The Descriptive Finding Guide for the Eugene P. Rankin Personal Papers
SDASM.SC.10116

Alan Renga
San Diego Air and Space Museum Library and Archives
11/10/2014
2001 Pan American Plaza, Balboa Park
San Diego 92101
URL: http://www.sandiegoairandspace.org/
Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: San Diego Air and Space Museum Library and Archives
Title: Capt. Eugene P. Rankin Personal Papers
creator: Rankin, Eugene P.
Identifier/Call Number: SDASM.SC.10116
Physical Description: 0.36 Cubic FeetThree (3) boxes, 12"x5"x10.5"
Date (inclusive): 1944-1997
Date (bulk): bulk
Abstract: Eugene P. Rankin was born in 1916. He graduated from the Naval Academy at Pensacola, Florida, in 1941. In 1943, he served in World War 2 in the Pacific Theater. There he was the commanding officer in a “Black Cat Squadron”, conducting nighttime attack missions consolidated PBY Catalina patrol bombers. Afterwards, Rankin became a Captain of the USS Kearsarge (CV-33). The Kearsarge was tasked with assisting Project Mercury, in that it would have to recover astronauts who splashed down in the ocean after orbiting the Earth.

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Immediate Source of Acquisition
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Preferred Citation
[Item], [Filing Unit], [Series Title], [Subgroups], [Record Group Title and Number], [Repository “San Diego Air & Space Museum Library & Archives”]

Biographical / Historical
Eugene P. Rankin was born in 1916. He graduated from the Naval Academy at Pensacola, Florida, in 1941. In 1943, he served in World War 2 in the Pacific Theater. There he was the commanding officer in a “Black Cat Squadron”, conducting nighttime attack missions consolidated PBY Catalina patrol bombers. After the war he was one of the crew members of the “Truculent Turtle”, a Lockheed P2V-1 Neptune. This was the first plane to fly across the Pacific Ocean without refueling. It was the longest un-refueled flight made to that point – 4000 miles (6,400 km) and the “Turtle” held this world record for 16 years.

Afterwards, Rankin became a Captain of the USS Kearsarge (CV-33). The Kearsarge was tasked with assisting Project Mercury, in that it would have to recover astronauts who splashed down in the ocean after orbiting the Earth. The Kearsarge recovered Captain Wally M. Schirra, Jr., USN, (who signed photographs in collection) and later Colonel Gordon Cooper, USAF. In 1967, Rankin retired from the Navy. He passed away on August 27, 2000.

Scope and Contents
Three (3) boxes, 12"x5"x10.5". The collection contains many photographs, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, and dozens of once confidential documents, all of which are related to World War II, the Turtle, Project Mercury, and the USS Kearsarge. This spans a total of 38 folders. Items in folders are numbered by Box.

Related Materials
All photographs have been digitized but not necessarily uploaded to Flickr. There is one picture of the Truculent Turtle on Flickr and no pictures on Flickr that have Rankin in them as of June 26, 2014. However, there is plenty on Project Mercury, https://www.flickr.com/search/?w=49487266@N07&q=Project%20Mercury
https://www.flickr.com/search/?user_id=49487266%40N07&sort=relevance&text=Kearsarge
https://www.flickr.com/search/?user_id=49487266%40N07&sort=relevance&text=P2V
https://www.flickr.com/photos/sdasmarchives/8596483510/in/photolist-e6De3W-n13Gt7-8nRfQf
Related Research Institutions: Patrol Squadron Two Association Website Manager: Doug Donohue Truculent Turtle Preservation http://www.patron2.com/ 2894 Gardnerville NV 89410
Box 01

Physical Description: World War Two and Aircraft

Folder 01 - Impact Magazines

Physical Description: Folder contains 3 magazines detailing allied air forces in World War II. 1. Impact “US Tactical Air Power in Europe”, magazine detailing allied air superiority in the European Theater of World War II. 2. Impact “Air Victory over Japan,” magazine detailing the various bombs used and dropped on Japan in World War II. This was the final issue of Impact magazine. 3. Impact “Strategic Air Victory in Europe,” magazine focused on the tactics of bombing missions in the European Theater of World War II.

Folder 02 - Weekly Intelligence


Folder 03 - Know your Enemy

Folder 04 - Turtle Magazine Snippets

Folder 05 - Turtle Preliminary Reports
Physical Description: 15. Detailed plan and graph of ranging fuel usage distance of travel and engineering calculations. 16. Operation Turtle preliminary report spanning over 20 pages.

Folder 06 - Turtle Newspapers
Physical Description: Stored newspapers to prevent acidification of other documents. 17. Intact newspaper snippets from 1946 detailing the Truculent Turtle. 18. Newspaper fragment from 1997 about Rankin and the Turtle. 19. Several photocopied newspapers.

Folder 07 - Turtle and Aviation Magazines

Folder 08 - Truculent Turtle Photographs
Physical Description: 2 original black and white photographs related to the Truculent Turtle. 23. Picture of the 4 crew members. 24. Photograph of the turtle in flight.

Folder 09 - Miscellaneous

Folder 10 - Neptune Crew P-2v Neptune Record Flight Biographies and general documents
Physical Description: 27. Truculent Turtle flight log containing information on refueling and other important activities related to the successful flight. 28. Navy Aeronautic Association letters entailing discussion about pilot fatigue, timings and general information about the flight. 29. 2 Letters between “Gene” “Tom” and “Jed”. How they fit into the story is unknown. 30. Several naval messages related to flying on pink paper. 31. Naval communication once classified documents about the Truculent Turtle. 32. Navy Immediate Release document planning the events of the Turtle. 33. Map of the proposed path that the Turtle would take. 34. Press release document making the motives of the Turtle clear. 35. Printed draft of a news bureau 25 years after the flight about the Turtles’ flight. 36. Navy Department office of the chief of naval operations memorandum about long range flight and how it is related to the Truculent Turtle. 37. Synopsis of events in WWII, the Turtle and afterwards for Captain Thomas D. Davies. 7 April, 1964.

Box 02
Physical Description: Project Mercury and Project Gemini. A box containing all related articles to project Mercury and Project Gemini but not inclusive to the USS Kearsarge. Includes many pictures related to project Mercury, many reports, magazines and newspapers.
Folder 11 - Newspapers #1 - 1960+.

Folder 12 - Newspapers #2. - 1963.
Folder 13 - CTF 2. - 1962.
Physical Description: 10. CTF 140 Project Mercury Recovery Training Pamphlet #2, Partial reproduction.

Folder 14 - CTF 3. - 1962.
Physical Description: 11. CTF 140 Project Mercury Recovery Training Pamphlet #3, Partial Reproduction.

Physical Description: 12. CTF 140 Project Mercury Recovery Training Pamphlet #4.


Folder 18 - NASA General Information for Mercury 8 Recovery report.
Folder 19 - United States Navy “Report of Mercury 8 Recovery” Report
Folder 20 - NASA Files “General Information for Mercury Recovery Forces”
Folder 21 - Miscellaneous

Folder 22 - Magazines

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Binder 01 - Pictures
Physical Description: 40. 39 Official NASA Photographs of recovery of Wally Schirra from Sigma 7 capsule. 1 Signed by Wally Schirra. 41. 4 Official NASA Pictures of Schirra greeting people after his successful mission. 42. 4 Official NASA Pictures of Sigma 7 capsule being moved. 43. 11 Official NASA Photographs of Wally Schirra doing various activities including getting X-rayed, talking to people and sitting at a table. 44. 6 Photographs of various navy aircraft carriers and battleships.

Box 03
Physical Description: USS Kearsarge (CV-33) related documents.

Folder 23 - USS Kearsarge “Welcome Aboard” Packets, 1963
Physical Description: 1. Blue covered welcome aboard packet with a foreword by Eugene Rankin. 2. 3 Standard Welcome Aboard packets with more pictures than the previous. 3. 2 Pink printed Kearsarge welcome aboard newspaper like welcoming paper. 4. “Useful information for shipboard personal and their dependents” 7 Pages. February 9, 1963.


Physical Description: 8. 36 intact newspaper clippings related to the Kearsarge Orion collision. 9. Christmas card inside intact original envelope to Captain Rankin. December 7, 1962. 10. Air mail from Captain Walter Louis Curtis of the USS Kitty Hawk to Captain Rankin of the Kearsarge. December 14, 1962. 11. 3 personal correspondents to “Gene” December 12, 1962, 7 December, Unknown date.

Folder 26 - CO’s Messages / Kearsarge Mercury 9 Recovery 1 of 4.
Physical Description: 16. Declassified Operation Order 301-63 March 9. Provides instructions and objectives for astronaut recovery. Also includes other related activities. Hand written date of “7-14 on front cover. Estimated 50 pages in length.

Folder 31 - USS Kearsarge Messages T300-To Mission KN Accomplished 1963.
Physical Description: 17. Over 70 pages of naval communications entailing the successful completion of the Kearsarge’s role in project mercury. At one point, was confidential. March 9, 1963.

Physical Description: 18. Estimated 30 page report signed by Rankin entailing the recovery of Mercury 8 and the successful conclusion of said project. The report contains detailed maps and images related to project mercury.

Folder 33 - USS Kearsarge/ Mercury 9 Miscellaneous 1. 1963.
Folder 35 - USS Kearsarge / Mercury 9 Miscellaneous 3. 1963


Physical Description: 26. Over 200 original naval messages from the Kearsarge to the press. All of which are related to the Kearsarge in some way. 1962. 27. 4 Photocopies of some of the messages from item 26. Importance suspected on content of message. October 3, 1962. 28. 8 cards with printed speeches directed at “Madam Chairman” and “M Chairman” The speech entails a formal introduction and a dramatic anecdote about the role of the Kearsarge in the Mercury project. 29. 48 teletext messages detailing the recovery of the astronauts in the Mercury project, the history of the Kearsarge and various other related pieces of information.

Folder 38 - USS Kearsarge Mercury 9 Emergency SAR procedures.
Physical Description: 30. Estimated 20 pages of emergency procedures, diagrams, tables, instructions, and notices. Many directed to or associated with Rankin and or the Kearsarge.