

Bunker, Carl M. Letters

Carl M. Bunker Letters

1944-1945

Title Statement

Bunker, Carl M. LettersGuide to the Carl M. Bunker Letters SC 01010

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

SC 01010

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/373

Unit Date

1944-1945

Language

English

Creator

Bunker, Carl M.

Extent

0.01 Linear Foot

Repository

Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access:

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Scope and Contents

Letters, 1944-1945, written by Carl M. Bunker, a private in the US Army during World War II, to his parents in Dayton, Ohio.

Keywords

Letters (correspondence)

World War, 1939-1945--European Front

World War, 1939-1945--United States

Accruals:

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Description of Subordinate Components

Letters

Unit ID id77720

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/36850

Unit Date 1944-1945

Mixed Materials Small Collections Box 66 (Box)

Container 1 (folder)

Scope and Contents

The following information was provided by the seller and has not been verified: "This is a group of 7 original WWII letters written in 1944 and 1945 by an American soldier who served in the 9th Armored Infantry Battalion of the 6th Armored Division. This soldier was in combat almost continuously from Normandy until the conclusion of the war in Europe. Three of them are V-Mail letters. One is a long letter written in June 1944 just a few days after D-Day. Another is a good frontline letter written in early February 1945 which contains mention of his having recently been in Bastogne. The soldier who wrote these letters was wounded near Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge, and was later hospitalized for trench foot during fighting in the Rhineland. He served throughout the 1944-45 campaign in Europe in the 9th Armored Infantry Battalion of the 6th Armored Division, 3rd Army. He was P.F.C. Carl M. Bunker, of Dayton, Ohio. After his service in the 9th Armored Infantry Battalion he was transferred, in July 1945, to the 69th Amphibious Tractor Battalion in preparation for service in the Pacific. The letter written in early February 1945 includes a segment about some wooden shoes which Bunker had mailed home from Bastogne. There is a long letter written three days after D-Day, which includes a segment in which Bunker expresses his eagerness to get across to France and into action: "I'm still in the same joint but I sure would like to be doing a little slugging across the Channel. They seem to be doing pretty well without me though." The same letter includes some very unflattering remarks in which Bunker expresses a very low opinion of the intelligence of the English people. One letter includes a segment about a dog which had been found at the

front and adopted by Bunker's unit as a mascot. The dog spent most of his time with the mortar squad, so they named the dog "Mortar". Bunker relates that the dog had been starving, so they fed him on powdered milk, and he became the unit mascot. This segment about "Mortar" is long, touching, and quite funny. There are stories of how "Mortar" would stand formation with the platoon, and join them when they lined up for chow, and of how he would wake the men in their sleeping places on the ground in the morning. He would stand on the head of each man until the man got up, and would then move on to the next man. There is also a segment about an argument that arose on one occasion concerning whether or not the dog should be given a blanket of his own, blankets being in very short supply. Two were written in the months after VE Day. One was written in July, immediately after Bunker was transferred from the 9th Armored Infantry to the 69th Amtrak Battalion. Bunker explains in the letter that this had until recently been the 69th Tank Battalion, and had recently been converted (for landings in the Pacific). Bunker appeared as a witness at a General Court Martial in late 1945, and about this he wrote: "Well, I did something I never had done before. I was on a special court-martial as a witness. The guy got five years at hard labor out of it. He would have been discharged in a couple of months. It's been cold and rainy the past few days and I have a nice cold. We took influenza shots about four days ago but it's not helping much." In June of 1945 Carl Bunker learned that his 5 campaign stars provided him with insufficient points to be exempt from Pacific service. He was very fatalistic about the prospect of going to the Pacific, he expected to be killed there. In June 1945 Carl Bunker wrote a very long letter to his parents, vividly detailing all of his overseas service, so that they would know what he had done in case he didn't make it home. Carl Bunker's battle experiences began on the North Atlantic, when the convoy in which he was travelling was attacked several times by U-Boats. In England he witnessed V-1 attacks, and also attacks by German aircraft. He once watched an R.A.F. Spitfire shoot down a German Dornier aircraft. He arrived at Omaha Beach on D + 25, and he described watching heavy artillery in action from the beach. He spent most of the next two months in and around Ste Mere Eglise, often coming under German air attack. He joined the 6th Armored Division in September, and was in combat almost continuously until VE Day. He was wounded in the hand early in the Battle of the Bulge, but chose to remain on the line rather than go to an aid station. Later the wound became infected and he became hospitalized for a few days, but he was denied a Purple Heart because he had not immediately reported the wound. He rejoined his battalion in time to participate in heavy fighting at Bastogne in January 1945. He fought through the remainder of the European campaign, with the exception of a two week period in March 1945 when he was hospitalized for trench foot. His battalion was the first Allied unit into Buchenwald."