

Collection #
M 0280

**ROBERT H. TYNDALL
PAPERS, 1916–1943 (BULK 1916–1919)**

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February 1989
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July 1993
Updated 15 December 2004

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 2 mss boxes (.66 linear feet)

COLLECTION DATES: Inclusive 1916-1943, bulk 1916-1919

PROVENANCE: Mrs. Robert H. Tyndall, Indianapolis, Indiana, November 1964

RESTRICTIONS: None

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

ALTERNATE FORMAT: None

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: Mayor Robert H. Tyndall Papers (M 0069) and Nancy Elston Harrison Papers (SC 1477)

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1964.1103

NOTES: Photographs and postcards stored in Visual Collections

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Robert Henry Tyndall (1877-1947) was born in Indianapolis, the son of William Eddy and Alice (Boyd) Tyndall. In 1908 he married Dean Spellman, a daughter of Samuel and Emma Spellman of Indianapolis. The Tyndall's had three children, Ann, Samuel S., and Ruth.

Tyndall was educated in local public schools, and after high school held jobs in grocery, machine manufacturing, energy, and clothing industries. In 1897 Tyndall enlisted in Battery A of the Indiana National Guard, and the following year served with the 27th Indiana Volunteers in Puerto Rico, during the War with Spain.

Following the war Tyndall engaged in a number of business ventures, becoming a partner in the merchandise brokerage business of Dietz and Tyndall at Terre Haute, Indiana, and subsequently (1903) a partner in the tailoring firm of Nessler & Tyndall, Indianapolis. In 1916 he sold out to his partner Frank Nessler, and re-entered military service.

In August 1917 Tyndall was named colonel of what became the 150th Field Artillery of the 42nd (Rainbow) Division. This division participated in several major battles, including Saint Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne. Tyndall received numerous decorations and awards, including the Distinguished Service Medal and the French Croix de Guerre and Legion d'Honneur. He served in the army of occupation in Germany in 1918-1919, and was honorably discharged from active service, May 1919. In 1921 he was commissioned Colonel, Field Artillery Officer's Reserve Corps and by 1924 was promoted to Major General.

Back in civilian life, Tyndall from 1919 to 1925 was vice-president of the Fletcher American Bank. He was national treasurer of the American Legion for the first eight years of its existence (1919-1925). From 1925 to 1932 he worked with Indianapolis industrialist and promoter Carl G. Fisher in the latter's enterprises at Miami Beach and Montauk Beach. For the next ten years he was associated with the Russell B. Moore consulting engineering firm.

In 1941 Tyndall mobilized the 50,000 troops of the 38th Division at Camp Shelby, Miss., but then was forced to retire because he had reached the statutory age of sixty-four. He was elected Mayor of Indianapolis in 1942, and served until his death. As Mayor he worked for long-term planning to achieve grade separation, smoke abatement, revamping of the city's sewer and sanitation systems, and non-partisan administration of City Hospital.

Sources: Materials in collection

Who Was Who in America, Vol. II

Indiana Biographical Series. Vol. 32, pp. 115-119

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection, filed chronologically, consists primarily of letters written by Robert H. Tyndall to his wife, Dean [Spellman] Tyndall during World War I. Included in the collection are some official military papers, several letters to Tyndall's children, and historical material on the 150th Field Artillery of the Rainbow Division.

In Box 1, Folder 2, there is biographical information on Tyndall, including a certificate of the Livre d'Or des Soldats de Verdun and a biographical sketch compiled in July 1934 by the Citizens Historical Association, Chamber of Commerce, Indianapolis.

Information in Box 1, Folder 3 pertains to the 150th Field Artillery of the Rainbow (42nd) Division. Included are the 12 February 1919 speech of Honorable Horace M. Towner of Iowa in the House of Representatives entitled the "Rainbow Division"; a photocopy of an account of the World War I record of the 150th Field Artillery prepared by the Rainbow Division Veterans Association of Marion County, Indiana (4 July 1927), a list of military engagements of the 150th (1898-1941) and Battle Credits of the 42nd Division.

Box 1, Folders 4 & 5, include correspondence and documents written before and during Tyndall's training at Camp Mills, Long Island, N.Y. Letters and documents written by Tyndall while in France are in Box 1, Folders 6-15 and Box 2, Folders 1-5. Letters written while on "the march to Germany" through Belgium and Luxembourg are in Box 2, Folders 5-6. Letters and documents written while in Germany are in Box 2, Folders 6-11.

A diary kept by Tyndall, 1918-19 is in Box 2, Folder 12. Letters to his children are in Box 1, Folders 7, 11 and 12. A map of the German Empire (Karte des Deutschen Reiches, 1917) is located in Box 2, Folder 6. Postcards of France and Germany and photographs of Tyndall (Box 1, Folder 11, Box 2, Folders 6, 9 & 11) are stored in Visual Collections.

In Box 2, Folder 13 there is a photocopy of a transcribed transcript of a captured enemy (unnamed Japanese soldier) diary, May 12-29, 1943.

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