

John Dougall Metcalfe Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2022

Contact information: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm2020086364>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms022009>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Manuscript Division staff, 2022

Collection Summary

Title: John Dougall Metcalfe Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1878-1996

Bulk Dates: 1941-1963

ID no.: MSS86364

Creator: Metcalfe, John Dougall, 1918-2000

Extent: 2,400 items

Extent: 7 containers plus 1 oversize

Extent: 2.8 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm2020086364>

Summary: United States Navy officer. Family papers, correspondence, journals, notes, writings, photographs, maps, orders, memorabilia, employment applications and résumés, and other material relating primarily to Metcalfe's naval career from 1941 to 1963.

Acquisition Information

The papers of John Dougall Metcalfe were given to the Library of Congress by his nieces, Lonna Muirhead and Robin Keyes, in 2020.

Processing History

The papers of John Dougall Metcalfe were arranged and described by Connie L. Cartledge in 2022.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of John Dougall Metcalfe in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of John Dougall Metcalfe are open to research. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Division prior to visiting.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, John Dougall Metcalfe Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1918, Jan. 8	Born, Shelton, Wash.
1935	Graduated from William Winlock Miller High School, Olympia, Wash.
1935-1937	Laborer, Works Progress Administration, Olympia, Wash.
1936	Manager, Olympia Custom Cannery, Olympia, Wash.
1937-1938	Archives clerk, Works Progress Administration, Olympia, Wash.
1938-1939	Draftsman and radio operator, United States Forestry Service

1939-1941	Drafting clerk, United States Forestry Service
1941-1943	Radio operator, United States Navy
1943-1963	Electronics technician and chief warrant electronics officer, United States Navy
1964-1969	Senior electronics technician to assistant electronics engineer, Stanford Research Institute, Menlo Park, Calif.
1969-1970	Electronics engineer and service manager, Videonetics, Inc., Sunnyvale, Calif.
1970	Assistant to electronics engineer, Stanford Research Institute
1970-1971	Senior electronics technician, Develco, Inc., Mountain View, Calif.
1971-1983	Director, Language Lab, Stanford University, Stanford, Calif.
2000, Oct. 29	Died, Palo Alto, Calif.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of John Dougall Metcalfe (1918-2000) span the years from 1878 to 1996, with the bulk of the material dating from 1941 to 1963. The collection documents Metcalfe's career in the United States Navy from 1941 to 1963, particularly his service during World War II and his postwar activities relating to nuclear weapons testing and training, and a small amount of material pertaining to Metcalfe's post-military career in electronics. The papers are in English.

Although not comprehensive in scope, the collection covers in detail Metcalfe's naval career from his early years as a radio operator monitoring the coastal harbor and ship stations from Sitka, Alaska, to his postwar work pertaining to the Navy's involvement in the testing of nuclear weapons and its training of personnel for its nuclear program. The bulk of the collection is made up of letters from Metcalfe to his family, which he signed by his nickname "Jack." The letters are almost journal-like in their descriptions of Metcalfe's assignments both at sea and on shore as well as his activities while on leave. The collection documents Metcalfe's training as a radio technician at Naval Station Treasure Island, near San Francisco, California (1943), his time as a student and instructor at Texas A & M University radio school (1943), his service on the *Shangri-La* (aircraft carrier) during nuclear testing at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands (1946), his participation in "Operation Highjump" on the *Currituck* (seaplane tender) for Richard Evelyn Byrd's fourth Antarctic expedition (1946-1947), his tenure as an instructor at Radio Matériel School, Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, D.C. (1947-1948), his assignments as part of the atom bomb tests at the Sandia Base Albuquerque, New Mexico (1948), his activities at the Naval Training Center San Diego, California (1952 to 1953), and his sea duty on the Pacific Ocean with stops at Hawaii, Japan, and Hong Kong (1957). The family correspondence also provides details of Metcalfe's shore leaves, including hikes in Alaska and the Muir Woods of California as well as sightseeing in Washington, D.C. A few letters contain a map or drawings relating to his location.

The general correspondence is made up mostly of letters from friends and acquaintances of Metcalfe and his wife, Jean Violet, with the bulk dating from 1985 to 1987. The subject file documents primarily Metcalfe's education and training; his employment, including a small amount of documentation relating to Metcalfe's post-naval employment with early electronics firms in northern California (now known as Silicon Valley) and with the Stanford Research Institute; and his naval orders, assignments, and commendations, located in the military file. Also in the subject file are photographs relating to Metcalfe's military service.

Arrangement of the Collection

This collection is arranged alphabetically by type of material.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Metcalfe family--Correspondence.

Metcalf family.
Metcalf, Jean Violet, 1917- --Correspondence.
Metcalf, John Dougall, 1918-2000.

Organizations

Byrd Antarctic Expedition (4th : 1946-1947)
Currituck (Seaplane tender)
Operation Highjump (1946-1947)
Radio Matériel School (Washington, D.C.)
Shangri-La (Aircraft carrier : CVS-38)
Stanford Research Institute.
United States. Navy--Radiomen.
United States. Navy--Sea life--Pacific Ocean.
United States. Navy.

Subjects

Atomic bomb.
Communications, Military.
Electrical engineering.
Electronic industries--California.
Electronics.
Naval education--United States.
Nuclear weapons--Marshall Islands--Bikini Atoll--Testing.
Nuclear weapons--New Mexico--Sandia Base--Testing.
Nuclear weapons--Testing.
Radio, Military--Alaska--Sitka.
Radio, Military.
World War, 1939-1945--Naval operations, American.
World War, 1939-1945--Pacific Area.
World War, 1939-1945.

Places

Bikini Atoll (Marshall Islands)--History.
Naval Station Treasure Island (San Francisco, Calif.)
Naval Training Center San Diego (Calif.)
Sandia Base (N.M.)--History.

Occupations

Electronics engineers.
Naval officers.
Radio operators.
Radiomen.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Family papers
BOX 1	Correspondence
BOX 1	Metcalf, John Dougall
BOX 1	Chronological file
BOX 1	1939-1945 (22 folders)
BOX 2	1946-1949 (18 folders)
BOX 3	1950-1954, undated (12 folders)
BOX 3	Metcalf, Jean (wife)
BOX 3	1956-1957 (8 folders)
BOX 4	1960-1966, undated (9 folders)
BOX 4	Other family members, 1919-1923, 1931-1936, 1945-1954, 1973, undated (2 folders)
BOX 4	Other papers
BOX 4	Cochrane, Donald (father-in-law), 1943-1946, undated
BOX 4	Genealogical material, 1948, undated
BOX 4	Metcalf, Margaret (mother), 1955, 1965, undated (2 folders)
BOX 4	Miscellany, 1956, undated
BOX 4	General correspondence, 1934-1937, 1944-1947, 1956, 1971, 1979-1987 (5 folders)
BOX 5	General correspondence, 1988-1992, undated (3 folders)
BOX 5	Subject file
BOX 5	Biographical file, 1939-1946, undated
BOX 5	Education and training
BOX 5	General, 1931-1966 (2 folders)
BOX 5	Notes and draft assignments, 1952-1954, 1963, undated (3 folders)
BOX 5	Employment applications, résumés, and related documents, 1938-1941, 1952-1982 (3 folders)
BOX 5	Ham radio, operation of, 1878, 1937-1948
BOX 5	Journals
BOX 5	Dream, 1961
BOX 5	Travel (cross country trip), 1986
BOX 6	Military file

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 6	General, 1939-1964, 1980-1985, undated See also Container OV 1, Map (9 folders)
BOX 6	Hines, E. G., <i>Shangri-La to Bikini</i> , 1946
BOX 6	Memorabilia, 1951, undated
BOX 6	Orders, assignments, and commendations, 1947-1956 (2 folders)
BOX 7	Orders, assignments, and commendations, 1957-1959
BOX 7	Notes, 1965, undated
BOX 7	Passports and identification cards, 1956, 1965, 1972-1987, 1996
BOX 7	Photographs
BOX 7	Family, undated
BOX 7	Metcalfe, John Dougall, undated
BOX 7	Military service, 1942-1943, 1950-1951, undated See also Container OV 1, Photograph of Ranger (aircraft carrier) (3 folders)
BOX 7	Professional associations, 1955, 1974, undated
BOX 7	Santa Rita Technology, Inc., 1962-1963
BOX 7	Travel file
BOX 7	General, 1946-1951, undated
BOX 7	Postcards, 1951, undated
BOX 7	Writings by Metcalfe
BOX 7	Journal, includes memoirs and poetry, undated
BOX 7	Poetry, 1945-1947, 1957-1961, undated
BOX OV 1	Oversize
	Subject file
	Military file
BOX OV 1	Map of route taken by <i>Currituck</i> (seaplane tender) for Richard Evelyn Byrd's fourth Antarctic expedition, 1946-1947 (Container 6, General)
	Photographs
BOX OV 1	Photograph of <i>Ranger</i> (aircraft carrier), 1946-1947 (Container 7, Military service)