

Buzek, Cyril Papers

Cyril Buzek, Sr. Papers
1945-1946

Title Statement

Buzek, Cyril PapersGuide to the Cyril Buzek, Sr. Papers MS 00077

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MS 00077

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/464

Unit Date

1945-1946

Language

English

Creator

Buzek, Cyril, Sr., 1922-1958

Extent

0.20 Linear Feet

Repository

Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access:

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Acquisition Information:

Acc. 2011.701 was received by the SCRC in November 2011.

Processing Information:

Accessioned and minimally processed by Steven Bookman, University Archives Specialist, in January 2012. Further processed by Del Moore, SCRC volunteer, October-December 2014. The letters originally were housed in plastic sleeves in three-ring binders. They were removed from the sleeves and binders for preservation purposes.

Preferred Citation:

Cyril Buzek, Sr. Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

Biographical Information:

Cyril Buzek was born on July 5, 1922, in Ellinger, Fayette County, Texas. His parents were Joe and Celia Shimek Buzek. Celia's parents were born in Czechoslovakia. Cyril had younger sisters Judith and Leona, also called Babs. His family lived on a farm near Lane City, Texas.

Cyril enlisted in the U. S. Navy on January 18, 1945, and attended boot camp at Camp Peary, near Williamsburg, Virginia. He was shipped out to Panama in July 1945, where he was stationed at various sites until his discharge in July 1946. He trained as a tinsmith in Panama and eventually attained the rank of Metal Smith Third Class.

Back in Texas, Cyril worked as a laborer in the carpentry business. He married Averill Hoffman, and they had three children in the mid-1950s, Averill, Cyril, and Joe George. Cyril Sr. suffered a coronary occlusion and died on October 19, 1958, at his home near Wharton, Texas. His family had an official military marker placed at his gravesite in the Wharton City Cemetery.

Scope and Contents

154 letters, 2 postcards, and a photograph, 1945-1946. The letters are from Cyril Buzek to his parents and sisters in Lane City, Texas. Buzek came to Camp Peary, near Williamsburg, Virginia, in January 1945 for basic training in the Navy. After short stints in Norfolk and Newport News, he was sent to Panama in July 1945, where he was posted at various sites. The nearly continuous stream of letters ended in late December 1945, but there were two additional ones from Panama written in May 1946, shortly before he was expecting to be discharged.

There are 71 letters from Camp Peary, January 23 - June 7, 1945; 8 letters from Norfolk, Virginia, June 9 - June 22, 1945; 4 letters from Newport News, Virginia, June 25 - July 4, 1945; 2 letters from New York City, July 7 and 8, 1945; and 69 letters from Panama, July 20, 1945 - May 30, 1946. Buzek wrote to his family frequently, sometimes more than once on the same day.

Keywords

Letters (correspondence)

United States. Navy--History--World War, 1939-1945

World War, 1939-1945--United States

Camp Peary (Va.)

Arrangement of Materials:

The letters are arranged in chronological order.

Description of Subordinate Components

Photograph and cover sheet

Unit ID id252756

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/41934

Unit Date 1945

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 1 (folder)

Scope and Contents

According to penciled notations on the back, the photograph is of Cyril Buzek, taken June 2, 1945. The photograph was attached to the cover sheet that apparently had been prepared by family members.

Letters

Unit ID id252760

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/41935

Unit Date 1945 January 23-February 17

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 2 (folder)

Scope and Contents

Arrives at Camp Peary via Houston, Cincinnati, and Richmond; complains about cursing, marching, slow mail, shots, health care, noise in the barracks, homesickness, and not being allowed to have a camera; mentions going to shows and church in camp; studies types of airplanes and takes a test; starts numbering his letters to match numbers on his mother's letters; enters the hospital on February 6 because of cold, fever, and backache; is diagnosed with pneumonia, but soon claims to be feeling fine; comments on mail and news from home; requests pictures of family members and his dogs. 15 letters.

Letters

Unit ID id252836

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/41936

Unit Date 1945 February 21-March 7

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 3 (folder)

Scope and Contents

Is still in the hospital but feels fine except for ears and neck; misses his hounds; receives letters and a Valentine from Lillian but wonders if he should keep writing to her; when allowed to get out of bed, he helps around the hospital, sweeping, carrying meals, and working in the kitchen; leaves hospital on March 4, but has to join a different unit because of missing so much training; begins rifle training; takes arithmetic and writing classes; meets a Mexican boy from Wharton, Texas. 14 letters.

Letters

Unit ID id252844

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/41937

Unit Date 1945 March 9-March 31

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 4 (folder)

Scope and Contents

Appreciates a package from home with cookies and sausage; passes airplane and arithmetic tests; complains about guard duty, sore muscles, and lack of palms in church on Palm Sunday; sends home letters and Valentines he has received, to be kept for him; requests his watch and a loan of \$10; mentions a fight between negro and white recruits; comments on war news; goes in a large rowboat on a river. 14 letters.

Letters**Unit ID** id252848**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival_objects/41938**Unit Date** 1945 April 2-April 26**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)**Container** 5 (folder)**Scope and Contents**

Is liking the Navy better now, not working so hard; mentions going to church and school, marching, pulling guard duty, getting good grades, practicing boxing and self-defense, having inspections and fire drills, studying telescopes, and hearing about President Roosevelt's death; reenters the hospital, with the mumps; leaves the hospital on April 23 and has to join yet another unit; expects to get leave to go home around the end of May. 14 letters, including one addressed to his sister Judith.

Letters**Unit ID** id252853**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival_objects/41939**Unit Date** 1945 April 28-June 7**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)**Container** 6 (folder)**Scope and Contents**

Mentions going to school, taking tests, marching, doing laundry, having fun, getting a package from home, practicing for Victory Day; expects to be a Seaman Second Class on the upper deck; says he hasn't been to Williamsburg yet; has more training on boats; learns about knots, signal flags, and gas masks; gets a sore arm from his final shot; attends graduation; gets paid and buys a train ticket for home; arrives back at Camp Peary on June 5; expects to get shipped out soon, hopefully to a better place than Virginia. 14 letters and a postcard.

Letters**Unit ID** id252856**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival_objects/41940**Unit Date** 1945 June 9-July 8**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)**Container** 7 (folder)**Scope and Contents**

Arrives at his station in Norfolk, not knowing how long he'll be there; mentions working in a carpentry shop, partying, putting curtains in windows in the Waves' barracks, mowing grass, pulling guard duty, going to a show in Norfolk, riding a street car for the first time, working as a messenger boy, weighing 132 pounds, sending home a package and pictures of himself and his buddies, buying a pen and pencil set, and drinking too much beer. Moves to Newport News on June 24 and really likes being right on a beach with no fences; mentions painting barracks, speed boat riding, fishing, cleaning a kitchen in a hotel, going to movies, visiting Buckroe Beach, and spending July 4 writing letters; complains about Donnie, a girl friend from home, not writing to him. Writes on July 7 and 8 from New York City, where his address is a pier; admires the high buildings; goes to church; buys a suitcase from a fellow seaman. 14 letters.

Letters**Unit ID** id252860**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival_objects/41941**Unit Date** 1945 July 20-August 14**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)**Container** 8 (folder)**Scope and Contents**

Arrives in Panama after three days in New York, three in Hoboken, and eight at sea; likes the new camp, with its beaches, games, shows, and coconut trees; goes roller skating; has easy work; doesn't like the town; complains about having his letters censored; mentions fights in the camp, but promises not to get drunk. Moves to a new post, which is a camp for Seabees; works in the mess hall; sends home a radio tube and a mouth harp. 14 letters.

Letters**Unit ID** id252866**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival_objects/41942**Unit Date** 1945 August 15-September 9**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)**Container** 9 (folder)**Scope and Contents**

Has a better job now in the mess hall, helping the cooks; celebrates the end of the war; finds nicer places in the town and attends some shows; buys a watch; hopes to be home soon, but doesn't have enough points yet for a discharge; has easy work and friends who always want to go to town; complains about being a land sailor; goes to the jungle and sees a monkey; hopes to get leave in a couple months, but doesn't know if he can afford to come home; says the censorship has ended so he can reveal the town's name, Colon; wishes he were home to help repair the damage from a storm. 14 letters.

Letters**Unit ID** id252872**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival_objects/41943**Unit Date** 1945 September 11-October 13**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)**Container** 10 (folder)**Scope and Contents**

Having been asked to reenlist for another four years, he announces his refusal to sign anything but a discharge; complains about the heat, sailors fighting, a fire in the barracks, not getting leave, and not being a 'real sailor'; says Lillian stopped writing after he suggested they be just friends, so he writes to a friend's sister; says he has only 16½ points, but needs 35 to get out of the Navy; visits the Panama Canal; cooks for a farewell party before being moved to Balboa. Is assigned to the ship fitters' shop, learning to make things with tin, which he hopes will lead to a higher rank and skills he can use when he is discharged; makes two water tanks for ships; visits a 'most beautiful' cathedral in Balboa. 14 letters.

Letters**Unit ID** id252880**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival_objects/41944**Unit Date** 1945 October 15-November 24**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)**Container** 11 (folder)**Scope and Contents**

Makes funnels, boxes, and a monkey coop for an officer; wonders if his dad drinks too much because he misses him; learns welding; goes boat riding on the canal; hopes to be home for Christmas; wishes he had stayed in school; makes rank of Seaman First Class; complains about eye strain and asks his mom to send his glasses; goes about 30 miles by boat to visit Tobago Island; studies for tests to make Metal Smith Third Class; says he's having a barrel of fun and would reenlist if he could get closer to home. 14 letters.

Letters**Unit ID** id252882**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival_objects/41945**Unit Date** 1945 November 25-1946 May 30**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)**Container** 12 (folder)**Scope and Contents**

Hears he didn't pass the tests to make Metal Smith but vows to study and try again; asks his mom to send a quart of sauerkraut; has Shore Patrol duty; expects to be in charge of the shop soon; sends home an ashtray and a knife he made; makes lockers and strainers for submarines; has good luck fishing; takes the Metal Smith tests again and passes; celebrates Christmas in Balboa, but hopes never again to be away from home for Christmas; expects to get a 72-hour pass for New Year's, but doubts that would give time for a hello and goodbye at home. There are no letters between December 27, 1945, and May 3, 1946. In May, Cyril writes from Balboa about his 'blue eye', which he got in a fight; has Shore Patrol duty; expects

to check out on June 5; looks forward to the happy day when he'll be home having some good fried chicken. "I be seen you'll pretty soon. Youlls Son, Cyril Buzek." 13 letters, including one to his sister Babs, and a Christmas postcard from a church in Wharton, Texas.