

SMS 500

7 July 2023

Schreck, Christopher J.

**BENNETT, JOHN M.**  
**1942-1945**  
**LINEAR FT.: 0.3**  
**APPROX. NO. PGS.: 140**

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

John Morley Bennett (1918-1989) served in the 341st Bomber Squadron, 97th Bomber Group, Heavy, as a Captain and Pilot on the B-17 #41-24344 during World War II.

Bennett survived when his airplane crashed in Saint-Vougay, France. On October 21, 1942, his crew took off from Station 110 airfield in Polebrook, England, for a bombing attack in Lorient, France. Upon arrival over the target, their plane was shot down by an FW 190 piloted by Armind Landman and exploded. Among the ten crew members, only two survived. They were thrown out of the plane by the explosion. Cpt. Bennett was captured and sent to Stalag Luft III prison camp in Sagan, Germany (Żagań, Poland). Bennett was held at Stalag Luft III until January 1944 when he and his fellow prisoners were marched to Stalag VII-A in Moosburg, which is where he remained until the camp was liberated several month later.

Part of this collection was donated to the Air Force Academy by Colonel Bennett before his death in 1989, and the rest was donated by his wife, Lorraine, in 2013. See *The Military Journal of Colonel John Morley Bennett: World War II through Vietnam* (UGB 291.B471 A11 1997) in Clark Special Collections for more information.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This collection consists of four series divided into two boxes, outlined in the *Arrangement and Description* section of the finding aid. Most of this collection pertains to John M. Bennett and his experience as a prisoner of war at Stalag Luft III and Stalag VII-A, where he was detained from 1942 to 1945.

Additionally, the memoirs of Freidrich-Wilhelm von Lindeiner-Wildau (Col. von Lindeiner), in Series Two, provide a complete account of the administration of Stalag Luft III from the perspective of the German officer in charge of the facility.

**Names:** Bennett, John M.; Bennett, Lorraine Rolfes; von Lindeiner-Wildau, Freidrich-Wilhelm

**Keywords and terms:** Stalag Luft III; Stalag VII-A; Prison Camps; World War II; World War, 1939-1945; Prisoners of War (POWs); 341st Bombardment Squadron; Diaries; Journals; Memoirs; Moosburg, Bavaria, Germany; Sagan, Germany; Żagań, Poland; 1940s

For information on how to cite the materials in this collection, see the Clark Special Collections Citation Guide at <https://usafa.libguides.com/spc>, or contact Clark Special Collections at (719) 333-4674.

## ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION

### **SERIES ONE: STALAG LUFT III**

#### **BOX 1**

- Folder 1      Prisoner Logbook/Diary. A journal kept by John Bennett while a prisoner at Stalag Luft III and in the weeks following his liberation. The journal includes recipes, prisoner lists, daily life, and the liberation of the prisoners. 1943-1945
- Folder 2      Photo Album. Album containing black-and-white pictures depicting the POW's daily living conditions in the South and Moosburg camps in Germany during the winter of 1944-1945. Partially numbered and captioned
- Folder 3      Interview. Interview with John M. Bennett relating to a square dance exhibition put on by American prisoners of war for their British POW friends at Stalag Luft III, Sagan, Germany, February 1943. Interview date 13 March 1985
- Un-foldered: Microfilm. Contains photographs that depict the allied prisoner of war experience in Stalag Luft III during World War II

### **SERIES TWO: PRINTED MATTER**

#### **BOX 1**

- Folder 4      Printed Matter  
  
                  *Navigation*. Student workbook, 1 March 1945.  
  
                  Map titled "Prison Camps." Depicts German camps where US POWs were held  
  
                  Poster titled "70 Years of R.F.C. & R.A.F. Aircraft." Depicts fifty-three aircraft in full color
- Folder 5      *Rocky Mountain News*. 8 December 1941.

#### **BOX 2**

- Folder 1      *The Memoirs of Colonel Friedrich-Wilhelm von Linder-Wildau, Kommandant, Stalag Luft III*. Unpublished manuscript translated to English by Berthold Gaeiss. The subject of these memoirs was the German Commandant of Stalag Luft III from March 1942 to March 1944. This manuscript provides a brief biography of him, along with his translated memoirs that were written shortly before his death in 1963. The preface was written by USAF General Albert P. Clark.

**SERIES THREE: OBITUARY AND EULOGY**

**BOX2**

Folder 2      Obituary and Eulogy. Includes documents and announcements for both John Bennett (d. 1989) and his wife, Lorraine Rolfes Bennett (d. 2020)

**SERIES FOUR: COLOR PRINTS**

**BOX 2**

Three surrealistic prints depicting a pilot, navigator, and bombardier, produced from artwork created by Floyd H. Green, Jr., while interned at Stalag Luft III

12" x 15" color print of a B-26 bomber flying over an airbase and farmland

12 x 15" color print of a B-29 bomber flying over farmland