

# Bridgewater State University

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**Sgt. William E. Smith Collection,  
1943 – 1946, 1952  
(MSS-027)**

*Finding Aid Compiled by  
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Maxwell Library  
Bridgewater State University  
10 Shaw Road / Bridgewater MA 02325 / 508-531-1389

**Volume:** 2.5 linear feet (3 document boxes)

**Acquisition:** All items in this manuscript group were donated to Bridgewater State University by Susan (daughter of William E. Smith) and Robert Conant in 2016.

**Access:** Access to this record group is unrestricted.

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### **Sgt. William E. Smith Collection Biographical Sketch**

William E. Smith rose in rank from private to sergeant while serving 22 months in the European Theater during World War II. He oversaw the tactical employment and coordination of a team in charge of a 155 mm gun (howitzer) in the "C" Battery, 174<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion of the United States Army. During the war the battalion, along with Smith, saw action in Normandy, the Rhineland, Northern France, Central Germany, and the Ardennes. His battalion was connected to General Patton's 3<sup>rd</sup> Army that liberated Luxembourg and fought at the Battle of the Bulge. He was awarded the Silver Service Star for participation in the Ardennes-Alsace, Central Europe, Normandy, Northern France and Rhineland Campaigns.

Smith was born (1917) and raised in Hanover, MA. He was married to Barbara (Josselyn) Smith, and remained in Hanover till his death in 1987. He had two brothers who served in the military during World War II. His brother Harold served in the Army, and his brother Clarence served in the Navy. The scrapbook in box 2 contains photographs of all 3 of the Smith brothers.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The collection contains both archival material and artifacts relating to the European Theater during World War II. Some of the artifacts were taken from Nazi occupied positions and brought back to the States for remembrance purposes. Material in the collection represents the areas William E. Smith traveled through while part of the 174<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion that landed at Normandy and cut through France on its way to Germany.

### **Box and Folder List**

#### **Box 1 Folder**

1. William E. Smith military discharge and awarded medals documents, 1945-1946, 1952
2. Hanover, MA Congregational Church newsletter "The Spire," with retyped letter from "Bill Smith in France," 1944

3. Letter from William E. Smith to his wife Barbara noting his military experiences including Normandy, Battle of the Bulge, and Battle for Brest, July 23, 1945
4. Smith's "order to report for induction" into the military, 1943
5. Document noting Smith had been promoted from corporal to sergeant, 1945
6. Certification of captured equipment Smith brought back after the war, 1945
7. Smith's "Soldier's Individual Pay Record" booklet, 1943-1944
8. 174<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion coat of arms and history, 1944
9. Smith's notepad with addresses and other notes, undated
10. German/Nazi pocket atlas brought back by Smith after the war, undated
11. Reproduction of a 1945 letter from Cecil Durard to H.P. Snyder who wrote the 174<sup>th</sup> Battalion history, 1946
12. Photocopies and research of European money found in Smith's scrapbook from box 2, represents 1906-1944
13. Photocopy of scrapbook (original in box 2), c. 1943-1945

## **Box 2**

### Scrapbook of William E. Smith's time in the war

- Military documents of Smith and of his Battalion, including Battle of the Bulge and a memo by General Patton sent to everyone in the 174<sup>th</sup> Battalion.
- Types of currency he collected from different countries, including occupied countries.
- Photographs of William E. Smith, his brother Harold, and friends in uniform in Europe.
- Photographs of destroyed buildings and bridges in France Smith's battalion was involved in.
- Images from Concentration Camps.

## **Box 3**

### World War II Artifacts

- 2 medals with 2 matching ribbons
- Crossed rifles pin
- Nazi patch
- Page from his scrapbook: Nazi armband on one side, 2 Nazi patches and 2 photos of Smith on the 2<sup>nd</sup> side
- Large Nazi Flag