

J. Russell Major papersMS.0432

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1942-1945

Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

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Unit ID

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Unit Date

1942-1945

Language

English .

Creator

Major, J. Russell (James Russell), 1921-1998

Extent

2 cubic feet

Physical Location

Manuscripts stacks

Repository

Virginia Military Institute Archives

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access

There are no restrictions

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Biographical / Historical

James Russell Major (1921-1998) graduated from VMI in 1942. During World War II he served in the United States Army (Field Artillery) and was stationed in the European Theater of Operations with the 949th Field Artillery Battalion as a forward artillery observer. Following the War, Major attended graduate school at Princeton University where he earned his Ph.D in History. A noted authority on French and European history, he was a Professor at Emory University (Georgia) from 1949 to 1990 and was instrumental in building the history program there.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of J. Russell Major's World War II papers, including: Correspondence to his parents (dated 1942-1945). The early letters cover his training as a field artillery officer at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma (1942-1944) and other United States bases, including Laurinburg-Maxton Army Air Base (Glider School) and Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. Letters from July 1944 to May 1945 date from his service as a forward artillery observer in France and Germany. Military orders (1942-1945) Papers relating to his awards (Silver Star, Bronze Star, and Purple Heart). Service record Notes relating to his United States Army career. Four volumes of the United States Army official history (European Theater), with one volume annotated by Major. Major's World War II reminiscences, based in part on the correspondence in this collection, were published in 1999 under the title "The Memoirs of an Artillery Forward Observer, 1944-1945." This book is in Preston Library's rare book collection.

Related Materials

Papers relating to Major's professional career are located at Emory University [here](#).

Keywords

Virginia Military Institute—Class of 1942
United States. Army—Officers—Biography
Virginia Military Institute—Alumni—Biography
World War, 1939-1945—Personal narratives
Correspondence
Orders (military records)
Military decorations
Books
Notes
Military records