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## William C. Bianchi Collection

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# William C. Bianchi Collection

## COLLECTION SUMMARY

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### IDENTIFIER

MA 57

### TITLE

William C. Bianchi Collection

### DATES

1942-1998

### PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

0.42 linear feet [1 document case]

### NAME OF CREATOR(S)

Bianchi, William C.

### LANGUAGE

English

### REPOSITORY

South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections

Hilton M. Briggs Library (SBL) Room 241, Box 2115

1300 North Campus Drive, Brookings, SD 57007

Phone: 605-688-5094

Email: [arcrefs@sdstate.edu](mailto:arcrefs@sdstate.edu)

### ACCESS NOTE

Open. This material does not circulate and may be used in-house only.

### PREFERRED CITATION

Name of item, Collection identifier, box #, folder #, Collection Title, South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections, Hilton M. Briggs Library, Brookings, South Dakota.

### ABSTRACT

Willibald C. Bianchi (1915-1945) a native of New Ulm, Minnesota, and a 1940 graduate of South Dakota State University. He was commissioned in 1940 and joined the 45th Infantry Regiment of the Philippine Scouts in 1941. For his actions during the Battle of Bataan, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1942. He was promoted to Captain and returned to battle only to be captured by the Japanese on April 9, 1942. He spent over two years in multiple prison camps before dying on an unmarked prison ship after it was bombed by an American airplane on January 9, 1945.

The collection contains information regarding the Willibald C. Bianchi Memorial scholarship, ceremony, and plaque at South Dakota State University. The records also include news clippings, remembrances, and a photocopy of the Congressional Medal of Honor certificate. In addition, there are photocopies of letters from Bianchi to his family while he was stationed in the Philippines and as a prisoner of war.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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Willibald C. Bianchi was born March 12, 1915, in New Ulm, Minnesota to Joseph and Carrie Bianchi.

He enrolled at South Dakota State College in 1935. An active member of the R.O.T.C., Bianchi was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army upon his graduation in 1940.

That fall, Bianchi entered Infantry School in Fort Benning, Georgia, where he was later promoted to First Lieutenant. In April 1941, Bianchi joined the 45th Infantry Regiment of Philippine Scouts. His unit was to provide military training to Filipinos.

Bianchi remained in the Philippines after the United States entered World War II. On February 3, 1942, he was injured during the Battle of Bataan. Despite being wounded multiple times, he continued to push back Japanese troops until an explosion disabled him. As a result of his actions, General Douglas MacArthur presented Bianchi with a Congressional Medal of Honor, making him the third recipient of the medal during World War II.

After recuperating, Bianchi returned to service and received a promotion to Captain. Along with 75,000 other American and Filipino soldiers, he was captured by the Japanese on April 9, 1942. The captives marched 65 miles across the Bataan Peninsula in the heat with no food or water, in what is known as the Bataan Death March. Bianchi worked to help his fellow prisoners survive the grueling conditions of the march and prison camps.

After more than two years of being held prisoner, Bianchi was detained in several prison camps. On January 9, 1945, he was being held on an unmarked prison ship, which was bombed by an American airplane. He died instantly.

His body was never recovered, and Bianchi is remembered on the Wall of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial in Manila, Philippines. His grave marker is located at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Honolulu, Hawaii.

In 1998, South Dakota State University honored Captain Willibald Bianchi by dedicating a plaque placed in the Student Union, creating a scholarship, and holding a ceremony.

## CONTENTS NOTE

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The collection consists of collected materials relating to the life of Captain Willibald C. Bianchi. The materials were used by the Tom Beattie and the Willibald Bianchi Memorial and Scholarship Committee to create a memorial to Bianchi at South Dakota State University. Files contain information regarding the scholarship, ceremony, and plaque. These materials also include news clippings, remembrances, and a photocopy of the Congressional Medal of Honor certificate. Items of significance comprise photocopies of letters from Bianchi to his family while he was stationed in the Philippines and as a prisoner of war.

## SUBJECT HEADINGS

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### PERSONS

Bianchi, William C.

### SUBJECTS

- Armed Forces
- Medal of Honor
- Soldier
- War memorials
- World War, 1939-1945
- World War, 1939-1945 – Campaigns -- Philippines

## ACCESS

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### CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS

This collection is open to researchers without restrictions. The materials in the Archives do not circulate and may be used in-house only.

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Requests to publish should be arranged with the SDSU Archives and Special Collections.

## CONTAINER LIST

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Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
1	1	Biographical Information: photocopies of photographs and brief biographies	undated
1	2	Congressional Medal of Honor for Valor: photocopies of letter and certificate	1943

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
1	3	Certificate of Recognition on Behalf of the United States of America for Bianchi and Signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson	1960s
1	4	Correspondence: Bianchi to His Family and letter to Tom Beatie explaining the letters [photocopies]	1941, 1997
1	5	Correspondence: Bianchi to His Family When He was a Prisoner of War [photocopies]	1944
1	6	Correspondence: Spaulding, Theodore I. to Carrie Bianchi	1951
1	7	Correspondence: Thomas, Mrs. Lowell to Carrie Bianchi	1943
1	8	Correspondence: Veteran's Administration to Mrs. John McKethen [photocopy]	1980
1	9	Correspondence: War Department to Bianchi Family	1942-1945
1	10	Family: Charles Bianchi (grandfather)	undated
1	11	Family: Joseph Bianchi (father)	1933
1	12	Newsclippings	1942-1995
1	13	Remembrances and Memorials: Acceptance Speech of Carrie Bianchi upon Bianchi Receiving the Medal of Honor	undated
1	14	Remembrances and Memorials: Army Report Tells Help Bianchi Gave to Prisonmates [photocopy]	undated
1	15	Remembrances and Memorials: Bianchi Grave Marker at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii	undated
1	16	Remembrances and Memorials: Bill Bianchi, Bataan Fighter, in the Tuol River Pocket, Bataan, February 3, 1942 [photocopy]	1944
1	17	Remembrances and Memorials: Letter Jim Daly Sent to His Mother Regarding Bianchi	1942
1	18	Remembrances and Memorials: Memorial at Fort Smelling to Remember the End of World War II	1995
1	19	Remembrances and Memorials: Memorial Speech Given by Bianchi's Niece Sue	2001
1	20	Remembrances and Memorials: These Men Shall Never Die, Bianchi of the Scouts by Lowell Thomas	1945
1	21	Remembrances and Memorials: To Whom Honor is Due, Minnesota Recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor in World War II	1995
1	22	Remembrances and Memorials: Willibald	undated
1	23	Remembrances and Memorials: With Army Forces Western Pacific 29th Replacement Depot Near Manilla.	1945
1	24	SDSU Memorials: Military Science Hall of Fame Induction of Captain Willibald C. Bianchi	1990
1	25	SDSU Memorials: Alumni Remembrances	undated
1	26	SDSU Memorials: Alumni Trip to New Ulm, Minnesota	1998

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
1	27	SDSU Memorials: Correspondence Related to Memorial and Plaque between Tom Beatie and Others	1997-1998
1	28	SDSU Memorials: General Information Regarding Congressional Medal of Honor and Awardees from South Dakota	undated
1	29	SDSU Memorials: Listing of Alumni between 1940 and 1949	1997
1	30	SDSU Memorials: Memorial and Scholarship Committee	1997-1998
1	31	SDSU Memorials: Memorial Ceremony	1998
1	32	SDSU Memorials: Plaque in the Student Union	1997