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:


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 Leatham 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 Heroina. It was scrapped in 1966.

Sources:
Items in collection.
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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<td>DePauw University Phi Gamma Delta Fraternity, ca. 1940</td>
<td>Photographs: Box 1, Folder 1</td>
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<td>DePauw University Bachelor of Arts degree, 1940</td>
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<td>Draft Notice, August 1941</td>
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<td>Letter from Dirks to Dr. John Ferguson, minister at the Irvington Presbyterian Church, 15 May 1942</td>
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<td>United States Coast Guard commission, 19 August 1943</td>
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<td>United States Coast Guard Academy appointment as ensign, 1 September 1943</td>
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<td>Officers and Crew of <em>U.S.S. Reading</em>, 1942, 1943</td>
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<td>Memorial Day Parade, Washington, D.C. 1942</td>
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<td>Christmas party Florida 1943 with crew and families</td>
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<td><strong>Album Snapshots:</strong> 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</td>
<td>Photographs: Box 1, Folder 3</td>
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<td><strong>Album Snapshots:</strong> <em>U.S.S. Reading</em> crew relaxing on deck, with dog mascot &quot;Soogie,&quot; recreation, church service, and in crew's quarters</td>
<td>Photographs: Box 1, Folder 4</td>
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<td><strong>Album Snapshots:</strong> Gun crew and training sessions on deck</td>
<td>Photographs: Box 1, Folder 5</td>
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<td><strong>Album Snapshots:</strong> Officers and crew on deck, inspections, on lookout, in officer's quarters</td>
<td>Photographs: Box 1, Folder 6</td>
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**Album Snapshots:** Convoy and other ships at sea  
Photographs:  
Box 1, Folder 7

**Album Snapshots:** Sharks, dolphins and fishing at sea  
Photographs:  
Box 1, Folder 8

Navy Department letter to Mrs. Jane Dirks concerning family allowance, 30 November 1943  
Box 1, Folder 5

Box 1, Folder 6

Life insurance and income tax information for servicemen  
Box 1, Folder 7

"The United States Patrol Frigate / U.S.S. Reading / Commissioning" [program, 1943]  
"Thanksgiving Day Farewell Party" 22 Nov. 1945 [menu]  
"Officers' Wine Mess ... Iceland" [card]

*Double Trouble* Vol. II No. 2, 28 Oct. 1945  
*Double Trouble* 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  
Authorization to wear "American Campaign Ribbon" and "WWII Victory Medal" 27 November 1945

American Campaign Ribbon  
WWII Victory Medal [ribbon]

"United States Coast Guard 1790" [patch]

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