



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

Charles E. Harris World War II memorabilia collection

1944-1971 [bulk 1944-1945]

Sc MG 767

Summary

Creator: Harris, Charles E., 1923-1996

Title: Charles E. Harris World War II memorabilia collection

Date: 1944-1971 [bulk 1944-1945]

Size: 0.25 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Gift of Sandra Harris, November 2006.

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: During World War II, Charles Edward Harris was in the all-Black 57th Ordnance Ammunition Company, whose duty was the procurement, storage, and distribution of ammunition. The Charles E. Harris World War II memorabilia collection includes two handwritten and typed histories of the 57th Ordnance Ammunition Company, love letters, two handkerchiefs, and a booklet.

Preferred citation: [Item], Charles E. Harris World War II memorabilia collection, Sc MG 767, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs

Creator History

Charles Edward Harris was born in 1923 in Philadelphia. During World War II, Harris was in the all-Black 57th Ordnance Ammunition Company, whose duty was the procurement, storage, and distribution of ammunition. He served in France, Belgium, Germany, and England from 1943-1945. As a bomb reconnaissance non-commissioned officer, he was trained as a demolition specialist and a platoon scout for mines. Upon his discharge, he became a tailor and furrier in New York City, and he and a partner opened their own shop in 1971. Harris died in 1996.

Scope and Content Note

The Charles E. Harris World War II memorabilia collection includes two handwritten and typed histories of the 57th Ordnance Ammunition Company maintained by Harris's commanding officer, Captain Jack Carstarphen. These histories discuss the company's battles in France and Germany, awards received for heroic actions in France, numbers of enlisted men and officers, and related information. The collection also includes documents pertaining to the aforementioned battle and a booklet entitled "Flaming Bomb: The Story of Ordnance in the ETO" concerning the significance of ordnance companies in the European Theater of Operation. Certificates, Harris's sketch of an explosive device, a hand-drawn map of an area in Belgium in 1944, two handkerchiefs (one with a map of Brussels and the other, a military handkerchief, showing flags of the Allies and Belgium), and love letters from girlfriends complete this collection.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American soldiers

Authors, Black

United States. Army -- African American troops -- History

Geographic Names

United States -- Armed Forces -- African Americans

Names

Harris, Charles E., 1923-1996

United States. Army. Ordnance Ammunition Company, 57th.