

Proud to be a WAC



They called, we delivered!
Birmingham - Rouen - Paris



NORTH ATLANTIC
WORLD WAR II
6888th MOVEMENT
1945-1946

OVERSEAS TRAINING
AND LIFE AT SEA



Winter - Spring
1945

KEEP CALM AND
CARRY THE MAIL ON



Winter - Spring
1945

UNITED
STATES

New York City

JOINING UP AND DOING OUR PART



1942 - 1945

A t l a

BONJOUR FRANCE!



Spring - Fall 1945

Glasgow

Scotland

ENGLAND

Birmingham

Rouen

Paris

FRANCE

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED
WE'RE GOING HOME



Winter 1946

O c e a n

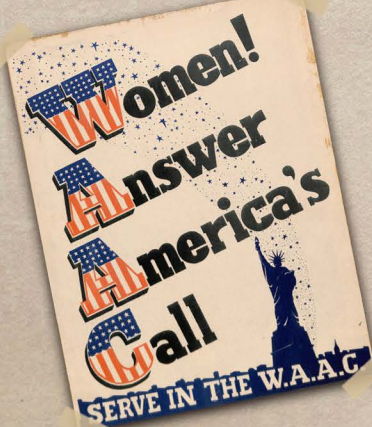
Joining Up and



Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune,
the champion who helped
secure our place in the WAAC!

"The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps gives
all women a new opportunity for leadership,
serving their country during this crisis. The
Negro woman citizen has come forward
eagerly to share in this leadership"

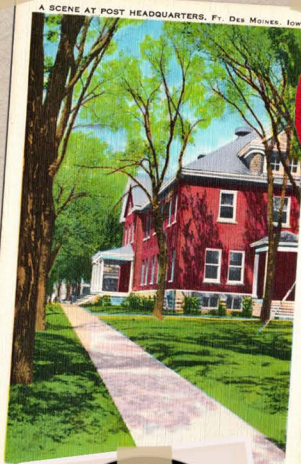
Mary McLeod Bethune, 20 July 1942,
War Department News Release



Joining up means assignments
all over the country: Arizona,
Oklahoma, North Carolina, and
Massachusetts to name a few!



Ruth Bray, Christine Petty, Abbie Noel Campbell,
and Janette Lanton take the Officer Candidate
exam at Fort McPherson, GA.



We're in the Army
now! The majority of
us trained at Fort
Des Moines, IA.



Touch for Audio: Song,
"WAAC is in Back of You"
WAAC Band, 2d WAAC
Training Center,
Daytona Beach, FL, 1942/43

Doing Our Part



Drill Time



Meeting those who've spearheaded the charge!



touch to see
Highlights about
Mary Kearney



Contributing to a smooth operation, Ruth Wade and Lucille Mayo work in motor repair at Fort Huachuca, AZ.



At the Chapel.



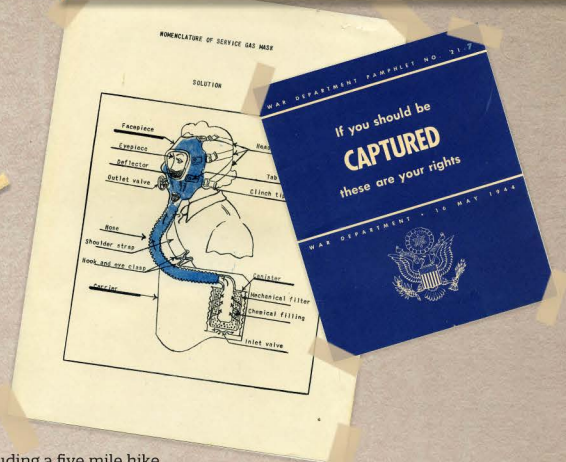
Overseas Training



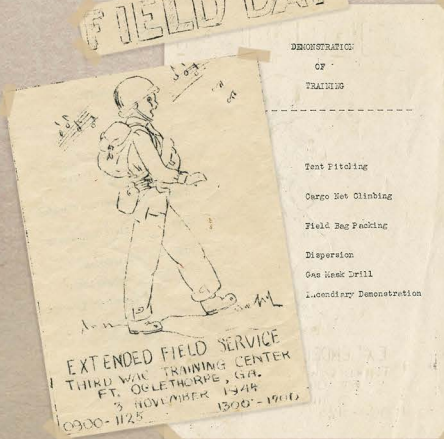
We volunteer from units across the states to be a part of the new postal battalion. Overseas training begins at Fort Oglethorpe, GA.

"...we were put through intensive training, including a five mile hike in full regalia (pistol belts, gas masks, canteens, packs and helmets) under active war conditions, learning how to climb up and down a cargo net, going through the gas chamber..."

Lucia M. Pitts, One Negro WAC's Story, 1968



FIELD DAY



Training schedule
Fort Oglethorpe, November 1944



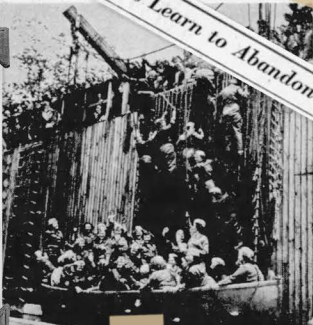
**Negro WAC Unit
Sent Overseas**

Col. Hobby chats with enlisted women at Camp Shanks, N. Y., before contingent sailed for England. Unit was first group of Negro WACs given overseas assignment.



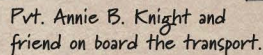
Train speeds WACs to New York Port of Embarkation and start of great adventure. Women, most of whom asked overseas assignment, were given extensive training.

New York Sunday Mirror, 18 February, 1945



ACs Learn to Abandon Ship

Port of Embarkation Patch



Writing home

[illegible]

On 3 February 1945, the bulk of our group sails from New York aboard the SS Ile de France. It was a treacherous journey through enemy waters!



touch to see
Highlights about
Annie Knight Jordan



FIRST NEGRO WACS OVERSEAS — Brigadier General Benjamin O. Davis welcomes Pvt. Nispa Tankard, of New York City, left, the first member of an all-Negro Wac postal unit to step on a foreign theatre. (Signal Corps photo.)

Brig. Gen. Benjamin O. Davis, Sr. with Maj. Adams greets the unit upon arrival in the ETO

Keep Calm and C

(England)
BIRMINGHAM GAZETTE. Wednesday, 14 February, 1945

NEGRO U.S. ARMY GIRLS IN BIRMINGHAM

The First in This Country

NEGRO members of the U.S. Women's Army Corps are now quartered in Birmingham, in temporary buildings.

The first contingent of Negro Wacs in Europe, the girls were given a rousing welcome when they reached the city from their port of disembarkation, where they had been greeted by Brig.-Gen. B. O. Davis, the only coloured general in the U.S. Army.

They travelled by special train to Birmingham, where they were met by Col. F. Herr, Commandant of the Western District U.S. Army, and a U.S. Army band played for them. Their commanding officer, Major Charity Adams, herself a coloured American, flew over in advance to make preparations for their stay in this country.

Major Adams, a tutor in mathematics, is the daughter of the Rev. E. A. Adams, secretary of education of the African Episcopal Church, she was the first Wac to become a control officer in the Army.

The battalion she commands is composed of 24 Negro W.A.C. officers and 677 other ranks.

It was the first ocean voyage for most of the girls and many of them said how thrilled they were with it.

One of them, Private Beula Fant, has sung with a local sextette on the radio. "One of my greatest ambitions has been to go abroad," she said.

Another, Private Lola Cleggett, aged 27, of Vicksburg, Mississippi, is, in peacetime, a theatre manager.

Cheerio! In February, our first group arrives in Scotland and travels by train to Birmingham. After being greeted by an Army band, we were ready to tackle the mail situation.



We chip away at mountains of mail stacked ceiling-high in the warehouses. Bitter cold and occasional rodents made the job less than pleasant!



Tech 5 Mary E. Walker, Pvt. Ermantrude Finch, Cpl. Callie K. Smith, Tech 4 Evelyn Martin, Pvt. Virginia Blake and Pvt. Gladys S. Carter at chow time!



New digs-English style!

I'm Doing My Bit and More.



What's Your Score?



POST CARD

Carry the Mail On



Capt. Mildred Carter is in charge of all recreational activities for the unit.



Birmingham England
Pfc. Margaret Sales and her colleagues smiling for the camera in Birmingham.



Touch to see Highlights about Margaret Sales Semmes

Our thespian sisters put on a play enjoyed by WACs and GIs alike!



"We are housed in a very old building... Both the Scotch and British greeted us enthusiastically and I know it is genuine."

Pvt. Florence Collins,
The Afro-American, 10 March 1945



Shakespeare calling.

Bonjour



Maj. Charity Adams And Her WAC's Land In France To Handle Mail

ROVEN, FRANCE (ANP) Maj. Charity Adams and her unit of WACs arrived here recently and are now redrecting the mail for soldiers who have returned to the states since V-E day.

The Negro WACs, numbering 31 officers and 800 enlistees, make up the 6888th central postal directory and the first colored members of America's Women Army corps to be seen here.

Maj. Adams, a former Columbia S. C. mathematics teacher, and her outfit were welcomed by several of the Army units here. Pfc. Geraldine Beaumont of Chicago met her husband, 1st Sgt. Paul Beaumont, here.

Stricken by excitement, all they could say was: "Oh!"



Pvt. Ruth L. James meeting some fellow American soldiers stationed in Roven for an Open House.

Springtime in Roven and new mounds of mail to tackle. Paris - Next stop.



Who's on first?

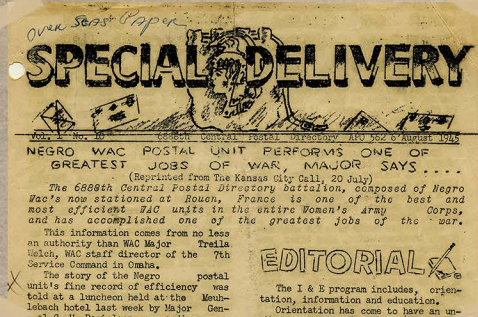


Pfc. Gladys Debman and her friend Dot traveling in a jeep.



Pfc. Dorothy Mills, of Chicago, is reaching for a high one in the softball practice in Nice, France. Her WAC team, the 6888th Central Postal Directory detachment, won the championship for the Chance base section, Northern France, and competed in the European theatre championship at the "U.S. Riviera recreational area" U.S. Signal Corps photo.

France!



6888th Special Delivery newsletter,
6 August 1945



Catching up with friends as we wait for chow.



At Work

Our Billets



The Infirmary



Paris - La Tour Eiffel

"Rouen was in crumbles, the buildings were all bombed out...we still ate Spam. I haven't eaten Spam since...I got to go to Paris...All of France was torn up from the bombing but the Eiffel Tower was still there"

Indiana Hunt, excerpt from her papers

touch to see
Highlights about
Indiana Hunt



Mission Accomplished

JACKSON ADVOCATE, JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

173 Wacs Returned Home From European Theater On Queen Mary

Had Spent 9 Months In The 6888th CPD

PIER 50, NEW YORK PORT OF EMBARKATION — "It was great to be over there, but it's greater to be back," said Sergeant Jerrell Lawrence, Caldwell, Texas, who was among the 173 Negro Wacs debarking at Pier 50, New York last week, as she moved down the gangplank and touched native ground.

ARMY SERVICE FORCES
TRANSPORTATION CORPS
ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES
NEW YORK PORT OF EMBARKATION

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
Sgt MA 203 1485 ROBERT J. ROBINSON
returned to the UNITED STATES on the
ship CLAYTON TUTOR
which sailed from HARVE, FRANCE
on 2 MARCH 1946
Sig. *Robert J. Robinson*
Title *Capt. 1st Lt.*

N.Y. PORT OF EMBARKATION



Two Overseas Stripes for 12 months!

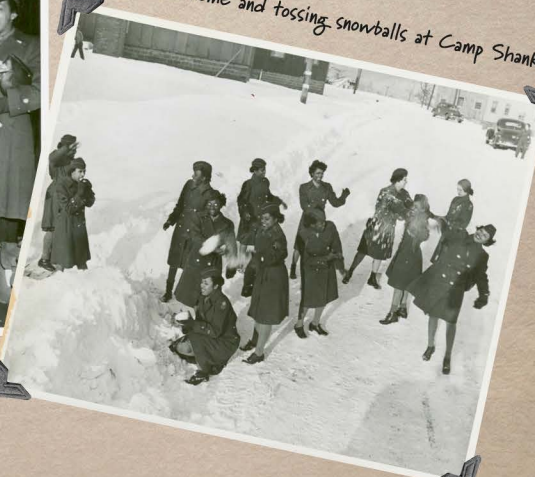


WAC Service Medal



The Red Cross, with doughnuts and hot coffee, greets our last contingent of members returning from the ETO in March 1946. Pfc. Thelma Duncan gets a refill.

Happy to be home and tossing snowballs at Camp Shanks.



ed...Heading home

FUTURE RELEASE PLEASE NOTE DATE

WAR DEPARTMENT
Bureau of Public Relations
NEWS DIVISION
Washington, D. C.

FOR RELEASE MONDAY, MARCH 18, 1946

NOTE TO EDITORS: The following material, covering the activities of
* Negro soldiers, organized with the Public Relations Officers of United
* States Army camps, posts, stations and overseas theaters. Similar informa-
* tive releases will be available weekly. Please note release date.

NEGRO WACS WELCOMED NEIL FUCH ETU BY WAC STAFF DIRECTOR OF N.Y. PORT

NEW YORK PORT OF EMBARKATION—When the last contingent of the 6888th Central Postal Directory, only Negro WAC unit to serve overseas, landed at Staten Island Terminal, New York Port of Embarkation installation, on Friday, March 8, they were met by the WAC Staff Director of the Port, Major Caroline Gerber, who also had been on hand to see the unit off when it sailed from the same port in February, 1945, numbering 761 enlisted women and officers.

Major Gerber, who boarded the SS Claymont Victory, on which the Wacs returned, spoke with many of the officers and enlisted women who were among the 200 returning Wacs, many of whom she knew before they sailed for overseas.

The hundred and eighty nine enlisted women and eleven officers debarked in the early morning loaded with bags, sewnins, trophies and stories of their years' service in England and France, where they were responsible for re-routing to their proper destinations letters and packages of G.I.s who were continually on the move.

Technician Fifth Grade Gertrude Cruse, Addyston, Ohio, clutched a small bag close to her. It seemed that her most important possession was in that bag and according to Miss Cruse, it was. Asked what it was, she said: "Perfume."

Miss Cruse, along with ten other enlisted women of the WAC contingent were self-winding watches which were the prizes awarded to them for having won the 1945 WAC Theater Basketball Championship of the ETO. In addition to the watches the team brought back a championship trophy, the team prize.

With the inactivation of the unit and the Wacs going their separate ways to be separated from the service the trophy will be donated to an organization of their choosing.

The championship team that returned on the Claymont Victory included: Technician Fifth Grade Doris Paige, 107 Henry Avenue, Bridgeport, Connecticut; Private First Class Evelyn Lane, 119 Harbor Road, Port Washington, Long Island, New York; Private Nan Jones, 506 East St. James Street, Tarboro, North Carolina; Private Ruby Ward, 21 Borod, Arkansas; Private June Reeves, 254 West 154th Street, New York City, and Technician Fifth Grade Cruse.

Also returning aboard the Claymont Victory was First Lieutenant Mercedes Jordan, 229 West 110th Street, New York City, Special Service Officer of the 6888th and coach of the unit's champion team. Not only did Lieutenant Jordan help whip the basketball team into championship form but she was also largely responsible for the unit's championship softball team which pulled off with the Chamberlaine Section, Northern France, softball championship.

Commanding the last detachment of Wacs to return from overseas was Captain Mary F. Kearney, 406 Norfield Avenue, Bridgeport, Connecticut. Lieutenant Colonel Charity A. Adams, Columbus, North Carolina commanded the outfit until December, 1945 when she was redesignated to the States for separation from the service. She was succeeded by Captain (then First Lieutenant) Berneice G. Henderson, 520 E. Market Street, Xenia, Ohio, who was followed by Captain Kearney.

In addition to those mentioned above the following officers also returned with the unit. Captain Mildred Pope, 7271 American Avenue, Detroit, Michigan; First Lieutenant Margaret Barnes, 221 North Main Street, Charlton, Ohio; Second Lieutenant Alice R. Edwards, 363 Alhambra Avenue, Los Angeles, California; Frances E. Platts, 506 West 154th Street, New York City, and Hazel Caddock, 1265 East 17th Street, Des Moines, Iowa.

As soon as the Wacs debarked at Staten Island Terminal they boarded Army buses which took them to Camp Kline, New Jersey, from where they will be sent to various separation centers closest to their homes for separation from the service.

Official War Department News Release announcing
the return of the last of our unit from France in
March 1946!



We are the champions!

Negro WACs Five Should Be In National A.A.U. Tourney

NEW YORK, Mar. 18.—The Central Postal Directory, only Negro WAC unit to serve overseas, landed at Staten Island Terminal, New York Port of Embarkation installation on Friday, March 8. The unit, which had sailed from the port February, 1945, is composed of 761 enlisted women and officers.

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With the inactivation of the championship trophy, the team unit and the WACs going their separate ways to be separated from the unit to an organization of their choosing.

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Honorable Service Lapel Patch
a.k.a. the Ruptured Duck!

Touch to see Highlights
about Charity Adams



St. Louis Argus,
5 April 1946

Maj. Adams playing ping-pong with a male
Lt. in Raven, 29 July 1945.

Special Thanks to the Following

Opening Page:

Summer 1942, courtesy of Stanley & Judith Earley
Winter 1945, courtesy of the Annie Knight Jordan family
Winter – Spring 1945, courtesy of Stanley & Judith Earley
Spring – Fall 1945, courtesy of the Evelina Rachel Griffin family
Winter 1946, courtesy of Stanley & Judith Earley

Joining Up and Doing My Part:

Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, Scurlock Studio Records, Archives
Center, National Museum of American History,
Smithsonian Institution
Drill Time, February 1943, New York Public
Library Digital Collection
Meeting those who've spearheaded the charge, February 1943,
Army Historical Education Center

Major Mary Frances Kearney:

All images courtesy of the Mary Frances Kearney family

Overseas Training and Life at Sea:

Tech Sgt. Tommye Berry at Camp Shanks, April 1945, NARA
"WACs Learn to Abandon Ship," Chicago Times (8 July 1945)
Annie B. Knight on transport, courtesy of
the Annie Knight Jordan family
SS Ile de France, Naval History and Heritage Command
Brig. Gen. Davis with WACs at Port, Jackson
Advocate (24 February 1945)

Pfc. Annie Knight Jordan:

All images courtesy of the Annie Knight Jordan family

Keep Calm and Carry the Mail On:

"Negro U.S. Army Girls in Birmingham," Birmingham
Gazette (14 February 1945)
Chow Time, February 1945, NARA
Pvt. Margaret Semmes and her colleagues, courtesy of
the Margaret Semmes Sales family

Our Thespian Sisters (top), courtesy of
the Indiana Hunt Martin family
Our Thespian Sisters (bottom), MSS 0136-PH031, Houston Public
Library, The African American Library at the Gregory School
Shakespeare Calling (right), courtesy of Col. (R) Edna Cummings

Pvt. Margaret Sales Semmes:
All images courtesy of the Margaret Sales Semmes family

Bonjour France!:
"Maj. Charity Adams and her WACs Land in France to Handle
Mail," The Weekly Review (23 June 1945)
Pvt. Ruth James, May 1945, NARA
Pfc. Gladys Debman, courtesy of the Gladys Debman Blount family
Who's on First?, December 1945, NARA
Pfc. Dorothy Mills, article courtesy of
the Margaret Semmes Sales family
Catching up with friends, courtesy of
the Evelina Rachel Griffin family

Pvt. Indiana Hunt Martin:
All images courtesy of the Indiana Hunt Martin family

Mission Accomplished - We're Going Home:
"173 WACs Returned Home from European Theater on Queen
Mary," Jackson Advocate (24 November 1945)
The Red Cross, March 1946, New York
Public Library Digital Collection
Happy to be home, January 1946, New York
Public Library Digital Collection
We are the Champions!, March 1946, New York
Public Library Digital Collection
Lt. Col. Charity Adams Earley:
All images courtesy of Stanley & Judith Earley

All other imagery courtesy of
the U.S. Army Women's Museum archive