Extent

3 folders, 54 pages

Summary

This collection consists of records dealing with the Association of 2,221 Negro Volunteers, World War II soldiers, who are considered the first unit involved in the integration of the American military. The integration occurred in December 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge when President Eisenhower, offered men of color the opportunity to volunteer out of their service units and go to the front lines and fight with white soldiers. Much of this collection revolves around the correspondence of J. Cameron Wade, viewed as the founder of the Association of 2,221 Negro Volunteers, who went to great lengths in writing to President Clinton and other similar higher-ups in an attempt to get the heroic sacrifices of the unit officially recognized. The material found in the collection is comprised of correspondence, notes, memoranda, newspaper articles, and reports.

Scope and Content Note

The materials in 2014-0122-F are a selective, not necessarily all inclusive, body of documents responsive to the topic of the FOIA. Researchers should consult the archivist about related materials. An organization formed by J. Cameron Wade in the aftermath of wartime service by African American soldiers going unrecognized, the Association of the 2,221 Negro Volunteers was actually the first unit involved in the integration of American armed forces. This landmark event occurred in December 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge, four years before President Harry S. Truman signed an executive order formally ending segregation in the American military. Wade and others responded to an edict issued by General Dwight D. Eisenhower allowing them to “volunteer” out of black service units and to join white soldiers on the front lines. The Supreme Allied Commander had to deal with the rapid depletion of men during the Germans thrust through the Ardennes; he needed replacements

desperately. In many cases Wade and his cohorts accepted demotions so as not to outrank their white counterparts. 2,221 refers to the number of African Americans who ended up volunteering to fight the Germans. Afterwards many of these soldiers got shipped back to their original units, but without any effort being made at the restoration of their previous, higher ranks. Moreover, in most instances their service records didn't reflect the time they had spent in combat. Wade devoted his postwar years to attempting to right the wrongs visited upon him and the other volunteers. Wade got President Clinton to officially honor the little known Association of the 2,221 Negro Volunteers at their first reunion in 1994. He issued a presidential message commemorating the bravery and courage they displayed in confronting the Germans during the Battle of the Bulge. Four years later at a Pentagon ceremony Wade and some of the remaining volunteers received Bronze Stars and had their old ranks restored. Wade passed away 2012 at the age of 87. He distinguished himself after his wartime service by pursuing a career that included a number of years as an investigator for the Internal Revenue Service, becoming a business manager for Johnson Publishing, which was responsible for the magazines Ebony and Jet, and establishing SEDAW Management, a contracting company that set-up and operated military dining facilities all across the United States. At various times Wade lived in Illinois, Texas, California, and Washington, D.C. FOIA request 2014-0122-F consists of correspondence, memoranda, notes, and reports related to the Association of the 2,221 Negro Volunteers and their achievements during World War II. The correspondence is mostly from Wade and comprises part of an ongoing effort to get the attention of President Clinton, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Chairman of the JCS, Colin Powell. There are declassified reports from the European Theater detailing the process whereby black troops made it to the front lines to fight Germans alongside white troops.

Record Type

Textual

System of Arrangement

Records that were responsive to this request were found in these collection areas—Clinton Presidential Records: WHORM Alpha Project, Clinton Presidential

Records: WHORM Subject Files, and Clinton Presidential Records: WHORM (OP). The White House Office of Records Management (WHORM) contains a variety of series created to organize and track documents and correspondence. The WHORM Subject File was compiled by the White House Office of Records Management and is a series of categories designated by a letter/number combination. In addition, there are WHORM, WHORM Counsel, WHORM (CL), WHORM (OP), WHORM (Too Late), WHORM (Various Offices), and WHORM (Alpha Project) series. FOIA 2014-0122-F includes WHORM records from these subject codes: [ME] [Messages].

Access

Collection is open to all researchers. Access to Clinton Presidential Records is governed by the Presidential Records Act (PRA) (44 U.S.C. Chapter 22, as amended) and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552, as amended) and therefore records may be restricted in whole or in part in accordance with legal exemptions.

Copyright

Documents in this collection that were prepared by officials of the United States government as part of their official duties are in the public domain. Researchers are advised to consult the copyright law of the United States (17 U.S.C. Chapter1) which governs the making of photocopies and other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Provenance

Official records of William Jefferson Clinton’s presidency are housed at the Clinton Presidential Library and administered by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) under the provisions of the PRA.

Processed by

Staff Archivist, 2013. Previously restricted materials are added as they are released.

Last Modified Date

2015-09-11

Container List

"The following is a list of documents processed in response to 2014-0122-F:
Box 1
Clinton Presidential Records: WHORM: Alpha Project
283520 [Folder #7] [Association of 2221 Negro Volunteers – June 11, 1998]
Clinton Presidential Records: WHORM: Subject Files
Category Case Number
ME 088683
Clinton Presidential Records: WHORM: (OP)
301181 [Folder #2] [Association of 2221 Negro Volunteers – January 28, 1998] "