



Hampton

CONVENTION & VISITOR BUREAU

Media Release

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Only WWII Black Battalion of the Women's Army Corps is Explored In Free Lunchtime Program at Hampton History Museum March 21

Hampton, VA - Through a unique partnership with the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), the Hampton History Museum is creating a forum for this organization to present lectures sharing the research ASALH members have done to accomplish their mission of promoting the study and appreciation of African-American History.

The first presenter through this partnership, Dr. Margaret Bristow, shares "Novella Auls and WAC Battalion 6888," the story of the first and only black battalion of the Women's Army Corps (WAC) who went to Birmingham, England during World War II, with a special focus on Sergeant Novella Auls of Hampton, as part of the museum's free Lunch in Time series on Wednesday, March 21, Noon-1:00 p.m.

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To bring these brave women to life, Dr. Bristow also shares several WAC songs of the period and highlights Novella Auls' story through a short dramatic reenactment illustrating the challenges she faced living and working in England.

African American WAC sorted through 3 million pieces of mail for servicemen in England and France and helped rebuild the morale of WWII active duty men. They got the job done under the direction of the first commissioned black woman in WAC history, Major Charity Adams, but their personal stories are told through the experiences of Hampton native Novella Auls.

In 1945 the first and only WAAC (Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, later WAC) Black unit went overseas. Tasked with sorting through millions of pieces of mail and packages, these 855 women that included 31 officers, finished what was to be a six month long task in 3 months. Under the direction of Major Charity (Edna) Early Adams, they worked seven days a week in three shifts a day--65,000 pieces a shift – all while enduring sexism and racism of the time.

The presenter, retired English Professor, Dr. Bristow is a native of Southeast section of Newport News. Having earned the BS and MA degrees in English from Hampton University, she went on to earn the doctorate in English from the University of Virginia in 1990. Dr. Bristow is currently working on a one act play about Auls, as well as a book for McFarland Press; she is a charter member of the Hampton Roads Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) and currently teaches part-time at Hampton University and Bryant and Stratton College.

The program is free and open to the public. Attendees are encouraged to bring a bag lunch. The museum will provide free dessert.

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The Hampton History Museum is located at 120 Old Hampton Lane in Downtown Hampton. There is free parking in the garage across the street from the museum. For more information call 757-727-1102., visit www.HamptonHistoryMuseum.org, or like the Hampton History Museum on Facebook and follow it on Twitter and Instagram.

Partially bordered by the Hampton Roads harbor and Chesapeake Bay, Hampton, with the 344,000 sq. ft. Hampton Roads Convention Center and the award-winning Hampton Coliseum, is located in the center of Coastal Virginia and the Hampton Roads metropolitan area. Hampton is the site of America's first continuous English-speaking settlement, the site of the first arrival of Africans in English North America, and is home to such visitor attractions as the Virginia Air & Space Center, Fort Monroe National Monument, Hampton History Museum, harbor tours and cruises, Hampton University Museum, The American Theatre, among others.

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