

Jon Robert Craig Papers (MC 352)

Biographical Note

Jon Robert Craig was born on September 7, 1916 in Columbus, Georgia and died there on March 4, 2010. During World War II he fought with the U.S. Army in the Pacific Theatre, including Guadalcanal, Bougainville, the Solomon Islands, Fiji, the Philippines, and other places. During his initial training and throughout the war he wrote and received copious letters as well as continuously photographing and sketching scenes of Army life and the life of civilians in the areas he served. After the war, he returned to Columbus and worked as an interior designer for local and regional businesses.

Scope and Content

The collection consists of Jon R. Craig's wartime correspondence, sketch books and loose sheets of sketches, war souvenirs (such as a Japanese flag from Guadalcanal), a sword, a shovel, a doll, Bibles, currency and coins, cameras, his typewriter, some 680 negatives of his war-time photography, books, pamphlets, and journals, as well as CDs and a flash drive containing scans of all of the sketches, one of scans of the photographs he made, and another of scans of both his "Censorship" letters and many of the letters he received, offering researchers that rare treat of being able to see both sides of a correspondence.

1940s 12 boxes (14 l.f.)

Permission to Publish

Permission to publish material from the Jon Robert Craig Papers must be obtained from the Columbus State University Archives at Columbus State University. Use of the following credit line for publication or exhibit is required:

Jon Robert Craig Papers (MC 352) Columbus State University Archives Columbus, Georgia

Provenance

This collection is a gift of Jon Robert Craig's daughters, Lucy Deborah Craig and Cynthia Craig Balsamo.

Box and Folder/Item List

Series 1 - Textual Materials

Box 1 - "Censorship" Letters

These letters are a rich source of information about Craig's experiences of a U.S. soldier in World War II from his enlistment through his training and deployment, his participation in combat in the South Pacific, especially on Guadalcanal, New Caledonia and the Solomon Islands, his demobilization at the end of the war, and a little of his return home to Columbus, Georgia. They also provide an insight into his bouts of homesickness and malaria, his engagement (eventually broken off), his art, his family relationships, his yearnings for a hot dog from the Varsity restaurant and home-made baked goods, his deep appreciation of letters and care packages from home as well as his irrepressible sense of humor and wry view of life and war. These are especially interesting since these letters did not pass through the hands of the military censors. Craig typed most of his correspondence and made carbon copies, which he kept and brought home with him at the end of the war. The letters which his family and friends received were censored and anything relating to locations, army movements, specifics of combat or anything likely to lower the morale on the home front would have been removed or inked out by military censors. He was careful to follow the military rules, but knew that all mail was subject to be read by others. He sometimes teased the unseen but ever-vigilant censors. In one letter he added a note directly to the

sensor in one corner, marked with a dashed line, so it would be easy to detect if it were removed. These carbon copies were concealed in the false bottom of a Japanese box for transport back to the States.

These letters were in a single folder with the following annotation:

T/4 Jon R. Craig 34080163HQ RSTRY 245th F.A. BNAPO 716-c/o PM-San FranciscoThe enclosed papers are carbon copies of letters written by me and mailed to the U.S. under regular censorship regulations[[signed]] Jon R. Craig- Oct 2, 1944IF RELEASED, MAIL TO:MRS. G.M. CRAIG1021 TALBOTTON ROADCOLUMBUS, GEORGIA

These letters have been digitized and there is both a CD and a thumb drive of them in the media box.

- Folder 1 - Censorship Letters, 1941-January 1942
- Folder 2 - Censorship Letters, February-July, 1942
- Folder 3 - Censorship Letters, August-December, 1942
- Folder 4 - Censorship Letters, January-February, 1943
- Folder 5 - Censorship Letters, May-August, 1943
- Folder 6 - Censorship Letters, September-December, 1943This folder also includes 3 copies of General Order # 61 of December 31, 1943, which detailed the honors list for the year.
- Folder 7 - Censorship Letters, January-September 13, 1944
- Folder 8 - Note Pads, nd This folder contains two pocket note pads in an envelope marked on one side with "SAVE THESE. Valuable notes on Jon's WWII records 340-80-163" and on the other side with VALUABLE WWII notes Jon R. Craig 340-80-163". The notebooks contain names and address, a summary of Craig's service record including dates places of service, financial notes. Some of these notes have been digitized and transcribed and are printed, also in the folder.
- Folder 9 -Veterans Affairs, 1944-1950, 1981 This folder contains documents relating to Craig's discharge and later his GI benefits.
- Folder 10 - InventoryThis folder contains an inventory of Craig's WWII objects and selected sketches, drawings and photographs. There is also a CD of the list.

Box 2 - Letters (Correspondence) June-July, 1941

This group of letters includes letters (many with enclosures) received by Jon Robert Craig and his response to them. His responses were placed in the envelope of the received letter, and filed by the postmark date of the envelope. Craig's original filing order was retained, although it is not strictly chronological. For example, the folder dated June 2, 1941 has a letter from his brother Murphy dated June 1. The envelope is postmarked June 2 and Jon Robert Craig's reply was dated June 4 . It is filed under the date of June 2, 1941. To have both sides of this correspondence, complete with envelopes, allows a researcher to hear the voices of both sides of these written conversations, and the envelopes allow us to trace the frequent movements of these articulate, active and peripatetic individuals. As with the "censorship" letters above, Craig's family has scanned these items and transcribed most of them. The thumb drives and the CDs are in the media box.

- Folder 1 - Bound images and transcripts of the June 1941 correspondence. Another copy of this item is cataloged and in the Archives Research Room shelves.
- Folder 2 - Correspondence, June I, 1941
- Folder 3 - Correspondence, June II, 1941
- Folder 4 - Correspondence, June III, 1941
- Folder 5 - Correspondence, July I, 1941
- Folder 6 - Correspondence, July II, 1941

Series 2 - Photographic Materials

In addition to the two folders below, there are also over six hundred negatives of photographs made by Craig during his time in the military. They are currently pending processing. They are also scanned and are available as digital files in the archives. The thumb drive and CD are in the media box.

Box 1

- Item 1 -- Photograph Album of large prints of some of Craig's photographs, 1940s

Box 2

- Folder 1 - Photos on CDs This folder contains three CDs containing scans of 22 selected photographs of Jon R. Craig. There are some details of faces and other elements of some of photographs.
- Folder 2 - War Photographs - Philippines
 - This folder contains negatives placed between pages numbered 1 to 33 with a note on the final numbered page saying "LEYTE. 33 negatives. Make 1 oversize of each." There is a note on the next page saying "DO NOT PRINT THESE NEGATIVES STUCK WITH TAPE". The remaining pages in the notebook are taped together, presumably with negatives also between these pages.

Series 3 - Sketches, Drawings and Mounted Photographs**Box 1**

This oversized box contains numerous sketches by Craig, both loose and some bound. These sketches have been digitized and there is a CD of them in the media box.

Series 4 - Artifacts**Box 1 - Craig's camera****Box 2 - Typewriter****Box 3 - Craig's chest**

Box 4 - Items in the inventory in Folder 10 above except the camera, typewriter, chest, shovel and sword which are in separate boxes.

Box 5 - Craig's shovel & sword

These objects have been digitized and there is both a CD of them in the media box.

Series 5 - Books and Publications**Box 1 - Books and other publications**

This box contains the following publications:

- Folder 1 - **Americal Division: Under the Southern Cross**, 1996
- Folder 2 - *Americal Newsletter*, October-November-December 1999; October-November-December, 2004; July-August-September, 2006; January-February-March, 2008; October-November-December, 2008
- Folder 3 - Americal Division Veterans Association materials, 1995-2008 These materials relate to Craig's membership in the Association, including his annual membership cards, copies of his discharge papers, etc. They were inserted in the book that documented the Americal Division history.

- Folder 4 - **Bible** (Teachers Self-Pronouncing Reference Edition) This book has three notes attached to it.
 - One says "Overseas Bible to Jonathan Balsamo. Bible Ma bought me with money from one of Daddy's customers to be left to Jennifer Balsamo. January 20, 1982" [[signed]] Jon R. Craig]].
 - Another says "OVERSEAS BIBLE. To be given to Lucy Craig. The Bible Mother gave me in 1958 to be given to Cynthia Craig."
 - The third one says:"Jon's Overseas Bible. Bought by me from Sears Roebuck mail order at the time I was asked to teach a class of junior boys at Rose Hill Baptist Church, Columbus—about 1957. Always seemed special because I bought it myself through my own efforts.
 - I carried this Bible to army service with me thus overseas, etc. It was harmed by jungle fungus, moisture, etc., but I was able to keep it wrapped in canvas and inside waterproof pack when not in actual use—thus it came through."
- Folder 5 - **New Testament** - A New Translation by James Moffett, 1934
- Folder 6 - **Guadalcanal**, by Richard Frank, 1990
- Folder 7 - **Guadalcanal Diary**, by Richard Tregaskis, 1943
- Folder 8 - **Pacific Islands Year Book**, 1942
- Folder 9 - **Struggle for Guadalcanal, August 1943-February, 1943**, by Samuel Eliot Morison
- Folder 10 - **Under the Southern Cross: the Saga of the Americal Division**, by Captain Francis D. Cronin, 1951
- Folder 11 - Items removed from the books These items were stuck into the above described books, perhaps as book marks. They include related magazine articles and slips of paper with notes.

Series 6 - Digital Materials

Box 1 - CDs and Thumb drives

- Item 1 - CD titled Jon Robert Craig World War II letters Censorship Correspondence
- Item 2 - USB stick titled Craig War Letters
- Item 3 - CD titled Jon R. Craig & Co Correspondence, June-July, 1941
- Item 4 - CD titled Jon R. Craig & Co Correspondence, July 1941
- Item 5 - USB stick titled JRC & Co. Jun/July 1941
- Item 6 - CD titled Jon R. Craig - War Time Drawings in PDF
- Item 7 - CD titled Jon R. Craig WW II objects, which contains photographs of the objects donated as part of this collection.