

Inventory of the Weldon E. Lewis, Jr. Papers 1943-1945

Weldon E. Lewis, Jr. Papers 1943-1945
1943-1945

A Collection in the Special Collections Research Center Mss. Acc. 2007.42
Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary
2009

History

Processed by Special Collections Staff.

Title Statement

Inventory of the Weldon E. Lewis, Jr. Papers 1943-1945

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Overview of the Collection

Identification:

01/Mss. Acc. 2007.42

Language of Materials

The papers are in: English

Abstract:

This is a collection of letters written mainly by Sgt. Weldon Eli Lewis, Jr. while he served in the 5th and 7th Army during World War II. He was in the Special Platoon of the company called Contact Platoon. The majority of the letters are written by Sgt. Weldon E. Lewis to his wife, Madge Colglazier Lewis. Some letters are written by Sgt. Lewis to his son, Weldon E. Lewis, III, his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Weldon E. Lewis and his in-laws, Mr. and Mrs. Carl M. Colglazier. A few letters were written by Madge Lewis and others to Sgt. Lewis after the war and were forwarded to his home after he returned. A few clippings and empty envelopes are included with the papers.

Creator:

Lewis, Weldon E., Jr. Lewis, Madge C. arrangement

Quantity:

1.00

Repository:

Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open to all researchers.

Conditions Governing Use

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Acquisition Information

The materials were acquired by Special Collections Research Center on 00/00/2007.

Processing Information

Processed by Anne T. Johnson during 2007.

Preferred Citation

Weldon E. Lewis Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

Additional Information

Biographical Note

Weldon Eli Lewis, Jr. was the son of Weldon Eli Lewis and Zula Frances Henry Lewis. He was born October 16, 1910 in Hot Springs, Arkansas and died April 19, 1970, location unknown.

He married Madge Colglazier on February 14, 1943.

He was a Corporal in the U.S. Army, stationed at Camp Cooke, California, before becoming a Sergeant in mid-January 1943. By May 1943 he was stationed near Nashville, Tennessee and by December 1943 he was stationed near Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. By April 1944, he was stationed in England, France and possibly other European locations, until at least September 1945.

Scope and Contents

This is a collection of letters written mainly by Sgt. Weldon Eli Lewis, Jr. while he served in the 5th and 7th Army during World War II. He was in the Special Platoon of the company called Contact Platoon. The majority of the letters are written by Sgt. Weldon E. Lewis to his wife, Madge Colglazier Lewis. Some letters are written by Sgt. Lewis to his son, Weldon E. Lewis, III, his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Weldon E. Lewis and his in-laws, Mr. and Mrs. Carl M. Colglazier. A few letters were written by Madge Lewis and others to Sgt. Lewis after the war and were forwarded to his home after he returned. A few clippings and empty envelopes are included with the papers.

Sgt. Lewis wrote about how he missed and loved his wife, about the good times they had, about his son who was born while he was in the army, about his and his wife's family, about the stress of being separated for so long and about the anticipation of his homecoming.

The 1943 letters deal with their relationship and attempts to be together while he is stationed in the United States. The 1944 and 1945 letters show his sadness about missing his son's growth and his uncertainty about his relationship with his wife, plus comments on his wife's difficulties with his family and the war being hard on them all.

Even though Sgt. Lewis never goes into detail about his military operations, and even comments that such writing could endanger the war effort, he does write about his military training, his maneuvers, his social life, his rations, his leaves to London and Paris, his tank named "For Manny", his stays in the hospital, his view of Germany, his shock about President Roosevelt's death, VE Day, combat and his opinions on the war. Not until May 1945 did he reveal what his unit and position were, where he had been during the war and how combat affected him.

Index Terms

This Collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Genre/Form of Material:

Clippings
Correspondence

Personal Name:

Lewis, Madge Colglazier
Lewis, Weldon E., Jr.

Topical Term:

World War, 1939-1945--European Front
World War, 1939-1945.

Arrangement of Materials

Series I, Letters, is arranged by writer or recipient, then chronologically within each subseries. Series II, Printed Material, is arranged chronologically, though most items are undated. Series III contains empty envelopes.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Letters, 1943-1945,

Scope and Content

Letters from January 1943 to September 1945 from Sgt. Weldon E. Lewis, Jr., whose nickname is Dub, to his wife, Madge Colglazier Lewis, his son, Weldon E. Lewis, III, his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Weldon E. Lewis, and his in-laws, Carl M. and Cora Colglazier. Letters to Sgt. Weldon E. Lewis, Jr. from his wife that were forward to his home after the war and a letter from his son and his aunt, plus one letter written to Mrs. Lewis by a friend.

Letters Written by Weldon E. Lewis, 1943-1945,

Sub-Series 1

Scope and Content

January 1943 letters are written from Camp Cook, California, to Miss Madge Colglazier in Louisville, KY. After January, the letters are written to Mrs. Weldon E. Lewis, Jr. from Nashville, Tennessee, Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, England, France and the front lines in Europe.

Sub-Series 1

Box 1

Written to his Wife, Madge Colglazier Lewis, 1943,

Sub-Series 1

Box 1

Folder 1

Scope and Content

9 letters.

January 4, 1943 letter is from Cpl Weldon E. Lewis stationed in Camp Cooke, California, but in a January 28, 1943 letter he says "I have just been promoted to Sergeant". In letter postmarked February 27, 1943, Sgt. Lewis writes from a hospital, "...don't know how to explain all of this, but I had a little mix up and crack up...". In other letters he talks of his guard duty, maneuvers, and washing clothes in boiling water and lux flakes. In letter postmarked December 13, 1943 he has just arrived in Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania.

Written to his Wife, Madge Colglazier Lewis, April 1944,

Sub-Series 1

Box 1

Folder 2

Scope and Content

7 letters.

Writes of his leave in London. Mentions that his wife is saving all his letters for "Jr." to read, but he has to burn all her letters. In May 1, 1944 letter he writes that he received wire about being a new father.

Written to his Wife, Madge Colglazier Lewis, June - August 1944,

Sub-Series 1

Box 1

Folder 3

Scope and Content

9 letters.

In June 12, 1944 letter he says mail has been held up until D-Day. In June 30, 1944 letter he says the invasion has begun. He talks of artillery shells popping, war nerves, combat fatigue and war breaking up families. He says he can't tell her where he is. Letters mostly about missing his baby and wife. Wife jealous of French girls. Wife is unhappy in Hot Springs with his family.

Written to his Wife, Madge Colglazier Lewis, September - October 1944,

Sub-Series 1

Box 1

Folder 4

Scope and Content

9 letters.

In September 12 and 26, 1944 letters he writes from Detachment of Patients, U.S. Army Hospital Plant where he is a patient. In October he writes about his uniform, the Co. K Detachment or 77th Station Hospital, the Army not paying him, the new V Mail, being moved to U.S. Army Group Force Replacement Pool and naming his tank "For Manny" after his son. Mentions his first wife and need to change his insurance beneficiaries.

Written to his Wife, Madge Colglazier Lewis, November 1944,

Sub-Series 1

Box 1

Folder 5

Scope and Content

8 letters.

In letter postmarked November 11, 1944, he has moved "back in mud and slush" but not yet with old unit, but in letter postmarked November 18, 1944, he is back in hospital with pneumonia. Mentions sulfa drugs, Red Cross visits, Sadie Hawkins Day where girls try to catch GI's, attack that wounded their friend, Walter and his rank as a tank commander who rides in turret.

Written to his Wife, Madge Colglazier Lewis, December 1944,

Sub-Series 1

Box 1

Folder 6

Scope and Content

8 letters.

Describes hospital, making billfold in Red Cross Shop and USO show. Per December 14, 1944 letter, he is being discharged from hospital and he received letter from Capt. Schwarz of his outfit. In December 20, 1944 letter he is upset over her last letter which mentions finances, her unhappiness with his family and her keeping her part of their bargain.

Written to his Wife, Madge Colglazier Lewis, January - February 1945,

Sub-Series 1

Box 1

Folder 7

Scope and Content

12 letters.

Mentions that he is in a new outfit, how he misses his old outfit and importance of teamship. Commander of old outfit sent him a booklet (possibly about their battles). He writes on February 26, 1944 "...you will note ...who was the first Yank to enter Germany and that's official. Your husband was right there and the third vehicle to be exact..." His wife is living with her parents and he is unsure of her commitment to him - calls their bargain "T and T" - now that she is with her old friends. Writes of his love for her and his son and that things will be better when he comes home.

Written to his Wife, Madge Colglazier Lewis, March 1945,

Sub-Series 1

Box 1

Folder 8

Scope and Content

7 letters.

Writes of his love of wife and children, but feels helpless. Responds to wife's questions about Bible her father gave him, his loyalty and his sarcasm. March 23, 1945 letter mentions Manny's birthday and the bitter feelings of men in combat.

Sub-Series 1

Box 2

Written to his Wife, Madge Colglazier Lewis, April 1945,

Sub-Series 1

Box 2

Folder 1

Scope and Content

10 letters.

He writes about the work ahead with demobilization, the U.S. 9th Army and the 5th Armed Division who are leading the army to Berlin, Roosevelt's death, how the German countryside shows they were prepared for war, and how the Germans should now be treated. He asks his wife to send boxes to him, though she said it was discouraged by the Post Office. In most of April's letters he talks of different aspects of his homecoming and shows his fear of how things might have changed between them, but he also lets her know what he thinks of some of her letters.

Written to his Wife, Madge Colglazier Lewis, May 1945,

Sub-Series 1

Box 2

Folder 2

Scope and Content

9 letters.

In the early May letters, he talks about peace, VE Day, German's reaction to the peace, selective service, and the redeployment program. On May 21 and 26, because some censorship regulations have been lifted, he tells her that he was in the 5th Army during the Normandy campaign and in the 7th Army in the Contact Platoon during the German campaign. He also tells her where he had been in Europe, that "For Manny" (his old tank) didn't make it to Berlin, and his feelings about combat.

In most of the letters, he shows his doubt about his marriage with talk of her job, her age, her comments in her letters and writing in the May 30 letter, "...you really make me feel like a heel...".

Written to his Wife, Madge Colglazier Lewis, June 1945,**Sub-Series 1****Box 2****Folder 3****Scope and Content**

9 letters.

He writes about Hitler, the war, cigarette rationing, Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), the point system and deployment, his current job, souvenir hunters and the Pacific War. On June 7, he is living at a PW Stockade with "Jerry prisoners" who are being guarded by Russians and Poles. He goes into detail about where he was and what he did on D-Day. He describes a bad dream and opens up about his fear.

Written to his Wife, Madge Colglazier Lewis, July 1945,**Sub-Series 1****Box 2****Folder 4****Scope and Content**

9 letters.

Many of his July letters concern his wife and family: their marriage, their future, his wife's attitude, her criticism of the number of letters he's written, her health, the death of his mother-in-law and how his son will react to him. In his July 18 letter he is still attached to the 470th Engineers and on detached service to the 511 Engineer Depot, but on July 29 and 31, he states that he has been transferred to the 237 Combat Engineers, attached to the 1st Army, where the high point men are and everyone talks of going home. He mentions a silk "tactful military" map that he sent her. Clippings included with July 27 and 31 letters.

Written to his Wife, Madge Colglazier Lewis, August 1945,**Sub-Series 1****Box 2****Folder 5****Scope and Content**

13 letters.

In many letters, the tension between him and his wife is growing. Most letters talk of the war, his work, peace and coming home. He notes that the "Articles of War" have to be read to each man every six months, gives detail about his visits to "Little Coney Island" in Rheims and to Paris, tells of trying to replace his front tooth and gives his reaction to VJ Day.

Written to his Wife, Madge Colglazier Lewis, September 1945,**Sub-Series 1****Box 2****Folder 6****Scope and Content**

8 letters.

He tells about the delays in getting on a transport ship, including his long trip to Marseilles to his camp near the Rhone River, about the different travel times of various transport ships, about the conditions at camp and the poor morale of the men. The September 26 and 27 letters are V-Mail.

Written to Welden E. Lewis, III, 1944-1945,**Sub-Series 1****Box 2****Folder 7****Scope and Content**

3 letters and 1 postcard.

Written to Parents and In-laws, 1944-1945,

Sub-Series 1

Box 2

Folder 8

Scope and Content

4 letters. August 13, 1944 letter to his Mom and Dad about his wife, son, the farm. He is "somewhere in France". November 1944 Christmas Greeting card to his mother-in-law, Mrs. Carl M. Colglazier. February 10, 1945 letter to his father, W. E. Lewis, Sr. about his wife and son's visit to Arkansas, and July 6, 1945 letter of condolence to his father-in-law on the death of his wife.

Letters to Weldon E. Lewis, Jr., 1945,

Sub-Series 2

Sub-Series 2

Box 2

Letters to Weldon E. Lewis, Jr. from his wife, Madge C. Lewis, August 30, 1945 - September 11, 1945,

Sub-Series 2

Box 2

Folder 9

Scope and Content

8 letters.

She talks about her activities, their son, how busy and tired she is, how much she misses him and about waiting for him to come home.

Letter to Weldon E. Lewis, Jr. from Weldon E. Lewis, III (Manny), January 1945,

Sub-Series 2

Box 2

Folder 10

Scope and Content

1 letter.

Letter to Weldon E. Lewis, Jr. from Aunt Molly Goldberg, September 11, 1945,

Sub-Series 2

Box 2

Folder 11

Scope and Content

1 letter.

Letter written to Madge and Manny (Weldon E. Lewis, III) Lewis, 1945,

Sub-Series 3

Sub-Series 3

Box 2

Letter Written to Madge and Manny Lewis, September 12 probably 1945,

Sub-Series 3

Box 2

Folder 12

Scope and Content

4 pages, partial letter. Writer unknown.

News Clippings,

Box 2

News Clippings, undated,

Box 2

Folder 13

Scope and Content

9 items. Originals and copies.

Includes cartoons, letter to editor , stories and articles from newspapers, Stars and Stripes and ETO. ETO, page 4, mentions a Sgt. Edward Lewis, St. Louis, as the lone survivor who reached the town of Fritzheim.

Empty Envelopes, 1943-1945,

Box 2

Empty Envelopes, 1943-1945,

Box 2

Folder 14

Scope and Content

6 envelopes. All addressed to Mrs. Weldon E. Lewis, Jr. from Sgt. Weldon E. Lewis.