

Charles Fry and Beryl Smith correspondence

Accession number 31299

Date 1937-1946

Author / Creator

Fry, Charles Horace.

Smith, Beryl Edith Chapman, 1916-1996

Abstract Correspondence from Flight Lieutenant Charles Fry who served with the RAF and RAAF during the Second World War, and was a German prisoner of war. The letters were written to his fiancée, Beryl Smith, who was Secretary to John 'Jack' Beasley, Minister for Supply and Shipping, during the war. The collection also contains typewritten copies of letters which Beryl wrote to Charles during the war.

System of arrangement Arranged into 12 series.

Description Digital correspondence

Guides A series and item list is available.

Administrative / Biographical history Charles Fry joined the RAAF in June 1936 and was trained as a pilot. He was seconded to the RAF in 1937 and served as a fighter pilot during World War II, being stationed in Egypt from May 1939. He served in the Battles of Greece and Crete, fighting both the Italian and German foes. He became a prisoner of war in Germany in 1941. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross medal by both the British and Greek governments. After the war he returned to Australia and married Beryl. In 1946 they purchased a farm at Dalby in Queensland where they lived for the rest of their lives. Beryl died in 1996 and Charles in 2010.

Access restrictions Unrestricted access.

Copyright status In copyright.

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Preferred citation

31299, Charles Fry correspondence, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

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Series 1: Photographs (1938-1949)

Series number 1

Series title Photographs

Date 1938-1949

Scope and content

Photographs of Charles Fry, pilot with the Royal Air Force (RAF) and Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and prisoner of war during the Second World War, and of his wedding to Beryl Smith. Charles and Beryl were married soon after his release in September 1945. [Items 31299/1, 31299/28-29, 31299/53 and 31299/98-31299/100]

Description

Description 7 photographs

Additional format Digital copies available

Locate OMDIG Digital copies only

Access

Access restrictions Unrestricted access

Copyright status Out of copyright

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Items in this series:

Photograph (1939)

Unit ID 31299/1

Date 1939

Scope and content

Photograph of Flight Lieutenant Charles Fry, 112 Fighter Squadron, RAF, Egypt 1939 (Gloster Gladiator aircraft). The caption reads: 'Digger' Fry. ***Digital Copy Only***

Description

Description 1 photograph

[View the items](#)

Photograph (1938)

Unit ID 31299/29

Date 1938

Scope and content

Photograph showing Charles Fry at R.A.F. Station, Biggin Hill, Kent, standing in front of a Westland Lysander aircraft. It is captioned "They call me Digger". ***Digital Copy Only***

Description

Description 1 photograph

[View the items](#)

Photograph (1938)

Unit ID 31299/28

Date 1938

Scope and content

Photograph of the Operations Room, R.A.F. Station, Biggin Hill, Kent, England. One of the men pictured is Flying Officer Charles Horace Fry in R.A.F. uniform. ***Digital Copy Only***

Description

Description 1 photograph

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Photograph (1942)

Unit ID 31299/53

Date 1942

Scope and content

Photograph of Flight Lieutenant Charles Fry as a prisoner of war in Poland. ***Digital Copy Only***

Description

Description 1 photograph

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Photograph (1945)

Unit ID 31299/98

Date 1945

Scope and content

Photograph of Beryl Edith Chapman Smith. The caption reads: 'Beryl Edith Chapman Smith 5/3/15. On the staff of Hon. Jack Beasley Minister for Supply and Shipping, Federal Parliament.' ***Digital Copy Only***

Description

Description 1 photograph

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Photograph (1939-1945)

Unit ID 31299/100

Date 1939-1945

Scope and content

Photograph of Charles Fry in uniform. The caption reads: 'Fighter pilot, POW for 4 1/2 years.'

Digital Copy Only

Description

Description 1 photograph

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Photograph (21 September 1945)

Unit ID 31299/99

Date 21 September 1945

Scope and content

Wedding photograph of Charles Fry and Beryl Smith. Caption reads: 'Had not seen each other from 15.7.1937 to September 1945.' ***Digital Copy Only***

Description

Description 1 photograph

[View the items](#)

(7 digital)

Series 2: Greeting cards (1936-1940)

Series number 2

Series title Greeting cards

Date 1936-1940

Scope and content

Greeting cards sent by Charles Fry while serving overseas during the Second World War. [Items 31299/7, 31299/20 & 31299/52]

Author / Creator

Fry, Charles Horace, 1914-2010

Description

Description 3 greeting cards

Items in this series:

Christmas card (1936-1940)

Unit ID 31299/7

Date 1936-1940

Scope and content

Christmas card issued by No. 32 (Fighter) Squadron, Biggin Hill and signed by Charles Fry.

Description

Description 0

Additional format Digital copies available

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Christmas card (25 December 1936)

Unit ID 31299/20

Date 25 December 1936

Scope and content

Christmas card issued by No. 1 Flying Training School, Royal Australian Air Force, Point Cook and signed by Charles Fry.

Author / Creator

Fry, Charles Horace, 1914-2010

Description

Description 1 greeting card

[View the items](#)

Christmas card (1940)

Unit ID 31299/52

Date 1940

Scope and content

Christmas card sent by Charles Fry to Beryl Smith, informing her that he is going to Greece.

Author / Creator

Fry, Charles Horace, 1914-2010

Description

Description 1 greeting card

Additional format Digital copy available

[View the items](#)

(4 digital)

Series 3: Certificates (1937-1946)

Series number 3

Series title Certificates

Date 1937-1946

Scope and content

Certificates issued in relation to the service of Charles Fry with the Royal Australian Air Force prior to and during the Second World War. [Items 31299/3, 31299/24 and 31299/4]

Description

Description 3 certificates

Additional format Digital copies available

Items in this series:

Certificate (17 July 1937)

Unit ID 31299/3

Date 17 July 1937

Scope and content

Certificate of Character issued by the Royal Australian Air Force to Air Cadet Charles Horace Fry.

Description

Description 1 certificate

[View the items](#)

Certificate (17 July 1937)

Unit ID 31299/24

Date 17 July 1937

Scope and content

Certificate of discharge issued to Air Cadet Charles Fry by the Royal Australian Air Force.

Description

Description 1 certificate

[View the items](#)

Certificate (25 September 1946)

Unit ID 31299/4

Date 25 September 1946

Scope and content

Royal Australian Air Force Officer's Certificate of Service issued to Charles Horace Fry.

Description

Description 1 certificate

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(3 digital)

Series 4: Correspondence (1936-1938)

Series number 4

Series title Correspondence

Date 1936-1938

Scope and content

This series contains letters and telegrams principally written by Charles Fry to Beryl Smith. The earliest was sent from No. 1 Flying Training School, Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), Point Cook, Victoria and later from Royal Air Force (RAF) Stations, Leuchars, Scotland and Biggin Hill, Kent, England. Charles Fry was granted a 'short service' Commission with the RAF where he trained as a fighter pilot. [Items 31299/6, 31299/21-23, 31299/25-27, and 31299/30-32]

Author / Creator

Fry, Charles Horace, 1914-2010

Description

Description 9 letters ; 1 telegram

System of arrangement Chronological

Access

Access restrictions Unrestricted access

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Series 5: Correspondence (1939)

Series number 5

Series title Correspondence

Date 1939

Scope and content

Letters in this series are chiefly from Charles Fry who was serving with the Royal Air Force (RAF) in England and the Middle East prior to the war with Germany. Posted to the re-formed 112 Squadron which was initially based at RAF Helwan, Cairo, and later over the Sudan, he was promoted to Flight Lieutenant. In November Charles proposed to Beryl Smith and sent her a cheque to buy an engagement ring; she accepted his offer. [Items 31299/33-42 and 31299/103]

Author / Creator

Fry, Charles Horace, 1914-2010

Smith, Beryl Edith Chapman, 1916-1996

Description

Description 8 letters ; 1 postcard ; 2 telegrams

Additional format Digital copies available

Access

Access restrictions Unrestricted access

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Series 6: Correspondence (1940)

Series number 6

Series title Correspondence

Date 1940

Scope and content

Letters and telegrams in this series follow the joyful news of Charles' and Beryl's engagement; their plans to be together in Egypt; the build up of troops in the Middle East, and the realisation that it would not be safe or possible for her to join him. [Items 31299/43-50, 31299/92 and 31299/104-106]

Author / Creator

Fry, Charles Horace, 1914-2010

Smith, Beryl Edith Chapman, 1916-1996

Description

Description 7 letters ; 5 telegrams

System of arrangement Chronological

Access

Access restrictions Unrestricted access

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Series 7: Correspondence (1941)

Series number 7

Series title Correspondence

Date 1941

Scope and content

This series principally contains letters (copies) which were sent by Beryl Smith to Charles Fry, who after being reported missing in May 1941 was located in prisoner of war transit camp at Gougi, Athens. Later that year Charles Fry was moved to Oflag XXC a camp for officers, in Lubeck, in northern Germany. Beryl begins a long series of letters in which she often repeats news, not knowing whether any or all of them will be received by Charles. Periodically Charles is allowed to send brief postcards to Beryl advising her of his health and well being. Many of the letters took up to three months to reach Australia. It is not known how many letters actually reached Charles while he was interned. [Items 31299/51, 31299/54-60 and 31299/107-115]

Author / Creator

Smith, Beryl Edith Chapman, 1916-1996

Fry, Charles Horace, 1914-2010

Description

Description 11 letters ; 6 postcards

Additional format Digital copies available

System of arrangement Chronological

Access

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Series 8: Correspondence (1942)

Series number 8

Series title Correspondence

Date 1942

Scope and content

Letters in this series are principally written by Beryl Smith to her fiancé Charles Fry a prisoner of war of the Germans. During 1942 Fry was moved from Oflag VI-B southwest of Dossel, to Stalag Luft III, near the town of Sagan (now in Poland). Later that year he was transferred Oflag XXI-B, at Szubin, Poland. Beryl received a number of brief notes from Charles which she has copied perhaps to share with family. Charles kept note of how many and the dates of the letters he has received. [Items 31299/61-71 and 31299/116-147]

Author / Creator

Smith, Beryl Edith Chapman, 1916-1996

Fry, Charles Horace, 1914-2010

Description

Description 42 letters ; 1 telegram

System of arrangement Chronological

Access

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Series 9: Correspondence (1943)

Series number 9

Series title Correspondence

Date 1943

Scope and content

This series contains letters written by Charles Fry from German prisoner-of-war camps in Poland to his fiancée Beryl Smith. The letters are brief and constantly refer to the delay in receiving them, some up to 8 months old. Beryl was active in sending books to Charles and his fellow prisoners to pass the time, and photographs of his family to remind him of home.

From September 1942 - April 1943 Charles Fry was interned at Oflag XXIB, located at Szubin, then in April 1943 he was returned to Stalag Luft III, at Sagan (now in Poland), south-east of Berlin, where he remained until being liberated in May 1945. [Items 31299/72-80 and 31299/148-168]

Author / Creator

Fry, Charles Horace, 1914-2010

Description

Description 29 letters ; 1 telegram

System of arrangement Chronological

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Series 10: Correspondence (1944)

Series number 10

Series title Correspondence

Date 1944

Scope and content

This series contains letters written by Charles Fry from a German prisoner of war camp Stalag Luft III located at Sagan, to his fiancée Beryl Smith. He writes of how delighted he is to receive her mail, and that many of them are more than 3 months delayed. [Items 31299/81-89, 31299/102 and 31299/169-184]

Author / Creator

Fry, Charles Horace, 1914-2010

Smith, Beryl Edith Chapman, 1916-1996

Description

Description 26 letters

System of arrangement Chronological

Access

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Series 11: Correspondence (1945-1950)

Series number 11

Series title Correspondence

Date 1945-1950

Scope and content

This series of letters and telegrams relate the happy news of Charles Fry's release from captivity. After arriving in England, Charles attended an event at Buckingham Palace in June, where he was awarded the Greek Flying Cross by King George VI. It was not until September that Charles was reunited with his family and bride to be Beryl Smith, who by then was secretary to the Minister for Defence, John 'Jack' Beazley. Charles was warmly welcomed when he arrived at RAAF Bradfield Park Station on the morning of 8 September 1945. [Items 31299/2, 31299/5, 31299/8-16 and 31299/185-198]

Author / Creator

Fry, Charles Horace, 1914-2010

Smith, Beryl Edith Chapman, 1916-1996

Description

Description 9 telegrams ; 21 letters

System of arrangement Chronological

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Series 12: Military papers (1946)

Series number 12

Series title Military papers

Date 1946

Scope and content

This series contains military papers and statements relating to the service of Flight Lieutenant Charles Fry during the First World War.

- Statement of special force deferred pay.
- Statement of account
- Personal effects of Flight Lieutenant C. H. Fry (40047) (a list of possessions left in England, then shipped to Australia after the war)
- Special tobacco ration for ex-service personnel
- Petrol tickets document issued to Charles Fry

[Items 31299/93-31299/97]

Description

Description 5 letters

Additional format Digital copies available

Access

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