

University of Memphis

University of Memphis Digital Commons

Special Collections Finding Aids

Special Collections

8-13-2021

MSS0311. James Cortese papers finding aid

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/speccoll-findingaids>

Recommended Citation

"MSS0311. James Cortese papers finding aid" (2021). *Special Collections Finding Aids*. 81.
<https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/speccoll-findingaids/81>

This Finding Aid is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections at University of Memphis Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Special Collections Finding Aids by an authorized administrator of University of Memphis Digital Commons. For more information, please contact khggerty@memphis.edu.

University of Memphis Libraries
Preservation and Special Collections Department

126 Ned R. McWhorter Library
Memphis, TN 38152 - 3250
Phone: (901) 678 - 2210
E-mail: lib_sc@memphis.edu

James Cortese papers

Title: James Cortese papers
Collection No: MSS.311
Creator: A. James Cortese, 1917-2006
Extent: 1.5 cubic feet
Inclusive Dates: 1942-1988 and undated

Abstract: The collection comprises primarily the drafts of the manuscript for James Cortese's 1988 book *Air Commandos Also Laugh*. There are also original drawings by his wife which may have been intended for the book. In addition, there are copies of the newspapers Cortese worked for while in the Army Air Force at Camp Williams, Wisconsin, and Sedalia Army Air Field, Missouri, in 1943-1944.

Donor: James Cortese, Memphis, Tennessee, November 1988.
Processed by: Michele Fagan, March 1990; Gerald Chaudron, April 2014.
Access: Open to all researchers.
Language: English
Preferred Citation: James Cortese papers, Preservation and Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis.

Publication date: April 2014

Biographical information

Anthony James Cortese was born in 1917, a member of the well-known Memphis family. He served as a reporter for camp newspapers at army air force bases in Wisconsin and Missouri during the Second World War before being posted to the Philippines. He married Anna Lee Slagle (1920-1999) and they had four sons: Angelo (Ted), Jim (William James), Richard Anthony and Michael Wesley. Cortese worked as a reporter for the Commercial Appeal newspaper in Memphis, retiring in 1979. He died in 2006.

James Cortese wrote or co-authored a number of books, including: The Man Who Likes Memphis: A Memoir of Forty Years Passed By, 1975; The Bluff City: A Newspaper History, 1978; Rambling Through: The First Ten Years of the Catholic Diocese of Memphis, 1971-1981, 1981; Air Commandos Also Laugh, 1988; Richard Halliburton's Royal Road, 1989; and, Monks, Nudes and Rollerskates: Life Begins at 40, 2007.

Scope and contents

The collection comprises primarily the drafts of the manuscript for James Cortese's 1988 book Air Commandos Also Laugh. There are also original drawings by his wife which may have been intended for the book. In addition, there are copies of the newspapers Cortese worked for while in the Army Air Force at Camp Williams, Wisconsin, and Sedalia Army Air Field, Missouri, in 1943-1944.

Subject terms

Cortese, James, 1917-2006.

United States. Army Air Forces. Camp Williams.

United States. Army Air Forces. Sedalia Army Air Field.

United States. Army Air Forces. Troop Carrier Squadron, 318th.

Inventory

Box 1

Folder

“History of 318th Troop Carrier Squadron, 3rd Air Commando Group, October 1943-October 1945”:

- 1 Ellis, Frederick M. and Tommy Thompson, “Highlights: The 318th Troop Carrier Squadron – Commando -, October 1943-October 1945”, undated.

- Typescript with some corrections and drawings, 57p. Thompson original manuscript.
- 2 Typescript pages 4, 4, 5, 7.
- 3 “Air Commandos Also Laugh”:
Cortese, James, “Air Commandos Also Laugh”, Memphis: Carnation Press, 1988. Typescript draft Introduction and page proofs Chapters 1-12 with corrections, 65 p.
- 4 Page proofs, 56 p. Chapters 13-25, notes for back cover by Earl Potter.
- 5 Page proofs, with corrections, 8p. Chapter 1: “The Bastards Learn to Sing”.
- 6 “Flying High”:
Typescript with corrections. Chapters 1-3, pp. 1-29. Page 1 is headed “Air Commandoes Also Laugh”.
- 7 Typescript with corrections. Chapters 4-9, pp. 30-85.
- 8 Typescript with corrections. Chapters 10-19, pp. 86-159.
- 9 Typescript with corrections. Chapters 20-25, pp. 160-210.
- 10 Typescript with corrections. pp. 1, 55, 78, 117-120.
- 11 Cortese, James, “The Fox Ran Fifth”. Typescript, pp. 9-38, 40-59.
- 12 “Misplaced Warrior”:
Cortese, A.J., “Misplaced Warrior”, 59 p. Typescript, Title pages, pp. 1-34 of Part 1 – ‘The Army, Ho Hum!’; pp. 39-58 of Part 2 – ‘These, Our Institutions’.
- 13 Typescript with some corrections, pp. 65-70, 72-81, 91-126.
- 14 Typescript with some corrections, pp. 127-193.
- 15 Typescript with corrections, pp. 1-12, 26-69. Title ‘Above the Clouds’ crossed out and retitled ‘Misplaced Warrior’, by Jim Cortese. Stamped “No Objection to Publication as Amended. Bureau of Public Relations, War Department.”
- 16 Typescript with corrections, pp. 71-79, 85-132.
- 17 Typescript with corrections, pp. 133-159, 168-204.
- 18 “5. Missing in Action”, pp. 127-129, 183. p. 183 is unrelated.
- 19 Miscellaneous papers, 1943-1944:
Letter: Constance Levy, WAC, to George Hecht, Doubleday Doran Book Shops, 1943 November 24. On Cortese’s book.
Letter: Tishie Ann Lee to James Cortese, undated. Lee was part of a USO show Cortese interviewed for Troop Courier.
“Troop Carrier Command”, Fortune magazine offprint, 1943 October.
Poems: drafts with corrections. Possibly for Troop Courier:
 “Ain’t No Santa Claus”, by Ralph L. Morey.
 “Swan Song”.
 “Bug House Fable”, by ‘SAAF poet’ Ralph L. Morey.
 “Air Minded”.
Play script: “Wings Over Missouri”. 3-act play with references to training at Sedalia Army Air Field.
Radio interview, 1944 January 10. Interview with Sergeant George Sanders, professional boxer and boxing promoter on base.

News script: "Troop Courier Presents the News", 194? January 10.
Untitled story on bond drive and Sedalia Army Air Field, 5p.
Troop Courier survey.

- 20 Drawings: Signed by Slagle (Anna Slagle Cortese):
"I Was Classified".
"We Made an Inspection".
"Best Dressed G.I. Joe".
"Charge of Quarters", 1944 September 22.
"I Disagree', Said the Little Wackie".
On one sheet: "He Belonged at Home", "With Twinkling Eyes He Read for Half
an Hour", "Dictionary Lore".

Box 2

Newspapers:

The News of Camp Williams, Camp Williams near LaCrosse and Tomah, Wisconsin.
Vol. 1, No. 1-5, 1942 August 1-September 4.

AAB News, Army Air Base, Warrensburg, Missouri. Later titled Troop Courier.
Vol. 1, No. 6-16, 1942 October 9-December 18.

Troop Courier, Army Air Force Base, Knob Noster, Missouri.

Vol. 1, No. 17-45, 1943 January 1-July 31; Vol. 2, No. 1-24, 1943 August 7-1944
January 22.

Clipping: "Even some of his comrades at the Sedalia Training Field didn't know he was
THE Jackie Coogan", St. Louis Globe-Democrat, 1943 February 6, p. 3C.

Separated materials

The following material has been separated from the collection and disposed of as follows:

Cortese, James, ed., The Bluff City: A Newspaper History, Moweaqua, Ill.: Spectator Books,
1978.

Separated to Special Collections book collection.