Summary Information

Title: Gayle Cruthirds Collection
Collection Number: 2005:070
Creator: Gayle Cruthirds
Collection Dates: 1930-1991, bulk 1930-1976
Extent: 2 cubic feet (2 boxes and 3 oversize boxes)
Language: English

Collection Abstract: Gayle Cruthirds grew up in Diboll, Texas, and later became a seargent of the 376th Heavy Bomb Group, 15th Air Force. This collection consists of photographs, magazines, newspapers, medals, a flight log, and correspondence documenting Cruthirds' life interests, school days, and service in World War II.

Repository:

The History Center
102 N. Temple
Diboll, TX, 75941
936-829-3543
http://www.thehistorycenteronline.com/

Author: Processed by Emily E. Hyatt November 3, 2005.
Revision History: Finding aid revised by Matt Gorzalski in June 2010.

Biographical/Historical Note:

Gayle Cruthirds was born on December 21, 1924, son of Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Cruthirds of Diboll, Texas. He graduated from Diboll High School in 1942. He entered the Army Air Corps on March 5, 1943 at Fort Sam Houston at the age of eighteen. He trained at Sheppard Field, Texas; Tyndall Field, Florida; and Tucson, Arizona. The following May, at the age of nineteen, he entered combat as a staff sergeant in Italy with the 376th Heavy Bomb Group, 15th Air Force and served as a gunner. He served between May 1944 to October 1944 in the European Theater where he participated in the air offensive of Europe, Naples-Foggia, Italy, and the invasion of France. Cruthirds was wounded on June 4, 1944 and received a Purple Heart. He served two years, seven months, and seventeen days from March 5, 1943 to October 21, 1945. Throughout his service, Cruthirds earned a Purple Heart, an Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, a Good Conduct Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with three bronze stars, a Presidential Citation with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, an Aviation Badge, and Overseas Servce bars. Cruthirds was discharged on October 21, 1945 and later lived in Vidor, Texas.

Collection Scope and Content:

The Gayle Cruthirds Collection consists of a variety of materials representing his many interests and life experiences. Eight magazines and 7 newspapers (in their entirety) from 1963-1964 represent his interest in the John F. Kennedy assassination in November 1963 and two newspapers from 1976 cover his interest in local sesquicentennial celebrations in southeast Texas. The collection also includes correspondence, photographs, ephemera, medals, and a flight log documenting his experiences as an aerial gunner during World War II. The flight log gives an account of each mission flown, including the June 4, 1944 flight where Cruthirds was injured and later awarded the Purple Heart. The correspondence reflects Cruthirds' communication with his parents during training. Several items also cover his personal experiences as a student in Diboll.

Arrangement: This collection has been described at the collection level. Items are arranged chronologically from Cruthirds' school days to the 1960s and 1970s newspapers and magazines. There is one loose item that is unboxed.

Subject Terms:

Topics

- World War, 1939-1945
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Veterans -- Texas -- Diboll
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Medals -- United States
- Military decorations -- United States
- Purple Heart
- Students -- Texas -- Diboll

Corporate Names

- United States -- Armed Forces --Aerial Gunners
- United States. Army. Air Corps.
- Diboll High School
- Diboll Rhythm Band

Personal Names

- Cruthirds, Gayle
- Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963 -- Assassination
- Johnson, Lyndon B. (Lyndon Baines), 1908-1973
- Oswald, Lee Harvey

Genres

- Periodicals
- Newspapers
- Medals
- Photographs
- Personal belongings
- Scrapbooks

Occupations

- Gunners, Aerial

Locations

- Diboll (Tex.)
- Diboll (Tex.) -- Social life and customs

- Romania
- Europe

Access and Use

Access Restrictions: No access restrictions.
Acquisition Information: Gifted by Gayle Cruthirds in October of 2005.
Custodial History: Gayle Cruthirds retained possession these items at his home in Vidor, Texas. When fleeing hurricane Katrina, he removed these items from his home and gifted them to The History Center in October 2005.
Citation: Gayle Cruthirds Collection, 1930-1991, 2005:070, The History Center, Diboll, TX
Related Material:

For another flight log and additional World War II materials see: Frank Devereaux World War II Collection, 1944-1945, 2005:050, The History Center, Diboll, TX

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Collection Inventory

Box 1

Folder 1	Geography Grade 5 – Texas Edition, 1935
Folder 2	Written English for Grade 5, 1935
Folder 3	Childhood Scrapbook #1
Folder 4	Childhood Scrapbook #2
Folder 5	3 Diboll School Report Cards, 1 Diboll School Certificate, 1936-1937
Folder 6	3 Diboll Free Press Portraits from the Past, 1991, undated
Folder 7	8x10 photo of Diboll Rhythm Band ca. 1930
Folder 8	Gayle Cruthirds Combat Missions List

Box 2

	1941 Diboll High School Jacket
	1942 Diboll High School Sweater

Box 3

Folder 1	World War II Letters and Personnel Records, 1932-1944
Folder 2	V-Mail from Leslie Cruthirds, 1944
Folder 3	Clippings Concerning Gayle Cruthirds' War Activities, undated
Folder 4	World War II Ephemera and Foreign Currency, 1940s
Folder 5	World War II Photographs, 1940s
Folder 6	Photographs in Vidor, Texas, 1930, undated
Folder 7	World War II Medals
Folder 8	Flight Log, 1944

Box 4

Folder 1	*Time*, November 29, 1963
Folder 2	*Newsweek,* December 2, 1963

Folder 3 *Four Dark Days in History,* 1963
Folder 4 *One Dozen Red Roses: The Life of Jacqueline Kennedy*, 1964
Folder 5 *Life* Magazine, December 6, 1963
Folder 6 *Look* Magazine, December 17, 1963
Folder 7 *Look* Magazine, December 31, 1963
Folder 8 *Look* Magazine, 1963

Box 5

Folder 1 Houston Chronicle, November 22, 1963
Folder 2 Beaumont Journal, November 22, 1963
Folder 3 Beaumont Enterprise, November 23, 1963
Folder 4 Beaumont Journal, November 23, 1963
Folder 5 Beaumont Enterprise, November 25, 1963
Folder 6 Beaumont Journal, November 25, 1963
Folder 7 Beaumont Enterprise-Journal, July 4, 1976
Beaumont Enterprise-Journal, April 17, 1976

Loose Items

20.5 inch x 26 inch framed World War II Memorabilia