

Black Military Photograph Collection

An inventory of the Black Military Photograph Collection at DC Public Library

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on March 26, 2018.

English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Stage

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Summary Information

Repository:	Stage
Title:	Black Military Photograph Collection
ID:	P033
Date [inclusive]:	1848-1940
Physical Description:	1 boxes
Language of the Material:	English
Language of the Material:	English
Language of the Material:	English

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Biographical / Historical

Although African Americans have participated in every major U.S. war, the battle for integration and recognition of the accomplishments of black soldiers has been a slow process. It wasn't until after World War II that the U.S. armed forces became integrated, under a 1948 executive order by President Harry S. Truman. Of the more than 2.5 million blacks who registered for the draft in World War II, about 909,000 served in the Army. In 1944, there were over 700,000 blacks in the Army; this represented the greatest proportion of blacks to total Army strength in World War II. At its peak, only 8.7 percent of the Army—instead of the planned 10 percent—was black. In June 1945, blacks accounted for less than three percent of all men assigned to combat duty in the Army. About 78 percent of all black males—and only 40 percent of all white males in the Army were placed in the service branches (including quartermaster, engineer, and transportation corps). Among the millions who registered, Benjamin O. Davis was determined to integrate the Air Force. He became the first African-American Air Force officer to achieve general's rank, retiring as a lieutenant general in 1970. The Tuskegee Airmen were dedicated, determined young men who enlisted to become America's first black military airmen, at a time when there were many people who thought that black men lacked intelligence, skill, courage and patriotism. These soldiers helped alter the ways in which society viewed Blacks. Approximately 167,000 blacks served in the Navy during the war, about four percent of total Navy strength; and over 17,000 blacks enlisted in the Marine Corps, 2.5 percent of all marines. The 761st Tank Battalion was one of the few black combat units to fight in World War II. During 183 days of combat in 1944 and 1945, the 761st, wearing the Black Panther patch, captured or liberated more than 30 major towns and four airfields. It suffered

a 50 percent casualty rate and lost 71 tanks. It pierced the Siegfried Line into Germany and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. The unit also liberated the Nazi concentration camp "Gunsierchen" in Austria during the year of 1945.

On July 26, 1948 President Harry Truman issued Executive Order 9981. The order brought an end to racial segregation within the ranks of the United States military forces.

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Scope and Contents

This collection includes photographs and correspondence from soldiers in four branches of the armed forces: Air Force, Army, Marines, and Navy. In many of the photos you will see a young and exuberant Benjamin O. Davis who accomplished a lot and made advancements for African American in the armed services. Photos of soldiers include field combat, hospital recuperation, and leisure time. Correspondence includes letters, press releases, and soldiers' personal notes.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Stage

Custodial History

The origin of this collection is undocumented.

Processing Information

General processing procedures included removing pictures from construction paper that it was attached to. The correspondence were photocopied to acid-free paper. The collection was divided into the four braches of the armed forces, as well as, identifying dates.

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Controlled Access Headings

- African Americans
- United States -- Armed Forces
- Photographs

Collection Inventory

Series 1: Army

Title/Description	Instances	
Leisure, undated	Box 1	Folder 1
Honors/Awards, undated	Box 1	Folder 2
Individual and group pictures, undated	Box 1	Folder 3
Individual and group pictures, undated	Box 1	Folder 4
Patient/Hospitals, undated	Box 1	Folder 5
Soldiers at work, undated	Box 1	Folder 6
Soldiers at work, undated	Box 1	Folder 7

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Series 2: Navy

Title/Description	Instances	
Individual and group pictures, undated	Box 1	Folder 8
Individual and group pictures, undated	Box 1	Folder 9
Training/Battle, undated	Box 1	Folder 10
Training/Battle, undated	Box 1	Folder 11
Leisure, undated	Box 1	Folder 12
Soldiers at work, undated	Box 1	Folder 13
Honors/Awards, undated	Box 1	Folder 14
Honors/Awards, undated	Box 1	Folder 15

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Series 3: Air Force

Title/Description	Instances	
Individual and group pictures, undated	Box 1	Folder 16

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Series 4: Marines

Title/Description	Instances	
Leisure, undated	Box 1	Folder 17

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Series 5: U.S. Coast Guard

Title/Description	Instances	
Leisure, undated	Box 1	Folder 18

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Series 6: Correspondence

Title/Description	Instances	
Correspondence, undated	Box 1	Folder 19

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Series 7: Miscellaneous

Title/Description	Instances	
Miscellaneous, undated	Box 1	Folder 20

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