

# Elsleger, Joseph, papers

Joseph Elsleger papers

1944-1945

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## Title Statement

Elsleger, Joseph, papers Joseph Elsleger papers MSS 16168

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## Profile Description

**Creation:** This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2026-03-05 17:53:09 +0000.

**Language Usage:** English

**Descriptive Rules:** Describing Archives: A Content Standard

## Descriptive Summary

### Unit ID

MSS 16168

### Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

### Unit ID

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### Unit ID

[Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

### Unit ID

[Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

### Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/916

### Unit Date

1944-1945

### Mixed Materials [X032652598]

1 (box)

### Mixed Materials

2 (box)

### Language

Materials are in English.

**Extent**

0.4 Cubic Feet 1 half-width document box (letter); 1 flat box

**Repository**

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

## Administrative Information

**Conditions Governing Access**

The collection is open for research use.

**Provenance**

2019-0151, Purchased 6 July 2016, Robert and Virginia Tunstall Trust Fund, 2016/2017.

**Preferred Citation**

MSS 16168 Joseph Elsleger papers, box number, folder number, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia.

## Biographical Note

Joseph Elsleger (1924-1996) enlisted in the U.S. Air Force on March 23, 1943 and served in France during World War II with the 392nd Bomb Group. On June 23, 1944, Elsleger's plane was shot down and he was captured by German troops. Elsleger survived imprisonment and lived in Pennsylvania and Ohio until his death in 1996.

Source: Family Search; materials within collection.

## Scope and Contents Note

The Joseph Elsleger papers (1944-1945; 0.4 cubic foot) document Elsleger's time spent as a prisoner of the German Army in World War II, after his plane was shot down over France on June 23, 1944. The collection includes two diaries distributed by the YMCA chapter in Geneva, Switzerland: one blank save an introductory letter and one used by Elsleger. The latter's contents include drawings of the prison camp, makeshift recipes, photographs of unidentified people (presumably from Elsleger's home), and a list of friends within the POW camp. While a couple drawings are signed by Elsleger, many others are signed by an unidentified G. Pratt or a Ben Phelper from Oswego, Illinois. Elsleger also kept a brief diary of a forced camp-relocation march in April 1945, writing on the packaging of Lucky Strike cigarettes.

Other materials in the collection include Elsleger's Purple Heart and Air Medal, ribbon bars, and brass U.S. and Army Air Corps uniform collar discs. Also included is a Caterpillar Club membership card and brass pin, housed in a faux leather box with clear glass pane window.

## Keywords

World War, 1939-1945 -- Personal narratives, American

## Description of Subordinate Components

**Diary**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/3/archival\_objects/180478

**Unit Date** 1944-1945

**Mixed Materials [X032652598]** 1 (box)

**Container** 1 (folder)

## **Forced march diary**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/3/archival\_objects/180479

**Unit Date** 1945

**Mixed Materials [X032652598]** 1 (box)

**Container** 2 (folder)

## **YMCA book introduction letter**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/3/archival\_objects/180480

**Unit Date** 1945

**Mixed Materials [X032652598]** 1 (box)

**Container** 3 (folder)

## **Blank diary**

**Unit ID** [Archival Resource Key](#)

**Unit ID** /repositories/3/archival\_objects/180481

**Unit Date** 1945

**Mixed Materials [X032652598]** 1 (box)

**Container** 4 (folder)