

JAMES PRESTON KING LETTERS

OVERVIEW OF THE RECORDS

- Repository:** Crandall Public Library – The Folklife Center
Glens Falls, NY.
- Creator:** James Preston King (1929 – 2010)
- Title:** James Preston King Letters (e-title: King, James Preston, Letters)
- Dates:** 1964 – 1965, 1970 -- 1972
- Abstract:** Letters from Major (later Lt. Col.) James P. King to his mother, Mrs. Carroll P. King in Putnam Station, NY.
- Quantity:** .5 cubic feet (1 document box)
- Identification:** Archives and Manuscripts: Personal and Family Collections

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

“Judge King was born in Ticonderoga on July 14, 1929 the son of the late Preston and Ethel (Shear) King. He graduated from Westminster College and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps, serving with the 3rd Marine Division in the Far East and becoming company executive officer. After release from active duty, he entered Albany Law School and graduated in 1959. The next year he returned to the Marine Corps as captain serving in Okinawa and Vietnam. In 1967, he was assigned senior marine instructor at the Naval Justice School in Newport, R.I. After he returned to Vietnam before being assigned Judge Advocate to the Fleet Marine Force, after which he was selected to attend George Washington University, where he received an LLM in criminal law and psychiatry. In 1978, he was promoted to brigadier general and became the corps' highest ranking JAG officer as the director of the Judge Advocate Division and as staff judge advocate for two Commandants of the Corps. His decorations include the Bronze Star Medal with Combat V, and the Combat Action Ribbon as well as various citations and service medals.” [from his obituary in the *Albany Times-Union*] After his retirement from the Marine Corps, he had a distinguished career as a judge and a law professor. He died June 11, 2010. He was predeceased by his parents and his first wife, Jane Campbell King. He was survived by his second wife, Anne Brewster King, three sons, two step-daughters, nine grandchildren and his two sisters.

SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE RECORDS

This collection consists of letters written by James Preston King, USMC, from various postings in the U.S. and overseas, to his mother, Ethel Shear King, in Putnam Station, Washington County, New York. The letters cover several date periods: 1964, 1965, and 1970 – 1971.

INDEX TERMS

- Topics:** USMC (United States Marine Corps)
JAG (Judge Advocate General)
Military law
War in Vietnam
- Places:** Da Nang, Vietnam
Putnam Station, Washington County, NY
San Francisco, CA
Honolulu, Hawaii
Johnstown, NY
Okinawa, Japan
- Important People:** Buchmann, Carl
King, James Preston
King, Carroll P. (Mrs.) (Ethel Shear King, wife of Carroll P.) (Mom)
King, Jane Campbell (first wife)
King, Anne Brewster (second wife)
- Form/Genre:** Letters

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- Preferred Citation:** James Preston King Letters
The Folklife Center at Crandall Public Library
Glens Falls, NY.
- Accession Information:** Received March 31, 2016. Donated by Maury Thompson who got them from Tim Reed.
- Processing Information:** Arranged and described by Erica Wolfe Burke 2016, with assistance from Rachel Wentworth.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE RECORDS

Series I: 1964, 23 June to 30 December; 26 letters and the July 2 edition of *Triad* 3rd Marine Division newsletter. Return address on all the letters is: Major J.P. King, c/o Division Legal Office, 3rd Mar. Div FMF, F.P.O. San Francisco, Calif., but have various postmark locations.

- A. 22 June, postmarked Honolulu: written enroute from NYC to Okinawa. Describes the trip.
- B. 26 June, pm New York: describes arrival in Okinawa
- C. 30 June NYC, from Okinawa
- D. *Triad* 2 July, with article about JPK at Civil Affairs Course
- E. July 6 NYC from Okinawa, family and friends news
- F. July 13 NYC from Okinawa, buying a car
- G. July 21 NYC from Okinawa, possible future plans
- H. July 27 NYC from Okinawa, rain
- I. Aug 3 NYC from Okinawa, work, movies, death of a friend in the States
- J. Aug 10 NYC from Okinawa, work, plans for future, dissatisfaction with Marine Corps
- K. Aug 18 NYC from Okinawa, typhoon, moving to different quarters, position at Univ. of Maryland, work, family
- L. Aug 25 NYC from Okinawa, family, work, celebration, gifts from client
- M. Sept 1 NYC from Okinawa, questions the war, legal matters, work, books, free time
- N. Sept 9 NYC from Okinawa, family news, getting his picture taken, weather, playing in a band
- O. Sept 16 NYC from Okinawa, shopping, work, plans for future, dissatisfaction with legal work
- P. Sept 23 NYC from Okinawa, typhoon, work, plans for future, books, family news
- Q. Sept 29 NYC from Okinawa, diet, work, politics, plans for future
- R. Oct 6 NYC from Okinawa, movies, work, books, weather
- S. Oct 13 NYC from Okinawa, weather, politics, comments on war, family news
- T. Oct 22 NYC from Okinawa, family, work, the Olympics, enclosed review in which his work is quoted and agreed with
- U. Oct 28 NYC from Okinawa, death of a friend, politics, work, plans for visit
- V. Nov 7 NYC from Okinawa, death of a friend, air field bombing, possible new position
- W. Nov 12 NYC from Okinawa, buying a tape recorder, the election
- X. Nov 18 NYC from Okinawa, teaching first class, Christmas plans, politics
- Y. Nov 27 NYC from Okinawa, work
- Z. Dec 5 NYC from Okinawa, work
- ZZ. Dec 9 NYC from Okinawa, plans for trip, work, teaching
- ZZZ. Dec 16 NYC from Okinawa, (no envelope) excitement over Hawaii trip
- ZZZZ. Dec 30 NYC from Okinawa, en route from Hawaii, details of the trip

Series II: 1965, 6 January to 26 June 20 letters from return address: Major J.P. King USMC, Div. Legal Office, 3rd Mar Div (Rein), F.P.O. San Francisco, Calif. And 5 from Maj. J.P. King. USMC, Hq Co. Hq Bn, Sub Unit #2, 3rd Mar Div (forward), F.P.O. San Francisco, 96601. 1 newspaper clipping from the Albany Times-Union, July 31, 1965 about Da Nang.

- A. Jan 6 NYC from Okinawa, work, the ethics of American presence in the East
- B. Jan 12 NYC from Okinawa, work, distaste for military justice cases, opinion on the election
- C. Jan 22 NYC from Okinawa, arrival of Carroll's phonograph, death of a family friend, plans for training in the Philippines
- D. Jan 29 NYC from Okinawa, the "Reich story," a policy about dependants not being overseas with the men, weather, work, reading
- E. Feb 3 NYC from Okinawa, work, the Reich story
- F. Feb 13 NYC from Okinawa, work, reason for lateness of letter
- G. Feb 19 NYC from Okinawa, work, death of friends, wedding and dinner-dance, Nat King Cole's death
- H. Feb 26 NYC from Okinawa, work
- I. Mar 6 NYC from Okinawa, work, death of a friend, speculation about orders, a documentary about Kennedy, politics
- J. Mar 10 NYC from Okinawa, the landing of the Marines in Viet Nam, possible placement in Da Nang, work
- K. Mar 20 NYC from Okinawa, orders for Beaufort
- L. Mar 29 NYC from Okinawa, the KKK, family, weather
- M. Apr 8 NYC from Okinawa, Aunt Margaret's hospitalization, Top Secret information
- N. Apr 12 NYC from Okinawa, Aunt Margaret's death, additional landings of Marines in Viet Nam, new stereo equipment
- O. Apr 21 NYC from Okinawa, work, friends
- P. Apr 29 NYC from Okinawa, friend, change of office, weather
- Q. May 5 NYC from Da Nang, transfer to Da Nang (more dangerous), seeing captured VC
- R. May 15 NYC from Da Nang, work
- S. Jun 2 NYC from Da Nang, briefing with the General, movement of the division, second letter in envelope, work, helicopter rides, buying a new car
- T. Jun 9 NYC from Da Nang, new car, going home, travelling for work
- U. Jun 13 NYC from Da Nang, work, weather
- V. Jun 19 NYC from Okinawa, bombing in Saigon, death of a friend, change of orders to Cherry Point, playing trombone with a group
- W. Jun 26 NYC from Okinawa, going home, work, weather, Cherry Point
- X. Loose sheet of legal paper saying Happy Birthday
- Y. Newspaper clipping from Times Union July 31, 1965

Series III: 1970: 15 letters without post marks so the year cannot be absolutely ascertained. On one envelope is the notation "Rec'd May 15,'70", so all letters with the same return address have been assumed to also be from 1970. Dates on these 15 letters appear to be March 4 to June 15. The return address (with some slight variations) is: Lt. Col. J.P. King, Hq Co Hq Bn OSJA, 1st Mar Div FMF, FPO San Francisco, Calif.

1 letter dated 5 August, ret. Add.: Lt Col JP King, Staff Judge Advocate, Headquarters Company, Fleet Marine Force Pacific, F.P.O. San Francisco, Calif., which describes King's arrival in Hawaii.

5 letters from Hawaii: Aug. 17 to Dec 21; the first 2 from Crown Waipahu Hotel, Waikele Rd., Waipaho, Hawaii, and the subsequent 3 from 1325 Molehu Dr., Honolulu, Hawaii, 96818.

- A. Mar 2 work, saving money
- B. Mar 19 trip to Udorn
- C. Mar 30 death of George Ward, new orders
- D. Apr 2 empty envelope
- E. Apr 8 enemy activity, possible promotion to position in Hawaii
- F. Apr 11 more about possible Hawaii position
- G. May 7 Nixon decision to send troops into Cambodia
- H. May 15 medical evacuation of General Wheeler (attached clipping), waiting to hear about Hawaii, trombone performance
- I. May 25 weather, work, coming home
- J. May 29 Hawaii plans, taking TAD for Hurt's case
- K. Jun 5 heat. work, plans for Hawaii
- L. Jun 8 plans for Hawaii, General Hurt's case
- M. Jun 15 work, going away party
- N. Jun 23 change of command ceremony of a friend, plans for Hawaii
- O. Aug 5 arrival in Hawaii, flights, housing, postcard of the plane used to fly to Hawaii
- P. Aug 17 plans to buy a home
- Q. Aug 29 plans for the house, new job
- R. Sep 14 settling into the new house
- S. Sep 23 Citation enclosed for the Bronze Star Medal, death of family friend
- T. Dec 21 work, friends in Hawaii

Series IV: 1971, January 26 to 23 November. All from the Molehu Dr. address. The letter postmarked March 29 bears the notation : "From Japan. Rec'd Mch.23,'71"

- A. Jan 12 NYC from Honolulu, Christmas, friends in Hawaii
- B. Jan 19 NYC from Honolulu, work, friends
- C. Jan 22 NYC from Honolulu, from Jane and Jim, thank you note for Christmas gifts
- D. Jan 28 NYC from Honolulu, work, change in policy for those who turn themselves in for hard drug use, plans to see the Globetrotters

Series V: 1972 7 Feb to 20 May, 3 letters, from the Mohelu Dr. address. Also the envelope (no contents) of a letter from King's son David to his grandmother. Also a paper dated 19 April 1972 about Law Day, May 1.

Currently there is a folder of letters of unidentified date. Further investigation may allow the content to indicate when they were written.

Also 4 folders which do not contain letters to King's mother.

Related Collections:

- Session Book of Presbyterian Church in Putnam, Washington, NY. (Folklife Center: Archives & Manuscripts: Churches).
- King Family Guest Book (Folklife Center: Archives & Manuscripts: Personal and Family Collections).