

PRITZKER MILITARY MUSEUM & LIBRARY

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312-374-9333

William J. O'Brien Collection

Creator: William J. O'Brien
Dates: 1941-2001
Quantity: 2 linear feet
Acquisition: Donated by Timothy State, December 24, 2012
Identification: PMML ID# 800142, OCLC# 855210450, Call# PAPERS 00134
Citation: [Document Title]. The William J. O'Brien Collection, [Box #, Folder #], Pritzker Military Museum & Library, Chicago, IL.
Location: Annex
Language: English
Finding Aid: Rebecca Freitag, 2013; Updated by Andrea Martinez, 2018

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Biographical Note

William J. O'Brien was born in June 12, 1913 in Muscatine, Iowa. He served in the Army with Company K, 168th Infantry, 34th Infantry Division. He was in the war from 1941 to 1945, serving in the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign, getting captured by Italian troops, and then transferred to a German prisoner of war camp, where he remained for two years until it was liberated. He received the Bronze Star for his service, and died in 1987.

Scope and Content of the Collection

This collection consists of letters, photos, medals, uniform decorations, and newspaper clippings all relating to the service of William J. O'Brien who was a Private First Class in the African/Middle Eastern Theater in WWII.

Arrangement

The collection arrived with no discernible arrangement, and was rearranged by PMML staff into 1 slim legal box, an artifact box, 2 small square boxes and an oversize box. The collection was also arranged into series according to Digitized Materials and Scrapbooks and Newspaper clippings.

Series One: Digitized Material

This series includes CDs that have scanned documents relating to the POW experience of William J. O'Brien, from two scrapbooks.

Series Two: Scrapbooks and Newspaper Clippings

This series includes two scrapbooks of letters and newspaper clippings from William J. O'Brien's POW and overseas war experience.

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Separations

Item ID	Description
800142100	Combat Infantryman Badge
800142101	Combat Infantryman Badge
800142102	34th Division Shoulder Sleeve Insignia
800142103	Company K Collar Disc
800142104	Fur Leistungen In Der H.J. (For Proficiency In the Hitler Youth)
800142105	PFC Insignia
800142106	PFC Insignia
800142107	Army Service Bars

800142108	135th Infantry Regiment, 34th Infantry Division Distinctive Unit Insignia
800142109	168th Infantry Regiment, 34th Infantry Division Distinctive Unit Insignia
800142110	VFW Pin
800142111	1941 Maneuvers National Defenders of the USA Pin
800142112	Italian Coin
800142113	Ribbon Row
800142114	American Defense Service Medal
800142115	Prisoner of War Medal
800142116	European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal
800142117	Victory WWII Medal
800142118	Army Good Conduct Medal
800142119	Bronze Star Medal

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.

Names

O'Brien, William J., 1913-1987

Subjects

World War, 1939-1945--Campaigns--Africa, North.
World War, 1939-1945--Campaigns--Europe.
World War, 1939-1945--Campaigns--Middle East.
World War, 1939-1945--Prisoners.

Container List

Box	Folder	Item ID #	Title	Dates
Series One: Digitized Material				
1	1		Digitized Materials	1941-1945
			Digitized materials CD	n.d.
			Digitized materials CD	n.d.
			O'Brien Family History	n.d.
			Timeline and inventory list	n.d.
			Appendix A- People referenced in William's letters	n.d.
			Appendix B- People who wrote to O'Brien's parents	n.d.
			Transcript of Scrapbook Materials	1941-1945
			Copies of letters to Headquarters IX Corps on O'Brien's POW experience	1944-1945
			Original Photo of William J. O'Brien	n.d.
			Series Two: Scrapbooks and Newspaper Clippings	2001
	2		Medal Paperwork	6/8/2001
		800142001	Authorization for Issuance of Awards	6/8/2001
		800142002	Authorization for Issuance of Awards	6/8/2001
		800142003	Certification for Issuance of Medals	n.d.
	3		Miscellaneous Newspaper Clippings	n.d.
		800142004	"Nazi Praised Iowans' Fight at Faid Pass"	n.d.
		800142005	"Italians Fired Upon By German Force in Africa"	n.d.
		800142006	"Brother, Sister Serve"	n.d.

800142007	"Reveal How Italian Sub Sank Vessel"	n.d.
800142008	"William O'Brien Is Listed With Missing"	n.d.

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Scrapbook One

1941-1945

800142009	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from Thomas Martin, Congressman	3/24/1943
800142010	"Another Contingent Goes to Camp"	5/28/1941
800142011	Postcard from William O'Brien to Mr. Earl State	7/4/1941
800142012	Postcard from William O'Brien to Mr. Earl State	7/16/1941
800142013	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	1/4/1942
800142014	Letter to Mother from William O'Brien	1/12/1942
800142015	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	1942
800142016	Letter to Mother from William O'Brien	n.d.
800142017	Postcard from William O'Brien to Mr. & Mrs. Earl State	1942
800142018	Notice of Change of Address	3/17/1942
800142019	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	5/11/1942
800142020	Letter to his family from William O'Brien	5/26/1942
800142021	Letter to Bob from William O'Brien	6/13/1942
800142022	Letter to his family from William O'Brien	6/15/1942
800142023	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	6/1942
800142024	Letter to Mother from William O'Brien	6/30/1942
800142025	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. Earl State from William O'Brien	7/20/1942

800142026	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	7/11/1942
800142027	Letter to Mother from William O'Brien	9/3/1942
800142028	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. Earl State from William O'Brien	9/4/1942
800142029	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. Earl State from William O'Brien	9/19/1942
800142030	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. Earl State from William O'Brien	n.d.
800142031	Letter to his family from William O'Brien	11/12/1942
800142032	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. Earl State from William O'Brien	12/28/1942
800142033	Letter to Bob from William O'Brien	12/29/1942
800142034	Letter to Genevieve State from William O'Brien	2/17/1943
800142035	Letter to Bert Budelier from William O'Brien	2/22/1943
800142036	"Bartelt, Tadewald Listed With Missing"	3/9/1943
800142037	"William O'Brien Is Listed With Missing"	n.d.
800142038	POW Postcard to O'Brien Family	3/2/1943
800142039	"Herring's Son Among Missing" from The Des Moines Register	3/9/1943
800142040	Letter to his family from William O'Brien	3/9/1943
800142041	"Status of Local Soldier Prisoner Still Indefinite"	n.d.
800142042	"O'Brien Held in Italian Prison Camp, Army Says"	n.d.
800142043	Letter to Genevieve State from William O'Brien	3/9/1943
800142044	Sympathy Card to the O'Brien family from J.P. and Irma Hickey	n.d.

800142045	Letter to the O'Brien family from Mrs. Tom Hackett	n.d.
800142046	Letter to the O'Brien family from Felicitas	3/17/1943
800142047	Letter to his family from William O'Brien	3/20/1943
800142048	Letter to the O'Brien family from Mr. & Mrs. C.D. Sterner	3/17/1943
800142049	Letter to the O'Brien family from Iowa Gov. Bourke B. Hickenlooper	4/12/1943
800142050	Letter to the O'Brien family from Mrs. Mae Sterner	4/12/1943
800142051	Letter to the O'Brien family from Congressman Thomas E. Martin	4/19/1943
800142052	Letter to Mrs. Earl State from Ambrose W. Ward	4/20/1943

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Scrapbook Two

800142053	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	7/19
800142054	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from M.M. Byrne, St. Joseph's Orphanage	n.d.
800142055	Postcard to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	4/22/1943
800142056	Letter to his family from William O'Brien	n.d.
800142057	Letter to his family from William O'Brien	5/11/1943
800142058	Letter to his brother from William O'Brien	5/22/1943
800142059	Postcard to his family from William O'Brien	6/4/1943
800142060	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	6/12/1943
800142061	Postcard to his dad from William O'Brien	6/18/1943
800142062	Letter to his family from William O'Brien	6/27/1943
800142063	Postcard to Bob from William O'Brien	7/4/1943

800142064	Letter to his family from William O'Brien	7/10/1943
800142065	Postcard to Mr. & Mrs. Earl Slate from William O'Brien	7/20/1943
800142066	Letter to Mrs. J.M. O'Brien from Mrs. Mae Sterner	8/25/1943
800142067	Copy of a letter from Mrs. Walter R. Lucas to Mrs. Sterner	8/24/1943
800142068	Postcard to Mrs. O'Brien from Gladys Lucas	8/24/1943
800142069	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. Earl State from William O'Brien	8/29/1943
800142070	Western Union Telegram from the Army	10/28/1943
800142071	Notes of thing sent out	n.d.
800142072	Postcard to Mr. & Mrs. Earl Slate from William O'Brien	11/14/1943
800142073	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. John O'Birne from Mr. & Mrs. Walles J. Ryan	12/9/1943
800142074	Postcard to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	7/23/1944
800142075	Letter to his family from William O'Brien	7/23/1944
800142076	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	7/30/1944
800142077	Postcard to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	8/7/1944
800142078	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	8/27/1944
800142079	Postcard to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	9/17/1944
800142080	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	9/24/1944
800142081	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	10/8/1944

800142082	Postcard to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	10/15/1944
800142083	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	10/22/1944
800142084	Postcard to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	10/29/1944
800142085	Postcard to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	11/12/1944
800142086	Letter to Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien from William O'Brien	11/19/1944
800142087	Postcard to Robert (Bob) from William O'Brien	11/26/1944
800142088	"Cpl. Tadewald on Way Home; Repatriated From Nazi War Camp"	n.d.
800142089	"Cpl. Tadewald Home From German Camp"	n.d.
800142090	"Tadewald Home From Nazi Camp"	n.d.
800142091	Western Union Telegram from the Army	5/11/1945
800142092	"Pfc. William O'Brien Is Liberated, Family Told"	n.d.
800142093	Letter to the O'Brien family from Laura	5/11/1945

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Oversize Box

800142094	"With Those In Service"	n.d.
800142095	Panoramic Picture of Co. K, 168th Infantry, Camp Claiborne, LA	10/3/1941
800142096	Letter to Tim from Aunt Mary, Uncle Chic and family	n.d.
800142097	National Geographic Endangered Earth Map	1988
800142098	National Geographic Map of Europe	1983
800142099	Barry Co. Dated Events War Map	1942