

Six Triple Eight

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Unheralded Heroes of World War II

By: James G. Fausone, Esq.



The 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, also known as

the [“Six Triple Eight”](#), remains one of the least recognized yet highly significant units in World War II history. As the first all-female, all-Black battalion deployed overseas, the Six Triple Eight was critical in ensuring the smooth mail delivery operation for American forces stationed in Europe.

Formation and Deployment

In 1944, the [6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion](#) was formed in response to the massive backlog of undelivered mail intended for American troops stationed in Europe. A delay in mail delivery was not just an inconvenience; it severely impacted troop morale, as soldiers relied on letters from home for emotional support. Recognizing the vital importance of steady communication for troop morale and operational efficiency, the U.S. Army formed this special unit.

Led by Major Charity Adams, the first African American woman commissioned by the Women’s Army Corps (WAC), the battalion included 855 enlisted African American women and officers. These women were meticulously trained in various facets of postal service to ensure seamless operations. On February 3, 1945, the battalion was deployed to Birmingham, England, marking the start of their historic mission.



Unsorted Mail. Courtesy: nycnabmw.org

Overcoming Racial and Gender Discrimination

The path of the Six Triple Eight was fraught with significant obstacles, most notably entrenched racial and gender discrimination. These women faced skepticism and prejudice from their fellow service members and the general public. The Army was still segregated at the time, and the women of the 6888th had to deal with inadequate living conditions, meager supplies, and isolation from their white comrades.

Despite the discrimination, their determination was unwavering. The battalion went to work sorting through the mail backlog – estimated to be over 17 million pieces – stacked in heaps in dilapidated warehouses under substandard conditions. The battalion worked around the clock in shifts, maintaining a rigorous schedule to ensure the timely processing of letters and packages. Their motto, “No mail, low morale”, underscored the importance of their mission.

Achievements and Operations



Members of the 6888th Central

Postal Directory Battalion. 2Lt.
Freda le Beau serving Major
Charity Adams a soda at the
opening of the battalion's snack
bar in Rouen, France. Courtesy:
Wikipedia Commons

Upon arrival in Birmingham, the women of the 6888th faced daunting challenges, including cold and cluttered warehouses filled with undelivered mail and poorly maintained records. Utilizing their training and resolve, they organized the vast amount of correspondence into a streamlined system. By implementing a new efficient process, they managed to clear six months' worth of backlog in just three months, a remarkable feat given the circumstances.

In June 1945, the battalion was transferred to Rouen, France, and later to Paris, tackling backlog after backlog. However, undeterred by the scale of the task, the Six Triple Eight continued to work with unmatched dedication. They applied the same systematic approach to clear these backlogs quickly, thus ensuring that vital lines of communication were restored for the soldiers.

Apart from their postal duties, the women of the 6888th also engaged with local communities attended educational lectures, led recreational activities, and made a positive impact everywhere they went.

Military Awards and Legacy

By March of 1946, all members of the Six Triple Eight had returned to the States, and the unit was disbanded. Its members were given the [European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal](#), the [Women's Army Corps Service Medal](#), and the [World War II Victory Medal](#). At that time, these were the only medals presented to the members of the 6888th.



[Women's Army Corps](#)

[Service Medal](#)

Despite their extraordinary efforts, the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion did not receive the recognition they deserved during or immediately following [World War II](#). Their story largely faded into obscurity, overshadowed by other wartime narratives. It wasn't until decades later that their contributions began to be acknowledged. In 2013, the battalion was finally honored by the U.S. Army with a commemorative plaque placed on Fort Leavenworth in Kansas, where many of the women trained. In 2019, the U.S. Army recognized the 6888th with a Meritorious Unit Commendation.

Though belated, the recognition they have received serves as a crucial reminder of the diverse narratives that make up our collective history. As the first all-female, all-Black battalion to serve overseas, the Six Triple Eight shattered barriers and set a precedent for inclusion and equality. Their story continues to inspire and educate, ensuring their legacy lives on for generations.

By acknowledging and celebrating the accomplishments of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, we honor the memory of pioneers who exemplified excellence in the face of adversity, shaping the course of military and social history.

Media Recognition

In 2021, host Jim Fausone of [Veterans Radio interviewed author Kaia Alderson](#) to discuss her historical fiction novel, "Sisters in Arms: the Daring Black Women Who Served During WWII".

In 2024, the battalion was the subject of a [Netflix movie "Six Triple Eight"](#). The film, directed by Tyler Perry, tells the inspiring true story of the 855 brave women of the first and only Women's Army Corps unit of colors stationed overseas during World War II.

VETERANS RADIO INTERVIEW WITH AUTHOR KAIA ALDERSON

[6888th Postal Battalion WWII – African American Women Get it Done](#)

About the Author

*Jim Fausone is a partner with **Legal Help For Veterans, PLLC**, with over twenty years of experience helping veterans apply for service-connected disability benefits and starting their claims, appealing VA decisions, and filing claims for an increased disability rating so veterans can receive a higher level of benefits.*

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