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Johnson, Darneal F. - 1944 (press release)

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June 14, 1944

Office of the Secretary
Howard University
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

The General Commission on Army and Navy Chaplains has received from Chaplain Darneal F. Johnson an account of his experiences with a Quartermaster Group in the Pacific Theatre of Operations. It has occurred to us that you may wish to publish for your readers an account of the observations of Chaplain Johnson.

We would be pleased to receive a marked copy of the paper in which this release appears.

Yours very sincerely,

Jacob S. Peyton
Public Relations

Enclosure
WASHINGTON, D.C.: Chaplain Darneal F. Johnson, now assigned to a Quartermaster Group in the Pacific Theatre of Operations has sent to the General Commission on Army and Navy Chaplains some observations he has made while overseas. Chaplain Johnson, who was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, resided in Washington, D.C. from his early childhood. He became a member of the Metropolitan Baptist Church, 1225 R St., N.W., Washington, D.C. during the pastorage of the Reverend M.W.D. Norman. He was graduated from the Dunbar High School, Class of 1924. In 1932 he received the Th.B. degree from the School of Religion, Howard University. Later, he became Assistant to the Reverend E.C. Smith, Pastor of the Metropolitan Baptist Church, and served as Director of Religious Education. Chaplain Johnson was ordained in 1934 and was serving this Church when appointed Chaplain.

Chaplain Johnson has furnished the following account of his services abroad:

"On the whole, the work in the field is similar to that in garrison. There is, however, a greater need of doing creative work in order to carry on properly. For instance, in order to conduct religious service, I have found it necessary to take what facilities that are available and transform them into places of worship. Example for this is taking a field organ and setting it up in a mess hall.

"It may have seemed a rather strange mixture to have in one end of the mess hall the jingle of the silver and in another part the playing of the organ at the same time. Yet, the men were made to feel that they were in a church service: it was necessary for the men to eat. They got their Spiritual food while there
was being prepared for them food for the body. We have also been able to construct Chapels of native design, yet Church-like in appearance.

"In foreign service, one has an opportunity to be practical: 'all things to all men.' To the American soldier, I am Chaplain, while to an Australian, I am Padre. It was interesting to discover that one Sunday afternoon while travelling on a boat, I held a service, with about sixty percent of those attending Australians. With the singing of such hymns as 'Sweet Hour of Prayer' and 'Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus,' one would hardly know that the audience was of two nationalities.