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William M. Smith Jr. Papers

1939-2014

4 boxes (1.7 linear feet)

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Read collection overview

Background on William M. Smith

Colonel William "Billy" Mitchell Smith Jr. was born in 1918 in Carpenter, Mississippi to William M. Smith Sr. and Fay Smith (née Craig). The family later moved to Alabama and lived in Birmingham and Auburn, where Smith graduated from Auburn High School in 1940 with high honors. After high school, he enlisted in the military, and served with the 19th Artillery attached to General Sharp's staff in France during World War II. In 1944, he was awarded a Bronze Medal for "meritorious service and gallantry in action". Following the war, he was stationed in Frankfurt, Germany where he oversaw post-war reconstruction there, and later, Japan. He also served in the Korean War. In 1962, he commanded a ring of missile units of the Army Air Defense Command in Homestead, Florida during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He served as a Colonel in Vietnam in 1964-1966. Smith died in late 1970 when he took his own life.

Scope of collection

The bulk of this small collection consists of correspondence between Smith and his wife to be, Eloise Lennard, during their courtship in 1939-1940. In addition, there are letters written during Smith's time serving in Vietnam from 1965-1966 where he discusses the tone of the war and the degree to which the war weighed on him as a commanding officer. The collection also contains clippings, military documents and ephemera related to each of his duty stations, as well as a photographic memory book from his deployment at a base in Homestead, FL during the Cuban Missile Crisis with the 13th Artillery Group. There is also correspondence from friends and family following Smith's death.

Inventory

1939-2014

Correspondence: Holiday cards

1958 Dec. - 1991 Dec.

Box 1: 1

Correspondence: Lennard, Eloise to Smith, William

1939 Oct-Dec

Box 1: 2

Correspondence: Lennard, Eloise to Smith, William

1940 Jan. - Mar.

Box 1: 3

Correspondence: Lennard, Eloise to Smith, William
1940 Apr. - May
Box 1: 4
Correspondence: Lennard, Eloise to Smith, William
1940 May
Box 1: 5
Correspondence: Lennard, Eloise to Smith, William
1940 Jun.
Box 1: 6
Correspondence: Lennard, Eloise to Smith, William
1940 Jul.
Box 1: 7
Correspondence: Lennard, Eloise to Smith, William
1940 Aug.
Box 2: 1
Correspondence: Lennard, Eloise to Smith, William
1940 Sep.
Box 2: 2
Correspondence: Lennard, Eloise to Smith, William
1940 Oct.
Box 2: 3
Correspondence: Lennard, Eloise to Smith, William
1940 Nov.
Box 2: 4
Correspondence: Lennard, Eloise to Smith, William
1940 Dec.
Box 2: 5
Correspondence: Lennard, Eloise to Smith, William
1941 Jan. - 1946
Box 2: 6
Correspondence: Miscellaneous
1946, 1956 Jun. - 1959 Jun.
Box 2: 7
Correspondence: Miscellaneous
1960 Jan. - 1963 Jan.
Box 2: 8
Correspondence: Miscellaneous
1963 May - 1970
Box 2: 9
Correspondence, publications: US Army
1941 - 1947
Box 3: 1
Correspondence: Smith, William to Lennard, Eloise
1939 Oct. - Dec.
Box 3: 2
Correspondence: Smith, William to Lennard, Eloise
1940 Jan. - Mar.
Box 3: 3
Correspondence: Smith, William to Lennard, Eloise
1940 Mar. - Apr.
Box 3: 4
Correspondence: Smith, William to Lennard, Eloise
1940 Apr. - May
Box 3: 5
Correspondence: Smith, William to Lennard, Eloise
1940-05-01
Box 3: 6
Correspondence: Smith, William to Smith, Eloise
1948-1964
Box 3: 7
Correspondence: Smith, William to Smith, Eloise
1964 May - Jun.
Box 3: 8
Correspondence: Smith, William to Smith, Eloise
1964 Jul.
Box 3: 9
Correspondence: Smith, William to Smith, Eloise
1964 Aug. - Sep.

Box 4: 1
Correspondence: Smith, William to Smith, Eloise
1964 Nov.
Box 4: 2
Correspondence: Smith, William to Smith, Eloise
1964 Dec.
Box 4: 3
Correspondence: Smith, William to Smith, Eloise
1965 Jan. - Feb.
Box 4: 4
Correspondence: Smith, William to Smith, Eloise
1965 Mar., 1966 May
Box 4: 5
Correspondence: Sympathy cards
1970 Nov.
Box 4: 6
Photographs, brochures, clippings, ephemera
1940 - 2014
Box 4: 7
US Army Defense Command 13th Artillery Group scrapbook
1962 Oct. 15 - 1964 Mar. 16
Box 4: 8

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Stephanie Cramer, 2024.

Processing Information

Processed by Tim Hagen and Jeremy Smith, December 2024/January 2025.

Language:

English

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Cite as: William M. Smith Jr. Papers (MS 1248). Robert S. Cox Special Collections and University Archives Research Center, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

- Soldiers--Germany--Correspondence
- Soldiers--Vietnam--Correspondence
- Veterans
- Veterans families
- Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Veterans--United States
- World War, 1939-1945--Veterans--United States

Contributors

- Smith, William M., 1918-1970 [main entry]
- Smith, Eloise

Genres and formats

- Correspondence
- Holiday cards

- Newspaper clippings
- Photographs
- Publications
- Sympathy cards

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