

## Baylor University . The Texas Collection

### Colonel Chris H.W. Rueter Collection. Inclusive:1927-2004, undated, Bulk: 1927-1955, undated

#### Summary Information

<b>Creator</b>	Rueter, Christian H.W., 1909 - 1977
<b>Extent (quantity/size)</b>	3 document boxes and 1 oversized box.
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	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

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**Preferred Citation** When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is:

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 Corps 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 1948 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 29 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

Army Air Corps Library. "97th Bombardment Wing." Army Air Corps Library and Museum.

[www.armyaircorpsmuseum.org](http://www.armyaircorpsmuseum.org) (accessed March 20, 2013).

Colonel Chris H.W. Rueter Collection, Accession #3838, Boxes #1-4, The Texas Collection, Baylor University. "Distinguished Service". *The Baylor Lariat*. Baylor University, Waco TX 1944 July 21. (Accessed 2013 March 20).

Maurer, Maurer, editor. *Air Force Combat Units of World War II*. (Washington D.C.: Department of the Air Force Government Print Officer, 1961).

"Regular Air Force Retired List". *Air Force Register*, 1996, Vol. 2. [www.newsimages.worldvital.com](http://www.newsimages.worldvital.com) (accessed 2013 March 20).

Wall, Richard, editor. "The 1930 Round-Up". Baylor University, Waco TX 1930. Accessed 2013 March 2013.

Wood, Margaret-Jean, editor. "The 1944 Round-Up of Service". Baylor University, Waco TX 1944. Accessed 2013 March 20.

## 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 2. Biographical Materials: Christian Henry William Rueter, undated

Box 1. Folder 3. Bulletin: "History of St. John United Church of Christ", 2004

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

Box 4OVZ. Folder 3. Certificate: New York Air National Guard, 1949

## Series 3: Photographic Materials. 1928-1965, undated

### 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 13. Photographs: Colonel Chris H.W. Rueter, 1936-1954, undated

Box 1. Folder 14. Photographs: Colonel Chris H.W. Rueter and family, 1965, 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 1. Folder 20. Photographs: Xerox Copies of Photographs, 1935-1939, undated

Box 4 OVZ. Folder 2. Photographs: Rueters, undated

## Series 4: Maps. 1943-1952

### 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 Rueter 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 2. *National Geographic Magazine: Africa*, 1950 March  
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 5. *National Geographic Magazine: Canada, Alaska and Greenland*, 1947 June  
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 2. *National Geographic Magazine: Eastern South America*, 1955 March  
Box 3. Folder 3. *National Geographic Magazine: Europe and the Near East*, 1949 June  
Box 3. Folder 4. *National Geographic Magazine: Japan and Korea*, 1945  
Box 3. Folder 5. *National Geographic Magazine: Northern Africa*, 1954 December  
Box 3. Folder 6. *National Geographic Magazine: Pacific Ocean*, 1943  
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 9. *National Geographic Magazine: The Top of the World*, 1949 October  
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