

O.W.L.S. Scrapbooks of faculty and students killed in World War II, 1942-1945:

A Guide

Descriptive Summary

Creator: The O.W.L.S. Club (Owls Win or Lose Smiling)

Title: O.W.L.S. Scrapbooks of faculty and students killed in World War II, 1942-1945

Inclusive Dates: 1942-1945

Abstract: The collection contains two scrapbooks created by the O.W.L.S. Club at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas during World War II. The scrapbooks include photos and records of Tarleton student and faculty military service members killed during the war.

Identification: UA5

Extent: 0.76 cubic feet (2 boxes)

Shelf location: Archivist's office

Language(s): Collection is in English.

Repository: Tarleton State University, Dick Smith Library, Archives and Special Collections, Stephenville, Texas

Organizational History

Fraternities and sororities were not introduced on the Tarleton State University campus until the early 1980s, because the school was a junior college (two-year) until 1959. Also, the Texas A&M System imposed a ban on those groups during that time. Social organizations filled the void by providing activities for the Tarleton students.

The O.W.L.S. Club (Owls Win or Lose Smiling) was such an organization. Begun in 1925, it was one of Tarleton's exclusively female clubs. Their goal was to encourage friendliness and social relationship among their members. Among its activities were the annual "Blue Christmas Ball" in the fall and the "Playboy Dance" in the spring co-hosted with the Silver Keys, an all-male social club.

The O.W.L.S. Club remained active through 1984. The Silver Keys disbanded from 1942-1946, since all its members joined the Army Air Corps.

When the United States entered World War II in late 1941, the O.W.L.S. joined the war effort by creating a service flag with embroidered emblems of the military services. When the flag was dedicated in May 1942, it contained six gold stars that represented former Tarleton students and faculty who had died during the war. They also created two scrapbooks commemorating Tarleton faculty and student soldiers who died as a result of the war.

Sources:

Chamberlain, Frank. The O.W.L.S. Social Club. Accessed October 16, 2018.

<https://www.tarleton.edu/library/crosstimbers/collections/tsucollection/TAN00033P.html>

Guthrie, Christopher E. *John Tarleton and His Legacy: The History of Tarleton State University, 1899-1999*. Acton, MA: Tapestry Press, Ltd., 1999.

King, C. Richard. *Golden Days of Purple and White: The John Tarleton College Story*. Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1998.

Scope and Contents

The collection contains two scrapbooks created by the O.W.L.S. Club at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas during World War II. The scrapbooks include photos and records of Tarleton student and faculty military service members killed during the war. By the end of the war, there were 182 entries in the scrapbooks. A digital copy of each record may be accessed in the Cross Timbers Historical Images database at <https://www.tarleton.edu/library/crosstimbers/> and https://tsds.ent.sirsi.net/client/en_US/crosstimbers/search/results?qu=o.w.l.s.&te=ILS .

Most of the records in the scrapbooks include the name and rank of the fallen soldier, his hometown and parents' names, and the years he attended Tarleton as well as his curriculum of study. Military information includes the military branch in which the soldier served, the location and date of his death, any honors awarded, and the manner in which he died. In addition to those killed in action, the scrapbooks contain information for those who died of wounds, who died in prisoner of war camps, and those who were missing in action and later declared dead. Several died while in training for combat or while in route to their assigned stations. A few soldiers died of illness or accidents outside their military service.

The collection also includes index cards that contain a handwritten record for each soldier in the scrapbooks. The scrapbook image number is included in the upper right corner of each card. The cards are in alphabetical order by last name.

The archival staff established a spreadsheet containing the information about each soldier found in the scrapbooks and giving the call number of the image included in the Cross Timber Historical Images database. Due to the extremely fragile condition of the scrapbooks, patrons must use that spreadsheet to research the records contained in the scrapbooks. A hardcopy of the spreadsheet is included with this finding aid. A digital copy will be supplied upon request.

Rights and Access

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Physical Access Restrictions

The scrapbooks are in fragile condition and digital records found in the Cross Timbers Historical Images database (<https://www.tarleton.edu/library/crosstimbers/>) must be used for research for preservation reasons. The hardcopy of the O.W.L.S. Scrapbooks spreadsheet containing the information from the records may be accessed in the finding aid folder. A digital copy of the spreadsheet will be supplied upon request.

Publication Rights

Copyright restrictions may apply.

Index Terms

Organizations

The O.W.L.S Club
Tarleton State University

Subjects

Student organizations—United States—Texas—1920-1990
Tarleton State University. Student clubs of TSU
World War, 1939-1945
World War, 1939-1945—Missing in action

Places

Stephenville (Tex.)

Administrative Information

Provenance

Donated to the Dick Smith Library at Tarleton State University by The O.W.L.S. Club.

Preferred Citation

O.W.L.S. Scrapbooks of faculty and students killed in World War II, 1942-1945, UA5, OWLS Scrapbooks spreadsheet record [no.], Tarleton State University, Dick Smith Library, Archives and Special Collections, Stephenville, Texas.

Processing Information

Finding aid prepared by Phyllis Kinnison, 2018. Revised by Amanda Pape October 16, 2018. Revised by Phyllis Kinnison January 22, 2019.

Related Collections [enter as many as applicable]

Mary Anne Foreman Papers, Box 1, Folder 1 (Roster of Army specialized Training Unit #4808).

Richard Lee Thompson Collection (Letters written by Sammy Hanover during his military service in Europe).

Note to the Researcher

The collection is processed, but use of the original is restricted due to the fragile condition of the scrapbooks. Digital copies of the information contained in the scrapbooks may be accessed in the Cross Timbers Historic Images database at <https://www.tarleton.edu/library/crosstimbers/>. For more information, contact Librarian/Archivist Phyllis Kinnison at pkinnison@tarleton.edu.