

Women fought for gender, race

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Greensboro, used her older sister's birth certificate to get into the WAC at age 17. She saw the military as an opportunity for advancement as well as a chance for personal growth. When Ingram's outfit reported for duty at Douglas Army Air Base in Arizona, she and another private were assigned to the print shop, freeing six men to go overseas. Ingram earned several recommendations for promotion, but when a new officer showed up, he had other ideas.

"He said 'Get the (expletive) out of my print shop,'" Ingram, 75, said. "If you want to do something for the service, stay home and knit socks."

That wouldn't be the end of the taunts. Black personnel were rel-

egated to segregated facilities on and off military bases. But Ingram and her unit protested and won equal treatment before it became a widespread national phenomenon.

"You could say we had marches and sit-ins in Douglas, Ariz., in the 1940s, long before (Martin Luther) King," she said. "The Army did not let this out because they thought it would spread like wildfire and that others would rebel."

In Europe, the 6888th was given six months to clear the postal bottleneck while Germany's first-generation ballistic missiles fell on England. Working 24 hours a day for three months, the task was accomplished.

"We had a backlog of mail for

months," Gaddy recalled. "We went in and along with German (prisoners of war) that all of us supervised, and we got that mail out in record time. We should've gotten a citation for that and we did not. We felt very bad about that because we did an excellent job on that."

The military often didn't honor—or even recognize—the achievements of all-black units before the armed forces were officially desegregated in 1948. Although units like the Tuskegee Airmen were acknowledged much later, outfits like the 6888th served in relative obscurity. To Gaddy African America's "Double V" campaign—victory abroad against foreign enemies and victory at home against American racism—didn't deliver what it

touted. The same went for England's black soldiers, who endured the same treatment, she said.

"We had no victory, nowhere," Gaddy said. "...My feeling is we had no victory there because we were short-changed and segregated. We had no victory here because we were not appreciated. We had no victory anywhere. But we served proudly and we did an excellent job in all wars, not only in World War II but World War I and the wars preceding that."

To contribute to the Women's Veterans Historical Project at UNC Greensboro, call Betty Carter at (336) 334-4045 or write her in care of Jackson Library, P.O. Box 26170, Greensboro, NC 27402. Her e-mail address is betty_carter@uncg.edu.

Mediation is next step for fractured school board

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inner city schools. They say the hurried time table sought by the commissioners and others is unnecessary since the appeals court's stay means Potter's order is null and void and the appeals court could rule in favor of the school board after next month's hearing.

If a plan is not passed until September, it would be in time to convert from the busing plan to a controlled choice plan by August 2001, they said.

Arthur Griffin, the board chairman who has received the most criticism, told a group at First Baptist Church West Monday night that his credibility was challenged during the desegregation trial that led to Potter's ruling because he had voted for plans and programs which he testified had contributed to unfair treatment of minorities and a segregated school system.

"I got badgered for voting to compromise," Griffin said of his two days of testimony last year. "I said 'I will never go through that again.'"

"I don't want that to happen again," Griffin said, promising to remain resolute against the concentration of low-income students. He noted that the federal government is spending millions of dollars to break up con-

centrations of low-income housing units for similar reasons.

Griffin and board members Wilhelmina Rembert and Vilma Leake say the plan will lead to a dual school system similar to those outlawed by the U.S. Supreme Court's Brown vs. Board of Education ruling in 1954.

Leake, who called Monday's meeting for District 2, which she represents, said she will continue to fight for children and would oppose plans which re-segregated the system.

Rembert, a Winthrop University administrator, said Wednesday the mediation process could take more than three weeks, since it may be difficult to find a mediator immediately.

"I'm certain a mediator will be able to help the board truly identify what board members want in a student assignment plan or would find acceptable in a student assignment plan," she said. "The mediator will perhaps cut through some of the political concerns people have and really address what is in the best interest of all children in the district."

Part of the conservatives' opposition to the pupil assignment plan is the relocation of magnets program—particularly International Baccalaureate programs at North Mecklenburg and Independence high schools—to other schools closer to the

city's center, West Charlotte and East Mecklenburg. Opponents of those moves include board vice chair John Lassiter, Jim Puckett, who is running for the board of county commissioners, and Lindalyn Kakadalis.

Those moves are being made to help insure racial and socio-economic diversity and to make close in schools more attractive, school officials say.

Said Rembert: "I hope the mediator will help the board determine whether or not this plan is even feasible, given the positions board members hold, and if it is not feasible, to help the board determine what is the best way to arrive at a plan that would be feasible."

"My difficulty with this plan centers around the fact that no where in the country have we found consistently...I'm not talking about isolated cases here and there...where urban schools that have high concentration of poor children and a high concentration of children performing below the level they are probably capable of performing, have been successful."

Rembert said the debate over equity is also troubling, because some don't feel equity requires additional help for those same inner city schools with high concentrations of low achieving students. She said the equity issue is separate from the student assignment plan.

"When so many people have to tie equity to a particular student assignment plan, I get really concerned that when they don't get that student assignment plan, they are not committed to equity," Rembert said. "No



Rembert

Inmates sue L.A. Sheriff

By Bart Jones
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — Sheriff's deputies intentionally allowed Hispanic inmates to attack black prisoners during a recent series of racial brawls in a county jail, a civil rights lawsuit alleges.

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court on behalf of 273 black inmates, alleges that deputies took away black prisoners' shoes so they couldn't stomp other inmates.

Attorney Leon Jenkins says deputies also did not retrieve razor blades from Hispanic inmates that later were used as weapons.

The lawsuit, filed Tuesday by Jenkins, seeks class-action status, unspecified monetary damages for those injured and an injunction to force the department to take steps to prevent future riots. Sheriff's officials would not respond to specific allegations in the lawsuit, but issued a statement that said, "acts of violence have never—and will never—be condoned."

"The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department has always held foremost in its responsibilities in maintaining the county jail system the welfare and safety of all inmates, regardless of race," the statement said.

Rioting that began April 24 and lasted three days left one black prisoner in a coma after his head was bashed into the concrete floor. More than 80 others were injured. Six Hispanic inmates pleaded innocent to attempted murder and mayhem charges in the attack on Ahmad Burwell, 21.

In their lawsuit, the black inmates contend the Sheriff's Department placed them in life-threatening situations by isolating them in dormitories dominated by rival Hispanic groups.

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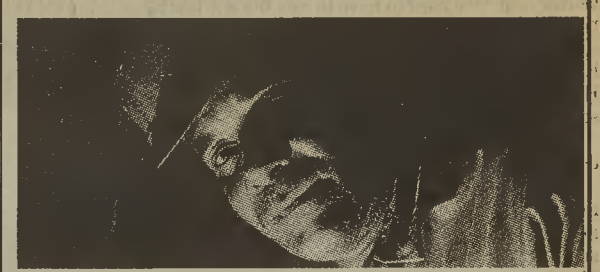
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