

Thomas W. Bennett (1947-1969) Papers A&M 2714

Thomas W. Bennett (1947-1969) Papers
circa 1940s-2010s and undated



Title Statement

Thomas W. Bennett (1947-1969) Papers A&M 2714

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Descriptive Summary

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Unit Date

circa 1940s-2010s and undated

Language

English .

Abstract

Papers regarding Thomas W. Bennett (1947-1969), a West Virginia University student who won a Congressional Medal of Honor for his services as a U.S. Army medic during the Vietnam War. He performed duties as a conscientious objector willing to serve. The microfilmed collection includes personal letters, programs, magazine articles, and other papers relating to his life and death. Most of the letters were written by Bennett, his parents, other relatives, and friends while Bennett was in the U.S. Army, including his training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and his later service in Vietnam. There are also letters dating from the years before he joined the U.S. Army. Programs document the presentation of the Congressional Medal of Honor on 7 April 1970, and the dedication of Bennett Barracks, Fort Belvoir, Virginia on 1 November 1979. Magazine articles and other papers were compiled after Bennett's death and describe his life in Morgantown, life in the Army, the circumstances surrounding his death, and his religious and philosophical views in terms of serving as an example for young people. Also includes addendum of research papers of Bonni McKeown for her book "Peaceful Patriot" (published in 1980), a biography of Thomas W. Bennett. This addendum includes complete transcripts of tape recordings Bennett made when in Vietnam.

Extent

8.88 Linear Feet 2 document cases, 5 in. each; 5 record cartons, 15 in. each; 1 document case, 2.5 in.; 4 flat storage boxes, 4 in. each; 1 flag storage box, 4.75 in.; 4 folders, 0.5 in. total; 1 reel of microfilm (121 items), 1.75 in.

Physical Location

West Virginia and Regional History Center / West Virginia University / 1549 University Avenue / P.O. Box 6069 / Morgantown, WV 26506-6069 / Phone: 304-293-3536 / URL: West Virginia & Regional History Center

Repository

West Virginia and Regional History Center

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

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Preferred Citation

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Scope and Contents

Microfilmed material is organized into five groups. 1) The first group contains letters written by Thomas W. Bennett. These are placed in chronological order. 2) The second group is made up of hand-written notes, identification cards, and a health record of Thomas Bennett. 3) In the third group are letters written to Thomas Bennett by his parents, other relatives, and friends. These are also organized chronologically. 4) Official U.S. Army correspondence addressed to Thomas Bennett and to his mother are grouped with a prepared speech on Thomas Bennett. The speech describes his life and includes excerpts from his letters and tapes while in the Army. These items were brought together by the donor and make up the fourth group. 5) The last group contains programs for the Congressional Medal of Honor on 7 April 1970, and the dedication of Bennett Barracks, Fort Belvoir, Virginia on 1 November 1979. There are also five magazine articles about Bennett in this group.

Bennett's Medal of Honor is housed at the West Virginia and Regional History Center.

There is an addenda of research papers of Bonni McKeown for her book "Peaceful Patriot" (published in 1980), a biography of Thomas W. Bennett who was one of two conscientious objectors to receive a Medal of

Honor in the Vietnam War. Includes photocopies of original letters by Bennett, transcriptions and notes by McKeown, and clippings and photographs documenting Bennett's personal life, student life through West Virginia University, and his military experiences. The collection provides much insight into his views regarding life and his response to the Vietnam War. Of note are complete transcripts of tape recordings Bennett made when in Vietnam. Some of these papers can be found in the Bennett collection on microfilm that was loaned by Mr. and Mrs. Kermit W. Gray.

All Other Addenda Include:

Letter from U.S. Army to West Virginia University (WVU) regarding display of Medal of Honor; transcript of speech delivered by President David C. Hardesty at ceremony honoring Thomas Bennett; letter from David C. Hardesty to Bennett Family regarding display of Medal at WVU; 2000.

Records and photograph documenting Thomas W. Bennett, Medal of Honor winner collected by Stephen W. Beard. Includes 26 pages and 1 photograph of army unit; 1968-1970, 2000.

Magazine article regarding Thomas W. Bennett's activities as a medic during the Vietnam conflict (Vietnam, June 2003, pp. 16, 62, 63).

Letter regarding the military service of Corporal Thomas W. Bennett in the Vietnam War, authored by H. Frederick Hutchinson, Jr. to David Hardesty (11-16-2000). Mr. Hutchinson provides a narrative history of the battle in the Chu Pa Mountains in which Corporal Bennett was killed and for which he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

The addendum of 2025 February-March includes papers, newspaper clippings, photographs, and other material regarding Bennett's life and service as a United States Army medic, including his Morgantown High School yearbooks, diplomas, Boy Scout badges, personal correspondence, and more. Also includes sympathy cards sent to Bennett's mother and stepfather after his passing, materials regarding the various buildings across the country named in Bennett's memory, memorial plaques and displays, and more. Also includes the flag presented to Bennett's family during his funeral.

Keywords

Morgantown (W. Va.)

Vietnam

Washington (D.C.)

Banks - American Security and Trust.

Soldiers' letters - Viet Nam War.

Viet Nam War - letters of soldiers' families.

Viet Nam War - soldiers' letters.

United States. Army

West Virginia University

Bennett, Thomas W.