

K E R R Y W A S H I N G T O N



WHEN AMERICA NEEDED HOPE, THEY DELIVERED.

THE SIX TRIPLE EIGHT

BASED ON THE HEROIC TRUE STORY

A FILM BY TYLER PERRY

PRESS NOTES

RECEIVED

MAR 35

Ans'd

By

NETFLIX

The Six Triple Eight releases in Select Theaters on December 6, 2024

Globally on Netflix on December 20, 2024

THE SIX TRIPLE EIGHT

For additional press materials, please visit:

► media.netflix.com ◀

UCAN PRESS CONTACT

Team Reich

✉ teamreich@netflix.com ✉

TABLE OF CONTENTS

► 3 ◀

Key Information

► 3 ◀

Logline

► 4 ◀

Synopsis

► 5 ◀

A Conversation with Writer-Director-Producer Tyler Perry

► 11 ◀

A Note from Ambassador Nicole Avant

► 12 ◀

A Conversation with Star & Executive Producer Kerry Washington

► 16 ◀

Meet the 6888th: Notes From the Cast

► 20 ◀

Outfitting the Company:

The Artisans of *The Six Triple Eight*

► 27 ◀

The Real 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion:

Key Facts About the Women Who Delivered Hope

► 2 ◀

RECEIVED

MAY 35

Ans'd

By

KEY INFORMATION

DIRECTOR:

Tyler Perry

WRITER:

Tyler Perry

BASED ON THE ARTICLE

"Fighting A Two-Front War" by Kevin M. Hymel published in
WWII History Magazine by Sovereign Media

PRODUCERS:

Tyler Perry, p.g.a., Nicole Avant, p.g.a., Angi Bones,
Tony L. Strickland, Keri Selig, Carlota Espinosa

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS:

Peter Guber, Kerry Washington

CAST:

Kerry Washington, Ebony Obsidian, Milauna Jackson, Kylie Jefferson,
Shanice Shantay, Sarah Jeffery, Pepi Sonuga, Moriah Brown,
Jeanté Godlock, Jay Reeves, Jeffery Johnson, Baadja-Lyne Odums,
Donna Biscoe, Gregg Sulkin, Scott Daniel Johnson, Susan Sarandon,
with Dean Norris, and Sam Waterston, and Oprah Winfrey.

ORIGINAL SONG:

"The Journey," written by Diane Warren and performed by H.E.R.

LOGLINE

The *Six Triple Eight* is inspired by the first and only Women's Army Corps unit of color to serve overseas in WWII. Given an extraordinary mission and united in their determination, these unsung heroes delivered hope and shattered barriers.



Date: _____
Name: _____

- SYNOPSIS -

The Six Triple Eight is inspired by the first and only Women's Army Corps unit of color to serve overseas in WWII. Despite facing racism and sexism — and grueling working conditions — they were committed to serving their country with honor and distinction. Given an extraordinary mission and united in their determination, these unsung heroes delivered hope and shattered barriers. Written and directed by Tyler Perry, the film stars Kerry Washington as Major Charity Adams, the commanding officer of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion. Produced by Tyler Perry, Nicole Avant, Angi Bones, Tony L. Strickland, Keri Selig and Carlota Espinosa, the film features an ensemble cast including Ebony Obsidian, Milauna Jackson, Kylie Jefferson, Shanice Shantay, Sarah Jeffery, Pepi Sonuga, Moriah Brown, Jeanté Godlock, Susan Sarandon, with Dean Norris, and Sam Waterston, and Oprah Winfrey. Based on the article by Kevin M. Hymel, the film features an original song written by Diane Warren and performed by H.E.R., with choreography by Debbie Allen.

A CONVERSATION WITH WRITER-DIRECTOR-PRODUCER - TYLER PERRY -



How did you first learn about The 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion?

I was sent a sizzle reel from the one and only Ambassador Nicole Avant. To give some background, Carlota Espinosa, who is a producer on the film, had secured the rights to an article about WWII history called "Fighting A Two-Front War" written by Kevin M. Hymel. She shared the story with Keri Selig who then brought Peter Guber and Mandalay Pictures on board. Keri and Peter developed a sizzle reel that Keri sent to Ambassador Nicole Avant. And the Ambassador sent it to me and when I watched it, I called Nicole right away. I couldn't believe nobody knew this story of 855 women of color, mostly Black, serving in World War II.

I was so fascinated by it, I started taking in everything I could find including Kevin's article about these incredible women and he came on as a consultant. From there I just dove into research and started making plans to meet the living members of the real-life battalion as soon as possible.

It sounds like you moved quickly. Did meeting some of the real women help inspire the script?

Yes, it was within a day that I started making plans. The thing that led me to writing this particular story was Lena Derriecott King, who was one of the few surviving members at the time that I saw in the sizzle reel. She was 99 years old and living in Las Vegas so I flew down right away, thinking time was of the essence.

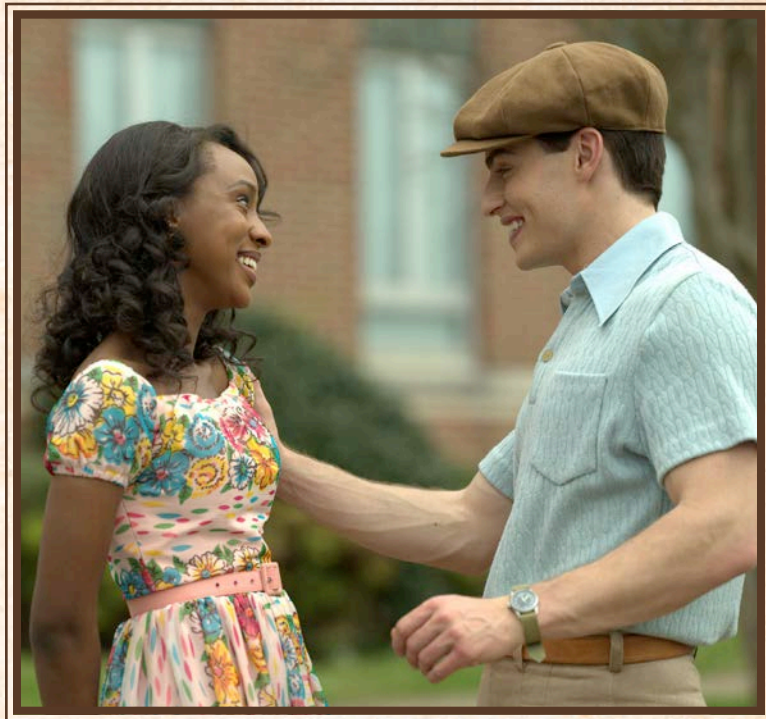
I went to this beautiful home and was greeted by her niece and everything's wonderful. I was waiting for this woman to come in thinking that, at 99, there might be nurses or a wheelchair or maybe her memory wouldn't be so sharp.

I turned around and this beautiful woman was coming down the stairs, in full makeup and I thought, "This cannot be Lena King."

We started to talk and she blew my mind. Her memory was so sharp. It was as if she was in the moment as she was telling the stories. At that time she was still driving, still going out and dancing with her friends. To have that opportunity to soak in all that wisdom and hear those truths, it was really, really powerful for me.

I'm always looking for the way into the story and she told me that she wanted to do something for our country because of a young boy named Abram, who was her friend who went off to fight in the war and was killed in the first couple of weeks that he was there.

The emotion that this woman had some 80-something years later was still so present in her eyes. I thought, "That's it. That's the way in. Let's follow Lena's journey."



What was the process of writing the script like after you met her?

The script as I was writing it came to me very quickly once I was able to manage the hundreds of voices in my head who were trying to get me to tell their stories.

I felt like Whoopi in *Ghost* with all these people showing up in my head constantly. I remember calling Oprah saying, "I've got so many people in my head, I've got to sort them all out."

Leaning in and following Lena's story was, for me, the way in. But also following the women that she came in contact with. We only focused on about seven women throughout the movie, but each of them represented a large portion of the women that made up the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion

Why was what the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion accomplished so impressive?

We are in a time where, if we need to talk to somebody, we just pick up a phone or we send an email, we send a text. We've got all of these gadgets that can do that.

During the war, the only way to get word to your family that you were okay, or for your family to find out if you were okay, was by letter.

There was this tremendous backlog of 17 million pieces of mail. All through the holidays, with all of these care packages, all of these gifts, all these wonderful things that were sent to these soldiers, families back home weren't getting any reply. It was debilitating. The motto that the real-life battalion came up with was "No mail, low morale."

They were inspiring the soldiers to keep fighting by getting them the letters from home. When that's the only way that you can communicate across seas in wartime, it was so important that those soldiers got those letters in their hands. That was life to them. That's why it was so important, what they did and how they were able to do it.



People think, "Oh, it's just sorting the mail. Just send it to a number here." No. A lot of these packages were eaten by vermin. They were moldy. There was rain and snow, and the addresses were illegible a lot of times.

But these 855 women found a way with their ingenuity to get this mail to the exact soldiers that it belonged to. It was an undeniable, incredible feat that they pulled off.

In addition to Lena's story, you chronicle the story of the leader of the real-life battalion, Major Charity Adams, played by Kerry Washington. How did you come to cast Kerry and why was she the perfect person for this role?

When I started thinking about casting, the strangest thing happened. Kerry Washington had just posted a picture on her social media dressed as a member of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion.



I was like, "How incredible is this? She doesn't even know I'm doing this." When I saw the picture, I thought, "Wow, she's Charity Adams." I've worked with her before. I know her acting ability. I know she can be off the charts, but I wanted to be able to bring her into a place that she had never been on film before.

Knowing the range that she has and knowing all of the things that she is capable of doing, I thought, "If she says yes to this, it's going to be amazing."

I immediately called her and her first question was, "How do you write a story about the mail?" After she saw the sizzle reel, and got her hands on a lot more of the research, she said, "Wow, this is going to be phenomenal." I'm so glad that I got a chance to put her in this role. She is incredible.

Then the strangest thing happened when we were in rehearsal at the studio for a scene. I got a knock on the door and it was one of my guys from transportation. He says, "We want to show you something." And they walk in with this trunk. Kerry and I were looking into the trunk thinking, "What is this?"

They said, "Well, the guy who was getting the tanks and the Jeeps and all of the World War II vehicles for the film is a World War II historian, and he was at an auction and he bought this trunk and he wants to share it with you."

We looked at the side of the trunk and it said Charity Adams. It was her original trunk. Kerry and I got chills. We opened it and it had her uniforms, a twig of a tulip tree, and some of her handwritten notes inside it. It was as if Charity was saying, "Okay, I'm with you. I'm leading you through this. Let's do it."

We had all these kinds of God-winks throughout shooting that let us know we were on the right path.



In crafting this story of smart, capable, ingenious, resilient women, you surrounded yourself with a large group of them as well: as producers, consultants, department heads, and actors. What was it like collaborating with this group of women?

To have all of these incredibly powerful women like Debbie Allen — who did all the choreography for us, and coordinated the march for us — producers like Ambassador Nicole Avant and Keri Selig, Carlota Espinosa, and Angi Bones, who produces with me all the time, and is my right hand, was amazing. They all are very strong in what they do and how they do it, and they all have very clear opinions. But there was one opinion that was important here, and it wasn't mine and it wasn't theirs. It was, "How are we honoring the women of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion?" Everything that we talked about came through the filter of honoring the dignity of these women. It was really pleasurable to walk through this with all of them.

I was so honored that before Lena died, I got a chance to show her the film.

What was her response to it?

By then she was in hospice at home, but still very clear, very lucid. She knew everything that was happening, and as she was seeing it, she was emotional. She was saluting the screen and after it was over, she said, "You did it. You nailed every detail, every button, every patch, every moment. I felt like I was right back there."

The most powerful thing she said to me, through tears, was, "Thank you for letting the world know that Black women contributed to the war effort and that we are patriots too." It was really wonderful.

What was it like casting this ensemble and working with them, combining newcomers with more seasoned actors?

The thing that was so profound about casting all of these young up-and-coming actors with these veterans was I had this incredible opportunity to walk the line right down the middle.

When you have people like Kerry Washington, and Debbie Allen, and Ambassador Nicole Avant, you see what grace and class and dignity is. So all of these young women who are coming up and trying to stay in the business forever, they see in these women what it takes, what these women represent. So to have both sides of that coming together, that naive excitement and that history and legacy, was just really beautiful.

*What makes right now a perfect moment to bring *The Six Triple Eight* to a global audience?*

This is a perfect time for the entire world to see the story, number one, to be inspired. It's an inspiring, moving story. It's going to encourage you, it's going to lift you, and it's also going to, hopefully ring some bells inside of us all to rise to challenges that are in our lives, to let us all know that you can't underestimate someone because they're Black, or because they're a woman, or because they're disenfranchised, because they're an immigrant.

No matter where you are in the world, and what your place is in it, I believe that everybody has a story and everybody's story is worthy of being told, I think that this is going to speak globally to the deepest parts of the goodness of people.

The Six Triple Eight is unique among World War II stories and it's going to warm a lot of hearts.



A NOTE FROM AMBASSADOR NICOLE AVANT



I first heard about the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, or Six Triple Eight, when I was a young girl because my mom told me about Major Charity Adams. Even though I never heard anything about them in school, I was lucky to have a mom that really honored history, honored the shoulders that we all stand on, and always wanted to celebrate an underdog.

The first inkling I heard about this project was from my friend Keri Selig, who's also a producer on the film. She and Peter Guber had put together a sizzle reel and sent me an email with a link saying "We have to make this movie."

I called Tyler Perry and said, "Listen, I have a sizzle reel. I need five minutes of your life. You're my first choice and I hope you say yes." He called me back within a half hour ready to tell the story. I chose Tyler because he appreciates African American history and our part in the story of America.

To me, the women of the real-life battalion represent grit, gratitude, and grace. They represent the best of America. They represent strength. They represent courage. They represent bravery. But they also represent humanity. They represent the energy in all of us that wants to quit, but never does. These women believed in a bigger picture, and they understood that they may not ever receive any accolades for the fruits of their labor, but they understood the greater good. That is why I have such respect for this battalion and these women, and I'm so excited to tell the story.

A CONVERSATION WITH STAR & EXECUTIVE PRODUCER KERRY WASHINGTON



How did you come to The Six Triple Eight? Were you familiar with their story?

I am a huge Tyler Perry fan. We've worked together before and been friends for decades. I have so much adoration and respect for what he's built and what he continues to build. For years we've been talking about working together again and trying to find the right project.

At the same time, I had been working with my social media team on a series called "Black Her Story." I was putting posts up in February and March for Black History Month and Women's History Month dressed as different important Black women throughout history from Rosa Parks to Pam Grier. One of the women highlighted was Lena Derriecott King, who was a member of the real-life battalion. The same week that we shot my picture for the "Black Her Story" series on my social media, Tyler had sent me a link to a sizzle reel that I hadn't watched yet.

So, there was this incredible synchronicity of him sending me an article and the sizzle reel and I was telling the same story on social media. When I opened up the link and watched it, I was floored. I had just learned about these amazing women and who they were and what they accomplished. And so, I was really excited to read his script and to talk to him about it more because it all just felt kind of magically meant to be. We had so many of those moments making this film, it just feels like we were surrounded by the angels of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion,

bringing us all together so that we could tell their story that so desperately needs to be told.

I get really emotional when I think about Tyler's work on this film because being his friend for decades, I've really watched him evolve not only as a titan of industry, as an incredible entrepreneur and business person, but as an artist as well. The amount of artistic integrity and creative commitment that he brought to the telling of this story is really moving. It's really inspiring to see him fight for this story and to bring all of himself to the dignity of these women. To try to make the film that they deserve: A truly artful, epic, historic drama.



What kind of research did you do into your character Major Charity Adams, who is one of the real women depicted in the film?

I love to do research when I'm developing a character. It's one of my favorite things about figuring out who a character is, to really nerd out on all the details about them and the world that they lived in and their relationships and their friendships.

Charity Adams wrote this beautiful memoir about her

time in the Armed Forces, *One Woman's Army: A Black Officer Remembers the WAC*. I dove into that book and have read it a couple of times. One of the things that was really moving for me, was to see the elements that Tyler was inspired to weave into the film from the book, including the moment where she says to the General "Over my dead body" and the moment she came up with the motto, "No mail, low morale."

I love that it took women, and Black women in particular, to understand that in order to be successful in the winning of freedom and justice, we have to stay strong in our hearts and that without morale, without feeling a deeper connection to your loved ones, without being able to hear from your mother or your wife or family and friends or say to them, "I love you" through the mail, that people's hearts were getting small. I love that Charity Adams came up with that, and I love that it's in the film. I love that Tyler was so diligent about understanding the history and the dynamics that were at play and crafting all of that into the script.

You had an opportunity to talk to two of the members of the real 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion — Lena Derriecott King, who is depicted in the film by Ebony Obsidian, and Romay Davis Robinson — on a Zoom call with Tyler and the cast before they passed. What was that like?

Thank God for modern technology! We got to spend some really beautiful, quality time together by Zoom and on the phone and it was such a delight. One of the women, Romay, was actually Charity Adams' driver in the motor pool. So, we talked for over an hour. I remember asking her, "What was she like? What was her essence? If you had to describe her in one word, what would it be?" And she said, "Kerry, she was herself. Her disposition was leadership." That told me so much about how these women saw her and the gravitas that I needed to bring to the role. This is a woman who was a real force, and had such a glorious impact on these soldiers, on these ladies. I felt like it was an invitation for me to really step into a different sense of leadership and what that might look, feel, and move like.

What was it like working with this large cast, from the younger women of the battalion to the more seasoned actors in supporting roles like Susan Sarandon and cameos like Oprah Winfrey?



It was an incredible opportunity to be working among those heroes of mine. But, we were all in service of these young women. These young women are the true heroines of the film, and they really are our window into this world. The journey that they go on is the journey that audiences will go on. Lena's journey in particular. But all of these young women, they're such fiercely talented and lovely human beings, I felt tremendous honor witness-

ing their work and to be put in a position of some sort of leadership because they are really phenomenal. And I'm excited for audiences. Maybe audiences will show up because they know who Kerry Washington is and they know who Oprah Winfrey is and they know who Susan Sarandon is, but they're going to walk away from this film being in love with these young women and just being blown away by the future of what each of them has to bring to this business.

Did you all develop a sisterhood on set?

Yes. I think one of my favorite memories of being on set will always be this one day that we were shooting and we had a storm warning. You can't film when lightning is within a certain mile radius so we had to shut down the set. And so for hours, we were sitting around just doing nothing, waiting for this storm to pass over. At

one point I grabbed Debbie Allen, who has been so tremendously important to the making of this film as a choreographer and consultant and said, "Let's just gather the ladies and let's let them ask us questions."

We went down to the basement of this church and we said, "What do you guys want to know? What are you curious about? What are you scared about? What are you wondering? What are you interested in? Ask us anything." And we had this incredible conversation about being actors, being moms, being wives, being professionals, about dreams, about commitment, about studying craft, about keeping the work fresh, about finding your partner in life. It was just this incredibly intimate, open, fabulous conversation where everybody got to share their experience and spend time



together. In some ways it was my excuse to ask Debbie Allen a bunch of questions that I wanted to know. But it was fun to be able to share some of my experience also with these young women and to learn from their experience and what's going on in their lives. It was really special.

The Six Triple Eight being on Netflix means the story will be available to a global audience. Why do you feel that is important?

This is a story about World War II. The entire world was engaged in this moment of trying to define or defend liberty. And this is a story about how the service of Black women impacted the history of the globe. So it makes so much sense and I'm so grateful that people all over the world are going to get to watch this film and honor the legacy of these women that are not just American heroes, but really international global superstars.

Black women have always understood what's at stake and really come to be part of the solution in what makes this country work. A big part of Charity Adams' arc in the film that resonated for me is, in the beginning, she really feels like it's all on her shoulders. She feels like she alone must solve this problem and she has to be a hero and be the perfect leader and make it all work. As the film progresses, you see her being open to the genius of all of the women around her. You see how powerful Black women are when we come together; that in community is really how they solve this problem.

MEET THE 6888TH

- NOTES FROM THE CAST -

NEW FACES

Tyler Perry is renowned for working with young, up-and-coming talent and the company of The Six Triple Eight is no exception with the women making up the battalion. Some are actors he has worked with previously and for others, this is their first Perry film. All of the women say they formed a real sisterhood working together.



LENA DERRIECOTT KING (Ebony Obsidian)

On playing a real person: “I had the opportunity to meet Ms. King on her 100th birthday in Las Vegas. I spent the day with her, her family, her friends, all the people who love her dearly. This woman had outlived many of her family members, many of her friends, and she still had so much joy. She taught me that no matter what you go through, you can still rise. It's really beautiful to see. I'm excited for people to see her story from the beginning, where she built her

strength and her resilience and her joy and her compassion. This is a woman who deserves so much, and I'm very glad that we can give her this little bit of her story back and share it with everyone.”

Tyler Perry on Obsidian: “Every time I worked with her on *Sistas*, I thought ‘She's got so much more in her.’ So to give her this opportunity to play Lena and lead this movie and follow her journey all the way through was something that I know was a dream come true for her, and I was impressed how she handled the weight of it all.”



CAPTAIN CAMPBELL

(Milauna Jackson)

On how working on *The Six Triple Eight* broadened her perspective: "We aren't often exposed to how Black women contributed to the military in an impactful way, and how we contribute to moving the world forward in a way that is positive and reflective of who we all are as human beings, which is integral to survive and to thrive in a peaceful and loving way. It sounds a bit, maybe esoteric, but the reality is that Black women do appreciate validation when we have really made strides in a way

that no one else could and these women did. They came home to no parade, no fanfare, no flowers, no support, and now are receiving that. To be a part of that, it really changed my perspective about why I'm a part of this project, but also how I am a part of history in a real, powerful way. I've done biopics based off of real stories before. I've done fictional narratives. But something like *The Six Triple Eight* really feels like the beginning of my career, and also the beginning of who I am going to be."





L-R: Bernice Baker (Kylie Jefferson), Johnnie Mae (Shanice Shantay), Dolores Washington (Sarah Jeffery) & Elaine White (Pepi Sonuga)

Jefferson on working with and learning from her castmates: I have been able to learn a lot from these women in the simplest of ways: how they conduct themselves on set, how they prepare for each scene, how they come out of character, how they decompress. Even with Kerry, she's amazing just on a personal level, but someone that big and famous, you generally think, 'I'm going to give them their space.' But she was very nurturing and very inviting and amazing to watch. There were times where we were filming scenes and I would almost forget that I was in the scene. I was like, 'Kylie, this is Kerry Washington — focus!' This was an experience that I needed for my spirit."

Shantay on the emotional impact of the film's authenticity in craftsmanship:

"When I saw 300 women costumed head to toe, in full hair and makeup, like they just stepped out of a time machine — I was emotional. It was like we're all working together — hair, makeup, costumes, everybody has such an essential part on this film. Looking at the women you could just see: 'Oh, that's my grandmother. That's my aunt. That's my ancestors.' With the ways that we dress now, sometimes it's hard to see but no, we come from them, we are them and this film shows them all."

Jeffery on watching and working with Tyler Perry: "What's really impressive about Tyler is he has such a specific vision and he knows exactly how to execute it. Watching him work has been incredible and enlightening, and especially with this story. He cares so much about it and you can see that. It's amazing being able to follow his lead and take inspiration from him. He believes so much that it's time for this story to be told. I admire that so much and I feel the same way. Getting to work with him on this has been, honestly, one of the biggest honors of my life."

Sonuga on the impressive scope of the production design: "I've been an actress for 10 years professionally, and I'm still stunned at the props and set decoration. Everything was real on this set. We had huge bags of mail, and if you went through them the letters and packages were real, just absolutely beautiful in the details. My second favorite set was when we were in England and production had transformed the entire street back to 1945. Even the pedestrians were stopped and watching because it was a marvel to see. It was just incredible. Sometimes, I just thought 'Wow, I can't believe I'm here. I can't believe I'm part of this.'"

AWARD-WINNING VETERANS

Joining the young cast was a group of acclaimed actors in brief but crucial supporting roles.



**L-R: President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (Sam Waterston),
Eleanor Roosevelt (Susan Sarandon),
Mary McLeod Bethune (Oprah Winfrey) & General Halt (Dean Norris)**

"These are incredible actors," says Perry of Norris, Waterston, Sarandon, and Winfrey. "I had wanted to work with Oprah for a long time, but I always wanted to find something worthy of her. Mary McLeod Bethune was worthy of calling Oprah Winfrey to play."

He savored the experience. "Having that moment for me, sitting at Tyler Perry Studios, on land that was once a Confederate army base, on the White House set in the Oval Office, with all of these acting legends in a scene together as I'm telling a story about 855 black women who were in World War II? It was a lot to take in."

"I mean, these folks are busy," Perry continues. "They're not just coming into the business. They've got lots of other things they could be doing, but for all of them to say, 'We want to help you tell this story,' meant the world to me. And I know it meant so much to Lena when she was alive, and I know it would mean so much to all of these women and their families, that these people wanted to come together to make sure that we can tell the story the right way."

OUTFITTING THE COMPANY

- THE ARTISANS OF *THE SIX TRIPLE EIGHT* -



COSTUMES: KARYN WAGNER

Over the course of a 30-plus-year career Wagner has worked across film and television on everything from romantic dramas (The Notebook) to action films (Hard Target) to acclaimed series (Underground) and Oscar-nominated epics (The Green Mile). She rejoins the Tyler Perry family after having worked on his previous period drama, 2022's A Jazzman's Blues.

"When I was writing the script, I was very conscious about how authentic it had to be," notes Tyler Perry. "I wanted to make sure the costumes were authentic, down to the buttons, down to the stitching in the dresses. Karyn Wagner was phenomenal."

Wagner herself was also dedicated to that "you are there" sense of veracity.

"I really wanted to represent fully and historically accurately every garment that these ladies were issued by the United States Army," notes Wagner, who dressed the principals as well as hundreds of extras. "Tyler Perry is very supportive of my process, which I just love."

That process included working with her assistant Josh Mar — “who’s a brilliant, brilliant military advisor” — to source original pieces of “all of the garments that these ladies were issued. And then we set about manufacturing each one to as close to period specs as we could. So the first thing we did was we gathered all the various pieces: The pajamas, the slips, the girdles, the class A’s, the Eisenhower jacket, the herringbone twills, the shoes, the boots, the hats.”

Then Wagner’s team set about reproducing them in bulk including a thousand uniforms. “But to do that, we first had to have fabric,” says Wagner. “After a lot of research — we called China, we called Italy, we called London, every conceivable place where military manufacturers get their fabric — what we discovered is that either the amount of yardage we wanted wasn’t available, or it had a lot of polyester in it, which they didn’t have in the forties, and it gives the fabric a specific glow.” So, how did they solve the problem? Like the 6888th themselves, with ingenuity and hard work, hiring multiple factories and building the pieces from scratch from uniforms to shoes to pajamas to scarves. “We manufactured 12,000 meters of wool.”

Wagner believes that *The Six Triple Eight* was worth it. “It’s a great untold story,” she notes. “Heroes come in many shapes and sizes and colors, and it’s such a wonderful, amazing story of these women who sacrificed a great deal to give hope to our troops and our country.”



PRODUCTION DESIGN: SHARON BUSSE

With a relationship that stretches over 13 projects across film (Mea Culpa, A Jazzman’s Blues) and television (Sistas, The Oval), Tyler Perry trusts Busse, an acclaimed industry veteran, implicitly.

To put it simply, Perry says he was “floored” by the work that Busse and her team did, particularly in the locations in Europe on what is one of the largest scale productions he has ever done. “I knew we had to go to Europe to get the feel of the movie,” he

notes. "The air is different in England. I knew in order to be able to tell this story and perfect it, I had to actually be on the ground that these women walked."

But he was not prepared for what he saw in brilliant 3-D after having been engrossed in research and reference materials in print and online. From the replica of King Edward's School — where the women worked and lived — to the recreation of war-torn streets through which they marched, "Sharon and her team did an incredible job making that come to life. I got out of the car and walked those eight to 10 blocks and I felt like time had just stopped."

That dedication was born of a passion for the story. "In the history of my 41-year career in the industry, I've never worked on anything that is so important to me," says Busse, adding, "and to my mother who lived through all that history. The story is just incredible and when I read the script, I started crying just at how beautiful it was."



She and her team poured that emotion into everything from those bomb-ravaged streets to the details of FDR's Oval Office to Lena's kitchen.

One of Busse's favorite sets, however, was King Edward's School. "We had to take a building and make it dilapidated on one end, and then we had to freshen it up on another end," she recalls. "So we shot one area that was completely destroyed because, when the girls first show up, it's in horrible condition and then they turn it into a workable, livable space. That was an amazing scene, turning that around." But attention to detail was paid, says Busse. "For example, we have top-notch painters on our crew, but we had to make it look as if it were painted by these ladies who didn't have these skills, so nothing was perfect. We had to ditch the perfection aspect of it." Which is what made it perfectly real.



MUSIC: SCORE

ARRON ZIGMAN, COMPOSER

*Composer-conductor-songwriter-producer-arranger Zigman is a man of many musical talents, having written over 70 film scores (including multiple previous collaborations with Tyler Perry including *For Colored Girls* and *A Jazzman's Blues*), and a wide range of films in all genres including *The Notebook* and *Wakefield* starring Bryan Cranston.*

Tyler Perry says he and composer Aaron Zigman are so simpatico that, "As he's reading the script, he's humming what I was thinking when I was writing it. We have this shorthand that really works for us, and I was just blown away to see the score come in and elevate these incredible performances even higher. He really nailed it. I'm so excited for him."

That excitement runs both ways, as Zigman was impressed by his longtime collaborator as well, praising *The Six Triple Eight* as Perry's best work. "I've done so many films with him, and he just keeps raising the bar every film."

"When I was thinking about *The Six Triple Eight*, and the marching and the struggle, and the pain and the triumph, that these women walked and went through, the score had to be perfect," says Perry.

"My general instinct is to always try to let the scene breathe," says Zigman of scoring a film that traverses everything from orchestral cues to period swing music, from grand marching scenes to intimate conversations between two soldiers having a

drink. "I like being supportive, but then having a point of view so the listener who's watching this film can see all that great production value that's onscreen."

Zigman aimed to thread a needle that honored the film's battalion but wasn't too on the nose in terms of typical military music and to stay away from the maudlin at all costs, to keep elevated but warm. "I wanted to give these characters a regal yet universal Americana sound," says Zigman, who interspersed recurring cues throughout the film. "I don't like to oversaturate themes too much. There is a main theme, you get it a little bit in the first act, then some other cues go by before it recurs. You've got to earn the right to get to the main theme. For most of this score I didn't move too quickly with too much."

"Like Tyler said, we have a shorthand," says Zigman. "One of his many great strengths is that he gives the various artists that he collaborates with creative freedom, and then he steps in and fine-tunes what he feels like he needs to fine-tune. I think he's got so many powerful moments in this film, it's really going to stick with people."



MUSIC: ORIGINAL SONG

"THE JOURNEY" WRITTEN BY DIANE WARREN,

PERFORMED BY H.E.R.

The iconic songwriter — who has penned 33 top-ten songs and is enshrined in the Songwriters Hall of Fame — knows her way around film music, having been nominated for 15 Oscars and bestowed the Oscar by the Academy's Board of Governors in 2022. She enlisted another widely acclaimed artist to sing the song: H.E.R. (aka Gabriella Wilson), the singer-songwriter-instrumentalist who has won an Oscar, an Emmy and five Grammys.

Diane Warren and Tyler Perry agree on one thing: She is very persistent.

Perry: "I kept getting these texts from Diane. She'd say, 'I've got the song, I've got the song. You've got to hear it. I know it is the song.'"

Warren: "I kept pestering him saying, 'Tyler, I have the song. I have the song.'"

"I was so focused on shooting the movie at the time, I was like, 'I can't think about a theme song. I'm trying to get the score. I've got 855 women. I'm trying to move their story forward with 400 extras. I've got Debbie Allen with the bullhorn, screaming, 'Left, right, left, right, left. You're missing a step. Get in line!'" recalls Perry with a laugh.

And then, he listened. And that's when they realized that it turns out that Diane Warren and Tyler Perry agree on two things: "The Journey" was the perfect end credits song for *The Six Triple Eight* and that five-time Grammy winner H.E.R. (aka Gabriella Wilson) was the ideal vocal vehicle for the nuances of the surging, poignant piano ballad about pushing on through life's ups and downs.

"When I heard Gabriella sing the very first words, I thought, 'Whoa, this is it,'" says Perry.

Warren had first caught wind of the film through the infamous sizzle reel via her friend, *The Six Triple Eight* producer Keri Selig, and was as taken as everyone from Avant to Perry to Washington had been. In very short order she started writing, even before seeing the finished film. "That's the first time that that's ever happened," says Warren. "I literally knew. In my mind, I saw the movie."

"The next day, I set up my keyboards and I just started playing those chords and I started singing 'the journey' because I felt like that just encompassed what this whole movie was and what these women went through with everybody telling them they couldn't do it and all the hardships that they had to face. Whenever I write a song for a movie, I write the song that I want to hear in the movie. Their story was so powerful that I knew I had to write a great song."

She also knew she had to get a great singer to perform it, so she called H.E.R., knowing she would nail it. "I just thought nobody could sing it better," says Warren, who played the song on the piano and Wilson was immediately hooked. "Literally, she recorded it that day. She played piano, she played guitar, and she sang her vocal, and I was just like, 'Oh my God.' I don't know if anybody's heard her sing like that, where she goes vocally at the end of that song. It's stunning."

For her part Wilson was thrilled to be asked to sing the song both by a songwriter she reveres and a director she respects but also for the women she honors with her performance. "I had never heard of this group of women before," she says, echoing



the common refrain. "But when I found out, I was like, this is ridiculous that I never heard of them before. But the song is just so perfect for this moment and these unsung heroes. For me to be the soundtrack to their story is an honor for me. I'm just grateful to be a part of their story being told."

"I'm a sucker for a really good chord progression," says Wilson of the song. "It's classic, it's dynamic and the music really matches the lyrics as far as being on this ride, being on a journey. When you hear it the first time, in the first few seconds of the song, it's like, okay, this is really special"

Warren was particularly moved that Perry chose to layer a portion of "The Journey" over the last few moments of the film as it pays tribute to the real-life members of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion. "I couldn't have thought of using it in a more perfect way than they used it. It ties it up emotionally so beautifully."

"I had to call Diane to say, 'You were so right. This is the song!'" says Perry with a laugh. And it turns out it touched the director on a deeper level. "It's become not only the theme song for me for *The Six Triple Eight*, but just for life. It's about the journey."



THE REAL 688TH CENTRAL POSTAL DIRECTORY BATTALION: KEY FACTS ABOUT THE - WOMEN WHO DELIVERED HOPE -

Writer-director Tyler Perry, members of the cast — including Kerry Washington and Oprah Winfrey — and several of the producers of The Six Triple Eight were able to participate in a Zoom call with two members of the the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion right before production kicked off in 2023.

Lena Derriecott King, portrayed by Ebony Obsidian in the film, and Romay Davis Robinson, both still-sharp centenarians when they passed in 2024, were excited to be remembered and finally have their story told.

"I'm way past being amazed," said Robinson on the call. "Thank you. That's all I can say. I can't find another word. It's just absolutely beautiful and I'm certainly happy to be a part of the whole thing."

"I feel so honored that Tyler has chosen such beautiful women, such talented women to portray us," said King. "We just thought we were going over to do a little job and here we are 80 years later, being honored in such a way. We couldn't have even dreamed that in the future this would be happening to us and everyone would start thinking about the Six Triple Eight. It just absolutely makes tears come to my eyes because we thought nobody even remembered us. Thank you so very much for bringing this out and letting the world know about us."

Everyone on the call was deeply moved by the women and Winfrey summed up their feelings succinctly in a letter of gratitude she later penned to the real-life battalion that ran in *The New York Times*. She wrote: "Your story is not just one of perseverance in the face of adversity, but of empowerment, unity and the indomitable spirit that lives in every woman who refuses to be defined by the limits of society. I am forever grateful for the sacrifices you made, the doors you opened and the example you've set for me and the women of future generations. May your legacy of strength and resilience inspire us all to bravery and continue to echo through the generations."

» In February 1945, the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion deployed overseas to England and subsequently to France, making it the first and only Women's Army Corps unit of color to be stationed in Europe during World War II. The battalion was mostly Black women but there were also women of Caribbean and Mexican descent.

➤ The women's impact can't be overstated, says military history advisor Kevin Hymel, whose article "Fighting A Two-Front War" helped inspire the film. "Here are these women of color doing their patriotic duty with dignity in a danger zone, and doing it better than anyone expected and accomplishing the mission and simultaneously chipping away at prejudice. It changed perceptions and made desegregation of the military possible. They changed the face of the United States military."

» The 855 women were tasked with breaking a backlog of 17 million pieces of mail. That bottleneck meant that soldiers on the front lines as well as families back home were not hearing from their loved ones.

» Led by Major Charity Adams, the women — working in three, 8-hour shifts — met the challenge of sorting and routing the letters and packages, some with incomplete or incorrect addresses, in buildings lacking sufficient lighting and heat. They were given six months for the task yet accomplished their mission in less than 90 days.

» Given segregated facilities that were not up to the same standards as those enjoyed by the white and Black male soldiers, the women of the 6888 used their ingenuity to create their own food hall, hair salon, and refreshment bar.

- » The women came up with the motto "No Mail, Low Morale." The 6888th brought communication and an important uplift in morale and hope to soldiers far from home.
 - » In 2022, the U.S. House of Representatives voted unanimously to award the women of the 6888th the Congressional Gold Medal.
 - » On April 27, 2023, the U.S. Army renamed Fort Lee, named for a Confederate leader during the Civil War, Fort Gregg-Adams in honor of two Black US Army pioneers, Lieutenant General Arthur Gregg and Lieutenant Colonel Charity Adams. The fort's re-designation honoring Adams makes her the only Black woman in U.S. history to receive such an honor. Fort Gregg-Adams is located in Prince George County, Virginia.
 - » On November 30, 2018, a monument to the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion was dedicated at the Buffalo Soldier Monument Park at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.
 - » As of 2024, there are only two remaining members of the 6888th battalion: Fannie McClendon and Anna Mae Robertson. Watch Tyler Perry's tribute to Mrs. Lena Derriecott King [HERE](#).
-