

Guide to the James Stewart McDermott Papers

MS 1073



compiled by Susan Grigg

February 1980

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 1073

CREATOR: McDermott, James Stewart, 1921-1945

TITLE: James Stewart McDermott papers

DATES: 1938-1945

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.75 linear feet

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of letters written by James Stewart McDermott to his family and friends, describing his life at Yale College and in the Marine Corps. His wartime letters were written from Quantico, Virginia; Washington, D.C; Camp Pendleton; and unspecified locations in the Pacific, until his death on Iwo Jima. The papers also include a few newspaper clippings and other items.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1073>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1073>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html. The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Mrs. Katharine Stewart McDermott, 1945-1946.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

James Stewart McDermott Papers (MS 1073). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

James Stewart McDermott, B.A. 1942.

Born February 15, 1921, in Topeka, Kans.; Died March 2, 1945, on Iwo Jima.

Father, George Thomas McDermott (Ph.B. Univ. Chicago 1908, J.D. 1910), judge 10th Judicial Circuit, U.S. Circuit Court, Topeka; son of James and Tirzah (Henderson) McDermott of Winfield, Kans. Mother, Katharine (Stewart) McDermott (Washburn Coll. ex-'17); daughter of James Harvey and Kate (Martin) Stewart of Wichita, Kans.

Topeka High School. Scholar of the second rank Freshman and Junior years; high oration appointment Senior year; Freshman Swimming Squad; member Timothy Dwight College (football team Sophomore year; Senior aide) and Phi Beta Kappa. Member Grace Cathedral (Episcopal), Topeka. Unmarried.

Enlisted in U.S. Marine Corps Reserve March 5, 1942; enrolled in Candidates Class, Quantico, May-July, and Reserve Officers Class July 18-September 26, 1942; commissioned Second Lieutenant, Marine Corps Reserve, July 18, 1942, and Second Lieutenant, Marine Corps, September 26, 1942; promoted First Lieutenant April 12, 1943, and Captain August, 1944; at Training Center, Fleet Marine Force, Marine Barracks, New River, N.C., taking field artillery course November 19-December 8, 1942; stationed at Quantico as artillery, motor transport, and matériel [sic] instructor until February, 1944 (rewrote a number of instruction pamphlets and wrote several instruction books for classroom use); stationed at Camp Pendleton February, 1944, until sent overseas in September, 1944; commanding officer of a battery, 13th Regiment, 5th Marine Division, stationed at a Pacific island base; took part in invasion of Iwo Jima in February, 1945.

Captain McDermott was fatally wounded while on reconnaissance on Iwo Jima. Buried in 5th Marine Division Cemetery on that island. Posthumously awarded the Navy Cross. Survived by mother, maternal grandmother, and two sisters, Jane McDermott Hergenreter (B.A. Stanford Univ. 1937), the wife of Capt. William Hergenreter, A.U.S. (B.A. Washburn Coll. 1940), and Mary Katharine McDermott Shideler (B.A. Swarthmore Coll. 1938), the wife of Rev. Emerson Wayne Shideler (B.A. Univ. Pittsburgh 1937; B.D. Chicago Theological Seminary 1940) of Russell, Kans.

(Taken from *Yale University Obituary Record, 1943-45*, pp. 198-199).

Scope and Contents

The James Stewart McDermott Papers consist almost entirely of letters that McDermott wrote to his mother and sister from Yale College (1938 Sep-1942 Apr), Quantico, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. (1942

May-1944 Jan), Camp Pendleton (1944 Mar-Sep), and various unspecified locations in the Pacific (1944 Sep-1945 Feb). Besides many observations about ordinary events at Yale and in the Marine Corps, there are accounts of conversations with Maury Maverick, U.S. Representative from Texas, and James Grafton Rogers, deputy director of the Office of Strategic Services, and descriptions of social life in wartime Washington.

Collection Contents

Letters

b.1	JSMcD to his mother, Katharine (Stewart) McDermott A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1938-1945
b.2	JSMcD to his sister, Mary (McDermott) Shideler	1939-1943
b.2	JSMcD to family and friends	1941-1945
b.2	Terrell (Mrs. Maury) Maverick to Katharine (Stewart) McDermott	1944
b.2	James Grafton Rogers to the Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps	1942
b.2	Meditation on the significance of life	undated
b.2	Navy Cross citation (photostatic copy)	1945
b.2	Newspaper clippings	1945

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

World War, 1939-1945 -- Personal narratives,
American

Geographic Names

United States -- Armed Forces -- Military Life
United States -- Politics and government
Washington (D.C.) -- Social life and customs

Names

McDermott, James Stewart, 1921-1945

Corporate Body

Yale University -- Student life