

Guide to MS-031:

Letters from Chan Coulter to his wife and child, World War II



Gettysburg College, Musselman Library  
Special Collections and College Archives

Jaclyn Campbell  
August 2001

## MS-031: Letters from Chan Coulter to his wife and child, World War II

Processed by Jaclyn Campbell

August 2001

### Size

3 boxes, 0.81cubic feet

### Dates

Inclusive: 1942-1985

Bulk: 1942-1945

### Provenance

Donated by Chan L. Coulter (1928-1999), retired professor of Gettysburg College, 1998.

### Biographical Note

Chan Frank Coulter was born in Johnson County, Iowa, to Elmer and Ida Hunter Coulter on September 24, 1901. Ida Coulter died about eleven years later and her sister, Etta Hunter, helped to raise Coulter. The family moved to Iowa City when Coulter and his younger brother entered high school.

Coulter went on to the State University of Iowa, where he majored in physical education and received a Reserve Officer Training Corps (R.O.T.C.) Commission. Upon graduation, he acquired a job selling life insurance in Pittsburgh.

He married Mae C. Becker in 1926 and had a son, Chan Lowell Coulter, in 1928. The Coulters lived in Pittsburgh for one year before they moved to Lakewood, Ohio, where Chan Lowell was born.

While in Lakewood, Coulter sold life insurance, coached track at Western Reserve University, taught physical education, and served in the Ohio National Guard under the 37<sup>th</sup> Division. His division was called to active duty in 1940 by President Franklin Roosevelt. Coulter was commander of the division's Headquarters Company at the time.

After being called to active duty, he spent a year and a half at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, training, until he was sent to the South Pacific in 1942. During this time, his family moved to Mississippi to be closer to him. Once sent overseas, though, they moved to Iowa City. During the training at Camp Shelby, Coulter served as Aide-de-Camp to General Bietler and commanded the M.P. company.

After he was discharged in 1945 for health reasons, he returned to his family in Iowa City and continued to sell life insurance and participate in the military by serving in the Army Reserves as Commanding Officer of the 410<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. He retired as a full Colonel in 1965. Coulter purchased a farm and worked on it during the 1950s and 60s.

Coulter worked closely with the Iowa City Chapter of Phi Gamma Delta and received the Coulter Cup, named for him, for his exceptional service to the chapter. He was very active in his community after the war, serving as the mayor of University Heights, working for the Republican Party, volunteering at the Johnson County Historical Society, serving on the local school board, volunteering at the First Methodist Church, and volunteering at the Veterans Hospital in Iowa City.

Coulter died in August of 1991.

### Scope and Content Note

This collection consists primarily of correspondence from Coulter to his family.

**Series I** consists of a series of letters, written by Coulter, to his wife, Mae, and son, Chan Lowell, during his overseas service in the South Pacific from 1942 until his discharge in 1945. The correspondence includes fatherly advice to his son and talk of normal family business matters to his wife, as well as day-to-day happenings of military life during war. Some letters have been censored and cut in places.

**Series II** consists of a series of V-Mails, written by Coulter, to his wife and son during his overseas service from 1942 until 1945. The content of this correspondence is very similar to the correspondence of Series I.

**Series III** consists of papers acquired by Coulter regarding the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division's Liberation of Manila. This series includes news clippings, itineraries, and programs of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division and its 40<sup>th</sup> reunion in 1985.

**Series IV** consists of collection information regarding the gift of Chan Lowell Coulter of the series of letters from his father. Also included is a photograph, most likely of Coulter during World War II.

### Series Description

The collection is broken up into four series; **Series I**: Correspondence by regular mail, **Series II**: Correspondence by V-Mail, **Series III**: 1985 reunion of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division, and **Series IV**: Collection information.

## Box List

### Box 1

#### Series 1: Correspondence by Regular Mail

- 1-1 Regular Mail – From San Francisco, Dated:
- May 10, 1942
  - May 11, 1942
  - Political Cartoon
  - May 13, 1942
  - May 13, 1942 (includes two postcards)
  - May 14, 1942
  - May 15, 1942
  - May 17, 1942
  - May 19, 1942
  - May 20, 1942
  - May 20, 1942 (includes two cancelled checks and a notice of promotion as captain)
  - May 22, 1942
  - May 23, 1942
  - May 23, 1942
  - *American President Lines News Flashes* June 1942
- 1-2 Regular Mail – From South Pacific and En Route, Dated:
- June 5, 1942 (includes list of charges before mock court)
  - June 1942
  - June 16, 1942
  - June 1942
  - June 22, 1942
  - June 24, 1942
  - June 29, 1942
  - July 1, 1942
  - July 12, 1942
  - July 19, 1942
  - July 27, 1942
  - July 28, 1942
- 1-3 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:
- August 4, 1942
  - August 5, 1942 (includes newspaper clipping concerning General Connelly)
  - August 13, 1942
  - August 19, 1942
  - Dinner Menu 1942
  - August 25, 1942

- August 25, 1942
- August 27, 1942
- August 31, 1942

1-4 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:

- September 1, 1942
- September 2, 1942
- September 5, 1942
- September 7, 1942
- September 9, 1942
- September 9, 1942
- September 11, 1942
- September 12, 1942
- September 13, 1942
- September 15, 1942
- September 19, 1942
- September 20, 1942
- September 25, 1942
- September 26, 1942
- September 27, 1942
- September 28, 1942
- September 29, 1942
- September 30, 1942

1-5 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:

- News Digest distributed to units of 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment Oct. 10, 1942
- October 1, 1942
- October 5, 1942
- October 6, 1942
- October 8, 1942
- October 10, 1942
- Sunday Evening (not dated)
- October 11, 1942
- October 18, 1942
- October 19, 1942
- October 23, 1942
- October 24, 1942
- October 25, 1942
- October 25, 1942
- October 28, 1942

- 1-6 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:
- November 1, 1942
  - November 4, 1942
  - November 6, 1942
  - November 8, 1942
  - November 15, 1942
  - November 15, 1942
  - November 18, 1942
  - November 18, 1942
  - November 19, 1942 (includes typed letter from Mariett Hunter)
  - November 23, 1942
  - November 25, 1942
  - November 27, 1942
  - November 27, 1942
  - November 30, 1942

- 1-7 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:
- December 1, 1942
  - December 5, 1942
  - December 6, 1942
  - December 8, 1942
  - December 10, 1942
  - Card from Curtis Flower Shop and Greenhouse, Iowa City, Iowa
  - December 11, 1942 (includes sports news clipping)
  - December 14, 1942
  - December 17, 1942
  - December 19, 1942
  - December 21, 1942

- 1-8 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:
- December 22, 1942
  - December 22, 1942
  - December 23, 1942
  - December 23, 1942
  - December 24, 1942
  - December 25, 1942
  - December 26, 1942
  - Menu from 37<sup>th</sup> Division Christmas Dinner
  - December 27, 1942
  - December 28, 1942
  - Not Dated

## Box 2

### Series 1 continued

- 2-1 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:
- January 1, 1943
  - January 2, 1943 (misdated 1942)
  - January 3, 1943 (misdated 1942)
  - January 5, 1943
  - January 16, 1943
  - January 19, 1943 (misdated 1942)
  - Two news clippings concerning World War II
  - January 21, 1943 (misdated 1942)
  - Thursday morning (not dated)
  - News Clipping picture with written message by Coulter
  - January 22, 1943
  - January 24, 1943
  - January 25, 1943
  - January 26, 1943
- 2-2 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:
- February 1, 1943
  - February 2, 1943
  - February 4, 1943 (includes news clipping regarding taxes)
  - February 4, 1943
- 2-3 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:
- February 6, 1943
  - February 9, 1943
  - February 11, 1943
  - February 13, 1943
  - February 16, 1943
  - February 16, 1943
  - February 16, 1943
  - February 17, 1943
  - February 18, 1943
  - February 21, 1943
  - February 23, 1943
  - February 28, 1943
- 2-4 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:
- March 12, 1943
  - March 17, 1943
  - March 18, 1943
  - March 19, 1943

- March 21, 1943
- March 22, 1943
- March 23, 1943
- March 24, 1943
- March 29, 1943

2-5 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:

- April 4, 1943
- April 6, 1943
- April 10, 1943
- April 12, 1943
- April 14, 1943
- April 15, 1943
- April 16, 1943
- April 17, 1943
- April 19, 1943
- April 23, 1943
- Easter Sunday (not dated)
- April 27, 1943
- April 29, 1943

2-6 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:

- May 1, 1943
- May 2, 1943
- May 7, 1943
- May 10, 1943

2-7 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:

- May 12, 1943
- May 12, 1943
- May 13, 1943
- May 13, 1943
- May 14, 1943
- May 16, 1943
- May 16, 1943
- May 19, 1943
- May 21, 1943
- May 23, 1943
- May 27, 1943
- May 27, 1943
- May 28, 1943
- May 29, 1943



2-8 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:

- June 3, 1943
- June 4, 1943
- June 6, 1943
- June 10, 1943
- June 11, 1943
- June 12, 1943
- June 13, 1943
- June 14, 1943
- June 17, 1943

2-9 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:

- June 18, 1943
- June 19, 1943
- June 25, 1943
- June 27, 1943
- June 28, 1943
- July 4, 1943
- July 7, 1943
- July 9, 1943
- July 10, 1943
- Sunday afternoon (not dated)
- July 12, 1943
- July 16, 1943
- July 17, 1943
- July 25, 1943
- July 25, 1943
- July 30, 1943

2-10 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:

- August 3, 1943
- August 8, 1943
- August 17, 1943
- August 22, 1943
- August 29, 1943
- September 3, 1943
- September 4, 1943
- September 6, 1943

2-11 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:

- September 11, 1943
- September 17, 1943
- September 18, 1943

- September 20, 1943
- September 21, 1943
- September 24, 1943
- September 26, 1943
- October 2, 1943
- October 5, 1943
- October 6, 1943

2-12 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:

- October 12, 1943
- October 12, 1943
- October 17, 1943
- October 20, 1943
- October 22, 1943
- October 23, 1943
- November 7, 1943
- Two news clippings regarding World War II
- December 5, 1943
- December 5, 1943
- December 6, 1943
- December 10, 1943
- December 11, 1943 (misdated 1942)
- December 14, 1943
- December 18, 1943
- December 22, 1943
- December 24, 1943
- December 25, 1943
- December 25, 1943
- December 29, 1943

2-13 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:

- January 1, 1944
- January 3, 1944
- January 6, 1944
- January 8, 1944
- January 10, 1944
- January 12, 1944
- January 13, 1944
- January 16, 1944
- January 26, 1944
- February 2, 1944
- February 3, 1944

- February 6, 1944
- February 8, 1944 (includes *Trees, Vines, and Shrubs*)
- February 11, 1944
- February 13, 1944
- February 15, 1944
- February 21, 1944
- February 24, 1944
- February 29, 1944
- March 2, 1944
- March 4, 1944
- March 7, 1944
- March 19, 1944
- March 30, 1944
- March 31, 1944

2-14 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:

- April 3, 1944
- April 5, 1944
- April 8, 1944
- Original memorandum from Robert S. Beightler April 12, 1944
- April 9, 1944
- April 12, 1944
- April 14, 1944
- April 17, 1944
- April 19, 1944
- April 21, 1944 (includes copy of Beightler memo)
- April 21, 1944
- April 26, 1944
- April 30, 1944
- May 3, 1944
- May 5, 1944
- May 6, 1944
- May 7, 1944
- May 14, 1944
- May 14, 1944
- May 15, 1944
- May 19, 1944
- May 20, 1944
- May 21, 1944
- May 22, 1944
- May 24, 1944
- May 29, 1944

## Box 3

### Series 1 continued

#### 3-1 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:

- June 1, 1944
- June 1, 1944
- June 5, 1944
- June 7, 1944
- June 7, 1944
- June 11, 1944
- June 12, 1944
- June 15, 1944
- June 17, 1944
- June 18, 1944
- June 19, 1944
- June 21, 1944
- June 21, 1944
- June 23, 1944
- June 25, 1944
- July 2, 1944
- July 2, 1944
- July 3, 1944
- July 3, 1944
- July 8, 1944
- July 11, 1944
- July 11, 1944
- July 13, 1944
- July 17, 1944
- July 20, 1944
- July 31, 1944

#### 3-2 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:

- August 6, 1944
- August 8, 1944
- Telegram August 22, 1944
- October 16, 1944
- October 16, 1944
- October 20, 1944
- October 22, 1944
- October 22, 1944
- October 23, 1944
- October 24, 1944
- October 26, 1944

- October 27, 1944
- October 29, 1944
- October 30, 1944
- October 31, 1944
- November 1, 1944
- November 6, 1944
- November 9, 1944
- November 11, 1944
- Monday (not dated)
- November 15, 1944
- November 16, 1944
- November 17, 1944
- November 17, 1944
- Not Dated
- November 20, 1944
- November 21, 1944
- Not Dated
- Map of Oahu
- November 25, 1944
- November 26, 1944
- November 27, 1944
- November 28, 1944
- November 28, 1944
- November 30, 1944

3-3 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:

- December 1, 1944
- December 3, 1944
- December 4, 1944
- December 5, 1944
- December 7, 1944
- December 7, 1944
- December 9, 1944
- December 10, 1944
- Not Dated
- December 11, 1944
- December 15, 1944
- December 16, 1944
- December 18, 1944
- December 23, 1944
- Christmas Day Dinner Menu 1944
- December 24, 1944

- December 25, 1944
- December 29, 1944
- December 31, 1944
- January 1, 1945
- January 5, 1945
- Not Dated
- January 1945 (misdated 1944)
- January 11, 1945
- January 16, 1945

3-4 Regular Mail – From South Pacific, Dated:

- February 15, 1945
- February 19, 1945
- February 20, 1945
- February 23, 1945
- February 24, 1945
- February 26, 1945
- February 26, 1945
- February 27, 1945
- February 28, 1945
- March 1, 1945
- March 2, 1945
- March 2, 1945
- March 5, 1945
- March 7, 1945
- March 8, 1945
- March 10, 1945
- March 11, 1945
- March 13, 1945
- March 17, 1945
- March 19, 1945
- March 20, 1945
- March 23, 1945
- March 25, 1945
- March 28, 1945
- March 30, 1945
- March 31, 1945
- April 1, 1945
- April 2, 1945
- April 5, 1945
- April 8, 1945
- April 9, 1945

- April 15, 1945
- April 16, 1945
- April 19, 1945
- April 23, 1945
- April 28, 1945
- May 1, 1945
- May 1, 1945
- May 3, 1945
- May 8, 1945
- May 9, 1945
- May 11, 1945
- May 14, 1945
- May 16, 1945
- May 17, 1945
- May 19, 1945
- May 20, 1945
- May 22, 1945
- May 24, 1945
- May 25, 1945
- May 28, 1945
- May 30, 1945
- June 1, 1945
- June 3, 1945
- June 4, 1945
- June 10, 1945
- June 11, 1945
- June 13, 1945
- June 14, 1945
- June 16, 1945
- June 17, 1945
- June 19, 1945
- June 20, 1945
- June 22, 1945
- June 24, 1945
- June 24, 1945
- June 25, 1945
- June 30, 1945

Series 2: V-Mail Correspondence

3-5 V-Mail – From the South Pacific, Dated:

- November 9, 1942
- November 9, 1942

- November 15, 1942
- November 16, 1942
- November 30, 1942
- November 18, 1942
- November 18, 1942
- November 28, 1942
- December 3, 1942
- December 5, 1942
- December 11, 1942
- December 12, 1942
- December 21, 1942
- December 23, 1942
- December 26, 1942
- December 28, 1942
- January 28, 1943
- February 3, 1943
- February 4, 1943
- February 4, 1943
- Not Dated
- February 9, 1943
- February 11, 1943
- February 18, 1943
- February 24, 1943
- February 27, 1943
- March 3, 1943
- March 6, 1943
- March 9, 1943
- March 11, 1943
- March 15, 1943
- March 15, 1943
- March 24, 1943
- March 28, 1943
- April 1, 1943
- April 5, 1943
- April 21, 1943
- Pineapple Tidbits and Juice labels
- Not Dated
- July 23, 1943
- Not Dated
- August 10, 1943
- August 11, 1943
- August 12, 1943



- August 17, 1943
- August 22, 1943
- August 30, 1943
- August 31, 1943
- September 1, 1943
- September 2, 1943
- September 12, 1943
- September 25, 1943
- September 27, 1943
- October 8, 1943
- October 25, 1943
- October 30, 1943
- November 2, 1943
- November 9, 1943
- November 9, 1943
- November 20, 1943
- November 23, 1943
- November 29, 1943
- November 30, 1943
- December 3, 1943
- December 4, 1943
- December 6, 1943
- December 8, 1943
- December 9, 1943
- December 10, 1943
- December 11, 1943
- December 12, 1943
- December 13, 1943
- December 14, 1943
- December 17, 1943
- December 20, 1943
- December 29, 1943
- December 1943
- January 6, 1944
- Not Dated
- January 25, 1944
- January 19, 1944
- January 28, 1944
- January 28, 1944
- February 4, 1944
- February 13, 1944
- February 18, 1944

- February 25, 1944
- February 29, 1944
- March 14, 1944
- March 19, 1944
- March 21, 1944
- March 22, 1944
- March 22, 1944
- March 27, 1944
- March 28, 1944
- March 29, 1944
- April 4, 1944
- April 5, 1944
- June 2, 1944
- June 3, 1944
- June 3, 1944
- June 6, 1944
- June 6, 1944
- June 6, 1944
- June 9, 1944
- June 10, 1944
- June 12, 1944
- June 13, 1944
- June 15, 1944
- June 16, 1944
- June 20, 1944
- July 24, 1944
- July 25, 1944
- July 31, 1944
- August 16, 1944
- October 17, 1944
- October 17, 1944
- October 26, 1944
- October 28, 1944
- Not Dated
- November 19, 1944
- November 23, 1944
- November 24, 1944
- November 30, 1944
- December 16, 1944 (letter to Chan from Major W. A. Boice)
- January 1945
- Not Dated
- Not Dated

- January 1945
- January 1945
- January 14, 1945
- January 19, 1945
- January 23, 1945
- January 29, 1945
- February 3, 1945
- February 4, 1945
- February 4, 1945
- February 5, 1945
- February 7, 1945
- February 7, 1945
- February 23, 1945
- March 27, 1945
- April 13, 1945

#### Series 3: 1985 Reunion

- 3-6 Reunion – Folder consisting of news clippings of 37<sup>th</sup> Division, Orders for Philippine Liberation Medal to be given to Chan F. Coulter, list of members and addresses, *40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Liberation of Manila*, Itineraries and Accommodation Information for reunion, newsletters of 37<sup>th</sup> Division, postcard of Cagayan, business cards, travel receipts, and *A Brief History of Cagayan*

#### Series 4: Collection Information

- 3-7 Collection – Picture of soldier (probably Chan F. Coulter), Correspondence from Mike Birkner to Chan L. Coulter, Accession List

#### Additional Information

For additional information on Coulter and his family, see Chan L. Coulter's Oral History, located in the Reading Room of Special Collections and in the Birkner/Hedrick Oral History Collection located in the Archives.

#### Contact Information

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