

*Six Triple Eight Congressional Gold Medal Celebration  
June 15, 2022  
The Military Women's Memorial  
Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia*



***The 6888<sup>th</sup> Central Postal Directory Battalion***

*The Six Triple Eight provided an enduring legacy for future generations of military personnel and society. Due to their exemplary performance in solving the Army's mail and morale crisis during WWII, on February 28, 2022, the House of Representatives voted unanimously 422-0, to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the Six Triple Eight. On March 14, 2022, President Biden signed the bill into Public Law 117-97. The 6888<sup>th</sup> is the only women's military unit to receive the nation's highest civilian honor, the Congressional Gold Medal.*

*Other recognitions and honors include a 2009 ceremony at the Military Women's Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery, a 6888<sup>th</sup> Monument dedicated at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in 2018, a 2019 Army Meritorious Unit Commendation, a 2019 documentary by Lincoln Penny Films, and a Blue Plaque at the King Edwards School in Birmingham, England. Currently, the U.S. Mint is working on the Congressional Gold Medal design and minting with an anticipated completion timeframe between 12-18 months. Local communities are hosting celebrations for the six known living 6888<sup>th</sup> veterans.*

## Speakers

### Senator Jerry Moran, Kansas



Before his election to public office, Senator Moran attended Fort Hays State University and later the University of Kansas, where he completed a degree in economics. After an early career as a small-town banker, he received his J.D. from the University of Kansas.

#### Sen. Moran's involvement in honoring the Six Triple Eight:

- ✓ On February 28, 2022 s.321, the Six Triple Eight Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2021 passed the U.S. House of Representatives.
- ✓ On April 30, 2021, this legislation unanimously passed the U.S. Senate.
- ✓ On April 20, 2021, Sen. Moran spoke at the memorial service for Deloris Ruddock, a member of the Six Triple Eight.
- ✓ In February 2021, Sen. Moran reintroduced the S.633 legislation in 117th Congress.
- ✓ In December 2020, the Senate passed Sen. Moran's legislation to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Members of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, but it did not pass the U.S. House of Representatives.
- ✓ In March 2019, Sen. Moran introduced S. 633 to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Members of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion.
- ✓ In November 2019, Sen. Moran participated in the dedication of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Monument at the Buffalo Soldier Memorial Park on Fort Leavenworth in Kansas.
- ✓ Sen. Moran helped raise awareness about the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion and as a result the Army award the battalion with the Meritorious Unit Compensation.
- ✓ In October 2018, the Senate unanimously passed Sen. Moran's resolution honoring the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion.

### Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dennis R. McDonough



Before coming to the Department of Veterans Affairs, Secretary McDonough served as the 26th White House Chief of Staff, and as Principal Deputy National Security Advisor. He believes deeply, as he testified to Congress, that "there is no more sacred obligation nor noble undertaking than to uphold our promises to our Veterans, whether they came home decades ago or days ago."

### Dr. Elwood L. Robinson, Chancellor, Winston Salem State University



A native of Ivanhoe, North Carolina, Dr. Elwood L. Robinson graduated magna cum laude from North Carolina Central University (NCCU) in 1978 with a degree in psychology and then earned a master's degree in the field from Fisk University in Tennessee. After completing a pre-doctoral internship at Duke University Medical Center – performing rotations in neuropsychology, psychiatric inpatient and behavioral medicine and health psychology – he began his doctoral work in clinical psychology at Penn State where he earned his Ph.D. in clinical psychology in 1986.

Dr. Robinson joined the faculty at NCCU in 1984. In 1993, he was named Director of the Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC) Program, which provides research-training opportunities for students and faculty from minority groups underrepresented in the biomedical sciences. From 1993 to 1996, Dr. Robinson also served as chair of NCCU's Psychology Department. In 2006, he was named founding dean of the NCCU College of Behavioral and Social Sciences. In 2012, Dr. Robinson left North Carolina for the role of provost and vice president of Cambridge College in 2012. While there, he was responsible for forging the first private/state partnership in New England between Cambridge College and Granite State College in New Hampshire to offer online programs.

Dr. Robinson is currently the 13th Chancellor of Winston-Salem State University – a position he has held since Jan. 1, 2015. As the chief executive officer of WSSU, he has overseen the development of an ambitious strategic plan that sets a course for the university to be recognized as a leader in educating students who thrive in a dynamic society. Dr. Robinson's thought-leadership in the area of social mobility has not gone unnoticed. WSSU has been one of only four universities in the nation to reach the Top 20 on CollegeNet's Social Mobility Index for four consecutive years. Additionally, in 2017 the university was named a Social Mobility Innovator by CollegeNet.

Active in professional and civic organizations, Dr. Robinson has received numerous awards and honors over the course of his career. A former National Institutes of Health Fellow, he has received the Sigma Xi Award (1995), the Omega Psi Phi Founder's Award (2007), an Image Award from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (2003), the Order of the Long Leaf Pine (2012), Penn State's Most Outstanding Alumni (2018), and the L. Richardson Preyer Alumni Award (2018). He has served on the boards of the YMCA of the Greater Triangle, the Center for Child and Family Health, and the Uplift Foundation, and has served as a delegate for the People to People Citizen Ambassador Program to China, Egypt and South Africa.

Dr. Robinson is married to Denise Robinson, a 1978 NCCU graduate and former elementary school teacher. Together, they have two children: Chanita and Devin, and one granddaughter Skylar.

### Dr. Toni Draper, Chairman of the Board & Publisher, the Afro American Newspaper



Dr. Frances "Toni" Draper has been a community leader in her home, Baltimore, Maryland for decades, with leadership positions in journalism, education, and a church she founded. In February 2018, she was named chairman of the board and publisher of the AFRO

American Newspapers, which was founded in 1892 by her great-grandfather. She served previously as president of the company from 1987 to 1999.

In 2002, She became the founding pastor of the Freedom Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in south Baltimore. She received a Doctor of Ministry degree in preaching and leadership from the United Theological Seminary in Ohio in 2006. Her bachelor's degree in Spanish language education in 1969 is from Morgan State University and served on the university's Board of Regents for 24 years before stepping down last June.

She also holds a master's degrees in education, business administration and pastoral counseling. Her mother, Frances L. Murphy II, helped inspire her to be a community leader. She encouraged her to honor God, treat people the way you want to be treated and surround yourself with younger people who can keep you up to date on the latest trends and technologies.

Now it's her turn to inspire the younger generation. She often tells her grandchildren that it's important to give back to the community because many people need a genuine hand up or a simple word of encouragement, in order to survive and thrive. When people are healthy economically, socially and spiritually, communities are healthy.

Among the 855 soldiers of the 6888th is Vashti Murphy-Matthews, one of the five daughters of Carl Murphy, who was *AFRO* Publisher from 1922-1967. Thanks to his foresight to send war correspondents to Europe, the *AFRO* is now one of the primary 6888th references. The *AFRO*'s archives provided much needed historical information for Six Triple Eight Congressional Gold Medal Advocates

### **Blair Underwood, Actor, Executive Producer, 6888<sup>th</sup> the Musical**



Blair Underwood was nominated for a 2021 Tony Award for his performance in the Roundabout Theatre's Tony Award winning revival of *A Soldier's Play* at the American Airlines Theater. He was also nominated for a Drama League Distinguished Performance Award. He made his Broadway debut in the iconic role of "Stanley" in Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*, for which he earned a Drama League Distinguished Performance Award nomination.

As a theatrical producer, he was recently represented on Broadway with the acclaimed production of *Pass Over*. He will soon Executive Produce and reprise his role of Jonathan Rollins as the lead for the upcoming reboot of "L.A. Law" for A.B.C. Before that, he will be featured in the upcoming Showtime series, "Three Women," alongside Shailene Woodley, DeWanda Wise and Betty Gilpin. Underwood recently directed *Viral*, a feature in which he will also play the lead, opposite Sarah Silverman and Alfre Woodard. He can currently be seen playing Vernon Jordan, opposite Clive Owen, Edie Falco and Beanie Feldstein, in megaproducer Ryan Murphy's "Impeachment" for F.X.. Underwood co-starred in the Netflix limited series, "Self-Made," opposite Octavia Spencer, earning his eighth N.A.A.C.P. Image Award. In 2019 he recurred on the Netflix comedy series, "Dear White People," and in Clark Johnson's *Juanita*, opposite Alfred Woodard, also for Netflix.

He spent two years as a series regular on the A.B.C. drama series, "Quantico," while also recurring on another hit A.B.C. drama, *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* He also had a co-starring role in *The After Party*, from writer/director Ian Edelman, which Netflix released late in 2018. He can be seen co-starring in Justin Simien's horror comedy, *Bad Hair*, which premiered on Hulu in October 2020. Past television credits include series regular roles on "Dirty Sexy Money," "The New Adventures of Old Christine," "In Treatment," "L.A. Law" and "The Event". Film credits include *Just Cause*, *Set It Off*, *Rules of Engagement*, *Madea's Family Reunion* and *Full Frontal*, for director Steven Soderbergh. Underwood co-starred opposite the late Cicely Tyson in the national tour and in the Lifetime telefilm, *A Trip To Bountiful*, based on the Tony Award-winning play.

### **Brigadier General Hope Rampy**

**The Adjutant General of the U.S. Army  
Commanding General, Physical Disability Agency  
Executive Director of the Military Postal Service Agency**



Brigadier General (BG) Hope Rampy graduated from Cameron University as a Distinguished Military Graduate and was commissioned as an Adjutant General's Corps Officer in May 1996. After attending the Adjutant General's Corps Officer Basic School at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, she was assigned to 3rd Signal Brigade, III Corps at Fort Hood, Texas, in January 1997, where she served as the Personnel Management Officer and later as the Brigade S1/Adjutant. She was reassigned to the 3rd Personnel Group, III Corps as the Group S1 and later took command of Alpha Detachment, 546th Personnel Services Battalion supporting III Corps and later 1st Cavalry Division in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Following the Adjutant General's Corps Captain's Career Course and the Combined Arms Services Staff School, BG Rampy returned to Fort Jackson, South Carolina in May 2001 and served as a Captain's Career Course Instructor. In June 2003, she was selected to serve as Board Recorder at Human Resources Command in Alexandria, Virginia. In May 2005, she moved to the Army G-1, Pentagon, Arlington, Virginia, and served as the Promotion Policy Officer in the Director for Manpower and Personnel Management (DMPM) Directorate and later as the Executive Officer to the DMPM.

Upon completion of the Intermediate Level Education program at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in June 2008, BG Rampy was assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, where she served as the Division Strength Manager and deployed with the Division in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Upon redeployment in January 2010, she served as the Secretary General Staff, 1st Cavalry Division. In December 2011, BG Rampy took command of the 4th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 1st Cavalry Division. The battalion deployed to Afghanistan in November 2012. The battalion conducted route clearance, military intelligence operations, signal support and security for the BCT. BG Rampy served as lead for the Counter Improvised Explosive Device (CIED) effort in Regional Command-East. Upon redeployment, she relinquished command and reported to the Joint Staff, Pentagon, in November 2013, where she served as the Military Secretary for the Director for Operations, J-3. In August 2015 BG Rampy attended the United States Army War College as a fellow at the University of Texas. Upon graduation she reported to Fort Shafter, Hawaii in July 2016 and served as the G1, United States Army Pacific (USARPAC) until July 2018. BG Rampy served as the Executive Officer to the Army G-1 from July 2018 to June 2020.

Her awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (4 Oak Leaf Clusters), the Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Army Achievement Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the National Defense Service Medal with Bronze Star, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Afghan Campaign Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terror Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the NATO Medal with Bronze Star, the Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Joint Staff Badge, the Army Staff Badge and the Parachutist Badge.

BG Rampy is a native of Lawton, Oklahoma. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Cameron University and a Master of Business Administration from Touro University.

### **Colonel Edna W. Cummings, U.S. Army (Retired)**

**Six Triple Eight Congressional Gold Medal Champion, Documentary Producer, and Army Reserve Ambassador-Maryland**



A native of Fayetteville, NC, Col. Cummings operates a Washington DC area consultancy specializing in management and proposal services for federal and commercial clients. She was the first African American woman to earn her commission as an Army officer through the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Appalachian State University (ASU), Boone, NC. Afterwards, she embarked on a distinguished 25-year military career in a variety of progressive assignments culminating with senior-level positions at Georgetown University, the Pentagon, and NORAD/USNORTHCOM in Colorado Springs, Colorado. After retiring from the Army, she held management positions for federal contracting companies wherein she led homeland security and information technology initiatives for federal agencies including the Department of Defense and the Department of Justice.

Since January 2018, retired Army Col. Edna W. Cummings has worked to bring recognition to the all-black WWII Women's Army Corps unit the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion also known as the Six Triple Eight. As a citizen advocate, she raised funds for the 6888th monument and co-produced an award-winning documentary about the unit. She championed the effort with Congress to enact passage of the Six Triple Eight Congressional Gold Medal Act. On March 14, 2022, President Biden signed the legislation into law awarding the 6888th the nation's highest civilian honor.

Col. Cummings is a former member of ASU's Foundation Board of Directors, wherein she established the Warrior Fund for veterans their children. She is current member of the Military Advisory Board of the History Makers, the nation's largest African American video oral history archive, and an Army Reserve Ambassador for the state of Maryland, a volunteer special government employee equivalent to a Major General (two-star) in the Armed Forces. In this capacity she advances Army ROTC scholarships for reserve duty opportunities and promotes awareness of the Army Reserve, its goals and objectives.

Col. Cummings holds a Master of Strategic Studies, Army War College, Carlisle, PA, and a Master of Science Degree in Foundations of Education, Troy State University, Troy, AL. She is also a graduate of the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, Quartermaster Officers' Basic and Advanced Courses, Fort Lee, VA, and the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, Patrick Air Force Base, FL. She has certifications in Information Technology Information Library (Foundations), Maryland Circuit Court Training for Mediators, and as an Equal Employment Opportunity Investigator. As an Army officer, she received the Defense Superior Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medals (three awards), Army Commendation Awards (four awards), Joint Service Commendation Award, Army Superior Unit, Reserve Forces Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, and the Army Staff Identification Badge.

Among other the many other military and civic recognitions, in March 2020, Col. Cummings was inducted into the Army Women's Foundation Hall of Fame, and the Military Officers Association of America selected her as one its national Changemakers.

### **Master Sergeant Elizabeth Helm-Frazier, U.S. Army (Retired)**

**Six Triple Eight Advocate**



United States Army Master Sergeant (MSG/Ret) Elizabeth Anne Helm-Frazier was born in St. Petersburg, FL, the oldest of five children. On August 5, 1981, she joined the Army for its educational, travel, and job opportunities. Throughout her 25-year career, she held a variety of assignments and high-profile positions. Some of her military career highlights include being U.S. Army TRADOC's Career Counselor of the Year, San Antonio's Mentor of the Year, Past President of the Northern Virginia Chapter 33, and The Fort Discovery Science Center Volunteer of the Year, Augusta, GA. She successfully petitioned Pinellas County to rename the street Baskin Drive to Gooden Crossing in honor of late Grandparents, Mr. & Mrs. Chester (Corrine) Gooden. The Street name was approved, Aug 20, 2002 and street ceremony for new street name -Gooden Crossing was Feb 1, 2003.

Frequently commended as an expert in personnel and career counseling, her unit and leadership retention programs were worthy of emulation and demonstrated outstanding supervisory and management with subordinates. MSG Helm-Frazier was an exceptional Soldier, role model, and frequently commended for her outstanding leadership, recruitment, and retention skills.

After her retirement from active duty in 2006, MSG Helm-Frazier has continued her service to military women, veterans, and community activities. One of her many ongoing volunteer commitments is ensuring the legacy of the 6888th Postal Battalion, the first and only all-Black and all-female unit to deploy to the European Theater of Operations during World War II. Her fundraising efforts supported the establishment of the 6888th Monument at Fort Leavenworth, KS, honoring these women's exemplary service in WWII. Additionally, she served as a producer of the critically acclaimed documentary, "The SixTripleEight," which tells the 6888th Postal Directory Battalion story.

Highly skilled at providing counseling and guidance, MSG Helm-Frazier continues to be an advocate and role model for Army women. She is also the founder of The Walk to Cure Cancer Tour and to date has completed 30 walks, committed to walking in all 50 states until cancer is cured. She has traveled to four of the seven continents and is in the ALL 50 STATES Club with her trip to Alaska, Aug 2019. She continues to be active in philanthropy and charitable projects.

She holds a Bachelor of Business Administration and Management from Wayland Baptist University and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Phoenix. She is a member of Berwyn Presbyterian Church, Berwyn Heights, Maryland, and her home church is St. Mary Missionary Baptist Church, Largo, Florida. Her late grandparents, Chester and Corrine Gooden donated the land for the church to be build and were co-organizers. Proud to be from Ridgecrest!

### **James W. Theres, Executive Producer, The Six Triple Eight Documentary**



James William Theres is an award-winning Executive Writer for the Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington, DC and an award-winning independent documentary filmmaker. His film, the Hello Girls won Best Documentary Feature at the Chagrin Documentary Film Festival in 2018 and the People's Choice Award at the Beloit International Film Festival in 2019. May 13-17, 2019, James screened his third film, the *SixTripleEight*, throughout England, courtesy of the United States Embassy in London, at several universities and venues to include the Birmingham, England City Hall, universities of Manchester, Glasgow, and Cardiff, and the National War

Museum in London. The *SixTripleEight* was nominated for Best Documentary Feature at the 9th Annual Charlotte Black Film Festival.

He has a BA in History from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and an MBA from Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and an MA in History from Jackson State University. His first film, *The 30th of May*, was based on his graduate research project of the same name. The paper received the prestigious Dr. Margaret Walker Alexander Award at the 10th Annual Creative Arts Festival at Jackson State University. The documentary received 10 awards and appeared on Mississippi Public Television in May 2017.

His second documentary, *The Hello Girls*, tells the relatively unknown story of 223 American women who were recruited, trained, and sent overseas by the US Army Signal Corps to serve as telephone operators. They wore Army uniforms and swore Army oaths. They served at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. For 60 years, they fought the U.S. government and finally received their recognition as soldiers and Veterans in 1977. The Hello Girls has screened at the National Archives in Washington D.C., the World War I Museum in Kansas City, and General Pershing's former headquarters in Chaumont, France on November 11, 2018, 100 years after the end of the war.

James completed his third documentary, the *SixTripleEight*, about the only all-black female battalion to serve in Europe during World War II, May 2019. In March 2019, James received a "Special Recognition Award" from the US Army Women's Foundation for The Hello Girls documentary. In June 2019, James received the prestigious 2019 Media and Entertainment Award from the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) at their National Defense Night Ceremony of their 128th DAR Continental Congress on Saturday, June 29 at DAR Constitution Hall in Washington D.C. Past recipients include Lynn Novick, Director, *The Vietnam War* with Ken Burns, the Broadway musical *Hamilton*, the AMC series *TURN: Washington's Spies*, and the mini-series *John Adams* produced by HBO Films.

### ***About the Congressional Gold Medal***

*Since the American Revolution, Congress has commissioned gold medals as its highest expression of national appreciation for distinguished achievements and contributions. Each medal honors a particular individual, institution, or event. Although the first recipients included citizens who participated in the American Revolution, the War of 1812 and the Mexican War, Congress broadened the scope of the medal to include actors, authors, entertainers, musicians, pioneers in aeronautics and space, explorers, lifesavers, notables in science and medicine, athletes, humanitarians, public servants, and foreign recipients.*

*Since 1776, less than 200 Congressional Gold Medals have been awarded. General George Washington was the first recipient.*



*Thank You to the 6888<sup>th</sup> families,  
friends, organizations, and  
supporters nationwide who made  
the Six Triple Eight Congressional  
Gold Medal a reality!*