre medal issued to Corporal Lawrence L. McVey who was a part of the Harlem Hellfighters] [Photograph]. National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington D.C., United States. https://nmaahc.si.edu/object/nmaahc_2011.108.9.2

TIMELINE:

JUNE 2, 1913

Governor William Sulzer signed a bill authorizing the creation of the 15th Infantry of the New York National Guard. It made them the first African American Infantry of the New York National Guard.

APRIL 6, 1917

America entered World War I. Three days later, the regiment was recognized by the federal government.

OCTOBER 8, 1917

The regiment traveled to Camp Wadsworth in Spartanburg, South Carolina but faced such severe discrimination from the locals that the regiment was moved to France to continue training.

DECEMBER 27, 1917

The regiment landed in France but was only used as a labor unit, building roads and docks, while the regimental band, directed by James Reese Europe, toured hospitals and camps.

MARCH, 1918

After months of rallying for combat, the 15th Infantry was granted permission to join the French Army as the 369th Regiment of the United States.

MAY 14 - 15, 1918

Henry Johnson, a native of Albany, New York. He defeated over twenty German soldiers using a broken rifle, a handful of grenades, and a bolo knife in what is known as "The Battle of Henry Johnson."

DECEMBER 13, 1918

The 369th Regiment received the Croix de Guerre, which was France's prestigious military honor. For his bravery, Johnson was awarded the Croix de Guerre "avec Palme."

FEBRUARY 17, 1919

The 369th was welcomed home by massive crowds in a parade along 5th Avenue into Harlem.

Citation/Information Resources:

<https://empirestateplaza.ny.gov/legacy-harlem-hellfighters>

DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION DURING AND AFTER WAR

In April 1917 the United States declared war on Germany. The following month the 15th New York reported to Camp Peekskill, New York, for a short course of rifle training. The regiment was officially mustered into federal service in July. However, the 15th would be held apart from the rest of the army. When the “Rainbow Division,” a collection of National Guard units assembled from more than two dozen states, marched down Fifth Avenue in a farewell parade, the 15th would not be allowed to join them because “black is not a color of the rainbow.”

In October 1917, the men of the 15th were ordered to Camp Wadsworth in Spartanburg, South Carolina, and harassment and verbal abuse became a matter of routine. Some from the 15th recalled the events of 1906, when whites in Brownsville, Texas, had framed a group of African American soldiers for a crime they did not commit. Just two months before the 15th arrived in Spartanburg, racial clashes between African American soldiers and whites in Houston had claimed 20 lives. Returning Black veterans confronted the reality that the country still held Black people in low regard. Racist attacks were widespread upon their return to the United States. in what now is known as “The Red Summer of 1919,” coined by James Wheldon, field secretary of the NAACP. That summer saw violent attacks including race riots, mob violence and lynchings, initiated by white servicemen against Black veterans in many cases.

Citation/Information Resources:

Ray, M. (2020, April 18). Harlem Hellfighters. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Harlem-Hellfighters>
<https://abcnews.go.com/US/photos-back-courageous-harlem-hellfighters-wwi/story?id=75909298>

WILLIAM HENRY JOHN-

William Henry Johnson (circa July 15, 1897 – July 1, 1929) was a United States Army soldier who performed heroically in the first African American unit of the United States Army to engage in combat in World War I. On May 15, 1918, Johnson fought off German soldiers, killing several, and saved his fellow American soldier Needham Roberts from capture in northern France. His heroic actions were celebrated in the press at the time. Johnson received France’s highest award for valor, the Croix de Guerre, but did not even receive a Purple Heart from the U.S. government after being wounded 21 times.

A Purple Heart was finally presented to Pvt. Johnson posthumously by President Bill Clinton in 1996. Johnson received the Medal of Honor in 2015 from President Barack Obama, which was 97 years after his actions on the battlefield. President Barack Obama gave a speech summarizing Johnson’s early life, his time as a soldier, and his life after his service.

Citation/Information resources:

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