



SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Jordan Family Papers, 1941-2009

SCHS# 0601.00

Description: .25 linear feet (1 box)

Background / Biographical Note: Correspondence, articles, and documents pertaining to the Jordan family. Three sons from this family- Nathan H. Jordan, Jr., Richard Jordan, and William Jordan- fought in World War II. The majority of the material relates to Nathan Haynes Jordan, Jr. (1918-1944), who joined the army in February 1942, trained at Camp Wheeler, Georgia for two years, sailed for the UK in July, 1944, and was deployed to France as a staff sergeant in Company M, 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Division, U.S. Army. He was listed as Missing in Action on August 14, 1944 during fighting near Tinchebray, France, after being severely wounded. Over a year later, on August 15, 1945, he was officially declared dead after the discovery of his remains. With the news of his death came an extensive correspondence in the late 1940s between his parents and the Department of the Army to ascertain what happened to him, locate his burial site (Plot E, Row 10, Grave 14) at the Brittany American Cemetery and Memorial in St. James, France, and determine whether he had a will. In the end, the government was unable to locate a will, and returned to his family only the single British coin and pencil that had been found on his body- his “personal effects”. For his sacrifice, Nathan was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart on September 8th, 1945.

Nathan’s two brothers also had notable military careers. The oldest, Richard Holmes Jordan (1917-1963), joined the U.S. Navy and was a Seaman 1st Class aboard the Essex-class aircraft carrier USS Boxer. This ship entered service too late to participate in World War II, but did visit occupied Japan, as well as Okinawa, the Philippines, and China. The youngest son, William Henry Bailey Jordan (1925-2012), also served with the Navy as a radioman with the rank of Seaman 2nd Class. After finishing his training at the U.S. Naval Radio School in Auburn, Alabama, he served in Great Lakes, Illinois, where he joined the Navy “Bluejacket Choir” and performed on the weekly radio program “Meet Your Navy”. Later he was transferred to Camp Shoemaker and San Diego, California before being deployed abroad. During and after the war, he was stationed in various Pacific naval posts, including Manila, Hong Kong, and Shanghai. He later attended South Carolina University and went on to become Director of Music at West Market Street Methodist Church in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Along with the materials from these three sons, some papers and items originate with their parents: Nathan H. Jordan, Sr. (1894-1963) and Mary Frances Bailey Jordan (1894-1980). A sister, Audrey Mary Jordan (1915-1990) also has a small number of items.

Scope and Content: Three folders include materials from Nathan H. Jordan, Jr., divided into that relating to his training at Camp Wheeler, service in France, and death – including the fruits of a 2009 Freedom of Information Act request filed by his brother William to obtain his personnel records. Most are photocopies of original letters home, correspondence between his family and the government, and official documents. There are also several books and pamphlets from his Camp Wheeler days. Another folder, dedicated to Richard Jordan, contains several issues of the “Bark of the Boxer”, the ship’s newspaper of the USS Boxer, dating to the occupation of Japan and associated activity in late 1945. Also included is a “Domain of Neptunus Rex” certificate awarded as part of the “Crossing the line” ceremony customarily performed when a ship crosses the Equator. The folder for William Jordan holds cards, certificates, records of his tenure in the U.S. Naval Radio School, and advertisements for the Bluejacket Choir and Meet Your Navy program. The folder dedicated to Audrey Jordan contains her USO membership card, a business card, a scanned letter to her from her grandmother dating to the late 1940s, and a scanned photograph of herself. The folder containing material from the parents of these four siblings, Mary and Nathan Jordan, Sr., includes ration coupons and calendars used to keep track of their children. One small one, annotated only with the words “Jr. left” on June 28, 1944, is poignant considering his death six weeks later. Finally, another folder holds an article about the family dating to 1994.

Preferred Citation: Jordan Family. Jordan Family Papers, 1942-2009. (#0601.00) South Carolina Historical Society.

Search Terms:

Jordan family.
Jordan, Nathan Haynes, 1894-1963 – Correspondence.
Jordan, Mary Frances Bailey, 1894-1980 – Correspondence.
Jordan, Audrey Mary, 1915-1990 – Correspondence.
Jordan, Richard Holmes, 1917-1963 – Correspondence.
Jordan, Nathan Haynes, 1918-1945 – Correspondence.
Jordan, William Henry Bailey, 1925-2012 – Correspondence.
University of South Carolina – Students.
Soldiers – South Carolina.
Greer (S.C.) – Biography.
Japan – Description and Travel.
USS Boxer.
World War, 1939-1945--Biography.

BOX 1

Folder 1: Nathan Jordan, Jr. – Camp Wheeler, 1941-1943

- 1 Red Cross membership card, 1942. Signed by “N. H. Jordan, Jr.”
- 2 Father’s Day card, 1943. This pre-filled Father’s Day card, which explains that the necessities of war prevent the sender from visiting his father, is marked “Camp Wheeler; Georgia”, indicating that it once belonged to Nathan Jordan, Jr. It appears to have never been signed.
- 3 Camp Wheeler Cartoons, by Dick Bothwell and Peter Paul Czerepak. Published by Observer printing House, Charlotte, NC, 1942. This book of cartoons was intended as humorous commentary on life at Camp Wheeler.
- 4 “Jap-Rat Hunting License”, 1942. This satirical but extremely racist card “allowing” the bearer to hunt “any dirty slant-eye Jap-Rat” was likely a possession of Nathan while at Camp Wheeler.
- 5 Army Song Book. Compiled by the Adjutant General’s Office under the Secretary of War, 1941.
- 6 Fighting on Guadalcanal. Published by United States Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1943.
- 7 Note with military records, 1943. Handwritten note with various records, including immunizations, date of arrival, blood type, rifle and bayonet training, etc. Last date mentioned is 2/10/1943.
- 8 Easter Card. Folded card on yellowed paper stating “Easter Greetings from 62nd Service Group”. In the lower right corner is the attribution “Pvt. Trubey”.
- 9 Certificate of rank, 1942. This certificate, signed by the colonel and captain in charge of Nathan’s unit at Camp Wheeler, promotes him to the rank of Corporal (temp) as of April 24, 1942. His unit is noted as Company C, 15th Inf. Tng. (training) Battalion.
- 10 Photocopy of invitation to Valentine Dance, 2/15/1943. This was undertaken by the 15th Battalion and held at the Service Club; it is addressed to Nathan.
- 11 Chapel Announcements sheet. This documents, featuring a picture of a church, details the attendance of the 15th Battalion at chapel services by platoon for each week in November (likely of 1943).

Folder 2: Nathan Jordan, Jr. – Service in France, 1944

- 1 Photocopy of newspaper clipping entitled “Nathan Jordan is Missing in Action”. There is no author or date, but it is likely from a local South Carolina newspaper sometime later in August of 1944. It relates that Nathan is missing and describes some details of his family and military service.
- 2 Photocopy of The 38th United States Infantry. By the U.S. Army 38th Infantry Regiment, published in Pilzen, Czechoslovakia, 1945. This book is a complete history of the 38th Regiment, Nathan’s unit in France, through the end of World War II.

- 3 Letter (photocopy), August 1, 1944
- 4 Letter (photocopy), August 7, 1944, to Mary Jordan from Nathan, Jr. in France. He discusses another change of unit assignment, the good quality of food and rations, and the kindness of the French people.
- 5 Letter (photocopy), August 11, 1944, to Mary and Nathan Jordan, Sr. from Nathan, Jr. in France. He discusses his reassignment to Co. M of the 38th Inf. Reg., a heavy weapons company, and promotion to Staff Sgt. and section leader, being in combat for several days, and having “the Jerries on the run”. He states that he is doing well and tells his mother not to worry about him.

Folder 3: Nathan Jordan, Jr. – Death, 1944-2009

- 1 Photocopied section of French-language highway map of France. The town of Saint-James is marked with a red circle and the note “U.S. Military Cemetery St. James France”. This is the final resting place of Nathan Jordan, Jr. It was likely William Jordan who printed and marked the map.
- 2 Scans of packet containing personal effects of Nathan Jordan, Jr. On top of the packet are laid its meagre contents: a bent rubberized pencil and a British pre-1971 penny coin featuring King George V and an obscured date. The two images are labeled “Jordan WWII artifacts obverse” and “Jordan WWII artifacts reverse”.
- 3 Letter (photocopy), August 30, 1944, to Mary Jordan from J.A. Ulio, on behalf of the Adjutant General’s Office of the War Department. This letter explains to Mrs. Jordan that her son has been declared Missing in Action.
- 4 Freedom of Information Act copy of Individual Deceased Personnel File on Nathan Jordan, Jr., December 9, 2009. This large packet was requested by William Jordan, Nathan’s last surviving brother. It is prefaced with a letter to him from Thomas M. Jones, Chief of the Freedom of Information Act Office, explaining that all available information is included but that more might be obtained from the National Personnel Records Center. The many attachments include a disinterment directive dated 10/15/1948 stating that Nathan’s body was disinterred on June 4th of that year in Gorrion, France, and that he had a skull fracture; letters sent on April 20, 1949 to Nathan’s father and mother from the Quartermaster General explaining that the body had been transferred to St. James; a letter sent on June 17, 1948 to Edna Mattox, Director of Home Service with the American Red Cross in Atlanta, GA by Col. John Hyatt of the Quartermaster General’s Memorial Division requesting her to secure disposition instructions from Nathan’s next of kin for his remains; a document from the Quartermaster General indicating that no will for Nathan was found and that his personal effects had been sent to his family; a letter sent on October 20, 1947 by Mr. Jordan to the Quartermaster General asking for more information on the circumstances of his son’s death; letters sent on January 6 and 16, 1948, to Mr. Jordan from the Quartermaster General answering a request for more

information on the reinterment; and more correspondence between Nathan, Jr.'s parents and the Army during the late 1940s as they tried to find what had become of their son.

- 5 Photocopy of Finding of Death of Missing Person form for Nathan Jordan, Jr., 1945. It states that he was presumed dead on August 15, 1945, a year and a day after his "disappearance", and was "wounded by enemy fire while participating with his unit in a battle near Tinchebray, France."
- 6 Photocopy of newspaper clipping entitled "Nathan Jordan, Jr. is declared dead". There is no author or date, but it is likely from a local South Carolina newspaper sometime in August of 1945. It relates that Nathan is dead and describes some details of his family and military service. It is mentioned that, when wounded, a comrade administered first aid to Jordan but was then forced to advance with his unit, after which no trace of him could be found.
- 7 Photocopy of Purple Heart certificate awarded on September 8, 1945, to Nathan H. Jordan, Jr. for merit and wounds resulting in his death.
- 8 Photocopy of a standardized letter from Gen. Edward Witsell, dated January 31, 1945, relaying the nature of the Purple Heart award and how it should be displayed.

Folder 4: Richard H. Jordan – Service on USS Boxer, 1945

- 1 Certificate entitled "Domain of Neptunus Rex". It has three holes punched on its left side, indicating former placement in a binder. This type of certificate was given out on many U.S. Navy vessels during the 1940s as part of the traditional "Crossing the Line" celebration which marks the crossing of the Equator and the maturation of new recruits, called "Pollywogs" into hardened "Shellbacks". This certificate was likely presented to Richard Jordan as he served aboard the USS Boxer, although none of the fields on the certificate are filled out and it is therefore impossible to ascertain for sure. A dark spot marks the former presence of an adhesive seal in the lower right corner.
- 2 The Bark of the Boxer, Vol. 1 No. 8, 11/5/1945. Ship's newspaper published by crewmembers of the USS Boxer.
- 3 The Bark of the Boxer, Vol. 1 No. 7, 10/20/1945. References time spent in Japan.
- 4 The Bark of the Boxer, Vol. 1 No. 2, 5/15/1945. References V-E Day.

Folder 5: William Jordan – Navy Service, 1943-2008

- 1 Photocopy of newspaper article "Jordan used Morse code to communicate in WWII" by Jim Fair, 7/1/2008 for the Greer Citizen, part of a series called Hometown Heroes that was devoted to veterans from the Greer, SC area. The article describes William Jordan's service in the Navy as a Morse code operator and some details of his later life, including marriage and retirement.
- 2 Photocopy of an image of the choir at U.S. Naval Training Station "Great Lakes", of which William Jordan was a part.

- 3 Envelope labeled "Telegrams Feb., 1944 re Williams singing", containing two smaller Western Union telegrams in envelopes. One is from Williams' aunt and grandmother complimenting him on his singing; the other is from his mother Mary Jordan, expressing a similar sentiment.
- 4 Letter (photocopy) January 8, 1944, to Mary Jordan from Captain R.R.M. Emmet, U.S. Navy, commanding officer at the U.S. Naval Training Station in Great Lakes, Ill. Emmet describes a rough outline of training at the base, what comforts and diversions William can expect, and the rules for visiting and writing, along with other information that would be pertinent to a mother.
- 5 Photocopy of newspaper article "Choir Singers on all Fronts". No author or date is legible; a note in the margin lists the year as 1943. The article describes the various locations in which members of the Great Lakes naval choir are stationed. The reverse side appears to contain a note mailed with the letter of 1/8/1944 describing visitor pass applications for the base, as well as an envelope addressed to Mary Jordan from Lt. Cmdr. Halmar Hanson, leader of the Bluejackets.
- 6 Photocopy of a poster promoting the "Meet Your Navy" program in which William Jordan sang, sponsored by the Hallmark greeting card company.
- 7 Scans of four photographs, likely dating from 1943 or 1944, featuring William Jordan in his Navy uniform. In two he poses with another man, also in uniform (perhaps one of his brothers), in one he poses with five family members, including two young children, and in one he poses alone with the official flag of the Great Lakes naval station.
- 8 Copy of 6.

Folder 6: Audrey Jordan, 1942-1948

- 1 Letter (photocopy), May 18, 1948, to Audrey Jordan from her grandmother Janie Holmes Bailey. It describes, among other topics, an antique crescent pin she owned.
- 2 Scan of a photograph of Audrey Jordan as a young woman.
- 3 Envelope containing a membership card of the USO Junior Hostess Organization, of which Audrey was a member, authorizing her to attend dances at the USO and service clubs at Donaldson Air Force Base in Greenville, SC, as well as the USO club in that town.
- 4 Envelope containing a business card for Audrey when she worked in the lingerie department of the Meyers-Arnold Department Store in Greenville, SC.

Folder 7: Mary Jordan and Nathan H. Jordan, Sr., 1942-1943

- 1 Novelty "L-O-N-G" letter, December 14, 1943, probably from Mary Jordan to Nathan Jordan, Jr. Signed "Jitter bug." Being a joke letter, this note is pre-written with military-related wisecracks and accompanying cartoons which unfold for roughly 5 feet of length. There are only a few blanks for date, location- stated as Macon, GA- and recipient, stated

simply as “soldier”. As Nathan was the only one of the three brothers to become a soldier rather than a sailor, we can assume that this letter was meant for him.

- 2 Gasoline ration card B-3, 1942, for “N.H. Jordan”, presumably the elder Nathan. Included in this form, designated OPA R-504 form No. 6126746, is Nathan’s full name, his address at 11 North Ave., Greer, SC, and the make and model of his car, a Chevrolet sedan. All the ration coupons once attached to the bottom of the card have been used. The reverse side contains instructions for using the card and the date of issue.
- 3 Envelope containing war ration book No.3, 1943, for Mary Jordan. This is a larger book which originally contained 7 pages of ration stamps, of which three are gone and the other four still intact. Included on the front cover are Mary’s full name and her address at 1 Merchant St., Greer, SC.
- 4 Clipping from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution newspaper with article titled “Soldiers of U.S. to get undies of khaki color”. This is dated January 29, although the year (probably 1943 or 1944) is unknown.
- 5 Envelope containing pocket calendar, 1944. This card-sized calendar is unmarked save for an “x” on June 28th and the comment “Jr. left”.
- 6 Wall calendar, 1944. The month of July is marked on the 6th with the note “Jr. left for overseas”. August is marked on the 8th with “Jr. went in action”, on the 11th with “Nathan’s last letter” and on the 14th with “Nathan Missing”. October is marked on the 5th with “Audrey’s birthday” and on the 17th with “Jr.’s birthday”.

Folder 8: Postwar Articles, 1994

- 1 Photocopy of newspaper article “Attic Treasure yields Jordan Family’s WWII Story” by Gala Mickle, 1/5/1994 for the Greer Citizen. The article shines a spotlight on the collection of Second World War-era items and correspondence kept by William Jordan and his wife, Rose Marie Jordan., mentioning the mystery of the fate of Nathan, Jr., seemingly now resolved.