



**Thomas O. Lawton Papers, 1938-2005 (bulk 1943-1947)
SCHS #537.00**

Description: 1.75 Linear Feet (6 boxes)

Biog./Historical Note: Thomas Oregon Lawton, Jr. was born in 1924 in Barton, Allendale County, South Carolina, the son of Thomas Oregon Lawton (1885-1972) and Alexania Salley Easterling Lawton (1889-1989). During World War II he served as a combat infantryman in the 36th Infantry Division and fought in the Italian Campaign and the invasion of southern France. After the war, he attended Duke University, receiving a B.A. in 1947 and a Juris Doctor in 1950. Lawton practiced law in Allendale for nearly five decades and was president of the Allendale County Bar. Lawton had an interest in South Carolina history, serving as chairman of the state's Tricentennial Commission, and as president of the South Carolina Historical Society and the Huguenot Society. Lawton died on March 8, 2005, at the Presbyterian Home of South Carolina in Summerville.

Scope and content: Papers chiefly relate to the military service of Thomas O. Lawton during World War II and include correspondence (mostly letters to his family), military records, historical and biographical information, medals, photographs and an album. Military records include a Bronze Star citation; a certificate of honorable discharge; and copies of "after action reports" concerning the operations of the 36th Division. Other materials, including a pictorial history, relate to the 36th Division, 142nd Infantry Regiment. There are also postwar issues of newsletters of the 36th Division called "The T-Patch Review." A photograph album contains photographs of Thomas O. Lawton and fellow soldiers, as well as locales in Europe including Pompeii, Munich, London, Paris and Rome.

Preferred citation: Lawton, Thomas O., 1924-2005. Thomas O. Lawton papers, 1938-2005. (0537.00) South Carolina Historical Society.

Container Listing:

BOX 1

- 1 Correspondence, 1938-1943.
- 2 Correspondence, 1941.
- 3 Correspondence, 1942.

- 4 Correspondence, undated letters likely of 1941-1942.
- 5 Correspondence, 1943 January – February.
- 6 Correspondence, 1943 March – April.
- 7 Correspondence, 1943 May – June. Includes a letter (June 20) from Thomas O. Lawton's mother headed "Pinned Thoughts" in which she writes about his childhood and reflects about the war.
- 8 Correspondence, July – August. Includes a letter (August) from Thomas O. Lawton's mother concerning "Midge" Cleveland and her family.
- 9 Correspondence, 1943 September – October.
- 10 Correspondence, 1943 November – December.
- 11 Correspondence, undated letters of 1943.
- 12 Correspondence, 1944 January – February.
- 13 Correspondence, 1944 March.
- 14 Correspondence, 1944 April.
- 15 Correspondence, 1944 May.

BOX 2

- 1 Correspondence, 1944 June.
- 2 Correspondence, 1944 July.
- 3 Correspondence, 1944 August – September.
- 4 Correspondence, 1944 October – November.
- 5 Correspondence, 1944 December. Includes a letter from Thomas O. Lawton to his parents which disputes a public statement by a U.S. Representative asserting that American troops did not favor a "proposed rotation system" for the soldiers.
- 6 Correspondence, 1945 January.
- 7 Correspondence, 1945 February.
- 8 Correspondence, 1945 March.
- 9 Correspondence, 1945 April.

- 10 Correspondence, 1945 May.
- 11 Correspondence, 1945 June.
- 12 Correspondence, 1945 July.
- 13 Correspondence, 1945 August.
- 14 Correspondence, 1945 September – November.

BOX 3

- 1 Correspondence, 1946-1987.
- 2 Military records: includes handwritten sheets headed “War Diary of Thomas O. Lawton, Jr.” which are mainly a timeline of his military service.
- 3 Military records: includes Bronze Star citation, and certificate of honorable discharge.
- 4 Military records: includes a tally of Lawton’s “combat days,” and a certificate authorizing the possession of a pair of captured German binoculars.
- 5 Military records: photocopies of newspaper clippings, issues (1945) of “T-Patch 36th Division News,” and a magazine article (1996) about the bombing of the Abbey Monte Cassino.
- 6 Military records: newspaper clippings and issues.
- 7 Commemorative pamphlet: “36th Division Hero, Our James L. Minor, Youngest Lt. Col. of World War II.”
- 8 Military records: includes the unit roster of Company G, 142nd Infantry Regiment, 36th Division, and orders dated 13 April 1943 concerning South Carolina reservists called to active duty. Also includes a program (1991) concerning the commemoration of the crossing of the Moselle River in France by the 36th Infantry Division, and posters commemorating the 36th Infantry Division campaigns in France, Austria and Germany.
- 9 Material relating to operations of the 142nd Infantry Regiment.
- 10 Material (mostly 1990s) relating to Matney’s Raiders, Company G, 142nd Infantry, 36th Division, including membership rosters and newsletters.

BOX 4

- 1 Issues of “The Company ‘G’ Review” (1980s) and “Matney’s Raiders Reports.”
- 2 Issues of “The T-Patcher Newsletter” (1977-2003).

- 3 Commemorative calendars of the 36th Division, 2000-2003.
- 4 Photocopy of “History of 142nd Infantry Regiment, 36th Infantry Division, 3 September 1943 – 8 May 1945, Italy – France – Germany – Austria” pages 1 -183.

BOX 5

- 1 Photocopy of “History of 142nd Infantry Regiment, 36th Infantry Division, 3 September 1943 – 8 May 1945, Italy – France – Germany – Austria” pages 184 – 316.
- 2 Material relating to the 142nd Infantry Regiment and 36th Division, including a fact sheet and a magazine article.
- 3 After Action Report (Texas State Archives): 142nd Infantry Regiment, 36th Division, October – November, 1943.
- 4 After Action Report (Texas State Archives): December 1943.
- 5 After Action Report (Texas State Archives): December 1943.
- 6 After Action Report (Texas State Archives): January 1944.
- 7 After Action Report (Texas State Archives): June 1944.

BOX 6

- 1 Book: *A Pictorial History of the 36th “Texas” Infantry Division*.
- 2 Miscellaneous items: including a program (1946) for a worship service at Duke University Church; and a typescript essay written in response to a critical article by a Northern woman, “Dyspepsia in Dixie,” concerning the South and Southern cooking.
- 3 Biographical material: includes “Notes on the Wartime Papers of Thomas O. Lawton, Jr.” (written by his son); a timeline of Thomas O. Lawton’s military service; an obituary; and a newspaper article.