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Forsythe, Belmont, 1920-2005 (MSS 486)

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Descriptive Inventory

MSS 486 FORSYTHE, Belmont, 1920-2005

3 boxes. 43 folders. 396 items. 1914-2004.
 Originals, photocopies, cassette tapes, photographs.

1991.39.41

BIOGRAPHY

Belmont Forsythe, the son of Pearl A. Forsythe and his wife Ethel (Mallory) Forsythe, was born on 8 March 1920 in Belton, Kentucky. He graduated from Kirk High School in Beechmont, Kentucky in 1937, then earned an A. B. degree from Western Kentucky State Teachers College (now WKU) in 1940. Forsythe worked as a math teacher, band director, and school principal in Scottsville, Kentucky after obtaining his degree, but decided to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps as a private on 8 December 1941, just a day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He served in several capacities in the United States, the South Pacific and Newfoundland, rising to the rank of Captain in 1945.

Forsythe received a Master of Philosophy degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1947. He completed one semester of the Ph.D. program at McGill University in Montreal before being recalled to active duty in the Marine Corps. He served in the Caribbean and also in Korea, where he was assigned to the United Nations Command as a team captain in charge of receiving prisoners of war from North Korea.

In 1957, Forsythe, now a major, resigned his commission and was sworn in as a major in the U.S. Army Signal Corps. He served in the United States and Japan, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel on 31 July 1966. Forsythe then served as the Senior Army Instructor of the Junior ROTC Department at Punahou Academy in Honolulu, Hawaii. He retired from that position on 31 August 1972.

Forsythe married Agnes C. Baxter on 3 December 1942 and had four children. His varied interests included jazz history and appreciation, quilting and needlepoint. He died on 3 July 2005 after a fire at his Seattle, Washington home and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

COLLECTION NOTE

This collection contains materials relating to the life of Belmont Forsythe. Prominently featured are records relating to his career in the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Army Signal Corps, and material related to his personal interests and hobbies. Also included are

photographs, a small amount of correspondence, and cassette recordings by Forsythe recounting his life and experiences. A collection inventory is in Box 1, Folder 1.

Box 1 contains material mostly related to Forsythe's non-military activities and interests, although biographical data (Folder 2) includes details on his military career as well as his education. Other personal information in this box includes a broadside for a band concert dating to his time as band director at Scottsville (Kentucky) High School (Folder 3); materials relating to his community interests, such as Sunday School teaching and the Boy Scouts (Folder 4); passports (Folder 5) and a map illustrating his world travel (Folder 6); miscellaneous jokes and quips (Folder 7); Forsythe's 1949 correspondence with British economist Harold Laski regarding Laski's view of trade unions (Folder 8); reading lists and study materials relating to Forsythe's interest in jazz (Folder 9); clippings on quilts and quilting (Folders 10, 11) and Forsythe's taped comments on his quilting (Folder 12); materials about folk artist Ettore "Ted" De Grazia, whom Forsythe admired (Folders, 13, 14); and data on a few Forsythe family members (Folder 15). Box 16 includes two U.S. Army certificates, a letter describing the Award of the Silver Star Medal, two Korean/English certificates of appreciation, and a world map on which Forsythe outlined his world travels.

Box 2 contains materials relating to Forsythe's military service with the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II and the Korean War, and with the U.S. Army Signal Corps afterward. Included are details of his service and medical records, and a "Short Snorter," a dollar bill signed by then-Senator Albert "Happy" Chandler and apparently given to those crossing the equator and the international date line in a single trip (Folder 1); military certificates and citations (Folder 2); and World War II letters Forsythe wrote to Mattie McLean, in whose office he had worked while a student at WKU and who he regarded as his "foster mother." Writing her from the Solomon Islands, Forsythe refers to the hardships of living in the jungle and criticizes civilians at home who complained of rationing and shortages (Folder 3). Also included are notes and maps relating to Forsythe's service in the Solomon Islands (Folder 4) and at the Naval Station in Argentina, Newfoundland (Folder 5). Of interest and relating to his service with the U.S. Army Signal Corps at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey (Folder 6) are invitations, notes and cards of a social nature from foreign military personnel who were training at the facility; many of the cards have Far Eastern themes. In 1995 and 2003, Forsythe recorded his personal history on several cassette tapes. These are included in Box 2 (Folders 7-13) along with a summary of the tapes' contents (Folder 14).

Box 3 contains miscellaneous materials relating to Forsythe's military career and personal interests: books on Japanese and Korean culture (Folders 1, 3); clippings on the Korean War and prisoner of war exchanges (Folder 2); a tape of an Army psychiatrist's lecture on brainwashing (Folder 6); and photographs of Forsythe (Folders 7-9), his needlepoint and rug hooking (Folder 10), his Seattle garden (Folder 11), his quilts (Folder 12), and of Ted De Grazia artwork (Folder 13). Of interest is a souvenir booklet given to Forsythe by a former prisoner of war documenting the 1952 Intercamp Olympics, a propaganda event staged by the North Koreans featuring competition among prisoners from several camps (Folder 4). Also of interest (Folder 5) is a cassette tape containing Japanese music and Forsythe's account of his duty late in the 1950s at a U.S. base in southern Japan nicknamed "Goat Hill Farms"; included is a description of the local farmers' use of human waste as fertilizer, collected and carried to their fields in "honey buckets."

SHELF LIST

BOX 1	Belmont Forsythe	1914-1999	77 items
Folder 1	Inventory		1 item
Folder 2	Biographical data; transcripts	1947-1955	6 items
Folder 3	Scottsville, Ky. – High school band concert broadside	1941	2 items
Folder 4	Community service records	1953-1959	7 items
Folder 5	Passports, holder, and vaccination certificate	1960-1984	7 items
Folder 6	Travel – Maps and records	1962-1996	5 items
Folder 7	Jokes and quips	1935-1998	6 items
Folder 8	Correspondence with Harold Laski and William Ebenstein	1948-1949	5 items
Folder 9	Jazz instruction	1967-1999	11 items
Folder 10	Quilts and quilting – Clippings	1974	7 items
Folder 11	Quilts and quilting – Clippings	1975	4 items
Folder 12	Cassette tape – Batik quilting	1999	4 items
Folder 13	Ted De Grazia – Book and Calendar	1981-1991	7 items
Folder 14	Ted De Grazia – Memorabilia	1998	2 items
Folder 15	Family records	1914-1973	3 items
Folder 16	Family records	1953-1968	6 items
BOX 2	Belmont Forsythe	1941-2003	56 items
Folder 1	Military orders, assignments, medical records, identification cards, data sheets	1941-1966	11 items
Folder 2	Military commendations and certificates	1943-1991	8 items
Folder 3	Letters to Mattie McLean and Etta Runner	1943-1955	4 items

Folder 4	Solomon Island assignment – World War II	1943-1993	10 items
Folder 5	History and duty in Argentia, Newfoundland	1946	3 items
Folder 6	U. S. Army Signal School, Fort Monmouth, New Jersey – Invitations, notes, cards	1956-1958	11 items
Folder 7	Personal history (cassette tape)	1995	1 item
Folder 8	Personal history (cassette tape)	1995	1 item
Folder 9	Personal history (cassette tape)	1995	1 item
Folder 10	Personal history (cassette tape)	2003	1 item
Folder 11	Personal history (cassette tape)	2003	1 item
Folder 12	Personal history (cassette tape)	2003	1 item
Folder 13	Personal history (cassette tape)	2003	1 item
Folder 14	Tape indexes	1995-2003	2 items
BOX 3	Belmont Forsythe	1937-2004	257 items
Folder 1	Books on Japanese customs and culture	1954-1955	2 items
Folder 2	Korea – Newspaper articles regarding prisoners of war, etc.	1950-2003	13 items
Folder 3	<i>Korea</i> , by Horace Bristol	1953	2 items
Folder 4	Korea – Map; Intercamp Olympics souvenir booklet	1952, 1994	2 items
Folder 5	Military career – “Goat Hill Farms” (Japan) – sketches and cassette tape	1959-2004	5 items
Folder 6	“Brainwashing: The Ultimate Weapon” – Lecture by William E. Mayor (cassette tape)	1991	1 item
Folder 7	Scottsville High School, etc. – Photographs	1937-1959	12 items
Folder 8	Military career – Photographs	1941-1972	34 items

Folder 9	Life abroad – Photographs	1953-1973	39 items
Folder 10	Needlepoint and rug hooking – Photographs	1988-1999	28 items
Folder 11	Garden – Photographs	n.d.	26 items
Folder 12	Quilts – Photographs	n.d.	46 items
Folder 13	Ted De Grazia – Collector Plates and Pictures	n.d.	47 items

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

MSS FORSYTHE, Belmont, 1914-2004
486 1920-2005

Biographical data, military, health and travel records, photographs and papers relating to the life, military service and hobbies of Belmont Forsythe, a native of Muhlenberg County, Kentucky. Military material documents his service in the U.S. Marine Corps and U. S. Army Signal Corps from 1941-1966. Includes audio recordings by Forsythe recounting his life and career.

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SUBJECT ANALYTICS

Boy Scouts of America, 1957-1959 – Relating to B1,F4
Brainwashing B3,F6
Certificates – Equator crossing B2,F1
Certificates – U. S. Army – Signal Corps B1,F16; B2,F2
Certificates – U. S. Marine Corps B2,F2
Chandler, Albert Benjamin “Happy,” 1898-1991 – Relating to B2,F1
Christmas cards, 1957-1958 B2,F6
Courts martial and courts of inquiry, 1951 B2,F1
De Grazia, Ettore “Ted,” 1909-1982 – Relating to B1,F13; B3,F13
Ebenstein, William, 1910-1976 B1,F8
Forsythe, Belmont, 1920-2005 – Photographs B3,F7-9
Forsythe, Eric – Relating to B1,F15
Forsythe, Ethel Z. (Mallory), 1892-1972 – Relating to B1,F15
Forsythe, Pearl A., 1875-1964 – Relating to B1,F15

Forsythe, Robert P. B1,F15
 Forsythe, Robert P. – Photograph B3,F8
 Japan – Travel and description, 1954-1959 B3,F1; B3,F5
 Korea – Travel and description, 1953 B3,F3
 Korean War, 1950-1953 – Prisoners and prisons – Relating to B3,F2,4,6
 Korean War, 1950-1953 – Relating to B1,F4,16; B2,F2; B3,F2
 Laski, Harold Joseph, 1893-1950 – Correspondence B1,F8
 Laski, Harold Joseph, 1893-1950 – Relating to B1,F8
 Mayor, William E. – Speeches B3,F6
 McLean, Mattie M., 1882-1954 – Letters to B2,F3
 Military education – Relating to B1,F9; B3,F6
 Needlework – Photographs B3,F10
 Passports, 1960-1994 B1,F5
 Quilts – Photographs B3,F12
 Quilts and quilting – Hawaii – Relating to B1,F10; B3,F12
 Quilts and quilting – Relating to B1,F10-12; B3,F12
 Rugs – Photographs B3,F10
 Runner, Etta Jane, 1894-1971– Letter to B2,F3
 Schools – Allen County – Scottsville High School, 1941 – Relating to B1,F3; B3,F7
 U. S. Army – Signal Corps – Military life, 1957-1966 B1,F2; B2,F1,6; B3,F5
 U. S. Army Signal School – Fort Monmouth, New Jersey – Relating to B2,F6
 U. S. Marine Corps – Military life, 1941-1957 B1,F2; B2,F1; B2,F3
 Western Kentucky University – Alumni
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Newfoundland – Argentia, 1945 B2,F5
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Soldiers from – Muhlenberg County
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Solomon Islands, 1943 B2,F3,4
 World War II, 1939-1945 – U.S. Marine Corps – Ninth Defense Battalion – Relating to B2,F2,4

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