

Collection #
M 0939

HENRY S. SMITH WORLD WORLD WAR II LETTERS, 1943–1946

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Processed by

Tyler Nowell
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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	Manuscript Materials: 1 document case Visual Materials: 8 folders of photographs
COLLECTION DATES:	1943–1946 (bulk 1944–1946)
PROVENANCE:	Charles, Kritsch, Indianapolis, Indiana, August 1999
RESTRICTIONS:	None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1999.0589

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Henry S. Smith was born on February 20, 1914 in Indiana. He married Alice Kritsch sometime in the late 1930s. Smith enlisted in the United States Army on March 3, 1944 to fight in World War II. When he enlisted he stated he had four years of high school and that his occupation was as a physical therapy technician or chain store manager.

Smith served as a truck driver in C Company of the 136th Ordnance Maintenance Battalion, which was later changed to an Armored Ordnance Maintenance Battalion in April 1945. The battalion was in the 14th Armored Division, which was in the 7th Army for much of the war under General Alexander M. Patch. Late in the war the division was moved to the 3rd Army under General George Patton.

Henry Smith was a private until early November 1944. At this time he was promoted to Technician Fifth (T/5), which is equal to a corporal. Throughout the war he corresponded with his wife Alice. All of his letters were sent to Mrs. Henry Smith (Alice) who lived at 1311 Woodlawn Avenue in Indianapolis. Smith also received letters from his wife. He burned all the letters she sent him, over 400, after each month of so.

After the war was over and the censorship was lifted Smith wrote Alice and gave a brief synopsis where he had been. He left Camp Shanks in Orangetown, New York, on October 13, 1944 and sailed across the Atlantic Ocean for about two weeks. He then arrived at Marseille, France, on October 28. Smith and his outfit left for the front on November 11. His company then fought through many towns. In his letters he mentioned Rambervillers, France, Alsace, France, Strasbourg, Germany, and Toding, Germany. Smith was in Toding on VE Day. He received two battle stars for fighting in Germany.

His company stayed in Toding for a while after the war. He attended USO shows, movies, baseball games and even took a trip to see Hitler's Berchtesgaden. On August 19, 1945 Smith moved on to a replacement depot in Namur, Belgium. He stayed about a month until he then went on to Paris, France, in mid-September 1945. About this time Smith was transferred out of the 14th Armored Division and into the 6809 Army Exchg. Mob. Det. His new job was being mail clerk for his outfit. He would retrieve mail for everyone in the company and disperse it.

While stationed in Paris he would go to shows, listen to the radio, read, and go into town with his buddies. At the beginning of January 1946 Smith was again transferred to another outfit. This time it was the 249th Quartermaster Supply Depot Company. He stayed in Paris as an office clerk. The company was moved briefly to Reims, France, and then back to Paris. In this unit Smith would sit in an Army Exchange Warehouse checking orders and writing invoices.

He was in Paris until March 12, 1946 when he was sent to Camp Herbert Tareyton in Le Harve, France. This was the

last stop before jumping on a ship and heading back to the United States. He sailed on March 18, 1946 on the *Marine Shark*. It was to take between 7 and 9 days before he got back to the U.S. Henry Smith returned to the United States and lived in Indianapolis until he died in November 1980.

Sources:

Information in the collection

“Ancestry Library Edition.” Available online at: <http://www.ancestrylibrary.com>

“Family Search.” Available online at: <http://www.familysearch.org>

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Series 1: Correspondence consists of 221 letters written by Henry S. Smith, while in the European Theater of World War II. There is also a change of address form and a V-mail from Smith. All of the letters were all sent to his wife Alice, who was living in Indianapolis during the war. In the letters Smith gives a basic description of what he did during the war and a more detailed account of his actions after the war and censorship ended. The letters are arranged in chronological order from January 1943 to March 1946, with the bulk of them falling between October 1944 and March 1946.

Series 2: Photographs consists of 24 photographs arranged into eight different topics. The photos are not dated and most of the give no clue as to who is in the scene. Most show a man, most likely Henry S. Smith, in a military uniform.

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: Correspondence, 1943–1946

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Correspondence, 26 January 1943	Box 1, Folder 1
Correspondence, 8 October–31 October 1944	Box 1, Folder 2
Correspondence, 1 November–28 November 1944	Box 1, Folder 3
Correspondence, 1 December–28 December 1944	Box 1, Folder 4
Correspondence, 1 January–30 January 1945	Box 1, Folder 5
Correspondence, 1 February–28 February 1945	Box 1, Folder 6
Correspondence, 1 March–27 March 1945	Box 1, Folder 7
Correspondence, 3 April–28 April 1945	Box 1, Folder 8
Correspondence, 4 May–30 May 1945	Box 1, Folder 9

Correspondence, 1 June–29 June 1945	Box 1, Folder 10
Correspondence, 1 July–29 July 1945	Box 1, Folder 11
Correspondence, 1 August–30 August 1945	Box 1, Folder 12
Correspondence, 3 September–30 September 1945	Box 1, Folder 13
Correspondence, 2 October–31 October 1945	Box 1, Folder 14
Correspondence, 2 November–30 November 1945	Box 1, Folder 15
Correspondence, 2 December–30 December 1945	Box 1, Folder 16
Correspondence, 1 January–30 January 1946	Box 1, Folder 17
Correspondence, 1 February–27 February 1946	Box 1, Folder 18
Correspondence, 1 March–17 March 1946	Box 1, Folder 19
Documents, n.d.	Box 1, Folder 20

Series 2: Photographs, ca. 1940s

CONTENTS

Photographs, Portraits

Photographs, In front of house

Photographs, Working on vehicle

Photographs, On airfield

Photographs, Miscellaneous in uniform

Photographs, Miscellaneous as a civilian

Photographs, Unknown town

Photographs, Charles

CONTAINER

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Folder 8

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 0939).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.