Guide to the Grattan H. McCafferty Papers 1942/1945

Special Collections & University Archives

Overview of the Collection
Collection Title: Grattan H. McCafferty Papers
Dates: 1942-1945
Identification: MS-0535
Creator: McCafferty, Grattan H.
Physical Description: 0.84 linear ft
Repository: Special Collections & University Archives
5500 Campanile Dr. MC 8050
San Diego, CA, 92182-8050
URL: http://library.sdsu.edu/scua
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Biographical Information:
Col. Grattan H. McCafferty served in the U.S. Army from 1917 to 1946. He was in command of a regiment of Filipino soldiers during the Battle of Bataan in World War II. On April 8, 1942, General Edward P. King ordered the surrender of the allied forces in the Bataan. The combined American and Filipino forces, including McCafferty, were taken prisoner by the Japanese Army and forced on the Bataan Death March, a 60-plus mile march to the POW camp at Camp O’Donnell. The prisoners suffered many abuses at the hands of the Japanese along the way. Those who lagged behind or could not complete the march were beaten, shot, stabbed and beheaded. Around 500 Americans and many more Filipino soldiers are estimated to have died during the march, with more dying at Camp O’Donnell and other camps. For the remainder of the war McCafferty was held prisoner in camps and internment areas in the Philippines, Taiwan, Japan, Korea and Manchuria. The major camps where McCafferty was imprisoned were Camp O’Donnell and Tarlac prison camp in the Philippines; Karenko, Taiwan; and Mukden, Manchuria. He was repatriated after the Japanese surrender in 1945 and died in November, 1954 at the age of 65.

Access Terms
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Topical Term:
Bataan Death March, Philippines, 1942
Prisoners of war
World War, 1939-1945--Sources

Accruals:
2015-026

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Related Materials:
World War II San Diego State College Servicemen's Correspondence
Herman F. Fritzenkotter Papers
Robert M. Briggs Papers

Scope and Contents
McCafferty kept a diary in which he made near-daily entries from April 8, 1942, the day before the surrender of Bataan, until the Japanese surrender in 1945 and the liberation of prisoners of war. The collection includes 15 notebooks and notepads which document McCafferty’s life in Japanese prison camps. McCafferty wrote in a sloppy and cramped hand in order to make the diary indecipherable to the Japanese authorities, and also due to the scarcity of writing supplies (he often fits two lines of script into one ruled line on the page). Accompanying the handwritten diaries is a typescript which McCafferty later made, consisting of 17 numbered and dated sections and one undated section, being a reflection on his Japanese captors and a list of their names and/or nicknames and personality traits. Most of the sections include an index of events. Also included in the collection is a photograph of McCafferty taken when he was a captain.

In the diary McCafferty describes his experience on the Bataan Death March, as a passenger aboard various transport ships bound for prisoner of war camps, and daily life in the camps. McCafferty records the many abuses prisoners were subjected to. Prisoners who failed to bow or show proper respect to their captors received beatings, or “boppings” in McCafferty’s words. McCafferty describes instances of Japanese sentries hiding in bushes to catch prisoners unawares, then beating them for failing to bow. Occasionally the prisoners were assigned essays on topics chosen by their captors, such as “who started the war?” and “the treatment of Japanese internees in the U.S.” McCafferty writes that shortened rations and punishment would follow if the essays displeased the Japanese authorities. Food, or lack thereof, is a constant theme in the diary. Sometimes McCafferty’s entry is little more than a description of the food ration that day. He records the men’s complaints over the size and quality of rations and fairness of food distribution, as well as describing the men’s efforts to supplement their diet, for instance, by foraging for snails. McCafferty also records the cramped and unsanitary conditions aboard Japanese transport ships, in which hundreds of men were squeezed into rat-infested cargo holds and forbidden from opening the portholes to get fresh air.

Box 1, Folder 1  Diary, April 8-May 10, 1942
Box 1, Folder 2  Diary, August 16-November 4, 1942
Box 1, Folder 3  Diary, November 5-December 10, 1942
Box 1, Folder 4  Diary, December 11, 1942-January 21, 1943
Box 1, Folder 5  Diary, January 22-March 2, 1943
Box 1, Folder 6  Diary, March 3-April 27, 1943
Box 1, Folder 7  Diary, April 28-June 20, 1943
Box 1, Folder 8  Diary, June 21-October 3, 1943
Box 1, Folder 9  Diary, October 4, 1943-March 3, 1944
Box 1, Folder 10 Diary, March 4-June 16, 1944
Box 1, Folder 11 Diary, June 17-July 8, 1944
Box 1, Folder 12 Diary, July 9-November 10, 1944
Box 1, Folder 13 Diary, November 10, 1944-April 26, 1945
Box 1, Folder 14 Diary, April 27-September 2, 1945
Box 1, Folder 15 Diary, undated
Box 2, Folder 1 [Reflections on Japanese captors]
Box 2, Folder 2 Typescript section 1, April 8-May 9, 1942
Box 2, Folder 3 Typescript section 2, May 11-August 15, 1942
Box 2, Folder 4 Typescript section 3, August 16-September 7, 1942
Box 2, Folder 5 Typescript section 4, September 8-November 4, 1942
Box 2, Folder 6 Typescript section 5, November 5-December 10, 1942
Box 2, Folder 7 Typescript section 6, December 11, 1942-January 21, 1943
Box 2, Folder 8 Typescript section 7, January 22-March 2, 1943
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Box 2, Folder 13 Typescript section 12, March 4-June 16, 1943
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<td>Photograph of Grattan H. McCafferty</td>
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