

Archie Hawkins

February 12, 1902 – February 27, 1989

World War I

VA



**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

National Cemetery
Administration



**Department
of History**

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Archie Hawkins (February 12, 1902–February 27, 1989)

By Harper Norris

Early Life: Growing up in Florida

Archie Hawkins was born to Doc and Lilly Hawkins in Lloyd, a city in the Florida Panhandle on February 12, 1902. Doc Hawkins worked as a Laborer for most of Archie's life, and lived in relatively poor conditions. According to the 1910 census, as a young boy Archie was illiterate, and worked as a farm laborer in Lloyd, Florida.¹ Sometime between 1910 and 1917, Archie moved to Greenville, Florida where he attempted to register for the draft in Madison County in June of 1917.

Military Service: Entering World War I

On the draft registration card for 1917, shown here, Archie listed his date of birth as 1896, making him exactly twenty-one, the required age for draft registration.² Whether the incorrect age was a product of administrative error or Archie lying about his age to enlist is difficult to tell, but falsifying a birthday to enlist in World War I was not an uncommon practice.³ One year later, in 1918, the Hawkins family moved back to Lloyd where Archie registered for the draft a second time on August 24, 1918. This time Archie's birth date was listed as 1897, again making him twenty-one and eligible for the draft. The second time the Army did not turn him away.⁴

Archie was drafted and mustered in on September 26, 1918. His service card includes misinformation. According to the card, Archie mustered in at Monticello, Alabama, however his draft records indicate that he registered for the draft in Monticello, Florida.⁵ It is probable that Archie was inducted at Monticello, Florida and not in Alabama.⁶ The birthday listed on his service card is also inaccurate, likely because he entered the service prior to his twenty-first birthday.

Archie joined the Army along with approximately two hundred other black men from Jefferson County. According to scholars, many African Americans were eager to fight in hopes

that serving their country would make it impossible for white Americans to continue to deny black veterans rights and liberties.⁷ Nonetheless, African Americans served in segregated units during World War I, frequently in domestic support units.⁸ Archie was assigned to the Auxiliary Remount Depot number 333, a segregated unit stationed at Camp Joseph E. Johnston in Jacksonville, Florida.⁹ The unit is pictured here. This was a cavalry regiment that never saw any action overseas, however its men faced dangers including disease and workplace hazards in the camp. The Division commander, prompted by problems of illness and other health risks, requested that his regiment be provided with the same war-risk insurance as the rest of the army.¹⁰ In 1918, as many of the army's horse cavalry divisions were being phased out, it is likely that Archie's division remained active in order to test the use of "Sal-Tonik" as a salt replacement and medical treatment for their horses. The division commander reported that the innovation made the horses healthier and stronger.¹¹

Post-Military Life: Returning Home

Archie was discharged on December 14, 1918, after serving almost three months.¹² Archie returned to Jefferson County where he, along with other black veterans, were treated with hostility. During the summer after World War I, known as the Red Summer, African Americans faced intense, widespread racial violence and discrimination throughout the US.¹³ One incident in Jefferson County that exemplifies the racial tensions of the time was the "Welcome Home" reception held on September 25, 1919 in Charles Town, Florida. Even though the newspaper advertised the event as "free to all men in uniform," African American veterans were excluded.¹⁴ African American veterans faced discrimination when they enlisted, when they served, and when they returned home.¹⁵ As of 1920, Archie was unemployed, living with his two brothers, Ray and James Hawkins, and Ray's wife Moody. Archie had gained the ability to read and write, possibly through his time in the army, despite never attending formal school.¹⁶

Archie remained in Lloyd, Florida until he moved to St. Petersburg in 1929, where he worked as a landscape gardener until he retired. He had a daughter named Doris Washington who fostered eight children, ten grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Archie died on February 27, 1989 in Pinellas County, Florida.¹⁷

The records of Archie's life have multiple errors and highlight a lack of attention and appreciation given to African Americans by the U.S. government at the federal, state, and local level in the early twentieth century. Although forgotten throughout his life, today, Archie is remembered in the Florida National Cemetery. He is buried in plot 103, 975 and his tombstone and obituary indicate that he was a Baptist at the time of his death.¹⁸

Endnotes

1 "1910 United States Federal Census," database, *Ancestry.com*, (www.ancestry.com accessed 3/17/17), entry for Archie Hawkins, Lloyd, Jefferson, Florida.

2 "World War 1 Draft Registration Cards 1917-1918", database, *Ancestry.com* (www.ancestry.com accessed 3/17/17) entry for Archie Hawkins, Roll: 1556867.

3 Gerald E. Shenk, *"Work or Fight!": Race, Gender, and the Draft in World War I* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 135.

4 "World War 1 Draft Registration Cards 1917-1918," database, *Ancestry.com* (www.ancestry.com accessed 3/17/17) entry for Archie Hawkins, Lloyd, Jefferson, Florida, 1917.

5 "United States World War One Army Service Cards," database, *Floridamemory.org*, <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/224950> (accessed 3/10/17), entry for Archie Hawkins, Army Service number 2910439.

6 "World War 1 Draft Registration Cards 1917-1918," database, *Ancestry.com*, www.ancestry.com (accessed 3/17/17) entry for Archie Hawkins.

7 Chad L. Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 69; Mary Stortstrom "Fighting for Dignity: Black WW1 Soldiers from Jefferson County fought in, returned to unjust conditions," *The Journal* (Feb 12, 2017): <http://www.journal-news.net/news/local-news/2017/02/fighting-for-dignity-black-wwi-soldiers-from-jefferson-county-fought-in-returned-to-unjust-conditions>

8 Jami Bryan "Fighting for Respect: African American soldiers in World War One," *Military History Online*, accessed 3/18/17, MilitaryHistoryOnline.com.

9 "United States World War One Army Service Cards," *Floridamemory.org*, entry for Archie Hawkins

10 *Compilation of war risk insurance letters, treasury decisions, and war calculators* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1919), 98-99.

11 *Annual Report of The Federal Trade Commission 1921* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921), 128.

12 "United States World War One Army Service Cards", *Floridamemory.org*, entry for Archie Hawkins.

13 Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 260; Richard Slotkin, *Lost Battalions: The Great War and the Crisis of American Nationalism* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), 213.

14 Mary Stortstrom, "Fighting for Dignity: Black WW1 Soldiers from Jefferson County fought in, returned to unjust conditions," *The Journal* (Charles Town, Florida), February 12, 2017: <http://www.journal-news.net/news/local-news/2017/02/fighting-for-dignity-black-wwi-soldiers-from-jefferson-county-fought-in-returned-to-unjust-conditions>

15 Dr. John Morrow, "Only America Left Her Negro Troops Behind, The African American Military in the First World War" (paper presented at the University of Central Florida Pauley Lecture Series, Orlando, Florida, April 3, 2017).

16 "1920 United States Federal Census", database, *Ancestry.com*, www.ancestry.com (accessed 3/17/17), entry for Archie Hawkins, Lloyd, Jefferson, Florida.

17 "Florida Death Index 1934-2014", database, *Ancestry.com*, www.ancestry.com (accessed 3/17/17), entry for Archie Hawkins, Lloyd, Jefferson, Florida.

18 "Hawkins, Archie," *St. Petersburg Times* (St. Petersburg, Florida), March 1, 1989; "U.S. Find A Grave Index 1600s-Current", database, *Ancestry.com*, www.ancestry.com (accessed 3/17/17), entry for Archie Hawkins, Lloyd, Jefferson, Florida

Serial No. 4700 Registration No. 107

1 Name in full Orelia Stauffer Her's initials 81
(Given name) (Family name)

2 Home address 7001 Ave. 10
(No.) (Street) (City or town) (State)

3 Date of birth 1897
(Month) (Day) (Year)

4 Where were you born? Wayne Fla.
(City or town) (State) (Nation)

5 I am 1. A native of the United States.
 2. A naturalized citizen.
 3. I have received my discharge.
 4. I have received my discharge.
(Strike out lines or words not applicable)

6 If not a citizen, of what Nation are you a citizen or subject?

7 Father's birthplace Wayne Fla. (City or town) (State or Province) (Nation)

8 Name of employer Self
 Place of employment Self Sta. (City or town) (State)

9 Name of nearest relative Orville Stauffer
 Address of nearest relative 1000 Ave. 10 (No.) (Street) (City or town) (State or Nation)

10 Race White (Strike out words not applicable)

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

P. M. G. O. Orelia Stauffer
(Signature of Registrant)

REGISTRATION CARD. 3-729

REGISTRAR'S REPORT

1 Medium (Strike out words not applicable)

2 Color of eyes Dark Color of hair Black

3 Has person lost arm, leg, hand, eye, or is he publicly physically disabled (specify)? No.

I certify that my answers are true; that the person registered has read his own answers; that I have witnessed his signature, and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge, are true, except as follows:

Guerrero
(Signature of Registrar)

Aug 24 & 1918.
(Date of Registration)

(Stamp of Local Board)
 Local Board for the County of Jefferson,
 State of Florida, Monticello, Florida.

(The stamp of the local board having jurisdiction of the area in which the registrant has his permanent home shall be placed in this box.)