

Randolph Scott Collection
A Register – 1968-1970, 1980, No Date

Creator: Randolph Scott

Collection Number: Mss 257

Title: Randolph Scott Collection

Abstract: During the Vietnam conflict, Randolph Scott kept an audio journal along with a sporadic written correspondence to his family that documented his experiences while serving with the United States Armed Forces.

Quantity .3 cubic feet.

Scope and Content Note

The material in this collection dates from 1969-1970, with one letter dated 1980. The papers contain photocopies of correspondence and news clippings, as well as audiocassettes, and one original photograph.

The correspondence contains Selective Service documentation, letters written by Randolph and his family, Western Union telegrams notifying the family of Randolph's death, and a series of condolence letters from military and political figures. The undated news clipping announces that Randolph Scott has received two posthumous medals. There is one letter dated 1980 that is an invitation to attend a Vietnam Veterans memorial service at Tri-County Tech. There are nine duplicated user audiocassettes with nine backup duplicates. A summary of the material on the tapes is included in the collection. There is one 8 X 10 black & white glossy photograph of Randolph Scott taken while on patrol in Vietnam.

The correspondence and Western Union telegrams are arranged by date. The news clipping is undated. The audiocassettes are arranged by date.

Additional Collection Information

Cite as: [description of item such as "Randolph Scott -- Cassette One"] box number, folder number, Mss 257, Randolph Scott Collection, Special Collections, Clemson University Libraries, Clemson, SC

Biographical Note

Randolph Scott was born on March 15, 1949 in Anderson, S.C. His parents were Carroll and Gladys Scott, both of Anderson, SC. Following graduation from Westside High School in 1967, Scott was drafted into the Army in order to serve in the Vietnam conflict, beginning his tour of

duty on July 21, 1969. While there, he kept an audio journal as well as sporadic written correspondence to his family that documented his various experiences while serving. Randolph Scott was stationed in Vietnam with *Charlie Company*-First Battalion/Sixth Infantry/One Hundred Ninety Eighth Light Infantry Brigade. The commanding officer of the First Battalion/Sixth Infantry was Lieutenant Colonel H. Norman Schwarzkopf. Scott was killed in action on March 11, 1970 in Quang Ngai, South Vietnam, four days short of his twenty-first birthday. South Vietnam's Government awarded Scott two posthumous medals: the Military Merit Medal, and the Gallantry Cross and Palm.

Collection Item Indexed Terms

Vietnamese Conflict, 1961-1975
Vietnamese Conflict, 1961-1975—Personal Narratives
United States. Army—Military Life

Added Names

Scott, Randolph, 1949-1970

Administrative Information:

Acquired from: Mrs. Gladys Scott
Originally accessioned as 90-97, and 91-3.

Processing Information:

This collection was processed by Carl Redd, Project Archivist, in 2004.

Detailed Description

Box	Folder	Title
1	1	Selective Service Documentation/Correspondence/ Western Union Telegrams/ Condolence Letters/ Photograph, etc.
		Nine User Cassettes
2		Nine Original Cassettes— <u>Do Not Use</u>

Photographs (1)

Original photograph can be found in the vault

Randolph Scott Cassette Abstracts
Original Summary by Sean McMahon
2004 edited by Carl Redd

Cassette 1

Speaker-Randolph Scott

Audio Quality-Good

Date-August 6, 1969

Side 1 -- Blank --

Side 2

00:30 -- This is likely the first tape Randolph made in Vietnam. It is Wednesday, August 6, 1969. Randolph begins the tape by insisting that he sent \$150.00 home, and tells his family if they haven't received it soon to let him know. He is now in Chu Lai.

1:40 - 4:50 -- Randolph reminisces about his voyage over to Vietnam. He trained in South Carolina, and then went on to short stops in Seattle, Alaska, and Japan before finally being stationed in Vietnam. Randolph comments on how nice the beaches are.

4:53 - 15:50 -- Randolph has to pull guard duty his first night. He really doesn't know what to do; the situation is made tense by the fact that his perimeter received enemy sniper fire. He didn't shoot back because he had been given an unfamiliar weapon [M-14]. None of the other American positions fired back either -- they were also rookies and had similar trouble with weapons they had not been trained with. Randolph is comforted by this fact, and relates the story with much humor.

He has already calculated that his tour will be up on July 20, 1970. He feels lonely --he wants music sent from home. Randolph admits to an odd request -- send "Kool-Aid" from home. The water provided to the soldiers is of poor quality; his fellow soldiers have recommended Randolph use Kool-Aid in order to improve the taste.

Randolph mentions "walking the point," and how he doesn't want any part of it --even if you can rise through the ranks quickly by volunteering for such assignments. [Walking the point refers to the soldier who walks in front of the platoon as they are advancing.]

15:55 -- He went on his first real mission the previous Tuesday night. It was an ambush operation, designed to give the new men experience. They didn't see anything. Randolph states that he really misses home and has seen other men openly weeping out of loneliness and desperation. He has made two good friends already, Smith (from New York) and Stone (from Florida).

Randolph states that Vietnamese families hang around the camp. He refers the fathers, mothers, and children that are present as papa-san, mama-san, and baby-san respectively. He notes that Vietnamese scouts are around to help the troops with military intelligence, but it is no secret that many of them work for both sides.

He is quite homesick, and talks about people getting sent home for injuries. He acknowledges that some individuals self-inflict wounds in order to go home. Some guys shoot themselves; others break their own legs. "If I could think of an easy way to do it," he says, "I'd do it." Scott humorously admits that the act of self-inflicting wounds is a crime of destroying government property -- yourself!

27:00 -- He signs off, promising to record more messages.

Cassette 2

Speaker-Randolph Scott

Audio Quality-Good

Date-September 1969

Side 1

00:22 -- Randolph requests that food, letters, and blank tapes be sent from home. He is talking over a heavy rain -- it is the monsoon season in Vietnam. Randolph says that he is a member of a small gun squad; acknowledging that it may be hard to imagine. He says many of the men have taken pictures while out on patrol. Randolph and the squad have been for some time walking 2-3 miles per day through rice-paddies. They have been fired upon once, by a lone "VC," but the fire from their own "60's and 79's" [machine guns] killed him. They have also been patrolling mountainous terrain.

4:15 -- Randolph describes one vivid scene in which a fellow soldier had both his hands severed by the rotor blades of a helicopter as it was landing. All the men are urged to keep low around the "birds," but this unfortunate soldier raised his hands to disastrous results.

6:37 -- He mentions that Ho Chi Minh has just died, making the date of this tape early September 1969.

10:50 -- The troops have encountered "Coke-girls" around the camp. These are young Vietnamese girls who sell Coca-Cola to the men. Their superiors advise against this, as many are suspected of spying.

12:10 -- Randolph has heard that clothes are very inexpensive in Vietnam and expresses the desire to purchase several while he is on "R & R." He states that when he gets those suits he's really going to "be one clean dude."

13:25 - 17:29 -- The rain is falling harder now. He pleads that the family could do better in terms of sending him more letters and pictures. Agitated, Randolph yells, "I wish it would stop raining!" Randolph says that literally every morning the men wake up in puddles of water.

17:30 -- The men call him "Coconut" because of his closely shaved head. This disturbs him somewhat; pictures from home prove that he did indeed have an Afro before joining the army.

19:00 -- Randolph mentions water buffalos, which the men have encountered several times. They are "very tough." He also mentions finding wild bananas, a rare treat in the jungle since most of the time the enemy gets to them first. Randolph then relates other humorous run-ins with local wildlife.

21:00 -- The enemy, he states, did most of its killing during the Tet Holiday. The more experienced troops tell Randolph that the enemy usually makes up for lost time and inactivity by really attacking during this time-period. The memory of the Tet Massacre of 1968 is fresh in his mind.

23:00 - 26:35 -- He has been accused of falling asleep at his post on a previous occasion. Randolph insists that it was the soldier next to him that slept. The rain becomes thunderously loud.

26:39 -- Randolph allows another soldier to talk on the tape.

29:20 -- Randolph signs off and the tape ends.

Side 2 -- Blank --

Cassette 3

Speaker-Randolph Scott

Audio Quality-Good

Date-December 1969

Side 1

00:00 - 5:00 -- A tape recorder product commercial followed by Vietnamese music. Around the 5 minute mark Randolph starts talking. Many of the men have been gambling; he has won and lost his share of money.

6:40 -- There will be no more missions, he announces, during the monsoon season. Randolph sounds quite tired on this tape. "This is," he says, "one dull war." He is now an assistant gunner and has been involved in a firefight. Randolph talks about various experiences on missions--he recalls watching a "bird" "kick off the water" in a rice-paddie revealing enemy weapons that had been submerged. He was recently on a mission in the mountains. He complains that he had no food or water during much of this time, and was extremely fatigued.

20:50 -- Most of his friends who have died in Vietnam so far have died because of "friendly fire." Another soldier "just cracked." He does not elaborate, but states that the soldier received a medical discharge. Randolph admits that the "VC" hasn't been around much during the past month.

22:00 -- He puts in a request for materials from home: Spam, Sloppy Joe's, Tang, beans, chili, film, and music. Randolph points out that new music from the States is very important -- evidenced by the native music on the beginning of the tape that he is not quite fond of.

24:00 -- Randolph jokingly says that he wants to send HIMSELF home for Christmas. He is slowly getting his hair back, but the men still call him "Coconut."

27:00 -- Randolph begins to reminisce as the tape winds down. The "best part of life is being a teenager; wish I could be one again."

31:00 -- Randolph signs off.

Side 2

00:54 -- Randolph mentions that Bob Hope will soon be making an appearance. He wishes his family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

2:30 -- Randolph signs off with "See you later...sooner or later...more like it will be later."

Cassette 4

Speakers-Randolph's friends and family

Audio Quality-Good

Date-December 7-10, 1969

Side 1

00:05 - 31:00 -- Friends and family take turns talking on the tape. It is very cold in Anderson, SC and the weather has been icy. Various individuals relate local happenings and gossip. Several of the guys talk about the NFL. Randolph's father says hello. Randolph's brother gives him grief about his new nickname: "Coconut."

Side 2

1:05 -- Side 2 begins with music. Later, family and friends pass around the recorder in order to leave Randolph messages.

16:09 -- Randolph's mother begins to speak. She is quite upset that "Uncle Sam" would be so poorly supplied that it let soldiers go hungry while they were out on operations. She bids farewell with advice, most importantly to "Watch out for Charlie!"

30:00 -- The family signs off.

Cassette 5

Speakers-Randolph Scott, family members

Audio Quality-Side 1 Good, Side 2 Poor

Date-Side 1-December 24, 1969

Side 2-Perhaps a few weeks before Christmas, 1969

Side 1

00:06 -- It is Christmas Eve. Most of the other men in Randolph's unit have gone to the Bob Hope show, but he stayed behind, because he is one of the "newer" men. He is sitting around his post, apparently with little worry of seeing the enemy. "I ain't dreaming of no white Christmas," he says wryly -- "a wet one, maybe."

Randolph has lost his rank and is back down to a Private 1st Class. He is not getting along with the 1st Sergeant. Randolph is quite upset that he has been accused of falling asleep in his bunker and leaving his post. These charges he denies, and he is planning to meet with the "IG" [Inspector General] to have the situation cleared up.

Randolph says it has been a very poor holiday and expresses little Christmas cheer. It is frankly hard for him to tell that it is Christmastime in Vietnam. There was supposed to be a cease-fire, but fighting has not subsided.

Randolph states that he would almost rather be back in the field, just to break the monotony. He says that some men have re-enlisted just so they could go home for Christmas. Randolph states that he would like to go home, but not that badly.

He occasionally places the tape recorder near the music he is playing. *Heaven Must Have Sent You from Above*, *Sittin' on the Dock of the Bay*, etc. As James Brown's *Prisoner of Love* begins to play, Randolph sarcastically states "Yeah...got a prisoner over here."

His hand is very swollen and he can hardly move it. It seems that six days earlier he had injured it. His unit was attempting to pass through difficult terrain when Randolph lost his footing and fell against a log--his hand became impaled on a large splinter. It was removed but the wound has not healed properly and this is a concern.

31:00 -- Audio ends.

Side 2

00:35 -- This is a recording made by Randolph's family. His brother talks about high school football; the Westside Rams have played well of late. They talk NFL football.

Various family members catch up on all the latest gossip and local happenings.

The family wishes him well with quotes such as: "only the strong survive," and "just keep on keepin' on." There is some commotion and much laughter as Randolph's grandmother begins to speak into the tape recorder. His grandmother, laughing hysterically, states "I thought this thing was a phone...I thought you were on the other end!" She then gives Randolph powerful words of spiritual advice.

His brother makes additional comment on Randolph's baldness, and states the he was going to grow an Afro and "...*never, never* cut it off."

The family is in very good spirits. One male speaker tells Randolph, "Come on back home...come on back with the fellas."

32:00 -- Audio ends.

Cassette 6

Speaker-Randolph Scott

Audio Quality-Good

Date-January 1970

Side 1

00:10 -- Randolph's hand has gotten badly infected. Writing letters has become almost impossible, making use of the tapes all the more important. Despite the fact that he can't open or close his hand he has been placed out on "OP" [field operations] anyway. The weather is extremely cold.

4:00 -- He relates a story in which Delta and Bravo Company recently got caught in an open field with no cover. Randolph recalls what a desperate situation the soldiers found themselves in. Randolph himself has recently been involved in a similar ambush. He says he really prayed - somehow they got out all right. He can't really believe he was in an actual ambush.

5:30 -- The Inspector General is supposed to come to his position today. Randolph would like to have several matters cleared up when they meet.

Randolph states that he hasn't seen the "Coke-girls" lately, but attractive ladies he refers to as "boom-boom girls" have recently made an appearance on the scene.

14:40 -- Randolph has met a gentleman from the Anderson, SC area. They talk and reminisce about their hometown. Randolph plays the music tapes that have been sent from home for the guys in his unit. Hearing popular music from the United States has become especially important to the men.

22:00 -- Randolph has seen terrible things and vividly describes scenes of wartime carnage.

32:00 -- Audio abruptly ends.

Side 2 -- Blank --

Cassette 7

Speakers-Randolph's friends and family

Audio Quality-Good

Date-January 11, 1970

Side 1

00:07 -- This was a tape made by Randolph's family and sent to him. A family member states that the NFL Minnesota Vikings are to play the Kansas City Chiefs that evening -- making the date of this recording January 11, 1970.

Randolph's brother, father, mother, and sister all talk on the tape for around 16 minutes. They describe scenes and events from home such as extreme cold weather, the family dog having had 5 puppies, and the lake freezing over near their house.

9:50 -- Randolph's mother wants to know just exactly why he is still out on operations instead of resting his hand. She advises him not to go out on operations if he can help it. In any case his mother reminds him to "...get the enemy before they get you...I hope you don't see any."

They mention to Randolph that they have sent him blank tapes, and have received several recorded messages from him.

16:26 -- The conversations end abruptly at this point.

Side 2 -- Blank --

Cassette 8

Speakers-Randolph's friends and family

Audio Quality-Good

Date-January 31, 1970

Side 1

1:20 -- This is a recording made by friends and family of Randolph. Someone says at the beginning of this tape that the date is Saturday, January 31, 1970.

5:20 -- Randolph's brother immediately mentions that he wants a "jungle hat" sent home from Vietnam.

Mrs. Scott speaks at length on several subjects. She expresses concern about his injured hand, and reminds him to be careful. Laughter fills the room as Mrs. Scott pokes fun at Randolph's brother by proclaiming that he is really getting "mushy" with the girls. Mrs. Scott continues, "You know your sending all this stuff home for everybody else...when you get home, you're gonna be flat broke!" She then advises Randolph to watch himself with the new women that he had previously spoken of. [She is likely referring to the "boom-boom girls"].

18:23 -- Randolph's brother gets on the tape and requests a "jungle hat" once more before playing various recordings of the music of James Brown.

32:20 -- Audio ends.

Side 2

00:05 -- Friends play “disc jockey” and spin some LPs for Randolph. They even introduce a new group that is popular on the national scene -- the Jackson Five. The DJ plays *I Want You Back*, and someone comments that “...the littlest one is the leader...he can really dance!”

26:45 -- Randolph’s grandmother wishes him well.

31:00 -- Audio ends.

Cassette 9

Speakers-Randolph’s friends and family

Audio Quality-Poor

Date-unknown

Side 1

00:35 -- Some of Randolph’s friends pass the microphone around and tell stories, wish him well, and play music.

They play James Brown, the Temptations, etc. Someone introduces the Bill Moss song *Sock it to ‘Em Soul Brother* by saying: “That’s what we want you boys to do over in Vietnam...sock it to ‘em soul brother!”

As James Brown’s *Turn It Loose* plays, someone yells “Come on home safe now brother!”

32:00 -- Audio ends.

Side 2

00:10 -- A friend of Randolph introduces more music, “...dedicated to all the soldiers over there!” Featured artists include: Dyke and the Blazers, The Supremes, The Temptations, James Brown, and Marvin Gaye.

32:00 -- Audio ends.

