

For Immediate Release

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**Mayor Robert F. Sullivan, City of Brockton to Honor Brockton’s First Black Veteran
Killed in World War I**

City to re-dedicate square in honor of 25-year-old vet Private Orleanis W. Burton

BROCKTON – The City of Brockton and Mayor Robert F. Sullivan will honor veteran Private Orleanis W. Burton, the first Black Brocktonian killed in World War I, in a rededication ceremony on September 7, 2022, at 3:00 PM.

“Private Burton is a reminder of the sacrifices our citizens have made throughout the generations in the name of freedom,” Mayor Sullivan said. “He stands as an enduring symbol of the bravery of the Black community that helped build the “City of Champions” and our Nation. We are proud to honor him and all our Veterans and celebrate our City’s Black heritage.”

Private Burton will be honored at a ceremony September 7th to re-dedicate the intersection of Crescent, School and Commercial streets in his honor. Private Burton was just 26 and had only been in the U.S. Army for two months when he died fighting in France on July 2, 1918. He had just married his wife, Elizabeth, shortly before he was killed.

Private Burton migrated to Brockton from Virginia and attended the former Sprague School. He worked at a Brockton market and a factory in Whitman before voluntarily enlisting to fight in World War I.

The square was originally dedicated in Private Burton’s name in 1941 and in 1986 the Brockton Beautification Committee placed a plaque there in his honor. The re-dedication was planned for the 80th anniversary last year but was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The plaque has been removed for cleaning and the Brockton Garden Club is working to beautify the intersection.

Details:

WHAT: Re-dedication of the Private Orleanis Burton Square

WHEN: Wednesday, Sept. 7, at 3 p.m.

WHERE: The juncture of School, Crescent and Commercial Streets.

WHO: Speakers will include Mayor Robert Sullivan, Veterans Services Director Kelly Young and historian Willie Wilson, Jr. The Brockton Veterans Services Honor Guard will be in attendance.

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