

**Guide to the
Gov. Robert O. Blood Papers,
1917-1954**

**Special Collections
Tuck Library
New Hampshire Historical Society**

Collection Overview

Title: Gov. Robert O. Blood, Papers, 1917-1954

Bulk Dates: 1917-ca. 1954

Accession Number: 2007-003

Physical Description: Total: 1 box containing 11 folders

Provenance and Acknowledgements: The Society acquired the Gov. Robert O. Blood Papers in 1999. The collection was donated by Dr. Horace S. Blood, Concord, NH.

Processor: ~~William Copeley~~ *Lorayne Billings?*

Access Restrictions: No restrictions

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Repository: Special Collections, Tuck Library

For Additional Information:

Special Collections, Tuck Library
New Hampshire Historical Society
30 Park Street
Concord, NH
603-856-0600

Summary:

The collection is comprised of 11 folders in 1 box of military orders and records, news clippings, and correspondence during Blood's administration as governor (especially during 1941), and miscellaneous ephemera.

Biographical Note

At a ceremony held for the portraits of several New Hampshire Governors at the State House in 1970, Leon W. Anderson remarked that Governor Robert O. Blood was "our favorite of all the Governors we have known down through two score years." Robert Oscar Blood was born in 1887 in Enfield, NH, the son of a farmer and railroad worker. He attended Dartmouth Medical School and received his M.D. degree in 1913, setting up practice in Wells River, Vermont, and then in Concord, N.H. in 1915. He married Pauline Shepard in 1916, and had children Robert, Jr., Horace, and Emily.

In August 1917 he enlisted as a lieutenant in the U.S. Medical Corps and served in a field hospital on the front line as an orthopedic surgeon. He was promoted to Captain in 1918. He was known for his bravery and his surgical skills and he was decorated with the Distinguished Service Cross and the Croix de Guerre. He was discharged in April 1919 as a lieutenant-colonel, having served in France with the 26th (Yankee) Division. He had been recommended for promotion to Major the month before and he received the promotion in June. He returned to his practice as a surgeon in Concord, a position he held for 56 years.

Robert Blood entered politics as a Republican in 1935 as a New Hampshire legislator and then as a senator in 1937, serving as Senate president 1939-1940. He was elected governor in 1940 and reelected in 1942, maintaining his full-time medical practice. Dr. Blood served as governor during World War II (1940-44), a time when war restrictions curbed state spending. During his term he was known for his frugality and, in fact, it became his hallmark. He reduced the state debt, leaving office with a 6-million dollar surplus.

Blood was modest and quiet-spoken man. As Governor, he pioneered state travel controls, set up the state Council of Defense; promoted benefits for veterans, initiated the state worker classification system that guaranteed vacation and sick time, made the office of Attorney-General a full time job, and put the state on a biennial budget. During his frequent travels throughout the state, he was the only governor known to have had a tiny bed on the rear seat of his car, so he could nap when speaking at long-distant engagements.

Blood tried for a third term as governor, but was defeated in 1944. He also tried, in 1946, for the U.S. Congress, but lost to Norris Cotton.

Blood was also active in real estate and the dairy business. He held offices in the national Ayrshire Breeders Association, was active in veterans affairs, held religious offices and offices in humanitarian agencies. He remained interested in politics and attended every Republican convention until 1960. Blood died in Concord in 1975 and is buried in the Blossom Hill Cemetery.

Sources:

Leon W. Anderson, *Of Tobey, Blood, and King*. (n.p., mimeographed), (1970).

Harriet S. Lacy, Frank C. Mevers, Katherine Morrill, Ruth C. Page, *Governors of New Hampshire: Biographical Sketches*, Concord: N.H. Historic Society (1977).

Scope and Content Note

This collection is made up of military orders, correspondence, and records; correspondence during his governor administration; and miscellaneous ephemera.

Contents

Folder	Description
1	Military papers, 1917 Assignment as Orthopaedic Surgeon in the 26 th Division. Itinerary to report to duty in a Field Hospital in France.
2	Military papers, Jan.–Apr. 1918 Inventory list of property. Report from Robert Blood to Chief Surgeon regarding tour of duty that included mustard gas attacks, methods of care, and delays in the transportation of wounded. Memorandum on treating the wounded for shock.
3	Military papers, May–Aug. 1918 Report from Robert Blood on the use of gas masks. Reports on gas poisoning. Also, a memo about the epidemic of influenza. A memorandum on using menus of “light diets” of restricted calories and are to be eaten for no more than two weeks. Procedures for a military offensive in battle.
4	Military papers, Sept.–Dec. 1918 Receives the distinguished-service cross for heroism in France, working untiringly under heavy enemy fire and supervising the evacuation of wounded.
5	Military papers, 1919 -- Discharge from service.
6	Miscellaneous military papers Menus, reports from the War Department
7	Military promotions Certificates for promotion to Major and to Lieutenant Colonel.
8	Correspondence, 1941 Congratulatory letters on his election to N.H. Governor. Mostly New Hampshire-related papers and correspondence; transcripts of speeches by Gov. Blood
9	Correspondence, 1940, 1942, 1944
10	Copies of news of Emily Blood’s death, 1943 Many newspaper accounts and condolences on the death of Gov. Blood’s daughter after a long illness.
11	Miscellaneous, 1952, 1954