

**Claude Raymond Rossi (1921-1945)**  
**Papers, 1937-1945**  
**MSA 532**

**Introduction**

The collection contains the high school and World War II papers of Claude Raymond Rossi (1921-1945) of Barre, Vermont, including documentation of his death in a plane crash in 1945. The material was donated to the Vermont Historical Society by Lawrence Rossi, older brother of Claude Raymond Rossi, in 2009. The collection is housed in one archival, flip-top box and consumes .5 linear feet of shelf space.

**Biographical Notes**

Claude Raymond Rossi was born, the eighth child of Fenisia C. Malnati and Augustus Martin Rossi, on 16 January 1921 in Barre, Vermont. Rossi attended local schools in Barre, graduating from Spaulding High School with the class of 1940. He participated in band, track, football, skiing, athletic association and intramural basketball as a student. Additionally, Rossi's musical interests extended beyond school; he was first drum major with the Spaulding High School Band, played independently as a drummer with local dance bands, and was also a member of the Barre American Legion Drum and Bugle Corps.

Claude Rossi enlisted in the US Navy on 13 October 1942, reporting for duty on 15 April 1943. In the Navy, Rossi pursued a career as a pilot, completing a training course for naval aviators at the Naval Training Center in Pensacola, Florida, in December 1944. Claude Raymond Rossi received his commission as an ensign and an aviator after completing his training and joined VF Squadron 176, US Naval Air Station, Daytona Beach, Florida. During his military service, Rossi flew his fighter from the deck of an aircraft carrier while on patrol off the coast of California. At the end of the World War II, he changed assignments to become a test pilot and died in a plane crash in Alameda, California, shortly thereafter on 24 September 1945. Rossi's headstone can be found in Hope Cemetery in his hometown of Barre, Vermont. The same day Rossi died another Barre aviator, Staff Sergeant Frederick W. Levesque, died a few hours later in a separate plane crash in California.

**Scope and Content**

The collection consists of photographs and papers saved by Lawrence Rossi of Barre, Vermont to document the life, military service, and death of his younger brother, Claude Raymond Rossi, between 1937 and 1945. Although the bulk of the collection centers around Claude Rossi's death in 1945, photographs of the Barre American Legion Drum and Bugle Corps and Spaulding High School ski and basketball teams capture him as a high school student athlete and musician. Additionally, a scrapbook is included with high school graduation cards, news clippings and other ephemera documenting Rossi's graduation from Spaulding in 1940.

Other papers in the collection relate to Claude Rossi's military service as a Navy pilot in World War II. After graduating high school, Rossi trained as a US Navy fighter pilot and became

a naval aviator in December 1944, close to the end of the war in Europe. Rather than ship him overseas, the navy assigned Rossi to patrolling the west coast. The collection includes educational certificates of training from the US Navy Flight Preparatory School in 1943 and from the Naval Air Training Center in Pensacola, Florida, in 1944. Other items such as his aviator's flight log book and ID cards go on to document some aspects of his later experiences in the Navy.

A number of other items in the collection relate to Claude Rossi's untimely death in a plane crash in 1945 and include newspaper clippings and obituaries, letters of condolence to his family and the memorial and family record from his funeral. There is also a sympathy card and photograph of Rossi in a leatherette folder signed by Vermont Governor Ernest W. Gibson.

### Inventory

- MSA 532 :01 Photographs, 1937- ca. 1945, see also oversize squadron photograph in Size D
- :02 Spaulding High School commencement scrapbook, 1940
- :03 Newspaper clippings, 1945
- :04 Letters of condolence, 1945 (from Senator George Aiken and Governor Mortimer Proctor)
- :05 Memorial record of Claude Rossi, 1945
- :06 Papers, 1944-1945, including flight logs, ID cards, war rations, and veterans' guides
- Size D Certificates and diplomas, 1943-1944: US Navy Flight Preparatory School, 1943; Naval Air Training Center, 1944

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