

SMS 42

12 January 2021

Schreck, Christopher J.

KIRKPATRICK, WALLACE B.

1943-1945

Linear Ft.: 0.1

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Wallace B. Kirkpatrick (1921-2017) attended radio & business school in Port Arthur, Texas, and later entered the Civil Service working as a clerk at Fort Sam Houston. After the breakout of World War II, Kirkpatrick enlisted in the Army Air Corps and attended Navigation School in California before being assigned to a B-17 group in 1942. Commissioned as a lieutenant, the 306th BG was sent to the RAF base at Thurleigh, England.

On January 13, 1943, while on his 3rd mission, Kirkpatrick's B-17 went down in Lille, France. Accounts differ as to whether the loss of a wing was due to enemy fire or a collision with Allied aircraft. He bailed out of the crippled plane and landed safely, but in the custody of the Germans. From January 1943 until April 1945 Kirkpatrick experienced numerous interrogations, solitary confinement, forced marches in extreme winter conditions, and lack of sanitary conditions. Having been relocated from one prison to another Kirkpatrick ended up at Stalag Luft III, where he assisted the British POWs in digging tunnels for an elaborate escape plan. He also "procured" Romex and other materials needed in the building of those tunnels while working in the camp's theater. By the end of his military career in 1976 Kirkpatrick rose to the rank of major, and earned numerous medals and citations for his thirty-five years of distinguished service.

Source: Included biography

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains five items kept in a single folder, listed below. It also includes several books, which have been cataloged into Clark Special Collections and are also listed below.

Names: Kirkpatrick, Wallace B.

Keywords and terms: 306th Bombardment Group; Stalag Luft III; World War II; World War, 1939-1945; Prisoner of War (POW); Zagan, Poland; 1940s

ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION

SERIES ONE:

BOX ONE

Folder 1 Documents and Artifacts

- Kirkpatrick Bio
- Steelman, John R. *The Second Year of Peace: Eighth Report to the President, the Senate, & the House of Representatives*. 1946.
- Concentrated food storage pouch that was hidden under an overcoat when the men escaped the prison camp
- WWII Sons of Service pennant
- Nazi pennant

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS: Cataloged Books-See Clark Special Collections Staff

Bove, Arthur P. *First Over Germany: The 306th Bombardment Group in World War II*. N.d.

Glass, Wiley, et al. *369th Squadron Combat Diary, 1942-45*. 306th Bomb Group Historical Association, 1993.

Great Photographs of World War II. New York: The Reader's Digest Association, 1964.

Greening, Ross C. and Angelo M. Spinelli. *The Yankee Kriegies: How Our POWs Made "Little Americas" Behind Nazi Barbed Wire*. N.d.

Leszczyc, S. *Prisoner of War 619/45*. London: Atlantis Publishing Co., Ltd., 1943.

Simmons, Kenneth W. *Kriegie: A Tribute to Man's Ability to Face Despair with Hope; to Find a Ray of Light in the Darkness; to Survive, with Spirit Intact, the Assault of Barbarism on his Love for Home, God and Country*. New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1960.

Strong, Russell A. *Combat Crews: The 306th Bombardment Group (H), 1942-1945*. September 2004.

Strong, Russell A. *First Over Germany: A History of the 306th Bombardment Group*. Winston-Salem, NC: 1982.

Westgate, Charles J., III. *The Reich Wreckers: An Analysis of the 306th Bomb Group During World War II*. N.d.