

TITLE: Lavern Smith Collection.

DATE RANGE: 1937 - 1948

CALL NUMBER: Y-MS 8

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1 box (.5 linear feet)

PROVENANCE: Unknown

COPYRIGHT: Unknown

RESTRICTIONS: This collection is unrestricted.

CREDIT LINE: Lavern Smith Collection, Y-MS 8, Arizona Historical Society-Rio Colorado Division, Yuma

PROCESSED BY: Benjamin Findley, July 2013

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

Lavern Smith was an enlisted member of the United States Army during World War II. He was born in Oklahoma on March 22nd 1923. His parents moved to Yuma, Arizona six months after he was born. He lived in Yuma until he enlisted in the Army on February 6, 1940. In the army he spent two years training at camps in Washington and California. Sometime in 1942 he was deployed to the European theatre. Records indicate that he served in General Patton's Third Army and participated in the invasions of North Africa, Sicily, and Normandy. Smith was tried for desertion in December of 1942 while his Division was in French Morocco, Africa, and was demoted from the rank of private first class to private. However he continued on in the Army and achieved the rank of staff sergeant. He died on June 15, 1944 in Normandy. He was buried in Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Francisco, California.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE:

The center of this collection is a series of letters sent by Lavern Smith to his parents. All of Lavern's letters date from before his deployment into combat, and discuss daily activities and concerns at the various camps where he was stationed. In addition to Lavern's letters, there are letters sent to the Smiths by their nephews Albert Ferguson who served in the army in Belgium and France, and Alva Haigood who also served in Belgium. The collection also contains several letters from Lavern's girlfriend, Peggy (last name unknown), to his family. Aside from the correspondence there is a reproduction of a book entitled "Combat History of the 79th Inf. Div." This edition of the book was apparently printed in the war zone with captured German printers due to high demand and limited resources.

CONTAINER LIST:

Box	Folder	Title	Dates
1	1	Biographical: Lavern Smith	1944
	2	Correspondence: Albert Ferguson	1940 – 1944
	3	Correspondence: Alva Haigood	1944 – N.D.
	4	Correspondence: General	1940 – N.D.
	5	Correspondence: Lavern Smith (1 of 2)	January – November, 1940
	6	Correspondence: Lavern Smith (2 of 2)	November, 1940 – N.D.
	7	Correspondence: Peggy	1944 – 1945
	8	Documents: Combat History of the 79 th Inf. Div. (Reproduction)	1945
	9	Documents: School awards, Application for family allowances, Parental records	1937 – N.D.
	10	News Clippings: Miscellaneous WWII newspaper clippings	1940's
	11	Postcard: R. M. S. Aquitania	N.D.
	12	Scrapbook: World War II	N.D.
	13	Transcripts: Assorted correspondence (includes transcripts of a trial, incomplete)	1940 – N.D.