

Archives Branch
Naval History and Heritage Command
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Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5060

Processor: Roy Grossnick (Updated October 2012) and originally processed by Judy Short (June 1999).

Scott M. Smith Papers

COLL/225

Creator: Electronics Technician First Class Scott M. Smith, USN

Extent: 1 box
.3 cubic feet

Date Range: circa. 1945-1951

Classification: Unclassified

Access: Open

Scope and Content Notes

Ms. Jane M. Protzman donated this collection of papers to the Center's Operational Archives Branch on 26 March 1999. Letters comprise the bulk of the collection and document ET1 Smith's eighteen month assignment (from January 1948 through July 1949) in the Marshall Islands with the Kwajalein Ship Security Detail. In addition to his letters to "Mom and Dad," the collection includes biographical information, clippings, photographs, and miscellany.

The collection is arranged into five series: Biographical Data; Letters; Clippings; Photographs; and Miscellany.

The biographical information on ET1 Smith includes his statement of service and his discharge certificates.

The letters "home" are an excellent source of information on Navy life on Kwajalein and his duties as an electronics technician from January 1948 to June 1949. The topics discussed in his letters include: day to day life on the island; monitoring of radiation exposure; sinking of target ship, USS PENNSYLVANIA, because the ship was taking on water; towing of target ships out to sea where cruisers, destroyers, and submarines held gunnery practice on them; his duties repairing out of order electronics equipment; his July 1948 trip to Bikini to measure the radioactivity of the islands in the atoll and to make repairs to instruments used to measure radioactivity; effect of Berlin Airlift on mail service to the Pacific; his assignment to the Naval Station repair force; and his plans after the Navy.

The clippings relate to the quest of the inhabitants of Bikini to find a suitable home to replace the one from which they were uprooted in 1946 when the Navy chose their atoll for the atomic-bomb

tests. There is also an article on the sinking of PENNSYLVANIA off Kwajalein and cites ET1 Smith's letter to his parents describing the event. The last clipping announces ET1 Smith's discharge from the U.S. Navy.

The eight undated photographs in the collection show ET1 Smith with his parents and depict scenes of ships off Kwajalein.

The miscellaneous items include a chart of Kwajalein Island Fire Zones (with ET1 Smith's annotations identifying sites of interest around the lagoon). There is also an annotated postcard of San Francisco and the Bay.

Note: For additional information on the Bikini Atomic-Bomb Tests see official Navy records held in the Post 1946 Command File and Post 1946 Report File.

Biographical Sketch

Scott Maynard Smith was born on 21 April 1926 in Denver, Colorado. After graduation from high school, he studied electronics at Cornell University for two years. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy on 1 September 1945.

His service record indicates that he attended ET School at Treasure Island, Del Monte, California. He also served as an electronics instructor at Treasure Island, San Francisco, prior to his assignment with the Radioactive Safety Unit ("Rad Safe"), Kwajalein Ship Security Detail (KSSD), U.S. Naval Station, Kwajalein.

The Kwajalein Ship Security Detail was established to take care of the target ships which were used in the atomic-bomb tests on Bikini. "Rad Safe" (which is part of KSSD) was established to check on the radioactivity of the target ships to insure that safety precautions were observed aboard them. The function of Kwajalein Naval Station was to maintain the small water ships, tankers, and other ships used to supply larger ships which put into Kwajalein.

According to his letters, he arrived in Kwajalein in January 1948. His duties with "Rad Safe" included servicing the instruments which were used to check the radioactivity of the target ships. After the detail closed down its activities in October 1948, he was assigned to the Naval Station's repair force. He left Kwajalein in June 1949.

He was honorably discharged from the U.S. Navy on 12 July 1949. After his discharge, he returned to Cornell University. Later, he worked on military systems at Bell Laboratory.

He died in October of 1992.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1

SERIES I: Biographical Data, 1949 and 1951

1. Biographical Data (Statement of Service), 1949
2. Biographical Data (Discharge Certificates), 1949 and 1951

SERIES II: Letters, undated, ca. 1945 and 1948-1949

3. Letters, undated

4. Letters, ca. 1945

5. Letters, Jan-Jun 1948

6. Letters, Jul-Dec 1948

7. Letters, Jan-Mar 1949

8. Letters, Apr-May 1949

9. Letters, Jun-Jul 1949

Note: Some letters were copied onto acid free paper for preservation.

SERIES III: Clippings, ca. 1948-1949

10. Clippings, ca. 1948-1949 (Clippings were copied onto acid free paper for preservation)

SERIES IV: Photographs, undated

11. Photographs (ET1 Smith and his parents, ships off Kwajalein), undated

SERIES V: Miscellany, undated

12. Kwajalein Island Fire Zones (annotated), undated

13. Postcard of San Francisco and Bay (annotated), undated