

Collection #
M 0982
OM 0479

**ROBERT J. KENNEDY
COLLECTION, 1939–1946; 2009**

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Processed by

Paul Brockman
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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 flat manuscript box; 1 oversize folder; 1 folder photographs; artifacts

COLLECTION DATES: 1939–1946; 2009

PROVENANCE: Robert J. Kennedy, Lawrenceburg, Indiana, July 2009

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2009.0168

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Robert J. Kennedy (1921–2010) was born in Lawrenceburg, Indiana on 29 September 1921. After graduating from Lawrenceburg High School in 1939 Kennedy went to work for the United States Government first as a census taker in Seymour, Indiana and later as a secretary in the Ordnance Department at the Jefferson Proving Grounds in Madison, Indiana and then to Crab Orchard Lake Proving Grounds, Carbondale, Illinois facility as a the secretary to the commander.

Kennedy entered the United States Army in September 1942 and was sent to Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland where he received hand to hand combat training. He also received training at Fort Belvoir, Virginia and Fort Benning Georgia before returning to Aberdeen Proving Grounds where he was promoted to Sergeant Major of a select group of replacements called Regimental Combat Team.

In December 1944 Kennedy and his unit were sent to Hollandia, New Guinea where they engaged the Japanese in Dutch New Guinea and through Luzon and into the Philippine Islands where he earned three bronze stars. The Regimental Combat team was disbanded because of near annihilation during the months of fighting and the survivors were waiting for reassignment when Kennedy was selected to become a member of the staff of Major General S. J. Chamberlain who was directly under General Douglas MacArthur. As a member of the staff, Kennedy served as a secretary for MacArthur taking minutes and notes for events such as the proposed invasion of Japan, the initial Japanese peace seeking mission after the bombing of Hiroshima and the initial surrender group following the dropping of the second bomb on Nagasaki. Kennedy was also part of the MacArthur's that set up U. S. headquarters in Tokyo following the formal surrender on the USS *Missouri*.

In January 1946 Kennedy returned to the U. S. and was discharged on the 25th of that month. After the war he attended college under the G.I. Bill. He attended Ball State University and completed his bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky. He then taught for a short time at schools in Greensburg and Greenfield while pursuing his masters and doctorate degrees. Kennedy left teaching to work for Ford Motor Company. At Ford he became head of labor relations and the hourly employment office while living in Indianapolis but traveling throughout the country. Kennedy retired from Ford in 1980 and moved to Lawrenceburg in 2001. Mr. Kennedy died in February, 2010.

Sources:

Handwritten biography prepared by Robert J. Kennedy, July 2009.

Dearborn County *Register*, July 16, 2009.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection is almost exclusively made up of materials for Robert J. Kennedy's time in the United States Army during World War II, the exception being his 1939 yearbook from Lawrenceburg High School. The items include copies of official orders, photographs, sketches made by Kennedy, printed materials and artifacts. There are also several handwritten pages of autobiographical supplied by Mr. Kennedy at the time of the donation, 2009.

Official military orders include those issued to Kennedy regarding postings and assignments as well as copies of those he typed announcing the end of the war and one from General George C. Marshall naming Douglas MacArthur supreme commander of the allied occupation forces, 15 August 1945. Most of these items deal with the logistics of moving of MacArthur's headquarters from Manila to Tokyo in September 1945. Printed items include army manuals, pamphlets, magazines and newspapers.

Many of Kennedy's two-dimensional items were housed in a bound scrapbook which has been unbound for preservation purposes and taped and glued in items removed when possible without damaging the materials. All pages of the scrapbook containing Kennedy's handwritten descriptions were retained. These items include photographs, printed items, and colored sketches drawn by Robert Kennedy. Photographs include snapshots taken by Kennedy and professional Army photographs around Hollandia, New Guinea, the Manila Philippines, and Tokyo and Yokohama Japan as well as external and internal images of the Diet (government building) in Tokyo. Several show the mass destruction in the cities of Manila and Tokyo. Of particular note are several of Kennedy's personal snapshots taken of the initial Japanese peace inquiry group that met with MacArthur shortly after the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. There also are several hand colored sketches drawn by Kennedy of the scenery in Dutch New Guinea.

Artifacts from Kennedy's World War II service include a Japanese officer's sword received by MacArthur when the Japanese military surrendered on 15 August 1945. MacArthur personally gave the sword to Kennedy as a "souvenir" of the day. Other items include souvenirs Kennedy acquired while in Japan and various items from his military career.

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Autobiographical Information, 2009

Lawrenceburg High School Yearbook, 1939

Military Orders and Related Typed Documents, Nov.
1944–Dec. 1945

Original Items from Scrapbook, 1944–45

Photographs, 1945

Printed Materials from Scrapbook, 1944–45

Publications and General Items, 1944–45

Army Training Manuals (3), 1941–43

Scrapbook Cover, n.d.

WW II Scrapbook (empty), n.d.

Army Portfolio, n.d.

Army Photo Portrait Cover, n.d.

Artifacts (Includes Japanese officer's dress sword,
lacquer bowl, obi sash, uniform shirts, patches,
Soldier's Bible, lighter, Betty Grable letter opener,
lighter and mess kit, 1942–45.)

CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 1

Box 1, Folder 2

Box 1, Folder 3

Box 1, Folder 4

Photographs:
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Box 1, Folder 5

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Box 1, Folder 9

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R 2678–2698; 2700–2713

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 0982).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.