

C Daetwyler, Wallace K. (1915-1974), Papers, 1942-1945  
3998 .4 linear feet

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## INTRODUCTION

The papers contain the World War II correspondence of Wallace “Wally” Daetwyler of Lamar, Missouri, to his wife, Ruth A. Daetwyler. Wallace Daetwyler served as an information technician with the U.S. Army Medical Corps in the European Theatre from 1943 to 1945.

## DONOR INFORMATION

The Daetwyler Papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Amanda Sefton on 12 July 2003 (Accession No. 5997).

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Wallace Kent Daetwyler was born to Fred and Rheua Daetwyler on 16 April 1915, in Barton County, Missouri. He married Ruth Anderson in 1939. Before the war, Daetwyler worked as a reporter for the *Lamar Democrat*. He served as an information technician with the U.S. Army Medical Corps in England, France, and Germany before returning home in December 1945. The Daetwylers served as publishers and editors of the *Pleasanton Express*, Pleasanton, Texas, from 1951 to 1975. Wallace died on 10 September 1974 in Atascosa County, Texas, and Ruth died on 21 March 1987 in Columbia, Missouri.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Wallace Daetwyler Papers consist almost entirely of correspondence written to his wife, Ruth Daetwyler, while he served with the U.S. Army Medical Corps. For much of the war Ruth Daetwyler worked as a drill press operator in Hawthorne, California. The letters document in great detail Daetwyler’s induction, basic training in Texas and Pennsylvania, and subsequent service in Europe. The collection is a vivid portrayal of the life of an enlisted soldier serving in a non-combat unit during World War II.

The early correspondence describes basic training at Camp Barkeley, Texas, including the physical training, technical classes, KP duty, and friendships formed with soldiers from around the United States. The letters from England and France detail the people, countryside, monotony of day-to-day military life, and entertainment enjoyed by the GIs. Daetwyler often wrote of the boxing matches, football games, USO shows, and movies he attended. While stationed in Paris, Daetwyler studied French and visited the studio of Pablo Picasso.

By April 1945, he was traveling into Germany and the letters illustrate the destruction of the cities, war refugees, German civilians, and atrocities of the Holocaust. Of note is a letter, dated 7 April 1945, documenting a visit to Buchenwald Concentration Camp shortly after the camp was liberated by American forces. The date of the letter is most likely an error by the author and, as later correspondence reflects, should actually be dated 17 or 18 April.

The miscellaneous material consists of a postcard, several newspaper clippings and the September and November 1945 issues of *RN: A Journal for Nurses*, which include articles written by Daetwyler.

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