



# Webinar

Organized by Minority Veterans of America (US)

Host: Crystal Ellington

Speaker:

Dr. Ann James

Isaiah James

Simply Tee Poetry

Christy Piper

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## Our Stories, Our Truth: When the Uniform Comes Off

During this series, you will hear stories of discrimination faced during and after-service from our members of our community, our family-in-arms, and thought-leaders within our community.

To (re)-see this webinar: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=796IY5D2nRY&list=WL&index=2&ab\\_channel=MinorityVets](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=796IY5D2nRY&list=WL&index=2&ab_channel=MinorityVets)

\*This webinar addresses the issue of minorities in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Since the integration of the Armed Forces in 1946, racial and ethnic minority veterans and servicemembers have been subjected to discrimination, racism, even physical and mental assault. Despite the obstacles, these members of the Armed Forces have overcome all odds to repeatedly go above and beyond the call of duty.

Based on 2019 survey data from the military time, about 36% of respondents have seen evidence of white supremacists and racial ideologies in the military: a rise of 14% in just one year. In this webinar you will hear powerful testimony from several ethnic minority representatives who are former members of the United States Armed Forces.

This report reflects several testimonies by highlighting some of the salient passages of the shared discourses.

### Crystal Ellington

“The sad truth was - and in many ways still is - that certain career specialties don’t attract or retain people of color or women”.

“I slowly began to see that not only was I the first and only black helicopter female in my unit, but I was regarded as less than solely for that reason. I witnessed being passed over for promotion – despite being overly qualified -, I was also frequently asked probing questions about my hair – it was even referred to as a little black girl – from a certain superior when he was looking for me”.

“In conclusion, I’d be wrong if I said that the military is a racist and discriminatory place. I met amazing people within the military and my unit that have forever changed my life for the better. However, just like anywhere else in this country, there are racist, and problematic, and discriminatory individuals. While this is not a new phenomenon, the policies and regulations surrounding accountability for these individuals must be changed if we are to have a more inclusive armed force”.

### Dr Ann James

<https://www.drannjames.com>

“The first time that I felt some type of discrimination due to my race – it’s one thing to be a woman in the military – but when you put race on top of that, that double edged sword on top of that, that is something totally different”.

### Isaiah James

<https://www.blackveteransproject.org>

“Racism and racial disparities in the military are everywhere. The military is a microcosm of society: to think that there’s no racism in the military would be just naïve. [...] Just because you wear a uniform, does not automatically erase your biases or prejudice and they are still there. We’re going to have to deal with racism at a societal level because society feeds our military industrial complex.”

## Our Stories, Our Truth: When the Uniform Comes Off

“For the most part, African-Americans were subjugated and relegated to service roles in the military. So, you go with what you know.”

### Simply Tee Poetry

<https://simplyteepoetry.com>

She shared a poem entitled “Homeland” explaining how she has got discriminated against once she got out of the military and what that felt like. The poem is available in the video between 33:53 and 36:46.

### Christy Piper

<https://www.christypiper.com>

“They all look the exact same. They all look identical so like those guys they screwed up just as much as the women or the minorities, but they blended right in. They never learned their names. But if you stick out, if you’re a different colour, you’re a woman, you look different, they know exactly who you are and you’re never going to blend in with anybody”.



1. Video Clip from American Veteran\_PBS.com (<https://www.pbs.org/show/american-veteran/>)