

WILLIAM J. MCALLISTER

WORLD WAR II LETTERS, 1942-1944

Collection #
BV 2594

Table of Contents

[Collection Information](#)
[Biographical sketch](#)
[Scope and Content note](#)
[Cataloging Information](#)

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 item

COLLECTION DATES: 1942-1944

PROVENANCE: Amos and Mary Helen Hynes Edwards, Indianapolis IN, 19 December 1990

RESTRICTIONS: None

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Joseph McAllister (1922-1944) was born in Indianapolis, the son of George W. and Margaret S. McAllister. After graduating from Shortridge High School, he worked as a timekeeper at the Allison division of General Motors in Indianapolis.

Drafted late in 1942, McAllister served at Scott Field in Illinois, at Laredo Army Air Force Base in Texas, and at

Geiger Field in Washington. During this time he was trained as a radio operator and top turret gunner. Working his way up through the ranks, he achieved the rank of technical sergeant.

From October 1943 he was stationed in England, on the crew of the B 17 bomber "Pandora" in the 561st Bomb Squad, 388th Bomb Group. "Pandora" was on its fifteenth mission on 10 February 1944 when it was shot down as it approached its target near Vechta, Germany. Three crew members bailed out and were held as prisoners of war; the remaining five were killed. It was reported that McAllister could have bailed out but stayed on board to help a wounded fellow crewman. He was posthumously awarded a Purple Heart and an Air Medal with oak leaf cluster.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This is a bound volume of Xerox copies of correspondence and other documents detailing the military career of Sgt. McAllister, from his draft notice in 1942 through the correspondence following his death in 1944.

The main body of the correspondence is from McAllister to his mother and his sister Margaret. Following his being shot down, there are letters among the families of the lost crew members, as well as from the War Department.

As a whole, the volume gives an unusually complete account of how wartime service affected one young man and his family and friends, and also of what was done by authorities in Washington to inform and help his survivors.

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's [online catalog](#)
2. Click on the "Local Catalog" icon.
3. Search for the collection by its call number, using the letter or letters designation and **four** digits (e.g., M 0715, SC 2234).
4. When you find the collection, go to the "Holdings" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.

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