

Clifton B. Cates

A Register of His Papers in the Archives Branch



Archives Branch

Marine Corps History Division

Quantico, VA

2010

Introduction

The Archives Branch supports the professional military education requirements of Marine Corps residential and distance learning programs. The Archives is the chief repository for reporting units, as well as for the personal papers of current and veteran Marines. The Archives is open without appointment to both military and civilian patrons. Patrons may bring laptops, digital cameras, and scanners for personal use.

The Archives Branch is located at 2044 Broadway Street, Quantico, VA 22134

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Collection Summary

Title: Papers of Clifton B. Cates

Collection Number: COLL/3157

Physical Characteristics: 17 standard legal size document boxes; 3 oversized boxes; 12 linear feet

Span Dates: 1914-1969

Language: English

Creator: Clifton B. Cates, 1893-1970

Administrative Information

Restrictions: Collection is open to all researchers

Preferred citation: Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information:

Papers of Clifton B. Cates, [Folder heading], COLL/3157, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA

Provenance: The President Truman apology letter and other papers were donated to the Marine Corps Historical Branch by General Cates in the 1960s. His son, Clifton Cates, Jr. donated the rest of the Cates Papers in 1970. The papers were transferred from the Historical Branch to the Archives and Special Collections at Quantico in 1999.

Biographical Sketch

Clifton Bledsoe Cates was born on 31 August 1893 in Tiptonville, TN. He attended the Missouri Military Academy and later obtained his Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Tennessee in 1916. On 13 June 1917, as a second lieutenant in the

reserves, he reported for active duty at the Marine Barracks, Port Royal, SC and left for France in January 1918.

With the 6th Marine Regiment in World War I, he fought at Bouresches and Belleau Wood, Soissons, St. Mihiel, and Blanc Mont. After participating in the occupation of Germany, 1stLt Cates returned to the United States and served in Washington, D.C., as a White House aide and Aide-de-Camp to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. He then served at San Francisco, California, as Aide-de-Camp to the Commanding General, Department of the Pacific, from October 1920 until June 1923, when he began a tour of sea duty as commander of the Marine Detachment aboard the USS *California*.

In 1928, Cates was named a member of the American Battle Monuments Commission at Washington. He served in that capacity until May 1929 then was ordered to Shanghai, China, where he rejoined the 4th Marines. Three years later he was detached from that regiment to return to Washington D.C. for study in the Army Industrial College.

Cates reported to Quantico in 1933 where he served with the 7th Marines and completed the Senior Course in the Marine Corps Schools. He returned again to Washington D.C. in September 1935 and was assigned to the War Plans Section of the Division of Operations and Training at Headquarters Marine Corps.

In August 1937, Cates went to Shanghai as a battalion commander with the 6th Marine Regiment and stay with them until March 1938 when he rejoined the 4th Marines. In May of 1942, Cates took command of the 1st Marines, which he led at Guadalcanal. After commanding the 1st Marines in the Guadalcanal-Tulagi landings and the capture and defense of Guadalcanal, he fought as commander of the 4th Marine Division in the Marianas operation, the Tinian campaign and the seizure of Iwo Jima.

Ordered back to the United States in December of 1945, Cates became President of the Marine Corps Equipment Board at Quantico, holding that position for six months before he was named Commanding General of the Marine Barracks, Quantico. He held that command until 1 January 1948, when he was advanced to the rank of general and sworn in as Commandant of the Marine Corps.

When Cates completed his four year term as Commandant, he reverted to the rank of Lieutenant General and began his second tour as Commandant of the Marine Corps Schools, Quantico. He retired on 30 June and was again promoted to general.

Clifton Cates died 4 June 1970 at the US Naval Hospital, Annapolis, Maryland, after a long illness. He was buried with full military honors on 8 June 1970 at Arlington National Cemetery.

Scope and Content Note

The Papers of Clifton B. Cates consist of materials relating mainly to his career with the Marine Corps from enlistment through his position as Commandant. The dates of the collection range from 1914-1969.

Included in this collection are letters describing his actions at Belleau Wood, Soissons, St. Michiels, Blanc Mont, and Argonne in addition to his leadership during World War II and later his testimony before the House Armed Services Committee on the military unification controversy following World War II. The majority of this correspondence is written to his mother, wife, children, and aunt and he goes into great detail on the activities of the Marines in various engagements.

Manuscripts included deal with the 96th Company, 2d Battalion, 6th Marines in World War I. Also included is a short study on the Japanese operations against Shanghai in 1932, written while Cates was a student at Command and Staff College, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico in 1935, and a manuscript derived from his diary entitled "My First at Guadalcanal".

Of note in the Cates papers are his World War I scrapbooks that include service records, photographs, and correspondence. Also of note is the letter of apology, written by President Harry S. Truman to Cates, for the President's use of the term "Navy's police force" in reference to the role of the Corps in the military forces of the United States.

The collection is arranged alphabetically by subject headings and chronologically within each series. For all of the subject headings, some were assigned by Cates and others were imposed by the processor. Series in this collection include addresses, correspondence, scrapbooks, service records, and photographs. The size of the collection is approximately 12 linear feet.

List of Series

- Series 1. Addresses
- Series 2. Clippings
- Series 3. Correspondence
 - 3.1 Correspondence, General
 - 3.2 Correspondence, By Subject
- Series 4. Publications
- Series 5. Scrapbooks
- Series 6. Service Records
- Series 7. Subject Files
- Series 8. Photographs
 - 8.1 Photographs, Alphabetical File
 - 8.2 Photographs, Subject

Series 1. Addresses, 1943-1954

Arrangement: ascending chronological by date given. This series consists of transcripts of addresses given by General Cates during and after World War II.

Series 2. Clippings, 1914-1961

Arrangement: alphabetical by subject heading. This series consists of newspaper clippings featuring General Cates or collected by him.

Series 3. Correspondence, 1917-1969

This series consists of correspondence produced and received by Cates. The series is arranged into two subseries: General and By Subject.

Series 3.1 Correspondence, General, 1917-1969

Arrangement: ascending chronological order by date written. This subseries consists of the correspondence of Clifton Cates. Incoming correspondence is interfiled with outgoing correspondence. These letters cover his service in World War I and World War II with letters home to his wife, children, mother, and aunt.

Series 3.2 Correspondence, Subject, 1918-1966

Arrangement: alphabetical by subject heading. This subseries consists of correspondence files arranged by subject headings. They cover correspondence from World War I into Cates' retirement. This series includes copies of the apology letter from President Truman.

Series 4. Publications, 1915-1966

Arrangement: alphabetical by title or subject heading. This series consists of publications collected by Cates. The bulk of the publications are about World War I and the actions of the 96th Company and some World War II histories.

Series 5. Scrapbooks, 1918-1942

Arrangement: alphabetical by subject heading. This series contains scrapbooks compiled by Cates. Of note is his World War I scrapbook that includes service records, photographs, and correspondence.

Series 6. Service Records, 1917-1957

This series consists of General Cates' service records dating from enlistment to retirement.

Series 7. Subject Files, 1919-1969

Arrangement: alphabetical by title. This series consists of miscellaneous files arranged by subject. Included are awards, Reports, and Congressional statements.

Series 8. Photographs

This series consists of many photographs of Cates, fellow Marines, and other notables. The series is arranged into two subseries: Alphabetical File and By Subject.

Series 8.1 Photographs, Alphabetical File

Arrangement: alphabetical by file title. This subseries consists of photographs that were maintained in a vertical file arranged by Cates according to subject title. Several of the photographs were duplicated in different alphabetical files. Many have been located based on the last name of the most notable person shown in the photograph.

Series 8.2 Photographs, Subject

Arrangement: alphabetically by subject heading. This subseries consists of photographs taken during World Wars I and II, scenes on Quantico, portraits, and notable events attended by Cates.

Box List

Series 1. Addresses, 1943-1954

Box 1

Folder 1	What's Wrong With Our Team?, Date Unidentified
Folder 2	First Things First, Date Unidentified
Folder 3	The Marine Corps' Birthday Battle, 10 November 1943
Folder 4	Iwo Jima Anniversary, 29 May 1946
Folder 5	Marine Corps Reserve Assembly, 11 January 1948
Folder 6	St. Paul, MN Ice Carnival, January 1948
Folder 7	St. Paul, MN Winter Carnival, 31 January 1948
Folder 8	Senate Armed Service Committee, March 1948
Folder 9	Advertising Club, 12 March 1948
Folder 10	Presentation, April 1948
Folder 11	Freedom Train Ceremony, 4 June 1948
Folder 12	Marine Corps Reserve Officers Association, 29 January 1949
Folder 13	Harvard Club, 12 March 1949
Folder 14	Joint Civilian Orientation Conference, 4 April 1949
Folder 15	University Club, 13 April 1949
Folder 16	Virginia State Chamber of Commerce, 15 April 1949
Folder 17	"Education, Athletics and Leadership", University of Maryland, 24 May 1949
Folder 18	"Give me Liberty or Give me Death", Date Unidentified

- Folder 19 "The Role of the Marine Corps in National Security", National War College, 1 June 1949
- Folder 20 "The Marine Corps and its Functions", Third Joint Civilian Orientation Conference, 14 June 1949
- Folder 21 "The Marine Corps and its Functions", Fourth Joint Civilian Orientation Conference, 19 September 1949
- Folder 22 Marine Corps League, Boston, 1 October 1949
- Folder 23 Balance in the Armed Forces, Date Unidentified
- Folder 24 Fifth Joint Civilian Orientation Conference, 31 October 1949
- Folder 25 Conference for Commanding Generals, 1 December 1949
- Folder 26 Notes on Speech at Kansas City, 11 February 1950
- Folder 27 Congressional Stag Party, 21 March 1950
- Folder 28 Notes on California Society Talk, 26 March 1950
- Folder 29 Sixth Joint Civilian Orientation Conference, 17 April 1950
- Folder 30 "Time for Defense", Interview with Robert Sherrod, 10 May 1950
- Folder 31 Armed Forces Day, 17 May 1950
- Folder 32 National War College, 6 June 1950
- Folder 33 "The Challenge of 1950", American Ordnance Association, 6 December 1950
- Folder 34 "Defenders of Freedom", Armed Forces Day, 19 May 1951
- Folder 35 "The Marine Corps-Present and Future", National War College, 23 May 1951
- Folder 36 "The Role of the Marine Corps in Global War", Naval War College, 29 May 1951
- Folder 37 "Your Approach to the Future", University of Tennessee, 4 June 1951
- Folder 38 "Power for Peace", Armed Forces Day, 16 May 1953
- Folder 39 General E. A. Pollock, Cate's Farewell Dinner, 7 June 1954
- Folder 40 Unidentified

Series 2. Clippings, 1914-1961

- Folder 41 1914-1961
- Folder 42 Anne Cates, 1950-1951
- Folder 43 Marine Corps Memorial, 1954
- Folder 44 Frances Newman, 1945
- Folder 45 Political Cartoons
- Folder 46 Retirement, 1946

Series 3. Correspondence, 1917-1969

Series 3.1 Correspondence, General, 1917-1969

Box 2

- Folder 1 1917-1918
- Folder 2 World War I Letters, Transcripts, 1918

Folder 3 1919
Folder 4-5 1918-1919 (Transcripts, copies)
Folder 6 1937-1939
Folder 7 1941-January 1943

Box 3

Folder 1 January 1944 – 20 April 1945
Folder 2 20 April 1945 – July 1945
Folder 3 August 1945 – June 1946
Folder 4 1948-1969

Series 3.2 Correspondence, Subject, 1918-1966

Folder 5 American Battle Monuments Commission, 1929
Folder 6 Brandt and Harsch Articles, 1951
Folder 7 Congratulatory Letters on Completion of Term, 1951
Folder 8 Congratulatory Letters on Promotion to Major General Commandant, 1947-1948
Folder 9 Congratulatory Letters on Retirement, 1954

Box 4

Folder 1 Frances Newman, 1945
Folder 2 Honorary Memberships and Degrees, 1948-1951
Folder 3 President Harry Truman, 1950 (copies)
Folder 4 Promotion to Major General Commandant, 1947-1948
Folder 5 Responses to Unification Hearings, 1949
Folder 6 Secretaries Conference, 1953-1954
Folder 7 Trip Around the World, 1939
Folder 8 Brief History of the 96th Co, 2d Battalion, 6th Regiment, 1928
Folder 9 Brief History Marine Barracks, Quantico, VA
Folder 10 Diary of Fourth Marine Brigade, 1918
Folder 11 4th Marine Division Association Reunion, 1966

Series 4. Publications, 1915-1966

Box 5

Folder 1 The 4th Marine Division in World War II, 1946
Folder 2 History of the 96th Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Regiment
Folder 3 Leatherneck, March 1948
Folder 4 Marine Corps Schools Paper, A Critical Analysis of Japanese Operation Against Shanghai in 1932, 1935
Folder 5 Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, VA
Folder 6 The Marines Magazine, June 1952

- Folder 7 My First at Guadalcanal
- Folder 8 My First at Guadalcanal (bound)
- Folder 9 Now Hear This!, Vol. VIII, No. 4, Summer Issue, 1957
- Folder 10 Operation Remember, 1-3 May 1957
- Folder 11 A Pocket History of the 4th Marine Division and the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing in World War II

Box 6

- Folder 1 Record of 96th Co., 2d Battalion, 6th Marines, 2d Division, AEF
- Folder 2 Shanghai's Undeclared War, 1937
- Folder 3 Song Book of the 4th Marine Division
- Folder 4 Telephone Directory, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1966
- Folder 5 Thru the Years with the Volunteers, 1950
- Folder 6 The United States Marine Corps in the World War, 1920
- Folder 7 US Marines: A Pictorial History
- Folder 8 US Naval Institute Proceedings, September 1962
- Folder 9 The Volunteer, University of Tennessee, 1915
- Folder 10 Walla Walla, May 20, 1939
- Folder 11 Where the Marines Fought in France

Box 7

- Folder 1 World War I, 2d Division
- Folder 2 World War I, Government Printing Office, 1921-1922

Series 5. Scrapbooks, 1918-1942

- Folder 3 Scrapbook 1
- Folder 4 Scrapbook 2
- Folder 5 Guadalcanal
- Folder 6 World War I, 1918-1920

Series 6. Service Records, 1917-1957

Box 8

- Folder 1 1917-1931
- Folder 2 1932-1940
- Folder 3 1941-1945
- Folder 4 1946-1951
- Folder 5 1951-1957

Series 7. Subject Files, 1919-1969

- Folder 6 31st Report of Preparedness Subcommittee, Senate Armed Services, 1951

Folder 7 Appointment Calendar, 1969
Folder 8 Awards and Certificates

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Folder 1 Biographical Information
Folder 2 Brief on Marine Corps' External Relations (Oct 1949-21 July 1951),
Volume I
Folder 3 Brief on Marine Corps' External Relations (Oct 1949-21 July 1951),
Volume II
Folder 4 Fire Support Base Cates, 1968
Folder 5 First Marine Division, Awards, 1942-1943
Folder 6 First Marine Division, Station List, 1942
Folder 7-8 ID Cards

Box 10

Folder 1 Johnson Preparedness Committee Report on Inspection of Camp Lejeune,
Quantico, Camp Pendleton, and El Toro, 1951
Folder 2 Joint Civilian Orientation Conferences Roster of Guests
Folder 3 Korean War Notes kept by Cates, 25 June-17 August 1950
Folder 4 List of 96th Co., 6th Marines Veterans, 1967
Folder 5 Missouri Military Academy, Graduation Program, 1910
Folder 6 New Equipment Display for General Officers, 1952
Folder 7 New Marines Hymn, 1950
Folder 8 News Release, 25th Anniversary, Tinian Campaign
Folder 9 Pass to Japanese Dedication Exercises
Folder 10 Personnel Plans for FY 1953 and 1954
Folder 11 Programs
Folder 12 Roster of US Composite Battalion, Victory Parade, Paris France, 1919
Folder 13 Senate Resolution, Hawaii, 4th Marine Division, 1945
Folder 14 Sheet Music, Lovely Hula Hands
Folder 15 Statement Before Armed Services Committee, B-36, 1949
Folder 16 Station List, 4th Marine Division, 1945
Folder 17 Testimony before House Armed Services Committee, 1949
Folder 18 US Congress, Reports and Testimony, 1949-1951
Folder 19 World War I, Officers of the 96th Company, 1918
Folder 20 World War II Casualties, Statistics

Series 8. Photographs

Series 8.1 Photographs, Alphabetical File

Box 11

Folder 1 Alphabetical File, A

Folder 2 Alphabetical File, B
Folder 3-4 Alphabetical File, C
Folder 5 Alphabetical File, D
Folder 6 Alphabetical File, E

Box 12

Folder 1 Alphabetical File, F
Folder 2 Alphabetical File, G
Folder 3 Alphabetical File, H
Folder 4 Alphabetical File, I
Folder 5 Alphabetical File, J
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Folder 7 Alphabetical File, L
Folder 8 Alphabetical File, M

Box 13

Folder 1 Alphabetical File, N
Folder 2 Alphabetical File, O
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Folder 4-5 Alphabetical File, Q
Folder 6 Alphabetical File, R
Folder 7 Alphabetical File, S

Box 14

Folder 1 Alphabetical File, T
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Folder 3 Alphabetical File, W

Series 8.2 Photographs, Subject

Folder 4 Army Industrial College, Class of 1932-1933
Folder 5 Baseball
Folder 6 Commandant's House
Folder 7 Dedication, Acquisition of Quantico Land Marker, 1949
Folder 8 Dinners
Folder 9 Edgewater, MD, 1959
Folder 10 Family
Folder 11 First Division Reunion, Merritt Edson, Last of the First Cognac, 1952
Folder 12 FMFPac Stained Glass Window, Marine Corps Chapel
Folder 13 Football, University of Tennessee, 1914
Folder 14 4th Marine Division

Folder 15 Guadalcanal, 1942

Box 15

Folder 1 Headquarters Staff, 1920
Folder 2 Iwo Jima, 1945
Folder 3 Iwo Jima, 1945
Folder 4 Korea, 1950-1951
Folder 5 Korea, 1950-1951
Folder 6 Maps, World War II
Folder 7 Marine Barracks, Washington, DC
Folder 8 Marine Corps Band
Folder 9 Maui, 1944-1945

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Folder 1 Maui, 1944-1945
Folder 2 Melbourne, Australia, 1943
Folder 3 Museum Exhibit Opening, 1950
Folder 4 Frances Newman
Folder 5 Maureen O'Hara
Folder 6 Portraits
Folder 7 Chesty Puller, Korea, 1950
Folder 8 Quantico, 1943-1947
Folder 9 Retirement, Quantico, 1954

Box 17

Folder 1 Royal Marines, Canton Bell, 9 March 1951
Folder 2 Saipan, 1944
Folder 3 Saipan, Cemetery
Folder 4 Secretaries Conference, 1953
Folder 5 Shanghai, China, 1932
Folder 6 Signed Portraits
Folder 7 Statue, John Vincent Power
Folder 8 Tinian, 1944
Folder 9 World War I

Oversize

Box 1

Folder 1 4th Marine Division
Folder 2 Certificates
Folder 3 Drawings
Folder 4 Missouri Military Academy

- Folder 5 Photograph, Army War College, Class 1939-1940
- Folder 6 Photographs, Football, University of Tennessee
- Folder 7 Photographs, Hawaii
- Folder 8 Photographs, Portraits
- Folder 9 Photograph, Massed Colors
- Folder 10 Photographs, Signed, Nimitz and Truman

Box 2

- Folder 1 Photograph Scrapbook, World War I
- Folder 2 17th Joint Civilian Orientation Conference, 1953
- Folder 3 Joint Civilian Orientation Conference, 1953

Box 3

- Folder 1 Japanese Scrapbook
- Folder 2 Marine Corps Memorial Scrapbook

Maps

One folder of Clifton Cates maps are located in the World War I Section of the Marine Corps Map Collection