

NEWS RELEASE

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MEDIA ADVISORY

**Original Member of Unique Military Unit
To Speak At USM**

10 a.m. Friday, Sept. 8, 2006

(Leavenworth, Kan.)— As part of a celebration honoring the first ever African-American parachute battalion in U.S. history, one of the lone surviving members of the unit will host a brief discussion at USM, starting at 10 a.m. Friday, Sept. 8.

Ret. First Sgt. Walter Morris, an original member of the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion, also known as the “Triple Nickels” and the “Smoke Jumpers,” will discuss his experience with the first all African-American unit in the U.S. Army during the tumultuous times of World War II. His discussion will be held at **10 a.m. Friday, Sept. 8 in Mabee Auditorium**, on the University of Saint Mary campus, 4100 South 4th Street, Leavenworth, Kan. Admission is free and open to the public.

“The Triple Nickels” were never sent into combat overseas during World War II. However, the unique group was sent to the U.S. western coast in May 1945 to combat forest fires ignited by Japanese balloons carrying incendiary bombs. While the Japanese threat subsided, the “Triple Nickels” stayed in the U.S. Pacific coast to fight other numerous forest fires during the summer of 1945, earning another nick-name—the “Smoke Jumpers.”

For more information about the “Triple Nickels” or Sgt. Morris, please call 913-758-6424.

The University of Saint Mary is a private, co-educational applied liberal arts university founded by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. The University of Saint Mary is located at 4100 South 4th Street, Leavenworth, Kan., with additional locations at 11413 Pflumm in Overland Park and inside Providence Medical Center at 8929 Parallel Parkway in Kansas City, Kan.

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