

Collection #
SC 2709

**ARLIN T. MCRAE
PAPERS, 1943–1945**

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Processed by

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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 3 folders

COLLECTION
DATES: 1943–45

PROVENANCE: Arlin T. McRae, 218 S. Spring Street, Evansville, IN 47714

RESTRICTIONS: None

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HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION 2003.0033
NUMBER:

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Arlin T. McRae of Griffin, Indiana, was born on 23 November 1925. On his eighteenth birthday, his draft card was mailed. He left for basic training at the Marine Corps base at San Diego on 24 December 1943. After his basic training, he trained for action in the South Pacific at Camp Pendleton in California and at Camp Tarawa in Hawaii. He was wounded in the Battle of Iwo Jima on 25 February 1945. Of McRae's platoon of fifty-six, fourteen were killed and only three were not wounded. For his wound, McRae received the Purple Heart.

After recovering from his wound, he was sent back to Camp Tarawa to train for the invasion of Japan, which was planned for 1 November 1945. After the atomic bombs were dropped and the Japanese surrendered, he was shipped to Japan with the occupation troops, landing on the same beachhead that his battalion was to have invaded. After seeing how heavily the area was fortified, the troops came to the conclusion that none of them would have lived if the invasion had been made.

Since it was known that McRae did a lot of sketching, his lieutenant asked him to make a map of the Sasebo area of Japan, using aerial photographs. When it was finished, he was ordered to take a Japanese interpreter, go into the hills, locate all the buildings and caves where arms were stored, number them, and place them on the map. He was given pocket-sized spiral notebooks to record the information. He finished the inventory using a notebook containing notes used in Hawaii to teach new recruits "Scouting and Patrolling" and "Security on the March." This book was kept only because it contained names and addresses of Marine friends. This booklet records the materials found in several buildings and caves. The last one recorded was Cave 54; therefore, there were 53 other caves and buildings inventoried. This indicates that the Japanese had an arsenal with which to defend itself had the atomic bombs not been dropped.

Following the war, McRae returned to New Harmony, Indiana, and worked summers in the oil fields while attending college. He attended Florida Southern College where he graduated in three years. McRae taught Art and English at Tell City, Indiana, for thirteen years. In 1963, he moved to Evansville, Indiana, where he taught at Harrison High School and was the English Department chair. In 1988, he became Supervisor of English for the Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation. After his retirement in 1991, he worked for eight years supervising student teachers for the University of Southern Indiana. He co-authored a series of vocabulary workbooks for Houghton-Mifflin Publishing Company, entitled *Vocabulary for Achievement*.

Sources:

Accession file

Indiana War Memorials World War II Veterans Database, <http://www.state.in.us/iwm/database/index.html>. Accessed 2 July 2003.

Letter from McRae. 17 July 2003.

Telephone interview with McRae. 9 July 2003.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection includes two postcards, a letter, a photograph, and a manuscript spiral notebook.

A postcard from the Local Board of the Selective Service in Posey County, Indiana, dated 23 November 1943 requires McRae to report to the Memorial Coliseum in Mt. Vernon, Indiana, on 1 December 1943 for a preliminary physical examination.

Also present is an undated, possibly unsent postcard on U.S. Marine stationery from McRae. On the back of the card is a poem that McRae penned about the things he is not allowed to speak of, the things he does not want to speak of, and things that are of no interest to others. On the front of the postcard, McRae writes: "Just a little joke mom. I'll try to write tomorrow."

A military photograph of McRae dates from 1943–45.

A letter to Mr. and Mrs. McRae, New Harmony, Indiana, from L. B. Brooks, Captain of the United States Marine Corps, Washington, dated 10 April 1945, informs Mr. and Mrs. McRae that Arlin was wounded on 25 February 1945 at Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands. Brooks assures Mr. and Mrs. McRae that when other information is available, it will be given to them.

After recovering from a wound from the Battle of Iwo Jima, McRae returned to duty in Japan as a member of the occupational troops; his job was to locate, number and review the contents of buildings and caves. Out of his inventory, he kept one notebook. This book contains notes for instruction on "Scouting and Patrolling" and "Security on the March" as well as names and addresses of other soldiers. The last pages of the notebook contain McRae's notes over the contents of buildings and caves that he inspected. In these buildings and caves were found explosives, weaponry, ammunition, electronic devices, electrical equipment, and chemical weapons.

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Photograph of Arlin T. McRae, ca. 1943–45	Folder 2
Spiral notebook, 1945	Folder 3

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://157.91.92.2/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC 2709).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.

