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Celebrate Black History Month at the NVMM on February 26

Free panel discussion, music and poetry honor Legacies of Black Veterans

COLUMBUS, Ohio -- Join the [National Veterans Memorial and Museum \(NVMM\)](#) on February 26 from 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. for [Legacies of Black Veterans](#) in honor of 200,000 pioneering soldiers of the United States Colored Troops (USCT). Programming includes a discussion of the USCT's critical contributions to the Union's Civil War victory with scholars, authors and military descendants.

Events will begin with a special performance of the Black national anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," featuring renowned Ukrainian violinist, Arkadiy Gips, and fellow musical guests Shaun Booker, a Columbus Blues Hall of Fame inductee, and Eric Gnezda, musician and vocalist.

In addition to his musical talents, Gnezda is an Emmy-nominated host of the national PBS program, "Songs at the Center," and will lead panelists in a thoughtful conversation around the history and impact of African Americans who served in the USCT. This special event will close with additional musical performances and readings of works from the late Black poet laureate and Ohio native, Paul Laurence Dunbar. This event is free for all attendees, but [registration](#) is required.



Legacies of Black Veterans Panelists

- **Donna and William Burtch**, NVMM members, are sibling co-authors of the award-winning biography of W.G. Raymond titled, "W.G.: The Opium-addicted Pistol Toting Preacher Who Raised the First Federal African American Union Troops." Raymond is credited with recruiting the first federal companies of Black soldiers from Washington, D.C. (Book is available for purchase from the Museum Exchange)
- **Dr. Kelly Mezurek**, author of "For Their Own Cause: The 27th United States Colored Troops," is a renowned USCT scholar, member of the Ohio Humanities Speakers Bureau and NVMM member. (Book is available for purchase from the Museum Exchange)
- **Dale A. Henry** is a U.S. Army Veteran, former mayor of Springfield, Ohio, and descendent of a USCT soldier. As president of The Gammon House, an Underground Railroad Historic Landmark, Henry was instrumental in procuring a monument dedicated to USCT Soldiers in Springfield.
- **Eric Gnezda**, Emmy-nominated creator and host of the national PBS program, "Songs at the Center," will moderate the panel discussion. Gnezda also is a recipient of the Ohioana Citation for Music Composition.

Musicians

- **Arkadiy Gips**, Ukrainian born violinist virtuoso, has performed at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and was featured on two world tours with Madonna.
- **Shaun Booker**, the Empress of Beale Street, is a Columbus Blues Hall of Fame inductee whose family roots are in the heartland of the blues -- Meridian, Mississippi. Booker is a descendant of many Veterans with service as far back as the Civil War.

Black History Month Digital Stories and Shopping

In addition to Legacies of Black Veterans, the NVMM is featuring [inspiring stories from Black service members](#) and **new items in Shop NVMM for Black History Month**, including the [Cashe Hero T-Shirt by Triple Nickel](#) in honor of Sergeant 1st Class Alwyn C. Cashe, the first Black Medal of Honor recipient during the Global War on Terror. Visitors can support Triple Nickel and more minority-owned businesses on [Shop NVMM](#), the National Veterans Memorial and Museum's online store dedicated to elevating companies owned or operated by Veterans turned entrepreneurs -- Vetrepreneurs.



Check out our latest Rally Point conversation with U.S. Army Veterans Ruben Ayala and Chris McPhee in [More than Clothing: The Triple Nickel Story](#). Learn about the inspiration behind their brand and how they along with their business partners, Rod Graham and Curtez Riggs are driven to spark change with a little bit of hip-hop flare. [Rally Point](#) is powered by Central Ohio Ford Dealers.



About the National Veterans Memorial and Museum

The National Veterans Memorial and Museum takes visitors on a narrative journey telling individual stories and sharing experiences of Veterans from all military branches throughout history. [The National Veterans Memorial and Museum](#) pays tribute to the sacrifices of men and women in service and their families. History is presented through a dynamic, participatory experience with photos, letters and personal effects, multi-media presentations, and interactive exhibits. Together, these elements link our national story of service to the larger context of the world.

THIS SPECIAL EVENT IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

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