

A hero finally receives his due

Frank "Big Ed" Vereen has been a major player in the political, economic and social life of Trenton for more than 45 years.

His rise to North Ward stardom began when he was released from the United States Army in 1945. He made wise investments and became owner of "Big Ed's" Supermarket and of the Turf Club on Princeton Avenue. His counsel and money helped blacks early on to effectively engage in Trenton politics.

He left Trenton for Freeport in the Bahamas in 1970. There he dabbled in real estate and opened a restaurant. But as successful as he became in civilian life, Big Ed was not satisfied because the United States Army did not treat him right. Here is a man who fought for his country during World War II but whose discharge papers did not state that he was a combat veteran of the Battle of the Bulge. Only recently, after 54 years of waiting, did the Army make revisions in his discharge papers that made him eligible to receive the Combat Infantry Badge and the Bronze Star.

He is 75 years old.

In bold letters, Frank "Big Ed" Vereen's revised discharge, dated Nov. 9, 1999, reads: "This is to certify that the President of the United States of America, authorized by executive order, 24 August 1962, has awarded the Bronze Star Medal to private first class Frank E. Vereen, United States Army, for meritorious achievement in ground combat against the armed enemy during World War II in the European-African-Middle Eastern Theater of Oper-



Frank "Big Ed" Vereen at the time of his discharge from the Army, November 1945.