Shortly before his twentieth birthday in 1918, Roswell "Ross" Calin joined the 44th Coast Artillery Corps and was sent overseas for service. Arriving in France in August 1918, Calin took part in the St. Mihiel offensive and was wounded in action. He returned to his home in Providence, R.I., early in 1919 and was active in veterans’ organizations for years, including serving as Rhode Island State Adjutant of the Disabled American Veterans in the mid-1920s.

The Calin collection consists of two scrapbook “volumes,” now disbound, assembled by Ross Calin to document his experience in the First World War. Labeled a “memoir,” the volumes consist primarily of photographs and postcards (including many real photo
Ross Calin was born in Providence, R.I., on Mar. 1, 1898 (sometimes listed as 1897), to Swedish immigrants Aron and Emma Calin. The son of a paperhanger, Calin was working as a jeweler’s engraver when the United States entered the First World War.

Appointed a corporal to the Headquarters Company of the 44th Artillery (Coast Artillery Corps) after enlisting on February 5, 1918, Calin was sent overseas in August to join his unit as it was called into action. In his first month in France, he saw combat with the American 1st Army in the St Mihiel offensive and then the Meuse-Argonne Campaign. Although the specifics are unclear, he was apparently wounded in action, possibly at or just after St. Mihiel, and was cared for in hospital in France until finally receiving orders to depart from the port of Brest in February 1919.

After the war, Calin returned home to Providence, never living further from the city than Johnston or North Providence. An active member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and a Rhode Island State Adjutant in the Disabled American Veterans in 1923-1925, he was listed in city directories as a student in 1920-1922, and then as a salesman, credit manager, and after World War II, as owner of a painting company. He may have been married briefly in the mid-1920s, and in September 1930, he married Myrtle G. Arnold, with whom he raised a family of two daughters, Barbara and Joann. Ross died at the age of 82 in March 1980, and is buried along with his wife, parents, infant sister, and daughters in Oakland Cemetery, Cranston.

Scope of collection
The Calin collection is comprised of two scrapbook “volumes,” now disbound, assembled by Ross Calin to document his experience in the First World War. Labeled a “memoir,” the volumes consist primarily of photographs and postcards (including many real photo postcards) depicting American troops in the field, war damage, and sites visited by Calin in France. The majority of war-time images relate to operations near Saint Mihiel where America forces figured prominently, including Apremont, Hattonchatel, Montsec, Menil la Tour, Nancy, Seicheprey, and Thiaucourt.

Also laid in are the order her received to join the 44th C.A.C., a small number of newscplings during and after the war relating to Calin’s work with veterans’ organizations, and a selection of medals received for his service and post-war activities, including a World War I Victory Medal with clasps for St. Mihiel ad “Defensive Sector,” a Rhode Island State Guard veteran’s medal, two World War II E (efficiency) pins, and a D.A.V. pin. A Croix de Guerre that he apparently received in October 1918 was not part of the collection. Although the organization within the volumes was disturbed and may have been fairly arbitrary, we have chosen to retain it when possible, apart from sorting some of the postcards.

Inventory
Memoirs, vol. 1
1929
Roswell A. Calin: Portrait in uniform
1918
Folder 1
Photographs and postcards
1918-1919
29 items

Folder 2
Mostly post-war images of sites in France, former barracks, and reception back home.

Newspaper clipping
1956

Folder 3
On low voter turn-out in local election in which Calin served as a warden.

Memoirs, vol. 2
1929
Ross Calin Memoirs, book 2 [covers]
1918-1919

Folder 4
News clippings
1907-1963

Folder 5
Military orders
1917, 1928

Folder 6
Includes Headquarters 44th Regiment Coast Artillery Corps memorandum to Organization Commanders, Jan. 1, 1919; General Orders No. 1, Camp Pontanezen, Dec. 4, 1918; Train regulation, Dec. 25, 1918; Camp instructions no. 3, Dec. 23, 1918; and Lieutenant's shoulder bar.

Medals
1918-1919
5 items

Folder 7
Includes two photographic portraits of Calin in uniform, medal as honorary commander of UTA, Rhode Island State Guard World War I medal, U.S. Victory medal with clasps for St. Mihiel and Defensive Sector.

Medals (post-war)
1918
6 items

Folder 8
Includes E Award pins (1943, 1945); Veterans of Foreign Wars Post Commander (Boston), 1922; National Army and Navy Club President, 1924; Disabled American Veterans of the World War, RI State Adjutant, 1923; watch fob as National President of the Silver Button Association for veterans wounded in action, 1919-1922.

Postcards: Brest (France)
1918-1919
21 items

Folder 9
Postcards: Paris (France)
1918-1919
9 items

Folder 10
Photographs (Mounted on album pages)
1918-1926
18 items

Folder 11
Photographs (loose and real photo postcards)
1918
25 items

Folder 12
Photographs (mounted collotypes)
1918
43 items
Administrative information

Access
The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Digitized content
Selected images have been digitized and may be viewed online through SCUA's digital repository, Credo.

Processing Information

Language:
English

Copyright and Use (More information)
Cite as: Roswell A. Calin Collection (MS 1086). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms
Subjects
Saint-Mihiel, Battle of, Saint-Mihiel, France, 1918--Photographs
United States. Army. Coast Artillery Corps. Regiment, 44th
World War, 1914-1918--Photographs

Contributors
Calin, Roswell A. [main entry]

Genres and formats
Medals
Photographic postcards
Photographs
Postcards

Link to similar SCUA collections
Colotypes (Prints)
Photographs
Rhode Island
World War I