Senate Resolution No. 2771

BY: Senator SANDERS

COMMEMORATING the 75th Anniversary of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, the only all-African American, all-female Army unit sent overseas during World War II

WHEREAS, Members of the United States Armed Forces, who served so faithfully and courageously in wars in which our Nation's freedom was at stake, as well as in the preservation of peace during peacetime, deserve the highest commendation of this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, the only all-African American, all-female Army unit sent overseas during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Nearly 900 members strong, the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion was the first and only all-black Women's Army Corps (WAC) unit deployed to Europe during World War II; the women kept mail flowing to nearly seven million soldiers in the European Theater of Operations (ETO); and

WHEREAS, With the majority of Americans in Europe during the war on the move, tracking them down for mail call was overwhelming; subsequently, in February of 1945, the members of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion shipped out to Birmingham, England, tasked with the mission to sort and clear a two-year backlog of mail; and

WHEREAS, Almost immediately after leaving the United States, the women were introduced to the rigors of war; during the trip across the Atlantic Ocean German U-boats forced the convoy of troop ships to change course; and

WHEREAS, Once the women arrived in England on February 14, 1945, they encountered another scare when a German V1 rocket, also known as a Buzz Bomb, dove into the area; no one was killed, but the event served as a harsh reminder that even behind the lines, soldiers were at risk at all times; and

WHEREAS, The 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion was officially organized on March 4, 1945, pitching mail at a facility with less than ideal working conditions in Birmingham, until after the end of the war in Europe; and

WHEREAS, These extraordinary women tirelessly worked three shifts a day, seven days a week, while bombs dropped all around them, processing 17 million pieces of mail by the time they were done in Birmingham; and

WHEREAS, With approximately 850 officers and enlisted personnel, this Women's Army Corps unit was organized into four postal directory companies-A, B, C, and D-and a Headquarters company, which handled all

administrative and service support duties; and

WHEREAS, Commanding the battalion was Major Charity Adams, who joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, the predecessor to the WAC, in 1942, and became the first African American woman to receive an Army commission; she ended the war as a Lieutenant Colonel and as the highest-ranking black woman in the Army; and

WHEREAS, In May of 1945, the unit transferred to Rouen, France, via the port of La Havre; although the sights changed, the women were once again ordered to deliver two to three years of mail in six months, and again they completed the task in just three; and

WHEREAS, After five months in Rouen, the Battalion transferred to Paris, where they were housed in two lavish hotels; while living conditions improved, their work became more difficult as more WACs transferred home; and

WHEREAS, In November of 1945, only 558 women of the original 850 remained with the Battalion, and on February 27th of the following year, the 6888th boarded the Claymont Victory for its return to the United States; and

WHEREAS, During a time when the members of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion were denied basic liberties as Americans, these brave women steadfastly served their country, enduring hatred and racism to keep morale blooming at a time when it was needed the most; and

WHEREAS, All of our Nation's veterans deserve to be recognized, commended and thanked by the people of the State of New York for their service and for their dedication to their communities, their State and their Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, the only all-African American, all-female Army unit sent overseas during World War II; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the 688th Central Postal Directory Battalion.