OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Author: Walter Ervin

Title: Walter Ervin Collection

Date: 1935 – 1988

Abstract: Correspondence, newspaper clippings, and printed material related to Ervin’s World War II service and being a prisoner of war.

Quantity: 1 cu.ft.

BIOGRAPHY OF WALTER ERVIN

Walter R. Ervin was born on August 8, 1914 in Greenbrier County, West Virginia. At the age of five his family moved to Athens County, Ohio and settled near Ervin Road in Athens Township. After graduation from Athens High School in 1933 he went to work for the Athens Ice and Storage Company until the U.S. entry into World War II. He reported for duty with the Army on December 8, 1941.

Ervin did his basic training at Camp Roberts, California. His first duty station was with C Company, 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry Regiment, Western Defense Command at Gilroy, California. Here he was attached to the S-2 section (intelligence) and was trained as an infantry scout.

In June of 1943 he married his long-time sweetheart, Helen Sheridan. She was a 1939 BSED graduate of Ohio University and worked for the University as a secretary for football coach Don Peden.

In February 1944 Ervin began intensive training in preparation for overseas duty. In March 1944 he shipped out from Camp Pickett, New Jersey for a stop in North Africa and then on to Naples, Italy. There he joined K Company, 3rd Battalion, 30th Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division. His first combat experience was during the breakout from the Anzio beachhead in late May 1944.

On August 15, 1944 he took part in Operation ANVIL, the invasion of southern France. His division, part of the 6th Army Group, fought up the Rhone River valley and
became the left flank of the 3rd Army Group. Ervin was captured near Colmar, France on January 23, 1945. He spent the next two and a half months as a German prisoner of war at Stalag VII near Freiberg, Germany. He was freed from captivity on May 11, 1945 and discharged from the Army as a corporal on October 18, 1945 at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas. He was awarded the European Theater Ribbon with three bronze stars (denoting a major campaign), two overseas bars, Good Conduct Medal, and the Combat Infantryman’s Badge.

On Ervin’s return to Athens he went back to work for the Athens Ice and Storage Company. In 1955 he bought the Athens Culligan Company. He lived in Millfield, Ohio until his death.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

The Ervin Collection covers the years 1935 – 1988. The majority of the material is correspondence from 1941 to 1945 to and from his wife. Included is official correspondence the two received during the period.

There are also newspaper clippings related to local events, one issue of the Camp Maxey Times, two issues of Beachhead News (July and October 1944) from Anzio, and a copy of the European edition of Time for U.S. servicemen, dated May 14, 1945. In addition, the collection contains an Ohio University record book from 1939, four 1941 Army training manuals, three song books from World War II, and a 1988 letter concerning Ervin’s eligibility for the Prisoner of War Medal.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION

These records are organized into the following series:

Series I: Correspondence
Series II: Publications
Series III: Miscellaneous

Abbreviations within content list:

N/A

RELATED MATERIALS

Cornelius Ryan Collection of World War II Papers (MSS# 20), Rybarczyk-Fisher Letters (MSS# 190), Iris Carpenter Collection (MSS# 147), Papers of John Wilhelm (RG 99), William H. Culver Diary (MSS# 210), George Hebenstreit Collection (MSS# 187), Spanish Civil War, World War II and Cold War Bubblegum Cards (MSS# 186), Athens (OH) War Loan Scrapbooks (MSS# 209),
Marcius P. Garafalo Collection (MSS# 208), Richard Cole Collection (MSS# 191), Hugh Davis Collection (MSS# 121), Hans Flaechsner Collection (MSS# 125), Sammy Kaye Collection (MSS# 116), President Campaign Artifacts Collection (MSS#11), Thomas Evans Maps, OMAHA Beach, United States Army Center on Military History, and World War II News Maps.

**ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

**Restrictions:** The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Ohio University Libraries.

**Preferred Citation:** Researchers are requested to cite the collection name, collection number, and the Ohio University Libraries, in all footnotes and bibliographical references.

**Accession Number:**

**Provenance:** The Ohio University Archives received the collection in March 1990 as a gift.

**Property Rights:** Ohio University retains all property rights to the collection.

**Copyrights:** Ohio University retains all copyrights unless retained by the donor, other correspondents, or other artists.

**Photoduplication:** Ohio University will entertain requests to photcopy reasonable amounts of material from the collection for the convenience of individual researchers.

**Processing:** Charles Arp processed the collection in April 1990.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION**

*Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note both the location and box numbers shown below.*

**CONTAINER LIST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box/Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
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Series I: Correspondence

1 Official Correspondence to Walter Ervin
- Draft Registration Certificate, October 16, 1940
- Letter from the Director of Selective Service, December 8, 1941
- Certificate of Completion, Heavy Weapons Specialist, March 29, 1942
- Certificate of Completion, NCO Course, March 6, 1943
- Graduate, Military Intelligence Training, December 23, 1943
- Army Service Forces Ribbon Card, September 19, 1945
- Letter from the Veterans Administration, March 30, 1988 concerning the POW medal
- War department Card on family allowances – n.d.

2 Official Correspondence to Helen Ervin
- POW notification in French and German, February 1, 1945
- War Department letter, May 2, 1945 – POW information
- War Department letter, May 26, 1945
- Secretary of War telegram, May 29, 1945
- Adjutant General telegram, June 22, 1945

3 Cards from Helen to Walter
- December 22, 1941 to October 22, 1944 (13 items)

4 - December 17, 1941 to April 22, 1943 (13 items)

5 Correspondence from Walter to Helen
- August 1935 to June 1945 (17 items)

6 Correspondence from Helen to Walter
- December 16, 1941 to May 6, 1945 (8 items)

7 Civilian Correspondence to Helen
- February 5, 1945 to March 8, 1945 from friends regarding Ervin being MIA.

Series II: Publications

8 Newspapers and Magazines
- *Camp Maxey Times*, February 4, 1944
- *Beachhead News*, Anzio beachhead, July 4, 1944
- *Beachhead News*, Anzio beachhead, October 15, 1944
- Clippings of local news and poems

9 Official Publications
- “Army Songbook,” 1941
- “Devotions Under the Flag,” prayer book for Catholics in the service, 1941
- FM 21-25, Map Reading, 1941
- FM 21-100, Soldiers Handbook, 1941
- “The Most Common Shortcomings in the Training of Battalion and Regimental S-2,” 1943
- “The One-Two-Five, Marching Song of the 125th Infantry Regiment,” 1944
- Program, Irving Berlin’s “This is the Army,” Royal Opera House, Rome, n.d.

**Series III: Miscellaneous**

10 - Two brown notebooks, training notes, n.d.
- Combat Infantryman’s Badge (3 items)
- European Theater ribbon with three bronze stars
- Military unit patches (5 items)
- Photographs of Paris and Strasbourg
- *Esquire* pin up calendar, 1945
- Bronze bracelet with Army crest inscribed “Helen, Walter Love, 1942”
- Smoking pipe
- Spoon with star underneath handle