



Something From Eddie: Getting to know Eddie Livingston, WWII Vet, ex-POW, Activist, Visionary, Writer...

Pam Baker

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"I came out of service with my health shattered. I had no "job skills" had I been able to work... I only knew how to 'soldier.' There was no demand for my services. A VA doctor told me to go home and 'shoot myself' as a relief to my government. Perhaps I should have." ---From a letter to Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher, 2001, just months before Eddie, WWII hero, Prisoner of War, valiant soldier, passed away. A plain-put Shakespeare of the common man, who took on monumental human situations with the sword of his words and the shield of his simple typewriter, Eddie fought the Veterans Administration for seventeen years before he received his full VA benefits. SOMETHING FROM EDDIE does not aim to define the life of the trailblazing American veteran, Eddie Livingston. It simply provides insight into the life of someone who fought for the freedom of all Americans in war, Veterans Affairs, politics and Civil Rights throughout his lifetime. Lacking healthcare coverage, delays in payments (17 years) and deficient diagnoses are only the beginning of Eddie's 20-year struggle with the VA and his endless correspondences with local and national politicians---including the President of the United States---to right the wrongs of the VA system, some that plague US soldiers still today. Eddie Livingston once described himself as being born "Poor white trash from Alabama." He was a private in the airborne infantry of the United States Army during World War II; he fought in multiple combat campaigns, even volunteering to parachute jump during the D-Day invasion at Normandy. He was captured, interred, and beaten in Nazi POW camps, and received multiple, life-long wounds that were both physical and emotional. Through his own pain and suffering, Eddie continued the march with his typewriter---tirelessly authoring letters to the Veterans Administration, congressmen, and even presidents of the United States, concerned about the plight of veteran care issues, post-traumatic stress disorder (called "shell shock" back then), civil rights, politics, equality for humankind, and peace. His words are all that is left of this valiant warrior, but there was so much power injected in them for others to share, indeed, for history to hold and nourish future generations of people--all of the world's people.--Jim Hodges

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