

African-American Women Troops Boosted WWII Morale

A group of nearly 900 black women made sure U.S. troops in Europe got their mail in 1945, and they made history as the only all-women, African-American U.S. unit to deploy to Europe in World War II

Feb 25, 2020

Anyone who has served overseas away from family and friends knows the power of a letter from home. But toward the end of WWII, there was a two-year back-log of mail for U.S. troops, Red Cross and uniformed civilian specialists serving in Europe.

Led by Army Maj. Charity Adams, the nearly 900-strong 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion of the Women's Army Corps (WAC) had a motto: "No mail, low morale."

In February 1945, the "Six-Triple Eight," as it was known, went to England becoming the first and only all-black WAC unit to be sent overseas during WWII.

Lena King, who was with the 6888th, said the mail was stacked nearly to the top of the hangar in Birmingham, England. The women worked three shifts a day, seven days a week to make sure the mail reached troops in the field.

"They had asked if we could get it done in about six months," King told CBS News in November. "We were able to get it done in three months."

By the time they were done, they had processed 17 million pieces of mail and were off to France to work their magic there, as well.

The women of the 6888th worked on sorting the mail in Europe until March 1946.

When the women returned home, however, there were no parades or special recognition.

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Retired Army Col. Edna Cummings hopes to see the 6888th recognized with a Congressional Gold Medal.

“During a time when they were denied basic liberties as Americans, they still wanted to serve the United States,” Cummings told CBS News.

As such, the identical bills S. 633 and H.R. 3138 — “Six Triple Eight” Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2019 — have been introduced in the Senate and House, respectively.

On Nov. 30, 2018, a monument to these women was dedicated at the Buffalo Soldier Commemorative Area on Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

Furthermore, on March 15, 2016, the U.S. Army Women’s Foundation inducted the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion into the Army Women’s Hall of Fame.

“Servicemen want their mail,” King said. “That’s a morale booster. That made me feel good that I had done my part.”

This article is featured in the February 2020 issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Janie Dyhouse](#), senior editor for VFW magazine.