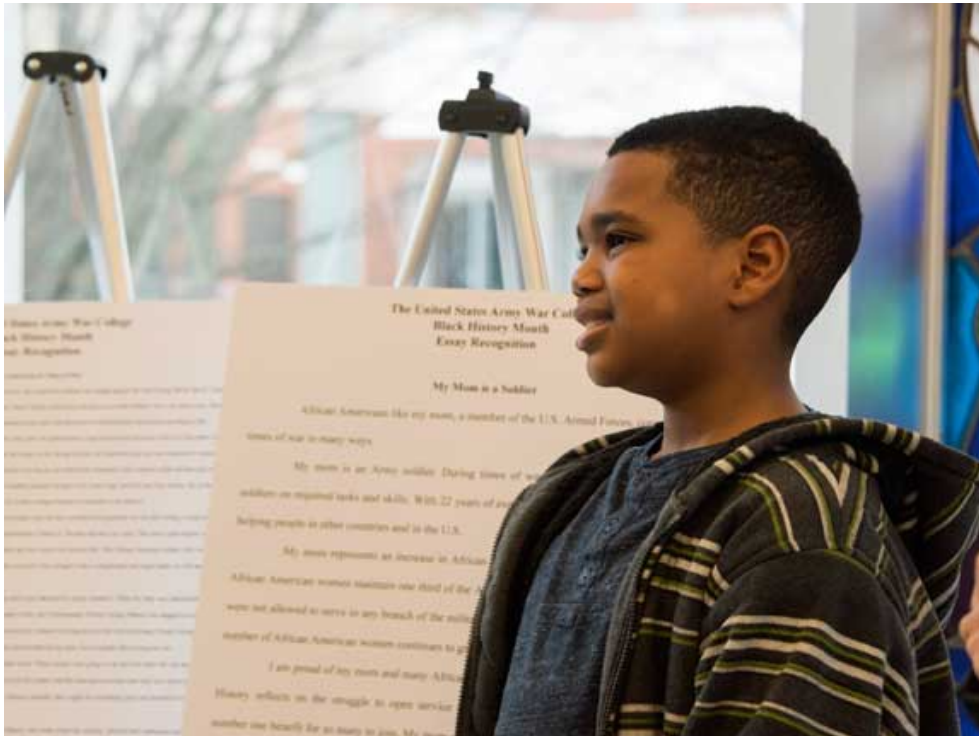


USAWC celebrates African Americans wartime achievements

By Robert Martin 16 February 2018



Keenan Williams a sixth grader from Lamberton Middle School stands in front the his winning essay about his mother being a Soldier, after the Army War College observance of Black History Month, Bliss Hall, Feb. 14.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usawc/albums/72157665775767208>

Carlisle Barracks recognized finalists of its annual essay competition and honored Black History Month at a ceremony in Bliss Hall, Feb. 14. The audience in attendance included middle school students, parents, principals and USAWC students, faculty and staff.

“Black history month should serve as a reminder to celebrate this final aspect of our American heritage year round” said Lt. Col. Johnny Evans. “Today we celebrate the achievements of African Americans and recognizes the central role we have played in the history of the United States,” he said.

Members of the Discussion panel were:

Brig. Gen. William Walker, acting Commanding General of the National Guard District of Columbia and resident students, Lt. Col.'s Landis and Yolanda Maddox, and Lt. Col. Andre Burks.

Brig. Gen. Walker began by thanking the middle school students for writing their essays, and noted how he read each essay.

Walker explained to the audience how, in 1917, Black Americans answered the call to protect our country, and how 1,005 African Americans of the First Separate Battalion, District of Columbia National Guard, were ordered to protect our nation's capital.

Landis told the story of [Col. Charles Young](#), and the early years of the armed forces. He told how Young fought during the Spanish American War with the Buffalo Soldiers, was the third African American to graduate from the U.S. Military Academy, and the 1st African-American National Park Superintendent.

Yolanda discusses African Americans currently serving, and who are making significant impacts through their service today. She mentioned Lt. Gen. Nadja West, who went from being an orphan to the highest-ranking African American woman in the history of the United States, and serves as the Army's Surgeon General.

Burks then looked to the future of African Americans, directing his comments to the middle school students, saying, you have the opportunity to make something of yourself, graduated from High School, graduate from college and position yourself in society, so that those that came before you are proud.

The Army War College collaborated with seven area schools for this year's Black History Month recognition event. The War College invited middle school children in grades 6-8 to participate in the Black History Month essay contest.

"Writing about black history sparks interest, and maybe they will look into an area they may have never looked. It allows them to learn something new and unique," said Wilson Principle Walter Bond. "It's important not to let Black History be a onetime event, but try to embed it within everything they are learning about.

2018 Black History Month - Essay Contest Awardees, essays can be found at <https://csi.armywarcollege.edu/bhm/BlackHistoryMonth.aspx>

Big Spring Middle School

6th Grade: Peyton Weekly

7th Grade: Aliyah March and Paige Gibboney

Eagle View Middle School

7th Grade: Aapthi Kavuri

8th Grade: Kharece Ogunnaike

Good Hope Middle School

6th Grade: Hope Gabikiny

8th Grade: Mariyam Ahmed

8th Grade: Derek Works

Lamberton Middle School

6th Grade: Efraimara Fernandez

6th Grade: Keenan Williams

6th Grade: Lily Chhoeung

Mechanicsburg Middle School

6th Grade: Sophia Goss

7th Grade: Jackie Wyszynski

8th Grade: Bella Gilliard

Saint Patrick School

6th Grade: Morgan Coleman

7th Grade: Daniel Sandino-Salazar

8th Grade: Kaitlyn Baranko

Wilson Middle School

6th Grade: Jake Kiesow

7th Grade: Maya Reichenbach

8th Grade: Owen Andrews

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