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CIVIL WAR TROOPS FROM THE 102ND U.S. COLORED INFANTRY TO BE REMEMBERED AT ELMWOOD CEMETERY ON VETERANS DAY

Detroit, MI – For the 25th consecutive year, a diverse group of veterans, historians, students and other citizens will gather on Veterans Day, **Wednesday, November 11, 2009 at 10 a.m.** in **Historic Elmwood Cemetery**, 1200 Elmwood at East Lafayette in Detroit, to honor the memory of members of the **102nd U.S. Colored Infantry**. The public is invited to attend this moving event.

The **Detroit Historical Society's Black Historic Sites Committee**, led by **Beulah Ware Hamilton**, conducts the ceremony. The ritual will be held in Section S of the cemetery, where 18 members of the 102nd Colored Infantry are buried.

The idea for the ceremony was inspired by visits Beulah Hamilton made to her husband's gravesite shortly after his death. Her husband, **Karl Walker Hamilton**, was an internationally noted historian and had guided numerous visits to the graves of these Civil War veterans. In fact, during her visits, Mrs. Hamilton noted that there was never even an American flag flying over this historic gravesite. "To honor their legacy and the legacy of my husband, I decided to hold a Veteran's Day ceremony there every year," Mrs. Hamilton said.

The 102nd U.S Colored Infantry Regiment was formed in the summer of 1863 as the volunteer First Michigan Colored Infantry and trained on the site of Detroit's Duffield School on Macomb Street. Some of these volunteers were escaped slaves from the Underground Railroad, and many were fighting to free family members who were still enslaved. The regiment was renamed the 102nd after mustering into the Union Army in 1864. Members of the 102nd served with distinction in South Carolina, Georgia and Florida.

Participating in the ceremony are members of the **W.A.C. Veterans Association, Wolverine Chapter 67**; the **Brewster Old -Timers**; the **Detroit Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen**; the **U.S. Marine Corps Montford Point**, the **U.S. Marine Corps Montford Point Association** and the **U.S. Marine Corps Detachment #158**; the **Tom Phillips Post # 184**;

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the James Europe Post #3080; the Colin L. Powell American Veterans Post # 910; the Detroit Civil War Re-enactment Group; the Buffalo Soldiers 9th & 10th Cavalry; the Historic Daughters of the Union Veterans of the Civil War, Tent #3; the 1279th U.S. Combat Engineers Alumni Association; the Historic Triple Nickels; the Michigan National Guard; the 761st U.S. Tank Battalion; the Detroit Veterans of Desert Storm; the Coleman A. Young Post #202; the Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.; the Native American Association; First Nation of Canada; Disabled American Veterans, units of JROTC cadets from several Detroit area high schools; and veterans of several wars.

Highlights of the program will be the following:

1. A fly-over by a U.S. Air Force fighter unit;
2. A presentation of the American flag;
3. A placement of the American flag on each Civil War gravesite;
4. A presentation of wreaths honoring the 102nd Colored Infantry, two Native Americans from Michigan who served in the Civil War, all veterans – living and deceased – who have served our country;
5. A placement of a wreath by the Tuskegee Airmen on the gravesite of former Detroit mayor Coleman A. Young, who was a Tuskegee Airman;
6. A roll call for the 102nd Colored Infantry and the two Native Americans;
7. A placement of a long-stemmed red rose on each gravesite by JROTC cadets from area high schools;
8. A release of two doves to symbolize peace for Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan;
9. The playing of “Taps;”
10. A gun salute by the 102nd U.S. Colored Troops Reenactment Group;
11. A ceremonial postlude;
12. Historic St. Joseph Church will ring its bells to re-create the religious celebration for the finale of the Civil War;
13. Weather permitting, there will be a mini-parade of men and women in period dress.

There is no charge for the program.

The Black Historic Sites Committee of the Detroit Historical Society, celebrating its 35th birthday, is a group of volunteers that promotes a greater understanding of the contributions of African Americans to the history of metro Detroit and the state of Michigan.

For more information, call **(313) 567-1785**.

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