Dee Jones

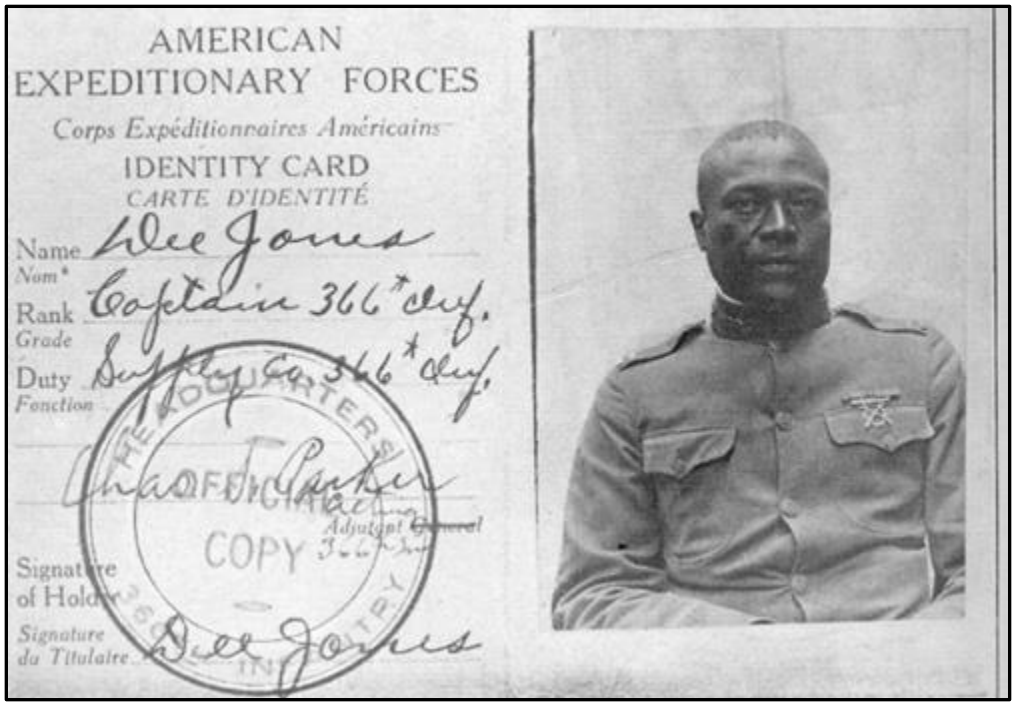

Image from Scott, The American Negro in the World War (1919)

Dee Jones was born 20 March 1894 in El Dorado, Union County, Arkansas, the son of George Jones (1863-) and Eliza Snowden (circa 1866-), who were married in 1887 in El Dorado. Dee Jones' siblings were Ollie, Nathan, George, Lillie, Jodie, Wallace, and Lizza, all born in Arkansas. The family was enumerated in the 1910 census while living in El Dorado; George had remarried to Alice Lewis (circa 1878-) in 1904.

Dee Jones registered for the draft on 5 June 1917 in the Village of Inver Grove in Dakota County. He was 23 years old and lived in Inver Grove, where he worked for the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway. He was single. In August 1918, Prizell Edwards, Albert Marshall, and Dee Jones were inducted and sent to St. Paul, where they and 128 other African-American draftees left for Camp Dodge in Iowa for training.

During the War, Jones served as captain in the supply company of the 366th Infantry Regiment, American Expeditionary Forces. The segregated 366th Infantry Regiment fought with distinction in the First World War. Unlike previous segregated units, both its ranks and officers were comprised of African-American volunteers. It existed in the segregated 92nd Division of the National Army, the "Buffalo Soldiers" who deployed to France in June 1918. The regiment earned credit for battle participation as follows: St. Die Sector (Lorraine), 23 August 1918 – 20 September 1918; Meuse-Argonne Sector, 26 September 1918 – 5 October 1918; and Marbach

Sector (Lorraine) 8 October 1918 – November 1918. The 366th Infantry was demobilized 25 March 1919 at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia.

Jones married Sallie Buffington, but it is not known whether he had any children. After the War, Jones lived in Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota. In the 1920 census, Dee Jones is listed at 717 Cedar Avenue with wife Sallie, who was also born in Arkansas, along with Dee's brother Wallace, Sallie's mother Martha (whose age was listed as 113), and several boarders. All of the men worked as laborers for the railroad.

In the 1930 census, Dee Jones was living in Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan with Bessie Joiner, and he is listed as widowed and a construction worker. There is a Dee Jones of the right age and birthplace in the 1940 census in Detroit who appears to be the same man; he was a porter for a barber shop, and lived in the same household as Laura Sanders. In 1942, when he registered for the WWII draft, Jones was living in Detroit, and he reported that he had been unemployed for six years.

Dee Jones died in April 1969 in Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan at age 75. His place of burial is unknown.

Note: For those wishing to do further research, the Arkansas Digital Archives holds a WWI discharge record for Dee Jones (Identifier: MS.000742, Dee Jones). https://digitalheritage.arkansas.gov/ "Each card contains the veteran's age, place of birth, place of residence, and information about military service."

See also: "The Buffalo Soldiers in WWI." Website of the National Parks Service (https://www.nps.gov/articles/the-buffalo-soldiers-in-wwi.htm, accessed 9 August 2021).