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2nd Lt. Eugene Sherwin Collection

Creator: Eugene Sherwin (a.k.a. Eugene Czerwinski) (1917—1944) and family
Dates: 1940-2001
Quantity: 0.2 linear feet, 1 box plus separated material
Acquisition: Donated by Camille Einoder, December 15, 2006; May 2008
Identification: PMML ID# 320616, Call# PAPERS 00005, OCLC# 163572242
Citation: [Document Title]. The 2nd Lt. Eugene Sherwin Collection, [Box #, Folder #], Pritzker Military Museum & Library, Chicago, IL.
Language: English and Polish
Finding Aid: Written by Sarah Doherty, August 2007; Additions by Devin Hunter, May 2008; Updated by Andrea Martinez, 2018

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Biographical Note

2nd Lt. Sherwin enlisted with the Army Air Corps on October 25, 1940 and was initially stationed at Wheeler Field, HI. In the year leading up to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, 2nd Lt. Sherwin undertook training in all aspects of the communication section with the 46th Pursuit Squadron F.

On December 7, 1941, having come off of guard duty at three in the morning, 2nd Lt. Sherwin was hastily informed by a comrade to get up because the Japanese were attacking the American fleet stationed at Pearl Harbor and the surrounding air fields. In leaving his barracks he witnessed a bomb hit the 6th Squadron barracks and the chaos that ensued. 2nd Lt. Sherwin, along with his good friend Bill Truminen, scrambled to set up communication with General Headquarters and spent the rest of the day helping to extinguish fires in surrounding hangars and tend to the casualties. As a result of 2nd Lt. Sherwin's actions during the attack on Pearl Harbor, he received accommodations for his bravery shown while under fire.

After Pearl Harbor, 2nd Lt. Sherwin went through a series of quick promotions to make him eligible to apply for Officer's Candidate School. He came highly recommended by his superiors and former employers for his diligent work ethic, excellent character, courage under fire, and above average intellect.

On October 12, 1942 2nd Lt. Sherwin received orders to report to Officer's Candidate School (Signal Corps) at Fort Monmouth, NJ. He completed all the required training in March 1943 and became a non-commissioned officer with the rank of second lieutenant. 2nd Lt. Sherwin was assigned to the 2nd Photographic Squadron of the 311th Reconnaissance Wing of the U.S. Army Air Forces. The United States and United Kingdom have yet to declassify intelligence from WWII, thus little is known about 2nd Lt. Sherwin's wartime contributions once he was assigned to Army intelligence.

On August 15, 1944 upon exiting a swimming pool in Oxford, England, 2nd Lt. Sherwin succumbed to an acute subarachnoid hemorrhaging of the brain. He was pronounced dead on September 4, 1944 at the army hospital in Oxford. He was buried at the Cambridge American Cemetery established in the village of Madingley, Cambridgeshire on property donated by the University of Cambridge. 2nd Lt. Sherwin's name appears on the WWII Roll of Honour in St. Paul's Cathedral, London in recognition of his unending service to god and country.

In his early life, 2nd Lt. Sherwin resided in Chicago, IL. He was the son of devout Polish immigrants. According to the 1920 United States Federal Census, 2nd Lt. Sherwin's parents Leo and Lilly Czerwinski immigrated to the United States from Poland in 1901 and 1902 respectively. He was born on February 16, 1917 and was one of the younger children in the Czerwinski family.

2nd Lt. Sherwin attended LaFayette Grammar School and then graduated from Murray F. Tuley High School. Initially, he intended to be a draftsman, but temporarily put his aspirations on hold to enlist with the U.S. Army Air Corps. His enlistment record reveals a change in name from the family name Czerwinski to a less ethnic-sounding Sherwin.

He was immediately assigned to 46th Squadron F, Wheeler Field, Hawaii, as a radio operator and mechanic. Upon his non-combat related death, members of the Czerwinski family actively corresponded with the War Department in hopes of gaining more details about the death and burial of 2nd Lt. Sherwin. At some point during the war he was awarded the Purple Heart.

On May 3, 1947 he was posthumously honored at the Sherwin-Banek Post No. 98 American Veterans of WWII First Annual Dance.

Scope and Content of the Collection

The collection contains personal papers of 2nd Lt. Eugene R. Sherwin (a.k.a. Eugene R. Czerwinski) as well as postwar correspondence and photographs pertaining to his death and burial in Cambridge American Cemetery. The bulk of the collection concerns the years 1940-44. Majority of the photographs and papers during this timeframe pertain to 2nd Lt. Sherwin's service at Wheeler Field, HI and his subsequent promotions that led him to Officer's Candidate School (Signal Corps) at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey.

The collection includes 2nd Lt. Sherwin's handwritten personal account of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. In addition, there is a copy and translation of a handwritten letter from 2nd Lt. Sherwin from Signal Corps Fort Monmouth to his mother. It was originally written in Polish on Christmas Eve 1942.

Also included in the collection are some receipts, 2nd Lt. Sherwin's application for Officer's Candidate School with supporting letters of recommendation, and various special orders and an affidavit pertaining to 2nd Lt. Sherwin. In addition, there is a list of instructions for passengers and troops aboard a navy vessel and behavior manual for the non-commissioned officer. Furthermore, there are letters from the War Department to 2nd Lt. Sherwin's widow, Mrs. Donna M. Sherwin, confirming the death of her husband and another letter to his brother Danny Czerwinski providing more details on the death of 2nd Lt. Sherwin.

The collection also includes personal photographs of 2nd Lt. Sherwin on base at Wheeler Field in Hawaii. In addition, there are photographs taken by his great niece Camille Einroder of his grave, the memorials, and chapel at Cambridge American Cemetery. There are also some dried clover leaves taken from 2nd Lt. Sherwin's grave. Furthermore, there is a document that provides a history and description of the Cambridge American Cemetery.

Additionally, there is an assortment of 2nd Lt. Sherwin's promotion certificates, course completion certificates, and awards. There is also correspondence of Camille Einroder with Ms. Elizabeth Popowski, the Illinois World War II Memorial Project and St. Paul's Cathedral, London.

Arrangement

The collection arrived with no discernable arrangement and was rearranged in a more efficient working order by PMML staff. The collection is contained within one archival box.

Rights

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Separations

Accompanying the Sherwin collection is a commemorative flag display box containing 2nd Lt. Sherwin's funeral flag, a memorial pamphlet, a photograph of his grave, and his Purple Heart Medal. This box is located in the PMML realia collection and is available to researchers upon request.

Two issues of the newsletter *Wheeler Windsock* (Wheeler Field, Hawaii, 1942) have been catalogued separately and are housed in the Library's Rare Serials location.

Key Subjects

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the Library's online catalog. Researchers interested in materials about related topics, persons, or places should search the catalog using these subject headings.

Subjects

Pearl Harbor (Hawaii)—attack on, 1941
United States—Army—Signal Corps
World War, 1939-1945—personal narratives
World War, 1939-1945—correspondence

Detailed Description of the Collection

Folder One

Letters and journal entries, December 1941

Journal entry: "Remember Pearl Harbor," copy one (two pages)

Journal entry: "Remember Pearl Harbor," copy two (one page)

Journal entry: "A sharp 'Get Up'..." (eight pages)

Journal entry: "Lt. Rasmusen each got..." (two pages)

ALS from Sherwin to mother (photocopy) in Polish, December 24, 1942

English translation of December 24, 1942 ALS

**Folder Two
Reprimand**

Receipts, Credentials, Letters of Recommendation and

Letter of Enlistment in the US Army, October 25, 1940

“Instructions for Cabin Passengers and Troops,” Capt. ER Johnson,
USN, n.d.

Letter of Recommendation from Henry Crown, Material Service
Corporation, Chicago, June 2, 1941

Letter of Recommendation from Lilly Varnish Company, Indianapolis,
IN (Chicago Branch), July 1, 1941

Application for Attendance at Officers’ Candidate School, Wheeler
Field, HI, February 12, 1942 (two pages)

Affadavit, Honolulu County Court declaring no civil or military court
convictions, February 17, 1942

Position Description for non-commissioned officers, Headquarters 7th
Interceptor Command, n.d. (four pages)

Letter of Recommendation from Lt. Paul Fojtik, AAF, n.d.

Letter of Recommendation from Lt. HM McCloskey, AAF, 15th Fighter
Group, July 20, 1942

Letter of Recommendation from Lt. Eldon Stratton, AAF, 46th Fighter
Squadron, August 16, 1942

Special Orders No. 280, Fort Shafter, HI, Headquarters Hawaii
Department

Drew Field Headquarters Section Army Emergency Relief repayment
receipt, February 1, 1944

Investigation file (four pages): violation of AR 600-40, C-16—“wearing
a field jacket while entering the base on 11 Nov 43”

Bachelor Officer’s Mess No. 2, Drew Field receipt

AWUTC Officers Mess, Drew Field dues receipt

Folder Three Correspondence: 2nd Lt. Sherwin's Death and Grave

Letter to Donna Sherwin from Maj. Gen. JA Ulio, September 18, 1944 confirming "telegram of recent date informing you of the death of your husband"

Letter to Leo Czerwinski from the Veterans Administration, October 3, 1944

Letter to Danny G. Czerwinski from Maj. Gen. Edward Witsell, January 22, 1947, "in reply to your letter in which you request information relative to your brother"

American Battle Monuments Commission, August 1982: Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial

Card from Scott Troehler, Illinois World War II Memorial Project, January 31, 2000

Letter to Camille Einoder from John Seymour, St. Paul's Cathedral London, November 13, 2001: "...I am pleased to enclose a photograph of the entry of 2nd Lt E Sherwin USAAF from the Roll of Honour:

Folder Four Photographs and News Clippings

Subset 1: Family photographs

Eugene Czerwinski (Sherwin), first communion

Eugene Czerwinski (Sherwin), school portrait

Eugene Czerwinski (Sherwin), school portrait (colorized)

Eugene and Donna Sherwin, wedding portrait (seated)

Eugene and Donna Sherwin, wedding portrait (standing)

Subset 2: Army photographs

Hawaii scenic photographs (four)

Eugene Sherwin in Hawaii (six)

Newspaper Clippings: "Honolulu War Diary" by Laselle Gilman, n.d.
(two)

Eugene Sherwin, unknown locations (four)

Subset 3: Cambridge American Memorial Cemetery photographs

Photographs of Lt. Sherwin's grave and memorial listing (three)

Memorial park photographs (four)

Clover from Lt. Sherwin's grave

Folder Five

Certificates and awards

US Army Air Corps, Wheeler Field, Hawaii: Communications, August 8, 1941

Hawaiian Air Force Technical School, Wheeler Field Branch:

Certificate of Proficiency in Radio Technicians Course, August 8, 1941

Army of the United States: appointment to Corporal (temporary), February 24, 1942

US Army Air Corps, Air Corps Institute, Scott Field, Illinois: Certificate of Graduation in Arithmetic, May 6, 1942

Army of the United States: appointment to Sergeant (temporary), May 15, 1942

Army of the United States: appointment to Staff Sgt. (temporary), August 1, 1942

Eastern Signal Corps Schools, Monmouth, New Jersey: Certificate of Completion of Officer Candidate School, March 6, 1943

Eastern Signal Corps Schools, Monmouth, New Jersey: Certificate of Completion of Field Radio Communication Course, May 1, 1943

Third Air Force Camouflage School, Walterboro Army Air Field, South Carolina: Certificate of Completion for Military Camouflage, June 26, 1943

Headquarters Army Air Base, Drew Field, Florida: Certificate of Proficiency for Unit Gas Officer, November 19, 1943

Army Air Forces Air Intelligence School, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Diploma for Photo Intelligence, March 31, 1944