

Gettysburg College
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Guide to MS-301:
WWII Associated Press Photo Collection



Gettysburg College, Musselman Library
Special Collections and College Archives

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MS-301: WWII Associated Press Photo Collection

Processed by Sydney Dyer
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Size

7 boxes, 2.5 cubic feet

Dates

Inclusive: 1927-1945

Bulk: 1943-1944

Provenance

This collection was acquired through Between the Covers Rare Books in 2022.

Historical Note

These photos were collected by the editor of the *Waterbury Republican and American*, which were newspapers published in Connecticut. The editor put many of these photos into folders organized by subjects, that original order has been, for the most part, retained in this collection. The rest of the photographs may once have been organized this way, shown by the labelled folders included in the collection without a corresponding folder of photos.

The Associated Press is a news outlet founded in 1846 and has received numerous awards for its journalism and photography over its lifespan. In 1935, Associated Press launched their Wirephoto network, which allowed them to convert images into sound signals that were sent using electrical impulses through telephone wires. Images were then printed by the receiving news outlets. This revolutionary delivery of images allowed AP to distribute their photos to papers all across the country, and their investment in the machines related to Wirephoto made them a leader of this technology.

It has been recently revealed through an internal report that the Associated Press cooperated with the Nazi Regime during World War II by allowing them to use their photography, which led to it being used for Nazi propaganda. It was found that while most of the images used by the Nazis from the Associated Press were not altered, the captions were always changed to match with Nazi propaganda. The AP was kicked out of Germany in 1941 when the U.S. entered the war, and the internal report concluded that the AP had acted as an independent news source and had no involvement in what the images were used for.

The United States Army Signal Corps also had a hand in deciding which images could go out to the public, and when, depending on if the images and captioned published contained sensitive military information. The Signal Corps is a branch of the army dedicated to managing communications around military operations of all kinds, especially during times of war. They developed communication systems for the military, as well as oversaw the sharing of military information with the public through the news.

Many of the images and captions had to be approved by the Signal Corps before they could be sent out, and even then many captions came with notes on when photos were allowed to be published.

Scope and Content Note

This is a collection of black and white press photographs from the Associated Press. Most photos are 7 by 9 inches, each with its own attached original caption. There is a variety of subjects, settings, and people depicted in these images, many of soldiers training for or participating in battle or of helpful infographics for readers. Another large portion of the photographs are of explosions, plane crashes, or other events in history to be reported on, though the quality of these types of images tend to be lower than the others. There are also a handful of photographs of famous people in the corresponding folder as well as throughout, such as Winston Churchill and Adolf Hitler.

The captions also offer helpful insights into both the specific contents of the photographs as well as their journalistic use. Many captions include a warning on publishing dates from the U.S. War Department due to the nature of the military information the photos and captions have.

There is also a variety of photographs that were unlabeled, missing information, or unrelated to the WWII focus of the collection. These photos have been added to their own folder, with subjects ranging from a portrait of Richard Barthelmess, a silent film actor who enrolled in the Navy for WWII; to a the shipwreck of the Tzeeny Chandris off the coast of Cape Hatteras in 1937; to several photos of pilots trying to complete the first non-stop flight from California to Hawaii in the Dole Air Race in 1927. There is also a printed page and a seemingly letter pressed piece of cardboard with the same article on it about the M-18 Tank called the "Hellcat," but no dates can be found for when it was published.

Series Description

This collection is divided into 3 Series. **Series 1:** Subject Groupings, **Series 2:** Date Groupings, **Series 3:** Envelopes and Empty Folders.

Box List

Box 1

Series 1: Subject Groupings

- 1-1 Famous Men of World War 2
- 1-2 Russia
- 1-3 Italy

Box 2

Series Continued

- 2-1 Sicily
- 2-2 Marshall Islands, Eniwetok, Kwajalein
- 2-3 New Guinea December 10, 1942
- 2-4 Aleutian Islands, Attu May 15, 1943, Kiska August 22, 1943

2-5 Solomon Islands, Guadalcanal August 7, 1942, Russell Islands May, Rendova June 30, 1943, New Georgia July 5, 1943, Vella Lavella August 15, 1943, Bougainville October 29, 1943

Box 3

Series Continued

3-1 Gilbert Islands, Tarawa November 22, 1943, Makin November 22, 1943
3-2 New Britain December 17, 1943
3-3 Admiralty Islands, Los Negros February 29, 1944
3-4 Miscellaneous

Series 2: Date Groupings

3-5 1940 and 1941

Box 4

Series Continued

4-1 1942
4-2 1943 January-March
4-3 1943 April-June

Box 5

Series Continued

5-1 1943 July 1st-16th
5-2 1943 July 17th-31st

Box 6

Series Continued

6-1 1943 August
6-2 1943 September-December
6-3 1944

Box 7

Series 3: Envelopes and Empty Folders

7-1 Empty Letter Envelopes
7-2 Empty Photo Envelopes

Sources

“AP publishes review of Germany operations before and during World War II.” Associated Press. Associated Press, May 10, 2017. <https://www.ap.org/press-releases/2017/ap-publishes-review-of-germany-operations-before-and-during-world-war-ii>

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Schnurmacher, Emile C. "Wire That Picture!" Popular Mechanics, September, 1937.

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Related Collections

MS-248 Walter Lane WWII Photographs

Contact Information

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