Jack Burgeman Collection

Creator: Jack Burgeman  
Dates: 1941-2005  
Quantity: 2.5 linear feet  
Acquisition: Donated by Jack Burgeman, May 25, 2007  
Identification: PMML ID# 32605, OCLC# 163572088, Call# PAPERS 00004  
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Biographical Note

Jack Burgeman was born May 28, 1923 in Chicago, IL. He began his military service with the US Navy February 22, 1943 at Great Lakes, IL. After aviation radio school training, he was assigned to the USS Alabama as a PN3, where he worked primarily as fire control in the main 16" guns. The Alabama saw action throughout the Pacific, supporting operations in the Marshall Islands, Tarawa, Saipan, and the Marianas Turkey Shoot. At the time of Japanese surrender, the Alabama was anchored less than 100 miles off Tokyo Bay.

Burgeman was discharged from the Navy in January 1946. He also served during the Korean War aboard the USS Ruchmakin, before leaving the service in 1952 and returning to Chicago.
### Chronology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 22, 1943</td>
<td>Arrived at Great Lakes Naval Training Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2, 1943</td>
<td>Assigned to the <em>USS Alabama</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>November 22, 1943</td>
<td>Experiences first attack from Japanese fighters</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 12, 1944</td>
<td><em>Alabama</em> in port at Honolulu for repairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 25, 1944</td>
<td><em>Alabama</em> joins a carrier group</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 1, 1944</td>
<td><em>Alabama</em> shells Roi-Namar in the Marshall Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 22, 1944</td>
<td>Friendly fire accident kills five sailors on the <em>Alabama</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 19, 1944</td>
<td>Marianas Turkey Shoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June-July 1944</td>
<td>Supports the invasion of Saipan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 12-15, 1944</td>
<td>Heavy shelling of Formosa (Taiwan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 25-27, 1944</td>
<td>Heavy action in the Gulf of Leyte (Philippines) in support of MacArthur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 18, 1944</td>
<td>Survives &quot;Halsey's Typhoon&quot; in the Philippine Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 14, 1945</td>
<td>Supports carrier groups bombarding Hokkaido, Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2, 1945</td>
<td><em>Alabama</em> anchored 31 miles off coast for Japanese surrender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 31, 1945</td>
<td>Arrives at Long Beach, CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1946</td>
<td>Discharged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Significant Duty Stations

- Great Lakes Naval Training Center, Chicago, IL
- Naval Air Technical Training Center, Memphis, TN
- *USS Alabama* (BB-60)
- *USS Ruchamkin* (APD-89)
- Norfolk, VA

### Significant Awards

- World War II Victory Medal
- American Area Campaign Medal
- Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal with 10 stars
- Philippine Liberation Ribbon with 2 stars

### Scope and Content of the Collection

This collection contains several types of items relating to Jack Burgeman's service aboard the *USS Alabama* during World War II. A twenty page transcript of Mr. Burgeman's journal provides a comprehensive chronology of his service. The journal also relates Mr. Burgeman's experiences and thoughts relating to several naval
engagements throughout the Pacific, as well as thoughts on the wartime experience in general. Significant events referenced in the journal include the invasion of Saipan, a friendly-fire accident aboard the ship, "Halsey's Typhoon," and the Mariana's Turkey Shoot.

The collection also contains three wartime letters written to Mr. Burgeman's brother Clarence, who was stationed at the Army's Fort Lowry in Denver. The first letter written at sea August 29, 1945 gives a detailed account of the Alabama's actions that summer, as well as reminiscences of some of the more notable experiences aboard the ship, including an arrival of Japanese POWs, burials at sea, and the Mariana's Turkey Shoot.

The second letter was written September 6, 1945 from the given location "Tokyo Bay," as the Alabama was anchored approximately 65 miles off the Japan Coast. This letter tells Clarence of the crew's impressions of the Japanese surrender, as well as descriptions of the return of a landing force and Admiral Richard E. Byrd's time aboard the ship as an observer. Accompanying this letter in the collection is its original postmarked envelope. On the envelope is a first day cover commemorating V-J Day aboard the Alabama. A hand-drawn print of the ship framed by the words "V-J Off Tokyo Japan" in Japanese-style script is to the left the address block. PML tests have shown that this is not a pencil sketch.

The third letter is dated October 9, 1945, "on our way home." Mr. Burgeman describes the victory armada on its way from Honolulu to San Francisco. He also relates the Missing-in-Action status of a long-time friend. An original post-marked envelope also accompanies this letter.

These letters share a folder with four poems written by Mr. Burgeman aboard the Alabama in January 1946, as he awaited discharge. The poems express Mr. Burgeman's thoughts and emotions about the coming of peace; one was written for a woman.

Folder Four holds two memoranda from the Alabama. The first memo provides an official report on a friendly-fire incident on-board that killed five sailors, on February 22, 1944. The second memo, from July 31, 1945, details the Navy's censorship policy regarding personal correspondence.

Several items in the collection give the history and characteristics of the Alabama, including historical information on commanding officers. Also included are several original and photocopied newsletters of Alabama veterans groups, specifically those of the FM (Fire Management) division and the USS Alabama Crewman's Association. These items, ranging from 1987-2005, provide information on reunions and updates on the whereabouts and fates of fellow crewmen.
One significant textual item donated with the collection has been separated from the Archives and is housed in the PMML Rare Book Collection. This is Admiral William B. Goggins' personal copy of the War Diary USS Alabama 1942-1944.

**Arrangement**

The collection is arranged in six folders according to type of document. The collection was accessioned unarranged, and PMML staff arranged and housed the items according to archival practices. Due to its unique informational quality, Mr. Burgeman's journal is kept in a separate folder.

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**Related Collections**

Robert Luchs Collection  
Capt. Jack D. Gordon Collection

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**Separations**

The Pritzker Military Museum & Library also holds in its collection a CD-ROM transcription of Mr. Burgeman's interview for the Library of Congress' Veteran's History Project (VHP). For more information about the VHP, go to [http://www.loc.gov/vets/](http://www.loc.gov/vets/).

Additionally, the collection includes several books held in the Pritzker Military Museum & Library book collection.

These include:

**Title:** Decision at Nagasaki: the Mission That Almost Failed  
**Author:** Olivi, Frank  
**Call Number:** D767.25 .H6 O55 1999

**Title:** On Deck USS Alabama  
**Author:** Adcock, Al  
**Call Number:** VA65 .A48 A33 1999
Title: War Diary USS Alabama 1942-1944 (Capt. WB Goggins’ personal copy)
Call Number: V27 .B87 1945

Title: World War II Letters (includes a letter from Mr. Burgeman)
Author: Adler, Bill
Call Number: D811 .A2 W623 2002

Key Subjects

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the Library’s online catalog. Researchers interested in materials about related topics, persons, or places should search the catalog using these subject headings.

Subjects

Korea--History--War and Intervention, 1950-1953
Philippine Sea, Battle of the, 1944 (June 19-21)
United States Navy--History--Korean War
United States Navy--History--World War II
USS Alabama (Battleship: BB 60)
USS Ruchamkin (APD-89)
Veterans--United States--correspondence
Veterans--United States--World War II
World War II, 1939-1945--personal narratives

Container List

Folder One  Newspaper and Magazine Clippings

"'To Alabama, Very Well Done,'" Naval History (June 2004)
Photograph of Jack Burgeman, Illinois AMVETS (December 2000)
"Museum Report," Naval History (n.d.)
"Amazing Alabama," Chicago Sun Times (July 16, 1995)
"Alabama Comes Home," The World War II Times (January 1988),
   full original issue
"Alabama Comes Home," The World War II Times (January 1988),
   photocopy for reference
"Marines Invade Japan," The World War II Times (December-January 1993), photocopy of cover story
Folder Two  Letters and Other Writing, 1945-46

Copy of Mr. Burgeman's US Navy Memorial Log Page, including a 1951 photograph and a list of his significant duty stations and awards
Photocopy of letter from Jack Burgeman to Clarence Burgeman, August 29, 1945
Handwritten letter from Jack Burgeman to Clarence Burgeman, September 6, 1945 (Tokyo Bay), with postmarked commemorative envelope
Handwritten letter from Jack Burgeman to Clarence Burgeman, October 12, 1945 ("on way home"), with postmarked envelope
Poem: "This Christmas of Peace," January 1946
Poem: "This Christmas," January 1946
Poem: "Symphony," January 1946
Poem: "The New Year With," January 1946

Folder Three  Wartime Journal, 1943-46

Photocopy of Jack Burgeman's journal kept aboard the USS Alabama, February 22, 1943-January 1946

Folder Four  USS Alabama Memoranda, 1944-45

"From Commanding Officer, To Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet," February 24, 1944
"Censorship Memoranda No. 1-45," July 31, 1945

Folder Five  USS Alabama Historical Information and Memorabilia

War Diary, USS Alabama, 1942-1947 (photocopy of Mr. Burgeman's personal edition)
Chronology of USS Alabama actions (source unknown)
USS Alabama dimensions (source unknown)
Detailed history of the USS Alabama (source unknown)
Battle history and credits of the USS Alabama (source unknown)
"Interview with Veterans" series on public TV in Evanston CD Jack Burgeman Interview

Folder Six  Veteran's Activities

Photograph of USS Alabama reunion (Jack Burgeman, third from right), 1991.
1991 Postmarked covers with Alabama state stamp, April 4, 2002
FM Newsletter, May 29, 1987
FM Newsletter, November 8, 1988
FM Newsletter, n.d.
FM Newsletter, July 27, 2003
FM Newsletter, June 4, 2005
Scuttlebutt, USS Alabama Crewman's Association (vol. 15, no. 2), April 1991
Scuttlebutt (vol. 22, no. 2), May 1998 Scuttlebutt (vol. 25, no. 4), November 2001