

Walter Lewis scrapbooks of the 761st Tank Battalion

G89.038

**Finding aid prepared by Celia Caust-Ellenbogen and Sarah
Leu through the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden
Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories.**

Last updated on April 28, 2014.

African American Museum in Philadelphia

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Summary Information

Repository	African American Museum in Philadelphia
Creator	Lewis, Walter
Title	Walter Lewis scrapbooks of the 761st Tank Battalion
Call number	G89.038
Date [inclusive]	1944-1985
Extent	1.5 linear feet
General Physical Description note	7 binders and 1 flat box
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The 761st Tank Battalion, active during World War II, was one of the first African American armored units to enter combat. The battalion saw combat in six countries, endured 183 days of continual combat, and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. The Walter Lewis scrapbooks of the 761st Tank Battalion, 1944-1985, contain clippings, correspondence, photographs, speeches, and ephemera about the 761st Tank Battalion, honors it received, and reunions and award ceremonies attended by its veterans.</p>

Biography/History

Walter Lewis, a Philadelphia resident, was the historian of the 761st Tank Battalion and Allied Veterans Association. During World War II, he served as a gunner in the 761st Tank Battalion.

The 761st Tank Battalion, active during World War II, was one of the first African American armored units to enter combat. The battalion was formed in 1942 and, after receiving a rating of superior, was deployed to Europe and landed on Omaha Beach in France on October 10, 1944. Later on, the 761st was given the nickname of the Black Panther Tank Battalion and was eventually assigned to General George S. Patton, Jr.'s Third Army. The battalion saw combat in six countries, endured 183 days of continual combat, and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. The soldiers of the 761st were highly decorated. Many soldiers received honors such as the silver star, purple heart, and bronze star. In 1949, the battalion began to have reunions, and eventually formed the 761st Tank Battalion and Allied Veterans Association.

Dr. Phil Latimer, a retired engineering professor, advocated for honors, recognition, and a Presidential Unit Citation for the 761st Tank Battalion. Before retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel from the U.S. Army Reserve, Dr. Latimer served as a Captain and Battalion Supply Officer with the 761st, one of only eight white officers to do so.

Bibliography:

Lewis, Walter. *Diary of a Gunner*. Document found in collection.

The 761st Tank Battalion and Allied Veterans Association. "The 761st Tank Battalion." Accessed January 7, 2014. <http://www.761st.com>.

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of scrapbooks and one loose box of items, containing mostly clippings and correspondence about the 761st Tank Battalion and honors it received. There are also programs and planning documents, ticket stubs for travel, and speeches from reunions and award ceremonies. Some photographs are included in the collection, a few of which are from World War II, especially of soldiers who were killed in action. Of special interest is a personal account by gunner and Battalion Historian Walter Lewis (1964).

Administrative Information

African American Museum in Philadelphia

Finding aid prepared by Celia Caust-Ellenbogen and Sarah Leu through the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories.

Sponsor

This preliminary finding aid was created as part of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories. The HCI-PSAR project was made possible by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Access Restrictions

Contact African American Museum in Philadelphia for information about accessing this collection.

Immediate Source of Acquisition Note

Gift of Edgar Hammock, 1989 (AAMP.G89.038).

Processing Information Note

Summary descriptive information on this collection was compiled in 2012-2014 as part of a project conducted by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to make better known and more accessible the largely hidden collections of small, primarily volunteer run repositories in the Philadelphia area. The Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR) was funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This is a preliminary finding aid. No physical processing, rehousing, reorganizing, or folder listing was accomplished during the HCI-PSAR project.

In some cases, more detailed inventories or finding aids may be available on-site at the repository where this collection is held; please contact African American Museum in Philadelphia directly for more information.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- 761st Tank Battalion and Allied Veterans Association
- United States. Army. Tank Battalion, 761st

Personal Name(s)

- Latimer, Philip W.
- Lewis, Walter

Subject(s)

- African American veterans
- Ardennes, Battle of the, 1944-1945
- Military ceremonies, honors, and salutes
- Tank crews
- Veterans organizations
- World War, 1939-1945--African Americans
- World War, 1939-1945--Tank warfare
- World War, 1939-1945--Veterans