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GUIDE TO THE REES WORLD WAR II LETTERS COLLECTION 1939-2015 (1942-1946)

Accession #: 1508001

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Rees World War II Letters

Inclusive dates: 1939-2015
Bulk dates: 1942-1946
Volume: 2.21 linear feet (3 boxes)

Provenance

These materials were given to the UCO Archives & Special Collections in 2015 by Ken R. Rees.

Biographical/Background Content Note

This collection includes the wartime letters of Kenneth (Ken) W. Rees and Eloise Rodkey Rees, Ken's official Army documents, and other materials documenting the history of the Rees family and the 102nd Infantry Division. Kenneth W. Rees was born 1918 in Newton, Kansas. Eloise Rodkey (of the Rodkey family of Rodkey Flour Mill) was born in 1918 in Edmond, Oklahoma. The two met while attending the University of Oklahoma, marrying in 1940. Ken graduated with a B.S. in Petroleum Engineering, and Eloise received both a B.A. and a Master's degree in Drama. Ken worked for an oil company until his enlistment in the military, receiving a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps in 1941. Called to active duty in 1942, Ken served in the 102nd Ozark Infantry Division as an ordnance officer. Eloise followed Ken as he trained for deployment at various stations around the country, returning to her hometown of Edmond after he shipped out to Europe.

Receiving a promotion to Major, Ken deployed overseas in the fall of 1944. After short stops in France and Holland, Ken's division joined the invasion of Germany in early 1945. While in Germany, Ken received a

promotion to Lieutenant Colonel, and the Army awarded him a Bronze Star in recognition of his service. Wounded twice, once by friendly fire, Ken also received a Purple Heart.

Following his discharge from the military, Ken joined his family in Edmond. Ken and Eloise had three children together. Two of Ken and Eloise's three children, Kenneth "Roddy" and Carol, were born during the war years. Their youngest child, Robert, was born after the war. Ken worked as a petroleum engineer in Edmond for over forty years, and also operated a ranch. A homemaker for many years, Eloise later took up writing, composing novels, songs, and screenplays. Ken and Eloise were also long-time active community volunteers in Edmond. Ken passed away on July 16, 1988 at the age of 69. Eloise lived to be 94, passing away on February 7, 2012.

Scope and Content

The accession number for the collection is 1508001. The collection includes Ken's wartime letters to Eloise and their children, as well as Ken and Eloise's wartime letters to Ken's mother (Mrs. Charles F. Jones) and siblings. This collection also features official documents from Ken's Army files including certificates, orders, separation forms, military record, etc. In addition, the collection includes photographs of Ken's 1984 trip to Europe, as well as Ken and Eloise's correspondence with military friends and their families after the war. There is also a background note, written by Kenneth R. Rees, providing biographical information on Ken W. and Eloise Rees and their family. The collection also includes Eloise Rees' personal recollections of Ken and Eloise's World War II experiences. Lastly, the collection contains Ken's copy of his division's (102nd Ozark Infantry) history, as well as a scrapbook containing photographs, newspaper clippings, and other materials documenting Ken's war experiences and his division's wartime activities.

Organization and Arrangement

The collection is organized into 3 series: I. Rees Family Correspondence, 1942-1945; II. Army Documents, 1940-1946; III. History, 1939-2015.

Series Descriptions

I. Rees Family Correspondence, 1942-1945

8 folders

This series includes wartime letters from Ken W. Rees to his wife Eloise and their children, as well as Ken and Eloise's wartime letters to Ken's Mother (Mrs. Charles F. Jones) and siblings. The date range of this series is 1942-1946. The letters document Ken's activities during his military service, including the events that transpired during his time of active duty in Europe. In addition, the letters written to Ken's mother and siblings document the day-to-day activities of the Rees family during the war years. The materials are arranged in chronological order. Ken's letters to Eloise and their children are filed first, followed by Ken and Eloise's letters to Mrs. Charles F. Jones and family. The letters are arranged from the oldest date to the most recent. The only exception to this arrangement is the first folder containing the Rees' letters to Mrs. Charles F. Jones (Folder 5 in Box 020075). The folder contains letters dated from 10/10/1944-4/23/1945, a later date range than that of the letters in the next folder. The dates also overlap with the dates of the letters in Box 020076, Folder 1.

This series includes letters (handwritten, typed, and those sent via V-Mail) as well as telegrams. Some of the letters are chopped into several smaller pieces, probably due to army censorship. The series also includes some newspaper clippings, pictures of Ken and Eloise's children, greeting cards, and Army holiday dinner menus. In addition, the series includes some souvenirs from Ken's time in Europe including currency, postcards, an American Red Cross Map of London (relocated to oversize box 020077), and other miscellaneous materials collected from various places Ken visited during his time of service.

II. Army Documents, 1940-1946

7 folders

This series includes official Army documents Ken collected during his military service. The date range of this series is 1940-1946. This series includes Ken's officer commission papers, ordnance school certificates, clearance certificates, Ken's military record, certificates of service, separation papers, leave documentation, official orders, shipping tickets, documentation related to pay and other compensation, promotion status reports, temporary promotion orders, ration and accessory cards, documentation for issued equipment and supplies, letters and communications from division headquarters (including "letters of appreciation"), communications from the War Department to Army divisions, statements of service, officer rosters, physical examination reports, life insurance documents, documents from Ken's hearing before the Army Retiring Board for Officers, materials from the

Veteran's Administration, and other miscellaneous certificates and military documents. This series also includes two pages from the Daily Oklahoman, dated Sunday, April 29, 1945. In addition to other war news, the paper includes a story detailing Rees receipt of the Bronze Star. The newspaper pages were initially filed with Rees' official army documents, and are included in this series in order to reflect the original intellectual arrangement of the collection.

The series is arranged, for the most part, in chronological order. The materials in Box 020076, Folder 4 (dated from 5/29/1941-6/30/1946), are not arranged according to any chronological order. The two officer commission papers are filed oldest (1940) to newest (1946), and the materials in Box 020076, Folders 5-7, which came from Lt. Col. Rees' file 201, are arranged in chronological order, from the most recent date to the oldest. The newspaper pages, dated April 1945, are filed last in the series.

III. History, 1939-2015

5 folders, 1 oversize box

This series includes biographical material on Ken W. Rees' and his family, as well as materials related to the history of his division: the 102nd Ozark Infantry Division. The date range of the materials is from 1939-2015. The materials in this series include photographs (and negatives) of Ken W. Rees' trip to Europe. The photographs document Rees revisiting locations from his World War II experiences. The series also includes post-war letters from Rees' former comrades and their families to both Ken and Eloise, some following Ken's death in 1988. The letters mostly include updates on events in their friend's lives, discuss Army reunions, etc. In addition, the series includes a copy of Ozark Notes (the 102nd's newsletter) promoting the division's 50th anniversary reunion, Ken's passport, Eloise's personal recollections of the Rees' experiences during World War II, a short biography of Ken W., Eloise and family (written by Ken R. Rees), and Ken's scrapbook documenting both his activities and those of the 102nd Infantry during World War II. The scrapbook contains various photographs of Ken, Ken and Eloise, and Ken's comrades, newspaper articles and clippings, a cloth map (of Holland, Belgium, France, Germany and Switzerland), and various other miscellaneous materials. Lastly, the series includes a copy of *With the 102d Infantry Division Through Germany* edited by Major Allan H. Mick, a published history of the 102nd Infantry Division.

This is the only series not arranged according to chronological order. Overall, the series is roughly arranged by related subject. The negatives and photographs are filed first in the series. They are followed by the letters from Ken and Eloise's old Army friends. The next materials are the family histories written by members of the Rees family. Last in the series are the materials documenting the history of the 102nd Infantry: Rees' scrapbook and the published history of the Ozark Division.

Related collections

Sidney Bray World War II Collection. University of Central Oklahoma Archives & Special Collections.

The Royal Air Force in Oklahoma Collection. University of Central Oklahoma Archives & Special Collections.

Preferred citation

[Series title: Rees World War II Letters]. University of Central Oklahoma Archives & Special Collections.

Folder listing

I. Rees Family Correspondence, 1942-1945

Box#:	Folder Heading	Dates
Folder # 020075:1	Ken W. Rees Letters to Eloise Rees & Family -- 9/11/1944 -- 10/29/1944	1944-09-11 - 1944-10-29
020075:2	Ken W. Rees Letters to Eloise Rees & Family -- 11/2/1944 -- 12/31/1944	1944-11-02 - 1944-12-31
020075:3	Ken W. Rees Letters to Eloise Rees & Family -- 1/1/1945 -- 2/28/1945	1945-01-01 - 1945-02-28
020075:4	Ken W. Rees Letters to Eloise Rees & Family -- 3/2/1945 -- 4/23/1945	1945-03-02 - 1945-04-23
020077:3	American Red Cross Map of London	ND
020075:5	Ken W. & Eloise Rees Letters to Mrs. Charles F. Jones & Family -- 10/10/1944 -- 5/5/1945	1944-10-10 - 1945-05-05

020075:6	Ken W. & Eloise Rees Letters to Mrs. Charles F. Jones & Family -- 1/8/1942 - 12/20/1942	1942-01-08 - 1942-12-20
020075:7	Ken W. & Eloise Rees Letters to Mrs. Charles F. Jones & Family -- 1/2/1943 - 12/11/1943	1943-01-02 - 1943-12-11
020076:1	Ken W. & Eloise Rees Letters to Mrs. Charles F. Jones & Family -- 1/13/1944 -- 12/25/1944	1944-01-13 - 1944-12-25

II. Army Documents, 1940-1946

020076:2	Kenneth Walter Rees, 2nd Lt., Ordnance Department, Army of the United States Commission Paper	1940-01-19
020076:3	Kenneth Walter Rees, Lt. Colonel, Ordnance Department, Army of the United States Commission Paper	1946-03-20
020076:4	Rees Official Army Documents: 5/29/1941 -- 6/30/1946	1941-05-29 - 1946-06-30
020076:5	Rees Official Army Documents (File 201): 1/1/1944 -- 3/22/1946	1944-01-01 - 1946-03-22
020076:6	Rees Official Army Documents (File 201): 1/10/1942 -- 12/31/1943	1942-01-10 - 1943-12-31
020076:7	Rees Official Army Documents (File 201): 1/19/1940 -- 8/25/1941	1940-01-19 - 1941-08-25
020076:8	The Daily Oklahoman -- Pages C 11-12, Sunday, April 29, 1945	1945-04-29

III. History, 1939-2015

020076:9	Negatives of Photographs of Ken W. Rees' Trip to Germany & Holland, September 1984	1984-09
020076:10	Photographs of Ken W. Rees' Trip to Germany & Holland, September 1984	1984-09
020076:11	Ken W. Rees & Eloise Rees Post-War Letters from Military Friends & Ozark Notes -- 11-16-1948 -- 10-22-1994	1948-11-16 - 1994-10-22
020076:12	Eloise Rodkey Rees Account of Kenneth W. & Eloise Rees World War II Experiences	2003-02
020076:13	Background Notes on Kenneth W. Rees for Users of K.W. Rees World War II Archive by Kenneth R. Rees	2015-08-05
020077:1	Ken W. Rees Scrapbook	1939-04 -- 1964-11-10
020077:2	<i>With the 102d Infantry Division Through Germany</i> , edited by Major Allan H. Mick	1947