FINDING AID TO
THE RALPH H. SCHNECK
MILITARY COLLECTION, 1854-1973

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Processed by: Mary A. Sego, November 16, 2012
Descriptive Summary

Creator Information  Schneck, Ralph H., 1919-
Title  Ralph H. Schneck Military collection
Collection Identifier  MSP 123
Date Span  1854-1973, predominant 1941-1945
Abstract  Correspondence, photographs, clippings, high school and military artifacts documenting the childhood, military training and United States Army Air Forces career of Ralph H. Schneck.
Extent  2.2 cubic feet (2 c.f. boxes and 1 artifact tube)
Finding Aid Author  Mary A. Sego
Languages  English
Repository  Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections Research Center, Purdue University Libraries

Administrative Information

Location Information:  ASC
Access Restrictions:  Collection is open for research.
Accession Number:  20120713.1; 20120828.1
Preferred Citation:  MSP 123, Ralph H. Schneck Military collection, Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries
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Subjects and Genres

Persons
Schneck, Ralph H.

Organizations
Army
Army Air Forces (U.S.)
Wadesville High School

Topics
Army Air Forces (U.S.)
World War II
Military air pilots
Flight Archives at Purdue University

Form and Genre Types
Artifacts
Clippings
Correspondence
DVD
Log-books
Newspapers
Photographs
Post cards
Programs

Occupations
Military air pilots
Biography of Ralph H. Schneck

Ralph Herbert Schneck was born to Rolla and Jessie Schneck on November 11, 1919 in Wadesville, Indiana. Schneck had two sisters, Juana and Marsha. He grew up in rural Southern Indiana and graduated from Wadesville High School in 1937. Before he enlisted in the army, he worked for a grocery distributor in Evansville, Indiana. Schneck had a dream to fly, and when World War II broke out, he enlisted in the army. He took part in basic training in Lemoore, California in 1941, and later entered advanced training at Stockton, California. Further training was at the New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell, New Mexico, tactical training at Hobbs, New Mexico in May 1943, then on to Boise, Idaho, Pocatello, Idaho and to Sioux City, Iowa where he joined the 445th Bomb Group. His last phase of tactical training was at Watertown, South Dakota. After his bomber training in the United States, travels took him to South America, North Africa and on to England, where he was deployed with the Eighth Air Force and became a respected lead pilot. He served overseas from November 1943 to May 1945.

After a short period of civilian life following World War II, Schneck was recalled to active service and served in the United States Air Force for 25 years before retiring.

Source(s):

Ralph H. Schneck’s photo albums and captions in the albums

Retrieved November 20, 2012 from:
http://www.thepress.purdue.edu/contributors/ralph-h-schneck
Collection Description

Scope

The Ralph H. Schneck Military collection (2.2 cubic feet; 1854-1973) documents Ralph H. Schneck’s childhood, military training, and service in the United States Army Air Corps. The collection includes personal correspondence, photo albums with detailed captions, artifacts and a DVD of Schneck giving a personal account of his childhood until his enlisting in the Army. Schneck’s correspondence and photographs in particular give a rare, detailed glimpse into the daily existence of a soldier during military training and service, and later as a respected lead pilot in the Eighth Air Force during World War II. The collection also contains two pre and post-war Europe travel logs given to Schneck. Types of materials include: artifacts, correspondence, clippings, log-books, newspapers, photographs, post cards and programs. The papers are organized into 4 series:

Arrangement

1. **Correspondence, Clippings and Photo Albums, 1919-1946 (1 cubic foot).** This series includes numerous letters Ralph H. Schneck wrote to his family and friends chronicling his time training to enter military service during World War II, his time as a leading bomber pilot flying missions over Germany and reflections on his post-war days. Found among the letters are newspaper clippings, cartoons including “Hash Marks” columns and “Hubert” comic strips, post cards, theatre programs and newspaper issues of *War Week, Stars and Stripes and ce soir.* Post war material includes his parent’s war ration cards, mileage rationing records and a selective service card. The photo albums contain a pictorial history of Ralph H. Schneck from his childhood, through military training and his 18 months overseas during World War II. The albums include carefully detailed photo captions.

2. **Rare Travel Logs, 1939-1945 (2 folders).** The two travel logs were given to Schneck as gifts and offer a unique glimpse into pre and post-war Europe. Includes the world travel log of H.E. MacConaughhey, printed on Hawaiian Pineapple Company stationery, dated July 28, 1939. This report gives insight into pre-war Europe. The second log is “The Libs Tours” of Europe, a travel log of a flight for ground-based and support staff to see the destruction their *Liberators* delivered, c. 1945.

3. **Artifacts, 1854-2000 (1.2 cubic feet).** The artifacts include memorabilia from Wadesville High School, numerous military artifacts, including foreign currency, pilot’s good luck charms (given by friends), aviation sunglasses, silk gloves (worn under heated flight suits), United States Army Air Corps uniform items and “Hubert” cartoon books. Materials in the series are arranged chronologically, with oversized materials housed separately for preservation purposes.

4. **DVD – “Personal Account of Childhood – Joining the Army,” undated.** The DVD is narrated by Ralph Schneck and includes footage of the special places of his youth, military training and service in the army.
**Descriptive Rules**
Describing Archives: A Content Standard

**Processing Information**
All materials have been housed in acid-free folders and acid-free boxes. All newsprint has been photocopied and made available for research purposes, and original newspaper clippings have been retained for display purposes. Correspondence was kept in original order and envelopes were retained for historical value. Artifacts have been separated and grouped into individual series for preservation purposes.
DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Series 1. Correspondence, Clippings and Photo Albums, 1919-1946
(1 cubic foot)

Box 1  Photo Albums, Correspondence and Clippings, 1919-1946

Items
1. Photo album containing pictorial history of Ralph Schneck from childhood until he joined the Army, 1919-1941 [volume 1, a note that accompanied the collection indicates there never was a volume 2]
2. Photo album, “From cadet life in December 1941, until “I” went overseas in November 1943” [volume 3, includes photographs of airplanes Schneck flew]
3. Photo album, “covering the 18 months “I” was overseas, November 1943-May 1945 [volume 4, includes aerial and formation photographs]

Folder
1. Correspondence and Clippings, November 5, 1941 – February 22, 1942
2. Correspondence, March 1, 1942 – June 16, 1942 [includes graduation announcement, Air Corps Advanced Flying School, 42-F, Stockton Field, California, June 23, 1942]
3. Correspondence, “Mather to Year End 1943,” February 20, 1942 – December 21, 1943 [includes French francs from North Africa]
4. Newspaper clippings, 1944
5. Correspondence, January 1, 1944 – February 10, 1944 [includes clippings]
6. Correspondence, February 16, 1944 – April 24, 1944 [includes theatre programs and clippings - a poem and cartoons]
7. Correspondence, May 2, 1944 – December 10, 1944 [includes a Thursday, May 4, 1944 issue of Warweek; a Saturday, June 3, 1944 issue of The Stars and Stripes; a program announcing the “Celebration of Ninety-Third Bombardment Group (H), Colonel Fiegl, Commanding, July 25-26, 1944;” and theatre programs]
8. “1945 to Coming Home,” January 2, 1944 – May 13, 1945 [includes mileage rationing records, war ration books and selective service card for Rolla and Jessie Schneck (Ralph’s parents)]
9. “1945 to Coming Home,” circa 1945 [clippings separate from correspondence, includes “Hubert” comic strip and an issue of ce soir newspaper]
10. “Pre and Post War Stuff,” 1937-1946 [includes Schneck’s high school graduation announcement from Wadesville High School, postcards and correspondence]

Series 2. Travel Logs, 1939-1945
(2 folders)

12. The Libs Tours of Europe, a travel log of a flight for ground-based and support staff
to see the destruction their *Liberators* delivered. Prepared by the S-2 Section of the 93rd Bomb Group (8th Air Force), circa May, 1945 [The donor’s family noted this may be the only copy still in existence.]

**Series 3. Artifacts, 1854-1973**
(1.2 cubic feet)

**Box 2** *Assorted Artifacts – High School and Army, 1854-1973*

**Item**
1. One Army snap-front canvas pouch containing coinage from various countries, including France, England, Nazi Germany and the United States, 1854-1973
2. One bag of foreign currency and military script from: Holland, 1928 and 1943; France, 1941 and post invasion, 1944; Germany, military script and 1917 and 1923 Reichsbanknotes; Belgium, 1943
3. One pair of vintage Leedy drum sticks, sold by the Harding and Miller Music Store of Evansville, Indiana, circa 1934 [used by Schneck to learn to play drums in high school]
4. Wadesville High School athletic letters, one scarlet, one gray, one gray star, circa 1937
5. Wadesville High School graduation certificate, rolled and tied with the original scarlet ribbon, April 22, 1937
6. Rawlings baseball glove and 2 baseballs, circa 1938 [The donor’s family has noted that the glove was used by Schneck to try out for the St. Louis Cardinals in spring 1941]
7. Pilot’s good luck charms given to Ralph Schneck by co-workers just prior to him leaving for the Army. Included are a 1936 penny pressed into an aluminum horseshoe, a 1934 Chicago World’s medallion, a four-leaf clover preserved in a plastic case, a sea shell, a very tiny pocket knife, an oversized 1937 Indian nickel paper weight. Also included is a token from the Posey County or Vandenburgh County fair with Schneck’s name and address on it (The donor’s family indicated this was his personal good luck charm.) [items are in a small box within the artifact box]
8. One pair of aviation sunglasses by American Optical with case, circa 1942
9. One lot of World War II era patches which includes air cadet patch, 8th Air Force bullion patch, 8th Air Force, United States made embroidered patch, 8th Air Force, British made embroidered patch, two 329th Bomb Squadron British made embroidered patches, circa 1942
10. One conductor’s baton that the donor’s family noted was presented to Ralph Schneck by band leader Harry James at the Coconut Grove, Los Angeles, after James had just played *He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings*, June 30, 1942
11. One waterproof bag of survival maps printed on rayon, nylon or silk. Map detail: 43/K, Spain and Portugal [2 versions]; Map H2; Spain and France; Map 43/C Germany [2 versions]; Map 43/D, Germany; Map 43/E, Germany, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary. Also included in the bag are four hacksaw blades, three opened, one
unopened, circa 1940s
12. One bag of silk flight gloves, circa 1940s
13. One group of United States Army Air Corps uniform items that include: 3” Luxembourg sterling silver, pin back pilot’s wings; large pin back “U.S.” insignia, gold filled; small Balfour clutch-back United States insignia, 10k gold filled; World War II dog tag and a boxed 2 inch Balfour sterling silver sweetheart pilot’s wings, circa 1940s [housed in a smaller artifact box]
14. Two copies of Hubert cartoon books, circa 1944

1 Tube - Oversized Item – Artifact (Baseball Bat), circa 1938

Item
1. Hillerick and Bradsby baseball bat, circa 1938 [The donor’s family noted this bat was used by Schneck in his youth.]

Series 4. Multimedia, circa 2010

1 DVD – A Personal Account of Schneck’s Life, circa 2010

Folder
13. The Flier, a personal account of Ralph Schneck’s life from childhood through military training, going to war and returning, 1:42:30, narrated by Ralph Schneck with video footage, circa 2010? [homemade DVD, copy located in Box 1]