History:

Jack B. Navarre was born in Detroit in 1925. In October 1943, at the age of 18, he was accepted into the U.S. Merchant Marine Cadet Corps as a Cadet-Midshipman Engineer. He underwent basic training at the San Mateo Coast Guard Station in California from January to April 1944. He then reported aboard the S.S. *Canada Victory* in San Francisco for a period of training afloat.

Navarre served on three separate ships in the South Pacific War Zone between 1944 to 1945. After his training period on the *Canada Victory* ended in February 1945, he served a tour doing engine maintenance aboard the S.S. *Sea Flasher* from March to June 1945. This was followed by a tour as an oiler aboard the S.S. *Sea Partridge* from June to September 1945.

He subsequently served aboard the S.S. *Coast Rica Victory* in October 1945, sailing to Marseilles, France, and Naples, Italy, and then aboard the S.S. *Malvern Hill*, sailing to Puerto Rico in January 1946.

John C. Porter was born in Lowell, Massachusetts in 1924, and grew up in Claremont, New Hampshire and later in Newport, Rhode Island. He developed an early interest in radio, building his own radios and working for a radio and TV business installing antennas. He took and passed the FCC’s test to acquire amateur call letters, but Pearl Harbor intervened. Amateur radio use was prohibited, and no call letters were issued for the duration of World War II. He wanted to be a radioman in the Navy, and was accepted.

At the age of eighteen, Porter joined the Navy in Providence, Rhode Island. He was assigned to a new ship being commissioned at Sparrow’s Point, in Baltimore, the U.S.S. Severn, which saw service in the Pacific. After the War, Porter worked as a plumber and school custodian in Scituate, Rhode Island. He retired in 1987 and died in 1992.

Scope and Content Note:

This collection consists of official correspondence, identification papers, and ephemeral material relating to Navarre’s service in the Merchant Marine between 1943 and 1946. The correspondence

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concerns his appointment and training in the Merchant Marine Cadet Corps and his discharge from the Merchant Marine. Identification papers include his seaman's passport, his cadet school ID card and service record, his Coast Guard pass, and an ID card for Puerto Rico. Other materials include ship's crew passes from the vessels he served on, a shore leave pass for Naples, a job assignment card, and overtime sheets from his tour aboard the Sea Partridge. Many of these materials are attached to pages from a scrapbook. Of interest also are several ship's menus from 1944 and a photocopy of a ship's newspaper, dated September 3, 1945, describing the surrender of Japan.

Papers relating to John C. Porter include his diary, kept while serving on the U.S.S. Severn, and his photograph.

Provenance:

The Navarre material is the first group of records from the Division of Naval History's ongoing efforts to document the role of the U.S. Merchant Marine and Navy during World War Two. Mr. Navarre sent them to the Division in August 1990 and they were transferred to the Archives Center on February 21, 1991.

The Porter material was donated to the Archives Center in 2003 by his widow, Della S. Porter.

Craig A. Orr
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Revised 8-5-03

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