Collection #
M 0916

TOMLINSON FAMILY WORLD WAR I AND II MATERIALS, 1917–1950

Collection Information

Biographical Sketch

Scope and Content Note

Series Contents

Cataloging Information

Processed by

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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
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Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	Manuscript Materials: 1 document case Visual Materials: 1 OVA photograph box Artifacts: 4 artifacts
COLLECTION DATES:	1917–1950
PROVENANCE:	Heritage Photo Services, Indianapolis, IN, October 2001
RESTRICTIONS:	None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2001.1176

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ralph Ryland Tomlinson was born in Indiana on 21 February 1886 to Rachel and John R. Tomlinson. His World War I Draft Registration Card indicates he was living and farming in Fairland, Shelby County, Indiana in 1917.

Ralph married Anna Lee on 25 October 1917. In July 1918 he became a private in the United States Army and trained at Camp Zachary Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky. In early September 1918, Ralph was sent overseas with the 326 Field Artillery, Battery B, 84th Division of the American Expeditionary Force stationed at Camp de Souge near Bordeaux, France. During World War I, he served in the radio section as a wireless station operator until sent home in February 1919.

Anna was pregnant when Ralph left for France and their first child, John Elmore Tomlinson, was born 19 February 1919, shortly after Ralph returned to the United States. The couple had at least two more children, Elizabeth R. (b. ca. 1921) and Annabel (b. ca. 1922). Some time between 1930 and 1942, the family moved to Shelbyville, Indiana. Ralph's 1942 Draft Registration Card states his employer was the Polk Company, headquartered in Haines City, Florida.

Not much is known about John Elmore Tomlinson's service during World War II. He was a corporal in 1943 and spent some time in the 31st Training Group, Squadron B, Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. He was sent to New York around September 1943 and then presumably shipped overseas. The Department of Veterans Affairs website indicates he was a sergeant and staff sergeant in the U.S. Air Force. He died on 30 January 2007 and is buried at Florida National Cemetery.

Sources:

Information in the collection

Census and other information from Ancestry Library Edition. Available at: http://www.ancestrylibrary.com

United States Department of Veteran Affairs website. Available at: http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/j2ee/servlet/NGL_v1

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Series 1: Correspondence, 1917–1950 consists primarily of letters and photographs written by Ralph Tomlinson and his wife Anna Lee. Postmark dates have been penciled in on undated letters and may not correspond exactly to the dates the letters were written.

The World War I correspondence contains letters written by Ralph Ryland Tomlinson to his wife Anna, and vice versa. Ralph discusses his training at Camp Zachary Taylor, vaccinations, his desire to work in the veterinary division with the horses, his trip overseas, the studying of codes for his radio work, and the signing of the Armistice. He mentions influenza, or the Spanish Flu epidemic, a few times. Ralph frequently mentions other soldiers from Shelby County and writes often of his friend "Dibble" from Rising Sun, Indiana. His letters also include advice to his wife Anna on managing matters at home. Anna's letters to Ralph provide him with news from home, relate her preparations for the arrival of their child, and express her eagerness for his return.

The World War II correspondence consists primarily of letters written by Anna Lee Tomlinson and Elizabeth Tomlinson to Anna's mother Elizabeth Lee. The letters cover the period from August–October 1943 while Anna and Elizabeth were visiting Ralph in Goshen, New York. Anna and Elizabeth discuss their New York sightseeing experiences and visits with John, and their anxiety over John's impending overseas deployment.

Series 2: Artifacts and visual materials, 1918–ca. 1945 includes dog tags for both Ralph and John Tomlinson, photographs of Ralph, John, and other soldiers in uniform, and Ralph's World War I helmet.

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: Correspondence, 1917–1950

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Infantry Drill Regulations, United States Army, 1917	Box 1, Folder 1
Correspondence, 24 July–5 Sept. 1918	Box 1, Folder 2
Correspondence, 8 Sept.–22 Sept. 1918	Box 1, Folder 3
Correspondence, 1 Oct.–22 Oct. 1918	Box 1, Folder 4
Correspondence, 25 Oct.–13 Dec. 1918	Box 1, Folder 5
Correspondence, 19 Dec. 1918–11 Feb. 1919	Box 1, Folder 6
Postcard correspondence, 17 Feb. 1928	Box 1, Folder 7
Correspondence, 27 Aug.–11 Sept. 1943	Box 1, Folder 8
Correspondence, 13 Sept.–12 Oct. 1943	Box 1, Folder 9
Postcard correspondence, 26 July 1950	Box 1, Folder 10

Series 2: Artifacts and visual materials, 1918–ca. 1945

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
"Life in the U.S. Army, Camp Zachary Taylor, KY" souvenir folder, 1918	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 1
Ralph R. Tomlinson, World War I dog tags, ca. 1918–19	Artifacts: 2001.1176
Ralph R. Tomlinson, World War I helmet, ca. 1918–19	Artifacts: 2001.1176
Ralph R. Tomlinson, World War I picture postcards, ca. 1918–19	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 2
Ralph R. Tomlinson and other soldiers, World War I picture postcards, ca. 1918–19 (1 of 2)	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 3
Ralph R. Tomlinson and other soldiers, World War I picture postcards, ca. 1918–19 (2 of 2)	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 4
John E. Tomlinson, World War II dog tags [silver], ca. 1941–45	Artifacts: 2001.1176
John E. Tomlinson, World War II dog tags [brass], ca. 1941–45	Artifacts: 2001.1176
John E. Tomlinson, World War II photographs, ca. 1941–45	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 5
John E. Tomlinson and other soldiers, World War II photograph, ca. 1941–45	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 6
Group of soldiers, World War II photograph, ca. 1941–45	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 7
"Keeping in touch with home" postcard, n.d.	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 8
Unidentified farmhouse and outbuildings picture postcards, n.d.	OVA Photographs, Box 1, Folder 9

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 0916).

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