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:

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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.
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35 mm. Polyester Negatives, Box 1

35 mm. Polyester Negatives, Box 2

Artifacts: 2013.0329

Artifacts: 2013.0329

Artifacts: 2013.0329

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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.