

World War I soldiers diary and papers

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1915-09-1917-04



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS 16717

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Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/1410

Unit Date

1915-09-1917-04

Mixed Materials

BW 49 (box)

Container

1/1 (folder)

Language

English

Extent

0.03 Cubic Feet 1 folder Letter size folder

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research use.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was purchased by the Small Special Collections Library from Marc Selvaggio Books, Ephemera, and Photography at the University of Virginia Library on 18 June, 2019.

Preferred Citation

MSS 16717, World War I soldier diary and papers, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia Library.

Content Description

A concisely written diary documenting the realities of life on the Western Front as experienced by chemical warfare soldiers in the British Army. The diarist makes his first proper entry upon being transferred from the Machine Gun Section to the Chemical Section in September 1915, only a few weeks before the first British mobilization of chemical weapons during the Battle of Loos. Following his month-long training at Helfaut, he is attached to the 15th section of the 187th Company, first entering the trenches on December 17, where for the next year and a half he would manage the supply, disposal, and potential bombardment of gas shells. The diary ends suddenly on April 15, 1917, after a series of hurried entries referring to the diarist's work with the advancing artillery in the Somme Offensive. It is not known if the diarist lived to see the final Armistice in 1918.

Preserved within the book's rear inside sleeve, five wartime currency notes (issued from the war Front towns of d'Amiens, Bethune, Havre, St.Omer, and Treport), one reinforced clipping of an overly patriotic WWI poem by Harold Begbie ("Fall in!"), and a gelatin silver print, presumably depicting the diarist, in uniform, on a dispatch motorcycle.

Keywords

diaries

Black-and-white photographs

World War, 1914-1918 -- Personal narratives, British