



James R. Pettus Collection (R0704)

Collection Number: R0704

Collection Title: James R. Pettus Collection

Dates: 2001

Creator: Pettus, James R., 1924-2017

Abstract: The James R. Pettus Collection contains a memoir of service in the European theater of World War II by James R. "Pete" Pettus of the 42nd ("Rainbow") Division of the U. S. Army. Pettus saw combat with the 232nd Infantry Regiment in France and Germany, eventually ending his wartime experiences in Munich.

Collection Size: 0.1 cubic foot
(2 folders, 1 CD)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at rolla@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The Donor has given, assigned, and transferred to the Society all copyrights, and associated rights the Donor may possess in the materials.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *James R. Pettus Collection* (R0704); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Rolla].

Donor Information: This collection was donated to the University of Missouri by James R. Pettus on March 26, 2001 (Accession No. RA0776).

Alternate Forms Available: A born digital copy provided by the donor is available on a CD in the administration folder.

Processed by: Processed by Mark Stauter, May 24, 2001. Updated by Aaron Schmidt, May 2020.

Biographical Note:

James R. “Jim” Pettus was born on December 5, 1924 to James R. and Sylvia A. Pettus. He grew up in Flat River, Saint Francois County, Missouri. He enlisted in the United States Army in 1944 serving for three years.

Known as “Pete” to his army buddies. His unit, Company K of the 232nd Infantry Regiment, 42nd (“Rainbow”) Division, sailed for Europe on November 23, 1944, and arrived at Marseilles, France, on December 8. He received a Bronze Star for his role in the battle for Wurzburg, Germany, on April 4, 1945. In late December 1944, in response to the “Battle of the Bulge,” Company K was rushed into a defensive position near Strasbourg in the Alsatian region of France. During January and February 1945 heavy fighting removed the German presence from the area, and on March 14 the final offensive began. On March 18, Pettus crossed into Germany and his unit began a successful assault upon the “Siegfried Line.” There followed a rapid advance through southwestern Germany, passing through the cities of Dahm, Darstein, Worms (where Pettus crossed the Rhine River), Schweinfurt, Neustadt, and Munich. After occupation duty in Austria, Pettus returned to the United States in March 1946.

He married Ruth McNail and together they had two children. In 2015, Pettus attended the 70th Anniversary of the Liberation of Dachau where he and four other liberators were honored. Pettus died on September 26, 2017.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged in its original order.

Scope and Content Note:

Pettus’s memoir intersperses his personal narrative with excerpts from the Regiment’s official history and the Company’s morning reports, noting the frequent discrepancies between his experiences at the front and those officially reported by the troops in the rear echelon. Pettus’s subsequent narrative describes the daily location and activities of the Second Platoon, in which he carried a Browning Automatic Rifle. The collection contains many useful and detailed maps that illustrate Pettus’s daily movement, and many photographs, both contemporaneous and from later visits to the theatre of war.

Container List:

Box 001 f. 1-2 James R. Pettus World War II memoir, 2001

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