

# **Thomas H. Jones World War II scrapbooks**

**Ms. Coll. 1397**

**Holly Mengel.**

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University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
<b>Creator</b>	Jones, Thomas Howell, 1919-2012
<b>Title</b>	Thomas H. Jones World War II scrapbooks
<b>Call number</b>	Ms. Coll. 1397
<b>Date</b>	circa 1941-1968
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	1942-1945
<b>Extent</b>	.33 linear feet (1 box)
<b>Language</b>	English .
<b>Abstract</b>	Thomas H. (Howell) Jones (1919-2012) was a Black soldier, serving in the 4407th Quartermasters Service Company, during World War II. These two scrapbooks document his experiences in the United States Army from about 1942 to 1945, and in particular his time serving overseas in France and Germany from December 1944 to June 1945. There is limited material regarding his life following the end of World War II.

**Cite as:**

Thomas H. Jones World War II scrapbooks, circa 1941—1968 (bulk 1942-1945), Ms. Coll. 1397, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

## Biography/History

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Thomas H. Jones was born on July 13, 1919, in Athens, Georgia to William Brown and Mamie Howell Jones. Jones had four siblings: Zena (born 1911), Thelma (born 1915), Inez (born 1917), and Clifford Neal (1922-2002). William Brown worked as a cook at Georgia State Technical College.

In 1940 at the age of 21, Jones completed his World War II draft card and stated that he was a student at Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University). It is possible that he hoped to work as a teacher. In 1943, he was serving at Camp Pickett in Virginia and in December, 1944, he was sent overseas, where he served in the 4407th Quartermasters Service Company in France and Germany.

It appears that during his service, Jones was promoted from private to sergeant. He left Europe in June 1945, just a month after victory was declared in Europe. Jones's brother, Clifford Neal Jones (1922-2002) served in Company I, 25th Infantry in the Pacific Theater and was stationed in New Guinea and the Dutch East Indies.

On December 21, 1946, Jones married Thomasina Whitworth and they appear to have lived in Detroit, Michigan. Jones died on September 15, 2012.

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## Scope and Contents

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This collection consists of two scrapbooks documenting Thomas H. Jones's experiences in the United States Army from about 1942 to 1945, and in particular his time serving overseas in France and Germany from December 1944 to June 1945. There is limited material regarding his life following the end of World War II.

The first scrapbook is entitled: "Pvt. Thomas H. Jones: European Theater of Operations, December 1944 to June 1945" and contains official correspondence; photographs, greeting cards; v-mail from his brother Clifford N. Jones (serving in the Pacific Theater); letters; German stamps and German, French, and Italian currency (paper and coin) and Japanese invasion paper money; and newspaper clippings relating to the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The bulk of this scrapbook appears to date from Jones's time in France and Germany; however there are a few items that date after his return to the United States. It is important to note that the material within the scrapbook is not necessarily chronological and cannot be viewed as a sort of diary of Jones's experiences. Some photographs are missing; but on the whole, the items in the scrapbook are captioned, not only with titles, but often with context.

Photographs are largely of family (many of these are missing from the scrapbook) and friends (both fellow soldier and men and women from home), indicating that Jones had a wide social circle and close family connections. There are a number of portrait photographs of women, including Ruth G. Anthony of New York, New York; Naomi Davenport of Philadelphia; Harriette Davison of Oberlin College;

Virginia S. Eberhardt of Athens, Georgia; Miss Johnsie Foushee of New York, New York ;Hattie Grimmett of Tuskegee; Mary Frances Hunter from Evanston; Sally Lawhorne of Lynchburg, Virginia; M. Edythe Pierce of Washington, D.C. (captioned as college sweetheart); Pearl Tucker from Baltimore; and Charlotte Wheeler of Boston. There are letters from Naomi Davenport, Hilda Harvey (who worked in a war factory in England), Mary [Frances Hunter], and Olyve. The letters indicate that Jones requested photographs and letters from these women.

Fellow soldiers include Johnnie Barrow, Robert L. Barrow, Frank C.L. Bowie, Corsby Christian, Charley Iles, Lee Jackson, Thomas H. Johnson, Edgar Jones, Oliver Jones, Walter Martin, and Cliff Patterson. Photographs of Jones and his fellow soldiers are candid and are generally speaking very cheerful in nature—Jones's social nature and sense of humor are evident from both the photographs and the captions. There are a number of photographs (as well as a letter) from Jones's brother, Cliff, serving in the United States Army in the Pacific Theater.

This scrapbook contains a large number of greeting cards, all carefully pasted onto pages of the scrapbook. While there is little national news and no war news (except for impressions provided in letters sent to him), there are clippings documenting the death and funeral of Franklin D. Roosevelt and one clipping describing the trial and sentencing of Mrs. Marguerite Anna Robertson Pieczarka Barger Johnson (27) who married multiple servicemen in order to collect their allotment checks. A page from a military issue volume with French pronunciation and spelling of common military terms is included.

The second scrapbook, which is untitled, dates from before Jones's overseas service and after—there are family photographs from as early as 1938 (although bulk date from the early 1940s) of Clifford Neal Jones (brother) and his sisters ("The Jones Sisters") as well as people who may be cousins. It seems that during his military service, Jones was stationed in Massachusetts (where he probably met Charlotte, Frances and Dorothy) and there are photographs of him and his friends at Revere Beach in August, 1944.

The bulk of this scrapbook consists of greeting cards, most of which are undated, but were probably sent to Jones while he was in the service. Some of these greeting cards are highly patriotic and were created specifically for those serving in the war. There is one newspaper clipping of Inez (his sister) and Eddie Frazier in a fashion show, an invitation to a dance in France in January, 1946 (it is unclear if he was still in France at this time), an invitation to a get-together in August, 1946, and a few birth announcements.

Towards the end of the scrapbook are a number of uncaptioned photographs that appear to be of Jones (out of uniform) with his family, probably outside of the family home; several of a couple (possibly Jones and his wife Thomasina) in Washington, D.C., and photographs of children. Laid into the scrapbook are postcards from Philadelphia, Boston, and the University of Georgia; a baby picture of Dwight Tomas McCraney, Jr. from 1964 (relationship unknown); and a church bulletin from Ebenezer Church (African Methodist Episcopal) in Detroit, Michigan from 1968.

This collection provides a glimpse into the life of a Black soldier during World War II, in what appears to have been a segregated unit. According to Terrence Bell, "more than 900,000 Black men and women served their country during [World War II], but [they] were mostly assigned to segregated units subjected to substandard training, poor living conditions and menial work ... [and] in the minds of many Black soldiers at the time, this was a mere extension of American society, albeit a more favorable one in some respects." In this scrapbook, like many of the time, there is little evidence of the hardships suffered by the

soldiers. Instead, Jones focuses on his support system of friends and family in the United States and his friendships with his fellow Black soldiers in his unit.

Sources consulted:

Bell, Terrance. "Former World War II quartermaster recalls service in book, documentary," 2015 February 26 (accessed 2021 August 16): [https://www.army.mil/article/143473/former\\_world\\_war\\_ii\\_quartermaster\\_recalls\\_service\\_in\\_book\\_documentary](https://www.army.mil/article/143473/former_world_war_ii_quartermaster_recalls_service_in_book_documentary)

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## Administrative Information

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University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts  
Holly Mengel.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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### Corporate Name(s)

- United States. Army

### Form/Genre(s)

- Scrapbooks

- Photographs
- Greeting cards

### **Subject(s)**

- World War, 1939-1945
- African Americans
- Soldiers
- Military

## Collection Inventory

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	Box	Folder
"Pvt. Thomas H. Jones: European Theater of Operations, December 1944 to June 1945", 1942-1946.	1	1
Scrapbook, 1938-1968.	1	2

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