



THE HOOSIER VETERAN

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WELCOME!

BY JOE DEVITO

This month, we celebrate and acknowledge the tremendous contributions of our African American Veterans to our storied military history. The courage, faith and intelligence of so many are worth much more recognition than we can offer, but we can say thank you and continue to pave the way for today's African American veterans. As we reflect on Black History Month, the team at Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs remains committed to making Indiana the best place for all Veterans to Live, Work and Thrive! We welcome contributions and feedback to outreachedva.in.gov.

THE HOOSIER VETERAN
NEWSLETTER

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6888TH CENTRAL POSTAL DIRECTORY BATTALION: "NO MAIL, LOW MORALE"

BY LAURA MCKEE

Did you know Benjamin Franklin was the first Post Master General of the United States in 1775? Another interesting fact is the American Messenger Company was actually founded by two teenagers in 1907, paving the way for the company we know today recognizable by their large brown vans, the United Parcel Service (UPS). Years later, the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion (6888th CPDB) would rise on the heels of its predecessors and surpass all expectations. This courageous group ensured deployed Americans fighting on the battlefields in Europe received their mail during World War II.

Lt. Col. Charity Adams Early was the first black woman to be commissioned in the U.S. Army.

She continued to establish outstanding standards by leading the first all-black women battalion to serve overseas. The U.S. Army challenged her and her troops to rectify the doomed military mail system.

Prior to WWII, deployed servicemembers depended primarily on the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) to send and receive mail. From the beginning of U.S. involvement in WWII in 1941 and up to 1945, there were only 12 soldiers sorting mail for 10,000 U.S. troops. Those troops were stationed at approximately 1,000 locations throughout Europe, with many of those locations being in rural areas. Mail was exceedingly prolonged in reaching those final destinations. The parcels became so backlogged, they often did not reach recipients for months and even years after initially being sent. Incoming care packages often rotted or were consumed by rodents. Not getting their mail had a crushing effect on morale and readiness. Recognizing this impact, Adams created the motto, "No mail, low morale".

The 6888th CPDB (also known as the Six Triple Eight) consisted of African American women who were originally part of the Women Army Corps (WAC). At times, the battalion consisted of over 800 deployed soldiers. Their mission was to create a post office from a location in Birmingham, England, to straighten out the dysfunctional mail service. After defeating many challenges, such as overcoming bombed barracks, the 6888th CPDB set up their post office in a cold airplane hangar where three shifts were created to keep a disciplined process going 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The women worked so diligently that they did not have time to think of their own morale. The mission was scheduled to be complete in six months, but with dedication and determination to do their part during the war, the postal battalion completed the task in half that time. *Continued on page 3.*



Captain Abbie N. Campbell and Major Charity Adams inspect the first contingent of African American WACs sent overseas shortly after their arrival in England, February 15, 1945. (National Archives)

Once they achieved success in England, the Army relocated the battalion to France, another troubled spot, where they once again achieved superior success. After the European phase of the war ended and priority service members were reorganized in the Pacific, the women of the 6888th CPDB was sent home and disbanded.

The 6888th CPDB trained, deployed, and overcame an overwhelming problem. In 2016, the 6888th CPDB is inducted into the U.S. Army Women's Hall of Fame and in 2018, they were awarded the Meritorious Unit Award. Fort Leavenworth, Kan., is now home to the monument that stands in testament to the brave, outstanding women of the 6888th CPDB.

Today, there are less than seven members of the 6888th CPDB still living. We acknowledge their determination, their success, and their willingness to sacrifice to do their part, but mostly we say thank you. Thank you for steadfast and unwavering courage, skill and strength in a time when it was needed most. And thank you for getting the job done when no one else could.

Surviving members of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion at the dedication of the monument Nov. 30, 2018 on Fort Leavenworth, Kan. (Courtesy photo)



ROLL CALL!



The Indiana Veterans Home is officially COVID-free! All staff and residents have tested negative and our last positive resident has finished their recovery and quarantine period.

The Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery is open for visitors. Please follow all COVID-19 guidelines:



- Wear a mask in all buildings.
- Maintain 6 feet social space.

We understand and appreciate your contribution to keeping everyone safe to enjoy their visit.

Click [HERE](#) to see the webpage.

VETERAN PROFILES *in History*

The Montford Point Marines: Cpl. Averitte Corley & Sgt. Maj. Johnny Washington

Being in the presence of Cpl. Averitte Corley and Sgt. Maj. Johnny Washington is being in the presence of history itself. Both of these men are U.S. Marines. They were both proudly part of a special place in history, shattering glass ceilings and leading the way for change in the U.S. military. For they were members of the Montford Point Marines, the first black Marines.

Before Corporal Corley became a Marine, he felt so strongly the desire to serve his country that he dropped out of Crispus Attucks High School, lied about his age, and joined the U.S. Air Force.

For Sergeant Washington, he made a career for himself in the Marines, serving 30 years before retiring. He was part of World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Not many soldiers can claim all of those on their record and live to tell about it.

[Read the full story by Kara Kavensky HERE.](#)



"I WANT TO BE SOMEONE WHO THE PUBLIC TRUSTS, WHO PERFORMS AT A HIGH LEVEL, WHO REPRESENTS AS WELL AS I CAN OR ALL THE SOLDIERS WHO CAME BEFORE ME AND ALL THE SOLDIERS WHO ARE IN UNIFORM RIGHT NOW OR TO COME," SMITH SAID.



Cpl. Averitte Corley (top) and Sgt. Maj. Johnny Washington (bottom) of the Montford Point Marines. (Courtesy photos)

Capt. Chandler Smith, U.S. Army

In 2020, U.S. Army Capt. Chandler Smith placed fourth in the 2020 Rogue Invitational after excelling in the barbell events, including performing 50 reps of a 95-pound power snatch unbroken. Then, in Stage One of the 2020 CrossFit Games, he narrowly missed making the Finals by finishing in sixth place, two points behind Jeffrey Adler (the top five advanced to the Finals).

However, Smith was not absent from the Games entirely. He was selected to be part of the 2020 CrossFit Games Demo Team alongside Saxon Panchik and Danielle Brandon. The Demo Team tested each event in the Finals before they took place, so Games Director Dave Castro could sense how taxing each event was.

[Read the full story on Bar Bend HERE.](#)



ANNOUNCEMENTS

COVID-19 Veteran Vaccinations Begin

What: COVID-19 vaccinations for veterans

Who is eligible: Enrolled veterans over the age of 65, or in clinical categories: dialysis, oncology, transplant, or homeless.

Where: Roudebush VA Medical Center
1481 W. 10th St. Indianapolis

How: Enrolled veterans who would like a vaccine may call the direct appointment line at 317.988.4899. Same day appointments are available between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. If you would like to enroll in [VA Healthcare](#), [click HERE](#) to get started.

The History Underground

A muster roll from the Revolutionary War? An artifact from the USS Maine? A bust of Hitler from the Reich Chancellery? The Indiana War Memorial has it all! We are kicking off a new series in the state of Indiana exploring the history of war in the United States as seen through the lens of the Indiana eye! [Watch Indiana's Crazy War Artifacts now on YouTube.](#)

Building Healthy Military Communities Webinar Series

BHMC would like to invite you to join us in a webinar series to connect with military contacts across Indiana. If you have ever wondered who your point of contact should be when reaching out to the Indiana National Guard or Air/Army Reserves for help locating resources and assistance, this series is for you! Each day of the series will focus on a different area of support. [Please register for one or all of the Assemblies here.](#)



John Boner Neighborhood Centers
2236 E. 10th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46208
317.808.2393

Holy Angels School
2822 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. St.
Indianapolis, IN 46208
317.926.5211

Habitat for Humanity
3135 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46208
317.921.2121

Free Tax Prep for Veterans

In partnership with Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, the following organizations and locations are offering free tax prep with a valid veteran I.D. card:

Military One Source
800.342.9467

Real Skill

EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION



VET Initiative

- The VET Initiative is a fully funded 10-week professional immersion program in Washington, D.C., for U.S. military veterans who are in undergraduate or graduate school. The program runs June 6 through August 7, and includes an internship, coursework, career coaching, career strategy planning and one-on-one mentoring. This year, because of COVID-19, the program offers both virtual and in-person internships. Students may choose to select a remote internship, plus participate in the coursework, coaching, and training either remotely or in-person.
- The program is fully funded by the Prudential Foundation – the total value is \$14,000. This includes the program costs, and for students coming to D.C., the housing costs. Each student in the program also receives \$2,000 from The Washington Center to help with additional expenses during the 10 weeks.
- The goal of this program is to help the student veteran learn how their military experience and skills translates to a civilian job, and discover what their career niche may be. Students in this program develop key skills such as self-marketing, networking, communication, conflict resolution, and more. The deadline for applications is Feb. 24. More information is available [HERE](#). Contact Heather MacLeod to apply, 317.544.9177 or e-mail heather.macleod@va.gov.

Job Opening: Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) – Muncie Region 6

Grow your career with the State of Indiana! LVERs conduct outreach to employers and business associations and engage in advocacy efforts with hiring executives to increase employment opportunities for veterans and encourage the hiring of disabled veterans. More information and to apply for this position, [CLICK HERE](#).

Earn an undergraduate certificate at no cost from Indiana Tech!

Indiana Tech is an approved education provider for Indiana's Workforce Ready Grant. Qualifying students can have the cost of an undergraduate certificate covered by the grant. For more information, contact LaCinda Garriott at 765.838.0641, ext. 6125 or e-mail LRGarriott@indianatech.edu.