

NICHOLAS WILLIAM HATFIELD PAPERS, 1942-1946

M 0402
OM 0326

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Processed by
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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 manuscript box, 2 oversize folders

COLLECTION DATES: 1942-1946

PROVENANCE: Nicholas J. Hatfield, Indianapolis, IN, 11 May 1995

RESTRICTIONS: None

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: See card catalog for numerous references to World War II

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1995.0481

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Nicholas William Hatfield (ca 1910-1981) was a lifelong resident of Indianapolis. He graduated from Shortridge High School and Butler University, and from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia in 1935, and interned at City

Hospital in Indianapolis. He then had offices at 2032 North Rural Street and in the Odd Fellows Building.

During World War II, Dr. Hatfield entered the Medical Corps in July 1942. From July to December he served at Camp Carson in Colorado Springs, Colo. During the first nine months of 1943 he was on the staff of Bushnell Hospital in Brigham, Utah. After three months at a staging area in California, he was sent to the Southwest Pacific in December 1943. There he served for three months in Australia and then for six months in Melanesia. In June 1944 he was wounded at Biak Island, northwest of New Guinea, in action for which he was later awarded a Purple Heart and a Silver Star. He recuperated for several months at a hospital on New Guinea. In mid-1945 he was at Manila in the Philippines. Having entered the service as a first lieutenant, he was promoted to captain in mid-1943 and to major in mid-1945. He returned home via Japan, and was released from service in February 1946.

After the war, Dr. Hatfield continued as a general practitioner in Brightwood, and was on the staff of Methodist and Community Hospitals. From 1965 until his retirement in 1975 he worked as a reviewing physician in the disability department of the Social Security Administration.

Sources: Materials in collection

Indianapolis Star 12-21-1981 (obituary)

Journal of the Indiana State Medical Association, Vol. 75 No.3, March 1982, 222

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection, filling one small manuscript box and two oversize folders, contains correspondence, maps, and clippings from the period 1942-1946. It is arranged chronologically.

The correspondence describes the World War II career of Dr. Nicholas W. Hatfield. Most of the letters are written by him to his wife and family. During his early stateside service there are several letters from his wife, Vivian. In early 1945 there is a series of letters to Hatfield from his mother, who wrote to him several times weekly during his entire service, always addressing him as "My precious boy."

Within the bounds of military censorship, Hatfield gives considerable detailed information. His letters and his wife's give a good picture of what a wife with small children went through to live near her husband in wartime. Hatfield gives colorful descriptions of a series of incompetent commanders at the hospital in Utah, and of the tedious hurry-up-and-wait of getting an overseas assignment. He gives a clinical description of his wound and treatment (5-4-1945), and a humorous discourse on the insect population of Melanesia (3-26-1944). He came from a religious family; his mother did not hesitate to lecture him on the evils of alcohol; but he found well-meant morale-boosting letters from church members a burden to answer, and he told an army chaplain to stop praying for guidance and get into action now. He was fond of tobacco in all its forms, and had the interesting theory that it calmed his patients to see him chewing tobacco.

FOLDER LISTING

FOLDER	CONTENTS
1	1942-- July-August
2	1942-- September-October
3	1942-- November-December
4	1943-- January-February
5	1943-- March-June

6	1943-- July-September
7	1943-- October-December
8	1944-- January-March
9	1944-- April-June
10	1944-- July-September
11	(OM 0326) Maps-- Biak, New Guinea
12	1944-- October-December
13	1945-- January-March
14	1945-- April-June
15	-1945- July-October
16	(OM 0326) Newspapers-- 1943 leave; list of World War II doctors

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](#)
2. Click on the "Local Catalog" icon.
3. Search for the collection by its call number, using the letter or letters designation and **four** digits (e.g., M 0715, SC 2234).
4. When you find the collection, go to the "Holdings" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.

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