Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: Sacramento Public Library, Sacramento Room
Title: Robert L. Lavelle Collection
Identifier/Call Number: MC 92
Physical Description: .1 Linear Feet1 folder and one oversize image within an archival folder
Date (inclusive): 1938-2019
Abstract: Included are photographs, service records and ephemera covering the boyhood, military, and postwar life of Sacramento native Robert L. Lavelle.
Biographical / Historical
Robert "Bob" L. Lavelle was born to Leo Keating Lavelle and Edale Catherine O'Brien Lavelle on May 18, 1926, at Sacramento's Mater Misericordiae Hospital. He was named Robert Lee, but when able, he would change the "Lee" to Leo after his father. Lavalle spent his earliest years at his paternal grandparent' house at 2620 Q Street, then moving at age twelve to a new home at 2711 Harkness Avenue in old Land Park where he attended Fremont Elementary and McClatchy High School, graduating from the latter in 1944. On May 17, 1944, he joined the Navy serving 18 months in the Pacific at the end of World War II. He attended Radar School in San Diego and was a Seaman First Class working in communications. He was stationed aboard the USS Frazier, which received 12 battle stars for service in the Pacific War.
After World War II, Lavelle attended Sacramento City College and graduated from UC Berkeley in 1949 with a BA in advertising. As an intern, he developed an advertising campaign for Roos Brothers and went on to work at a variety of jobs in San Francisco before returning to Sacramento. He found his true calling as a social worker, first for Yolo County, and then for Sacramento County. In his last twelve years of employment, he worked as a jail social worker at the Rio Cosumnes Correction Center. Upon retirement in 1991, he volunteered for Loaves and Fishes' Jail Visitation Program, the STEPS Program (serving the homeless at St. Francis Church), Crocker Art Museum Art Service Group, as a member of the St. Francis Church Parish Council, and had his own business repairing and selling ceramics.
He met and married his wife, Corry Kwint, in 1969, enjoying a thirty-eight-year union. She preceded him in death. Lavalle died on August 16, 2019, and is buried at St. Mary's Cemetery, Sacramento. He is survived by one son, Robert Nicholas Lavelle.
Scope and Contents
The collection includes a 1946 congratulatory discharge letter to Lavelle from Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal (and signed by Forrestal). Most notably, U.S. Navy discharge papers, ephemera from the Alhambra Theatre, the Zombie Village in Oakland, California, and a 1938 photograph of Lavelle as a 6th grader at Fremont School are included. An oversize unit photograph from boot camp in San Diego is enclosed in a separate folder in close proximity to the holding box.
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Robert L. Lavelle Collection, MC 92, Sacramento Room, Sacramento Public Library, Sacramento, California.