

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 321

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”.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 12, 2021

Mr. MORAN (for himself and Ms. ROSEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

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## 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:

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

14           (2) Dubbed “10 percenters”, the recruitment of  
15 African-American women to the WAAC was limited  
16 to 10 percent of the population of the WAAC to  
17 match the proportion of African-Americans in the  
18 national population. Despite an Executive order  
19 issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1941  
20 banning racial discrimination in civilian defense in-  
21 dustries, the Armed Forces remained segregated.  
22 Enlisted women served in segregated units, partici-  
23 pated in segregated training, lived in separate quar-  
24 ters, ate at separate tables in mess halls, and used  
25 segregated recreational facilities. Officers received

1 their officer candidate training in integrated units  
2 but lived under segregated conditions. Specialist and  
3 technical training schools were integrated in 1943.  
4 During World War II, a total of 6,520 African-  
5 American women served in the WAAC and the  
6 WAC.

7 (3) After several units of White women were  
8 sent to serve in the European Theater of Operations  
9 (referred to in this section as the “ETO”) during  
10 World War II, African-American organizations advo-  
11 cated for the War Department to extend the oppor-  
12 tunity to serve overseas to African-American WAC  
13 units.

14 (4) In November 1944, the War Department  
15 approved sending African-American women to serve  
16 in Europe. A battalion of all African-American  
17 women drawn from the WAC, the Army Service  
18 Forces, and the Army Air Forces was created and  
19 designated as the 6888th Central Postal Directory  
20 Battalion (referred to in this section as the  
21 “6888th”), which was nicknamed the “Six Triple  
22 Eight”.

23 (5) Army officials reported a shortage of quali-  
24 fied postal officers within the ETO, which resulted  
25 in a backlog of undelivered mail. As Allied forces

1       drove across Europe, the ever-changing locations of  
2       servicemembers hampered the delivery of mail to  
3       those servicemembers. Because 7,000,000 civilians  
4       and military personnel from the United States  
5       served in the ETO, many of those individuals had  
6       identical names. For example, 7,500 such individuals  
7       were named Robert Smith. One general predicted  
8       that the backlog in Birmingham, England, would  
9       take 6 months to process and the lack of reliable  
10      mail service was hurting morale.

11           (6) In February 1945, the 6888th arrived in  
12      Birmingham. Upon their arrival, the 6888th found  
13      warehouses filled with millions of pieces of mail in-  
14      tended for members of the Armed Forces, United  
15      States Government personnel, and Red Cross work-  
16      ers serving in the ETO.

17           (7) The 6888th created effective processes and  
18      filing systems to track individual servicemembers,  
19      organize “undeliverable” mail, determine the in-  
20      tended recipient for insufficiently addressed mail,  
21      and handle mail addressed to servicemembers who  
22      had died. Adhering to their motto of “No mail, low  
23      morale”, the women processed an average of 65,000  
24      pieces of mail per shift and cleared the 6-month  
25      backlog of mail within 3 months.

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

4           (9) At the completion of their mission, the unit  
5           returned to the United States. The 6888th was dis-  
6           continued on March 9, 1946, at Camp Kilmer, New  
7           Jersey.

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

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

24          (12) The members of the “Six Triple Eight” re-  
25          ceived the European African Middle Eastern Cam-

1 paign Medal, the Women’s Army Corps Service  
2 Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal for  
3 their service.

4 (13) In 2019, the Army awarded the 6888th  
5 the Meritorious Unit Commendation.

6 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

7 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the  
8 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore  
9 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the  
10 award, on behalf of Congress, of a single gold medal of  
11 appropriate design in honor of the women of the 6888th  
12 Central Postal Directory Battalion (commonly known as  
13 the “Six Triple Eight”) in recognition of—

14 (1) the pioneering military service of those  
15 women;

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

17 (3) the contributions made by those women to  
18 increase the morale of all United States personnel  
19 stationed in the European Theater of Operations  
20 during World War II.

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

1 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—After the award of the gold  
3 medal under subsection (a), the medal shall be given  
4 to the Smithsonian Institution, where the medal  
5 shall be available for display, as appropriate, and  
6 made available for research.

7 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of  
8 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should  
9 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)  
10 available elsewhere, particularly at—

11 (A) appropriate locations associated with  
12 the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion;

13 (B) the Women in Military Service for  
14 America Memorial;

15 (C) the United States Army Women’s Mu-  
16 seum;

17 (D) the National World War II Museum  
18 and Memorial;

19 (E) the National Museum of the United  
20 States Army; and

21 (F) any other location determined appro-  
22 priate by the Smithsonian Institution.

23 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

24 Under such regulations as the Secretary may pre-  
25 scribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in

1 bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3 at a price  
2 sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor,  
3 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

4 **SEC. 5. NATIONAL MEDALS.**

5 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck under this  
6 Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title  
7 31, United States Code.

8 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section  
9 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck  
10 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

11 **SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF**

12 **SALE.**

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

18 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the  
19 sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section  
20 4 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public  
21 Enterprise Fund.

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