

Davis, Herbert R., photograph albums

Herbert R. Davis photograph albums

c. 1930-1950

Title Statement

Davis, Herbert R., photograph albumsHerbert R. Davis photograph albums MSS 16840

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS 16840

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/1652

Unit Date

c. 1930-1950

Mixed Materials [X032762516]

1 (Flat_Box)

Mixed Materials [X032669527]

2 (box)

Language

English

Extent

0.6 Cubic Feet Two custom made medium oversize flat boxes

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research use.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was purchased from Langdon Manor by the Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia Library on 7 February 2024.

Preferred Citation

MSS 16840, Herbert R. Davis photograph albums, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia Library.

Content Description

This collection contains two photo albums of Herbert R. Davis of Richmond, Virginia that document Black pre-World War II life in Richmond; Davis's service in the South Pacific (Guam, Guadalco, and Peleliu) as a Black Marine; and Davis's family life upon his return from combat during the early 1930's to the late 1940's.

Many of Davis's fellow soldiers in the 11th Marine Depot Company, 16th Field Depot are posed in photographs. The 11th Company, who fought at the Battle of Peleliu, had the heaviest casualty rate of any Black marine unit in the war. However, the majority of the photographs document African American communities in pre and post-war Richmond. Included are shots of Davis with friends and family, as well as studio and arcade portraits. They include street scenes, Black parades, including the African American Women's Army Corps (WAC), and sporting events. About twenty images depict segregation, with two images that include businesses with signs for "Coloreds" or "Whites" and others that include a segregated beach.

When the 1st Marine Division, on 15 September 1944, attacked the heavily defended island of Peleliu in the Palau group, the 16th Field Depot supported the assault troops. The field depot included two African-American units, the 11th Marine Depot Company and the 7th Marine Ammunition Company. The 11th Marine Depot Company responded beyond the call of duty and paid the price, 17 wounded, the highest casualty rate of any company of African-American Marines during the entire war. Major General William H. Rupertus, who commanded the 1st Marine Division, sent identical letters of commendation to the commanders of both companies, praising the Black Marines for their "whole hearted cooperation and untiring efforts" which "demonstrated in every respect" that they "appreciate the privilege of wearing a Marine uniform and serving with Marines in combat."

The album contains photographs of Herbert Davis and other marines holding guns in Peleliu, Palau.

The two albums contain seventy-one leaves with 324 black and white photographs and fourteen color photographs. 134 are hinged mounted, while the rest are corner mounted or tipped in. Some of the photographs contain captions. Many pages have missing photographs.

Source: Nalty, Bernard, C. "The Right to Fight: African-American Marines in World War II" Commemorative Series produced by the Marine Corps History and Museums Division

https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/npswapa/extcontent/usmc/pcn-190-003132-00/sec10.htm

Keywords

United States. Army -- History -- World War, 1939-1945

African American soldiers

World War, 1939-1945 -- Participation, African American

World War, 1939-1945 -- Campaigns -- Pacific Ocean

Richmond (Va.)