



## **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

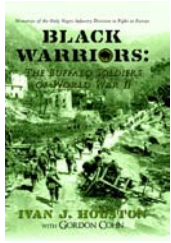
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CONTACT: Joanne Morris

(310) 801-6486

[joannemorris@blackwarriorsbook.com](mailto:joannemorris@blackwarriorsbook.com)



### **WWII Buffalo Soldier and Author, Ivan J. Houston Selected to Participate on Hon. Diane Watson's Entertainment Panel Being Held on September 24<sup>th</sup> at the 39<sup>th</sup> Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Weekend**

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WASHINGTON, DC – WWII Buffalo Soldier and author, **Ivan J. Houston** is one of the nationally selected participants on Hon. Diane Watson's Entertainment Entrepreneurs Panel at the 39<sup>th</sup> Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Weekend. Houston is the author of *Black Warriors: The Buffalo Soldiers of World War II* (iUniverse), his riveting account of serving in WWII with the U.S. Army's segregated Black 92<sup>nd</sup> Infantry -- the legendary Buffalo Soldiers – that became WWII's first Black Infantry Combat Unit in Europe. While Spike Lee profiled the 92<sup>nd</sup> in "Miracle at St. Anna," Houston hopes to expose even more people to the 92<sup>nd</sup>'s true story with *Black Warriors*, in this 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of D-Day and his combat unit's first battle on August 23, 1944.

About *Black Warriors*, renowned historian and author, **Dr. Ronald H. Baylor**, Chair of Georgia Tech's School of History, has noted, "[Houston] narrates a fascinating history of the military actions against the Germans, and African Americans' daily battles in a Jim Crow army... This book is an excellent source for anyone interested in World War II and African American history." Featured in the BEA's 2009 New Titles Showcase and a "Rising Star" book on barnesandnoble.com, *Black Warriors* is the first book by Houston, now 84, who is the former Chairman/CEO of Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company, one of the country's largest historically Black-owned businesses founded in 1925. Houston was renowned for both his local and national civic leadership, as well as, his business acumen. Corporate boards he sat on, often the first African American, included Fortune 500 entities such as Kaiser Aluminum and Pacific Telesis Group. His civic boards ranged from the National Urban League to Catholic University. He was listed on *Ebony Magazine's* "100 Most Influential Black Americans" from 1976 to 1990, and profiled in *New York Times* bestseller, *Our Kind of People* by Lawrence Otis Graham.

With *Black Warriors*, this great-grandson of both former slaves and free African-Americans will also be renowned for something not many knew – he is a decorated WWII veteran. In fact, Houston's father, Norman O. Houston, was one of the few Black officers in World War I, and has a residential park in Los Angeles named after him. His great-grandfather, Benjamin F. Talbot, served in the Civil War, and his name is listed on the African American Civil War Memorial in Washington, DC. His great-great grandfather, Charles Dyde Hine, was a member of the British

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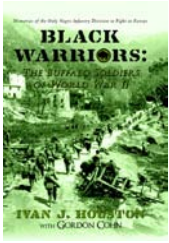
Ivan J. Houston ■ (310) 607-4943 ■ 419 North Larchmont Blvd., #98 ■ Los Angeles, CA 90004 ■ Fax: (310) 645-9155

[www.blackwarriorsbook.com](http://www.blackwarriorsbook.com) ■ [info@blackwarriorsbook.com](mailto:info@blackwarriorsbook.com) ■ [twitter.com/ivanjhouston](https://twitter.com/ivanjhouston) ■ [twitter.com/buffalosoldiers](https://twitter.com/buffalosoldiers)

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Monarchy's famed Life Guards. Therefore, in 1943, Houston, including his brother, Norman B. Houston, became the family's fourth generation in the military when he voluntarily enlisted while a business student at UC Berkeley.

At 19, Houston was one of the youngest members of the 3rd Battalion of Combat Team 370 that had 4,000 men, and entered combat in August 1944. On the enthralling pages of *Black Warriors*, that includes WWII maps and archival photos, Houston reveals his personal journey as a Black infantryman and the 370<sup>th</sup>'s odyssey as a Black infantry combat regiment based in Italy on a mission to break through the Nazis' infamous 170 mile "Gothic Line." Their combat assignment countered how the U.S. Armed Forces had previously – and unjustly – relegated most of its Black military personnel to service units, in support of the combat forces, such as the Red Ball Express driving munitions to the front line. Eventually, the Tuskegee Airmen flying and defending their escort missions and the 92<sup>nd</sup> Infantry bravely and fiercely fighting on the ground to victory would defy that infamous relegation.

Despite segregation, Houston and his fellow 92<sup>nd</sup> soldiers were victorious in the end, defeating their German foes and Italian Nazi sympathizers after nine months of fighting until Germany's May 1945 surrender. They were actually greeted with flowers, hugs and kisses by Italian citizens. Houston would receive a Purple Heart, a Bronze Star, a Combat Infantryman Badge and 3 Battle Stars. Unfortunately, despite his medals and the victory by the Allied Forces, 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 won the hearts and minds of those they liberated in WWII, but 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 the Nazis so many decades 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 Entertainment Entrepreneurs Panel is from 9 am – Noon on Thursday, September 24, 2009 in Room 201 at Washington DC's Walter E. Washington Convention Center. For more details go to [www.blackwarriorsbook.com](http://www.blackwarriorsbook.com), email [info@blackwarriorsbook.com](mailto:info@blackwarriorsbook.com) or call (310) 607-4943.