

Finding Aid for the 339th Ambulance Company collection Collection 108

Finding aid prepared by Martha J. Bloem

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
January 1990
111 Library Street NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49503
616-988-5400
localhis@grpl.org

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Summary Information

Repository	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Creator	United States. Army. Ambulance Company, 339th.
Creator	339th Ambulance Company Reunion Organization.
Title	339th Ambulance Company collection
Date [inclusive]	1917-1988, n.d.
Extent	5.7 Linear feet Seven boxes
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The 339th Ambulance Co. served in France during World War I. The collection documents the history of the company during World War I, from their formation in Grand Rapids as Red Cross Ambulance Unit No. 15, through Camp Custer as 339th Ambulance Co., and to France for active duty, 1917-19. In 1938 the group held a formal reunion and decided to continue meeting on a yearly basis thereafter. The collection contains scrapbooks, reunion announcements, correspondence, photographs and postcards. Of special interest are two taped interviews, with Vernie Zahm, 1980, and Elmo "Red" Nobles, 1988. The interviews contain recollections of their military service and the diaries recount the day to day experience during the war. A volume, "Sir the Company is Formed," gives brief biographies of the men in the company.</p>

Biographical/Historical note

Red Cross Ambulance Unit Number 15 was formed June 29, 1917, by Dr. Thomas D. Gordon and was made up of mainly Grand Rapids men. The unit assembled in Grand Rapids every Monday and Wednesday for drills, and remained in Grand Rapids until October 2, 1917, when the group transferred to Camp Custer in Battle Creek, Michigan. The 339th Ambulance Company remained at Camp Custer for several months before moving on to the war in France. The 339th spent several months in France, moving from place to place, but did not see any of the front line duty. They were 30 miles from the front when the armistice was signed November 11, 1918. The unit initially set out to return to Grand Rapids in January 1919, but an order sent them back towards general headquarters at Chaumont. The company remained at the village of Marac on the Suize River for a approximately a month before receiving orders to return home, traveling on S.S. Zeppelin arriving in New York April 1919.

Scope and Contents note

The collection was originally arranged by name of the individual gathering the material. This arrangement has been retained as much as possible. These people are Leonard "Deac" Ellis, (11 February 1892 - 25 May 1979); James Ten Broek (8 September 1892 - ?); Gerald LaBelle (10 October 1899 - 30 July 1979) and Vernie Zahm (2 November 1891 - 23 August 1982). The collection contains diaries, memorabilia, newsletters, news clippings, correspondence and taped interviews. The collection also contains photographs, 1918-66, which present a variety of images from World War I at Camp Custer and in France and the annual reunions. Some of the negatives have been matched to photos within the collection, others are arranged by description. Also in the collection is a series of postcards, ca.1917-19, n.d., with images of France and the U.S. during WWI. The scrapbook series contains news clippings of WWI and reunion memorabilia.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department January 1990

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Controlled Access Headings

Genre(s)

- personal papers

Geographic Name(s)

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History

Subject(s)

- World War, 1914-1918 -- France
- World War, 1914-1918 -- Medical care
- World War, 1914-1918 -- Regimental histories

Ellis Papers

Collection Inventory

Ellis Papers		
	Box	Folder
Mobilization orders, 1917, n.d.	1	1
Diary of John L. Jones and reorganization minutes, 1918-19, 1938	1	2
	Box	Volume
Diary of V. Lawrence Jones, 1918-19	4	3
	Box	Folder
Souvenir album, Lyon, France, ca. 1919	4	4
Souvenir album, Paris, France, ca. 1919	4	5
Oversize postcards, Sancerre, France, ca. 1919	1	3
Newsletters, 1939-46	2	7
Newsletters, 1947-76	2	8
Reunion announcements, 1954-62	6	3
Checking account statement and miscellaneous receipts, 1963-65	1	4

Tenbroek Papers

Checking account statements, 1963-66	1	5
Constitution, n.d.	1	6
	Box	Volume
Sir - the Company is Formed. n.d.	4	6
Tenbroek Papers		
	Box	Folder
Manual, "Defense Measures Against Gas Attacks", 1917	1	7
	Box	Volume
Diary of Harry Risendorph, 1917-18	4	1
	Box	Folder
Metal plate, instructions for maintenance of Hispano Suiza Ambulance, ca. 1919	1	8
Diary, 1918-19	2	9
Memo of orders for debarking S.S. Zeppelin, 1919	2	10
		Box
75th Corps Horse Show poster, 1919		6
Labelle Papers		

Zahm Papers

	Box	Folder
Thanksgiving menu, Camp Custer, 1917	1	9
	Box	Volume
Photo albums, scenes from the war in France, ca. 1919	6	1-3
Zahm Papers		
	Box	Volume
Class Register, n.d.	4	2
	Box	Folder
Thanksgiving menu, Moselle, France, 1918	1	10
Roster of Members, n.d.	1	11
General Papers		
	Box	Folder
French and German currency, 1914, 1918, n.d.	1	12
Memorabilia, 1917-19	1	13
339th Roster, 1917-19	2	1
News clippings, 1917-79, n.d.	2	2
	Box	Volume

General Papers

America's Way to the War in France, ca. 1917	4	8
	Box	Folder
Handbook for the Sanitary Troops, 1917	4	10
YMCA Educational Work in War Camps, 1918	4	7
Yanks, 1918	4	9
General orders, troops on board S.S. Anchises, 1918	2	3
Cartoon Sketches, ca. 1919	2	4
Correspondence from Harry Risendorph to his sister, 1919	1	14
Romsey Abbey Church booklet, ca. 1919	1	15
Soldiers envelope, ca. 1919	1	16
Correspondence, 1939-45, 1963, n.d.	2	5
Membership rosters, 1947-71	2	6
Remembrance cards, 1971	1	17
		Box
Taped interview, Vernie Zahm, 1980		7

Photographs, 1918-1966

	7
Taped interview, Elmos "Red" Nobles, 1988	
	Box
	Folder
Meeting Roster, 1986	1 18
Song book, n.d.	1 19
Cartoon, n.d.	6 4
Photographs, 1918-1966	
	Box
	Folder
Camp Custer, 1918	1 20
People. Unidentified, ca. 1918	1 21
People. Identified, MacKenzie, ca. 1918	1 22
U.S. General Hospital, West Baden, Indiana, ca. 1919	1 23
S.S. Zeppelin, 1919	1 24
U.C. 97, ex-German submarine, ca. 1925	1 25
Group Photos, people identified, 1947, 1966-67	1 26
Group photos, unidentified, ca. 1919, 1966	1 27

Photographs, 1918-1966

	Drawer	Folder
Camp Custer, 1917 / Spencer & Wyckoff, Detroit. Panoramic Photo Ellis Photographs	FF.IX.D.	3
	Box	Folder
Group photo, unidentified, ca. 1919	1	28
Scene, ca. 1919	1	29
People, Identified. "Deac." Ellis, ca. 1918	1	30
Group photos, unidentified, Camp Custer, 1918	1	31
People unidentified, ca. 1918	1	32
Views, France, ca. 1919	1	33
Panorama views, Camp Custer 1918	6	1
Scenes, behind the front, France, 1918-19	6	2
War Scenes, ca. 1919	1	34
Railroad station, ca. 1919	1	35
	Drawer	Folder
310 Sanitary Train / Photo by Spencer & Wyckoff, Detroit, Mich. Nov. 26, 1917. 2 copies	FF.IX.D.	1

Tenbroek Photographs

Panorama view, 30th Sanitary Train, 85th Div. N.A., Camp Custer, Mi. 1917. D.H. Pritchard	FF.IX.D.	2
Back From France. Headquarters Detachment and Troup 85th Division. Pictorial	FF.IX.D.	4

Tenbroek Photographs

	Box	Folder
Ship, 1919	1	36
Scenes, ca. 1919	1	37
People. Unidentified, ca. 1919	1	38
People. Shafer, Chet, ca. 1919	1	39
Push-ball, Camp Custer, 1918	1	40
Group photos, unidentified, ca. 1919	1	41

Labelle (La Belle) Photographs

	Box	Folder
Push-ball Camp Custer, ca. 1918	1	42
Group photos, unidentified, ca. 1919	1	43

Negatives, n.d., #108-1 to 108-9

People. Unidentified, ca. 1919	1	44
Negatives, n.d., #108-1 to 108-9		
		Box
Buildings. Exteriors (3).		7
Houses. Exteriors.		7
People. Unidentified, (10).		7
People. Groups, (12).		7
Postcards, ca. 1917-1919, n.d.		
	Box	Folder
Aubigny, France	3	1
Camp Custer, Michigan	3	2
The Capitol, Harrisburg, Pa.	3	3
Charmes-la-Cote, France	3	4
Cathedral Square, Fort Wayne, Indiana	3	5
Chaumont, France	3	6

Postcards, ca. 1917-1919, n.d.

Christmas	3	7
Clermont-Ferrand, France	3	8
Conlie, France	3	9
Cosne, France	3	10
Dijon, France	3	11
DuMont, France	3	12
Henrichemont, France	3	13
Jorquenay, France	3	14
La Bourboule, France	3	15
La Chappelle-D'Angillon, France	3	16
Langres, France	3	17
La Suze, France	3	18
Les Settons, France	3	19
Lyon, France	3	20

Tenbroek Postcards

Maigne, France	3	21
Metz, France	3	22
Mezeray, France	3	23
Paris, France	3	24
Pennsylvania Station, Pittsburgh, Pa.	3	25
Saint Francis Catholic Church, Petosky, Michigan	3	26
Saint Germain, France	3	27
Saint Satur, France	3	28
Saint-Saturnin, France	3	29
Sancerre, France	3	30
Soldiers Monument, Coldwater, Michigan	3	31
Toul, France	3	32
Union Depot, Wilkes-Barr, Pa.	3	33
Tenbroek Postcards		

Tenbroek Postcards

	Box	Folder
American Red Cross Canteen, France	3	34
Charms-la-Cote, France	3	35
Chaumont, France	3	36
Conlie, France	3	37
Cosne, France	3	38
Dijon, France	3	39
La Suze, France	3	40
LeMans, France	3	41
Lyon, France	3	42
Maron, France	3	43
Melun, France	3	44
Metz, France	3	45
Nancy, France	3	46

Labelle Postcards

Romsey, France	3	47
Saint Satur, France	3	48
Sancerre, France	3	49
Strasbourg, Germany	3	50
Toul, France	3	51
Labelle Postcards		
	Box	Folder
Auray, France	3	52
Autun, France	3	53
Beaumont, France	3	54
Bellery, France	3	55
Brest, France	3	56
Bourges, France	3	57
Charmes, France	3	58

Labelle Postcards

Charmes-la-Cote, France	3	59
Chateau DeMontjeu	3	60
Chaumont, France	3	61
Clermont-Ferrand, France	3	62
Conlie, France	3	63
Cosne, France	3	64
Cote-d'Azur, France	3	65
Dijon, France	3	66
Domremy, France	3	67
Faverolles, France	3	68
Gaudach, France	3	69
Jeanne D'Arc	3	70
LeMans, France	3	71
Langres, France	3	72

Labelle Postcards

La Suze, France	3	73
Metz, France	3	74
Menton, France	3	75
Mezeray, France	3	76
Monte Carlo, France	3	77
Nancy, France	3	78
Neufchateau, France	3	79
Nevers, France	3	80
Nice, France	3	81
Nogent-en-Bassigny, France	3	82
Paris, France	3	83
Pouilly-sur-Loire, France	3	84
Rolampont, France	3	85
Romsey, France	3	86

Ellis Postcards

Saint Ciergues, France	3	87
Saint-Pons, France	3	88
Saint Satur, France	3	89
Sancerre, France	3	90
Seicheprey, France	3	91
Strausbourg, Germany	3	92
Toul, France	3	93
Tours, France	3	94
Unidentified, France	3	95
Vancouleurs, France	3	96
Ellis Postcards		
	Box	Folder
The Abbey, France	3	97
Alliance Canteen, Alliance, Ohio	3	98

Ellis Postcards

Brest, France	3	99
Camp Custer, Michigan	3	100
The Capitol, Harrisburg, Pa.	3	101
Coln, France	3	102
Cosne, France	3	103
English Church	3	104
Eltville, France	3	105
Ferry Landing, Windsor, Ontario	3	106
Grotto of Pierre la Treiche	3	107
La Bourboule, France	3	108
La Suze, France	3	109
Lewis and Clark High School, Spokane, Wash.	3	110
Lyon, France	3	111
Nice, France	3	112

Scrapbooks, 1918-70

Plain postcard	3	113
Ridge Route, Calif.	3	114
Sancerre, France	3	115
Sayre, Pa.	3	116
Toul, France	3	117
U.S. Army Commissary	3	118
Woolworth Bldg., New York	3	119
Scrapbooks, 1918-70		
Ellis Scrapbooks		
	Box	Volume
339th Ambulance Co. Chow and Chatter, 1947-1970	5	1
Tenbroek Scrapbooks		
	Box	Volume
1918	5	2
	Box	Folder

Tenbroek Scrapbooks

ca. 1918	5	3-4
	Box	Volume
1919	5	5
	Box	Folder
ca. 1919	5	6
ca. 1919	5	1