

SMS 1084
21 November 2022
Schreck, Christopher J.

RYAN, CHARLES E., JR.
1943-1945
LINEAR FT: .5
APPROX. NO. PGS: 400

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Charles Edward Ryan, Jr. was a 2nd Lieutenant in the US Army Air Corps and a prisoner of war at Stalag Luft III, a German prison camp from August 1944 to March 1945. Ryan served in the 568th Bomber Squadron, 390th Bomber Group stationed in Britain as navigator of a B-17 Bomber named "Angel in D'Skies." He flew fifteen combat missions before suffering injuries as he was shot down over the North Sea and captured by German forces. He received a Purple Heart, an Air Medal, and a Prisoner-of-War medal for his actions, and he went on to serve in the Korean Conflict as a navigator instructor. Ryan passed away in 2021 at the age of 97.

These materials were donated to Clark Special Collections in 1994 by Charles E. Ryan through the Friends of the Air Force Academy Library.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection consists of two boxes divided into eight series, outlined in the *Arrangement and Description* section below.

Names: Ryan, Charles E.

Keywords and terms: World War II; World War, 1939-1945; European Theater; United States. Army. Air Corps; US Army Air Corps; 568th Bomber Squadron; 390th Bomber Group; Prisoners of War (POWs); Stalag Luft III; Sagan, Germany; Zagan, Poland; Chicago, Illinois; United States; 1940s

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ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION

SERIES ONE: IDENTITY MATERIALS

BOX 1

Folder 1	Photo/Dog Tag. Photograph of Lt. Charles E. Ryan taken at Stalag Luft III and his POW dog tag, No. 7983
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SERIES TWO: WAR TIME LOG
BOX 1

Folder 2 *War Time Log* produced by Ryan when he was a prisoner at Stalag Luft III, dated 1944. Items include a long list of foods to be eaten after the war, Kriegie slang words, poems, news clippings, and German translated words.

SERIES THREE: CORRESPONDENCE
BOX 1

Folder 3 Letters from War Department to Parents

18 September 1943: Letter to Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ryan from Maj. Gen. C.G. Brant advising them that their son Charles had been classified as a navigator and describing what the position involves.

26 May 1944: Government Insurance Report Form advising Mrs. Ryan that her son had taken out a \$10,000.00 National Service Life Insurance Policy and authorizing a \$6.50 monthly deduction from his pay. Also included is a request for membership in the Army Air Forces Aid Society along with payment of \$5.00 for dues.

31 May 1944: Letter to Mrs. Agnes J. Ryan, from Personal Affairs Office, Dow Field, Bangor, Maine, enclosing forms indicating the amount of insurance in force, any allotments, savings bonds if any are being purchased, and an explanation of the pension system in effect. Also enclosed is a checklist for military personnel confirming this information.

21 August 1944: Letter to Mrs. Agnes J. Ryan from Maj. Gen. J.A. Ulio, Adjutant General, confirming the telegram that her son, 2nd Lt. Charles Ryan, was being listed as missing in action.

6 September 1944: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from the Office of the Fiscal Director, Office of Dependence Benefits, advising her of the continuation of her son's pay and allotments for the next twelve months.

9 September 1944: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Colonel Howard F. Breese, Assistant Director, Prisoner of War Division, advising her that her son was being held as a prisoner of war in an unidentified camp and that he had been wounded, but the extent of his wounds was unknown.

1 November 1944: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Colonel Howard F. Breese, Assistant Director, Prisoner of War Division, advising her that no new information regarding her son had been received and enclosing an address through the International Red Cross Directory in Switzerland and instructions for faster delivery of mail.

21 November 1944: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Colonel Breese advising her that her son had been transferred to Stalag Luft III Prisoner of War Camp. Also enclosed are two copies of Information Circular No. 10 (Germany, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria) and revised mailing instructions (Germany).

25 November 1944: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Colonel Breese, enclosing new revised mailing labels and parcel mailing instructions.

29 November 1944: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Major John R. Crown, Finance Department, advising her that her inquiry about the non-receipt of United States savings bonds had been referred to the proper office for resolution of the problem.

4 December 1944: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Colonel Clyde V. Finter, Chief Personal Affairs Division, Assistant Chief of Air Staff Personnel, enclosing the names of the air crew members that were serving with her son when he was reported missing, along with the names and addresses of their relatives should she want to correspond with them.

15 January 1945: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Major Lee R. Scott, Port Postal Officer, Hampton Roads, advising her that a parcel she had sent to her son had been damaged by a fire, and the damaged goods were being returned to her. She is further advised that a duplicate POW label is enclosed for her use in sending another parcel.

March 1945: Letter to "the Next of Kin of American Prisoners of War in the Hands of the Enemy" from Major General Archer L. Lerch, Provost Marshal General, discussing the treatment of prisoners of war of by the various warring powers and describing the United States' adherence to the Geneva Convention regarding treatment of POWs.

6 August 1945: AAF Personal Affairs Statement pertaining to insurance arrangements made by 2nd Lt. Charles E. Ryan, Jr.

Folder 4 Letters and Cards from Crew Members' Families

18 September 1944: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. J.L. Stubbs describing that she had received a censored letter from her son and expressing the hope that Mrs. Ryan had heard from hers.

26 Sep 1944: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. J.L. Stubbs, the mother of Beverly Wayne Stubbs, one of Charles Ryan's crewmen also taken prisoner, asking if Mrs. Ryan had an address for their sons. Enclosed is a picture of Beverly Wayne Stubbs, age 21.

11 October 1944: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. Stubbs, enclosing the addresses for Stalag Luft III, and Mrs. J.J. Sproul, grandmother of Harold Sproul, the co-pilot of the plane Charles Ryan was in.

16 October 1944: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. L.B. Hanson, describing how she felt when 10 letters she had written to her son were returned to her marked "Missing."

17 October 1944: Postcard to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. H.H. Moore advising her that she had just heard a foreign broadcast on the radio stating that 2nd Lt. Charles Ryan is a POW in Germany.

17 October 1944: Postcard to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. C.P. Skilton, advising her of the same message referred to in Mrs. Moore's postcard.

17 October 1944: Postcard to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. Wilma Gerlin relaying the same message as above.

17 October 1944: Postcard to Mrs. Ryan from Gustave A. Magnuson relaying the same message as above.

17 October 1944: Postcard to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. Edgar Dudley relaying the same message as above.

17 October 1944: Postcard to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. Newton White relaying the same message as above.

21 November 1944: Christmas card to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. J.J. Sproul, requesting that if she writes to her son Charles not mention her own ill health for fear that Charles would mention it to her grandson and make things harder to bear for him.

24 November 1944: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. Stubbs, advising her that her son Wayne is in the same camp as Mrs. Ryan's son Charles.

8 December 1944: Christmas card to Mrs. Ryan from the Stubbs family.

10 December 1944: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Duel Hicks, mother of S/Sgt. Russell E. Hicks who was a member of the crew of Charles's plane. She relates that her son wrote to tell her that all the crew got out alive.

12 December 1944: Christmas card to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. Ida Campbell, stating that she had not yet had any message pertaining to her son Don and asking that when she writes to Charles to inquire how Don was injured.

15 December 1944: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. Thelma Shea Hoy, stating that she had received information that her son S/Sgt. Warren R. Shea was a POW and asking if she has any additional information.

30 December 1944: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Matie Hanson stating that she had a postcard from her son Clay, dated 31 August.

3 January 1945: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. Rose Peragallo whose son was a member of Charles's crew and expressing the hope that they would be home soon.

13 January 1945: Empty envelope addressed to Mrs. Agnes J. Ryan, no contents.

28 January 1945: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. Jewell Hicks saying that she had received a letter from her son that said he was being treated reasonably well.

February 1945: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Lt. Ivan Moody stating that he was being repatriated because due to his injuries and had lived in the same barracks as Charles Ryan. He goes on to say that her son is in good health and had been shot down near the English Channel.

22 April 1945: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. Hicks inquiring how wounded POWs were being held.

13 May 1945: Letter to Mrs. Ryan from Lt. Ivan Moody, congratulating her upon the news of "Chuck's" liberation.

14 May 1945: Postcard to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. Sinclair advising her that her son S/Sgt. Raymond B. Sinclair had been liberated.

18 May 1945: Postcard to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. Jewell Hicks saying that her son Russell had sent her a cable wishing her a happy Mother's Day.

19 May 1945: Postcard to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. Stubbs, telling her of her son Wayne's liberation.

22 May 1945: Postcard to Mrs. Ryan from Mrs. Edna Shea telling her that her son Warren had been liberated.

Folder 5 Telegrams and postcards from Charles Ryan to/from his family, August 1944-May 1945. Includes German currency.

SERIES FOUR: NOTEBOOK
BOX 1

Folder 6 Notebook with metal cover made from a Rose Mill Paté can, containing the days and distances marched during the evacuation to Moosburg. Also included is a short list of fellow POWs and German words and their English translation,

SERIES FIVE: NEWSPAPERS
BOX 1

Folder 7 Periodicals

Stars and Stripes

28 April 1945: "Yanks Meet Reds"

2 May 1945: "Hitler Dead"

5 May 1945: "Germans Surrender in Holland, Denmark; 7th and 5th Link Up"

7 May 1945: "Total Surrender Near"

8 May 1945: "VICTORY Nazis Reveal Surrender to Western Allies, Russia"

9 May 1945: "Allied World Celebrates as Peace Comes To ETO"

11 May 1945: "Here's GI Discharge Plan"

12 May 1945: "Troop Shift Plan Brings Big Army Reorganization"

Miami Daily News

14 August 1945: "U.S. Accepts Surrender"

Miscellaneous

Photocopies of articles pertaining to early aviation

SERIES SIX: UTENSILS
BOX 1

Folder 8 Utensils. One knife and one fork with swastikas, and one handmade Ruler

SERIES SEVEN: PHOTOGRAPHS
BOX 1

Folder 9 Photograph of crew in front of B-17 Bomber

SERIES EIGHT: SCRAPBOOKS
PACKAGE 1

Scrapbooks Two scrapbooks containing images and text from various newspapers and magazines produced in the Chicago area in the 1930s and 1940s. These scrapbooks were assembled by Ryan as a "teenager in love with aviation."

Most of the images and text are about aircraft, aircraft production, and the use of aircraft for military purposes, as well as Howard Hughes' around-the-world flight of 1938 and "Wrong Way" Corrigan's flight to Dublin, Ireland.