DeField, Edward Clyde, 1918-
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“Remembrance of World War II,” 1996.
One folder, photocopies.

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This is a memoir of World War Two by a native of Mississippi County, Missouri. DeField was a member of the 397th Antiaircraft Battalion. He served in Wales, Normandy, France, Belgium, and Germany, and in the Allied occupation force.

Ed DeField is a native of Charleston, Mississippi County, Missouri. He was born on a farm near Bertrand on 20 June 1918. Prior to World War Two, DeField served in the 140th Infantry regiment of the Missouri National Guard. He won election as Mississippi County Assessor in 1940. He enlisted in the Army in 1942, and took basic training at Camp Sheridan, Illinois. Assigned to the 397th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion, DeField was soon promoted to corporal, then sergeant. The unit underwent additional training and duty at Long Island, New York, and Camp Edwards, Massachusetts, before shipping overseas on 29 February 1944 to Llandmartin, Wales. Before D-Day, the 397th Antiaircraft Battalion was assigned aboard one of the concrete caissons known as “Phoenixes,” which comprised part of two artificial harbors towed by the Allies across the English Channel and assembled off the coast of Normandy. DeField’s Phoenix lasted thirteen days until the artificial harbor was largely destroyed by a gale and the antiaircraft gunners nearly washed overboard in the storm. DeField had an opportunity to examine the German defenses at Normandy before his unit moved farther up the coast toward the port city of Cherbourg. He was stationed next at Paris and Versailles, where the battalion served in the security force at Allied headquarters. From Versailles, the unit moved to a captured German airfield at Le Gulet, Belgium. DeField enjoyed leave in Brussels before Germans began their offensive in the Ardennes in December 1944. The 397th guarded Allied airfields in Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge, and was stationed at Dusseldorf, Germany, when the war ended. After occupation duty in the American sector at Kaufbeuren, Germany, DeField returned home via Camp Twenty Grand at Le Havre, France, the Port of New York, Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, and Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, where he was discharged.

This 33-page memoir is a candid reminiscence concerning the 397th Antiaircraft Battalion and its men. DeField mentions other soldiers in the unit, particularly those from Mississippi County, the mutual antipathy between DeField and one of his lieutenants, near disaster on the Phoenix off the coast of Normandy, cold and starving times in Belgium, encounters with the German populace, and narrow escapes from the military police for various shenanigans. DeField has also supplied some revisions to his reminiscence, as well as additional information concerning his wartime career, which are filed in front of the “Remembrance.”

DeField returned to home after his discharge to take up his career as Mississippi County assessor. Including the war years, De Field held the position for over 55 years.

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