Walter Crenshaw papers

Finding aid prepared by Jessica Geiser, Collections Management Librarian.
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Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Walter Crenshaw papers  
**Date (inclusive):** 1942-1944  
**Collection Number:** MS 418  
**Creator:** Crenshaw, Walter, 1909-2016  
**Extent:** 0.21 linear feet (1 box)  
**Repository:** Rivera Library. Special Collections Department. Riverside, CA 92517-5900

**Abstract:** The collection consists of medals and other records from Walter Crenshaw, who served as the administrative assistant to the provost marshal at the Tuskegee Army Air Field during the Second World War. Items in the collection include Crenshaw’s pay and physical fitness records, a Tuskegee Army Airfield yearbook, a Thanksgiving menu, and three medals Crenshaw received related to his service.

**Languages:** The collection is in English.

**Access**
The collection is open for research.

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**Preferred Citation**
[identification of item], [date if possible]. Walter Crenshaw papers (MS 418). Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

**Acquisition Information**
Gift of N. Joyce Crenshaw, 2018.

**Processing Information**
Processed by Jessica Geiser, Collections Management Librarian, 2018.

**Biographical Note**
Walter Crenshaw Jr. was born on October 27, 1909, and was raised in Alabama. He attended the Tuskegee Institute in 1927, and one year later transferred to Alabama State University. In 1940, Crenshaw married Zelma Whatley, and the two eventually had five children.

In 1942, Crenshaw joined the U.S. Army Air Corps, and received administrative training before being stationed at the Tuskegee Army Air Field. Crenshaw served as the Administrative Assistant to the Provost Marshal, where he oversaw the background checks and induction of cadets for the 99th Pursuit Squadron and the 332nd Fighters Squadron and got to know each recruit on a personal basis.

After being honorably discharged in 1945, Crenshaw moved to Detroit, Michigan, where he worked for 22 years as the head shipping clerk for Railway Express Agency. Crenshaw and his family then spent time in Santa Monica, California and South Carolina before retiring to Redondo Beach, California in 2007.

In 2008, he was honored at the National Historic Site of the National Museum of the Tuskegee Airmen, in addition to the 2007 Congressional Gold Medal President George W. Bush bestowed to all Tuskegee Airmen. Crenshaw also held the distinction for many years of being the oldest living documented Tuskegee Airmen, until his passing in 2016 at the age of 106.

**Collection Scope and Contents**
The collection consists of medals and other records from Walter Crenshaw, who served as the administrative assistant to the provost marshal at the Tuskegee Army Air Field during the Second World War. Items in the collection include Crenshaw's pay and physical fitness records, a Tuskegee Army Airfield yearbook, a Tuskegee Air Field Thanksgiving menu, and three medals Crenshaw received related to his service.

Also included is a checklist from the War Department Pamphlet "Command of Negro Troops," which sought to help white commanding officers successfully interact with black troops.

**Collection Arrangement**
The collection is arranged alphabetically.

**Indexing Terms**
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

**Subjects**
African American fighter pilots
Tuskegee Army Air Field (Ala.)
Tuskegee Army Flying School (Tuskegee, Ala.)
United States -- Armed Forces -- African Americans
World War, 1939-1945 -- Participation, African American

**Genres and Forms of Materials**
Medals
Military records
Yearbooks

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<th>Box 1, Folder 1</th>
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<td>&quot;Command of Negro Troops&quot; checklist circa 1944</td>
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