Name:_____

Isaac Woodard and his mother in South Carolina in 1946. In February that year, Woodard, a decorated Army veteran, was severely beaten by the police.

Starter: The Story of Isaac Woodard

Before Reading: In your opinion, how should veterans and those who defend the flag and the United States be treated once their service is over?

"Georgia pines flew past the windows of the Greyhound bus carrying Isaac Woodard home to Winnsboro, S.C. After serving four years in the Army in World War II, where Woodard had earned a battle star, he was given an honorable discharge earlier that day at Camp Gordon and was headed home to meet his wife. When the bus stopped at a small drugstore an hour outside Atlanta, Woodard got into a brief argument with the white driver after asking if he could use the restroom. About half an hour later, the driver stopped again and told Woodard to get off the bus. Crisp in his uniform, Woodard stepped from the stairs and saw the police waiting for him. Before he could speak, one of the officers struck him in his head with a billy club, beating him so badly that he fell unconscious. The blows to Woodard's head were so severe that when he woke in a jail cell the next day, he could not see. The beating occurred just 4½ hours after his military discharge. At twenty-six, Woodard would **never** see again…

"…Black veterans like Woodard, especially those with the audacity to wear their uniform, had since the Civil War been the target of a particular violence. . . People understood that once black men had gone abroad and experienced life outside the suffocating racial oppression of America, they were unlikely to **quietly** return to their **subjugation** at home. . . Many white Americans saw Black men in the uniforms of America's armed services, not as patriotic, but as exhibiting a dangerous pride. Hundreds of black veterans were beaten, maimed, shot and lynched[1]." - From "The Idea of America" by Nikole Hannah-Jones

1. Why would a Black veteran's pride (for serving one's country) be seen as dangerous?

2. What does the American flag represent for you? Do you wear it or represent it proudly?

[1] Woodard's blinding is largely seen as one of the catalysts for the decades-long rebellion we have come to call the civil rights movement.