

Archives and Special Collections

Dickinson College

Carlisle, PA

COLLECTION REGISTER

Name: **Minker, Ralph L., Jr. (1924-2008)** **MC 2001.15**

Material: Papers, copies (1943-1998)

Volume: 0.50 linear feet (1 Document Box, 1 Oversized Folder)

Donation: Gift of Ralph L. Minker, Jr. and Sandra O'Connell, 2001

Usage: This collection of photocopies has been donated without restrictions on usage. The original materials are housed at the Historical Society of Delaware. Permission to publish must be obtained from the Historical Society of Delaware.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Ralph L. Minker, Jr. was born in 1924 in Wilmington, Delaware to Ralph L. and Edna Minker. In the Fall of 1941, Ralph Jr. was a freshman at Dickinson College. The bombing of Pearl Harbor prompted the young man to register for the draft on June 30, 1942, shortly after his eighteenth birthday. He received permission to join the U.S. Aviation Cadet Corps. In February 1943, Ralph reported to Miami, Florida for basic training.

After basic training, Ralph Minker completed about eighteen months of training to certify as a B-17 pilot. In early October 1944, Ralph and his crew flew their B-17, the Blue Hen Chick, to England. There they were assigned to the 447th Bomber Group of the 709th Squadron of the Eighth Air Force, based at Rattlesden near Bury St. Edmunds in East Anglia. During the final months of the war in Europe, the Blue Hen Chick made multiple runs against enemy targets. Once Ralph's required thirty-five missions were completed in February 1945, he volunteered to remain on active duty. By V-E Day in May 1945, he had flown 38 missions, been promoted to captain, and won the Air Medal with five oak leaf clusters.

Ralph Minker returned to the United States in early September 1945 and resumed his studies at Dickinson College. After graduating from Dickinson in 1947, he trained as a Methodist minister. He died at age 84 on August 5, 2008.

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

The Ralph L. Minker, Jr. Collection contains photocopies of original documents owned by the Historical Society of Delaware. Only those documents suitable for photocopying are part

of the Dickinson College collection. For additional materials, including artifacts, please contact the Historical Society of Delaware. The collection consists primarily of correspondence related to Ralph Minker's experiences during World War II. The collection of photocopies is housed in one document box and one oversized folder, and is divided into two series: Correspondence and Miscellaneous.

The Correspondence series contains copies of letters written by Ralph L. Minker, Jr. to family members, as well as copies of letters written to him by his father, mother, and two sisters. The letters are arranged in alphabetical order by author, and thereafter by date.

The Miscellaneous series contains photocopies of various documents from during and after World War II. This series includes military papers, supporting information on Ralph Minker's military service, clippings and family materials, and commentary on the scrapbook. The one oversized folder contains photocopies of the scrapbook.

COLLECTION INVENTORY

BOX 1 - MC 2001.15

CORRESPONDENCE

Minker, Bernice

- Folder 01) Letters to Ralph L. Minker, Jr. - 1943
- Folder 02) Letters to Ralph L. Minker, Jr. - 1944
(includes Poem, "The Soldier's Mom")
- Folder 03) Letters to Ralph L. Minker, Jr. - 1945

Minker, Edna

- Folder 04) Letters to Ralph L. Minker, Jr. - Mar. to July 1943
- Folder 05) Letters to Ralph L. Minker, Jr. - Aug. to Dec. 1943
- Folder 06) Letters to Ralph L. Minker, Jr. - Jan. to June 1944
- Folder 07) Letters to Ralph L. Minker, Jr. - July to Dec. 1944
- Folder 08) Letters to Ralph L. Minker, Jr. - Jan. to Apr. 1945
- Folder 09) Letters to Ralph L. Minker, Jr. - May to Oct. 1945

Minker, Ralph L., Sr.

- Folder 10) Letters to Ralph L. Minker, Jr. - 1943
- Folder 11) Letters to Ralph L. Minker, Jr. - 1944
- Folder 12) Letters to Ralph L. Minker, Jr. - 1945

Minker, Ralph L., Jr.

- Folder 13) Letters to family - undated [1943]
- Folder 14) Letters to family - Mar. to June 1943
- Folder 15) Letters to family - July to Sep. 1943
- Folder 16) Letters to family - Oct. to Dec. 1943
- Folder 17) Letters to family - Jan. to Mar. 1944
- Folder 18) Letters to family - Apr. to June 1944
- Folder 19) Letters to family - July to Sep. 1944
- Folder 20) Letters to family - Oct. to Dec. 1944
- Folder 21) Letters to family - Jan. to May 1945
- Folder 22) Letters to family - June to Aug. 1945

BOX 1 - MC 2001.15 (cont.)

CORRESPONDENCE (cont.)

Minker, Shirley

- Folder 23) Letters to Ralph L. Minker, Jr. - 1943
- Folder 24) Letters to Ralph L. Minker, Jr. - 1944
- Folder 25) Letters to Ralph L. Minker, Jr. - 1945

MISCELLANEOUS

- Folder 26) Military papers
- Folder 27) Supporting information on military service
- Folder 28) Clippings and family materials - 1945 to 1998
- Folder 29) Commentary on scrapbook - 1998

OVERSIZED - OC 2001.15

MISCELLANEOUS

- Folder 01) Scrapbook - 1946

This collection register was prepared by LeAnn Fawver, September 2001.