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Jack Burgeman Collection

Creator: Jack Burgeman
Dates: 1941-2005
Quantity: 2.5 linear feet
Acquisition: Donated by Jack Burgeman, May 25, 2007
Identification: PMML ID# 32605, OCLC# 163572088, Call# PAPERS 00004
Citation: [Document Title]. The Jack Burgeman Collection, [Box #, Folder #], Pritzker Military Museum & Library, Chicago, IL.
Language: English
Finding Aid: Written by Devin Hunter, July 2007; Updated by Andrea Martinez, 2018

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Biographical Note

Jack Burgeman was born May 28, 1923 in Chicago, IL. He began his military service with the US Navy February 22, 1943 at Great Lakes, IL. After aviation radio school training, he was assigned to the *USS Alabama* as a PN3, where he worked primarily as fire control in the main 16" guns. The *Alabama* saw action throughout the Pacific, supporting operations in the Marshall Islands, Tarawa, Saipan, and the Marianas Turkey Shoot. At the time of Japanese surrender, the *Alabama* was anchored less than 100 miles off Tokyo Bay.

Burgeman was discharged from the Navy in January 1946. He also served during the Korean War aboard the *USS Ruchmakin*, before leaving the service in 1952 and returning to Chicago.

Chronology

Date	Event
February 22, 1943	Arrived at Great Lakes Naval Training Center
August 2, 1943	Assigned to the <i>USS Alabama</i>
November 22, 1943	Experiences first attack from Japanese fighters
January 12, 1944	<i>Alabama</i> in port at Honolulu for repairs
January 25, 1944	<i>Alabama</i> joins a carrier group
February 1, 1944	<i>Alabama</i> shells Roi-Namar in the Marhsall Islands
February 22, 1944	Friendly fire accident kills five sailors on the <i>Alabama</i>
June 19, 1944	Marianas Turkey Shoot
June-July 1944	Supports the invasion of Saipan
October 12-15, 1944	Heavy shelling of Formosa (Taiwan)
October 25-27, 1944	Heavy action in the Gulf of Leyte (Philippines) in support of MacArthur
December 18, 1944	Survives "Halsey's Typhoon" in the Philippine Sea
July 14, 1945	Supports carrier groups bombarding Hokkaido, Japan
September 2, 1945	<i>Alabama</i> anchored 31 miles off coast for Japanese surrender
October 31, 1945	Arrives at Long Beach, CA
January 1946	Discharged

Significant Duty Stations

Great Lakes Naval Training Center, Chicago, IL
Naval Air Technical Training Center, Memphis, TN
USS Alabama (BB-60)
USS Ruchamkin (APD-89)
Norfolk, VA

Significant Awards

World War II Victory Medal
American Area Campaign Medal
Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal with 10 stars
Philippine Liberation Ribbon with 2 stars

Scope and Content of the Collection

This collection contains several types of items relating to Jack Burgeman's service aboard the *USS Alabama* during World War II. A twenty page transcript of Mr. Burgeman's journal provides a comprehensive chronology of his service. The journal also relates Mr. Burgeman's experiences and thoughts relating to several naval

engagements throughout the Pacific, as well as thoughts on the wartime experience in general. Significant events referenced in the journal include the invasion of Saipan, a friendly-fire accident aboard the ship, "Halsey's Typhoon," and the Mariana's Turkey Shoot.

The collection also contains three wartime letters written to Mr. Burgeman's brother Clarence, who was stationed at the Army's Fort Lowry in Denver. The first letter written at sea August 29, 1945 gives a detailed account of the *Alabama's* actions that summer, as well as reminiscences of some of the more notable experiences aboard the ship, including an arrival of Japanese POWs, burials at sea, and the Mariana's Turkey Shoot.

The second letter was written September 6, 1945 from the given location "Tokyo Bay," as the *Alabama* was anchored approximately 65 miles off the Japan Coast. This letter tells Clarence of the crew's impressions of the Japanese surrender, as well as descriptions of the return of a landing force and Admiral Richard E. Byrd's time aboard the ship as an observer. Accompanying this letter in the collection is its original postmarked envelope. On the envelope is a first day cover commemorating V-J Day aboard the *Alabama*. A hand-drawn print of the ship framed by the words "V-J Off Tokyo Japan" in Japanese-style script is to the left the address block. PML tests have shown that this is not a pencil sketch.

The third letter is dated October 9, 1945, "on our way home." Mr. Burgeman describes the victory armada on its way from Honolulu to San Francisco. He also relates the Missing-in-Action status of a long-time friend. An original post-marked envelope also accompanies this letter.

These letters share a folder with four poems written by Mr. Burgeman aboard the *Alabama* in January 1946, as he awaited discharge. The poems express Mr. Burgeman's thoughts and emotions about the coming of peace; one was written for a woman.

Folder Four holds two memoranda from the *Alabama*. The first memo provides an official report on a friendly-fire incident on-board that killed five sailors, on February 22, 1944. The second memo, from July 31, 1945, details the Navy's censorship policy regarding personal correspondence.

Several items in the collection give the history and characteristics of the *Alabama*, including historical information on commanding officers. Also included are several original and photocopied newsletters of *Alabama* veterans groups, specifically those of the FM (Fire Management) division and the USS *Alabama Crewman's Association*. These items, ranging from 1987-2005, provide information on reunions and updates on the whereabouts and fates of fellow crewmen.

One significant textual item donated with the collection has been separated from the Archives and is housed in the PMML Rare Book Collection. This is Admiral William B. Goggins' personal copy of the *War Diary USS Alabama 1942-1944*.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in six folders according to type of document. The collection was accessioned unarranged, and PMML staff arranged and housed the items according to archival practices. Due to its unique informational quality, Mr. Burgeman's journal is kept in a separate folder.

Rights

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Related Collections

Robert Luchs Collection
Capt. Jack D. Gordon Collection

Separations

The Pritzker Military Museum & Library also holds in its collection a CD-ROM transcription of Mr. Burgeman's interview for the Library of Congress' Veteran's History Project (VHP). For more information about the VHP, go to <http://www.loc.gov/vets/>.

Additionally, the collection includes several books held in the Pritzker Military Museum & Library book collection.

These include:

Title: *Decision at Nagasaki: the Mission That Almost Failed*
Author: Olivi, Frank
Call Number: D767.25 .H6 O55 1999

Title: *On Deck USS Alabama*
Author: Adcock, Al
Call Number: VA65 .A48 A33 1999

Title: War Diary USS Alabama 1942-1944 (Capt. WB Goggins' personal copy)
Call Number: V27 .B87 1945

Title: World War II Letters (includes a letter from Mr. Burgeman)
Author: Adler, Bill
Call Number: D811 .A2 W623 2002

Key Subjects

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the Library's online catalog. Researchers interested in materials about related topics, persons, or places should search the catalog using these subject headings.

Subjects

Korea--History--War and Intervention, 1950-1953
Philippine Sea, Battle of the, 1944 (June 19-21)
United States Navy--History--Korean War
United States Navy--History--World War II
USS Alabama (Battleship: BB 60)
USS Ruchamkin (APD-89)
Veterans--United States--correspondence
Veterans--United States--World War II
World War II, 1939-1945--personal narratives

Container List

Folder One

Newspaper and Magazine Clippings

"To Alabama, Very Well Done," *Naval History* (June 2004)
Photograph of Jack Burgeman, *Illinois AMVETS* (December 2000)
"Museum Report," *Naval History* (n.d.)
"Amazing Alabama," *Chicago Sun Times* (July 16, 1995)
Photograph: 'Bob Feller back aboard Alabama,' unknown, n.d.
"Alabama Comes Home," *The World War II Times* (January 1988),
full original issue
"Alabama Comes Home," *The World War II Times* (January 1988),
photocopy for reference
"Marines Invade Japan," *The World War II Times* (December-January
1993), photocopy of cover story

Folder Two

Letters and Other Writing, 1945-46

Copy of Mr. Burgeman's US Navy Memorial Log Page, including a 1951 photograph and a list of his significant duty stations and awards

Photocopy of letter from Jack Burgeman to Clarence Burgeman, August 29, 1945

Handwritten letter from Jack Burgeman to Clarence Burgeman, September 6, 1945 (Tokyo Bay), with postmarked [commemorative envelope](#)

Handwritten letter from Jack Burgeman to Clarence Burgeman, October 12, 1945 ("on way home"), with postmarked envelope

Poem: "This Christmas of Peace," January 1946

Poem: "This Christmas," January 1946

Poem: "Symphony," January 1946

Poem: "The New Year With," January 1946

Folder Three

Wartime Journal, 1943-46

Photocopy of Jack Burgeman's journal kept aboard the *USS Alabama*, February 22, 1943-January 1946

Folder Four

USS Alabama Memoranda, 1944-45

"From Commanding Officer, To Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet," February 24, 1944

"Censorship Memoranda No. 1-45," July 31, 1945

Folder Five

USS Alabama Historical Information and Memorabilia

War Diary, *USS Alabama*, 1942-1947 (photocopy of Mr. Burgeman's personal edition)

Chronology of *USS Alabama* actions (source unknown)

USS Alabama dimensions (source unknown)

Detailed history of the *USS Alabama* (source unknown)

Battle history and credits of the *USS Alabama* (source unknown)

"Interview with Veterans" series on public TV in Evanston CD Jack Burgeman Interview

Folder Six

Veteran's Activities

Photograph of *USS Alabama* reunion (Jack Burgeman, third from right), 1991.

1991 Postmarked covers with Alabama state stamp, April 4, 2002
FM Newsletter, May 29, 1987

FM Newsletter, November 8, 1988

FM Newsletter, n.d.

FM Newsletter, July 27, 2003

FM Newsletter, June 4, 2005

Scuttlebutt , *USS Alabama Crewman's Association* (vol. 15, no. 2),
April 1991

Scuttlebutt (vol. 22, no. 2), May 1998 *Scuttlebutt* (vol. 25, no. 4),
November 2001