



A LEAP OF FAITH

THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE TRIPLE NICKLES



“ We fought segregation and discrimination and intolerance. They tried to burn us out, but it made us stronger. It made us angry. It made us persevere. ”

— Lt. Col. Bradley Biggs



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A Leap of Faith: The Untold Story of the Triple Nickles is a documentary project about a unique group of paratroopers who earned their jumpwings during World War II.

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 1945 a unique group of soldiers were called into action to fight the second largest attack on US soil since Pearl Harbor. Much like the Tuskegee Airman, the men of the 555th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR), known as the Triple Nickles, were an all African American outfit assembled less than a year after the Advisory Committee on Negro Troop Policies was formed. Rampant racism was the main enemy of this esteemed unit that was trained at a level much higher than their white counterparts.

Both change and integration were slow to take hold. The army trained these men as paratroopers, but didn't have a use for them. They weren't ordered to serve overseas, but when the war reached American soil, they were called into action. Japanese forces had launched an attack intended to destroy much of the Pacific Northwest with a simple and common weapon: fire. Weather balloons armed with incendiary bombs were launched from overseas, causing devastating forest fires in the Pacific northwest. This was the combat front in which the men of the Triple Nickles would see action.

CONCEPT

How this story is lost in the annals of time is remarkable. Not only is it an important chapter in the desegregation of the armed forces in the 1940s, but it is a story that has so many unbelievable elements that have never been told. The entire story of Operation Firefly in and of itself is an incredible story that most people are unaware. Much like the individual achievements made by the 555th PIR, their eventual integration leaves questions of how we reflect on change. Is there an ultimate benefit for surrendering one's roots to become a much larger part of the whole?

This project is an opportunity to tell a story that desperately needs to be told. It's much more than that as well. It's adding a chapter to American history that not many know outside of the 555th PIR family survivors, the US Army and US Forestry Service. To be involved with this project is to leave a footprint in history.

CREATIVE STYLE & APPROACH

Utilizing historic video archival footage, photographs and scheduled available interviews with surviving family members, the film will be narrated by an A-list African American talent. Very short stylized reenactments will be interspersed with voice-over actors conveying the thoughts of the scenes from actual quotes of the men who experienced them. Presented in a narrative format, the goal will be to tell the story from the perspective of the original test platoon members from existing memoirs.

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