



Summary Information

Title: Gayle Cruthirds Collection

Collection Number: 2005:070

Creator: Gayle Cruthirds

Collection Dates: 1930-1991, bulk 1930-1976

Extent: 2 cubic feet (2 boxes and 3 oversize boxes)

Language: English

Collection Abstract: Gayle Cruthirds grew up in Diboll, Texas, and later became a sergeant of the 376th Heavy Bomb Group, 15th Air Force. This collection consists of photographs, magazines, newspapers, medals, a flight log, and correspondence documenting Cruthirds' life interests, school days, and service in World War II.

Repository:

The History Center

102 N. Temple

Diboll, TX, 75941

936-829-3543

<http://www.thehistorycenteronline.com/>

Author: Processed by Emily E. Hyatt November 3, 2005.

Revision History: Finding aid revised by Matt Gorzalski in June 2010.

Biographical/Historical Note:

Gayle Cruthirds was born on December 21, 1924, son of Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Cruthirds of Diboll, Texas. He graduated from Diboll High School in 1942. He entered the Army Air Corps on March 5, 1943 at Fort Sam Houston at the age of eighteen. He trained at Sheppard Field, Texas; Tyndall Field, Florida; and Tucson, Arizona. The following May, at the age of nineteen, he entered combat as a staff sergeant in Italy with the 376th Heavy Bomb Group, 15th Air Force and served as a gunner. He served between May 1944 to October 1944 in the European Theater where he participated in the air offensive of Europe, Naples-Foggia, Italy, and the invasion of France. Cruthirds was wounded on June 4, 1944 and received a Purple Heart. He served two years, seven months, and seventeen days from March 5, 1943 to October 21, 1945. Throughout his service, Cruthirds earned a Purple Heart, an Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, a Good Conduct Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with three bronze stars, a Presidential Citation with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, an Aviation Badge, and Overseas Service bars. Cruthirds was discharged on October 21, 1945 and later lived in Vidor, Texas.

Collection Scope and Content:

The Gayle Cruthirds Collection consists of a variety of materials representing his many interests and life experiences. Eight magazines and 7 newspapers (in their entirety) from 1963-1964 represent his interest in the John F. Kennedy assassination in November 1963 and two newspapers from 1976 cover his interest in local sesquicentennial celebrations in southeast Texas. The collection also includes correspondence, photographs, ephemera, medals, and a flight log documenting his experiences as an aerial gunner during World War II. The flight log gives an account of each mission flown, including the June 4, 1944 flight where Cruthirds was injured and later awarded the Purple Heart. The correspondence reflects Cruthirds' communication with his parents during training. Several items also cover his personal experiences as a student in Diboll.

Arrangement: This collection has been described at the collection level. Items are arranged chronologically from Cruthirds' school days to the 1960s and 1970s newspapers and magazines. There is one loose item that is unboxed.

Subject Terms:

Topics

- World War, 1939-1945
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Veterans -- Texas -- Diboll
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Medals -- United States
- Military decorations -- United States
- Purple Heart
- Students -- Texas -- Diboll

Corporate Names

- United States -- Armed Forces --Aerial Gunners
- United States. Army. Air Corps.
- Diboll High School
- Diboll Rhythm Band

Personal Names

- Cruthirds, Gayle
- Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963 -- Assassination
- Johnson, Lyndon B. (Lyndon Baines), 1908-1973
- Oswald, Lee Harvey

Genres

- Periodicals
- Newspapers
- Medals
- Photographs
- Personal belongings
- Scrapbooks

Occupations

- Gunners, Aerial

Locations

- Diboll (Tex.)
- Diboll (Tex.) -- Social life and customs

- Romania
- Europe

Access and Use

Access Restrictions: No access restrictions.

Acquisition Information: Gifted by Gayle Cruthirds in October of 2005.

Custodial History: Gayle Cruthirds retained possession these items at his home in Vidor, Texas. When fleeing hurricane Katrina, he removed these items from his home and gifted them to The History Center in October 2005.

Citation: Gayle Cruthirds Collection, 1930-1991, 2005:070, The History Center, Diboll, TX

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Collection Inventory

Box 1

- Folder 1 Geography Grade 5 – Texas Edition, 1935
- Folder 2 Written English for Grade 5, 1935
- Folder 3 Childhood Scrapbook #1
- Folder 4 Childhood Scrapbook #2
- Folder 5 3 Diboll School Report Cards, 1 Diboll School Certificate, 1936-1937
- Folder 6 3 Diboll Free Press Portraits from the Past, 1991, undated
- Folder 7 8x10 photo of Diboll Rhythm Band ca. 1930
- Folder 8 Gayle Cruthirds Combat Missions List

Box 2

- 1941 Diboll High School Jacket
- 1942 Diboll High School Sweater

Box 3

- Folder 1 World War II Letters and Personnel Records, 1932-1944
- Folder 2 V-Mail from Leslie Cruthirds, 1944
- Folder 3 Clippings Concerning Gayle Cruthirds' War Activities, undated
- Folder 4 World War II Ephemera and Foreign Currency, 1940s
- Folder 5 World War II Photographs, 1940s
- Folder 6 Photographs in Vidor, Texas, 1930, undated
- Folder 7 World War II Medals
- Folder 8 Flight Log, 1944

Box 4

- Folder 1 *Time*, November 29, 1963
- Folder 2 *Newsweek*, December 2, 1963
- Folder 3 *Four Dark Days in History*, 1963
- Folder 4 *One Dozen Red Roses: The Life of Jacqueline Kennedy*, 1964
- Folder 5 *Life Magazine*, December 6, 1963
- Folder 6 *Look Magazine*, December 17, 1963
- Folder 7 *Look Magazine*, December 31, 1963

Folder 8 *Look Magazine, 1963*

Box 5

Folder 1 Houston Chronicle, November 22, 1963
Folder 2 Beaumont Journal, November 22, 1963
Folder 3 Beaumont Enterprise, November 23, 1963
Folder 4 Beaumont Journal, November 23, 1963
Folder 5 Beaumont Enterprise, November 25, 1963
Folder 6 Beaumont Journal, November 25, 1963
Folder 7 Beaumont Enterprise-Journal, July 4, 1976
 Beaumont Enterprise-Journal, April 17, 1976

Loose Items

20.5 inch x 26 inch framed World War II Memorabilia