

**Collection #
M 1300**

**EDWARD F. DIRKS
WWII COLLECTION, 1940–1953**

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 half size manuscript document case
1 half size photograph box
1 OVA graphics folder
3 artifacts

COLLECTION DATES: 1940–1953

PROVENANCE: Barbara Dirks, Indianapolis, 2016, 2017

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2016.0036, 2016.0195, 2017.0246

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Edward Frederick (Bud) Dirks was born in Irvington, Indiana on 19 December 1918. His parents, Edward Dirks (24 Nov. 1883–July 1971) and Anna L. W. Bloemker, a German immigrant, were married on 17 April 1907. The couple also had two daughters, Mildred Louisa Dirks in 1909 and Helen Lizette Dirks in 1911.

Edward F. attended School #57 for three years and then School #85 when the family moved to a new home at 50 N. Kenmore Road. He graduated from Shortridge High School in 1936 and from DePauw University in 1940.

Edward married Jane Dunning of Owensboro, Kentucky in April 1941. He received his draft notice in August 1941 and decided to join the Coast Guard. He served three and a half years in the United States Coast Guard Reserve aboard the *U.S.S. Reading* as an Assistant Gunnery Officer under the rank of Ensign (the first rank as an officer).

On his return to civilian life, he worked with his father in the family business, Dirks Market in Irvington, Indiana. He purchased the business from his father in 1954 and was active in civic and business organizations in Irvington and Indianapolis until selling the business in 1966. After closing the store he worked for the Internal Revenue Service until retirement in 1980. Together the Dirks had five children, four daughters and a son, and were members of Immanuel United Church of Christ.

Dirks died in June 2009 in Indianapolis.

The *U.S.S. Reading* (PF-66) was built by the Leathem D. Smith Shipbuilding Company in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin and partially fitted out in Chicago with the remainder of work completed in New Orleans. The ship was sponsored by Mrs. John C. Butterweck, who named it after the city of Reading, Pennsylvania, a city involved in manufacturing vital war materials. The ship was launched on 28 August 1943 with an address from Mrs. Butterweck: "I christen thee *U.S.S. Reading*, and I wish God speed to you, your crew, and to the men who will follow." The ship served as a convoy escort between U.S., European and North African ports until May 1945, when it was converted to a weather ship in the North Atlantic. Postwar: the ship was sold to Argentina in 1947 and renamed the ARA *Heroína*. It was scrapped in 1966.

Sources:

Ancestry, Library Edition. Accessed 4 August, 2017.

Items in collection.

Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships. Vol. 6. 46.

Priolo, Gary P., and Joe Radigan. "Reading (PF 66) ." NavSource Online: Frigate Photo Archive. < <http://www.navsource.org/archives/12/08066.htm>.> Accessed 4 August 2017.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains papers and photographs collected by Edward F. Dirks from his college days at DePauw University, and his service in the United States Coast Guard and aboard the *U.S.S. Reading* during WWII.

Arranged in chronological order, the papers consist of his Bachelor of Arts degree from DePauw, his draft notice, various papers, orders, commissions and appointments that he received during his service in the Coast Guard. There are also some military papers and applications from after the war.

The formal photographs feature officers and crew of the *U.S.S. Reading* and snapshots of Dirks with his wife, and with crew members aboard ship.

Two photographs of note: one shows Dirks marching with the color guard in the Memorial Day parade in Washington D.C. in 1942, and Dirks and his wife Jane and their oldest daughter at a Christmas party in Hollywood, Florida in 1943. They are there with other *U.S.S. Reading* officers and family members.

Dirks also had a photograph album with snapshots of him and the crew aboard the *U.S.S. Reading*. For conservation reasons the photographs were removed from the album and are stored in folders. The snapshots were in no particular order and are now arranged by subject. Dirks wrote captions on the verso of some snapshots. The processor has also written comments on the verso of some snapshots in pencil and enclosed them in square brackets.

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Edward F. Dirks anecdotes on his life and service during WWII, written by his family

DePauw University Phi Gamma Delta Fraternity, ca. 1940

DePauw University Bachelor of Arts degree, 1940

Draft Notice, August 1941

Letter from Dirks to Dr. John Ferguson, minister at the Irvington Presbyterian Church, 15 May 1942

Application and transfer to Coast Guard Reserve Training Course, 27 April 1943

United States Coast Guard commission, 19 August 1943

United States Coast Guard Academy appointment as ensign, 1 September 1943

Officers and Crew of *U.S.S. Reading*, 1942, 1943
Memorial Day Parade, Washington, D.C. 1942
Christmas party Florida 1943 with crew and families

Album Snapshots: Edward F. Dirks with his wife Jane, Bill and Ellen Dunning during the war, with his father and daughters Sue and Betsy probably after the war

Album Snapshots: *U.S.S. Reading* crew relaxing on deck, with dog mascot "Soogie," recreation, church service, and in crew's quarters

Album Snapshots: Gun crew and training sessions on deck

Album Snapshots: Officers and crew on deck, inspections, on lookout, in officer's quarters

Album Snapshots: Convoy and other ships at sea

Album Snapshots: Sharks, dolphins and fishing at sea

CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 1

Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 1

OVA Graphics:
Folder 1

Box 1, Folder 2

Box 1, Folder 3

Box 1, Folder 4

OVA Graphics:
Folder 1

OVA Graphics:
Folder 1

Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 2

Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 3

Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 4

Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 5

Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 6

Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 7

Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 8

Navy Department letter to Mrs. Jane Dirks concerning family allowance, 30 November 1943	Box 1, Folder 5
Clothing Issue Slip, Orders, Change of Duty, Vouchers, Release from Service, 1943–1945	Box 1, Folder 6
Life insurance and income tax information for servicemen	Box 1, Folder 7
"The United States Patrol Frigate / <i>U.S.S. Reading</i> / Commissioning" [program, 1943]	Box 1, Folder 8
"Thanksgiving Day Farewell Party" 22 Nov. 1945 [menu]	
"Officers' Wine Mess ... Iceland" [card]	
<i>Double Trouble</i> Vol. II No. 2, 28 Oct. 1945	Box 1, Folder 9
<i>Double Trouble</i> Vol. II No. 3, 11 Nov. 1945	
[two issues of satiric ship board newsletter]	
Appointment as Lieutenant and Oath of Office, Release from active duty, 1945	Box 1, Folder 10
Authorization to wear "American Campaign Ribbon" and "WWII Victory Medal" 27 November 1945	
Certificate of Satisfactory Service, 17 January 1946	OVA Graphics: Folder 1
State of Indiana WWII Bonus Fund, 1952	Box 1, Folder 11
United States Coast Guard Reserve, reappointment paperwork, 1953	Box 1, Folder 12
Artifacts: 2 dog tags; American Campaign Ribbon WWII Victory Medal [ribbon]; "United States Coast Guard 1790" patch	Box 1, Folder 13