
Summary Information

Creator
Rueter, Christian H.W., 1909 - 1977

Extent (quantity/size)
3 document boxes and 1 oversized box

Language
English

Abstract
The Colonel Chris H.W. Rueter Collection consists of correspondence, certificates, postcards, artworks, photographs, and biographical information collected by Colonel Chris H.W. Rueter and his family.

Subjects
Air warfare -- History -- 20th century. / Baylor University -- History. / Baylor University -- History, Military. / World War, 1939-1945 -- Personal narratives, American. / World War, 1939-1945.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access and Use
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Preferred Citation
Colonel Chris H.W. Rueter Collection, Accession #3838, Box #, Folder #, The Texas Collection, Baylor University.

Processing Information
Described by Mary Ellen Stanley and released on 2013-06-14.

Scope and Content
The Colonel Chris H.W. Rueter collection was acquired by a gift in one transaction from a private donor. The gift was given by Barbara Forcher, Colonel Chris H.W. Rueter's niece, on 2013 March 6. The collection consists of documents, photographs, a book of National Geographic Society maps, certificates, and a large portrait painting.

The chronology of this collection begins in 1927 and ends in 2004. The Photographic Materials series is the largest in the collection. These photographs cover the span of Rueter's military career and a portion of his personal life. There is also a small collection of photographs of Clark Gable flying military planes and in uniform during World War II.

Administrative/Biographical History

Christian Henry William Rueter was born 1909 October 22. He was the son of German-American parents Herman and Elise Rueter, who lived in a farmhouse located in Robinson, Texas. Christian was the youngest of nine children. In his youth, Rueter attended Robinson Academy.

Rueter's desire to be an aviator was a life long passion. In order to join the Army Air Corps, it was a requirement to have a minimum of two years of college. As a result, he enrolled at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, from 1928 September 14 to 1930 June 6. While at Baylor, Rueter played the clarinet in the Baylor Cadet Band. After completing two years of schoolwork, he applied for aviation training at Randolph Field in San Antonio, Texas.

In 1934, Rueter was accepted to aviation school and joined the 143rd Infantry of the Texas National Guard band section. He eventually transferred to the Air Corps training center in Randolph Field and in 1935 February was transferred to the Army Air Force. Rueter completed his Air Corps training school in San Antonio, Texas, in 1935. In 1936 February, he acquired his wings and graduated from the Air Force Advanced Flying School at Kelly Field, becoming a flying cadet for a year. Rueter was eventually stationed at Langley Field, Virginia. He was promoted to Second Lieutenant on 1938 October 1.

Amid Rueter's busy career, in 1939 June, he married Alexine Turner of Mt. Sterling, Kentucky.

In 1940, Rueter was once again promoted and transferred to Tampa Army Base in Florida serving as a pilot and operations officer in the 43rd Bombing Squadron. Later on 1940 September 9, he was appointed First Lieutenant in the Army and late in 1941 October 1 was promoted to First Lieutenant in the Air Corps in the Regular Army.

During World War II, Rueter's career continued to prosper. In 1942 April, he served as a Squadron Commander of B-24s for the North African campaign. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for leading an American bomber raid on Italy, and he also served with the Ninth Bomber Command in the Middle East and as a commander of the 97th Combat Wing in Europe. Rueter also served in the Balkans, the Mediterranean, and was later transferred to England.

Throughout his military career, Rueter served in multiple notable missions. One of his most notable achievements as a bomber pilot was his role as the leader of the first United States raid on Italy. Rueter led successful raids on Tripoli and was the Deputy Commander of the raid on Naples Harbor and the port facilities. During World War II, he also piloted a plane that carried the Archbishop Francis Spellman to Cairo.

After the completion of his service during World War II, Rueter in 1946 became a member of the Regular Army Examining Board in Selfridge Field Michigan. On 1946 July 1, he was appointed Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Air Force. Rueter eventually served as the air force chief of staff at National Headquarters, Civil Air Patrol, Ellington Air Force Base. In 1949, he was assigned to the Military Air Transport Service (MATS) in Washington D.C. and was assigned to the strategy and mobilization branch at the headquarters. Late in 1949 August 4, Rueter completed training a group in the New York Air National Guard. On 1950 January 25, Rueter completed the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk Virginia. In 1954 July 25 he was awarded the Legion of Merit, Far East Command for...
his outstanding performance from 1952 November 24 to 1963 May 20. He was also awarded the Air Force Commendation medal for his service from 1959 October 5 to 1963 May 13.

After serving in the Air Force for more than 29 years, Rueter retired 1963 May 29 in the Houston Texas area. In his retirement, he enjoyed a variety of recreational activities such as golfing and boating. Rueter and his wife lived in Seabrook, Texas until his death on 1977 January 1. He is buried in Robinson Cemetery.

Related Resources

Related citations

Archival Arrangement
The Colonel Chris H.W. Rueter Collection was not organized prior to this finding aid. There was no previous inventory. The photographic materials and manuscripts were grouped together respectively.

Currently, the Colonel Chris H.W. Rueter Collection is arranged in five series. I. Correspondence, II. Literary Productions, III. Photographic Materials, IV. Maps and V. Artifacts.

Series 1: Correspondence. 1938-1943

Administrative/Biographical History
The Correspondence series includes letters detailing Colonel Chris H.W. Rueter's military service, letters concerning specific awards he received, a telegram to his wife, and a letter from Pat M. Neff requesting Rueter's participation in updating his records at Baylor University.

Item List
Box 1. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1938-1943

Series 2: Literary Productions. 1927-2004, undated

Administrative/Biographical History
The Literary Productions series consists of documents which include a biographical history of Christian Henry William Rueter written by his wife Alexine Rueter, a history of the Rueter family's church, Rueter's collected certificates from his military service, a portrait painting, clippings detailing Rueter's career and a collection of postcards.

Item List
Box 1. Folder 4. Certificates, 1927-1963
Box 1. Folder 5. Portrait Painting of Colonel Chris H.W. Rueter, undated
Box 1. Folder 6. Clippings (1 of 2), 1940-1963, undated
Box 1. Folder 7. Clippings (2 of 2), 1940-1953, undated
Box 1. Folder 8. Postcards, 1938-1941
Box 4 OVZ. Folder 1. Certificates: General, 1939-1963


Administrative/Biographical History
The Photographic Materials series includes a collection of photographs dated throughout Colonel Chris H.W. Rueter's life. The materials have been organized according to their subject matter.

Item List
Box 1. Folder 9. Photographs: Airplanes (1 of 2), undated
Box 1. Folder 10. Photographs: Airplanes (2 of 2), undated
Box 1. Folder 11. Photographs: Buildings, undated
Box 1. Folder 12. Photographs: Clark Gable, undated
Box 1. Folder 15. Photographs: General (1 of 2), 1928-1942, undated
Box 1. Folder 16. Photographs: General (2 of 2), 1928-1942, undated
Box 1. Folder 17. Photographs: Men in Uniform, 1949, undated
Box 1. Folder 18. Photographs: Portraits of Colonel Chris H.W. Rueter, undated
Box 1. Folder 19. Photographs: Tin Types, undated
Box 4 OVZ. Folder 2. Photographs: Rueters, undated

Series 4: Maps. 1943-1952

Administrative/Biographical History
The Maps series includes a collection of maps dated throughout Colonel Chris H.W. Rueter's life. The maps have been organized according to their subject matter.
Administrative/Biographical History
The Maps series consists of National Geographic maps collected from throughout the world and a National
Geographic Society Maps book in which the maps were originally stored. This map book was compiled by Chris
Ruetter for his father, so that he would be able to follow him during his travels.

Item List
Box 2. Folder 1. The National Geographic Magazine Maps Book, 1952
Box 2. Folder 3. National Geographic Magazine: Asia and Adjacent Areas, 1951 March
Box 2. Folder 4. National Geographic Magazine: Bible Lands and the Cradle of Western Civilization, 1946 December
Box 2. Folder 6. National Geographic Magazine: Central Europe, 1951 September
Box 3. Folder 1. National Geographic Magazine: Countries of the Caribbean, 1947 October
Box 3. Folder 4. National Geographic Magazine: Japan and Korea, 1945
Box 3. Folder 7. National Geographic Magazine: South America, 1950 October
Box 3. Folder 8. National Geographic Magazine: Southeast Asia, 1955 September
Box 3. Folder 10. National Geographic Magazine: Western Europe, 1950 December

Series 5: Artifacts. undated

Administrative/Biographical History
The Artifacts series includes an unidentified flight squadron patch.

Item List
Box 3. Folder 11. Squadron Patch, undated