

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1012

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the members of the Women's Army Corps who were assigned to the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, known as the "Six Triple Eight".

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 11, 2021

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin (for herself, Mr. LATURNER, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. VEASEY, Mrs. AXNE, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. TRONE, Mr. LIEU, Mr. POCAN, Mr. COHEN, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. NEGUSE, Mr. COLE, Mr. EVANS, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mrs. BUSTOS, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. CARSON, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. NORTON, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. COOPER, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. BEYER, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. COSTA, Mr. PASCRELL, Ms. WILD, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. BASS, Mr. KIND, Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. TONKO, Mrs. DEMINGS, Ms. BROWNLEY, Mr. WELCH, Mr. STANTON, and Mr. JONES) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the members of the Women's Army Corps who were assigned to the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, known as the "Six Triple Eight".

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “‘Six Triple Eight’ Con-
5 gressional Gold Medal Act of 2021”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) On July 1, 1943, President Franklin D.
9 Roosevelt signed into law legislation that established
10 the Women’s Army Corps (referred to in this section
11 as the “WAC”) as a component in the Army. The
12 WAC was converted from the Women’s Army Auxil-
13 iary Corps (referred to in this section as the
14 “WAAC”), which had been created in 1942 without
15 official military status. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt
16 and Mary McLeod Bethune, the founder of the Na-
17 tional Council of Negro Women, advocated for the
18 admittance of African-American women into the
19 newly formed WAC to serve as officers and enlisted
20 personnel.

21 (2) Dubbed “10 percenters”, the recruitment of
22 African-American women to the WAAC was limited
23 to 10 percent of the population of the WAAC to
24 match the proportion of African Americans in the
25 national population. Despite an Executive order

1 issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1941
2 banning racial discrimination in civilian defense in-
3 dustries, the Armed Forces remained segregated.
4 Enlisted women served in segregated units, partici-
5 pated in segregated training, lived in separate quar-
6 ters, ate at separate tables in mess halls, and used
7 segregated recreational facilities. Officers received
8 their officer candidate training in integrated units
9 but lived under segregated conditions. Specialist and
10 technical training schools were integrated in 1943.
11 During World War II, a total of 6,520 African-
12 American women served in the WAAC and the
13 WAC.

14 (3) After several units of White women were
15 sent to serve in the European Theater of Operations
16 (referred to in this section as the “ETO”) during
17 World War II, African-American organizations advo-
18 cated for the War Department to extend the oppor-
19 tunity to serve overseas to African-American WAC
20 units.

21 (4) In November 1944, the War Department
22 approved sending African-American women to serve
23 in Europe. A battalion of all African-American
24 women drawn from the WAC, the Army Service
25 Forces, and the Army Air Forces was created and

1 designated as the 6888th Central Postal Directory
2 Battalion (referred to in this section as the
3 “6888th”), which was nicknamed the “Six Triple
4 Eight”.

5 (5) Army officials reported a shortage of quali-
6 fied postal officers within the ETO, which resulted
7 in a backlog of undelivered mail. As Allied forces
8 drove across Europe, the ever-changing locations of
9 servicemembers hampered the delivery of mail to
10 those servicemembers. Because 7,000,000 civilians
11 and military personnel from the United States
12 served in the ETO, many of those individuals had
13 identical names. For example, 7,500 such individuals
14 were named Robert Smith. One general predicted
15 that the backlog in Birmingham, England, would
16 take 6 months to process and the lack of reliable
17 mail service was hurting morale.

18 (6) In February 1945, the 6888th arrived in
19 Birmingham. Upon their arrival, the 6888th found
20 warehouses filled with millions of pieces of mail in-
21 tended for members of the Armed Forces, United
22 States Government personnel, and Red Cross work-
23 ers serving in the ETO.

24 (7) The 6888th created effective processes and
25 filing systems to track individual servicemembers,

1 organize “undeliverable” mail, determine the in-
2 tended recipient for insufficiently addressed mail,
3 and handle mail addressed to servicemembers who
4 had died. Adhering to their motto of “No mail, low
5 morale”, the women processed an average of 65,000
6 pieces of mail per shift and cleared the 6-month
7 backlog of mail within 3 months.

8 (8) The 6888th traveled to Rouen, France in
9 May 1945 and worked through a separate backlog of
10 undelivered mail dating back as far as 3 years.

11 (9) At the completion of their mission, the unit
12 returned to the United States. The 6888th was dis-
13 continued on March 9, 1946, at Camp Kilmer, New
14 Jersey.

15 (10) The accomplishments of the 6888th in Eu-
16 rope encouraged the General Board, United States
17 Forces, European Theater of Operations to adopt
18 the following premise in their study of the WAC
19 issued in December 1945: “[T]he national security
20 program is the joint responsibility of all Americans
21 irrespective of color or sex” and “the continued use
22 of colored, along with white, female military per-
23 sonnel is required in such strength as is proportion-
24 ately appropriate to the relative population distribu-
25 tion between colored and white races”.

1 (11) With the exception of smaller units of Af-
2 rican-American nurses who served in Africa, Aus-
3 tralia, and England, the 6888th was the only Afri-
4 can-American Women’s Army Corps unit to serve
5 overseas during World War II.

6 (12) The members of the “Six Triple Eight” re-
7 ceived the European African Middle Eastern Cam-
8 paign Medal, the Women’s Army Corps Service
9 Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal for
10 their service.

11 (13) In 2019, the Army awarded the 6888th
12 the Meritorious Unit Commendation.

13 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

14 (a) **AWARD AUTHORIZED.**—The Speaker of the
15 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
16 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
17 award, on behalf of Congress, of a single gold medal of
18 appropriate design in honor of the women of the 6888th
19 Central Postal Directory Battalion (commonly known as
20 the “Six Triple Eight”) in recognition of—

21 (1) the pioneering military service of those
22 women;

23 (2) the devotion to duty of those women; and

24 (3) the contributions made by those women to
25 increase the morale of all United States personnel

1 stationed in the European Theater of Operations
2 during World War II.

3 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the
4 award described in subsection (a), the Secretary of the
5 Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Secretary”) shall
6 strike the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and
7 inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

8 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—After the award of the gold
10 medal under subsection (a), the medal shall be given
11 to the Smithsonian Institution, where the medal
12 shall be available for display, as appropriate, and
13 made available for research.

14 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
15 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should
16 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)
17 available elsewhere, particularly at—

18 (A) appropriate locations associated with
19 the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion;

20 (B) the Women in Military Service for
21 America Memorial;

22 (C) the United States Army Women’s Mu-
23 seum;

24 (D) the National World War II Museum
25 and Memorial;

1 (E) the National Museum of the United
2 States Army; and

3 (F) any other location determined appro-
4 priate by the Smithsonian Institution.

5 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

6 Under such regulations as the Secretary may pre-
7 scribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
8 bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3 at a price
9 sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor,
10 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

11 **SEC. 5. NATIONAL MEDALS.**

12 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck under this
13 Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title
14 31, United States Code.

15 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
16 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
17 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

18 **SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF**
19 **SALE.**

20 (a) AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.—There is
21 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint
22 Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may be nec-
23 essary to pay for the costs of the medals struck under
24 this Act.

1 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the
2 sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section
3 4 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public
4 Enterprise Fund.

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