

Collection #
SC 2842
OM 0461

FRANK A. BANKS COLLECTION, 1936–1943

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Processed by

Wilma L. Moore
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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 folder; 1 oversized folder; 6 medals

COLLECTION 1936–1943
DATES:

PROVENANCE: Edward Jackson, Indianapolis, Indiana, October 2007

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2007.0320

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Frank Andrew Banks was born in Michigan in 1917. His parents were John (born in Mississippi) and Mabel Darcey Banks (born in Indiana). By the 1930 census his family was living in Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana. Intending to make the military a career, Frank Banks enlisted in the United States Navy in January 1936. He was a Mess Attendant 3rd class on the U.S.S. Arizona, when the ship crossed the equator in May of that year.

According to official records, Banks had the following assignments during his military career:

NRS in Indianapolis to USNTS, Norfolk, VA

From Norfolk to U.S.S. Arizona on April 22, 1936

From U.S.S. Arizona temporarily based on shore at Fleet Air Base, San Pedro, Calif. With VO Squadron One, U.S. S. Arizona on 5-2-1938 (actual transfer date: 6-18-1938)

From San Pedro Air Base to U.S.S. Arizona on 10-4-1938 (temporary duty complete)

From U.S.S. Arizona to U.S.S. Tennessee on 6-5-1939 (Temporary duty in connection with Anti-aircraft Gunnery School.)

From U.S.S. Tennessee to U.S.S. Maryland on 7-5-1939 (Further temporary duty in connection with Anti-Aircraft Gunnery School.)

From USS Maryland to USS Arizona on 8-5-1939

From U.S.S. Arizona to USS Arizona AV Unit (VO-1 squadron) for temporary duty for period of tender overhaul on November 22, 1939 (10-16-1939)

From U.S.S. Arizona AV Unit (VO-1) to U.S.S. Arizona, 12-21-1939

From U.S.S. Arizona to U.S.S. Pensacola on 4-29-1940

During 1942, as the United States's participation in World War II escalated, Banks saw action off Santa Cruz Island, at the Battle of Midway, and throughout the Guadalcanal Area campaign. Banks's ship, the U.S.S. Pensacola was torpedoed during a night surface engagement off Tassafaronga on November 29, 1942. One of a series of naval battles during the Guadalcanal Campaign, this encounter is sometimes referred to as the fourth battle of Savo Island. Dubbed "Task Force 67," a United States eleven-ship formation consisting of cruisers and destroyers and commanded by Rear Admiral Carleton H. Wright made radar contact with a Japanese fleet directed by Rear Admiral Raizo Tanaka. Three of the American destroyers launched torpedoes and the accompanying cruisers opened fire. One Japanese destroyer sank, after being hit. When the Japanese squadron returned fire, torpedoes hit several of the American ships including the Pensacola. The ship suffered massive damage and a fire.

Banks's body was not recovered after the attack on the U.S.S. Pensacola. He was declared dead on December 1, 1943. The Purple Heart of Frank Andrew Banks, Officer's Steward 3c, USN was sent, posthumously, to his mother, Mabel Darcey Banks at 1225 Edgemont Avenue in Indianapolis.

Sources:

Ancestry Library.com <http://www.ancestrylibrary.com/>, accessed 10-19-2007

Indianapolis Recorder, Victory Progress Edition, July 7, 1945

Polk's Indianapolis (Marion County, Ind.) City Directory. Taylor, Mich.: R. L. Polk & Company, 1930; 1935; 1936; 1940

State Summary of War Casualties [Indiana], issued by the War Department in 1946.

Official Military Personnel Records, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, MO

Materials in the collection.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of materials pertaining to Frank Andrew Banks and his service in the United States Navy. Banks was in S Unit on the USS *Arizona* when the ship crossed the equator in 1936. A booklet, *Neptune's domain: U.S.S. Arizona crosses the equator, May 20, 1936* commemorates the event. It lists the personnel in each unit—Banks' rate is recorded as a MA3c. Banks was awarded a Purple Heart, posthumously. The Purple Heart, along with five other medals, is in the collection.

Frank A. Banks was on the USS *Pensacola* when it was torpedoed in November, 1942. He was presumed dead and a certificate, with Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidential signature block, was issued to that effect on December 1, 1943.

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Booklet: *Neptune's Domain: U.S.S. Arizona crosses*

CONTAINER

Folder 1

the equator, May 20, 1936

Printed document indicating that Frank A. Banks, crew member of the USS *Pensacola*, was presumed dead at sea, December 1, 1943

OM0461

Framed group of six medals (Purple Heart , United States Navy, World War II, Asiatic Pacific Campaign, American Campaign, and American Defense)

Artifacts:
2007.0320

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case SC 2842).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.