

Gregory, Earle D., Collection

Earle D. Gregory Collection
1915-1997



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1972.004

Unit Date

1915-1997

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

This collection contains the papers of Congressional Medal of Honor winner and VPI alum Earle D. Gregory (1897-1972), documenting his time as a member of the 1st Virginia, 29th Regiment of the U.S. Army during World War I. The majority of the materials relate specifically to Gregory's impact during his first day of combat at Bois-de-Consenvoye, France for which Gregory was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroic actions. In his lifetime, Earle Gregory received several awards and recognitions. Some of the most notable awards include the Medal of Honor and Purple Heart, along with a Medal of Honor plaque signed by President Lyndon Johnson, which is a replacement of Gregory's original certificate signed by President Woodrow Wilson which was destroyed in a fire. A total of eleven medals are included in the collection, along with other certificates and miscellaneous items, including a signed invitation to President Richard Nixon's inauguration. The collection also includes items related to his student years at Virginia Polytechnic Institute after the war.

Creator

Gregory, Earle D., 1897-1972

Extent

1.9 Cubic Feet 4 boxes

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open to research.

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Source of Acquisition

This collection was willed to the Virginia Tech Special Collections department by Earle D. Gregory in 1972. Additional materials were donated in 2000.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the Earle D. Gregory Collection was completed in or prior to 2004.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Earle D. Gregory Collection, Ms1972-004, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

Earle Davis Gregory was born in Clayville, Virginia on October 18, 1897. His father served as a telegrapher for the Richmond and Danville Railway, eventually transferring to Chase City, Virginia as a dispatcher in 1901. Upon completion of his freshman year, Gregory entered the Fork Union Military Academy from 1912 until the summer of 1915, when Gregory returned to Chase City and joined Company E, 2nd Regiment, Virginia Volunteers.

On October 8, 1918, Gregory's unit was committed to battle at Bois-de-Consenvoye, north of Verdun, France during the outset of the United States involvement in World War I. On his first day of battle, Sergeant Gregory's unit was halted by incessant machine gun fire by German forces. Gregory abandoned his position and charged the machine gun, destroying it with a mortar round along with single-handedly capturing a howitzer and 22 German prisoners. His actions and overall valiance earned Gregory the Congressional Medal of Honor, the only Virginian to be awarded the Medal during World War I.

Three days later, Gregory and his unit were attempting to take an enemy trench line when an artillery shell landed on his unit, wounding Gregory in his leg from shrapnel. Gregory was hospitalized for six months, partly in France before being shipped to Camp Lee, Virginia. He was discharged on April 25, 1919, and four days later Gregory was awarded the Medal of Honor at a ceremony on the Camp's parade field.

Gregory enrolled in Virginia Polytechnic Institute in September of that year. Entering under a disabled veteran's program, Gregory was accepted into the Corps of Cadets in spite of his war wound. He served as Cadet 1st Sergeant during his junior year and Cadet Captain of Company A during his senior year, in addition to being elected to class president twice and president of the student body his senior year.

Gregory was a life-long member of the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans and a Master Mason. He died on January 6, 1972 in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets renamed the "Pershing Rifles" drill team in his honor, now known as the "Gregory Guard," an elite drill and marching unit.

Scope and Content

Comprising the majority of the Earle D. Gregory collection are military records and files dating back to when Gregory was a member of the 1st Virginia, 29th Regiment during World War I. This material consists of publications and correspondence pertaining to Gregory's infantry unit, more specifically Gregory's impact during his first day of combat at Bois-de-Consenvoye, France for which Gregory was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroic actions. Significant material from Gregory's affiliation with the Medal of Honor is also included, such as invitations to Gregory's ceremony and various correspondence, along with several pictures taken from the ceremony, including one photograph with Earle Gregory and President John F. Kennedy.

Also included in the Gregory collection is material from VPI where Gregory enrolled after he came back from his service in France. Most of the material is comprised of correspondence and alumni bulletins, along with some photographs taken of Gregory while he was a student and his original student transcript.

In his lifetime, Earle Gregory received several awards and recognitions. Some of the most notable awards include the Medal of Honor and Purple Heart, along with a Medal of Honor plaque signed by President Lyndon Johnson, which is a replacement of Gregory's original certificate signed by President Woodrow Wilson which was destroyed in a fire. A total of eleven medals are included in the collection, along with other certificates and miscellaneous items, including a signed invitation to President Richard Nixon's inauguration.

Keywords

Medal of Honor

Students and alumni

University History

World War, 1914-1918

Gregory, Earle D., 1897-1972

Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (1896-1944)

Virginia Polytechnic Institute (1944-1970)

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged according to subject matter.

Description of Subordinate Components

Gregory Military Records and Files

Unit Date 1915-1997

Publications and Correspondence about Gregory's WWI Infantry (1st Virginia, 29th Regiment)

Unit Date 1915-1997

box 1

Container 1 (folder)

Gregory Discharge from the U.S. Army (original copy)

Unit Date 1919, 1963

box 1

Container 2 (folder)

Files from the American Legion

Unit Date 1922-1969

box 1

Container 3 (folder)

Veterans Advisory Board (correspondence)

Unit Date 1935-1936

box 1

Container 4 (folder)

Veterans Administration Files (insurance, disability benefits, correspondence)

Unit Date 1935-1958

box 1

Container 5 (folder)

U.S. Civil Service Commission - Retirement Files

Unit Date 1935-1963

box 1

Container 6 (folder)

Records and Correspondence Pertaining to the Veterans Administration

Unit Date 1960-1961

box 1

Container 7 (folder)

Virginia National Guard Files

Unit Date 1990-1997

box 1

Container 8 (folder)

VPI

Unit Date 1939-1969, n.d.

VPI Material (correspondence, alumni bulletins, promotional material)

Unit Date 1939-1969

box 1

Container 9 (folder)

Photocopy of the 1915 "Skirmisher"

Unit Date n.d.

box 1

Container 10 (folder)

Congressional Medal of Honor

Unit Date 1956-1965

Medal of Honor Files (correspondence, rosters, invitations)

Unit Date 1956-1965

box 1

Container 11 (folder)

Medal of Honor Programs, Calendar

Unit Date 1962-1965

box 1

Container 12 (folder)

Publications and Photographs

Unit Date 1922-1972, n.d.

Newspaper Clippings

Unit Date 1922-1972, n.d.

box 2

Container 13 (folder)

Photographs

Unit Date 1957-1967, n.d.

box 2

Container 14 (folder)

Miscellaneous

Unit Date 1935-1996

Miscellaneous Files

Unit Date 1935-1962

box 2

Container 15 (folder)

Correspondence in Relation to Gregory's Inheritance

Unit Date 1946-1948

box 2

Container 16 (folder)

Biographical Information

Unit Date 1960-1996

box 2

Container 17 (folder)

Signed Invitation of President Nixon's Inauguration

box 2

Container 18 (folder)

Oversize Material

Gregory Awards, Personal Items

box 3

Scope and Contents note

Medals

- Congressional Medal of Honor
- Merito Di Guerra
- Fortes-Greantur-Fortibus
- Republiour Francaisi (1914-18)
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (USA)
- The Great War for Civilization - Meuse-Argonne Defensive Sector
- Republique Francais - Valeur et Discipline
- Russian Medal
- Purple Heart in leather case
- Mexican Border Service Medal

Plaques

- Medal of Honor Plaque, signed by President Lyndon Johnson
- Cross of Military Service, given by the United Daughters of the Confederacy

Personal Items

- VPI class ring
- Fork Union Military Academy Distinguished Alumnus Award
- Miscellaneous folder (Oversize)

Gregory Scrapbook and U.S. Flag

box 4