



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Parks and Recreation Department

Oregon Heritage Commission

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Testimony in Support of SCR 30  
June 14, 2017, 3 pm, HR D  
House Committee on Rules

Chair Williamson, Vice Chairs McLain and Rayfield, and Representatives Barreto, Hack, Holvey, Kennemer, Nosse, and Smith Warner:

The Oregon Heritage Commission supports recognition of Oregon's rich and diverse heritage. This heritage includes the pioneering achievements and distinguished service of the 555<sup>th</sup> "Triple Nickles" Parachute Infantry Battalion during World War II, which SCR 30 will honor. As the first African-American paratrooper unit in the United States Army, the officers and enlisted men of the 555<sup>th</sup> had a unique mission of recovering and disposing of Japanese incendiary balloon bombs and suppressing the forest fires those bombs caused. In the face of segregation and discrimination, lacking appropriate equipment and training, these brave servicemen conducted thirty-six missions in the Pacific Northwest. By the end of the 1945 fire season, they completed more than 1,200 individual jumps over Oregon, California, Washington, Montana, and Canada as part of their "smokejumper" patrols.

Stationed right here in Oregon, the story of the 555<sup>th</sup> challenges us to rethink where we draw the frontline of World War II's Pacific Theatre, and reminds us, as Oregonians, of the many ways we can celebrate our heroes. SCR 30 will recognize an exceptional chapter of Oregon's history and honor those that contributed to it. We are proud to join the bipartisan legislators supporting SCR 30 and look forward to working together in the future as we continue to give voice to a just and inclusive history of our state.

Sincerely,

Chair, Eric L. Martin

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