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INTRODUCTION
Papers, artifacts, and photographs collected by 1st Lt. Samuel R. Gardner and his family. These materials primarily pertain to the early childhood, high school years, military service, and posthumous memorial activities involving Gardner. The collections include: correspondence, visual materials, documents, clippings, artifacts, miscellaneous materials, and scrapbook pages.

DONOR INFORMATION
The contents of this collection were donated by the family of Lt. Samuel R. Gardner, Pam Geer and Jerry Gardner. The items contained in this collection were received in two shipments, Accession 7-24 and Accession 7-25.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
Samuel R. Gardner was born in 1943. He was an accomplished high school athlete in area of track and field. Gardner graduated from South High School in Wichita, Kansas in 1961. He enrolled at Wichita State University in 1961 where he received a 4-year track scholarship. At WSU, Gardner majored in education with a minor in mathematics.

At WSU, Gardner enrolled in the R.O.T.C. program. He graduated in 1966 and received a commission in the US Army with the rank of 2nd Lieutenant. Gardner was selected for the helicopter program and attended the United States Army and Aviation School at Ft. Rucker, Alabama. Upon completion of the program he earned his wings and was deployed to Vietnam in December of 1963.

During his service in Vietnam, Gardner was promoted to the rank of 1st Lt. and became a squadron commander in the 176th AHC, 14th AVN BN, 16th AVN Group. Gardner’s unit was noted with providing transportation and support for the 101st Airborne Division.

On the May 5, 1968, Gardner and his unit volunteered for a mission where they were to provide transportation and extraction for E Co, 1st Bn, 6th Infantry operating in Quang Tin province. At 10:30am, Gardner’s aircraft, 66-17075 “The Inserter” was hit by ground fire from NVA forces, losing its main rotor at an altitude of 2,500 ft. All four crewmen including 1st Lieutenant Samuel R. Gardner and 6 men of the 6th infantry were killed in the crash. Allied forces on the ground secured and held the crash site until the following day, May 6, when the bodies were recovered.

Gardner’s body was laid to rest in Wichita, Kansas on June 10, 1968. He was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, the Air Medal with 18 Oak Leaf Clusters, the Purple Heart, the National Defense Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, National Order of Vietnam (5th Degree), and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE
The Gardner Collection contains correspondence, visual materials, documents, newspaper clippings, artifacts, miscellaneous material, and scrapbook pages. These items in this collection pertain to the life of Samuel R. Gardner, the events surrounding his death, and subsequent events related to his legacy. This collection also contains a handful of items not directly related to Samuel R. Gardner, but concerning the Gardner family.
The Correspondence Series is comprised of letters, cards, sympathy cards, and an audio tape pertaining to the life of Samuel R. Gardner. The letters include correspondence between Samuel Gardner and several universities prior to his service in Vietnam. This series contains extensive correspondence between Gardner and his parents during his military service up until the day he was killed. Included in this series is an audio tape recorded by Gardner a few weeks before his death intended for his family a few weeks. Also included are holiday cards, graduation cards, and various other cards sent to the Gardner family as well as over one-hundred sympathy cards. Material related to this series can also be found in the Scrap Book Series.

The Visual Material Series contains photographs, drawings, rubbings, prints, and posters accumulated by or pertaining to Samuel R. Gardner and the Gardner family. The photographs in the series include childhood photographs of Gardner, photographs of Gardner’s college years, and photographs taken by and of Gardner during his military training and deployment to Vietnam. The drawings in this series are childhood drawings of Samuel Gardner. This series also contains rubbings of Gardner’s name from the Vietnam memorial in Winfield, Kansas, as well as the Vietnam memorial in Washington D.C. The prints contained in this series include a team photograph of the 1954 St. Louis Cardinals, two prints of the Winfield Vietnam memorial, and a print of a helicopter. Material related to this series can also be found in the Scrap Book Series.

The Documents Series contains certificates, contracts, receipts, reports, documents, and programs pertaining to Samuel R. Gardner and the Gardner family. The certificates contained in this series include awards given to Gardner as a child, his high school and college diplomas, and the certificates related to the medals that were posthumously awarded to him. The contracts and receipts found in this series include monthly bill for Samuel Gardner and the contracts and receipts related to his funeral and burial. Included in this series are programs for high school and college functions and graduations, military balls, musical recitals, the funeral of Samuel Gardner, and functions associated with Wichita State University. The reports and documents found in this series include all government and military documents, casualty reports, and subsequent documentation associated with Samuel Gardner’s death and posthumous awards. Material related to this series can also be found in the Scrap Book Series.

The Clippings Series contains newspaper and publication clippings associated with Samuel Gardner. Included this series are clippings related to Gardner’s academic and athletic accomplishments, his military career, death, and subsequent legacy. Material related to this series can also be found in the Scrap Book Series.

The Artifacts Series contains physical artifacts belonging to or associated with Samuel Gardner. Included in this series are several items associated with Samuel Gardner’s track and field accomplishments such as several patches and medals as well as a medley baton. Also included in this series are several artifacts related to the military career of Samuel Gardner. These items include the Silver Star, the Air Medal with 18 Oak Leaf Clusters, the Purple Heart,
the National Defense Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, National Order of Vietnam (5th Degree), and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and all accompanying ribbons. Also included is a 1964 R.O.T.C. yearbook.

The Miscellaneous Series contains artifacts and material that do not pertain to any of the subjects or categories of the other series in this collection. Included in this collection are two luggage tags, a baby book for Samuel R. Gardner, loose pages of math homework, Rachel Gardner’s graduation program and diplomas from Kansas State College of Pittsburg, Sig Ep Song Book.

The Scrap Book Series contains the pages of two scrap books. The first of these scrap books contains photographs, clipping, and material relating to the athletic career of Samuel R. Gardner. The second scrap book contains photographs, clippings, correspondence, and documents relating to Gardner’s death.

FOLDER LIST

Correspondence Series

f. 1 Telegram, date unknown, likely late 1940s to early 1950s; 15 letters, date unknown, after May 1968.


f. 5 28 letters, May 28 1968


1968, August 2 1968, August 5 1968, August 9 1968, August 14 1968, August 15 1968,
August 16 1968, August 28 1968, September 17 1968, September 20 1968, October 14

April 3 1977.


f. 11 Letters, October 27 1995, November 12 1996; postcard, February 7 1996; letters,

f. 12 5 business cards, date unknown; cards, undated, June 1 1961, June 1 1961, May 21 1967,

f. 13 14 sympathy cards, 1968.

f. 14 16 sympathy cards, 1968.

f. 15 24 sympathy cards, 1968.

f. 16 18 sympathy cards, 1968.

f. 17 19 sympathy cards, 1968.

f. 18 18 sympathy cards, 1968.

f. 19 19 sympathy cards, 1968.

f. 20 26 sympathy cards, 1968.

f. 21 20 sympathy cards, 1968.

f. 22 14 sympathy cards, 1968.

f. 23 20 sympathy cards, 1968.

f. 24 17 sympathy cards, 1968.

f. 25 53 sympathy cards, 1968.

f. 26 4 sympathy cards, 1968.

f. 27  Audio tape with DVD duplicate, Lt. Sam Gardner, Mid to late April 1968.

Visual Material Series

f. 28  24 photographs, childhood of Samuel Gardner, early 1950s to 1960.

f. 29  25 photographs, late high school through Vietnam years of Samuel Gardner, early 1960s
to 1967/1968.

f. 30  18 photographs, Vietnam, 1968.


f. 33  2 Valentine’s Day Cards, undated; 2 typewriter drawings, May 23 & 27 1958; 2 rubbings
Visual Materials Series continued


Documents Series


Document Series continued


Clipping Series

f.40  72 newspaper clippings relating to the childhood, athletics, college years, military service, posthumous memorial activity of Samuel R. Gardner, early 1950s and after (most undated); 7 journal pages, Samuel R. Gardner, November 28-December 19 1967.

Artifacts Series


f.44  4 patches, U.S. Army Artillery and Missile School, 1966; patch, USARV, 1967-1968; black chord, undated, 2nd Lieutenant uniform bar, sheet of army aviator wing decals; R.O.T.C. Summer Training, Company H, 1964; Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry (Brigade Citation), 1968; Silver Star ribbon, 1968; National Defense ribbon, 1968; Air ribbon (3 Oak Leaf Clusters,) 1968; Air ribbon (15 Oak leaf clusters,) 1968; Vietnam Service
Artifacts Series continued
ribbon, 1968; Purple Heart ribbon, 1968; Army Aviator badge, 1967; prop and wings
lapel pin, undated; weapon qualification badge-expert(automatic rifle qualification bar attached,)
1966-1967; 2 unidentified ribbons (1 bronze service star); unidentified ribbon (2 bronze
service stars); 4 unidentified ribbons; 176th AVN Co. emblem plaque, 1967-1968; last
rites flag, May 1968; small American flag, date unknown; wooden display case
containing: Silver Star, Air Medal with 18 Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart, National
Defense medal, Vietnam Service medal, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry (Individual
citation,) National Order of Vietnam (5th Degree), Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry
(Regiment/Brigade Citation.)

Miscellaneous Series
f.45 32nd Degree Masonic medal, Sam Gardner, undated;; baby book, Samuel Gardner, 1943;
16 pages of math homework, undated; leather diploma folder, Rachel Gardner, 1963;
graduation commencement program, Kansas State College of Pittsburg, Rachel Gardner,
August 8 1963; Master of Science diploma, Kansas State College of Pittsburg, Rachel
Gardner, August 8 1963; 2 customs declaration tags, Mr. & Mrs. Sam Gardner,
December 4 1969; prize voucher, January 16 1970; invitation, July 10 1987; certificate of
appreciation, Rachel Gardner, Wichita State University, April 5 2002.

Scrapbook Series
f.46 16 pages from a scrap book containing photographs and newspaper clippings associated
with the athletic experiences of Samuel R. Gardner
f.47 5 pages from a scrap book containing newspaper clippings, certificates, documents
related to the death of Samuel R. Gardner.

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