Collection #
M 1071

DONALD AND SALLY ROBERTS COLLECTION, 1927–2013

Collection Information

Sketch

Scope and Content Note

Series Contents

Cataloging Information

Processed by

Paul Brockman
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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	2 manuscript boxes, 1 box photographs, 2 boxes photograph negatives, artifacts
COLLECTION DATES:	1927–2013
PROVENANCE:	Sarah Roberts Houghland, Williamsburg, Virginia, September, 2013
RESTRICTIONS:	None
COPYRIGHT:	
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.
ALTERNATE FORMATS:	
RELATED HOLDINGS:	
ACCESSION NUMBER:	2013.0329
NOTES:	

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Donald B. Roberts (1906–1987) was born and raised in Fort Wayne, Indiana, graduating from Purdue University in 1928 with a chemical engineering degree and a commission as a field artillery reserve officer. He went to work for Delco-Remy Company in Anderson in 1928 but was transferred to the Muncie plant later that same year. During these years, he retained his officer's reserve status and was promoted to captain in 1936. On 24 August 1940, Roberts married Sally Ann Robards (1908–1995) of Muncie and they had two daughters.

Roberts was called to active duty with the U. S. Army in July, 1942 and studied at the War Department School of Military Government at the University of Virginia in May, 1943. In November, 1943, he was assigned as Police and Civil Affairs Officer to the Allied Military Government in Foggia, Italy. In February, 1944, he was transferred Naples, Italy as the Motor Transport Officer. Roberts was transferred to the Rome Headquarters of Allied Commission as Industry Officer on staff in September, 1944, then to Piedmont in Northwest Italy in August, 1945. He was relieved from active duty in October of the same year and returned to the United States.

Roberts returned to his job at Delco–Remy after the war and became Sales Engineer in 1946, Chief Inspector in 1951, and Assistant Plant Superintendent in 1953. Around 1956 he joined Indiana Pressed Steel Company of Muncie as Vice-President, Assistant Secretary and Assistant Treasurer.

Sources:

Information in collection

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The majority of the collection consists of Donald Roberts' almost daily letters to his wife and family in Stilesville, Hendricks County, Indiana, while serving with the U. S. Army during World War II, August, 1943–May, 1945. The correspondence is separated by standard letters and V-Mail for storage purposes. Most of the letters describe his daily duties in the military government in Italy, the places he visited, and the other people he met. Many also contain the pain of being separated from his wife and family. There also are letters written by Sally to Donald after the war while he was still in Italy waiting to be returned to the United States. Most of the content is about news from home including the death of her father, visits with relatives and friends and home finances. Other letters in the collection include a letter from Sally to Donald's parents from 1943 informing them of his going overseas, several other letters to Donald from his parents from 1945, and a letter to Donald from a friend, Dr. Piatelli, in Palestine, 20 September 1945.

The collection also contains notes from three talks Donald Roberts presented after the war on the military government in Italy: "Rome Today," 3 December 1945; "Observations on Italy," 5 February 1948; and "Military Government in Italy as I Saw It," 26 March 1951.

There also a number of photograph and negatives Donald Roberts took while stationed in Italy during World War II. Most are of the sights he visited and a few are of fellow soldiers. In addition there are several artifacts in the collection including his overseas cap, insignias, maps and other related items. There also is a folder of correspondence and related items from a friend in England Roberts made in the Army and kept in touch with after the war, Lord Inglewood, 1975–1985.

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: World War II Letters

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
1st Lieutenant Commission, 28 Aug. 1931	Box 1, Folder 1
Telegrams (2), Nov., 1940 Re: Purdue ROTC	Box 1, Folder 2
Correspondence, 16 Aug.–31 Aug. 1943	Box 1, Folder 3
Correspondence, 19 Sept.–31 Oct. 1943	Box 1, Folder 4
Correspondence, 1 Nov.–30 Nov. 1943	Box 1, Folder 5
Correspondence, 1 Dec.–31 Dec. 1943	Box 1, Folder 6
Correspondence, 1 Jan.–31 Jan. 1944	Box 1, Folder 7
Correspondence, 1 Feb.–28 Feb. 1944	Box 1, Folder 8
Correspondence, 1 March–31 March 1944	Box 1, Folder 9
Correspondence, 1 April–30 April 1944	Box 1, Folder 10
Correspondence, 2 May–30 May 1944	Box 1, Folder 11
Correspondence, 1 June–16 June 1944	Box 1, Folder 12
Correspondence, 17 June–30 June 1944	Box 1, Folder 13
Correspondence, 1 July–29 July 1944	Box 1, Folder 14
Correspondence, 31 July–27 Aug. 1944	Box 1, Folder 15
Correspondence, 28 Aug.–10 Sept. 1944	Box 1, Folder 16
Correspondence, 11 Sept.–30 Sept. 1944	Box 1, Folder 17
Correspondence, 1 Oct.–31 Oct. 1944	Box 1, Folder 18
Correspondence, 1 Nov.–30 Nov. 1944	Box 1, Folder 19
Correspondence, 1 Dec.–30 Dec. 1944	Box 1, Folder 20
Correspondence, 1 Jan.–31 Jan. 1945	Box 2, Folder 1

Correspondence, 2 Feb.–27 Feb. 1945	Box 2, Folder 2
Correspondence, 1 March–31 March 1945	Box 2 Folder 3
Correspondence, 2 April–29 April 1945	Box 2, Folder 4
Correspondence, 1 May–31 May 1945	Box 2, Folder 5
V–Mail Correspondence, 21 Sept.–31 Oct. 1943	Box 2, Folder 6
V–Mail Correspondence, 1 Nov.–31 Dec. 1943	Box 2 Folder 7
V–Mail Correspondence,1 Jan.–28 Feb. 1944	Box 2, Folder 8
V–Mail Correspondence, 3 March–27 May 1944	Box 2, Folder 9
V–Mail Correspondence, 7 June–24 Dec. 1944	Box 2, Folder 10
V–Mail Correspondence, 4 Jan.–15 April 1945	Box 2, Folder 11
Letters from Sally Roberts to Donald, 21 Sept.–17 Oct. 1945	Box 2, Folder 12
Letter from Dr. Piatelli in Palestine, 20 Sept. 1945	Box 2, Folder 13
Letters with Parents, 1943, 1945	Box 2, Folder 14

Series 2: Speeches

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Speech, “Rome Today,” 3 Dec. 1945	Box 2, Folder 15
Speech, “Observations on Italy,” 5 Feb. 1948	Box 2, Folder 16
Speech, “Military Government in Italy as I Saw It,” 26 March 1951	Box 2, Folder 17

Series 3: Post World War II Correspondence, Newspaper Clippings

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Correspondence, Lord Inglewood and Others, 1975–1985; 2013	Box 2, Folder 18
Letter from Dr. Richard Owen, 18 April 1995	Box 2, Folder 19

Newspaper Clippings, 1940–1956	Box 2, Folder 20

Series 4: Photographs and Negatives

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Camp Knox, Kentucky, July, 1927	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 1
World War II Photographs (1 of 4)	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 2
World War II Photographs (2 of 4)	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 3
World War II Photographs (3 of 4)	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 4
World War II Photographs (4 of 4)	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 5
Family Photographs, 1948	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 6
Maj. Don Roberts, Training Officer, ca. 1959	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 7
World War II Italy, Negatives (1 of 2)	35 mm.Polyester Negatives, Box 1
World War II Italy, Negatives (2 of 2)	35 mm. Polyester Negatives, Box 2

Series 5: Artifacts

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
1 overseas cap with major rank pin	Artifacts: 2013.0329
1 blue star service banner	Artifacts: 2013.0329
3 foreign currency bills	Artifacts: 2013.0329
1 Imperial Hotel decal	Artifacts: 2013.0329
3 World War II Maps	Artifacts: 2013.0329

Small box of military pins, patches, dog tags and ID card

Artifacts: 2013.0329

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: http://opac.indianahistory.org/

2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.

3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.

4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 1071).

5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.