

Graves B. Erskine

**A Register of His Papers in the Marine Corps Archives
and Special Collections**



**Marine Corps Archives and Special Collections Branch
Library of the Marine Corps
Gray Research Center**

Quantico, VA

2008

Introduction

The Marine Corps Archives is located at 2040 Broadway St., Quantico, VA 22134.
Hours of operation: Monday-Friday, 7:30am-5:00pm.
Phone: 703-784-4685. Email: grcarchives@grc.usmcu.edu

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Collection Summary

Title: Papers of Graves B. Erskine

Collection Number: COLL/3065

Accession Number: 2001-3065

Physical Characteristics: 41 standard legal size document boxes; 5 oversized boxes; 23 linear feet

Span Dates: 1915-1993

Language: English

Creator: Graves B. Erskine, 1897-1973

Administrative Information

Restrictions: Collection is open to all researchers

Preferred citation: Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information:

Papers of Graves B. Erskine, Folder heading, 2001-3065, Marine Corps Archives and Special Collections, Gray Research Center, Quantico, VA.

Provenance: The papers of Graves B. Erskine were donated to the Marine Corps Historical Branch by Constance Erskine from 1976-1990s. The papers were transferred from the Historical Branch to the Archives and Special Collections at Quantico in 1999.

Biographical Sketch

Graves Blanchard Erskine was born in Columbia, Louisiana on June 28, 1897. While a student at Louisiana State University he enlisted in the First Louisiana Infantry and served with that unit during the Mexican Border Campaign in 1916. In July 1917 he was discharged with the rank of Sergeant Trumpeter to accept a commission as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps.

After a tour at the First Marine Officers Training School at Quantico, VA, General Erskine was assigned to the Sixth Marines and sailed for France in January 1918 as a platoon leader of that unit. As a member of the Fourth Brigade Marines, American Expeditionary Force, he participated in active combat operations at Bouresches, Belleau Wood, Soissons, and St. Mihiel. He was wounded first at Belleau Wood and again at St. Mihiel after which he was evacuated to the United States.



Upon his return after hospitalization, General Erskine was assigned to the First Marine Brigade which was participating in pacification operations in Haiti and commanded a rifle company in these operations against guerrilla groups for a period of about eight months when he was ordered back to the United States for duty with the honor guards for the Unknown Soldier.

Upon completion of this duty, he was assigned to the Second Marine Brigade in Santo Domingo. He served in this capacity for two and a half years, after which he served as Depot Quartermaster, at Quantico, Virginia. After completion of this assignment, he completed the course at the Infantry School, Fort Benning and was reassigned as an instructor at the Marine Corps Schools, Quantico.

In March 1929, General Erskine was ordered to Nicaragua as a member of the Second Marine Brigade. While there he was assigned to duty with Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua and was commissioned a major in the Guardia Nacional.

After returning from Nicaragua, General Erskine was assigned as Executive Officer of the Marine Corps Officers Basic School in Philadelphia for two years and then went to the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas for two years.

In 1935 Erskine served for two and a half years with the Marine Detachment, American Embassy, Peiping, China.

In 1941, he was reassigned to San Diego and then was transferred with the Fifth Amphibious Corps to Pearl Harbor in 1943. He then participated with this unit in the assault and capture of Kwajalein, Saipan, and Tinian Islands. Upon completion of the Marianas operations he was promoted to the rank of Major General and assigned to command the Third Marine Division, then stationed at Guam. He commanded the Third Marine Division during the Iwo Jima operations in the spring of 1945.

In 1945 General Erskine was ordered to Washington and was appointed Administrator of the Retraining and Reemployment Administration in which he assisted veterans in returning to the workforce after the war. In 1947 he was released from the RRA and assumed command of Camp Pendleton and later the First Marine Division which returned to Camp Pendleton from China.



In 1951 General Erskine was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General and was assigned as the Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic. He was authorized to retire with the rank of General in 1953 for the purpose of accepting a position as Assistant to the Secretary of Defense. At this time he had served in the Marine Corps for 36 years.

Upon his retirement from the Department of Defense, he worked as a consultant for Beckman Instruments and Northrup Nortronics.

General Erskine died on 21 May 1973 at Bethesda Naval Hospital. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Scope and Content Note

The Papers of Graves B. Erskine consist of materials relating mainly to his career with the Marine Corps and his position as Administrator of the Retraining and Reemployment Administration. The dates of the collection range from 1915-1993.

Included in this collection are addresses made by General Erskine after the end of World War II, official and personal correspondence ranging from 1925-1993, invitations and programs, notebooks including his 1918 Field Message Books, various publications, and travel documentation from journeys made to Southeast Asia. Of particular note is the series of Schools material. Erskine was a student and an instructor in several Marine Corps Schools and in this collection is course material and papers covering the 1920s and 1930s. At the end of the collection are several boxes of photographs. Erskine and his wife had a large collection of signed portraits as well as photographs taken during World War II. Also within this series is a scrapbook of photographs compiled while he was the Commanding Officer at Camp Pendleton. Two other scrapbooks are located in the oversize boxes. They consist mainly of documentation from the Retraining and Reemployment Administration.

The collection is arranged alphabetically by subject headings and chronologically within each series. For all of the subject headings, some were assigned by Erskine and others were imposed by the processor. Series in this collection include addresses, correspondence, invitations and programs, publications, schools, travel and photographs. The size of the collection is approximately 23 linear feet.

List of Series

- Series 1. Addresses
 - 1.1 Addresses, Given by Erskine
 - 1.2 Addresses, Given by Others

- Series 2. Clippings
- Series 3. Correspondence
 - 3.1 Correspondence, General
 - 3.2 Correspondence, By Subject
- Series 4. Invitations and Programs
- Series 5. Northrup Corporation
- Series 6. Datebooks and Notebooks
 - 6.1 Datebooks
 - 6.2 Notebooks
- Series 7. Publications
- Series 8. Schools
 - 8.1 Schools, Courses
 - 8.2 Schools, Papers and Pamphlets
- Series 9. Subject Files
- Series 10. Travel
- Series 11. Photographs

Series 1. Addresses, 1931-1973

This series consists of transcripts of addresses given by General Erskine and also some given by other notables. The series is arranged into two subseries: Given by Erskine and Given by Others.

Series 1.1 Addresses, Given by Erskine, 1931-1959

Arrangement: ascending chronological order by date given

This subseries consists of transcripts of addresses and speeches given by General Erskine who was very active in traveling around the country to give addresses to various groups primary after the end of World War II. Many of the events he spoke at were for patriotic functions and he often spoke of his experiences in World War II and the reemployment of disabled veterans.

Series 1.2 Addresses, Given by Others, 1949-1973

Arrangement: ascending chronological order by date given

This subseries consists of transcripts of addresses given by political notables. The transcripts were either obtained by Erskine attending the presentation or friends forwarded the comments to him.

Series 2. Clippings, 1932-1974

Arrangement: alphabetical by subject

This series consists of newspaper clippings featuring General Erskine or collected by Erskine or his wife because they interested them.

Series 3. Correspondence, 1925-1993

This series consists of correspondence produced and received by Erskine and his wife Constance Caraway Erskine. The series is arranged into two subseries: General and By Subject.

Series 3.1 Correspondence, General, 1925-1972

Arrangement: ascending chronological order by date written

This subseries consists of the correspondence of Graves Erskine. Incoming correspondence is interfiled with outgoing correspondence. These letters cover his duties as Administrator of the Retraining and Reemployment Administration as well as the commanding officer at Camp Pendleton. There are also some personal letters to family members and friends.

Series 3.2 Correspondence, By Subject, 1929-1993

Arrangement: alphabetical by subject heading

This subseries consists of correspondence files arranged by subject headings. They cover correspondence from Nicaragua into Erskine's retirement. There is a great amount of correspondence from his commanding of the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, his orders, and correspondence with various political notables. There is also a notable amount of correspondence of his wife, Constance Caraway Erskine who passed away in 2000.

Series 4. Invitations and Programs, 1935-1978

Arrangement: alphabetical by title or subject heading

This series consists of invitations to and programs from various events. They are mainly from luncheons and dinners attended by General Erskine or his wife. The Marine Corps event invitations and programs were too numerous to file individually, so they are filed chronologically within the same folder.

Series 5. Northrup Corporation, 1963-1971

Arrangement: alphabetical by subject heading

General Erskine served as a consultant for Northrup upon his retirement from the Department of Defense. This series consists of documentation from that position. It includes expense reports, memorandum, and travel vouchers.

Series 6. Datebooks and Notebooks, 1918-1990

This series consists of books kept by the Erskines. The series is arranged into two subseries: Datebooks and Notebooks.

Series 6.1 Datebooks, 1955-1973

Arrangement: ascending chronological order

This subseries consists of datebooks kept by General Erskine and his wife. They list their daily appointments.

Series 6.2 Notebooks, 1918-1990

Arrangement: alphabetical by subject heading

This subseries consists of notebooks kept by General Erskine and his wife. Of note are his field message books, notes kept by Erskine during Nicaragua and World War II and guest books kept by the couple for social functions at their home.

Series 7. Publications, 1915-1977

Arrangement: alphabetical by title

This series consists of publications collected by General Erskine and his wife. Included are official operational reports, Erskine's college yearbook, and veterans group newsletters.

Series 8. Schools, 1920-1961

This series consists of materials from school classes Erskine either took or taught. The schools and courses that are represented are: Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, VA; Company Officers Course, Quantico, VA; Field Officers Course, Quantico, VA; Marine Corps School of Aerial Observation, Quantico, VA; Basic School, Marine Barracks, Navy Yard, Philadelphia, PA; The Basic School, Philadelphia, PA; Army War College; Command and Staff Officers School, Camp Pendleton, CA; Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, KS; and The General Service Schools, Fort Leavenworth, KS. The series is arranged into two subseries: Courses and Paper and Pamphlets.

Series 8.1 Schools, Courses, 1920-1949

Arrangement: alphabetical by course title

This subseries consists of course materials from different schools that General Erskine either taught at or took courses from. They included courses on troop leading, landing operations, and amphibious doctrine. The bulk of the material is from the 1920s and 1930s.

Series 8.2 Schools, Papers and Pamphlets, 1926-1961

Arrangement: alphabetically by title of paper or pamphlet

This subseries consists of papers written by students and publications used in the courses. They include the subjects of map reading, an analysis of the Gallipoli campaign, and uses for explosives.

Series 9. Subject Files, 1926-1976

Arrangement: alphabetical by subject heading

This series consists of miscellaneous files arranged by subject. They include certificates and awards, a diary from 1929, and some personal paperwork.

Series 10. Travel, 1959-1968

Arrangement: alphabetical by subject title

After his retirement, General Erskine traveled extensively in Southeast Asia particularly Thailand. This series consists of documentation of this travel.

Series 11. Photographs

Arrangement: alphabetical by subject heading

This series consists of many photographs of Erskine, family members, and other notables. A large portion of the series is a group of signed portraits given to the General by political and social personalities. Another main group of photographs is from a scrapbook that was maintained while General Erskine was the commander at Camp Pendleton. Photographs were put into the scrapbook with captions and some artwork. The scrapbook has been disassembled, but the page order and all captions and artwork maintained.

Box List

Series 1. Addresses, 1931-1973

Series 1.1 Addresses, Given by Erskine, 1931-1959

Box 1

Folder 1	“A New Generation of Patriotism”, Date Unidentified
Folder 2	Chamber of Commerce, San Diego, Date Unidentified
Folder 3	Disabled Veterans Announcement, Date Unidentified
Folder 4	Labor News Review with Albert N. Dennis, Date Unidentified
Folder 5	Marines in Nicaragua, 19 April 1931
Folder 6	Statue Unveiling Ceremony, 10 November 1945
Folder 7	AAF Conference, 5 December 1945
Folder 8	New York Veterans Service Center, 24 January 1946
Folder 9	Employment Conference of State Chairmen, 20 February 1946

- Folder 10 Governors Conference on the Readjustment of Veterans, 28 February 1946
- Folder 11 Penn Harris Hotel, 9 March 1946
- Folder 12 State Conference, Governor Kerr, Oklahoma City, OK, 19 March 1946
- Folder 13 State Apprentice Agencies and Regional Supervisors, 25 March 1946
- Folder 14 Forum at Walter Reed Hospital, 30 April 1946
- Folder 15 United States Chamber of Commerce Convention, 2 May 1946
- Folder 16 Louisiana State University, 27 May 1946
- Folder 17 Banquet of Class VII, National Service Officer Trainees, Disabled American Veterans, 3 June 1946
- Folder 18 Colorado Veterans Advisory Council, 7 June 1946
- Folder 19 General Federation of Women's Clubs, 20 June 1946
- Folder 20 Statement before the Advisory Board of the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion, 25 June 1946
- Folder 21 American Council on Education, 11 July 1946
- Folder 22 Lions Club, Austin, TX, 18 July 1946
- Folder 23 Coordinating Committee of State and Federal Agencies in Texas, 18 July 1946
- Folder 24 Civic and Service Groups Interested in Veterans Affairs, 19 July 1946
- Folder 25 Membership Committee Meeting, 7 August 1946
- Folder 26 California Department of Veterans Affairs, 8 August 1946
- Folder 27 American Federation of the Physically Handicapped, 18 August 1946
- Folder 28 National Convention of Disabled Veterans, 2 September 1946
- Folder 29 Veterans Service Committee, 2 September 1946
- Folder 30 Nevada State Veterans Advisory Committee, 4 September 1946
- Folder 31 Women's National Press Club, 16 September 1946
- Folder 32 Advertising Council, 18 September 1946
- Folder 33 National Association of Personnel Directors, 20 September 1946
- Folder 34 OPA Building, Washington, DC, 19 September 1946
- Folder 35 Exposition for the Handicapped, 9 October 1946
- Folder 36 Catholic Youth Organization, 9 October 1946
- Folder 37 American Federation of Labor, 11 October 1946
- Folder 38 Midwest Veterans Service Conference, 23 October 1946
- Folder 39 Congress on the Air, 3 November 1946
- Folder 40 National Council of American Veterans Organizations, 9 November 1946
- Folder 41 Armistice Day Celebration, 11 November 1946
- Folder 42 State Directors of Veterans Affairs, 13 November 1946
- Folder 43 St. Louis Veterans Center, 21 November 1946

Box 2

- Folder 1 Convention, American Veterans of World War II, 22 November 1946
- Folder 2 National Council of Chief State School Officers, 30 November 1946
- Folder 3 State Directors of Divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation, 1 December 1946
- Folder 4 National Conference on Veterans Affairs, 4 December 1946

- Folder 5 Southern Governor's Conference, 6 December 1946
- Folder 6 Interagency Committee on Employment of the Physically Handicapped, 9 December 1946
- Folder 7 Harvard University, 12 December 1946
- Folder 8 Special Speech Kit for Marine Corps Anniversary and Navy Day, 1947
- Folder 9 Greater Hazelton Veterans Association, 14 January 1947
- Folder 10 Services to Veterans Conference of the Red Cross, 20 January 1947
- Folder 11 Shriners, Almas Temple, Washington, DC, 14 February 1947
- Folder 12 Testimonial Dinner for Mrs. Edith Nourse Rogers, 17 February 1947
- Folder 13 Men's Club of Temple Beth El, 19 February 1947
- Folder 14 New York and Philadelphia Executives, 24 February 1947
- Folder 15 2nd Anniversary Dinner of the 52 Association, Inc., 25 February 1947
- Folder 16 Conference on Community Services, 12 March 1947
- Folder 17 Interagency Committee on Employment of the Physically Handicapped, 28 March 1947
- Folder 18 Women's Supreme Council of B'nai B'rith, Washington, DC, 23 April 1947
- Folder 19 Memorial Day Ceremony, Unveiling of Monument, Metairie, New Orleans, LA, 30 May 1947
- Folder 20 Ready Reference Speech Kit, 1948
- Folder 21 Memorial Services, Veterans of Foreign Wars, 23 June 1948
- Folder 22 World War II Victory Celebration, 14 August 1949
- Folder 23 "The Marine Corps Today", 22 November 1949
- Folder 24 Dedication of Mural of Flag Raising on Iwo Jima, 11 February 1950
- Folder 25 Rotary Club of Santa Monica, 24 February 1950
- Folder 26 Flag Day Ceremonies, 11 June 1950
- Folder 27 Monterey Peninsula Navy League Council, 16 March 1951
- Folder 28 Washington's Birthday Dinner, Sons of the Revolution, 22 February 1952
- Folder 29 Presentation of Award of Merit, Norfolk, VA, 29 February 1952

Box 3

- Folder 1 Presentation of Diplomas, Camp Lejeune, NC, 27 March 1952
- Folder 2 Memorial Day Address, MCRD Parris Island, SC, May 1952
- Folder 3 National Memorial Gardens
Memorial Service, 25 May 1952
- Folder 4 Presentation of Award of Merit, 26
September 1952
- Folder 5 Armistice Day, 11 November 1952
- Folder 6 Renaming Ceremony, Camp Elmore,
11 February 1953
- Folder 7 Memorial Day Luncheon, 30 May
1954
- Folder 8 Greater Hazelton Veterans
Association, Hazelton, PA, 26 May
1955



- Folder 9 Operations Coordinating Board, 1 June 1955
- Folder 10 Third Marine Division Association Dinner, 25 June 1955
- Folder 11 American Legion, Department of Texas, 22 July 1955
- Folder 12 Bar Association, 3 September 1955
- Folder 13 Ridgeway Parent Teacher Association, 7 November 1955
- Folder 14 Veterans Day Celebration, Welch, West Virginia, 11 November 1955
- Folder 15 Employment of the Handicapped, 16 November 1955
- Folder 16 Daughters of the American Revolution, January 1956
- Folder 17 VFW Loyalty Day Ceremonies, 1 May 1956
- Folder 18 Patriotic Order, Sons of America, 25 September 1957
- Folder 19 Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association, 22 February 1958
- Folder 20 Marine Corps Basic School Graduates, 30 August 1958
- Folder 21 Memorial Services at Iwo Jima Monument, 19 July 1959

Series 1.2 Addresses, Given by Others, 1949-1973

- Folder 22 Commencement Exercises, Bernard Baruch, 28 June 1949
- Folder 23 U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Roger Kyes, 27 April 1953
- Folder 24 Inland Daily Press Association, Roger Kyes, 26 May 1953
- Folder 25 The Re-Assessment of the US Defense Position, 12 June 1953
- Folder 26 Defense Programs, 15 June 1953
- Folder 27 United American Mechanics, Bernard Baruch, 17 June 1953
- Folder 28 Detroit Board of Commerce, Roger Kyes, 24 June 1953
- Folder 29 Veterans of Foreign Wars, Bernard Baruch, 4 August 1953
- Folder 30 Department of State, Our Foreign Policy in Latin America, December 1953
- Folder 31 Statement of Luis E. Julia, Puerto Rico Status Commission Hearings, 1 December 1965
- Folder 32 Briefing Kit, Navy Department Reorganization, 1966

Box 4

- Folder 1 General Robert E. Cushman, Jr., 1972-1973
- Folder 2 National Press Club Luncheon, Lee Kuan Yew, 6 April 1973

Series 2. Clippings, 1932-1974

- Folder 3 Erskine Memorial Scholarship, 1974
- Folder 4 Features on General Erskine
- Folder 5 Marine Band History and its Leaders, 8 May 1932

- Folder 6 Memorial Dedication Ceremonies, 1952-1959
- Folder 7 Social Functions
- Folder 8 Veterans Clothing, 1945-1946
- Folder 9 Various, 1949-1957

Series 3. Correspondence, 1925-1993

Series 3.1 Correspondence, General, 1925-1972

- Folder 10 1925-1928
- Folder 11 1930-1935
- Folder 12 1936-1937
- Folder 13 1940-1943
- Folder 14 January-June 1944
- Folder 15 July-December 1944

Box 5

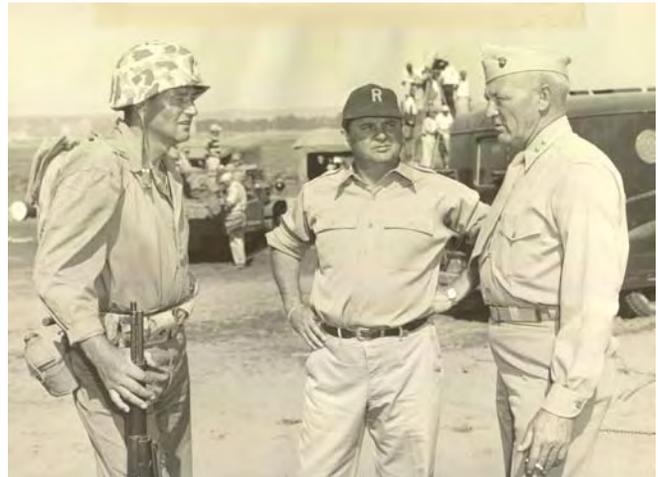
- Folder 1 January-March 1945
- Folder 2 April 1945
- Folder 3 May 1945
- Folder 4 June-July 1945
- Folder 5 August 1945
- Folder 6 September-December 1945

Box 6

- Folder 1 January 1946-December 1949
- Folder 2 February 1950-December 1951
- Folder 3 January-December 1952
- Folder 4 January-May 1953
- Folder 5 June-December 1953
- Folder 6 January-December 1954
- Folder 7 January-April 1955

Box 7

- Folder 1 May-August 1955
- Folder 2 September-December 1955
- Folder 3 January-April 1956
- Folder 4 May-December 1956
- Folder 5 January-June 1957
- Folder 6 July-December 1957
- Folder 7 January-June 1958



Box 8

- Folder 1 July-December 1958
- Folder 2 January-March 1959
- Folder 3 April-August 1959
- Folder 4 September-December 1959
- Folder 5 January-April 1960
- Folder 6 May-December 1960

Box 9

- Folder 1 January-March 1961
- Folder 2 April-August 1961
- Folder 3 September-October 1961
- Folder 4 October 1963-April 1968
- Folder 5 June-December 1968
- Folder 6 January-December 1969
- Folder 7 April 1970-June 1972

Series 3.2 Correspondence, Subject, 1929-1993

- Folder 8 1st Marine Division, All Navy Championship Football Game, 1949

Box 10

- Folder 1 1st Marine Division, Commanding General, 1947-1948
- Folder 2 1st Marine Division, Invitations, Guest and Station Lists, 1948-1949
- Folder 3 1st Marine Division, Quarterly Reception, 1949
- Folder 4 1st Marine Division, Training Orders, 1948-1949
- Folder 5 1st Marine Division, USMC Birthday Balls, 1948-1949
- Folder 6 Appointments, 1943-1944
- Folder 7 Blair County Memorial Committee, 1954
- Folder 8 Bowles, Chester, 1953-1954
- Folder 9 Byrd, Richard E.
- Folder 10 Catlin, Sir George, 1958-1975
- Folder 11 Christmas Cards, 1939-1987
- Folder 12 Circular Letters, No. 501-600, 1941-1942
- Folder 13 Citations, 1943-1945
- Folder 14 Commendation Appreciation Letters, 1947-1953
- Folder 15 Disney, Walt, 1942
- Folder 16 Dominican Republic, 1923-1937
- Folder 17 Duplantis, W.H. to Brooke Nihart concerning Erskine and Iwo Jima, 1993

Box 11

- Folder 1-2 Erskine, Constance, 1951-1989

- Folder 3 Erskine, Constance, From General Erskine, 1960
- Folder 4 Erskine, Constance, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, 1984
- Folder 5 Erskine, Constance, Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation, 1988-1989
- Folder 6 Erskine, Constance, Senators Mike Mansfield, Bob Dole, and Elizabeth Dole, 1976-1981
- Folder 7 Fleet Marine Force, 1945-1947
- Folder 8 Glenn, John
- Folder 9 Heimlich, Dr. Henry
- Folder 10 National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week, 1952
- Folder 11 Nicaragua, 1929-1950
- Folder 12 Observer Reports, Saipan, 1944
- Folder 13 Orders, 1926-1938
- Folder 14 Orders, 1941
- Folder 15 Orders, 1942-1943
- Folder 16 Orders, 1944-1945

Box 12

- Folder 1 Orders, 1949-1950
- Folder 2 Participation in Presidential Unit Citation, 1947
- Folder 3 Promotion Board, 1938
- Folder 4 Prosthetic Devices, 1946-1947
- Folder 5 Retraining and Reemployment Administration, 1945-1951
- Folder 6 Taylor, Ione, 1955
- Folder 7 Thailand Trip, 1959
- Folder 8 Truman, Harry S., 1945
- Folder 9 USMC Museum, Quantico, 1968
- Folder 10 Veterans Service Centers, 1955
- Folder 11 Visceglia, James, 1955
- Folder 12 War with Japan, 1945

Series 4. Invitations and Programs, 1935-1978

- Folder 13 All Marine Corps Track Meet, 1950
- Folder 14 Ambassador of Belgium, Funeral of King Albert I, 1965
- Folder 15 Ambassador to Greece, 1964
- Folder 16 Birthday Dinner Party Bangkok, 1969
- Folder 17 Dedication, Higgins Industries, Inc., 1941

Box 13

- Folder 1 Dedication Ceremony, "The Flag Raising at Iwo Jima", Cape Coral, FL, 1965
- Folder 2 Funeral Service for the Unknowns of World War II and Korea, 1958
- Folder 3 Hollywood Chapter, National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, Annual Ball, 1967

- Folder 4 Invitations, 1935-1961
- Folder 5 Invitations, USMC, 1964-1989
- Folder 6 Luncheon Honoring Colonel A.A. Vandegrift, 1937
- Folder 7 Memorial Service for Harry Truman, 1973
- Folder 8 Military Order of the Carabao, 1964, 1968
- Folder 9 Naming of Bataan and Corregidor Streets, Washington, DC, 1961
- Folder 10 Programs, 1959-1986
- Folder 11 Programs, USMC, 1957-1989
- Folder 12 The Royal Wedding, Greece, 1964
- Folder 13 Texaco Quarter Century Club, 1948 and 1951
- Folder 14 Walter Reed Army Medical Center, 1977-1978

Series 5. Northrup Corporation, 1963-1971

- Folder 15 Business Cards
- Folder 16 Expense Reports, 1963-1964
- Folder 17 Expense Reports, 1965
- Folder 18 Expense Reports, 1966

Box 14

- Folder 1 Expense Reports, 1967
- Folder 2 Expense Reports, 1968
- Folder 3 Expense Reports, 1969
- Folder 4 Expense Reports, 1970-1971
- Folder 5 Correspondence, 1967-1971
- Folder 6 Information Systems
- Folder 7 Memorandum, 1964-1966
- Folder 8 Proposal, Large Screen Display System for Naval Operations

Box 15

- Folder 1 Visit Requests, 1963-1967
- Folder 2 Vouchers, 1965-1967

Series 6. Datebooks and Notebooks, 1918-1990

Series 6.1 Datebooks, 1955-1973

- Folder 3 1955
- Folder 4 1956
- Folder 5 1957
- Folder 6 1958
- Folder 7 1961

Folder 8 1962

Box 16

Folder 1 1963
Folder 2 1964
Folder 3 1966
Folder 4 1968
Folder 5 1969
Folder 6 1970
Folder 7 1970 Photo Diary
Folder 8 1972

Box 17

Folder 1 1973



Series 6.2 Notebooks, 1918-1990

Folder 2 7th Division
Folder 3 Address Book
Folder 4 Appointment and Address Book
Folder 5 Asian Trip, 1957
Folder 6 Field Message Book, May 1918

Box 18

Folder 1 Field Message Book, May 1918
Folder 2 Guestbook, 1955-1969
Folder 3 Guest Book, 1969-1990
Folder 4 The Mayfair Laundry, 1953-1956
Folder 5 Memo Grams, 1965-1967
Folder 6 Notebook, 1941
Folder 7 Notebook, 1941

Box 19

Folder 1 Notes, Date Unidentified
Folder 2 Notes, Date Unidentified
Folder 3 Notes, Made as a Captain
Folder 4 Notes on Missions
Folder 5 November, Year Unidentified
Folder 6 Southeast Asia Notes, 1950-1955
Folder 7 Stenographer's Notebook, 1943
Folder 8 Stenographers Notebook, Tinian

Series 7. Publications, 1915-1977

- Folder 9 Aggression From the North
- Folder 10 Armed Truce: United Nations Command/Military Armistice Commission
- Folder 11 Army Officer's Notebook
- Folder 12 Biographical Sketches, 1947-1975
- Folder 13 A Brief History of SATS, 1965

Box 20

- Folder 1 Caltrap, 3rd Marine Division Association, 1955-1963
- Folder 2 Campaign for the Marianas, 1947
- Folder 3 China: The Land and the People
- Folder 4 The Coco Patrol by Merritt A. Edson
- Folder 5 Congressional Pictorial Directory, January 1969
- Folder 6 Diplomatic List, May 1973
- Folder 7 Faces of the Philippines
- Folder 8 Facing the Issues, Employment of the Handicapped, 1977
- Folder 9 First Marine Division, Chosin Reservoir
- Folder 10 French Embassy
- Folder 11 French Relief Fund, 1944
- Folder 12 General and Military Law
- Folder 13 The Graves Family History
- Folder 14 Guideposts, April 1957
- Folder 15 Gumbo, Yearbook, Louisiana State University, 1915

Box 21

- Folder 1 Indirect Fire Infantryman Job Book
- Folder 2 Invitation to Seoul
- Folder 3 Landing Exercises, 1942
- Folder 4 Listing of Retired Marine Corps Personnel, 1961
- Folder 5 Louisiana State University Alumni News, January 1945
- Folder 6 A Manual for Commanders of Large Units, 1931
- Folder 7 The Marshall Islands Operations
- Folder 8 The Metropolitan Club, 1970
- Folder 9 The Metropolitan Club, 1972
- Folder 10 Military Order of the Carabao Song Book
- Folder 11 The Official List of Contacts of the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua
- Folder 12 The Old Breed News, 1962
- Folder 13 Parade Rest: A Handbook for MCDEC Officers' Wives
- Folder 14 Performance: The Story of the Handicapped, November 1967
- Folder 15 Portrait of a Marine's Wife
- Folder 16 Presenting Parris Island
- Folder 17 Puerto Rico Status Commission Hearings, 1965
- Folder 18 Road Maps of the Philippines, 1950

- Folder 19 Roster of Members, Third Marine Division Association, Inc., December 1973
- Folder 20 Report of Operation Deep Freeze II, 1956-1957

Box 22

- Folder 1 Report on Atlantic Command Exercises, February-March 1949
- Folder 2 Roster, Third Marine Division Association, November 1961
- Folder 3 Report to the President of The United States by the Economic Survey Mission to the Philippines, 1950
- Folder 4 Secretaries Conference, 1959
- Folder 5 Selected News From Home, 1971-1972
- Folder 6 Services of Supply Organization Manual, 1942
- Folder 7 Silver Anniversary Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, Press Kit, 1971
- Folder 8 Simplified Culbertson System, 1944
- Folder 9 Soviet Affairs, 1955-1957
- Folder 10 Swedish Simplified
- Folder 11 Tables of Organization, 1945

Box 23

- Folder 1 Thailand Illustrated
- Folder 2 Third Marine Division Association, 7th Annual National Reunion, 1961
- Folder 3 Unification and Strategy, March 1, 1950
- Folder 4 Umpire Manual, 1941
- Folder 5 U.S. Congress, 1953-1954
- Folder 6 U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit, Camp Pendleton Water Rights, 1965
- Folder 7 With Pen and Sword, 1945

Series 8. Schools, 1920-1961

Series 8.1 Schools, Courses, 1920-1949

- Folder 8 Address By Director, First Year Class, 5 September 1932
- Folder 9 Applied Psychology: The Management of Men, 1926-1927
- Folder 10 Attack in Beach Combat by a Division, 9 April 1929
- Folder 11 A Battalion Landing Against Opposition, 8-9 March 1932
- Folder 12 The Caribbean Policy of the United States, 26 October 1932
- Folder 13 Coast Defense, Naval Operations and Naval Bases, 28 October 1926
- Folder 14 Combat Intelligence, 13 May 1931
- Folder 15 Combined Operations, February-November 1920
- Folder 16 Communication by the Navy in Forced Landing Operations, 15 February 1927
- Folder 17 Coordination of Naval Operations with Base Defense, 8 February 1927

Folder 18	Defense of a Coast Line Involving Counter Attack, 25 March 1927
Folder 19	The Development of Sea Warfare on Land, February-November 1920
Folder 20	Disembarkation of Forces of the Navy, 12 May 1931
Folder 21	Division Engineers in Attack, February-March 1933
Folder 22	The Estimate of the Situation, 8 March 1927
Folder 23	Estimate of the Terrain, June 1931-April 1933
Folder 24	The Gallipoli Campaign, 1915 by H.M. Farmar, 10 October 1923
Folder 25	General Tactical Functions of Larger Units, 8 November 1932

Box 24

Folder 1	Hydrographic and Meteorological Study, 14 February 1927
Folder 2-3	Landing Operations, 1931-1932
Folder 4	Landing Places Local Terrain and Naval Artillery Support, 30 March 1927
Folder 5	Machine Guns, 1929-1932
Folder 6	Map Exercises, 1927-1932
Folder 7	Military Courtesy and Customs of the Service
Folder 8	Naval Air Forces Mining Operations, 10 February 1927
Folder 9	Naval Considerations for an Oversea Expedition, 1926-1927
Folder 10	Naval Functions in the Defense of Advanced Bases, 15 November 1926
Folder 11	Naval Gunfire, Date Unidentified
Folder 12	Naval Operations and Base Defense, Historical Examples, 8 February 1927
Folder 13	Naval Organization and Fleet Bases, 17 January 1927
Folder 14	Naval Provisions for Disembarkation, 4 January 1927
Folder 15	Navy Beach Party, 24 February 1927
Folder 16	Notes on Explosives and Accessories, 1927-1928
Folder 17	Official Historical Account of the Dardanelles Campaign, November 1925

Box 25

Folder 1	Outline of Instruction on Leadership, 3 August 1949
Folder 2	Outline of Instruction on Military Instruction, 27 July 1949
Folder 3	Present Public Problems by Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt of New York, 23 September 1932
Folder 4	Sea Power and Plans of Campaign, 5 January 1927
Folder 5	Secretaries' Conference, 23-26 July 1953
Folder 6	Seizure of Cities, 8 May 1931
Folder 7	Selection of Advanced Bases, 1 February 1927
Folder 8	The Situation in Europe, 9 November 1932
Folder 9	The Situation in the Far East, 4 November 1932
Folder 10	Small Wars, 1925-1931
Folder 11	Strategic Map, Gettysburg-Richmond and Leavenworth Areas, 22 September 1932
Folder 12	Tactical Principles and Decisions, December 1932

- Folder 13 Tactical Principles and Decisions, Attacks and Defense of Positions, January 1933
- Folder 14 Tactical Principles and Decisions, February 1933
- Folder 15 Tactical Principles and Decisions, March 1933
- Folder 16 Tactical Principles and Decisions, Cavalry, April 1933
- Folder 17 Tactical Principles and Decisions, Reconnaissance, April 1933
- Folder 18 Tactical Principles and Decisions, Motorization and Cavalry, May 1933
- Folder 19 Tactical Principles and Decisions, Chapters V-X
- Folder 20 Tactical Principles and Decisions, Overseas Expeditions, March 1934

Box 26

- Folder 1 Tactical and Strategical Studies, Chapters, XI-XX
- Folder 2 Tactics and Techniques of Infantry, Tanks, September 1932
- Folder 3 Temporary Bases, 3 March 1927
- Folder 4 Troop Leading, Chapter I-XXI
- Folder 5 Troop Leading, Chapters, XVII-XXIII
- Folder 6 The United States and the World Situation, 13 October 1932
- Folder 7 Uses and Defense of Existing Bases, 11 January 1927
- Folder 8 War Strength, Landing Operations, Date Unidentified
- Folder 9 Washington Conference Limitations, Composition of the Fleet, 6 January 1927
- Folder 10 The "Y" Problem, A Naval Advance Base in a Group of Islands, 1929-1930

Series 8.2 Papers and Pamphlets, 1926-1961

- Folder 11 Embarkation and Transportation of Italian Expedition for Tripoli
- Folder 12 Estimate of the Situation, 1939-1940
- Folder 13 Explosives, 1926
- Folder 14 Gallipoli Viewed from the Turkish Side, 1923
- Folder 15 Graduation Exercises, First Basic Class, 22 June 1961
- Folder 16 Map Maneuvers
- Folder 17 Military History, Outline of Method
- Folder 18 Notes on the Preparation of Tactical Problems

Box 27

- Folder 1 The Operations of the 1st Division on the Belgian Coast in 1917, By W.G.S. Dobbie
- Folder 2 Outline of Advance Base Problems and Amphibious Warfare Studies, June 1961
- Folder 3 Principles and Methods of Conducting Landing Operations as Illustrated by the Action of Japanese Forces in Various Historical Instances, By G.B. Erskine, 23 March 1934
- Folder 4 The Solution of Map Problems

Folder 5 The St. John Problem, 1928-1929

Series 9. Subject Files, 1926-1976

Folder 6 Apostolic Blessing, 1966
Folder 7 Armed Forces Officers
Folder 8 Assistant to the Secretary of Defense
Folder 9 Automobile Accident Report, 1956
Folder 10 Award, Certificate of Merit, Patriotic Order Sons of America, 1957
Folder 11 Award, Daughters of the American Revolution, 1956
Folder 12 Award, International Eye Foundation, 1976
Folder 13 Award, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, 1964
Folder 14 Certificate, Infantry School, United States Army, 1926-1927
Folder 15 Certificate, President Ford
Folder 16 Certificate, United States Naval Institute, 1964
Folder 17 Citations and Medals
Folder 18 Contents of Wallet
Folder 19 Diary, January-1 May 1929
Folder 20 Football Schedule, Camp Pendleton, 1948
Folder 21 Identification Cards
Folder 22 International Eye Foundation, 1970
Folder 23 Inventory Reports, Camp Pendleton, 1950
Folder 24 Marine Corps Welcome Caravan Sign
Folder 25 Marriage Certificate, 1954
Folder 26 Nameplate
Folder 27 Poem, The Third Marine Raiders by William Greeley
Folder 28 Radio of Free Asia
Folder 29 Record of Procedure of a Board of Investigation, Peiping, China, 13
 August 1936
Folder 30 Retraining and Reemployment Administrator, 1946

Box 28

Folder 1 Rules and Regulations
Folder 2 Salute to Big E
Folder 3 War Danger Propaganda

Series 10. Travel, 1959-1968

Folder 4-5 Booklets, Thailand Culture Series
Folder 6 Boxing, Rajadamnern Stadium,
 Thailand, 1959
Folder 7 Locator and Itineraries, 1959-1961
Folder 8 Menu, Dinner Party in Honor of
 General Erskine, Thailand, 1969
Folder 9 Menus, Thailand, 1967-1968



- Folder 10 Program of Official Visit to Thailand, 1959
- Folder 11 Receipts, Thailand, 1959
- Folder 12 South America Airline Map
- Folder 13 Thailand Visit, 1964
- Folder 14 USAF Security Service, San Antonio, TX, 1961

Series 11. Photographs

- Folder 15 3d Marine Division Reunion
- Folder 16 Allied Powers Europe Conference, 1953
- Folder 17 American Legation Guard

Box 29

- Folder 1 Amphibious Operations at Sea, Saipan Island, 15 June 1944, vol. 1
- Folder 2 Amphibious Operations at Sea, Saipan Island, 15 June 1944, vol. 2
- Folder 3 Awards and Plaques
- Folder 4 Company E, Basic Class 3-63, Mess Night, 1963
- Folder 5 Erskine Bay

Box 30

- Folder 1-2 Erskine, Constance
- Folder 3 Erskine, Constance, Presentation of Firearms
- Folder 4 Erskine, Graves, Miscellaneous
- Folder 5 Evening Parades
- Folder 6 First Photograph of General Erskine
- Folder 7 Foreign Dignitaries
- Folder 8 French Indo China Visit, 1950
- Folder 9 Iwo Jima Memorial
- Folder 10 Korea Visit
- Folder 11 Korea Visit, 5th ROK Marine Brigade, 1967

Box 31

- Folder 1 Labor Department
- Folder 2 Laos Visit, 1959
- Folder 3 Leatherneck Ball, 1965
- Folder 4 Marine Corps Birthday Ball, Rangoon, 1959
- Folder 5 Marine Corps Schools, Students
- Folder 6-8 Nicaragua



Box 32

- Folder 1-2 Official Portraits

- Folder 3 Portraits, Signed by General Erskine to Constance Erskine
- Folder 4 Portrait at Camp Pendleton
- Folder 5 Retirement of General Canine, 1957
- Folder 6 Retirement of General Walt, 1971
- Folder 7 Scrapbook, Page 1, Honor Guards, Admiral D.C. Ramsey, U.S. Navy
- Folder 8 Scrapbook, Page 1, Honor Guards, Rear Admiral Whitehead, U.S. Navy
- Folder 9 Scrapbook, Page 1, Honor Guards, Brigadier General S. Jerome, USMC
- Folder 10 Scrapbook, Page 1, Honor Guards, Major General M.H. Silverthorn, USMC
- Folder 11 Scrapbook, Page 2, Dress Blue Review, 1950
- Folder 12 Scrapbook, Page 2, Dress Blue Parade and Review, March 1949
- Folder 13 Scrapbook, Page 3, Combat Review, 1949
- Folder 14 Scrapbook, Page 3, Combat Review, 1950
- Folder 15 Scrapbook, Page 4, DEMON III, 1950
- Folder 16 Scrapbook, Page 4, 13th Armored Division, U.S.A. Reserve
- Folder 17 Scrapbook, Page 5, Sands of Iwo Jima

Box 33

- Folder 1 Scrapbook, Page 6, Unidentified
- Folder 2 Scrapbook, Page 7, Gymkhana, May 1950
- Folder 3 Scrapbook, Page 7, Armed Forces Day, 1950
- Folder 4 Scrapbook, Page 8, Honors, Rear Admirals C.A. Swanson, P. Albright, B. Grosbeck, (MC) U.S.N.
- Folder 5 Scrapbook, Page 8, Honors, Major General K. Rockey, USMC
- Folder 6 Scrapbook, Page 8, Honors, Major General O.P. Smith, USMC
- Folder 7 Scrapbook, Page 8, Honors, Admiral C.W. Nimitz, U.S. Navy
- Folder 8 Scrapbook, Page 9, Camp Pendleton Honor Guards, Major General J.T. Walker, USMC
- Folder 9 Scrapbook, Page 9, Camp Pendleton Honor Guards, Rear Admiral W.D. Baker, U.S. Navy
- Folder 10 Scrapbook, Page 9, Camp Pendleton Honor Guards, Brigadier General L.H. Watson, U.S. Army
- Folder 11 Scrapbook, Page 9, Camp Pendleton Honor Guards, Brigadier General L.E. Ray, QMC, USMC
- Folder 12 Scrapbook, Page 10, Honors, Rear Admiral F.X. McInerney, U.S. Navy
- Folder 13 Scrapbook, Page 10, Honors, Rear Admiral J.F. Jelley Jr., U.S. Navy
- Folder 14 Scrapbook, Page 10, Honors, Major General R. Robinson, USMC
- Folder 15 Scrapbook, Page 10, Honors, Lieutenant General T.E. Watson, USMC
- Folder 16 Scrapbook, Page 11, General Cates, CMC, Visits, Summer and Fall, 1949
- Folder 17 Scrapbook, Page 12, Amphibious Maneuvers, DEMON II, 1949
- Folder 18 Scrapbook, Page 13, First Post War Reunion, Third Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, April 1950
- Folder 19 Scrapbook, Page 13, Medal Winners in USMC West Coast Matches, 1950
- Folder 20 Scrapbook, Page 13, San Diego "Bear" Trophy, West Coast Team Champs, 1st Marine Division Team

- Folder 21 Scrapbook, Page 14, Rodeo and Barbecue, 6-7 and 8 July 1949
- Folder 22 Scrapbook, Page 15, Sports Carnival and Rodeo, Gymkhana, 6-7 and 8 July 1949
- Folder 23 Scrapbook, Page 16, Days of San Louis Ray, 1949, Oceanside, California
- Folder 24 Scrapbook, Page 17, Birthday Ball, 1949
- Folder 25 Scrapbook, Page 17, Football Rally for Des. Pac. Game
- Folder 26 Scrapbook, Page 18, USMC Reserve

Box 34

- Folder 1 Scrapbook, Page 19, Baseball
- Folder 2 Scrapbook, Page 19, Change of Command, 1st Marine Division
- Folder 3 Scrapbook, Page 19, Parade and Review
- Folder 4 Scrapbook, Page 19, Signed Portraits
- Folder 5 Scrapbook, Page 19, Unidentified
- Folder 6 Scrapbook, Page 20, Retirement Reviews, Colonel F.C. Biebush, USMC
- Folder 7 Scrapbook, Page 20, Retirement Reviews, Master Sergeant Jans Peterson, USMC
- Folder 8 Scrapbook, Page 20, Retirement Reviews, 1st Lieutenant P. Manning, USMC
- Folder 9 Scrapbook, Page 20, Retirement Reviews, C.W.O. M. Floyd, USMC
- Folder 10 Scrapbook, Page 20, Retirement Reviews, Colonel W.N. McKelvey, USMC
- Folder 11 Scrapbook, Page 21, Lowell Thomas, Admiral Durgin and General Erskine
- Folder 12 Scrapbook, Page 21, Shirley Barton and General Erskine During Girl Scout Cookie Sale
- Folder 13 Scrapbook, Page 21, Under Secretary of the Navy Floberg and General Erskine
- Folder 14 Scrapbook, Page 21, Generals Rockey and Erskine with Recoiless Rifle
- Folder 15 Scrapbook, Page 21, Presentation of Steer Horns to Staff NCO Club
- Folder 16 Scrapbook, Page 21, Baseball Team, 1949 West Coast Champions
- Folder 17 Scrapbook, Page 21, 1950 Wrestline Team, 11th Naval District Champions
- Folder 18 Scrapbook, Page 21, 1948 Baseball Team, West Coast Champions
- Folder 19 Scrapbook, Page 22, Lt. Gen. Shepherd, FMF Pacific and Honors for General Erskine, February 1951
- Folder 20 Scrapbook, Page 22, Rear Admiral A.S. Stroble, U.S. Navy
- Folder 21 Scrapbook, Page 22, Colonel Leicester, Royal British Marines
- Folder 22 Scrapbook, Page 22, Marine Barracks, Pearl Harbor, Navy Yard, April 1950
- Folder 23 Scrapbook, Page 22, Memorial Day, Pearl Harbor, 1950
- Folder 24 Scrapbook, Page 22, Unidentified
- Folder 25 Scrapbook, Page 23, Reorganization of the 6th Marines
- Folder 26 Scrapbook, Page 23, Award Presentation to 13th Infantry Battalion, USMCR
- Folder 27 Scrapbook, Page 23, Unidentified

- Folder 28 Scrapbook, Page 24, Unidentified
 Folder 29 Scrapbook, Page 25, Ranch House, Commanding General's Quarters,
 Camp Pendleton
 Folder 30 Scrapbook, Page 26, 1sts's First Home
 From Korea, 5 March 1951
 Folder 31 Scrapbook, Page 26, Brigade Boys
 Come Home, Oakland, 22 March 1951
 Folder 32 Scrapbook, Page 27, Korea Medal
 Parade, 14 February 1951
 Folder 33 Scrapbook, Page 28, Fighting Coast
 Guard Movie Premiers, 3 May 1951
 Folder 34 Scrapbook, Page 28, Sports Teams
 Folder 35 Scrapbook, Page 29, Unidentified
 Folder 36 Scrapbook, Page 29, Chesty Puller
 Folder 37 Scrapbook, Page 30, Stinky Davis'
 Christening Ceremony
 Folder 38 Scrapbook, Page 30, Change of Command Ceremony
 Folder 39 Scrapbook, Page 31, Group Picture, General Officers Assembled at
 Headquarters, 1951
 Folder 40 Scrapbook, Page 31, Phiblant Critique



Box 35

- Folder 1 Scrapbook, Page 31, FMFLant Critique, Camp Lejeune
 Folder 2 Scrapbook, Page 31, Kaesong Base Conference, Camp Lejeune vintage
 Folder 3 Scrapbook, Page 32, Lant Flex 52, Puerto Rico
 Folder 4 Scrapbook, Page 33, Lant Flex 52, Puerto Rico
 Folder 5 Scrapbook, Page 34, Lant Flex 52, Birthday Ball
 Folder 6 Scrapbook, Page 34, Parris Island Trip
 Folder 7 Scrapbook, Page 35, Christmas Party, FMFLant, 1951
 Folder 8 Scrapbook, Page 36, Football Championship, Parris Island
 Folder 9 Scrapbook, Page 36, Lant Flex 52
 Folder 10 Scrapbook, Page 37, Trip to Detroit and Puerto Rico, May 1952
 Folder 11 Scrapbook, Page 37, General Summerall's visit to Camp Lejeune, NC,
 1952
 Folder 12 Scrapbook, Page 38, Commandant's visit to Camp Lejeune, 1952
 Folder 13 Scrapbook, Page 38, World War II
 Folder 14 Scrapbook, Page 38, Atomic Tests, Nevada, 1952
 Folder 15 Scrapbook, Page 38, Visit to Point Mugu
 Folder 16 Scrapbook, Page 39, Commandant's Visit to HQ FMFLANT
 Folder 17 Scrapbook, Page 40, Birthday Ball, 1952
 Folder 18 Scrapbook, Page 41, Birthday Ball
 Folder 19 Scrapbook, Page 41, Unidentified
 Folder 20 Scrapbook, Page 42, Awards Ceremony
 Folder 21 Scrapbook, Page 42, Jonathan Club, 1952
 Folder 22 Scrapbook, Page 42, Unidentified

Folder 23 Scrapbook, Page 43, Diplomatic Visit
Folder 24 Scrapbook, Page 44, Unidentified
Folder 25 Scrapbook, Page 45, National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week Award
Folder 26 Scrapbook, Page 45, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, 1953
Folder 27 Scrapbook, Page 45, Unidentified
Folder 28 Scrapbook, Page 46, Unidentified
Folder 29 Scrapbook, Page 46, Camp Elmore Dedication

Box 36

Folder 1 Scrapbook, Page 47, Puerto Rico
Folder 2 Scrapbook, Page 48, Puerto Rico
Folder 3 Scrapbook, Page 49, Camp Lejeune Training Exercises
Folder 4 Scrapbook, Page 50, Unidentified
Folder 5 Scrapbook, Page 51, Boxing
Folder 6 Scrapbook, Page 52, On Board Salem Gibraltar
Folder 7 Scrapbook, Page 53, Unidentified
Folder 8 Scrapbook, Page 54, Basketball and Volleyball
Folder 9 Scrapbook, Page 54, Puerto Rico
Folder 10 Scrapbook, Page 55, Puerto Rico
Folder 11 Scrapbook, Page 55, Medal Presentation
Folder 12 Scrapbook, Page 56, Unidentified
Folder 13 Scrapbook, Loose, Iwo Jima Statue and Unidentified
Folder 14-15 Signed Portraits

Box 37

Folder 1-6 Signed Portraits

Box 38

Folder 1-4 Social Functions
Folder 5 Thailand Visit

Box 39

Folder 1 Thailand Visit, 1956
Folder 2 Thailand Visit, Royal Thai Air Force, 1950
Folder 3 Thailand Visit, Royal Thai Army
Folder 4 Travel
Folder 5 Unidentified
Folder 6 Unidentified, Marine Corps Weddings
Folder 7 Unidentified, Military

Box 40

Folder 1-3 Unidentified, People
Folder 4 Wedding
Folder 5-7 World War II, 3d Marine Division

Box 41

Folder 1-3 World War II, 3d Marine Division
Folder 4 World War II, Awarding Medals
Folder 5 World War II, Field Mass
Folder 6 Drawings

Oversize

Oversize materials are identified as materials that are too large to fit in a standard legal size (8½ × 14 inches) folder.

Folder 7 Collier's, April 27, 1946

Box 1

Folder 1 Certificates
Folder 2 Carabao Club
Folder 3 Japanese Stencil Dyed Paper Calendar, 1959
Folder 4 Clippings
Folder 5 Presentation of Original Iwo Jima Flag
Folder 6 Music "Salute to the Marines"
Folder 7 Secretaries Conference, 1957
Folder 8 Photographs, Signed Portraits
Folder 9 Photographs, "Symbol of Victory"
Folder 10 Photographs, Korea
Folder 11 Photographs, World War II
Folder 12 Photographs, 34th Annual Meeting, Chamber of Commerce, 1946
Folder 13 Photographs, Signed by General Erskine to Constance Erskine
Folder 14 Camp John Hay

Box 2

Folder 1 Certificate, Greek
Folder 2 The 3D Marine Division Bulletin, 14 April-25 August 1945
Folder 3 The 3D Marine Division Bulletin, 3 November 1944-7 April 1945
Folder 4 Drawings
Folder 5 Phonograph Record, Iwo: Combat Actualities-Broadcast of the Battle and Fighting Men During the Bloodiest Battle of WWII, 1976
Folder 6 Phonograph Record, Secretaries Conference Beachcomber Party, 1956
Folder 7 Phonograph Record, A Mid-Summit Night's Dream, Secretaries Conference, 1959

- Folder 8 Phonograph Record, The King and Ike, Secretaries Conference, 1959
Folder 9 Phonograph Record, Special Radio Interview with Graves B. Erskine by
Edward C. Stodel, 1947
Folder 10 Phonograph Record, Interview with General Erskine, 1946
Folder 11 Phonograph Record, Sands of Iwo Jima Premiere

Box 3

Scrapbook 1 (1 of 2)

Box 4

Scrapbook 1 (2 of 2)

Box 5

Scrapbook 2

Oversize Folder (Located in Map Cases)

- Folder 1 Birthday Party Order, 1952 and a World War II era Japanese Grenades
table