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Inventory of the Ruth Ann McDonald Papers, 1941-2000

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Descriptive Summary

Title:	Ruth Ann McDonald papers
Date(s)	1941-2000 (bulk 1941-1945)
Creator:	McDonald, Ruth Ann, 1919-2013
Abstract:	Correspondence, photographs, military records, clippings, and textiles of Ruth Ann McDonald. Materials document her service in the U.S. Army during World War II as a nurse stationed at the Lawson General Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, Fort Bliss, Texas, the 67th General Hospital in England, and the 30th Field Hospital, which traveled through Luxembourg, France, and Germany. Also includes transcripts pertaining to Ruth's nursing education, certificates relating to her army service, and issues of army periodicals <i>The Yank</i> , <i>The Army Weekly</i> , and <i>The Army Nurse</i> . A small portion of the collection pertains to liberated concentration camps and displaced persons, Ruth's travels directly following her Army service, her fiancé Lyle Simpkins, and two reunions of the 67th General Hospital.
Extent:	2 linear feet (2 document boxes, 3 flat boxes, 1 oversize paper folder)
Repository:	Special Collections, College of Charleston Libraries 66 George Street Charleston, SC 29424 Phone: (843) 953-8016 Fax: (843) 953-6319 URL: http://archives.library.cofc.edu
Call Number:	Mss 0200
Language of Material:	Materials in English

Biographical Note

Ruth Ann McDonald (1919-2013) was born to Agnes and John L. McDonald in Braintree, Massachusetts. After graduating from St. Elizabeth's School of Nursing in 1941, Ruth joined the U.S. Army Nurse Corps, where she trained at the Lawson General Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, and Fort Bliss, Texas. In 1942, she was assigned to the 67th General Hospital in England, remaining there until 1944 when she was transferred to the 30th Field Hospital. Ruth stayed with the 30th Field Hospital through the end of World War II, traveling through Luxembourg, France, and Germany. In December of 1944, her fiancé Lyle Simpkins, a private in the United States Army, was killed in action and Ruth was granted leave to visit his grave in Belgium after VE Day. Ruth returned to the United States in September of 1945 and spent time traveling along the west coast with friends from the Nurse Corps shortly after her return. After her travels, Ruth worked in Anchorage, Alaska, for six months, leaving to attend Boston University in 1946 and graduating with her BS in Nursing in 1950. She then attended the Physical Therapy School at the Medical College of Virginia, graduating in 1954. Ruth worked as a physical therapist and public health official in Michigan and Massachusetts, retiring in 1981.

Collection Overview

The collection consists of a significant amount of correspondence sent by Ruth during her service in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps during World War II as well as photographs taken during her service. Correspondence discusses her interactions with patients, off-duty activities, and observations during and immediately after the war. Photographs primarily document Ruth's service at Lawson General Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, Fort Bliss, Texas, the 67th General Hospital in England, and the 30th Field Hospital, which traveled through Luxembourg, France, and Germany. A small portion of materials contain images of liberated concentration camps and displaced persons, Ruth's travels directly following her Army service, her fiancé Lyle Simpkins, and two reunions of the 67th General Hospital. The collection also includes military documents, Army periodicals, files relating to her fiancé Lyle Simpkins, a private in the United States Army, certificates, transcripts, clippings, and Ruth's army uniform garrison cap.

Collection Arrangement

Materials are described at the folder level.

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research.

Copyright Notice

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Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person, family, or organization, by topical subject, by place, and by types of material.

Names

- McDonald, Ruth Ann, 1919-2013
- Simpkins, Lyle, 1917-1944
- United States Army. Lawson General Hospital, Atlanta
- United States Army. Field Hospital, 30th
- United States Army. General Hospital, 67th
- United States. Army. Nurse Corps

Subjects

World War, 1939-1945--Participation, female
World War, 1939-1945--Hospitals
World War, 1939-1945--Medical Care
Military hospitals
Military nursing
Concentration camps
Nurses--United States

Places

Fort Bliss (Tex.)
Atlanta (Ga.)
England
France
Germany
Luxembourg

Types of Material

Correspondence
Black-and-white photographs
Color photographs
Photograph albums
Military records
Magazines (periodicals)
Clippings (information artifacts)
Garrison caps

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Ruth Ann McDonald papers, College of Charleston Libraries, Charleston, SC, USA.

Acquisitions Information

Materials were donated in 2014 by Mark Burns.

Processing Information

Processed by Amy Lazarus, June 2015.

Encoded by Amy Lazarus, October 2015.

Reviewed and uploaded by Joshua Minor, December 2015.

Inventory

Correspondence, 1941-1945, 1978, undated

Correspondence spans Ruth's service in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps during World War II, documenting her time at Lawson General Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, Fort Bliss in Texas, the 67th General Hospital stationed in England, and with the 30th Field Hospital in Luxembourg, France, and Germany. Her letters reference her interactions with patients, off-duty activities, and observations during and immediately after the war. Includes letters to her mother, father, and her two sisters, Mary May McDonald, and A. Judith McDonald.

Box 1 Folder 1

Transcription, undated

A bound book of typed transcriptions of the entire collection of Ruth's letters.

Box 1 Folder 2

November-June, 1941-1942

Letters from Ruth while she was stationed at Lawson General Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia.

Box 1 Folder 3

July-December, 1942

Letters from Ruth while she was stationed at Lawson General Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia and Fort Bliss, Texas, and the 67th General Hospital in England.

Box 1 Folder 4

January-June, 1943

Letters from Ruth while she was stationed with the 67th General Hospital in England.

Box 1 Folder 5

July-December, 1943

Letters from Ruth while she was stationed with the 67th General Hospital in England.

Box 1 Folder 6

January-June, 1944

Letters from Ruth while she was stationed with the 67th General Hospital in England.

Box 1 Folder 7

July-December, 1944

Letters from Ruth while she was stationed with the 30th field hospital in France and Luxembourg.

Box 2 Folder 1

January-August, 1945

Letters from Ruth while she was stationed with the 30th field hospital in Germany and Austria, and while on leave in Belgium and the French Riviera.

Box 2 Folder 2

Lyle Simpkins condolence letters, 1978, undated

Letters to Ruth on the death of her fiancé, Lyle Simpkins, as well as later letters from Lyle's family.

Photographs, circa 1941-1946, 1969-2000, undated

Box 2 Folder 3

Loose photographs, circa 1941-1945, 1969, 1982, undated

Photographs taken during Ruth's military service with the 67th General Hospital in England, the 30th field hospital in Europe, and the Lawson General Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia. Also includes images of an American WWII cemetery in Europe, and two 67th General Hospital reunions.

Box 2 Folder 4

Loose Photographs, circa 1943, 1984-2000

Photographs of Lyle Simpkins during WWII, and Ruth's yearly visits to Lyle Simpkins's grave in New York.

Box 3

Photograph album, 1941-1945

Includes photographs of Ruth during her service in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps, including her training in Atlanta, Georgia, and Fort Bliss, Texas, as well as images of her time with the 67th General Hospital in England and the 30th Field Hospital. Includes images of daily life in the field, Bob Hope and Francis Langford entertaining troops, James Cagney, a Nazi funeral, and Ruth's travels through Austria, Belgium, England, France, Germany, and Luxembourg. Also includes photos of concentration camp grounds, crematorium, displaced persons, and the dead in the German concentration camps.

Box 4

Photograph album, circa 1945-1946

Includes photographs of Ruth and friends from the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in Texas, Arizona, and Mexico. Also includes photographs of Anchorage, Alaska, where Ruth worked as a nurse for six months.

Oversize Paper Folder 1

"Enlisted Personnel, 3D H.U., 30th Field Hospital, Ebensee, Austria 27 May 1945", 1945 May 27

Box 2 Folder 5

Ruth Ann McDonald and Lyle Simpkins, undated

A portrait of Ruth Ann McDonald in her nurse uniform and portrait of her fiancé Lyle Simpkins in his military uniform in the field.

Military service files, 1941-1945, 1969-1982

Documents pertaining to Ruth Ann McDonald's military service, including military records, event programs, army periodicals, and files pertaining to the activities and death of her fiancé Lyle Simpkins, who died in action in Belgium in 1944.

Box 2 Folder 6

Military records, 1941-1945

Record and Report of Separation, Special Orders, Certificate of Clearance, application to the U.S. Army Nurse Corps, certificate of appointment to 1st Lieutenant, and correspondence providing assignments and orders.

Box 2 Folder 7

Lawson General Hospital Christmas program, 1941

Box 2 Folder 8

Lyle Simpkin files, circa 1944, 1978

Memorial booklets, Lyle Simpkins's uniform patch, photocopies of Lyle Simpkins's Report of Death, burial information, Disposition Request Forms, History of the 517th Port Battalion TC, and multiple historical reports relating to Lyle Simpkins's battalion's activities.

Box 2 Folder 9

Army periodicals, 1945

Issues of *The Yank*, *The Overseas Woman*, and *The Army Nurse*. *The Yank* includes accounts and photographs of several concentration camps.

Box 2 Folder 10

67th General Hospital Reunions, 1969, 1982

Program, attendee list, and several articles reporting on the reunions held for the 67th General Hospital.

Textiles, 1942, undated

Box 5

Garrison caps, circa 1942

Box 5

American flag, undated

Box 2 Folder 11

Transcripts and certificates, 1950, 1954, undated

Transcripts from the Medical College of Virginia the Boston University School of Nursing, and multiple certificates commending Ruth for her service in WWII.

Box 2 Folder 12

Miscellaneous, undated