



World War II Study Group Collection 1934-2020

Collection Summary

Title: World War II Study Group Collection

Summary: A collection of papers, publications, and research materials belonging to Nashville's World War II Study Group, along with personal World War II-related correspondence, printed materials, and photographs belonging to Major General William R. Douglas. Dates range from 1934-2020. Bulk dates: 1992-2020.

Creator: World War II Study Group; Maj. Gen. William R. Douglas.

Physical Description: Four Hollinger boxes, one oversize box; 3.34 linear feet.

Language: English and German (chiefly). Some French and Italian.

Stack Location: TBD

Repository: Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville-Davidson County, 615 Church Street, Nashville, TN 37219

Historical Note:

The World War II Study Group was a club dedicated to World War II research, in which members would present research papers about various aspects of the war. Its first meeting was held on April 13, 1992, with Vanderbilt Professor Howard Boorman as the first speaker. Originally, the club had thirteen members, including (in addition to Professor Boorman) Judge Allen Cornelius, J.P. Foster, Ramsey Leathers, Joe Martin, Neill Brown, Judge Ben Cantrell, Judge Bill Harbison, Judge Tom Higgins, Martin Roberts, Dick Hart, Charlie Anderson, and Charles Leach. Many members of the club served in the military, and several had served during World War II.

Over the course of 28 years, the World War II Study Group met regularly, sharing research and presenting papers with topics that ranged from the invasion at Normandy, the Pacific Theater, POW camps, personal narratives, and many more topics related to the war. The group's final meeting took place on February 10, 2020, after which it was forced to end due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Biographical Note:

William Reuther Douglas, a native of Ashland City, Tennessee, was a World War II veteran and retired Commanding General of the 30th Armored Division of the Tennessee National Guard. Born August 31, 1910 to James William and Harriet Emma Douglas, he worked for the postal service before he was called to World War II service in September of 1940. During that time, he served as a battalion adjutant and later as a company commander before leaving for overseas duty with the 102nd Infantry Division (the first Division to land at Cherbourg) in September of 1944. While he was in Europe, Douglas formed a friendship with former Bulgarian military attaché Major General Petar Ganchev. The two exchanged letters and political opinions – mainly regarding post-war Germany and the Soviet Union – after the war until Ganchev's death in 1950.

Douglas was awarded the Bronze Star in 1945, and the Legion of Merit Award in 1965. He worked for the Veterans Administration for over 35 years, and served as Assistant State Adjutant General for the Tennessee National Guard from 1968 until 1971. He died in April of 1995 at the age of 84, and is buried at Spring Hill Cemetery.

Scope and Contents of the Collection:

This collection chiefly contains the papers presented at meetings of the World War II Study Group from 1992-2020. There is also a large number of publications, including books, periodicals, and newspapers, which range from 1934 to 2017, and provide insight into various aspects of World War II in both the European and Pacific Theaters. In addition, the collection contains research materials that include maps, articles, and copies of primary source materials used by World War II Study Group members to write papers. Topics of these research materials include the Ardennes Campaign, naval operations, POWs, and biographical information about Tennesseans who were awarded with the Medal of Honor for their services in the war.

Interestingly, this collection also contains some of the personal papers of Major General William R. Douglas, a World War II veteran who lived in Nashville until his death in 1995. Much of these materials are comprised of ephemera collected during his time in Europe in the mid-1940s, and include a collection German propaganda leaflets targeted toward American soldiers, a Swiss vacation pass, and several newsletters for American and German soldiers. Additionally, there is correspondence with notable figures including Major General Petar Ganchev and Princess Elizabeth of Hesse (formerly Elizabeth Reid Rogers). Most materials are in English, though some are in German.

Index Terms:**Names:**

Douglas, William Reuther (1910-1995)
Ganchev, Petar (1874-1950)

Subjects:

World War II (1939-1945)
World War II research collections

Related Collections:

Cable Club Collection
Coffee House Club Collection
Old Oak Club Collection

Arrangement:

This collection is arranged alphabetically into four series: *Papers*, *Publications*, *Research Materials*, and *William Douglas Papers*.

The *Papers* series includes original papers written by members of the World War II Study Group that were presented at group meetings. Papers are arranged alphabetically by author into four separate volumes. Volume 1 also includes a history of the group and members list.

The *Publications* series includes books, newspapers, and periodicals about various political and military aspects of World War II. Dates of publication range between 1934 and 2017. Many published materials in this series commemorate anniversaries of World War II events.

Research Materials includes copies of secondary and primary sources used by World War II Study Group members to research papers presented to the group.

The *William Douglas Papers* series contains personal correspondence, printed materials, and photographs belonging to Major General William R. Douglas. Most of the correspondence is between Douglas and Major General Petar Ganchev, while printed materials include items such as a yearbook from the 30th Armored Division of the Tennessee National Guard, a collection of German propaganda leaflets targeted toward and distributed to American soldiers during World War II, and several newsletters for both American and German soldiers during the war.

Contents Listing:**Box 1: Papers**

Papers – Volume 1

Papers – Volume 2

Box 2: Papers

Papers – Volume 3

Papers – Volume 4

Box 3: Publications

Fol. 1: Publications – Books – 102nd Infantry Division (1947)

Fol. 2: Publications – Books – Flying Flak Alley (2008)

Fol. 3: Publications – Books – Hubertuskreuz (1984)

Fol. 4: Publications – Books – Yamamoto Isoroku (2012)

Fol. 5: Publications – Periodicals – Air & Space (2016)

Fol. 6: Publications – Periodicals – Army Magazine (1995)

Fol. 7: Publications – Periodicals – National Geographic (2017)

Fol. 8: Publications – Periodicals – National Guard (1995)

Fol. 9: Publications – Periodicals – Time Magazine (1945)

Fol. 10: Publications – Periodicals – Time Magazine (2005)

Fol. 11: Research Materials – Ardennes Campaign (n.d.)

Fol. 12: Research Materials – Atomic Bomb (1998)

Fol. 13: Research Materials – Biographical Information (1992-2011)

Fol. 14: Research Materials – Chronologies (n.d.)

Fol. 15: Research Materials – Medal of Honor (n.d.)

Fol. 16: Research Materials – Naval Operations (n.d.)

Fol. 17: Research Materials – Newspaper Articles (c.1940s)

Fol. 18: Research Materials – POWs (n.d.)

Fol. 19: Research Materials – Royal Air Force (n.d.)

Fol. 20: Research Materials – Solomon Islands Campaign (c.2011)

Fol. 21: Research Materials – Surrender Documents (1998)

Fol. 22: Research Materials – Transcriptions (n.d.)

Box 4: William Douglas Papers

Fol. 1: William Douglas Papers – Correspondence – Ganchev, Petar (1946-1950)

Fol. 2: William Douglas Papers – Correspondence – Pfeiffer, Jean (1946)

Fol. 3: William Douglas Papers – Correspondence – Princess of Hesse (1945-1948)

Fol. 4: William Douglas Papers – Correspondence – Scherraus-Cuanillon, Mathilde (1966)

Fol. 5: William Douglas Papers – Photographs (c.1940s-1960s)

Fol. 6: William Douglas Papers – Printed Materials – 30th Armored Division (1957)

Fol. 7: William Douglas Papers – Printed Materials – Anti-FDR Leaflets (1944)

Fol. 8: William Douglas Papers – Printed Materials – Articles (n.d.; 1985)

Fol. 9: William Douglas Papers – Printed Materials – Eisenhower Memo (fc.1945-1946)

Fol. 10: William Douglas Papers – Printed Materials – Facts Figures Faces (1944)

Fol. 11: William Douglas Papers – Printed Materials – Frontpolt (1944)

Fol. 12: William Douglas Papers – Printed Materials – German Propoganda Leaflets (c.1940s)

Fol. 13: William Douglas Papers – Printed Materials – Porten Narrative (1989)
Fol. 14: William Douglas Papers – Printed Materials – Swiss Transportation Co. (1946)
Fol. 15: William Douglas Papers – Printed Materials – War Map (1941)

Oversize Box: Publications

Item 1: Publications – Books – Atlas (1995)
Item 2: Publications – Newspapers – Jeffersonian (1934)
Item 3: Publications – Newspapers – Los Angeles Times (1945)
Item 4: Publications – Newspapers – Nashville Banner (1945)
Item 5: Publications – Newspapers – Nashville Tennessean (1944)
Item 6: Publications – Newspapers – Nashville Tennessean (1945)
Item 7: Publications – Newspapers – Nashville Tennessean (1945)
Item 8: Publications – Newspapers – Nashville Tennessean (1945)
Item 9: Publications – Newspapers – New York Herald Tribune (1944)
Item 10: Publications – Newspapers – New York Herald Tribune (1947)
Item 11: Publications – Newspapers – New York Times (1949)
Item 12: Publications – Newspapers – Stars and Stripes (1945)
Item 13: Publications – Newspapers – World War II Times (1990)
Item 14: Publications – Newspapers – World War II Times (1992)
Item 15: Publications – Periodicals – Life Magazine (1965)

Restrictions:

Restrictions on Access: In-library use only.

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Administrative Information:

Copyright: The Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville-Davidson County retains intellectual property rights to this collection. Some restrictions may apply.

Provenance: Donated by Charles Leach of the World War II Study Group, August 2025.

Processing Information: Processed by Kelley Sirko, September 2025.

Accruals: No further accruals expected.