

**Black HISTORY**

# Viva 'the Deuce': Roxbury honors Korean War vets

He rose to the rank of colonel, serving until 1947. After his discharge, Gourdin rejoined the National Guard and served in it until 1959. He retired having earned the rank of brigadier general, the first African American to earn this rank in Massachusetts.

and features Newton Mayor Setti Warren as the keynote speaker. The parade starts at 1 p.m. from Eliot Square and winds its way to the Gourdin Veteran's Memorial Park. The program starts there at 2 p.m.

Fondly called "the Deuce," the 272nd draws its roots from the 372nd Infantry, the racially segregated U.S. Army regiment that served as part of the French 157th Division (Red Hand Division) during World War I. It was made up of National Guard units from: Washington D.C., Ohio, Maryland, Tennessee, Connecticut and Massachusetts. Within the Massachusetts unit, Company L, 6th Infantry was the sole black company in an otherwise all-white regiment, a number of whom were combat veterans of the Spanish-American War.

According to former 272nd Corporal Ralph F. Browne Jr., the 272nd was the last all-black military National Guard unit to be integrated. Despite the politics of the time, Browne said the "Deuce" was sent to West Germany and trained troops for the Korean War.

Said Browne: "Many Boston citizens will never forget that historic moment in September 1950 when the 272nd proudly paraded down Columbus Avenue and Tremont Street on their way to North Station for their trip to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin" to join the 1st and 5th Armies at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin and later to Germany.



OFFICERS - 272nd F.A. Bn MNG, CAMP EDWARDS, 1949

COL. EDWARD A. GOURDIN, COMMANDING

METROPOLITAN AREA OF BOSTON - 1962