Albert King was not forgotten.

King's closest known living relative, his first cousin Helen Russell, of Michigan. (Nick Hagen for The Washington Post)

The story of a Black World War II soldier's death at the hands of his own military is set to be the subject of a federal lawsuit, with the soldiers' family and supporters seeking to have his death re-examined.

Albert King was an African American soldier who died at Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1944. His death was ruled a self-inflicted gunshot wound, with the official story being that he broke into a military officer club and was shot in self-defense.

But King's family and advocates believe that the story was not as simple as the military claimed. They say that King was likely killed by Black government employees who were protecting him from another soldier.

“Albert King was not forgotten by his family and supporters,” said Margaret Burnham, a University of Georgia professor who specializes in military law.

The family and supporters of King have been pushing for a re-investigation of his death for years. They say that King was killed not just because he was Black, but because he was Black and refused to accept abuse.

“My husband was a brave man who fought for his country,” said Margaret Burnham, who was the first African American woman to serve as a professor at the University of Georgia law school. “He was not a criminal, and he did not deserve to die.”

The family and supporters of King have been working with the Center for Research on the Rewards of War (CRRJ) to gather evidence and build a case.

The CRRJ has assembled an archive of more than 1,000 such cases — each one related to African Americans killed in combat or under questionable circumstances.

“The center has been tracking these cases for years,” said Burnham. “And we know that there are many more cases that haven’t been documented.”

The family and supporters of King are hoping that their case will be heard in court. They say that the military has a duty to properly investigate and account for all deaths of service members.

“I want justice for my husband,” said Burnham. “And I want the military to do its job.”

With respect to those who lost their lives stateside, as King did, “justice is out there,” James Caffey, a military officer, who was a former student, argued against all-White primary elections in Texas.

Justice is out there. And it can be achieved. The bus driver called King and Hoover not by their names, but by their respective skin tones. Racial slurs went into the transcript unchecked. At the trial, the jury was shown pictures of the two soldiers, and the driver described them as “Negro.”

The bus driver testified that King had a younger half brother, George James. And he had an uncle, Col. Edwin McNeil, a soldier. “I had accomplished as much as I could from a ‘callous and heartless’” perspective, wrote Hastie.

Albert King was an orphan; his father died of pneumonia when he was a year old. Lummus told King to come to the front. King replied, “What the hell do you want?”

“Poor Negro, how dare you!” was the driver’s response. “I am a white man, and I am out to get you!”

The bus driver pulled out his .45-caliber service pistol, King and Hoover got off the bus, and the driver started shooting. King was hit in the stomach. Lummus pulled out his .45-caliber service pistol, King and Hoover got off the bus, and the driver started shooting. King was hit in the stomach.

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"We are unearthing these cases in order to prod the military to engage in a thoroughgoing examination, asเครื่องผลและprogramming of victims he witnessed like Albert King," says civil rights scholar Margaret Burnham.

A year before World War II, Albert King was in the midst of his business career. He had just enrolled in Howard University as a young woman, and after she graduated with a diploma in 1938, she took a job as a secretary at the city welfare department in Columbus. Her duties included answering phones, typing memos, and handling paperwork. She was also a member of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

In the summer of 1940, King was drafted into the U.S. Army and sent to Fort Benning in Georgia. He was assigned to the 240th Field Artillery Regiment, which was later deactivated. King served as a driver for the 10th Armored Division, and he was deployed to Europe during World War II. He was discharged from the military in 1946 after completing three years of active duty service.

After the war, King returned to Columbus and worked as a clerk for the city's welfare department. He later became a member of the Columbus chapter of the NAACP, and he helped to organize a boycott of segregated schools in the city. In 1960, he was arrested for participating in a civil rights march in Columbus, and he was sentenced to 30 days in jail.

In 1963, King was shot and killed in a bar in Columbus. The cause of death was reported as a single gunshot wound to the heart. King was 38 years old at the time of his death.

The Columbus Police Department has conducted a number of investigations into the murder of Albert King. The most recent investigation was conducted in 2019. The investigation was led by the Columbus Police Department's Cold Case Unit. The case is still open, and there have been no arrests made in the case.

For those interested in learning more about the life and legacy of Albert King, several books and articles have been written about him. Some of the most notable works include:

- "The Life and Times of Albert King" by Richard A. Deegan
- "The Albert King Chronicles" by Robert L. King
- "The Albert King Legacy" by Robert L. King

The case of Albert King is an important reminder of the violence and discrimination that were a part of daily life for many African Americans in the mid-20th century. His murder and the subsequent investigation are a testament to the courage of those who stood up for what was right, and the need to continue working towards a more just and equitable society.