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Schenectady County Historical Society
32 Washington Ave., Schenectady, NY 12305
(518) 374-0263
librarian@schenectadyhistorical.org

Guide to the Fayette W. Clifford World War II Collection

Creator: Clifford, Fayette W., 1917 – 1984

Accession Number: 2019.18

Extent: 0.42 linear feet (1 full-size document box containing 20 folders)

Source: Military belongings of Fayette W. Clifford of Schenectady

Inclusive Dates: 1943 – 1960

Bulk Dates: 1944 - 1946

Access: Access to materials in this collection is unrestricted.

Abstract: The Fayette W. Clifford World War II collection consists materials from the military career of Fayette W. Clifford.

Catalog Terms:

Clifford, Fayette W., 1917 – 1984

Clifford, Fayette, 1917 – 1984

World War II

Scope and Content Note:

The Fayette W. Clifford World War II collection consists largely of small- and medium-sized photographs taken during Clifford's military service in the Philippines. Additional items include typed letters, citations and certificates; newspaper clippings; army publications; handwritten manuscript pages; and a few small artifacts. The collection also includes an assortment of military patches and pins, but because these are in the care of the Schenectady County Historical Society museum rather than the archives they are not included in this finding aid.

Biographical Note:

Fayette W. Clifford was born in 1917 in Schenectady, NY to John V. Clifford and his wife Annette E. Clifford. After graduating from Nott Terrace High School he found employment as a production clerk for General Electric. In September of 1943 he joined the service and began basic training at Camp Blanding, FL, as a Private First Class in the 126th Regiment of the famed 32nd Infantry Division.

The “Red Arrow” Division, as it was popularly known, was first formed in 1917 from Army National Guard units from Wisconsin and Michigan. It gained distinction during World War I when it became the first Allied division to pierce the German Hindenburg Line of defense. The division later adopted a shoulder patch with the image of a line shot through with a red arrow to signify their tenacity in that endeavor.

During World War II, the 32nd Infantry was deployed to the Pacific theater. It became the first American division to be moved in a single convoy from the United States to the front lines in April 1942, and was among the very first to enter combat. General MacArthur ordered parts of the 32nd Infantry to Papua New Guinea in September 1942 in response to Allied fears of a Japanese invasion of Australia. From November 1942 to January 1943 they engaged the Japanese in eastern New Guinea in the Battle of Buna-Gona. Although the battle was technically an Allied victory, the reliance on ill-informed, deficient intelligence and poor logistics made it an extremely costly one. The 32nd Infantry Division, already weakened by an extremely difficult 130-mile march on the harsh Kapa Kapa Trail, was decimated both by the brutal battle and by tropical diseases; the 126th regiment was the hardest hit.

In March 1943 the 32nd Infantry returned to Australia for recovery and to begin training replacements. Clifford would have come into the service as one of these replacements in March 1944, specifically as a regimental personnel clerk. The 32nd Infantry was redeployed to Papua New Guinea in October 1943, where it continued training. Starting in January 1944 it took part in Operation Cartwheel, MacArthur’s “leap-frog” plan to take strategic points for use as forward bases, and the Western New Guinea campaign. Clifford served specifically in the latter, engaging in combat at the Landing of Aitape (part of Operation Persecution), a battle which lasted from late April until late August 1944.

He served in the following Battle of Morotai, (starting in September 1944) until the 32nd Infantry’s command division opened at Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea in October, setting the stage for the Allied advance into the Japanese-occupied Philippines. Clifford then took part in the Battle of Leyte, codenamed “King Two,” the invasion of the Philippines by American and Filipino guerilla forces for the recapture and liberation of the entire archipelago. The campaign for Leyte, which lasted from October to December 1944, proved to be the first and most decisive operation in the American Philippines campaign (1944 – 1945).

The 32nd Infantry moved on to Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, in January 1945, fighting up the Villa Verde Trail for 119 days and taking Imugan as part of the Battle of Luzon. In May it met up with the 25th Infantry Division and took the Balete pass, though whether Clifford was part of this force or part of the division elements that stayed in Imugan as part of the mopping-up efforts is unclear. Regardless, for his exemplary conduct under fire during Luzon Clifford was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge.

After being discharged in January 1946 following the close of the war, Clifford was also awarded the Bronze Star in April of that same year in recognition of his twenty-two months of service. His additional commendations include: the Good Conduct Metal, the American Campaign Medal (referred to as the “ATO ribbon,” presumably for “American Theater of

Operations”) with three battle stars, the Philippine Liberation Medal, the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation (awarded to the entire 32nd division), the Distinguished Unit Citation (also awarded to the entire division, for its service in Papua New Guinea), the World War II Victory Medal (referred to in the 1940s as the “Victory Ribbon”).

Fayette W. Clifford married Frances Gifford in 1949, and passed away in 1984.

Organization Note:

The photographs in this collection are divided by size and subject. The photograph sizes are split between small, medium, and medium-large. Small photographs are those which are defined as “wallet-sized,” measuring 2.5 x 3 inches, 2.5 x 1.75 inches, or 2.625 x 2.625 inches. Medium photographs are those which are slightly larger and may or may not be considered “wallet-sized,” measuring 3 x 3 inches or 3.125 x 4 inches. Medium-large photographs are of various sizes (standard, somewhat smaller than standard, and larger than standard), but none can be considered “wallet-sized”; they measure 3.25 x 4.5 inches or 4 x 6 inches.

Finding Aid Created By/Date: Angela Matyi, March 2019

Folder Item/Listing:

Folder	Item Title
1	Photographs – Individuals: American (Small)
2	Photographs – Individuals: Filipino, Japanese (Small)
3	Photographs – Pairs and Groups (Small)
4	Photographs – Landscapes and Buildings (Small)
5	Photographs – Individuals (Medium)
6	Photographs – Pairs and Groups (Medium)
7	Photographs – Landscapes and Buildings (Medium)
8	Photographs – Individuals (Medium-Large)
9	Photographs – Pairs and Groups (Medium-Large)
10	Photographs – Landscapes and Buildings (Medium-Large)
11	Photographs – Album Pages
12	Manuscript Pages
13	Newspaper Clippings (1944 – 1946)
14	Army Correspondence (May 1944 – Oct. 1945)
15	Letters of Thanks
16	Citations, Certificates (Undated; 1944 – 1960)
17	Military News (Oct. 1945; Undated)
18	“Combat History of the 32d Inf Division”
19	Artifacts – Pocket Bible; Japanese Business Card
20	Photographs – Duplicates