

World War II Prisoner of War camp collection

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1915, circa 1940s-1950s



Title Statement

World War II Prisoner of War camp collectionGuide to World War II Prisoner of War camp collection C0557

Subtitle: World War II Prisoner of War camp collection

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Publication Statement

Publisher: George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

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Fairfax, Virginia 22030
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September 2, 2025

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2025-09-03 07:02:55 -0400.

Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

C0557

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/758

Unit Date

1915, circa 1940s-1950s

Language

German

Abstract

A collection of photographs, scrapbooks, correspondence, newsletters, and other ephemera collected by German soldier Major Traugott Steffler primarily during his time in an American-run Prisoner-of-War camp near Naples, Italy following World War II.

Extent

.25 Linear Feet 1 box

Physical Location

R 73, C 2, S 3

Repository

George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no access restrictions.

Use Restrictions

The copyright and related rights status of this collection have not been evaluated (See <http://rightsstatements.org/vocab/CNE/1.0/>)

Acquisition Information

Donated by Dorothee Schubel in May 2024.

Processing Information

Processing completed by Meghan Glasbrenner from July - August 2025. Finding aid completed by Meghan Glasbrenner in August 2025.

Preferred Citation

World War II Prisoner of War camp collection, C0557, Special Collections Research Center, George Mason University Libraries

Biographical Information

Traugott Steffler was born in 1893 in Glatz (Lower Silesia; now Klotzko, Poland). After serving in World War I in the German army, he completed his theological studies and served as a Lutheran pastor in Lower Silesia. During World War II, he took leave from his parish to serve as a Major in the German army; being deployed on the Eastern front and in Italy, where he was captured and transferred to an American Prisoner of War camp near Naples, Italy. By 1947 he was released from the camp and resumed his duties as a pastor, now in Bielefeld, North Rhine-Westphalia. Steffler passed away in 1968.

Scope and Content

A collection of photographs, scrapbooks, correspondence, newsletters, and other ephemera collected by German soldier Major Traugott Steffler primarily during his time in an American-run Prisoner-of-War camp near Naples, Italy following World War II (WWII). All of the materials are written in German, with the exception of a single financial receipt which has text in both English and German. The collection's poems and other writings were written by multiple authors, with some listing no author, and the single pencil sketch portrait is signed and dated 1945 and likely depicts Major Steffler.

The two scrapbooks that were gifted to Major Steffler feature photographs from camp theatre productions, many of which feature male prisoners cross-dressing for the women's roles. Each of these also include dedications to the "Battalion Commander," with one indicating on the first page it was given as a Christmas and New Year's present. The other includes a dedication written inside the front cover indicating it was given in celebration of his "55th" birthday on March 14, 1946 (based on his date of birth this is likely an error as Steffler would only have been 53 in 1946). The additional loose photographs include more images of prisoners in theatrical costumes, as well as documenting daily life in the camp, including images of the prisoners working in a vineyard, and images of the life of German military officers during WWII, including formal military portraits. The collection also includes a single professional portrait of Steffler in his German World War I military uniform taken in 1915.

Related Materials

The Special Collections Research Center holds other collections related to World War II, including the John C. Becher Soldier Show collection.

Keywords

World War, 1939-1945
World War, 1939-1945 -- Theater and the war
Performing arts
Theater
Germany
Correspondence
Photographs
Poetry
Creative writing
Prisoner-of-war camps
World War, 1939-1945 -- Prisoners and prisons
Naples (Italy)

Arrangement

The collection is arranged by material type or function.

Description of Subordinate Components

Correspondence sent and received by Major Traugott Steffler

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393691

Unit Date circa 1946-1950s

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Two personal pocket notebooks provided to German prisoners

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393693

Unit Date 1945-1946

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Scope and Contents

1945 notebook issued by Ecumenical Commission for the Pastoral Care of Soldiers and Lutheran Churches of America, inscribed by Major T. Steffler and includes a portrait of Major Steffler in military uniform dated 1943.

1946 notebook issued by the YMCA/CVJM

Officer List and financial withdrawal receipt for Major Steffler

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393694

Unit Date circa 1945

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Poems, writings, and pencil sketch

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393695

Unit Date circa 1945-1947

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Battalion 9901 camp Theater Group photo scrapbooks gifted to Major Steffler

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393696

Unit Date circa 1945-1947

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Photographs

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393697

Unit Date 1915, 1940s

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)