

Butler, Ernest, photograph album

Ernest Butler photograph album

c. 1942-1945

Title Statement

Butler, Ernest, photograph album Ernest Butler photograph album MSS 16875

Author: Ellen Welch

Publication Statement

Publisher: Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library
P.O. Box 400110
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia 22904-4110
URL: <https://small.library.virginia.edu/>

2025-02-27

This record is made available under an Universal 1.0 Public Domain Dedication Creative Commons license.

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2026-03-05 17:46:14 +0000.

Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS 16875

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/1739

Unit Date

c. 1942-1945

Mixed Materials [X032669528]

1 (Flat_Box)

Language

English

source

Max Rambod

Creator

Butler, Ernest

Extent

0.4 Cubic Feet One custom made flat box (medium)

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 a purchase from Max Rambod Books to the Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia Library on 21 August 2024. The bookseller noted that the consignor relates that the album was acquired from a Cleveland, Ohio estate.

Preferred Citation

MSS 16875, Ernest Butler photograph album, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia Library.

Content Description

This collection contains the photograph album of Ernest Butler, a United States Army soldier who served in Germany during the Second World War. Butler was among the one million African American men and women who served during the war.

The album documents his time in Germany, his return to the United States, and his post-war life. The album contains over 250 black and white silver gelatin photographs over its thirty pages. The images depict Butler's service in Germany, where he photographed the men he served alongside, as well as the destroyed Nazi weapons and vehicles, German prisoners of war, and sites seen on his journey back home to the United States. Included are images taken in Germany; destroyed enemy equipment; a group of German POWs aboard a truck unceremoniously entitled "a pack of krauts;" and a series of images collectively titled "going home" depicting Butler's long journey back to the United States, which may have been Cincinnati, Ohio.

The photographs most heavily depict the downtime of American soldiers, with subjects commonly posing in their uniforms with each other and civilians.

The pictures, primarily of African American soldiers, show the United States military's policy of segregation during World War II.

Also included are photographs of post-war life, including a large format family portrait, photographs of friends, family, and children, and an image of a man, likely Ernest, holding a captured German K95 Mauser Rifle.

There are also three Army insignia indicating the United States 1st and 7th Army, and one with four Overseas Bars that indicate two years of military service overseas.

Keywords

African American soldiers

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

World War, 1939-1945 -- Photography

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

Max Rambod