

The Fallen Cougars

Lewis David Julian

Pre-WSC Life:

Lewis David Julian was born on August 24, 1912 in the town of Frederick, Kansas, a small community in the middle of the state.¹ He was born to his parents, Edgar and Blanch, and was the youngest of four children with three older sisters, Winifred, Bernice, and Edna. Edgar supported the family by working as a clergyman for a Methodist Church. When the 1920 Census was collected the family was living in Walton, a small town north of Wichita.² Interestingly, the Julian family had a Jewish background, as evidenced by a document with the National Jewish Welfare Board.³ Lewis attended many different schools throughout his early life as the family continued to move to different towns. In 1925, Lewis was a seventh-grade student at Mount Hope High School as he was reported to be on the honor roll for his academic achievement.⁴ By 1928, the family relocated one final time to Wichita, Kansas as Lewis began his high school years in earnest. During a commencement ceremony for graduating seniors, Lewis was one of the students performing musical numbers during the program.⁵ A year later, he put his musical skills to the test when he was part of a group of students sent by South Haven High School to compete in a variety of talent contests. For Lewis, he was in the “boys low voice” competition,

¹ “Lewis David Julian in the U.S., World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947,” *Ancestry*, https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/194416951:2238?tid=&pid=&queryId=a200f0b6a88aff8e66d75a077a8cce9e&_phsrc=rpm765&_phstart=successSource (Accessed July 20, 2021)

² “Lewis Julian in the 1920 United States Federal Census,” *Ancestry*, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/47305180:6061> (Accessed July 20, 2021)

³ “Lewis D Julian in the U.S., World War II Jewish Servicemen Cards, 1942-1947,” *Ancestry*, https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=2125&h=52163&tid=&pid=&queryId=07c396abbba353f46d252a7be8b4e9db&usePUB=true&_phsrc=rpm766&_phstart=successSource (Accessed July 20, 2021)

⁴ “High School News,” *The Mount Hope Clarion*, March 5, 1925.

⁵ “31 Get Diplomas At South Haven,” *The Wichita Eagle*, May 19, 1928.

indicating what his singing voice sounded like.⁶ In May 1930, he was a part of the South Haven graduating class and was ready for the next phase in his life.⁷ While there were many options within Wichita and the state of Kansas, he decided to go westward to Washington State College.

WSC Experience:

Despite the seemingly random decision to travel so far for college, Lewis did have a reason to choose WSC. His older sister, Winifred, was already a student in Pullman and the comfort of having a family member in town helped him make the journey to Washington. Winifred was keen on defending her younger brother, a trait noted humorously in the student newspaper. A reporter for the social section of one particular edition saw “Miss Julian saving the kid brother from a hacking.”⁸ Despite this episode, Lewis was able to adapt to life at WSC and was involved in multiple extracurricular activities. Soon after the start of the semester, he tried out and was one of twenty-two freshmen selected to the Glee Club. Because of his low singing voice, Lewis joined bass section.⁹ He later appeared on a studio musical program for the school radio station, this time singing baritone.¹⁰ Though he was a talented singer, Julian also participated in school sports. As a member of the freshman tennis team, he displayed some prowess early after he easily won his contest against an opponent from the University of Idaho.¹¹ For his efforts in tennis, Lewis was awarded a freshmen numeral at the end of the season.¹² In addition to his activities singing and playing tennis, Julian was a member of the Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity and was listed as a pledge in the yearbook.¹³ After concluding his freshman

⁶ “Forty High Schools To Enter Students At Winfield Event,” *The Wichita Eagle*, April 18, 1929.

⁷ “Graduating Class,” *The Wichita Eagle*, May 25, 1930.

⁸ “The Campus Window Seen By A Stroller,” *Washington State Evergreen*, March 27, 1931.

⁹ “Announce College Glee Club Members,” *Washington State Evergreen*, October 8, 1930.

¹⁰ “KWSC Program,” *Washington State Evergreen*, March 27, 1931.

¹¹ “Varsity and Frosh Tennis Squads Win From Idaho Teams,” *Washington State Evergreen*, April 29, 1931.

¹² “Awards Voted To 91 Athletes,” *The Spokesman-Review*, May 29, 1931.

¹³ Washington State College, “Chinook” (1931), 353.

year, Lewis seemed primed to continue his time in Pullman after being active in the community. Nevertheless, his first year was also his last at WSC.

It is unknown why Lewis departed from Pullman after a single year but after 1931, he returned home to Kansas. There are no obvious reasons for it and while distance is the most likely cause, the presence of his sister at WSC and his involvement in clubs cast some doubt on this answer. What is clear is where Julian went to following WSC as he decided to attend a college much closer to home. He transferred to the Municipal University of Wichita, known today as Wichita State University, quickly continuing his education with little difficulty. Though information is scarce, the yearbook from his graduating year shows that Lewis' interests and activities remained the same. Graduating in 1934 with a degree in Education, he was a member of Minisa Chorus, a group that joined the orchestra in out-of-town programs.¹⁴ Julian also played with the tennis team and while he did not earn a letter for it, he was still listed alongside the rest of the team.¹⁵ While an Education degree provided him with ample job opportunities, Lewis had even greater ambitions as he decided to see how far his musical talents might take him.

Like many aspiring stars seeking fame, Lewis moved to New York City for a chance at stardom. He did not find immediate success but still put himself into a decent position as he found work with the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) as page boy. It is unknown how long he worked as a page boy before he finally found opportunity in February 1936. A Brooklyn newspaper reported that Lewis was selected to be a vocalist with the Russ Morgan Band by saying that “[Julian] one week ago was a page boy at Radio City. Now he’s paging them himself and a dress suit is his new uniform.”¹⁶ Russ Morgan was an accomplished leader and composer

¹⁴ Municipal University of Wichita, “Parnassus” (1934), 22-44

¹⁵ Ibid, 68.

¹⁶ “Around The Tables with Chester King,” *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, February 12, 1936.

of big band groups, a popular style that involved a large musical ensemble playing jazz music. Morgan saw success as early as the 1920's and maintained his popularity well into the 1950's. The band also played on the radio with an extremely popular show called "Music in the Morgan Manner" and it was on this program where Julian's voice was heard.¹⁷ Though he was far from his home in Kansas, his friends and family were able to see Julian sing as the Russ Morgan orchestra was filmed playing music and shown in theaters.¹⁸ After months of recording sessions and playing in New York hotel dining rooms and night clubs, Lewis finally returned home in September. Within the year, he had gone from a humble assistant to having a contract to sing for NBC. Still, he was far from the only family success story as his sister, Edna, was a popular signer in Wichita and also did radio work in New York.¹⁹ Lewis' quick rise was far from over as he flew back to New York to continue living his dream.

Once in New York, Lewis continued to sing with the Russ Morgan orchestra and had another opportunity to make it to the silver screen. In October, Morgan signed another contract to make another series of short movies featuring the band and Julian as one of the vocalists.²⁰ By February 1937, these films were distributed around the country. Lewis, now with the nickname "Bud," was featured prominently in the picture and the local paper declared that "Fans who recognized him thought he did himself proud."²¹ Coverage of Julian's activities slowed down after 1937 but he still maintained his success. In 1938, he was reported to still be a part of the Russ Morgan orchestra in an article listing the achievements made by KWSC radio students at

¹⁷ "Russ Morgan," *Battle of the Big Bands*, <http://www.battleofthebigbands.com/russ-morgan> (Accessed July 23, 2021)

¹⁸ "Odds and Ends of The Day's News," *The Hutchinson News*, August 7, 1936.

¹⁹ "Makes Good In East," *The Wichita Eagle*, September 19, 1936.

²⁰ "Signed For Second," *Brooklyn Times-Union*, October 26, 1936.

²¹ "An Eagle Eye on the Theaters," *The Wichita Eagle*, February 9, 1937.

WSC.²² As late as October 1940, Lewis is still reporting to be an employee of NBC and living in New York City.²³ While his fame may have slowed as the years went on, his rise to a singer in a prominent band was still remarkable. Though films of the Russ Morgan Band are scarce, some of the recordings featuring Lewis still survive and are publicly available on the internet.²⁴ Lewis likely remained in New York until events on December 7, 1941 changed his life and the world forever.

Military Experience and Death:

The military career of Lewis Julian is only known from scattered sources that do not give a complete account of his experience. Nevertheless, it is likely that he enlisted into the Army soon after war was declared as he was able-bodied and not a college student. According to his sister, Julian joined the Army from New York City and decided to become an officer. Because of his education and age, he was a typical candidate for the position, earning his commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in Fort Benning, Georgia.²⁵ After leaving Fort Benning, it is unknown what camps he was moved to or when he was deployed overseas. Julian soon was attached to the 168th Infantry Regiment of the 34th Infantry Division, joining them in the European theater of war.²⁶ The 168th was an Iowa Infantry Regiment and part of other regiments from Minnesota and the

²² “KWSC, Pullman, Blazes Trail for Nation’s College Broadcasts,” *The Spokesman-Review*, January 30, 1938.

²³ “Lewis David Julian in the U.S., World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947,” *Ancestry*, https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/194416951:2238?tid=&pid=&queryId=a200f0b6a88aff8e66d75a077a8cce9e&_phsrc=rpm765&_phstart=successSource (Accessed July 23, 2021)

²⁴ “Lewis Julian,” *Internet Archive*, [https://archive.org/search.php?query=creator%3A%22Lewis+Julian%22&and\[\]=mediatype%3A%22audio%22](https://archive.org/search.php?query=creator%3A%22Lewis+Julian%22&and[]=mediatype%3A%22audio%22) (Accessed July 23, 2021)

²⁵ Letter from Winifred Julian to Jimmy, April 19, 1946. C. James Quann Manuscripts. Lewis D. Julian Collection, Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, Washington State University Libraries, Pullman, WA.

²⁶ “Lewis D Julian in the U.S., Headstone and Interment Records for U.S., Military Cemeteries on Foreign Soil, 1942-1949,” *Ancestry*, https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=9170&h=16435&tid=&pid=&queryId=fdde90a91409d5d46847db9a3f0c3f69&usePUB=true&_phsrc=IBq226&_phstart=successSource (Accessed August 9, 2021).

Dakotas that comprised the 34th Division. By the end of the war, the division was famed for its experience in combat. It first saw action in the North African after landing in Algiers. After stifling the German advance in North Africa, the 34th was soon sent to the Italian theater where it spent twenty months in action.²⁷ Lewis likely joined the unit towards the end of the North African campaign but was fully involved as the Allies set their sights on the Italian peninsula.

Though the Italian military was not feared by American troops, German reinforcements in the mountainous terrain made any advance over Italy extremely costly. The 34th Division arrived in full force to Salerno on September 29, 1943, beginning a war of attrition that was far more difficult than anything seen in North Africa. One regiment reported firing more artillery rounds in its first Italian battle than it had during the entirety of the previous campaign. Despite the stiff resistance, the 34th Division made progress as it moved north to the Volturno River. 168th Regiment and the rest of the division conducted three river crossings that were met by barrages of machine guns, artillery, and minefields. While they were able to successfully cross the river, each attempt or capture of an objective resulted in horrendous losses, costs that were soon felt at home.²⁸ In January 1944, *The Wichita Eagle* reported that Lewis Julian was missing in action but providing little information on his whereabouts or when he went missing.²⁹ According to Julian's sister, Winifred, Lewis had been missing since November 19, 1943, squarely during the battles near the Volturno River. The Julian family sought more information from the government and others but was left without answers until November 1944. A report by the International Red Cross that was sent by the German government revealed that Lewis died on

²⁷ "34th Infantry Division," *Sons of Liberty Museum*, <https://www.sonsoflibertymuseum.org/34th-infantry-division-ww2.cfm> (Accessed August 9, 2021).

²⁸ "World War II: History of The Iowa National Guard," *Iowa National Guard*, <https://www.iowanationalguard.com/History/History/Pages/World-War-II.aspx> (Accessed August 9, 2021).

²⁹ "Wichita Youth Is Missing In Action," *The Wichita Eagle*, January 7, 1944.

November 24, 1943 due to wounds received during the campaign.³⁰ Though many questions still lingered for the Julian family, they were at last aware of his ultimate fate during the war. Lewis Julian was thirty-one years old at the time of his death. His body was recovered laid to rest at the Florence American Cemetery in Italy.³¹ Years later, Julian was recognized at the WSU Veterans Memorial alongside the other students who lost their lives during World War II.

Legacy:

The life of Lewis Julian is remarkable in many ways. Though his time at WSC was short and his military experience sparsely detailed, aspects of his legacy carry on stronger than many of his peers. He was a promising singer that flashed talent while at WSC before he made the trek to New York City to seek out a career. His voice not only propelled him to success as a singer, but his works can also still be enjoyed by listeners more than ninety years later. While Lewis had the life he dreamed of in New York, his sense of duty superseded the comforts of home. His exploits during the war are not well documented but his art continues to live on for future generations to catch a glimpse of who he was and his passions.

³⁰ Letter from Winifred Julian to Jimmy, April 19, 1946. C. James Quann Manuscripts. Lewis D. Julian Collection, Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, Washington State University Libraries, Pullman, WA.

³¹ "Lewis D Julian in the U.S., Headstone and Interment Records for U.S., Military Cemeteries on Foreign Soil, 1942-1949," *Ancestry*, https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=9170&h=16435&tid=&pid=&queryId=fdde90a91409d5d446847db9a3f0c3f69&usePUB=true&_phsrc=IBq226&_phstart=successSource (Accessed August 9, 2021).