



Curtis family World War Two correspondence and photographs

Accession number 33632

Date 1940-1945

Author / Creator

Curtis, William Kennedy, 1916- correspondent

Curtis, Robert, correspondent

Curtis, John Henry, 1920- correspondent

Abstract A collection of letters written by brothers Bill Curtis, Jack Curtis and Bob Curtis to their parents Eileen and Kennedy Curtis between 1940 and 1945. Most of the letters still have their original stamped envelopes, and are mostly addressed to their mother Eileen, although there are some occasional ones to their father or one of the brothers. There is also an album of black and white photographs taken by Bill Curtis during his army service in the Middle East with the 2/1st Motor Ambulance Convoy.

Scope and content William 'Bill' Curtis (service number QX9680) served with the 2/1st Motor Ambulance Convoy in the Middle East and later New Guinea. His correspondence starts in June 1940 when he is in Redbank camp and continues through the whole of his war service. Bill actively engaged with the local culture in the Middle East, meeting with and learning from the South Brisbane Syrian community prior to embarking, learning Arabic on the ship over, and writing descriptive letters home detailing the people that he met, customs he observed and places he visited including Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Solomon Islands and Bougainville. The collection includes a photograph album of images taken by Bill during his service in the Middle East.

System of arrangement Arranged into 4 series

Description Approximately 475 letters and 50 black and white photographs

Additional format Digital copies available for selected items.

Administrative / Biographical history William 'Bill' Kennedy Curtis, John 'Jack' Henry Curtis, and Robert 'Bob' Curtis were three of the five sons of Eileen Maude and Kennedy Howe Curtis who operated a dairy farm at Closeburn near Samford in Brisbane. Bill, born 2 November 1916, enlisted in the army for World War Two at Kelvin Grove, Brisbane. John 'Jack', born 20 March 1920, enlisted with the RAAF in Brisbane, service number 414911. Jack Curtis studied engineering at the University of Queensland after the war, specialising in telecommunications and went on to become the founding Managing Director of Telecom Australia from 1975 to 1981.

Copyright status Multiple copyright statuses.

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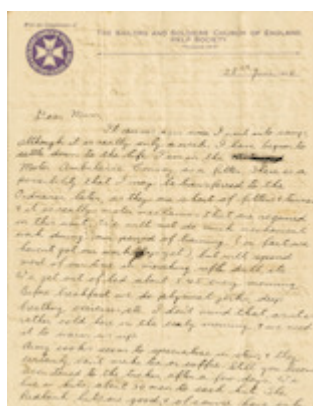
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Series 1: William Curtis letters (1940-1945)



Series number 1

Series title William Curtis letters

Date 1940-1945

Scope and content

William 'Bill' Kennedy Curtis, enlisted in the army during the Second World War at Kelvin Grove, Brisbane, service number QX9680. He worked as a fitter in the 2/1st Motor Ambulance Convoy. After training at Redbank, Bill was posted to various places in the Middle East, North Queensland, Adelaide, Solomon Islands and Bougainville. He was interested in different languages and cultures, and while in the Middle East he travelled widely to visit villages to learn the languages, experience the food and befriend local people. Bill read widely, had access to news from socialist and leftist organisations, and attended weekly discussion groups. His weekly letters to his parents related his views on the progress of the war, international and Australian news, as well as contemporary economic and political issues. He regularly shared news of his close friends Fred Moody (QX10049) and Peter Hely (QX18508). Bill was discharged from the Army in 1945 after more than five years' service. This series contains items 33632/1 - 33632/167

Author / Creator

Curtis, William, Kennedy, 1916-

Description

Description Approximately 167 letters and envelopes

Additional format Digital copies available

System of arrangement Chronological

Locate OMOSBOX Boxes 23740 - 23742 O/S

Access

Access restrictions Unrestricted access.

Copyright status In copyright

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View the items

[View the item](#)

(1 digital)

Series 2: John Curtis letters (1940-1945)

Series number 2

Series title John Curtis letters

Date 1940-1945

Scope and content

John 'Jack' Henry Curtis was born on 20 March 1920. At the outbreak of the war Jack was working at Mount Morgan mine. He joined the reserves and did initial training at Mount Morgan, before being accepted into the Royal Australian Air Force in July 1941, service number 414911. He trained at Cootamundra and Evans Head, and was posted to Adelaide as an instructor. During his time in Adelaide he returned home on leave to marry Patricia Foote in August 1943. Shortly after the wedding, he was sent for further training in Bairnsdale and Lowood, and eventually to New Guinea. During this whole period he wrote home almost weekly, letting his parents know his whereabouts and what his daily life was like. He maintained an active interest in the farm at Closeburn, often enquiring about crops, rain, the sale of pigs, the farm machinery, and also asking after other members of the family and friends. Jack Curtis studied engineering at

the University of Queensland after the war, specialising in telecommunications and went on to become the founding Managing Director of Telecom Australia from 1975 to 1981. This series contains items 33632/168 - 33632/381

Author / Creator

Curtis, John Henry

Description

Description Approximately 213 letters and envelopes

System of arrangement Chronological

Locate OMOSBOX Boxes 23742 - 23745 O/S

Access

Access restrictions Unrestricted access.

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Series 3: Robert Curtis letters (1940-1944)

Series number 3

Series title Robert Curtis letters

Date 1940-1944

Scope and content

Robert 'Bob' Curtis was a boarding student at Ipswich Grammar School during the Second World War. He wrote to his parents weekly, describing day to day life in the boarding school, rugby and cricket matches, visits to the Foote family home near Ipswich, and movies he's seen. Parts of the Ipswich Grammar School were taken over the US Forces in 1942, and Bob and his friends watched baseball games and walked to the Amberley airbase to see American aircraft, especially the Kittyhawks. He often asks for news of his brother Bill who is fighting overseas and speaks of visits with his brother Jack when he is on home leave. This series contains items 33632/382 - 33632/480

Author / Creator

Curtis, Robert

Description

Description Approximately 106 letters and envelopes

System of arrangement Chronological

Locate OMOSBOX Boxes 23746 - 23747 O/S

Access

Access restrictions Unrestricted access.

Copyright status In copyright

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Series 4: Photograph album (1941-1942)

Series number 4

Series title Photograph album

Date 1941-1942

Scope and content

An album containing approximately 50 black and white photographs taken by William 'Bill Curtis' during his service in the Middle East. There are photographs of local people, Bedouin policeman and shepherds, of Bill and his friends riding donkeys, and attractions such as churches, gardens, the Pyramids, the Gihon Spring in Jerusalem and places in Palestine. The album has wooden covers with a painted Egyptian scene and is bound with twine. There is also a portrait of Bill Curtis wearing military uniform.

Author / Creator

Curtis, William Kennedy, 1916-

Description

Description 1 photograph album

Locate OMBOX Box 10274

Access

Access restrictions Unrestricted access.

Copyright status Out of copyright

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