

THOMAS HOLCOMB

1879-1965

*Register of His Personal Papers*



by

Gibson B. Smith

*Occasional Paper*

HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION  
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. MARINE CORPS  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

1988

*The device reproduced on the front cover is the oldest military insignia in continuous use in the United States. It first appeared, as shown here, on Marine Corps buttons adopted in 1804. With the stars changed to five points this device has continued on Marine Corps buttons to the present day.*

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## Other Publications in the Occasional Papers Series

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*Vietnam Revisited: Conversation with William D. Broyles, Jr.* Colonel John G. Miller, USMC, editor. 11 December 1984. 48 pp.

*Bibliography on Khe Sanh USMC Participation.* Commander Ray W. Strubbe, CHC, USNR (Ret), compiler. April 1985. 54 pp.

*Alligators, Buffaloes, and Bushmasters: The History of the Development of the LVT Through World War II.* Major Alfred Dunlop Bailey, USMC (Ret). 1986. 272 pp. Reproduction of a master-of-arts thesis in history at the University of Utah, presented in March 1976, by a former LVT company commander in Vietnam.

*Leadership Lessons and Remembrances from Vietnam.* Lieutenant General Herman Nickerson, Jr., USMC (Ret). 1988. 93 pp. Reproduction of a series of articles which appeared in *Sea Tiger*, the weekly newspaper distributed in the III Marine Amphibious Force area of northern South Vietnam, while General Nickerson was force commander (June 1969-March 1970).

*The Problems of U.S. Marine Corps Prisoners of War in Korea.* James Angus MacDonald, Jr. 1988. 295 pp. A thesis prepared for a graduate-level degree in 1961 at the University of Maryland, this study has had a remarkable influence on official policies regarding prisoners of war since it was written. It is published for the use of the serious student of the POW experience.

*John Archer Lejeune, 1869-1942, Register of His Personal Papers.* Lieutenant Colonel Merrill L. Bartlett, USMC (Ret). 1988. 123 pp. Covers some of the more than 6,600 documents of the Lejeune Papers in the Library of Congress, photocopied for the Marine Corps Historical Center, and a small collection of related items donated to the Center. Correspondence of the Thirteenth Commandant is explored with particular reference to the nine years of his commandancy, which "remain the least known and appreciated of his accomplishments." Includes biographical sketch.

*To Wake Island and Beyond: Reminiscences.* Brigadier General Woodrow M. Kessler, USMC (Ret). 1988. 145 pp. Vivid and highly readable memoir detailing General Kessler's Marine service and, in particular, his efforts in helping to set up the meager defenses of Wake Island in World War II, his involvement in the subsequent battle, and his experiences as a Japanese prisoner of war. Published exactly as it was written in the author's legible handwriting.

# FOREWORD

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The History and Museums Division has undertaken the publication for limited distribution of various studies, theses, compilations, bibliographies, and monographs, as well as proceedings at selected workshops, seminars, symposia, and similar colloquia, which it considers to be of significant value to audiences interested in Marine Corps history. These "Occasional Papers," which are chosen for their intrinsic worth, must reflect structured research, present a contribution to historical knowledge not readily available in published sources, and reflect original content on the part of the author, compiler, or editor. It is the intent of the division that these occasional papers be distributed to selected institutions, such as service schools, official Department of Defense historical agencies, and directly concerned Marine Corps organizations, so the information contained therein will be available for study and exploitation.

The Thomas Holcomb papers particularly fit the criteria we have established for occasional papers, constituting, as they do, a significant body of material important to the better understanding of Marine Corps history. Their scholarly listing and abstraction was for the compiler a time-consuming labor, which was completed in good order. The extent of the collection and its resulting detailed register constituted a formidable publication problem in the face of expanding priority demands for time and funds posed by such other publications as operational histories of the Vietnam War. The occasional papers format, with its relatively inexpensive reproduction process and targeted distribution, provided a satisfactory solution to a lengthy delay in publication.

General Holcomb himself donated the papers to the then-Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps in 1963. They were put in first-stage, usable order by staff members of what is now the History and Museums Division. The papers primarily cover the period of General Holcomb's leadership as Commandant of the Marine Corps from December 1936 through December 1943; there are a few items from later years. They constitute a unique source of information about the Marine Corps and its leaders in the years leading up to World War II and during the crucial first years of battle. The compiler of this register, Gibson B. Smith, joined the staff of the National Archives in 1971 after completing work on a master's degree and a doctorate in history at Bryn Mawr College. Dr. Smith was the recipient of a Marine Corps Historical Program Research Grant to help edit and compile this register, but his efforts to help make the papers usable to researchers extended well beyond the grant's requirements. Currently, he is serving as appraisal archivist at the Washington National Records Center, where he helps to preserve more recent historical documents.

The index for this register was created by the joint efforts of Mr. Benis M. Frank and Mrs. Meredith P. Hartley, of the Center's Oral History Section. The volume itself was typeset and designed on computer screen by Mrs. Catherine A. Kerns of the Publications Production Section. In pursuit of accuracy and objectivity, the History and Museums Division welcomes comments on this publication from interested individuals and activities.



E. H. SIMMONS  
Brigadier General, U.S. Marine Corps (Retired)  
Director of Marine Corps History and Museums



# Preface

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The Thomas Holcomb Papers (P.C. 207) are an important contribution to the understanding of the political and social pressures exerted by and upon the office of Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps, from 1936 to 1944. During that time the Marine Corps grew from a small guard and expeditionary force of 17,000 men to over 400,000 men and women waging war over vast reaches of the Pacific Ocean. Although this collection of papers is very thorough on some details of Holcomb's administration of the Marine Corps, it ought to be used in conjunction with other manuscript collections from the period as well as the official files of the Commandant, located at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

There is no single item which stands out above the rest, but a number of letters exchanged by General Holcomb and Admiral Harold R. Stark reflect the close working relationship between the Commandant and the contemporary Chief of Naval Operations which made possible the phenomenal growth of the Marine Corps during these years. Much of the material in the collection shows Holcomb's tremendous concern for his men, particularly his officers, and therein also exhibits his ability to mold a successful, cohesive, fighting force.

Except for a few items from 1936 which pre-date his appointment as Major General Commandant (MGC) in December of that year and a number of letters from the early period of his retirement 1944-48, the entire collection dwells on Holcomb's seven years as Commandant.

The early part of the collection includes many letters from Shanghai, which follow the resumption of hostilities between the Chinese and Japanese in 1937-40. There is also a document containing excerpts of Major General Charles Lyman's comments on Holcomb's selection as Commandant; Lyman apparently was quite surprised at being by-passed for the job. These early letters also tend to go into greater detail about facilities, development of training, personnel matters, and even discipline problems at Parris Island, Quantico, and San Diego. Promotions and job preferences among the officer corps seemed to engage a great deal of Holcomb's attention in these personal letters. A large number of these early letters center on a few officers: Louis McCarty Little; Emile P. Moses; Douglas C. McDougal; William P. Upshur; Gilder Jackson, Jr.; John Beaumont; John Marston; Charles F. B. Price; and James Breckinridge. In most cases, the collection includes both the incoming letter and Holcomb's outgoing reply in the form of a typewritten carbon copy.

Throughout the collection are numerous social, political, and military invitations and a variety of fan mail and requests for favors from friends and strangers. In addition, the collection contains a number of family letters and miscellaneous business items of interest mainly to General Holcomb and his immediate family. Where appropriate, these letters are summarized or alluded to in the sections beginning "this folder also contains . . ." Those letters deemed important to Marine Corps history or explaining an important facet of General Holcomb's life have been paraphrased or covered in more detail in the initial description of each folder.

In the second half of the collection, roughly beginning in mid-1939, General Holcomb's letters become more brief and succinct and the variety and scope of his correspondents broaden considerably. With the approach of war, Holcomb exhibits a far greater concern for placing the right men in the right jobs, for getting key legislation passed to enlarge and strengthen the Marine Corps, and for stepped up publicity to place the Corps in the best light before the American people.

During this period of 1939-43 Holcomb loses several of his dearest friends in the Marine Corps—McDougal, Upshur, Breckinridge, and Beaumont—to terminal illnesses and accidental deaths. At the same time, he exhibits growing confidence in younger officers on their way up—Clayton B. Vogel, Holland M. Smith, Julian C. Smith, Charles D. Barrett, Henry Larsen, *et al.*—through

direct and indirect comments in his letters. Holcomb's masterful ability to play off and manipulate various conflicting demands of these often headstrong individuals was the mark of a true leader. Where possible, he tried to find suitable and challenging posts and assignments for them. Yet, it is obvious from a number of letters that he was not able to satisfy everyone. In every instance, however, he had the strength of character to leave the communications channels open to hear their complaints and act on them.

Holcomb's personal papers are by no means limited to correspondence with Marines who served with and often idolized him in World War II. Many letters are addressed to political contacts, friends, and other notables whom Holcomb courted in order to obtain the support needed in Congress, in the states, and even in the White House to gain the wherewithal to build up the Marine Corps. Evidence of this element of Holcomb's strategy can be seen in numerous letters to and from vital House and Senate committee members, especially with those such as Melvin J. Maas, whose experiences with the Corps made him an invaluable political ally in the annual appropriations struggles on behalf of Marine Corps projects. Holcomb also was on very good terms with such key committee leaders as Carl E. Vinson and David I. Walsh, whose respective military and naval affairs committees could make or break each of the armed services.

Additionally, Holcomb's sense of how to use the news media to best advantage appears very strongly in the second half of this collection. One of Holcomb's closest confidants, Samuel Meek, became his publicity troubleshooter and speechwriter. On several occasions Meek smoothed the way for the Marine Corps to gain the best public relations coverage in such periodicals as *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune*. The ebullient and dashing James "Jimmy" Roosevelt also surfaces in a number of letters acting as Holcomb's key liaison with the motion picture industry, another valuable tool in Holcomb's advertising blitz for the Marine Corps.

While Holcomb seemed to like showering praise and favors on his best officers, he was not hesitant to point out their shortcomings nor did he shy away from constructive criticisms. In the fall of 1943, just before the mantle of authority was to pass from Holcomb's shoulders, he dispatched a turgid and scathing critique of supply and equipment practices in the theaters of operation and called upon his successor, Alexander A. Vandegrift, to come up with a whole set of new policies and procedures to cope with the problem. He did not blame Vandegrift for the losses and waste of equipment, but he let him know that he expected a man of Vandegrift's caliber to be able to solve it.

The collection leaves several important facets of the Holcomb story untold — why Holcomb was selected to become Commandant over many senior officers, what went on at his staff meetings, and what kind of theories he espoused in the art of war. What we know conclusively of Holcomb is that under his tutelage the Marine Corps rose to world fame following its exploits at Wake Island, Guadalcanal, New Georgia, Bougainville, Tarawa, and Cape Gloucester.

In concluding my remarks, I would like to dedicate this book to my father, Lt Rayburn C. Smith, Jr., USN, whose own heroism in World War II as a fighter-director in the Pacific never received the attention it so justly deserved, and to my mother, Janet Bullett Smith, for her un-failing love, devotion, and encouragement during many hard and difficult years. Also I would like to acknowledge the kindness shown me by Joyce E. Bonnett, Richard A. Long, Charles Anthony Wood, and Henry I. Shaw, Jr., and many others on the staff of the Marine Corps Historical Center. And, finally, special thanks to my friend and typist, Mary Washington of the National Archives, without whom this register would not have seen the light of day.

GIBSON B. SMITH

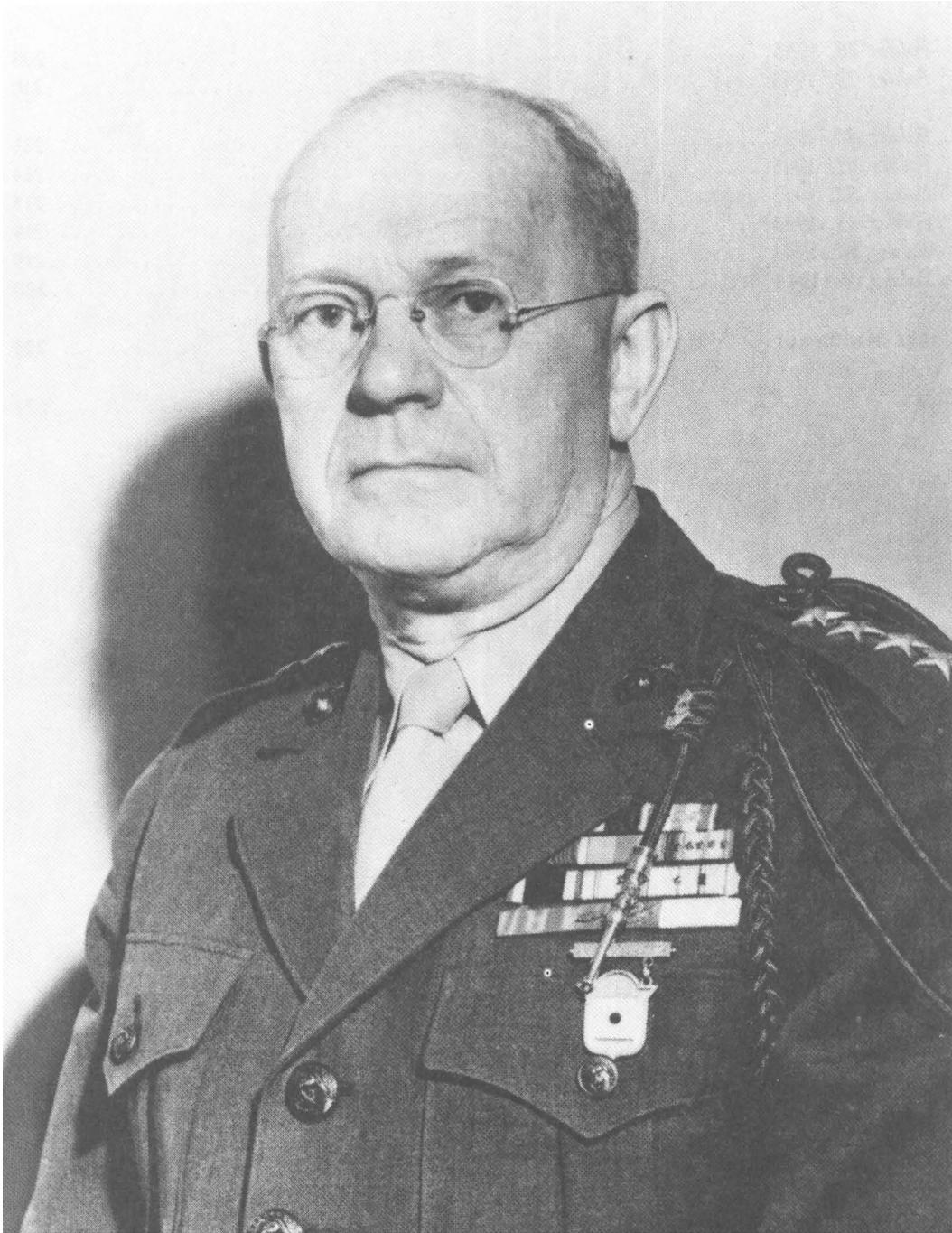
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*Lieutenant General Thomas Holcomb, 17th Commandant of the Marine Corps, 1936-1944.*

# BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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Thomas Holcomb was born on 5 August 1879, into a distinguished family of the historic town of New Castle, Delaware. He counted among his ancestors Commodore Joshua Barney, a naval hero of the American Revolution.

Holcomb's father, appointed to serve in the U.S. Treasury Department, in 1893 took the family to Washington, D.C., where young Holcomb attended Western High School for a curriculum that included military drills in uniform. It is perhaps here that he had his first taste of military discipline and tradition.

Unlike most of the other Marine Commandants of this century, Holcomb did not attend the U.S. Naval Academy. Since his father encouraged him to enter the business world, he did not attend college, but began his career as a cost clerk in the Bethlehem Steel shipyards at Sparrows Point, Maryland, near Baltimore.

After more than two years as a clerk, Holcomb decided that he wanted to become a Marine and, having passed the entrance examination, he entered the Corps on 13 April 1900 as a second lieutenant.

Holcomb's first tour of duty was with the North Atlantic Fleet, including some expeditionary force maneuvers at Culebra, Puerto Rico, between 1900 and 1903. His first real claim to fame was in winning the long-distance rifle championship at the International Matches at Ottawa, Canada, in 1902. In the summer of 1903, Holcomb had his first promotion and also was put in charge of the fledgling U.S. Marine Corps Rifle Team. He served on the team in 1901, 1902, 1903, 1907, and 1908, and led the team to the national championship in 1911.

Holcomb's main focus, however, shifted to the Far East during much of his tenure as a first lieutenant and then as a captain, 1908-14. From 1904 through most of 1905 and 1906, Holcomb was with the 1st Marine Brigade in the Philippines and then with the American Legation Guard in Peking. Early in 1908, Holcomb worked as a military aide at the White House and then, upon promotion to captain, returned to help the Marine Corps rifle team.

From 1908 to May 1914, Holcomb served in various capacities with the American Legation Guard at Peking and set himself the laborious task of learning Chinese. With only one interruption for the winning of the national rifle matches at Camp Perry in 1911, Holcomb diligently pursued the goal of becoming an expert on Chinese language and culture.

World War I in Europe brought a temporary end to Holcomb's Far East adventures. The new Major General Commandant, George Barnett, assembled a group of young, bright officers around him, including Holcomb, Ralph S. Keyser, and John A. Lejeune. While at Headquarters in Washington, Holcomb served as special aide-de-camp to Barnett, was a member of a number of key boards, and, above all, held sway and dominion over the improvement of rifle shooting in the Marine Corps with the official title of Inspector of Target Practice. In August 1916, Barnett was able to promote Holcomb to major with the general expansion of the Marine Corps resulting from the National Defense Act.

Marking another milestone, Holcomb married Beatrice Clover, the daughter of Rear Admiral Richardson Clover, on 11 November 1916, in Washington, D.C. They had one son, Franklin P. Holcomb, born in 1919, who later himself became a major in the Marine Corps Reserve.

Holcomb's first major command came soon after Woodrow Wilson's decision to place America at the side of Britain and France against Germany. Holcomb was put in charge of the 2d Battalion, 6th Marines, during its long preparation for American Expeditionary Force (AEF) duties at Quantico from August 1917 until the battalion saw action in France in 1918.

Holcomb's battalion left New York on 24 January 1918, on board the USS *Henderson*, and disembarked at St. Nazaire two weeks later. The battalion was then stationed at Robecourt for intensive training. By March and April, Holcomb and his men were assuming a support and fighting

position along the Toulon and Verdun front. For one more month, they went into intensive training at Montagny and then on 1 June they arrived at the Chateau-Thierry sector for their first and most heroic period of testing.

From 6 June until 6 July, Holcomb and his men were almost constantly manning the front lines for the murderous push through the Bois de Belleau (Belleau Wood). On the 6th, the 96th and 79th Companies of the 2d Battalion were able to attack and overrun the crucial town of Boursches, but for the next month, Holcomb, his men, and their allies took a severe pounding from lethal German gas attacks and precision firing. The 6th Marines, however, prevailed at Belleau Wood through sheer tenacity and from that group of men alone came many of the leaders of the Marine Corps for World War II and beyond.

After their success at Belleau Wood, Holcomb and the 6th Marine Regiment, of which he became second in command, went on to participate in the Aisne-Marne Offensive, the St. Mihiel Offensive, the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, and the march to the Rhine in the fall of 1918. For his bravery in France, Holcomb received the Navy Cross; the Silver Star with three oak leaf clusters; a Meritorious Service Citation from the Commander-in-Chief, AEF; the Purple Heart; the French Cross of the Legion of Honor; and the French Croix de Guerre with Palm.

After serving briefly with the occupation forces in Germany near Coblenz at the beginning of 1919, Holcomb returned to the United States and served as Major General Smedley D. Butler's chief of staff at Quantico until the summer of 1922. In the meantime (4 June 1920), he was promoted to lieutenant colonel. During the 1920s, Holcomb got several more opportunities for commanding troops: from 1922-1924 he was in charge of the Marine Barracks at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and from 1927 to 1930 he again was able to use his Chinese as a full colonel (1928) in charge of the American Legation Guard at Peking. The latter post, which included opportunity for wild hunting, brought him some of the greatest pleasure.

Holcomb's rise to prominence in the Marine Corps certainly was related to a sequence of training and educational opportunities pursued at the right time. In 1924-25, Holcomb attended the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth at Major General John A. Lejeune's nomination. Holcomb did not disappoint Lejeune's high opinion of him; he graduated with highest honors. Then, after serving as head of the Operations and Training Division at Headquarters from 1925 to 1927 and having the Peking command, Holcomb received two more training opportunities which acquainted him with leadership in both the Army and Navy. In 1930, he attended the Senior Course at the Naval War College at Newport and in rapid succession took classes at the Army War College at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, from 1931 to 1932.

The final preparations for his ascent to Commandant took place first within the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations from 1932 to 1934, where he served on various contract boards and performed special tasks for the CNO. Then, in January 1935, he returned to Quantico to head the Marine Corps Schools. As Commandant of the Schools, Holcomb put into actual practice many of the theoretical exercises relating to amphibious warfare which the new Major General Commandant, John Russell, had coalesced in 1933-34 at Quantico. Holcomb also used his administrative talents to push forward and develop the permanent buildings program at Quantico which replaced many of the temporary structures from World War I. Holcomb was promoted to brigadier general in March 1935 and remained at Quantico until his appointment as Major General Commandant in December 1936 to replace Russell.

Holcomb's tenure as Commandant of the Marine Corps over the seven years from 1936 to 1943 coincided with a period of incredible growth and change for the Corps itself. The letters included in the Holcomb Personal Papers reveal the enormous responsibilities and challenges that lay before Holcomb during this period. President Franklin D. Roosevelt showed the utmost confidence in Holcomb's abilities, first by extending him beyond the normal four-years term as Commandant in 1940 and then by exempting Holcomb from mandatory retirement at age 64 in August 1943.

Holcomb's struggles as Commandant were not only with representing the Marine Corps and its interests to the American people, the President, Congress, and Navy Department, but also with managing the internal squabbling of a superabundance of talented leaders within the Corps. He

had to administer a massively expanding force which in 1936 consisted of barely 17,000 men, but which upon his retirement in 1944 approached 400,000.

The stresses and strains upon Holcomb caused him to yearn for the peace and contentment of retired life as a gentleman farmer. He purchased Rosecroft in southern Maryland in 1940 for that purpose, but Roosevelt and Congress would not allow such an easy out; he was promoted to major general in 1938, lieutenant general in 1942, and then made the first full general in the Marine Corps history in 1944. Even upon Holcomb's official retirement from active service, there were attempts to keep him in Washington and rumors that he would serve in some special capacity as expert on amphibious warfare or become Marine Corps representative to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As he was about to receive the Distinguished Service Medal from Congress for his contribution to the war effort as Commandant, Holcomb was nominated to become American Minister to South Africa.

For the next four years, June 1944 to June 1948, Holcomb served as chief diplomatic representative in Pretoria (and Capetown), South Africa. Dealing with Prime Minister General Jan Smuts proved a challenging assignment. Because of mutual interests and common military backgrounds, Holcomb and Smuts grew to admire each other greatly. But each proved to be brutally stubborn at the negotiating table, and it was only with great luck and forbearance that Holcomb was able to persist and win a positive settlement of South Africa's lend-lease debts to the United States in 1947. Holcomb also helped to originate American contact with other regions of Africa.

Upon leaving Pretoria in 1948, Holcomb had completed 48 years of service to the government and at last was able to enjoy the uninterrupted pursuits of travel, hunting, reminiscing, photography, and vegetable farming at Rosecroft. He moved to Chevy Chase, Maryland, in 1956, and finally returned to his native New Castle, Delaware, just one year before his death on 24 May 1965.



# DESCRIPTIVE INVENTORY

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Manuscript  
Box 1  
*Folder 1*  
1936

**25 November.** BGen T. Holcomb, Commandant, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia, to the Chief of Naval Operations (Registered Publication Section), Washington, D.C.

A routine quarterly report of registered naval publications held at Quantico, including war plans. The document is of little value in itself, except that it marked the end of Holcomb's tour of duty in Quantico as the commanding officer of Marine Corps Schools.

This folder also contains correspondence and sworn statements relating to an automobile accident in which Mrs. Holcomb's car struck a pedestrian on a dark, stormy night in Virginia.

*Folder 2*  
1937

**12 January.** Holcomb to the Post Surgeon, Marine Base, Quantico, and to Commanding General, Marine Base, Quantico.

Holcomb writes a letter of commendation for the efficient professional care given his son, Franklin Holcomb, by LCdr C. R. Tatum, USN.

**20 January.** RAdm Henry Butler, USN, Commandant, Charleston Navy Yard, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

Butler is concerned over the proposed reassignment of LtCol M. E. Shearer, CO of the Charleston Marine Barracks, to duty at Washington Headquarters. Shearer has told Butler he wishes to stay. Butler asks that Holcomb reconsider and revoke Shearer's orders.

**22 January.** LtCol Maurice E. Shearer, CO, MB, Charleston, to Holcomb.

Shearer declares that he was not the instigator of Butler's letter to Holcomb and fully appreciates the honor that Holcomb is bestowing on him by calling him up to Washington. Nonetheless he would be quite satisfied to remain at his present duty station. He regrets having to leave it so soon, but he will never shirk his duty either.

**23 January.** Holcomb to RAdm Henry Butler, Charleston, South Carolina.

Holcomb informs the admiral that he has definitely decided to detach Shearer because the latter is the only man of his rank and reputation immediately available for very important duties with the Adjutant and Inspector's Department. The rapid promotion of Marine Corps officers in the past three years plus the reorganizations of the Fleet Marine Force (FMF) and other fleet units had caused severe dislocations and reassignment problems. Holcomb has the greatest confidence in Shearer's replacement, LtCol Joseph Rossell, and is sure that he will meet Butler's needs.

**25 January.** Holcomb to Col Frank E. Evans, USMC Recruiting Office, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb discusses Evans' desire to be detailed again in Hawaii or some foreign post. He explains that foreign duty has become so rare that it is highly sought after by Marine officers. Unfortunately, Evans is not high enough on the pecking order to qualify this time. Holcomb ends by suggesting that Evans apply himself vigorously to finding more recruits since the Marine Corps is well below authorized strength.

**25 January.** Holcomb to LtCol Maurice E. Shearer, Charleston, South Carolina.

Holcomb understands that Admiral Butler acted on his own and very much appreciates Shearer's desire to stay there and complete his normal tour of duty. But Col Vogel had assured Holcomb that only Shearer would satisfy Vogel for the position in the Adjutant and Inspector's Department.

**31 January.** Lt Augustus F. Hohl, CHC, USN with the FMF off San Clemente Island, California, to Holcomb.

Chaplain Hohl requests that Holcomb furnish him with the names of people at Headquarters (USMC), who might wish to serve as news correspondents for the *Quantico Sentry*. He briefly discusses the success and value of the *Sentry* newspaper for the Marine Corps and then Hohl gives his impressions of the enthusiasm prevalent among participants in the FMF fleet maneuvers.

This folder also contains 11 other letters of a routine nature relating to Holcomb's request for a two-day leave of absence; several letters of congratulations on his becoming the Major General Commandant (MGC) from old friends; correspondence on Mrs. Holcomb's change in driver's license and registration; a letter of recommendation from Holcomb to the U.S. Army Examining Board praising Lt A. P. Booker, a son of a friend from New Castle, Delaware; two written requests for autographed photos of the new MGC; and a letter from Sen John G. Townshend, Jr., of Delaware, inviting Holcomb to attend a political dinner reception in honor of newly elected members of Congress from Delaware.

*Folder 3*  
1937

**5 February.** Col Charles F. B. Price, CO, 4th Marines, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Price comments on the need for younger, more inspiring officers and suggests that Holcomb try to replace the old-timers with "go-getter" types. In addition, Price is seeking authorization from the Commandant to purchase more helmets to ameliorate the hot weather conditions for his men.

**8 February.** Holcomb to Lt Augustus F. Hohl, CHC, USN, MCB, San Diego, California.

Holcomb agrees to find someone at Headquarters to take on the job of gathering news notes for the *Sentry*.

**8 February.** BGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, FMF, MCB, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

McDougal reports that the FMF maneuvers have shown up some of the difficulties of handling the landing boats in surf and the need for expert "seamanship." There has been little sickness in spite of several dunkings in the cold Pacific

waters. The island is well suited for many types of training, and the results of these exercises have pleased McDougal. He hopes that Holcomb will speed up the arrival of his new chief of staff, Maj Schmidt.

**9 February.** Holcomb to Col Holland M. Smith, USMC, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb discusses Gen Little's plans to vacate his home shortly after 1 May. He then relates the positive outcome of the Appropriations Committee meetings, which depended on smooth delivery, mutual cooperation, goodwill, and, above all, extensive rehearsing beforehand. Holcomb expects that the outcome will approximate the appropriations figures approved by the Bureau of the Budget. Finally, the MGC warns Smith that he may require extensive coaching from Holcomb in order to cope with his new job at Headquarters.

**15 February.** Holcomb to LtGen Robert L. Bullard, USMC (Ret), New York, New York.

Holcomb congratulates Bullard on his recent book entitled *American Soldiers Also Fought* which tries to show how American forces, and particularly the Marines, made a solid contribution to Allied fighting in France in 1918. At the same time Holcomb comments on Gen Catlin's book, *With the Help of God and a Few Marines*, which the MGC felt was a direct affront or embarrassment to Holcomb and other officers of the 4th Marine Brigade. Finally, he deplored Gen Harbord's derogatory critique of the 7th Infantry.

**20 February.** Extracts from correspondence of Gen Lyman concerning the appointment of Gen Holcomb as MGC.

These brief extracts, dated variously from 23 November 1936 to 20 February 1937, reveal that MajGen Charles Lyman fully expected to be selected as the MGC in November 1936, and that he showed genuine surprise at Holcomb's selection and a certain amount of bitterness over it. Nevertheless, he and his correspondents back Holcomb fully now that he is the MGC, even though in their hearts they feel him to be second best. (It is believed that Col John H. Magruder III added these extracts to the Holcomb Personal Papers when he helped to arrange this collection).

**23 February.** Holcomb to BGen Frederic L. Bradman, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb asks Bradman to "keep under his hat" the plan to name him as Chairman of the Equipment Board of the Marine Corps. According to Holcomb, this board is doing vital development work which could only be performed at Quantico. Holcomb also announces that he wants to place McDougal in command of Parris Island.

**23 February.** Holcomb to BGen James J. Meade, CG, FMF, San Diego, California.

Holcomb remarks that McDougal has high praise for the performance of the FMF in its latest maneuvers. The Bureau of Navigation has told the MGC that Meade is required to take the Senior Course at the Naval War College as a prerequisite for the Advanced Course which he preferred. Holcomb wants Meade's opinion on which of the battalions of the FMF should participate in the reenactment of the Battle of the Crater at Petersburg, Virginia. Holcomb also seeks to know when Meade wants to arrive at Quantico and leave for the Naval War College.

**25 February.** BGen F. L. Bradman, Naval War College, to Holcomb.

Bradman shows displeasure in the selection of McDougal for the Parris Island job he wanted. He feels that McDougal's experience with the FMF would have proved more valuable for service with the Equipment Board than Bradman's. Nevertheless, Bradman is prepared to take on any task assigned him and would like to have the bungalow at Quantico that he and Holcomb occupied.

**27 February.** Holcomb to BGen F. L. Bradman, Naval War College.

Holcomb is surprised to learn of Bradman's preference for Parris Island over Quantico, especially since Bradman had never replied to a letter Holcomb wrote him ordering him to go to Parris Island. Holcomb explains that he favors a system of notifying officers several months in advance of proposed transfers. He is diametrically opposed to Gen Heywood's method which was to give 24-hour notice. The only drawback to the Holcomb system is that unforeseen circumstances can alter such advance planning. Holcomb felt sure that Bradman would want the bungalow, but Bradman should write to Gen Lyman for a final approval on it.

**27 February.** Holcomb to MajGen Charles H. Lyman, CO, MB, Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb discusses housing arrangements for the three general officers slated to go to Quantico and presumes that Lyman will be able to accommodate all of them comfortably. He regrets that he will not be able to issue orders for Lyman to go to Alabama this year and sing for the ladies, but the Comptroller General is being very strict on such matters. Holcomb compliments the Quantico polo team.

This folder also contains three letters relating to a Veterans' Appeals Case for Mr. Llewelyn T. McKee, Jr.; six letters of congratulations on his promotion to MGC, many of which seek favors; a letter of thanks from the President of the New York World's Fair 1939 Inc., for Holcomb's attendance at a dinner in honor of the diplomatic corps; one letter from Holcomb to a friend explaining that he does not make selections for prospective candidates for the Naval Academy; two financial letters regarding family bonds and checkbooks; three letters regarding the graduation exercises at the Basic School in Philadelphia; one letter from the officer in charge of the Mess Hall at Quantico seeking a reference for civilian employment; a letter to Mrs. Rawlins Hume suggesting reading material for a speech on Chinese dignitaries of the past; and a letter to Samuel Meek stating that Holcomb will accept his dinner invitation in New York but cannot stay at the Yale Club.

*Folder 4*  
1937

**1 March.** BGen F. L. Bradman, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, to Holcomb.

Bradman respectfully agrees to accept and enjoy the assignment to the Equipment Board at Quantico and has asked Lyman for the bungalow. His note concerning the Parris Island assignment must not have reached Holcomb.

**1 March.** MajGen Charles H. Lyman, CG, MB Quantico, to Holcomb.

Lyman also regrets that he won't be able to go to Alabama. He has already given the bungalow to Buttrick, so Bradman will have Barker's house; he will also have his hands full with the Equipment Board.

**5 March.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, FMF, MCB, San Diego, California.

Holcomb discusses the Naval Appropriations Bill announced in the House. The bad news is the \$82,000 to be cut from the previously anticipated Marine Corps budget. Most cuts are not too serious and Holcomb hopes that the Senate will restore the items that have been cut.

**9 March.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal.

In discussing high-level assignments, Holcomb mentions that he wants to send McDougal up to San Francisco to fill in until Lyman arrives. He thinks that John Beaumont will get to San Diego by June and is counting on E. P. Moses to hold San Diego in the meantime. Holcomb then seeks McDougal's reaction to the idea of having F. E. Pierce as chief of staff at Parris Island.

Holcomb then turns to a discussion of guns. He wants first to try out anti-aircraft batteries at Parris Island, which is near the factories making them, and then later try them at San Diego. Unlike Lyman, Holcomb favors keeping the Headquarters of the FMF at San Diego.

**11 March.** BGen James T. Buttrick, CO, MB, Parris Island, to Holcomb.

He welcomes Holcomb's visit to Parris Island and adds that the azaleas are at their peak. He urges that Holcomb not delay his departure.

**15 March.** Holcomb to MajGen James C. Breckinridge, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb announces that Breckenridge can leave San Francisco by 1 June by steamer. McDougal will relieve him until Lyman arrives in mid-July.

**15 March.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal.

Holcomb appreciates the photographs of the FMF maneuvers. He encloses McDougal's orders for temporary duty in San Francisco and discusses the suitability of arrangements for having his belongings shipped directly to Parris Island. He does not need to come to Washington for consultation since Holcomb himself will visit McDougal in San Francisco. Holcomb suggests that McDougal wait until August and September to take his summer leave because those are the worst months at Parris Island.

**16 March.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal.

Holcomb seeks McDougal's opinion on a Chief of Naval Operations plan to hold the FLEX No. 4 at Culebra between 15 October and 25 December 1937. The exercises would involve both the East Coast contingents of the Marines and some Army personnel.

**16 March.** Holcomb to Capt Isaac S. K. Reeves, USN, Naval Hospital, Portsmouth, Virginia.

Holcomb replies to Reeves' telegram of 15 March by refusing to grant Reeves' request to be ordered to Quantico. Holcomb felt that the present surgeon, Capt William L. Mann, Jr., USN, is performing well and wishes to remain another year there.

**17 March.** Holcomb to Col Joseph C. Fegan, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb orders Fegan to come down to Washington for a conference on 18 May and duty at Headquarters. Holcomb then discusses upcoming inspection

trips. He ends by praising James Roosevelt for securing permission for his son, Franklin Holcomb, to use the White House pool to help him recover from a 1936 illness.

**22 March.** Col Anthony J. D. Biddle, Pinehurst, North Carolina, to Holcomb.

Biddle seeks permission to present a copy of his Marine Corps manual, *Do or Die*, to the Canadian Military Institute. The book had just been simultaneously published and copyrighted in Canada and the U.S. (Holcomb's reply of the same date grants Biddle permission to do it).

**22 March.** Holcomb to RAdm Charles P. Snyder, USN, President of the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb dislikes the idea of having sergeants used as chauffeurs since it usually is a desirable billet for privates and corporals. But he is ordering Gen Little to provide Adm Snyder a sergeant. Holcomb then explains that budgetary considerations have forced him to be very frugal in the allocation of Marines to the various naval stations. This is especially the case because Holcomb has put much effort into beefing up the FMF and making it a viable force. The MGC ends with a fond hope that the Marines are doing well at the Naval War College and that Snyder will attend the Marine Corps Team presentation this year.

**31 March.** BGen Douglas C. McDougal to Col Emile P. Moses (carbon copy).

A letter of commendation for Moses praises his contributions to the FMF, especially Moses' successful training of the 2d Marine Brigade.

This folder also contains Holcomb's correspondence with Maj F. R. Turin, USMCR, of the Norfolk Advertising Board concerning his book on Norfolk; with Mrs. George Barnett, wife of the former Commandant, concerning her desire for a special favor in regard to the Naval Academy; with Col J. J. Staley of the National Press Club in Washington seeking to interview Holcomb; and with Henry Jessen of San Antonio, Texas, desiring a copy of Holcomb's photograph.

*Folder 5*  
1937

**5 April.** RAdm Hayne Ellis, Commandant, 9th Naval District, Great Lakes Naval Station, Illinois, to Holcomb.

Ellis refers to a conversation with the MGC in which they discussed increasing the Marine guard personnel at Great Lakes and encloses a memorandum of 1 April (a copy of which is attached to the letter) prepared by Maj Roy C. Swink on that matter. Basically Ellis wants the addition of a first or second lieutenant for purposes of parading an honor guard in front of visiting dignitaries. At present he has only a Marine gunner to accomplish the task.

**8 April.** Holcomb to RAdm Hayne Ellis.

Holcomb understands the admiral's concern for having an adequate Marine guard, but because of the general expansion of naval activities, the MGC could not grant his request without hurting other vital functions. He will try to authorize the replacement of the Marine gunner with a lieutenant in June 1937. For purposes of illustrating the tightness of Marine staffing patterns, Holcomb lists all the new requirements for officers in the face of a continued freeze on USMC personnel in fiscal year 1938.

**13 April.** Captain Thaddeus A. Thomson, Jr., USN, U.S. Naval Attache, Rome, Italy, to Holcomb.

An old friend, Thomson congratulates Holcomb and wishes him luck with his new job in Washington. Thomson also commends the Marine serving on his own staff in Rome for his fine coverage of the Italo-Ethiopian War.

**27 April.** Holcomb to RAdm Charles P. Snyder, USN, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb plans to order Maj William E. Riley to replace Col DeWitt Peck as Marine representative on the Naval War College staff in 1938. He trusts that Riley's FMF experience, his intelligence, and his "pleasing personality" will satisfy Snyder. Gen Meade is nervous about taking the Senior Course at Newport because there might not be any other flag officers. Holcomb, however, feels that it is the right course for Meade. Finally, Holcomb praises the close relationship existing between the Naval War College and the Marine Corps Schools at Quantico; the latter are hard at work preparing their War College Problem for presentation at Newport.

**28 April.** MajGen Charles H. Lyman, CG, MB, Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Lyman forwards two letters (Enclosures 1 and 2 are attached but not the third mentioned later by Lyman) in regard to a small-bore civilian rifle match that he has sponsored for shooters from North Carolina, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. According to the correspondents the matches went very well.

**28 April.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, FMF, MCB, San Diego, California.

Holcomb asks McDougal's opinion on what type of clothing, especially uniforms, Holcomb will need for his trip to the South and West. The MGC reports that he is pleased with CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) work in tidying up Quantico's appearance. He looks forward to seeing McDougal in San Francisco.

This folder also contains several letters and a memorandum from the Texas Oil Co., regarding gasoline credit cards; a letter from Maj W. S. van Dyke, Jr., of the Loew's Theatre Co., inviting the Holcombs to visit his studio in California; an order from Holcomb for 400 cigars from the Philippines; a letter from the Honorable John M. Houston (R-Kansas), House Committee on Appropriations, seeking a photograph of Holcomb and thanking him for courtesies extended at the Regimental Parade; a letter of old reminiscences from Capt E. W. Estes of New York discussing a chicken-shooting incident involving Holcomb and asking about Holcomb's affiliation with the Naval Academy; a letter for Mrs. Holcomb from the Pennsylvania Indemnity Corp., relating to the settlement of claims in her auto accident of the previous December; a letter from Mr. Lewis Wood of the Washington Bureau of the *New York Times* seeking Holcomb's opinion on a new audio system used at the Gridiron Club dinner they attended together; a letter from Dean N. Harding, president of the 82d Co., 6th Regiment, U.S. Marine AEF Association, electing Holcomb to honorary membership; a letter from Sol Bloom, director of the USS *Constitution* Sesquicentennial Commission, hoping Holcomb will enjoy the book being sent to him; letters to and from Col H. G. Claudius of Oakland, California, concerning Holcomb's honorary membership in the Headquarters Company of the Scabbard and Blade; a letter from Capt Lewis McSherry, USA (Ret), informing Holcomb of his election to honorary membership in the Army and Navy Club of San

Francisco; Holcomb's business note to the Chevy Chase Club; a letter from Basil H. Bonsios, asking Holcomb to write something for his book on Greek contributions to America; and a letter from Biltmore Industries enclosing suit materials for Holcomb's perusal and possible approval.

*Folder 6*  
1937

1 May. BGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, FMF, MCB, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

McDougal explains the different types of weather the Holcombs will encounter on their trip and the kinds of clothing he would recommend they bring. Because of the intense heat, McDougal suggests that Holcomb cancel his Southern trip until the fall and even then seek more northerly routes to avoid the heat. He also is anxious to see Holcomb in San Francisco and will brief Moses on the San Diego situation. Finally, he asks Holcomb to suggest how the FMF administration should be handled until Gen Little arrives to take command.

2 May. Holcomb to MajGen Charles H. Lyman, CG, MB, Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb upbraids Lyman for by-passing him and expressing his own opinions to Gen Milton Reckord of the National Rifle Association on the matter of having the FMF participate in the reenactment of the Battle of Antietam in Virginia. Although Holcomb agreed with Lyman's conclusions in his letter to Reckord (27 April letter is attached) that the FMF is already overcommitted and would not be available, the Commandant insists that this is a policy matter. He tells Lyman that Reckord's original letter should have been forwarded to the MGC in the first place for direct answering from Headquarters.

3 May. MajGen Charles H. Lyman to Holcomb.

This is basically an apology on Lyman's part though he still believes he was acting in the best interest of the Marine Corps to straighten out Reckord on the Antietam request. Lyman intends no embarrassment to Holcomb personally (attached is Reckord's April 21 letter).

5 May. Col Emile P. Moses, CO, 2d Marine Brigade, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Moses has learned of the MGC's impending visit to the West and suggests quarters for the Holcomb family. He asks the MGC to provide him with a short summary of Holcomb's service which he can circulate to the local newspapers. Moses is glad that Franklin Holcomb has recovered well enough to join his parents on the trip.

6 May. Sen David I. Walsh (D-Massachusetts), Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, to Holcomb.

He forwards to Holcomb a copy of a Senate document setting forth all the "essential information an American should have at hand about the Navy." (Holcomb congratulates him on getting out this publication in a thank-you note of 11 May).

12 May. Holcomb to Conoco Travel Bureau, Denver, Colorado.

Holcomb outlines both his proposed route to and from the West Coast and lists his cars, passengers, and daily mileage for the purpose of obtaining Conoco's

official passports, tour aid packages (which include tourist literature on sights, routings, accommodations), and two Conoco gasoline credit cards.

24 May. BGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, Department of the Pacific, San Francisco, California, to Holcomb.

McDougal assumes command of the Department upon arrival from San Diego (Breckinridge will leave within the week). McDougal stresses to Holcomb that the Marine Corps should use the occasion of the dedication of the Golden Gate Bridge to project the best image of the Marine Corps instead of being a subsidiary part of the Navy parades. He suggests that the San Diego Marine Band be brought up for this purpose. McDougal asks Holcomb to authorize the whole Drum and Bugle Corps to participate.

25 May. Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal.

Holcomb tells McDougal that he has sent him a radiogram on the subject of the San Diego Band proposal. Holcomb expresses his opinion that the thousands of dollars in travel costs could be better spent on other more vital activities, especially in view of possible cuts in Marine Corps appropriations. Holcomb fully appreciates McDougal's concern for uplifting the Corps' image, but he underlines the fact that the present CNO, Adm William D. Leahy, wants to have the Marine Corps act and appear as an integral part of the Navy and not as a separate service. Holcomb encloses a copy of a memorandum (24 May enclosure is attached) regarding the proper command relationship of the Commanding General, Department of the Pacific, and the Commandant of the 12th Naval District.

28 May. Holcomb to H. N. Wiseman, Bureau of the Budget, Treasury Department.

Holcomb thanks Wiseman for courtesies extended by the Bureau of the Budget, and provides a list of priority increases in Marine Corps strength by unit and in order of importance.

This folder also contains a number of routine invitations and letters including correspondence from J. Rogers of New Castle, Delaware, on the amount of auto insurance the MGC had for Western trip; an invitation from Charles O. Gridley, President of the National Press Club in Washington, asking Holcomb to be his guest on the occasion of its "Anchors Aweigh" celebration at Quantico; a letter from Holcomb to Conoco altering his travel route slightly; a letter to E. P. Moses regarding meals and quarters in San Diego; a letter from Congressman P. H. Drewry of the Naval Affairs Committee thanking Holcomb for his photograph and the kind cooperation of Marines in Virginia for the reenactment of the Battle of the Crater; a letter from Holcomb to the Regents of Mount Vernon College suggesting Col John Potts as the new Superintendent of the College; three letters to and from the Washington Loan and Trust Co. to alter Holcomb's checking account deposit procedures; a letter to Col C. R. Sander-son of Philadelphia regarding the automobile tag he presented to the MGC; two letters from an attorney, Norma Hardy Britton, asking that Holcomb raise the salary of a beleaguered USMC gardener, Benjamin Dooley, as well as seeking to clear his reputation (Holcomb agrees to raise the man's salary in a subsequent letter); several business letters regarding Holcomb's boat and car; and a request from Maj Claude Larkin seeking a photo.

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**3 August.** Holcomb to Dr. Stanley K. Hornbeck, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb writes a letter of recommendation on behalf of Col John Marston emphasizing his broad experience, his pleasant personality, and his courageous will. Holcomb personally chose Marston for his present post in Peking.

**3 August.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little, CG, FMF, MCB, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Little wants to make sure that the Marines make a good showing in the parade to be held in honor of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy's visit to San Diego. He also tells Holcomb that he would like to be given authority to hold the FMF intact despite all the demands placed on it by the Navy. Perhaps personnel from other Marine units could be used to meet RAdm Claude C. Bloch's request for a Marine guard at Reeves Field, Terminal Island. (Little encloses a letter from Bloch to ComBaseFor, 28 July 1937).

**5 August.** Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little.

Holcomb points out that Adm Bloch as CinCUSFlt lacks the authority to order FMF units to guard duty and emphasizes that this would set a bad precedent. Holcomb suggests that the 15 men be taken from a proposed increase at Anacostia and be placed instead on the USS *Argonne* whose Marine detachment already handles Reeves Field duty. Adm Leahy agrees with Holcomb that Little should try to straighten out the matter with Bloch directly.

**6 August.** Holcomb to LtCol DeWitt Peck, USMC, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb wants Peck to take up the question with Adm Snyder of having Maj William E. Riley replace Peck at the Naval War College instead of LtCol John W. Thomason. He states that Thomason has had no FMF experience and did not graduate from the Marine Corps Schools at Quantico.

Holcomb also notes that he had a fine trip west with his son Frank, who shows great improvement except that his knee remains rather stiff.

**10 August.** RAdm Manley H. Simons, Commanding Battleship Division One, en route from San Francisco to San Pedro, California, to Holcomb.

Simons relates his difficult personnel situation with the loss of several key staff members and a corresponding increase in responsibilities in battleship gunnery and antiaircraft defense. He asks Holcomb to change the order detaching LtCol Henry D. Linscott from his command, and says Linscott himself wants to stay.

**16 August.** Holcomb to RAdm Manley H. Simons aboard USS *Arizona*

Holcomb replies in the affirmative to Simons' request that Linscott be kept on his staff as the expert on landing operations until at least June 1938.

**17 August.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little, CG, FMF, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Little describes the elaborate tour and warm reception given Assistant Secretary of the Navy Charles Edison and a number of prominent military and civilian leaders, including Generals Pendleton and Russell. Edison remarked that it was the best parade he had ever seen. Little reports that he made a successful plea

to Edison for additional space where officers could congregate without encroaching on the areas allotted to enlisted men. He ends with another entreaty to Holcomb to keep the FMF intact.

**19 August.** Holcomb to MajGen L. McCarty Little.

Holcomb fully appreciates the excellent impression made by the Marine Corps parade on Edison and shares Little's concern about the FMF being "diverted from its basic purpose." Nonetheless, the grave China situation forces Holcomb to dispatch the 6th Marines there; if he had not done so willingly the Navy Department surely would have forced him to do so. Finally, Holcomb endorsed Little's request to the President for half-pay status during his 33-day absence.

**20 August.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, MB, Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb explains to McDougal that Beaumont was selected over him to command the 2d Brigade of the 6th Marines being sent to China, because Beaumont was the regular brigade commander and had sufficient China experience for the task. Adm Yarnell had specified that he wanted Marines, not Army men, for the Shanghai job.

Holcomb is pleased with McDougal's success in speeding up the training of recruits. At the same time, Holcomb demands to have an explanation for McDougal's strange order requiring all drivers of automobiles to have insurance; this caused quite a storm of protest. He assumes that Holland Smith's visit to Parris Island the next week will help iron out all difficulties.

**24 August.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little to Holcomb.

Little requests a replacement for Capt Julian N. Frisbie at the San Diego Recruit Depot Sea School. This arose from the fact that Little had been forced to transfer Frisbie to fill the important vacancy of Base Adjutant left by Maj Matthew H. Ames who had just left for China.

This folder also contains the following: a letter to Maj W. S. van Dyke, USMCR, at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studio, Hollywood, California, expressing Holcomb's delight at visiting the studio and thanking him for the souvenir photographs; a routine order by Holcomb for Cuban cigars; three letters exchanged with J. Rogers Holcomb regarding insurance for the Slow Boat; two letters to Bell and Howell in pursuit of information about his stolen 16mm movie camera; a letter to Alfred Cohn, the Los Angeles Collector of Customs, concerning photographs taken on Holcomb's trip west; two letters and two cables exchanged with Preston Brown of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, regarding the possibility of his daughter-in-law returning safely from Shanghai; two letters from Mrs. Holcomb to the Pennsylvania Indemnity Corp., about insurance for her broken automobile windshield; a letter to the Division of Motor Vehicles, Richmond, Virginia, seeking a change of address in the Holcomb's auto registrations from Quantico to Washington; Mrs. Holcomb's waiver of any claim against the estate of her uncle, Dr. George F. Clover; and a letter from Holcomb to LtCol Gilder D. Jackson regretting that the MGC could neither make an address nor inspect the Basic School upon his visit to Philadelphia on September 17.

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**2 September.** Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little, CG, FME, San Diego, California.

Holcomb informs Little that he has no available person qualified to fill the vacancy at the Sea School in San Diego. He surmises that it is very quiet in San Diego now that the 6th Regiment has left for Shanghai.

**13 September.** Holcomb to MajGen James C. Breckinridge, CG, MB, Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb informs Breckinridge that he has written the Virginia Military Institute rejecting its request to have the Quantico Marine Band play. This was based on a similar case in which Holcomb had refused a request from the Gold Star Mothers of Staunton, Virginia.

He praises Breckinridge for the idea to give the farmers of Manassas a party. He urged Breckinridge to use whatever influence he had in the Interior Department to prevent the removal of the Civilian Conservation Corps from Quantico; Holcomb felt that he himself had done everything within his own powers to achieve that end to no avail.

**20 September.** MajGen James C. Breckinridge to Holcomb.

He forwards the schedule of events for the graduation of 50 medical students at Quantico; he hopes that Holcomb not only will attend but also address the students as per the schedule.

This folder also contained three letters from J. Rogers Holcomb on boat insurance; a letter from Jack Dooley of the National Lead Co., New York, regarding a request for a photograph; a letter from Murray E. Hillman, President of the Hillman Press in New York, asking for Holcomb's comments on the recently released history of the 2d Division, AEF; Gov Charles F. Hurley of Massachusetts inviting Holcomb to attend the Constitution Day Parade as his special guest; a letter from Mrs. Frank B. Steele, President of the Huguenot Society of Washington nominating Holcomb to be on the Program Committee and urging his attendance at the winter meetings; a letter from Mr. William L. Zimmer, Jr., of Petersburg, Virginia., notifying Holcomb that he wanted to send him a copy of a book on Robert E. Lee as a memento of his visit to Petersburg; and letters to and from Mr. J. K. Lilly of Indianapolis, concerning a deluxe set of Stephen Foster scores sent from Eli Lilly and Co., and excerpts of favorable letters and articles congratulating Lilly for enabling such a wide distribution of these beloved songs for concert bands all over the world.

*Folder 9*

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**9 October.** BGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, MB, Parris Island, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

McDougal discusses the various appointees Holcomb plans to send to Parris Island as discussed in Holcomb's letter of 6 October. He then admits that he can spare Capt M. A. Cramer for duties in Washington. He also praises the organizational abilities of his quartermaster, Maj James W. Flett, who has fixed up so many older buildings.

McDougal briefly describes his visit to Hilton Head, analyzing its physical attractions and the social situation there. In regard to the arrival of the 3d Anti-Aircraft Battalion at Parris Island in the period December through May, McDougal foresees dislocations in both housing and allocation of funds.

11 October. Holcomb to Cdr Joel T. Boone, MC, USN, FMF, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb asks Boone to make inquiries about the actual health of LtCol Harry K. Pickett, because Pickett might be assigned to Asiatic Station next summer. He guesses that San Diego is no longer as busy as it was when Holcomb paid his visit.

11 October. MajGen John H. Russell, USMC (Ret), Coronado, California, to Holcomb.

Russell suggests very strongly that Holcomb should encourage the production of a history of the Commandant's House; he forwards the material on it that he had gathered. He congratulates Holcomb on the extra 1,000 men slated for the Marine Corps in the next fiscal year and stresses the need to keep the FMF at the level of 7,500 men.

Russell expresses his pleasure in being able to devote his full energies to writing now that he is retired. He hopes that Holcomb will read his latest article on "Motor Torpedo Boats" with possible developmental interest for the Marines' "X" boat. Finally, Russell praises the improved format of the Marine section in the *Navy Register*.

12 October. Holcomb to Sen David I. Walsh (D-Massachusetts), Washington, D.C.

Holcomb pleads the case of the widow of MajGen Harry Lee, under whom Holcomb served on several occasions. She is in danger of losing her job in the Bureau of Construction and Repair under Adm William G. DuBose; she failed the Civil Service Examination three times. Adm DuBose likes her work, but the law requires her to leave unless the President grants her an executive appointment. Holcomb therefore asks Walsh to intervene for a second time with President Franklin Roosevelt to ensure her retention.

12 October. Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, MB, Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb is very proud of the "team" that McDougal is fashioning at Parris Island and appreciates the news of McDougal's inspection tour of Hilton Head. He advises him to move rapidly in furnishing necessary details on the funds needed for barracks repairs so that the 3d Anti-Aircraft Battalion can be accommodated. He also will approve a recommendation to allow the noncommissioned officers to stay where they are. Marine movements to Shanghai have created a situation that necessitates very tight accounting of all Marine Corps funds and requires a big deficiency request.

14 October. MajGen John A. Lejeune, USMC (Ret), Norfolk, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Lejeune apologizes for not having written sooner, but his life had been in a confused state owing to his recent move to Norfolk. He was especially grateful for the Holcombs' attending the last graduation exercises of his career as superintendent of VMI. He hopes the Holcombs will visit him in Norfolk, especially since he has set aside the spare room for them.

16 October. Holcomb to MajGen John H. Russell.

Holcomb hopes that LtCol Clyde Metcalf will take on the task of writing a study of the Commandant's House. Holcomb is also optimistic at the prospect of getting the 1,000-man increase for the Marine Corps as well as other

needs because of support in the White House, the Bureau of the Budget, and the Navy Department. He reiterates the rightness of the decision to send the 6th Marines to Shanghai. Finally, Holcomb expresses a definite interest in seeing Russell's article on motor torpedo boats.

**16 October.** Holcomb to MajGen John A. Lejeune.

Holcomb asserts that he and wife were delighted to have the opportunity to attend Lejeune's final commencement ceremonies at VMI; he only regretted that they had to leave so abruptly, but they were required back in Washington to give a dinner party. The Holcombs also would like the Lejeunes to visit with them.

**16 October.** BGen Douglas C. McDougal to Holcomb.

McDougal promises to send Holcomb a full report on such problems as the heating of the barracks for the 3d Anti-Aircraft Battalion and appropriate quarters for NCOs and married enlisted men. He worries also about the loss of some 10,000 pounds of empty shells from the firing range. He thinks he has now developed a foolproof system against future losses. Finally, McDougal plans to come to Washington to attend a board called by the Bureau of Medicine and will bring up some documentation about Parris Island for Holcomb's perusal.

**25 October.** Holcomb to RAdm Frank H. Brumby, USN, Commandant, 5th Naval District, Norfolk, Virginia.

Holcomb expresses great interest in Brumby's remarks about the Marines in his upcoming Norfolk Navy Day speech. Nevertheless, he feels it necessary to correct Brumby's misconceptions about the FMF: the Fleet Marine Force does not consist of the Marine detachments on vessels, rather the FMF is made up of the two brigades stationed at San Diego and Quantico. They usually conduct maneuvers with the fleet once a year, but FMF units require special training and coordination for carrying out landing operations.

**26 October.** Holcomb to MajGen James C. Breckinridge.

Holcomb learned from Holland Smith that Breckinridge wanted to know if he could use Quantico's recreation funds for travel expenses of the small-bore rifle teams. While Holcomb is willing to leave the final judgement up to Breckinridge on how to spend these funds, he affirms that "the rifle shoot is the most appropriate way" to expend the money.

This folder also contains a letter from MajGen Charles E. Kilbourne, VMI's new superintendent, thanking Holcomb for attending the VMI exercises of 30 September and 1 October; a postcard from another World War I veteran, Robert W. Voeth, who had visited the American Memorial at Chateau-Thierry, France; a personal letter from Maj Charley Dunbeck, USMC (Ret), congratulating Holcomb on his high post and hoping that he will be kept in mind for possible employment; and a letter to the Western Clock Co., complaining that Holcomb's car clock has never worked right and should be fixed by the company without charge.

*Folder 10*  
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**4 November.** BGen John C. Beaumont, CG, 2d Marine Brigade, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Beaumont conveys the remarkable news that only three of his men have been wounded despite continuous bombardment from both Japanese and Chinese

sources. He states that his Marines have conducted themselves in "exemplary" fashion in the face of very difficult conditions. The Chinese were very cooperative and generally orderly during their retreat. Beaumont predicts that the Chinese will have to continue their withdrawals for lack of airplanes and artillery. Up to this time, the Japanese also maintained polite relations with the Marines and had not issued any ultimatums. The problem of refugees from Chaipei has ended, and Beaumont announces that the Marines have blocked off all access to Soochow Creek.

**8 November.** Lenning Sweet, Fairfax, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Sweet forwards a letter (enclosure) from a friend, Dwight Edwards, a YMCA welfare worker in North China. He hopes that Holcomb might be able to assist Edwards in some way and thus salvage a very bad situation. Edward's letter dated 24 September 1937, describes the rapidly deteriorating economic and welfare situation in Peking; he is seeking \$3,000 in aid from friends in the U.S. to keep the YMCA going in North China.

**15 November.** RAdm Ernest J. King, Commander, Aircraft Scouting Force, NAS San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

King thanks Holcomb for his kind letter congratulating him on his promotion to the "Big Board" (the General Board). He looks forward to seeing Holcomb in Washington.

**17 November.** Holcomb to Mrs. Richard M. Cutts, Coconut Grove, Florida.

Holcomb responds to Mrs. Cutts' letter of 15 November (typed transcript enclosed) asking about possible legislation to provide relief for her. Holcomb recommends that she tack her bill onto a Navy "omnibus" bill instead of pursuing a private bill since the omnibus has a better chance of getting on the floor for a vote. He then provides her a letter of introduction to Sen James H. Hughes of Delaware as per her request. (Mrs. Cutts had been introducing the same bill for seven years in a row without success.)

**18 November.** BGen John C. Beaumont CG, 2d Marine Brigade, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Beaumont warns that the Chinese would be unlikely to hold their present positions because of the massive Japanese infiltration of men and equipment. At the same time the Japanese are using mixed Japanese and Chinese patrols to restore order in Chapei, Nantao, and Shanghai. The situation in the International Settlement, however, remains uncertain.

Adm Yarnell expressed the opinion that most of the 2d Brigade, except the 4th Regiment, should be sent home. Beaumont reports that he transferred LtCol James F. Moriarty from intelligence work to temporary duty with the 4th Regiment to prevent him from getting a bad mark on his record. Beaumont also speculated that Marston is most uncomfortable in Peking with the Japanese in full control.

**22 November.** MajGen John A. Lejeune, Norfolk, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Lejeune was so happy to stay with the Holcombs in Washington and see all his many Marine Corps friends. Lejeune recalls their early days together at Quantico in 1917 and how much Quantico has changed since then. Lejeune also mentions his visit with RAdm James Glennon, who once taught him gunnery at the Naval Academy.

**23 November.** RAdm Claude C. Bloch, Commander, Battle Force, U.S. Fleet, aboard the flagship USS *California*, San Pedro, *California*, to Holcomb.

Bloch thanks Holcomb for his congratulations upon ascending to the position of Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet. He hopes that in this new capacity he will become better acquainted with the FMF. Bloch also praises the manner in which Holcomb seems to be leading the Marines happily upward.

**23 November.** Holcomb to LtCol James Roosevelt, USMCR, The White House, Washington.

Holcomb invites Roosevelt to attend the landing force exercises to be held at Culebra from 28 February to 10 March 1938. They will feature both offensive and defensive operations plus naval gunfire support. Holcomb then suggests Roosevelt's possible travel itinerary, the types of aircraft to be employed, and the preferred wearing apparel. He wants to be sure that Roosevelt will stop at Partis Island on the way back from Culebra to view the new antiaircraft battalion in action there.

In a second letter to Roosevelt on the same day, Holcomb clears the way for his son, Frank Holcomb, to use the White House pool by submitting his intended schedule beginning on 29 November.

This folder also contains letters exchanged between Holcomb and the Rev. John H. Clifford of Kingsport, Tennessee, discussing the courtmartial of Capt Walter Sweet; a letter from Sol Bloom of the U.S. Constitution Sesquicentennial Commission, sending him the book "The Story of the Constitution;" and a letter from Grace W. Crowell of Washington, D.C., seeking Holcomb's advice on her son's desire to become a Marine.

*Folder 11*  
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**2 December.** Holcomb to U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull, State Department, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb requests that his office be placed on a current mailing list for the *Register of the Department of State*. The *Register* is most helpful in daily business transactions and Holcomb has only a July 1936 copy.

**4 December.** BGen John C. Beaumont, Commanding General, 2d Brigade, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Beaumont reiterates Yarnell's bias in favor of returning all the Marines except the 4th Regiment from Shanghai. The British have also planned to reduce their garrison. The Japanese probably would not permit the Americans to continue rifle practice.

Beaumont himself likes the idea of keeping one battalion in the Philippines and one in Shanghai. He relates that the Japanese held a noisy victory celebration in Shanghai but that it did not spill over into the U.S. sector. He expects the American withdrawal will occur about 1 February 1938. He reports, finally, that the morale and health of the troops are good.

**6 December.** Col Charles F. B. Price, Commanding Officer, 4th Marines, Shanghai, China, to C. E. Gauss, American Consul General, Shanghai, China.

Price relates a similar tale about the Japanese victory parade. Since the Japanese had mounted a blockade and sentry point at the Grand Theatre in the American

Sector, Price demanded to see the Japanese commander, LtCol Yuki Fukabori. Price states that he achieved his goal of having the Japanese remove the road-block. Unfortunately, the newspapers quickly blew the incident all out of proportion; as a result, the Japanese unjustly reprimanded Fukabori for his action. Price felt that Fukabori had innocently blundered into the American Sector and was most courteous to Price. Thus Price wants the Consul to have the true story for his files to correct faulty newspaper coverage.

**6 December.** Holcomb to Capt August F. Hohl, USN, Chaplain, New York Navy Yard.

Holcomb encloses a letter of recommendation which he hopes will assist Hohl in obtaining a good job. He regrets Hohl's leaving the Navy but wishes him well. He also states that his son's health and morale are much better.

**6 December.** Holcomb to Col Julius Ochs Adler, Vice President, *New York Herald Tribune*, New York, New York.

This letter of recommendation contains high praise for Hohl's journalistic experience at Quantico as well as his fine personality traits.

**6 December.** Holcomb to Edwin L. James, Managing Editor, *New York Times*, New York, New York.

Same as letter cited above.

**7 December.** Holcomb to LtCol James Roosevelt, The White House.

Holcomb announces that the Navy will receive the new amphibian aircraft from Sikorsky early enough that Roosevelt can use it for his 25 February 1938 flight to the West Indies for the force landing exercises. His inspection at Parris Island plus stops at Miami, Culebra, and several islands are still planned for Roosevelt's itinerary. He ends by saying that son Frank is enjoying the White House pool.

**9 December.** Holcomb to Capt Ross T. McIntyre, MC, USN, The White House.

Holcomb discusses the scheduling of Frank's swims at the White House pool and emphasizes that it had been approved by LtCol Roosevelt. He definitely wanted to arrange it so as not to interfere with the President's swimming schedule.

**10 December.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal, Commanding General, MCB, San Diego, California.

Holcomb asks McDougal to keep under his hat the fact that he might be under consideration as the Marine Corps representative on the General Board. Holcomb, however, cautions him that he is not sure how to accomplish this.

He would like McDougal to give him his opinion on the merits of 1stLt Marcellus J. Howard as a possible bachelor aide (later White House aide). He also wants to know if Howard can be spared from the FMF.

**15 December.** Holcomb to Col Emile P. Moses, MCB, San Diego, California.

Holcomb explains to Moses that Generals Lyman and Little are currently vying for his services: Lyman would like to have him as his chief of staff in San Francisco while Little wants him in the FMF. Holcomb is now seeking Moses' actual preference confidentially, even though he had originally planned to order Col C. J. Miller to become Little's chief of staff in the FMF because he felt Moses' stint with the FMF had just about finished.

**16 December.** Col John Marston, Marine Detachment, American Embassy, Peking, China, to Holcomb.

Marston describes the new emphasis on outdoor sports and the creation of an athletic field between the British and American sectors. He encloses a general order showing that soccer had been added to the list of competitions for the Breckinridge trophy. He implores Holcomb to allow him to award a silver Holcomb trophy to the winners of the soccer matches. The general condition and morale of the post continues to be good in spite of the restriction imposed on them by the Japanese. (Enclosure is Post General Order No. 45-1937.)

**17 December.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little, Commanding General, MCB, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Little reports that he had lunch with Adm Bloch aboard the USS *California* and had a chance to voice his objections to the proposed scattering of FMF units; sending the antiaircraft battalion to Pearl Harbor for instance. Bloch agrees in principle. Little then pushed for the use of the USS *Utah* and its Marines in Fleet Problems XIX to be held in Hawaii. In general he terms the discussion as friendly and helpful to the FMF.

**19 December.** BGen Douglas C. McDougal, Commanding General, MCB Parris Island, to Holcomb.

McDougal jokes that Joe Fegan is travelling about like a squirrel. He then discusses labor and maintenance problems at Parris Island. The USS *Antares* arrived, bringing the 3d Anti-Aircraft Battalion; the latter seemed well-pleased with its new accommodations. Unfortunately, the cargo was partially damaged and missing, but he likes having the new barge. He regrets very much having to leave Parris Island.

**20 December.** Col Emile P. Moses to Holcomb.

Moses is naturally very excited about Holcomb's new assignment for him. He wishes the Holcombs a very happy holiday season.

**21 December.** LtCol J. O. Daly, USA (Ret), University Club, Washington, D.C., to the Committee on Admission of Members, University Club.

Daly notes that the University Club awards honorary memberships to both the Chief of Naval Operations and the Army Chief of Staff. He feels that the club therefore unintentionally slights the Major General Commandant of the Marine Corps by not including him in this group. The MGC holds equal precedence at White House functions. He himself has no connection with Holcomb, but proposes that Holcomb be duly elected to an honorary membership. (Holcomb's letter to George S. Ward of 30 December indicates that this entreaty by Daly had a successful conclusion.)

**22 December.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal.

Holcomb is glad to hear news of young Joe Fegan and also to know about the changes in public works officers at Parris Island. Adm Moreell has let it be known that he wants to be kept informed about civil engineers at the post. Holcomb agrees with McDougal that Sylvester sounds like a real problem-child. Moreell in general seems most sympathetic to the Marine cause and is willing to help on appropriations. At this point Holcomb feels he can get a 1,000-man increase for the Marines without any budget cuts.

**22 December.** MajGen Charles Lyman, Commanding General, MCB, Quantico, to Holcomb.

Lyman expresses disgruntlement over Holcomb's failure to appoint E. P. Moses as Lyman's chief of staff. In Moses' place, Lyman suggests Kingman, whom Vogel would have to release from the Adjutant and Inspector's Department. He also submits names for the post of assistant adjutant, and asks Holcomb to select the most appropriate. Lyman expects to stay in San Francisco two years and would like a staff agreeable to him. His assistant adjutant and inspector would travel with him on all special trips.

**23 December.** Holcomb to MajGen Charles Lyman.

Holcomb lists for Lyman the officers allowance for his post in San Francisco and says that it should be adequate for the job. Holcomb suggests Col John B. Wilson as Lyman's chief of staff. But if he would prefer a man from his own list, Holcomb will try to have that arranged. Holcomb will soon be making the assignments for the FMF.

**23 December.** Memorandum from Col John Marston, Director of Personnel, Headquarter, Marine Corps, to Holcomb: Standing of 2d Lieutenants Appointed to the Marine Corps from V.M.I. in 1935.

Marston's memorandum lists the poor standings of Virginia Military Institute graduates at the Basic School who are appointed from civilian life to fill vacancies in the Marine Corps. The majority are in the lower 10 percent of their class.

**24 December.** Holcomb to MajGen John A. Lejeune, USMC (Ret), Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia.

Holcomb sends a list of officers appointed by the Examining Board and expresses doubt that the Corps will get the 20 second lieutenants asked for in 1937. The quotas have not been fixed but he expects to ask VMI for two applicants and one alternate. Holcomb mentions that VMI candidates had not done well at the Basic School recently, and hopes that Lejeune will give consideration to the calibre of VMI applicants for the Marine Corps.

**26 December.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little, Commanding General, MCB, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Little complains that his wife has been sick and he does not relish the prospect of having to travel East for the Reisinger Court. Little discusses the conference he had with Adm Hepburn, Moses, and Le Breton. He gives some thoughts on military strategy in the Pacific and some views held by naval fleet commanders. Hepburn was especially vocal in his concern about the Far East situation and intends to ask for the 5th Marine Regiment to prepare for any contingency. He also felt that the FMF Fleet Landing Exercises at San Clemente indicated that the naval crews needed to improve their handling of small boats, and wants the USS *Utah* to be included in Fleet Problem XIX.

**26 December.** BGen Douglas C. McDougal Commanding General, MCB, Parris Island, to Holcomb.

McDougal describes the successful Christmas celebration on the post for the children. He is glad that Headquarters understands the situation with Sylvester, whose main problem is too big a mouth.

The *Panay* incident films and press reactions indicate that the China situation is deteriorating and should illustrate to the powers that be that more preparedness is necessary. Above all, McDougal feels that the FMF should get a big increase.

27 December. Holcomb to BGen John C. Beaumont, 2d Marine Brigade, Shanghai, China.

Holcomb is very pleased to have received several letters from Beaumont and has shared them with a few close friends. Holcomb admits he was quite upset at first learning of Beaumont's transferring of Moriarty, but once he saw Beaumont's latest explanation for the change, Holcomb fully concurs in the judgement.

Holcomb praises the fine job that the Brigade has done in China. He only hopes it will return home soon.

On the legislative front, Holcomb thinks that the Marine Corps did well in the hearings before the House Appropriations Sub-Committee, but he wishes they were getting 5,000 more men instead of 1,000.

27 December. Holcomb to RAdm Harry E. Yarnell, Commander-in-Chief, Asiatic Fleet, aboard the USS *Augusta*.

Holcomb informs Yarnell why LtCol Moriarty is not being used in Japanese intelligence work. He is obviously a good intelligence officer and thus Holcomb requests that Yarnell transfer him to an appropriate command. Holcomb at the same time praises Yarnell for his courageous and firm actions in China. He assures the Admiral that Price's relief, Col C. J. Miller, will prove a great "source of satisfaction to him as a fine officer."

29 December. Holcomb to LtCol Gilder D. Jackson, Marine Detachments, Philadelphia Navy Yard, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb asks Jackson to send him a confidential note as to the value of the Platoon Leaders' Class for the provision of second lieutenants in comparison with the Army and Navy ROTC programs as viewed from the Basic School.

30 December. MajGen John A. Lejeune, USMC (Ret), to Holcomb.

Lejeune writes on behalf of Capt Addison Hagan, USMC (Ret); he is a World War I veteran of the 4th Marines and was wounded in France. Hagan is now campaigning for Maj James Bain, USMC, to become Norfolk's chief of police and he needs a copy of Bain's service record for persuading Norfolk's business manager. It so happens that Bain is Mrs. Lejeune's nephew.

31 December. RAdm Wilson Brown, Training Detachment, U.S. Fleet, Norfolk, to Holcomb.

Cpl Marvin H. Myers, USMC, who had been Brown's very able chauffeur, failed to get his promotion because of a fluke which occurred when he transferred from the USS *Arkansas* to the USS *Wyoming*. He has just received orders to report to Newport, Rhode Island. Brown asks Holcomb to do him the personal favor of having Cpl Myers transferred back to Norfolk to serve in the same capacity. He stresses that Myers had nothing to do with the request which was strictly on Brown's own initiative.

This folder also contains a letter from Col John C. Dooley, USMC (Ret), executive of the National Lead Co. in New York, thanking Holcomb for the tickets to the Army-Navy game; several letters from J. Rogers Holcomb in regard to the purchase of Delaware Tercentenary Commission plates; two letters exchanged with Christopher R. Ward of Tercentenary Commission on the same topic; a Christmas letter from Elsie Little, wife of MajGen Louis McCarty Little, with news

of the family; a Christmas greeting from Paul C. Toussant, comptroller of immigration at Port au Prince, Haiti; a letter from George S. Ward, secretary of the University Club of Washington, extending honorary membership privileges, which Holcomb quickly accepted; a cable from Gen J. G. Harbord announcing that Gen Pershing and others would make a special broadcast in memory of Newton D. Baker; and a letter from Holcomb to the U.S. Postmaster General, complaining of mailing problems he encountered in sending Kodak films at the Navy Department Branch of the Washington Post Office.

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**3 January.** LtCol Gilder D. Jackson, Basic School, MCB, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Jackson states that the Platoon Leaders' Class is a poor third in comparison to the Army and Navy ROTC classes as a source of procuring second lieutenants for the Marine Corps. He has interviewed present officers about this as well as studying past experience. Jackson figures that ROTC men have more energy than the PLCs because the latter only have to take Marine training in the summers without the pressure of a full load of college courses. He thinks that part of the problem is that the PLC candidates are just seeking a way to have a paying job for the summer. Jackson suggests to Holcomb that another good idea would be to make a list of all the colleges where the best candidates have been found previously. Finally, Jackson is enthusiastic about working at the Basic School.

**5 January.** MajGen James C. Breckinridge, Commanding General, MCB, Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Breckinridge announces that he will be glad to give the ten-minute address to the Women's Patriotic Conference. He wants Holland Smith to advise him of the time and place, and he is so delighted to have Smith as a "side-kick" because he inspires confidence. Breckinridge finishes by making reference to the unsatisfactory nature of court-martial proceedings at Quantico.

**6 January.** Col Bennet Puryear, Jr., Assistant Quartermaster, MCB, Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Puryear wishes that his recommendation for more than one colonel being on the quartermaster eligibility list could have prevented some of the embarrassing situation that has arisen over the past few months. He assumes that Holcomb forwarded his recommendation to the proper authority.

**10 January.** Rep J. William Ditter (R-Pennsylvania), House Appropriations Committee, Washington, D.C., to Holcomb.

He acknowledges Holcomb's memorandum to him of 5 January and says that he will do his best to cooperate.

**10 January.** Sen William Gibbs McAdoo, Senate Appropriations Committee, Washington, D.C., to Holcomb.

He wants to introduce two of his constituents and hopes that Holcomb will listen attentively to their requests.

**11 January.** MajGen John C. Beaumont, Commanding General, 2d Marine Brigade, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

He states that his brigade has reduced its patrolling to a minimum and turned over the majority to the police. The Japanese have already apologized for their unauthorized entry into the American sector.

Beaumont reports that all is now in readiness for departure when the USS *Chaumont* arrives. Adm Yarnell has called for 1,000 men of the 4th Marines to be left behind in China. Price feels that this will not be enough to accomplish their patrolling mission. Beaumont himself would rather see another battalion in readiness at Cavite for emergencies. He foresees no improvement in the Shanghai situation.

**18 January.** Col Charles F. B. Price, Commanding Officer, 4th Marine Regiment, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Price discusses the "little incident" of 3 December 1937 at Shanghai. The press had blown the matter all out of proportion so he filed a report with the American Consulate General as well as giving verbal reports to Beaumont and Yarnell. He believes that the Japanese troops planned the bomb-throwing incident themselves to justify their full occupation of the International Settlements. But in the face of firm resistance by other foreign forces, the Japanese high command decided to abandon the plan. Price defends himself against the lurid news accounts by saying that he made no demands or show of force other than to find out by what authority the Japanese had acted in his sector. Price would appreciate it if Holcomb would inform the State Department that he is not a "fire-eater." Finally, he discusses Japanese manners and attitudes at length.

**18 January.** MajGen John A. Lejeune, USMC (Ret), Norfolk, Virginia to Holcomb.

Lejeune expresses his gratitude for Holcomb's sending him a photograph which he plans to add to his collection of friends and generals. He enjoyed their talk the other day about the Marine Corps and its prospects in the coming Congressional Session.

**19 January.** Col John A. Hughes, USMC (Ret), St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, to Holcomb.

Hughes likes living in St. Thomas, but he feels he must return to work because retired pay is not adequate. He has heard rumors that the U.S. Naval Government of the Virgin Islands may be reinstated and would like to get a job in that connection. He asks Holcomb to ascertain the truth of the rumor and if possible intervene on his behalf. Hughes praises the Marine aviators based in the Virgin Islands. He ends by saying that the 6th Marines finally got recognition through Holcomb's being MGC.

**21 January.** MajGen Douglas C. McDougal, Commanding General, MCB, Parris Island, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

McDougal airs some of the problems of the public works office and the quartermaster. He has tried to operate these two under his direct supervision, but they have required too much of his time. What he is really seeking is the removal of his present public works officer who is both uncooperative and inefficient. He also mentions several informal inspections which Seth Williams had conducted at Parris Island.

McDougal then proceeds to discuss his personal pleasure boat. He praises Perkin's outfit which has been training at Hilton Head. He ends the letter with a brief critique of the W.P.A. labor being used for policing of the base.

**24 January.** MajGen John A. Lejeune, USMC (Ret), to Holcomb.

Lejeune mentions that he has been approached by Maj E. H. Brainard to help

in a public relations blitz in favor of a House of Representatives bill for upgrading of officers. He has agreed to write letters to Chairman Carl I. Vinson, Adm William D. Leahy, RAdms Anderson and Rowcliff, but Lejeune has no interest in testifying before the Naval Affairs Committee. Brainard claims that Holcomb favors the bill also.

**24 January.** Holcomb to BGen James J. Meade, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb realizes that Meade would prefer to stay on duty as long as possible, but the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery wants Meade to appear before an examination board in Washington because of his declining health. Holcomb wonders if Meade is up to the trip. Holcomb then discusses Marine Corps prospects in Congress and admits the outlook for additional men is bleak. He refers to several old friends who are ill and the return of the 6th Marines from China.

**24 January.** Holcomb to Col John Marston.

Holcomb agrees to the idea of having a cup designated the "Holcomb Trophy" to encourage soccer in the Marine Corps. He mentions the expected increases in manpower appear to have fallen victim to limitations by the Bureau of the Budget. He then briefly alludes to Gen Meade's ill health and the Reisinger court-martial. McDougal has been commuting back and forth between Washington and Parris Island using the "Russell Barge" which Holcomb had given him. Holcomb feels that McDougal has done much to improve conditions at Parris Island including the reintroduction of squirrels. The largest of these he has nicknamed "Joe Fegan" in honor of the man who brought them in from the zoo originally.

**25 January.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little, CG, MB San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Little explains to Holcomb the plans for utilizing additional W.P.A. funds for plumbing, heating, and painting of buildings, installing sidewalks and grass outside, and helping along construction of the Officers' Mess. But W.P.A. fund allotments and regulations do not cover all the materials necessary to do these jobs, so Little requests more funds from the Quartermaster Department.

**26 January.** Holcomb to Capt H. A. Baldrige, USN (Ret), Curator, Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Maryland.

Holcomb has no doubt that the Zimmerman Sword should be placed in the Naval Academy Museum—the Marines lacking their own museum. It is especially appropriate since his publication *Anchors Aweigh*, was dedicated to the Naval Academy Class of 1907, to which Holcomb's brother, Franklin Porteous Holcomb, belonged.

**27 January.** Holcomb to Col John A. Hughes, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

Holcomb had not heard of the rumor mentioned in Hughes' letter of 19 January, but he will keep his request in mind should the U.S. Naval Government be re-established. He refers to a visit to see Gen Lejeune in Norfolk and to attending Pat Evans' wedding while on an inspection trip to the West. Sibley and Boone were there from the 6th Regiment. Holcomb also attended a Belleau Woods dinner in Chicago. He concludes with the prediction that the present 6th Regiment will leave Shanghai in mid-February and return to San Diego.

**28 January.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little, CG, MB, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Little is pleased that his actions in San Diego largely accord with Holcomb's wishes and desires. He has written Sam Woods to come out and help him reconcile differences between the FMF and the War Plans Section. Little mentions that he has had difficulty getting any action out of Col A. E. Randall and so he chose H. L. Smith to relieve him and so far has had good results. Cauldwell and Croka have done well on the recruit depot and the rifle range, respectively. Brown is perfect at the Sea School, but he has been ordered to Mare Island. Little then complains that San Diego is too small to find positions for the "inefficients." At the same time the FMF and recruit training require the best personnel to match their importance. He begs for more quality in new appointees or at least some pity. He wants Harrington to fill in for Moses.

**31 January.** Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little.

Holcomb apologizes for not having written Little any sooner about the various reliefs for San Diego but just hasn't had the time. The changes are to be kept confidential until mid-February: Col H. L. Smith is to take the 6th Marines; Col Clarke is to relieve Moses as Chief of Staff; Cauldwell can be kept at the Recruit Depot; Lienhard will relieve Croka on the rifle range. He then gives his justification for assigning Randall and Smith to Little. Meade will almost certainly have to retire and Reisinger will have to be back in court before long. Finally, Holcomb reminds Little that Peck and Thomason will be rejoining the 2d Marine Brigade from their duty at the Naval War College.

**31 January.** Holcomb to Col Philip H. Torrey, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

As Holcomb promised Torrey, he writes to give him warning of his next assignment which is to relieve Berry in charge of the Eastern Recruiting Division at Philadelphia. He feels Torrey would prefer Philadelphia to San Francisco, though he can still change it. The recruiting drive for an extra 1,000 men will require considerable effort and he feels confident that Torrey can keep "things humming" in the Eastern Division.

This folder also contains several receipts for automobile and photographic parts as well as the draft of a cablegram to "My Dear General" signed "Col P. A. Ramsay (Pat)".

*Folder 13*  
1938

**1 February.** RAdm Harry E. Yarnell (CinCAsiatic), USS *Isabel*, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Yarnell understands that Moriarty is more of a Russian than a Japanese intelligence expert and does not approve of his intelligence-gathering methods. In addition, Yarnell feels that Moriarty as a colonel holds too high a rank to perform intelligence duty; he already has good intelligence officers in Maj Hagen, Capt Boone, Capt Carlson, and Capt McHugh. Yarnell then reports that the 6th Regiment and the Brigade Headquarters will leave on the USS *Chau-mont* after having done fine work. The danger from Chinese irregulars at Chapei is over. The Japanese, he claims, are still difficult and are bent on driving all whites out of China, but are in for a very long war. Finally, Yarnell recommends that the battalions be alternated between Olongapo and Shanghai, since the latter lacks barracks and proper training facilities.

**1 February.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little, CG, MCB, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Little expresses a strong preference for increasing Marine Corps strength at San Diego, rather than diminishing it, in order to prepare for a "major conflict." Since trouble is likely to come from the Orient, Little urges that the expansion take place nearer the action so as to prevent transport delays. He is also very worried that the regiments returning from Shanghai will have little knowledge of FMF training techniques and doctrine. He claims that San Diego is the ideal location for the buildup, especially for offering more permanent shelter than Hawaii. He feels that putting the 6th Regiment at Hawaii would be very expensive and since the Hawaiian population is largely made up of aliens, military secrecy would be made very difficult.

**3 February.** Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little.

Holcomb replies that the 6th Regiment's stopover in Hawaii would be very brief, and confidentially, it was FDR's personal decision that they stop there. Holcomb is very relieved that they were not sent to Guam or Manila. And because it was FDR's idea, the Marine Corps should have little difficulty in getting Congressional approval of deficiency funding to cover the loss incurred by the Hawaiian visit.

**3 February.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, MB Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb discusses Sylvester's relief. Captain Carlson is reputed to be very fine and his father was, of course, a great promoter of the Marine Corps. Holcomb then suggests that the shore station development board for Parris Island must be re-worked. He especially objects to the distant locations of the new barracks from the main station. He will talk these items over with McDougal when he comes to Washington. In the meantime, Holcomb acknowledges that the Navy Squadron visiting Parris Island gave it a good write-up in their newsletter.

**1 February.** BGen Douglas C. McDougal to Holcomb.

McDougal reports that Sylvester had complained to him about his change in duty station. While McDougal feels sorry for him, he had to explain that conditions at present are not satisfactory, and he certainly hopes that Carlson could straighten things out in Public Works. He had just learned of General Meade's poor health and the possibility he may retire. McDougal is anxious to make the Navy aviators at Parris Island happy, especially as the Bureau of Aeronautics has just sent Harris and Garland to inspect conditions there. The Anti-Aircraft Battalion is also progressing well. McDougal completes his letter with references to fishing and boating.

**3 February.** BGen Philip H. Torrey, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, to Holcomb.

Torrey is very disappointed over being detailed to do recruiting work instead of being Price's relief in China, which the detail officer at Headquarters had tentatively promised him. He hopes Holcomb will reconsider the matter since there appears to be no obvious reason for this downgrading. Torrey does not expect an active command, having just finished with the FMF, but he would like to have a barracks command in the U.S. or possible duty at either Quantico or San Diego. But given Holcomb's previous alternatives, Torrey states that he would choose San Francisco over Philadelphia.

**4 February.** MajGen John C. Beaumont, CG, 2d Marine Brigade, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Beaumont is grateful to Holcomb for expressing his satisfaction over the job done by the 2d Brigade in China. Beaumont himself is very proud of the brigade's good spirit and attentive behavior. His sector has been free of incidents in the last month. Beaumont also is grateful that Congress is granting the Marine Corps a 1,000-man increase, which he feels is much needed to keep all elements up to par. At the moment the Brigade Headquarters, Battery F, and the 6th Regiment are in poor shape and time will be needed to fit in their replacements. He wants the brigade executive staff kept intact during the transition. He needs to know the future plans for the 2d Brigade very badly because officer morale tends to be very low on temporary station, and he would also like to have his wife Helen meet him in Hawaii during his stay.

**5 February.** BGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, MB Parris Island, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

McDougal thinks Meade is very foolish to stay in and risk further health troubles, especially in view of Holcomb's postscript describing his high blood pressure. Sylvester continues to harass McDougal over his being replaced for lack of cooperation. Sylvester blames the "labor element" for the whole problem and will probably appeal. McDougal looks forward to having more harmonious planning under Carlson. He would also like to see Sylvester's second in command, Mr. Meader, transferred out as a troublemaker.

McDougal then briefly touches on the new buildings' layout and water transport problems. He itemizes the boats available and their condition. He remarks that the Navy aviators are happy because they are to get in more flying time than up north. He hopes Holcomb will visit soon.

**7 February.** Col Charles F. B. Price, CO, 4th Marines, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Price encloses a pamphlet printed locally which he feels would interest all Marines sympathetic to happenings in Shanghai. It comes from the Enlisted Men's Club of the 4th Marines. He hopes that Holcomb will distribute it widely at Headquarters and at the Washington Marine Barracks, especially making it available to enlisted men there.

**8 February.** MajGen James J. Meade, Newport, Rhode Island, to Holcomb.

Meade expresses his appreciation for Holcomb's delaying his orders to enable the Meades to pack all of their belongings. He feels that was a reasonable request on his part.

**11 February.** Holcomb to LtCol J. O. Daly, USA (Ret), the University Club, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb is very grateful to Daly for intervening on his behalf with the University Club's Committee on Admissions. He had decided to keep Daly's letter on file permanently to show future commandants what a benevolent act was performed by an Army officer who did not even know Holcomb personally. He hopes to meet Daly and thank him in person soon.

**14 February.** Holcomb to VAdm John W. Greenslade, USN, ComBatFor, USS *Maryland*, San Pedro, California.

Holcomb discusses the fact that personnel at Marine Headquarters feel that

there have been too many high-ranking Marines sent to the fleet in the past and so from now on Holcomb will only send lieutenant colonels and majors to Battle Force and Scouting Force. Holcomb had only sent Arthur Worton to sea last summer because Wainwright had personally requested him. He then asks Greenslade whether he would prefer to have Maj Rogers, who was slated for the job originally, or whether he would rather have LtCol James W. Webb; the latter has FMF experience but has not been to the Naval War College.

**18 February.** Holcomb to MajGen James C. Breckinridge, CG, MB Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb wants to know how Breckinridge would feel about having Maj Wilkinson's relief from the Office of Chief of Cavalry upgraded to an instructor in equitation as well as assuming Wilkinson's previous duties. This would give the billet an added prestige. Would he or Buttrick have any objections to such a change? The Chief of Cavalry thinks he now can find a replacement for Wilkinson.

**19 February.** BGen Richard P. Williams, CG, 1st Marine Brigade, FMF, USS *New York*, to Holcomb.

Williams was well pleased with the results of the exercises at Vieques and the program at Culebra. The only problems stemmed from overcrowding caused by the presence of Army personnel and the Army's lack of training in amphibious techniques, which hampered Marine efforts especially in Turnage's ship-to-shore practice. Nonetheless, he feels that Turnage did very well in setting up his defense system. Because Gen Short wanted to run everything, Williams did encounter some problems of command relationships with the Army. The Army seems to want to "edge" the Marines out of the picture and thus, Williams feels, the Army's present course is a menace to the Marines. On the other hand, Williams found Adm Johnson most helpful and courteous. Williams finishes his letter by outlining probable recommendations by the Army and Navy based on these exercises; he hopes the General Board will hasten to build up the FMF.

**21 February.** LtCol DeWitt Peck, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, to Holcomb.

Peck appreciates the advance word on his orders and hopes that Holcomb will allow him several extra weeks in Newport, in order that his children finish their schooling there. Nevertheless, Peck would never consider making his request if Holcomb had any objections. The icy streets of Newport only hasten Peck's desire to return to sunny California. (A penciled notation indicates that Peck's wish for a delay in orders would be met.)

**23 February.** Holcomb to Col Emile P. Moses, MB, San Diego, California.

Holcomb has been hoping to station Moses either at Quantico or in Washington. But since Meade will not be able to attend the Advanced Course at the Naval War College, he will have to send Moses there. Meade will rest for 6 months at Hot Springs then return to the Washington Hospital for the final word. Holcomb suspects he will have to retire.

**23 February.** Holcomb to LtCol DeWitt Peck.

Holcomb has no objection to the delay and agrees to detach him from Newport on 1 June unless General Little has need of Peck sooner.

**24 February.** Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little.

Holcomb is disturbed over the fact that Webb and Moses, despite two or three years of service with the FMF, seem unable to sell the idea of the FMF to the fleet admirals. On the other hand, Holcomb has great confidence in Little's ability to impress them; he assumes that Little's many friendships in the Navy and his broad experience are big assets that can be exploited in this regard. Holcomb in discussing staff problems hopes to rotate more men through the FMF and counts on Little to do the best with the men available.

**24 February.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little to Holcomb.

Little attended a high-level conference of the CinCUS, VAdm Greenslade, and Taussig to discuss Fleet Problem XIX. He is most depressed by the Navy's total ignorance of Marine Corps problems "involved in an opposed landing." He feels it is urgent to get the admirals to understand the complexity of issues facing the FMF. Little himself is very worried at losing two key officers. He wants to prove that the FMF is to the Marine Corps what the fleet is to the Navy. Little then goes into the personalities and attributes of the men he would like for the FMF and compares them with those of the men he is losing and getting. Finally, he implores Holcomb to make the required staffing changes and to provide him with an adequate officer's mess hall.

**24 February.** BGen James T. Buttrick, CG, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Buttrick disagrees with Holcomb on the appointment of an Army cavalry instructor for the Schools. He points out that he already has Capt Riseley as an equitation officer and is very pleased with him. Instead of Holcomb's idea, he recommends that an Army officer not above lieutenant be sent and be attached to the post with additional duties in the Schools. This would allow Capt Riseley to carry on without interference or conflict. Gen Breckinridge also had approved this idea.

**24 February.** MajGen James C. Breckinridge, Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Breckinridge says that he and Buttrick are in complete agreement on not wanting an outsider in charge of anything even though they like cavalry officers. Breckinridge had altered Wilkinson's status as head of the stables for that very reason of preventing authority disputes. He feels that there is no proper place for an Army officer at Quantico except as a student. The new man should only assist Riseley. He is sorry that Holcomb will have to miss the amateur theatre production on the 25th.

**Date unknown – February.** VAdm John W. Greenslade, on the USS *Maryland*, San Pedro, California, to Holcomb.

Adm Greenslade affirms his opinion that the Marine assigned to the Landing Force organization should be senior in rank to other Marine officers in Battleship Battle Force; he thus feels that a lieutenant colonel would be the appropriate rank. Webb would satisfy him as Jenkins' replacement.

Greenslade then assures Holcomb that he was misinformed about ill feelings over the high ranks of Marine officers in the U.S. Fleet wardrooms. Any tiffs are due rather to difficult or eccentric personalities and not to a general feeling of envy.

This folder also contains a letter from Holcomb to Mrs. Eudora D. Holcomb in Shreveport, Louisiana, discussing Holcomb family origins and genealogy; letters to and from the Atlantic Publishing Company concerning Holcomb's yearly subscription fees; a letter from the Delaware Tercentenary Commission asking additional payment for 24 plates; three short, cryptic memoranda exchanged between Holcomb and Adm Adolphus Andrews of the Bureau of Navigation, relative to the Secretary of the Navy's desire for current information on the Reisinger court-martial case; and a brief letter from Wallace L. Lind on board the USS *Omaha*, Norfolk Navy Yard, transmitting to Holcomb a copy (not found in these papers) of LtCol Moriarty's letter complaining of his treatment while in Shanghai.

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**1 March.** Col Emile P. Moses, CO, FMF, MCB San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Moses appreciates the advance word about his assignment to the Naval War College, and he expects to be especially happy because some of his friends in the Fleet will be there too. His duty with the FMF had been most interesting, and he feels his relations with the Navy are excellent. Also he now thinks that the Fleet is aware of the need for the FMF. He and General Little will be on the USS *Maryland* with VAdm Greenslade, the Attack Force Commander for the fleet problem in Hawaiian waters.

**2 March.** Holcomb to BGen Richard P. Williams, 1st Marine Brigade, FMF, USS *New York*, Culebra, Puerto Rico.

Holcomb says that from what he has heard these are the best maneuvers yet, and he is especially proud as the Major General Commandant to have been responsible for the selection of its fine officers. He hopes that Jimmy Roosevelt is "getting a thorough picture of what the FMF is" since much depends on his sympathetic understanding. Holcomb wants to be kept informed.

Congressman Vinson's Naval Affairs Committee will start hearings soon, but Holcomb fears that many of the bills up for consideration are flimsily worded. Maas is proposing that general officers be retired after seven years unless they are the Major General Commandant or Commanding General of the FMF. Confidentially he informs Williams that Beaumont's Hq and 6th Marines are to be put aboard Navy vessels instead of being housed at great cost in Honolulu. This will prove Marine flexibility in dealing with a variety of situations.

**4 March.** Holcomb to BGen John C. Beaumont, CG, MB Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Holcomb sends his greetings to Beaumont on his arrival in Honolulu. He is delighted that the Marines were not delayed in either Guam or Manila as first planned. Holcomb had cleared the final details with Adm Leahy. Then Holcomb candidly admits that Beaumont's men are not ready for any landing exercises yet. While he is happy that Beaumont will go to San Diego by the end of April, he regrets not seeing him until December.

**5 March.** BGen Richard P. Williams, 1st Marine Brigade, to Holcomb.

Williams encloses a special critique of the landing exercises (enclosures no longer attached). He views the Culebra exercises as a total success. The landing was smooth and a total surprise to the defenders. The final objective was reached hours ahead of schedule. But he sees no need for "mechanized troops."

**6 March.** BGen Richard P. Williams to Holcomb.

Williams suspects that Holcomb is probably well informed about most aspects

of the happenings in the landing exercises except those concerning Jimmy Roosevelt. A great effort has been made to impress the President's son, even to the point of forced feeding and he in turn seems to have enjoyed it. Nevertheless, Roosevelt was not accorded any special privileges and has been kept very busy at non-stop briefing on FMF operations. He seems to understand a lot of procedures. He landed with Turnage's outfit and had a good workout.

Williams then comments that the critique aboard the USS *Wyoming* went extremely well. "CJ" (Col Charles J. Miller) was in charge and handled it beautifully. Those Marines who spoke looked especially well. But he is more critical of the big party held in the afternoon on the estate of a sugar planter. He displays some hostility toward the Army, both for its freeloading off Marines and for its boasts that it could have done the job better than the Marines. Above all, the Army has tried to steal all the publicity at home for the success of the exercises. Both AP and the *New York Times* give the impression that it was a joint Army-Navy maneuver with only a few Marines participating. Williams beseeches Holcomb to get Barrett to block future Army participation via the Chief of Naval Operations.

**7 March.** Holcomb to Adm Harry E. Yarnell, USN, CinCAsiaticFlt, aboard USS *Augusta*.

Holcomb tells Yarnell that he likes his idea about the possible stationing of one battalion of the 4th Marines at Olongapo. It may help both morale and training facilities in that area. Unfortunately, to build temporary buildings there would require a special appropriation. Holcomb actually hopes that U.S. Marines in China can be returned to the United States for service in the FMF. He is very grateful for Yarnell's releasing the 6th Marines so that they can participate in Fleet Problem XIX and then return to San Diego in "vessels of the fleet," a feat which Marines have sorely wished to try for a long time.

Col Price has informed Holcomb of Yarnell's displeasure at having some of his recommendations vis-a-vis the Marines rejected by Holcomb. The latter insists that he has done all in his power to comply with Yarnell's wishes, but he retorts that the Marines are presently spread too thin. Holcomb knows that Price was miffed over his refusal to permit him to rent drill and recreation fields and compete athletically with a White Russian contingent. Holcomb therefore asks Yarnell if he wishes to keep Price until the end of his own cruise instead of having Colonel Miller come out and replace him. Holcomb has the highest praise for Miller but would certainly accede to whatever Yarnell wished in this matter.

**7 March.** Holcomb to Col Emile P. Moses, CO, FMF, MB, San Diego, California.

Holcomb is delighted that Moses wants to go to Newport and especially because he feels it is important to have one as well versed as Moses in the value and technique of FMF operations attending the Advanced Class. Holcomb was mainly concerned before about the higher-priced cost of living that Moses would have to endure at Newport at the very moment that his wife is so ill. Holcomb is also very pleased about having VAdm Greenslade named as the Attack Force Commander since he is an up-and-coming officer in the Navy and one who should be given first-hand knowledge of FMF problems and procedures. He warns Moses not to expect too much in the performance of the 6th Marines: they have little experience and are low on officers. Even so, good things can be learned from such shortages. Holcomb is happy about Bloch's decision to use the *Chau-mont* and the 6th Marines and to allow them to come home in battleships as a demonstration of Marine adaptability.

**8 March.** Holcomb to Col Charles F. B. Price, CO, 4th Marines, Shanghai, China.

Holcomb announces that Price will be the next Commanding Officer at the Philadelphia Marine Barracks. In regard to the issue of some of Price's recommendations being rejected by Holcomb, he insists that Price explain to Adm Yarnell that Holcomb cannot always grant such requests on facilities, materiel, and personnel. He felt that some of Price's requests were exaggerated, and Holcomb is bound by President Roosevelt's 1,000-man ceiling for Price's outfit. Holcomb is willing to let Price stay if Yarnell insists on it, but he would rather proceed with the scheduled reliefs. Colonel Wells plans to retire in August so Price could have his quarters in Philadelphia.

**8 March.** Capt F. P. Pyzick, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Pyzick requests Holcomb's permission to give testimony before the House Naval Affairs Committee relative to the Navy promotion system. He cites the relevant regulations and a letter from Carl Vinson to the *Army and Navy Journal* inviting participants.

**8 March.** BGen James T. Buttrick, CG, MB, Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Buttrick explains that Pyzick's desire to testify stems from his being passed over by a selection board. Pyzick had complained that the board was not aware of all the facts, and his testimony he hoped would improve Navy selection methods.

Buttrick personally feels that Pyzick is actually seeking to restore his lost seniority through congressional action. He describes him as nervous and suspicious by nature and obviously upset over his not being selected.

**9 March.** Col John Marston, CO, American Legation Guard, Peking, China, to Holcomb.

Marston reports that the changes in command have been carried out smoothly. He only regrets that it has been necessary for the Marine Corps to reduce its strength in China. He is going to try to maintain some of the athletics, movies, and enlisted men's clubs because they are vital for the morale of the men. The reduction will hurt training the most since it will allow only one platoon to practice at the rifle range at any given time.

**7 March.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little, CG, MCB, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Little expresses his gratitude for the use of the 2d Brigade and the USS *Chau-mont* in Fleet Problem XIX. He wants to impress upon the Navy the need for the FMF in naval operations. Little has always been opposed to either splitting up the FMF or placing it too far forward. The latter would certainly destroy its strategic freedom of action.

Little appears to be unnerved by Holcomb's request that he take over the Department of the Pacific in Lyman's absence. He therefore asks Holcomb if he could run things from San Diego instead of having to maintain an extra household in San Francisco. He claims that he can keep in touch with the Department by phone. The three major factors he lists for his staying in San Diego are: the fact that his wife is sick and would prefer to have him nearby, that he fears losing the good servants he has in San Diego, and finally that he wants to be present for the return of the 2d Brigade to fix their new training schedule.

9 March. MajGen Louis McCarty Little to Holcomb.

Little is upset over the orders to send Captain Joel T. Boone to Cavite. Little asks that the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery be approached to postpone the change for six months so that Boone can finish full participation in Fleet Problem XIX and complete a report on the "salvage" of personnel. Little agrees with the need for Marines to gain wide exposure to the FMF by rotating them in and out quite often, but he also wants to have some experienced personnel like Boone.

9 March. Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little.

Holcomb approves the idea of Little going on Fleet Problem XIX. With regard to Department of the Pacific, Holcomb has already figured out a way for Little to avoid having to go to San Francisco. He then discusses a proposed change in the *Marine Corps Manual* with the purpose of making Marine practice on district commandants more similar to Navy methods.

9 March. Holcomb to MajGen James C. Breckinridge, CG, MB, Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb sympathizes with the position held by both Buttrick and Breckinridge that it would be better to have a more junior cavalry officer at Quantico. But Holcomb himself is in a bind because Gen Kramer has informed him that he has located a suitable replacement for Maj Wilkinson. Nevertheless, he agrees not to place the new Army officer officially on the staff of the Marine Corps Schools and asks that no more be said about the matter. Holcomb then turns to a discussion of uniform dress in the Fort Myer procession and participation of the 6th Marines in the Fleet Problem XIX. Finally, Holcomb asserts his desire to see the return of Air Squadron One to Quantico.

14 March. Capt Charles D. Baylis, USMC (Ret), Los Angeles, California, to Holcomb.

Baylis invites Holcomb to listen to his radio program, "The Marines Tell It to You," next Sunday. It will feature the story of a Marine veteran who served in Holcomb's 2d Battalion, 6th Marines at Blanc Mont. Baylis wants Holcomb's candid opinion especially since they had both worked together in the old Mills Building.

17 March. Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, MB, Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb shows enthusiasm at the prospect of visiting Parris Island but of course he cannot leave Washington until all legislative work is out of the way. Holcomb feels that the maneuvers went very well and suspects that Adm Johnson is now a good friend of the Marine Corps.

20 March. Mrs. Joel T. Boone, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Mrs. Boone announces that her husband has just been stricken ill and thus with great disappointment cannot proceed with his plan to participate in Fleet Problem XIX. She thanks Holcomb for all the support given to Capt Boone in his medical work on behalf of the Navy and Marine Corps. She suspects that it was the order from the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery transferring him to Curacao (sic) in May that might have had something to do with his heart attack. She is only grateful that it did not happen on board ship.

**26 March.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal.

Holcomb relates that he is busily engaged with the personnel bill introduced by Representative Scott. Until only 10 days ago the Bureau of Navigation had opposed Marine Corps inclusion in this bill. Holcomb will explain the workings of the bill when he next sees McDougal, but he is especially pleased about its 6 percent feature. If the Scott Bill passes everyone can stay on as there will be no forced retirement. Holcomb then submits his proposed itinerary for the visit to Parris Island.

Also included in this folder are the following: a note from Dr. William Lee Davidson of Chester, South Carolina, asking Holcomb to send his daughter an autograph; an exchange of letters between the MGC and Harvey S. Brown, a Marine private who served under Holcomb in World War I—Brown wanted information on Victory Medals and a photograph of Holcomb; an invitation from Col J. M. Wainwright, 3d Cavalry, USA, for the Holcombs to attend the “Hoof-prints” horse show at Fort Myer; a letter from Kate Jaquette, chairman of the membership committee of the Huguenot Society of Washington concerning prospective memberships of Holcomb’s sisters and brothers; a letter from Elsie Little, wife of the major general, hoping the Holcombs would come and visit the Littles; a letter from Holcomb to E. J. Willis Co., inquiring whether he could use their gas to fuel auxiliaries aboard his “Slow Boat”; a letter from C. M. Busbee, national secretary of the 2d Division Association, AEF, notifying Holcomb that his membership dues are all paid up; and finally a letter from Holcomb to the Conoco Travel Bureau of Denver, Colorado, asking for tour-aide routing for his trip to Parris Island, South Carolina.

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**31 March.** LtCol Gilder Jackson, Jr., CO, Basic School, MB Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Jackson announces a change in the date of graduation and hopes that Holcomb will attend and speak to the graduates. He has also invited Adm Cluverius and is thinking of writing to Gen Buttrick. The Commandant of the Philadelphia Navy Yard wishes to know the proper form and timing of honors to be accorded Gen Holcomb on his visit.

**1 April.** Holcomb to LtCol Gilder Jackson, Jr.

Holcomb assures Jackson that he still plans to attend the graduation ceremonies after brief visits to New Castle and the Depot of Supplies at Philadelphia. The Holcombs are hoping to stay with the Jacksons for the night. Holcomb does not particularly care what type of honors are displayed for him and would not be offended if they were dropped altogether.

**1 April.** LtCol Louis R. Jones, chairman of the mounted sports committee, Officers Mess, MB, Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Jones invites the Holcombs down to the annual horse show, buffet dinner, and dance at Quantico. He expects that it will be an even greater event with the addition of Col Wainwright from Fort Myer. Holcomb has offered to sponsor a trophy for the competition.

**4 April.** LtCol Gilder Jackson, Jr., CO, Basic School, MB, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Jackson is pleased to have the Holcombs stay at his residence and plans to

hold a buffet lunch in honor of the Holcombs. He mentions the protocol of exchanged visits with Adm Cluverius and feels it will be a successful graduation.

**7 April.** Holcomb to LtCol Gilder Jackson, Jr.

Holcomb insists on calling upon Adm Cluverius first in order to meet protocol requirements. But he states that the Adm need not repay his call. He looks forward to arriving in Philadelphia.

Holcomb is pleased at the results of his testimony before the House Naval Affairs Committee on behalf of the Personnel Selection Bill. It provides equal advantages for both the Marine Corps and the Navy. The ratio of enlisted men to officers is to become 16:1 and Marine strength will be pegged at one-fifth the authorized level of the Navy. The only unhappy feature of the bill is the forced retirement of two general officers yearly from active service. Also those officers who have been passed over twice by the selection process will end up on the retired list. Finally, Holcomb agrees to have the membership on senior boards change yearly.

**7 April.** Assistant Secretary of War Louis Johnson, Washington, D.C., to Holcomb.

Johnson declares that he was "honored" to have Holcomb attend the Army Day Banquet at the Mayflower Hotel, showing his loyal support for the national defense effort. Johnson enjoyed giving his speech.

**7 April.** Holcomb to MajGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, MB, Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb states that Jimmy Roosevelt will make his flight to Parris Island a week later than scheduled. He suggests that McDougal arrange with the Mayor of Charleston for visiting congressmen to go and see Parris Island. He then reports on the favorable response he received from the House Naval Affairs Committee in regard to the Personnel Selection Bill. Holcomb notes that only the Commanding General, FMF, can serve on the Senior Board two years in a row.

**29 March.** Maj Donald Winder to Holcomb.

Winder puts forth his view that the planned Marine Corps strength of 47,000 men at the outbreak of a war is entirely too meager to meet operational needs. He suggests the Army allow 5,000 to 25,000 experienced soldiers to be inducted directly into the Marine Corps to beef up the landing force. He asks Holcomb not to divulge this scheme to anyone else. He briefly mentions the fact that Holcomb befriended him in World War I.

**7 April.** Holcomb to Maj Donald Winder, USMCR, Chicago, Illinois.

Holcomb responds to Winder's suggestion of Marine Corps absorption of Army personnel to make up shortages by pointing out that the Army is faced with its own manpower shortages with the approach of war. The Army would therefore resist any such effort and Holcomb admitted that he did not support the idea either. He prefers to obtain increased authorizations for Regulars and to step up the training of Reserve Battalions to meet Marine shortages.

**8 April.** LtCol Gilder Jackson, Jr., to Holcomb.

Jackson continues to discuss matters of protocol for Holcomb's projected visit. Adm Cluverius insists on calling upon Holcomb because of the latter's august office. Jackson expects the initial result of the Personnel Bill will be the inundation of the Marine Corps with second lieutenants. He and his staff will try to find room for more at the Basic School.

**11 April.** James Roosevelt, The White House, Washington, D.C., to Holcomb.

Roosevelt sends Holcomb a contribution in the form of all the pay he received while on active duty, and he asks that it be given to a charity which the Marines designate. He only specifies that his name be withheld.

**12 April.** Capt James M. McHugh, USMC, Hankow, China, to Holcomb.

McHugh describes the evacuation of Nanking aboard the USS *Panay* as well as several excursions by plane and car to other Chinese cities and Hong Kong. Then he explains some recent social and political changes within the Kung regime. He indicates that "corruption is rampant," but he feels that Chiang Kai-Shek has developed greater leadership qualities in the face of the Japanese onslaught. The Chinese show increasing determination and unity and a will to fight.

As for the Japanese, McHugh thinks they will have a difficult time bringing the Chinese to the negotiating table and that as they proceed further into China, their military performance seems to decline. The Japanese must now decide whether to throw their whole military weight against China or become mired in the war. McHugh also comments on his good relations with both the American ambassador and the military attaches. He praises the Marine Corps' far-sightedness in China, and he feels this has been the most exciting experience of his life.

**13 April.** Holcomb to Maj David Nimmer, USMC, MB, Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb discusses putting his "Slow Boat" into shape. He wants Nimmer to varnish the mast but to hold off on the paint job. Holcomb had ordered the installation of a new gas heating system for the boat. He hopes to see Nimmer on the weekend of the Quantico horse-show.

**20 April.** MajGen John A. Lejeune, USMC (Ret), Norfolk, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Lejeune congratulates Holcomb on having the Marine Corps included in the Personnel Selection Bill brought before the Naval Affairs Committee. He believes it will pass both houses, and that at last the Marines will be given a firm authorization level pegged at 20 percent of the Navy's total. Lejeune himself had attempted the very same thing in 1916 and had made numerous appearances on behalf of a similar personnel measure. But the effort failed. He feels the Marine Corps will be all the greater a beneficiary the more it "ties up with the Navy."

**24 April.** MajGen Douglas C. McDougal to Holcomb.

McDougal elaborates on the visit of several congressmen to Parris Island. Unfortunately, his tour had to be telescoped into one hour and ten minutes because of their late arrival. McDougal personally chauffeured Senators Duffy, Maas, and Mott from the airport. After showing them the rifle range, he took them into the worst and most dilapidated portions of the base: several old, termite-ridden barracks and the condemned post exchange. McDougal finally reports that the senators were very impressed with the anti-aircraft artillery layout.

**25 April.** Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little.

Holcomb praises the way Little coordinated the landing of the regiment in spite of the six-month separation. Holcomb then shares his elation over the improved Personnel Bill. He is especially keen about the pegging of Marine Corps strength at 20 percent of the Navy total. The most dangerous feature he feels is the possibility that the selection boards might permit the upper ranks to be "clogged" with unfit officers. He will, of course, ask Little to serve.

25 April. Holcomb to Col Emile P. Moses, MCB, San Diego, California.

Holcomb appreciates the information Moses sent him on the landing exercises. He has just returned from his inspection trip to Charleston and Parris Island. While there, he looked up Moses' son, Billy, at The Citadel and found him very well. Holcomb apologizes for having taken so long to report on this, but the crush of work prevented his sending an earlier letter.

25 April. Holcomb to Capt M. H. Stayton, U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb acknowledges the great honor bestowed on him by Stayton and the trustees of the Academy for naming him to honorary membership to the Naval Academy Alumni Association. He also praises the quality of the *Shipmate* magazine sent to him.

13 April. Capt M. H. Stayton to Holcomb.

Stayton announces Holcomb's election and states that there are only three other honorary members. He also invites the Holcombs to the annual luncheon.

27 April. LtCol A. F. Howard, U.S. Fleet Training Detachment, on board the USS *New York* at Norfolk, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Adm Johnson and the president of the U.S. Fleet Landing Boat Board are seeking to have Holcomb witness the various types of landing boats being proposed for adoption by the board. They also would like Col C. J. Miller and Maj Creesy to attend.

27 April. Holcomb to BGen John C. Beaumont, MCB, San Diego, California.

Holcomb praises the performance of the 2d Brigade in the landing operations held in Hawaii. He is glad Beaumont is back on American soil and knows he will be very busy. Holcomb hopes the Selection Bill will pass the Senate. He feels it is a most important piece of legislation and a big improvement over the present system. He also makes reference to the activities of Walter Hill, James Meade, Douglas C. McDougal, and Charles Lyman.

19 April. BGen John C. Beaumont, Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, to Holcomb.

Beaumont discusses the logistics problems of unloading boats and equipment from the *Chaumont*. He regrets the lack of time available for training boat crews, but he praises the planning work done by Marine staffers which had made smooth coordination and execution possible. Marine Corps indoctrination on landing techniques had finally proved itself here. Nonetheless, heavy surf managed to damage a number of the boats quite severely. At the wrap-up conference, they decided to seek new boats with better handling characteristics.

28 April. Holcomb to LtCol A. F. Howard, aboard the USS *New York* at Norfolk Navy Yard, Portsmouth, Va.

Holcomb assumes him that he will try to attend the landing boat tests if at all possible. He only regrets that he missed Admiral Johnson on his last visit to Washington. Johnson's exchanges with other Marines indicate that he is favorably impressed about the performance of the FMF. Holcomb is very pleased with Johnson's own advocacy of the FMF role and its preparedness.

29 April. Holcomb to Col John Marston, American Embassy Guard, Peking, China.

Holcomb praises the new Selection Bill and recognizes Representative Melvin Maas (D-Minnesota) as responsible for this legislative success on behalf of the Marine Corps. He also lauds Gen McDougal for the improvements wrought at Parris Island. Then Holcomb questions Marston's motives for keeping both his quartermaster and paymaster in Peking.

April (undated). BGen Douglas C. McDougal to Holcomb.

McDougal expresses pleasure at Holcomb's plan to inspect Parris Island as previously scheduled. He is looking forward to having Jimmy Roosevelt as well as visiting congressmen. McDougal proposes to use his Marine Band for the welcoming festivities in Charleston. Finally, McDougal exhibits appreciation of the Selection Bill and is glad that he will not have to serve on the next selection board.

This folder also contains a letter from Samuel Eagle Burr of the American Legion Department of Delaware inviting Holcomb to become a member of New Castle Post No. 4 with Holcomb replying in the affirmative; a letter to Capt W. L. Lind, USN, aboard the USS *Omaha* thanking him for lending Holcomb Moriarty's letter (not found); copies of letters written by Gen McDougal to Mayor Burbank of Charleston and to Representative Thomas S. McMillan (D-South Carolina), asking them to help promote visits of congressmen to Parris Island during Charleston's Azalea Week; letters to and from Col Chandler Campbell of Forest Hills, New York, seeking Holcomb's aid in mediating with the F.H.A. for a homeowner's loan; a letter to the Alhambra Cigar & Cigarette Mfg Co., requesting 400 cigars; a letter from Holcomb to the *New Castle County Gazette* of Delaware seeking a subscription to the paper and the placing of the paper on the USMC publicity list.

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4 May. Adm W. H. Allen, Commandant, U.S. Navy Yard Charleston, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

Allen is very pleased that Holcomb took the trouble to visit him. Various dignitaries kept him very busy during the visit.

5 May. Holcomb memorandum to Col Melvin J. Maas, USMCR.

Holcomb discusses the proposed changes in the outfitting of the U.S. Marine Band. It involves replacing the present rain cape and overcoat with a raincoat and overcoat in combination. He has left all the detailed work and designs to the Depot of Supplies in Philadelphia.

6 May. Holcomb to Col Melvin J. Maas, USMCR.

Holcomb forwards four photographs as a remembrance of their recent get-together.

7 May. Holcomb to LtCol Miles R. Thacher, USMC, Cavite Navy Yard, Philippines.

Holcomb forecasts that Thacher will receive his promotion to full colonel by summer and then announces that McDougal has specifically requested his services as his chief of staff at Parris Island. Holcomb notes that any officer getting a year abroad is most fortunate, but he assumes that Parris Island will be more than adequate for Thacher because he himself has recently upgraded personnel there.

7 May. Holcomb to BGen Philip H. Torrey, USMC.

Holcomb explains his reasoning for selecting Torrey to command the Eastern Recruiting Division at Philadelphia as stemming from Torrey's having had more than his share of commands of barracks.

8 May. Col John B. Sebree, USMC, MCB San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Sebree announces that he has changed his mind about retiring for reason of lightening the financial burden on his family. He is very pleased with the prospective job at the Western Recruiting Division at San Francisco.

10 May. Col H. N. Manney, USMC Depot of Supplies, Naval Operating Base, Norfolk, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Manney protests that he knows of no "political influence" scandal brewing because of Pvt W. B. Johnson's misdeeds or in regard to his own affairs. He feels the whole matter is a "tempest in a teapot." Manney claims that he had his own worries without the burden of this problem which had almost caused him to have a nervous breakdown.

9 May. Holcomb to Representative Norman R. Hamilton, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb insists that Hamilton file formal charges against Pvt W. B. Johnson if Hamilton thinks Johnson is guilty of tampering with Virginia voting laws. Holcomb would like to have any evidence of Johnson's wrongdoing; he has already forced the private to forswear any more political activity. Holcomb himself is just about ready to order a full-scale investigation of the matter. Manney is the only one with whom Holcomb has discussed the matter.

6 May. Holcomb to Representative Norman R. Hamilton.

Holcomb tells the congressman that he has ordered Manney to make an investigation of Johnson's political activities. Manney reported back that Johnson seemed totally innocent of any premeditated attempt to break the law and had merely campaigned for civic improvements in his own neighborhood of East Ocean View. He has agreed to cease all such activity. Manney also finds Johnson a good soldier. Holcomb suggests that Hamilton let the matter rest because Holcomb is looking into the matter, and agrees that some time limit may be necessary for service at various Marine depots.

5 May. Col H. N. Manney to Holcomb.

Manney questioned Pvt Johnson immediately after the phone call from Vandegrift about his political activities. Johnson is legally registered to vote in East Ocean View and is quite unaware that he has committed anything illegal. He claims to have no axe to grind for either Hamilton or his opponent Colgate Darden. He has agreed to cease all politicking and resign from the local civic group.

Manney has nothing but the highest praise for Johnson's loyalty and capabilities. He says he would be glad to promote him should the opportunity arise. Finally, he recommends against having him transferred and remarks that his long service there is both common and desirable.

6 May. Col H. N. Manney to Holcomb.

Manney writes further about the Johnson situation. He states that Hamilton risked angering Virginia pride by forcing the transfer of a Virginia "landowner"

just before a very close political election. Manney believes that Johnson wants merely to work for the betterment of his community and not for any individual political gain. He further speculates that Hamilton's strength is in Portsmouth and the Navy Yard area while Darden's support comes from Virginia Beach and Ocean View. He certainly expects Ocean View to react strongly against any attempts to have Johnson transferred. Finally, Manney complained that such a move would damage morale in his close-knit quartermaster organization.

11 May. Col Melvin Maas to Holcomb.

Maas expresses his gratitude for the party honoring his promotion in the Marine Corps Reserve. He is especially pleased that it was Holcomb who placed the two silver eagles on his shoulders and administered the oath to him. He praises both the quality of the party and Holcomb's kindness in furnishing photographs.

In a follow-up letter of the same date, Maas sends his appreciation for information about the Marine Corps study to adopt a new combination raincoat and overcoat.

11 May. Holcomb to RAdm William H. Allen, USN, Commandant, Charleston Navy Yard, South Carolina.

Holcomb comments favorably on his visit to Charleston and agrees with Allen that Capt Spotts is not a good officer. He then explains that Spotts will be forced to retire this June unless the Selection Bill passes first in which case he will be on for another year. In the latter case, Holcomb would make sure that Spotts is transferred.

11 May. Maj William Alfred Eddy to Holcomb.

Eddy issues Holcomb an invitation to attend the Hobart 1939 commencement exercises as the guest of honor, since it will be the first graduation of platoon leaders seeking reserve commissions in the Marine Corps. He had written way in advance in order to indicate the eagerness with which he and the College want Holcomb. He also extends an invitation for this year's program.

12 May. Holcomb to Maj William Alfred Eddy, USMC (Ret), President of Hobart College, Geneva, New York.

Holcomb informs Eddy that he cannot accept his invitation for this year's graduation nor is he sure about next year for the first graduation of platoon leader candidates. This May Holcomb has to make his annual appearance at the Basic School graduation in Philadelphia. He also has to prepare for important legislation in Congress which requires his sticking near to Washington. Nonetheless, he did enjoy seeing the Eddys last summer and hopes for their return to Washington soon.

13 May. Holcomb to Col H. N. Manney.

Holcomb first discusses the Chinese characters and seals on a photograph which he sent to the Library of Congress for analysis and translation. They indicate that the seal belonged to a lay member of the Buddhist faith who has taken the the name "the Man of the Hills Who Nests Among the Rocks." He hopes that the explanation of the seals and characters would be helpful to Manney.

16 May. Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, MB Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb guesses that there will be a White House conference on the Personnel Selection Bill with early indications that the bill might pass. His secretary, Miss O'Malley, is about to marry LtCol James M. Daly. Holcomb ends with a wish that he could find an excuse to call McDougal in for a conference.

17 May. MajGen Louis McCarty Little, CG, FMF, MCB, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Little reports that CinCPac (Adm Claude C. Bloch) has informally endorsed the idea of requesting an increase in the number of FMF personnel, and favors the island defense force planned. Bloch seemed impressed by Marine Corps facilities developed at San Diego. Little feels that the best strategy would be continued expansion at San Diego so that the Marines would have adequate housing for future growth. Little also looks forward to a visit from Adm Kalbfus and hopes to broach FMF matters with him. He ends with a brief description of the awarding of some Purple Heart Medals at San Diego.

19 May. Col Charles F. B. Price, 4th Marines, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Price begins this long letter by insisting that he does not wish to be contentious over whether his requests and recommendations are reasonable. He is quite aware of the pressures Holcomb is under—social as well as political. Nonetheless, the Shanghai situation has attracted great attention and could be considered “the most active” front of all Marine Corps activities. Thus Price feels obligated to keep Holcomb apprised of the situation there.

He then turns to specific problems. Firstly, he wants a captain to head up the enlisted men's club since its management is a delicate international issue involving the reputation of the Marines because of the possible ill-effects of liquor consumption. Price then shifts to a long diatribe on the need for the Marine Corps to actively court the “admiration, respect, and support of the senior line officers of the Navy” to promote Corps programs and goals. Price points out that there is usually a Marine detailed to fill strategic positions under many admirals and that these individuals could consolidate this friendly and influential linkage by showing interest in the furtherance of the admirals' goals.

Finally, Price apologizes for any bad impressions given by his letter to Vandegrift on Holcomb's performance as the Major General Commandant. He hopes Holcomb will understand that he, Price, was only voicing his own judgements in the role of an elder statesman. Personally, Price is most grateful for this tour of duty under Yarnell, but of course he will gladly serve wherever Holcomb needs him.

19 May. Holcomb to LtCol Gilder D. Jackson, Jr., MB, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb has to decline the invitation to attend the Basic School graduation because the Second Deficiency Bill hearings begin next Monday. Holcomb cannot afford to miss them even though Gen Williams does most of the talking.

20 May. J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, D.C., to Holcomb.

Hoover acknowledges Holcomb's offer of May 10 to return the Thompson sub-machine gun to the FBI and gratefully accepts the offer.

14 May. Maj Joseph R. Knowlan, FMCR, CO, 7th Btry, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Knowlan conveys a strong desire for Holcomb to stay at the Basic School graduation long enough to inspect his unit which he points out is the only Marine Reserve artillery battalion. He also invites Holcomb to dine with officers of the battalion.

20 May. Holcomb to Maj Joseph R. Knowlan.

Holcomb insists that he has waited until the last moment to make a decision on his trip to Philadelphia. Congressional business forbids him to come since he must testify.

20 May. Holcomb to Maj Ray A. Robinson, USMC, MB, Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb expresses his appreciation for the fine work Robinson had done in getting the "Slow Boat" outfitted and encloses a check to cover labor and materials.

20 May. LtCol John W. Thomason, Jr., USMC, Washington, D.C., to Col H. von Hartlieb, Wiesbaden, Germany.

Thomason writes a letter of introduction for Frank Holcomb, son of the MGC, in which he reminds von Hartlieb that General Holcomb commanded the American battalion facing him at Belleau Wood in 1918.

25 May. LtCol Gilder D. Jackson, Jr., to Holcomb.

Jackson regrets that Holcomb could not witness the "simplicity and dignity" of the Basic School graduation exercises. He credits the fine finale on both the good spirit exhibited at the school and his own work there. He will soon submit his annual report.

He certainly understands Holcomb's need to be in Washington in order to obtain money for the Marines. Jackson's own plans call for him to go to Newport, Rhode Island, and he will entrust the summer exercises at the Basic School to Col Frank B. Goettge. But he also hopes to visit Holcomb in Washington before long.

26 May. Holcomb to Col Leander A. Clapp, USMC.

Holcomb has decided to place the 5th Marines under Julian Smith because Clapp's doctor urged him to assume light duties. Holcomb regrets having to delay Clapp's assumption of command but looks forward to his complete recovery.

31 May. Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little.

Holcomb seeks Little's views on whether there would be any advantage to bringing the FMF Headquarters, the 2d Anti-Aircraft Battalion, the 2d Brigade, and even the 1st Anti-Aircraft Battalion around with the Fleet to the East Coast for maneuvers and training. Holcomb's own opinion is that it is a long way to come for a relatively small advantage in the form of training benefits. Many of these could be attained in San Diego. Holcomb wants Little to reply rapidly by air mail.

This folder also contains a letter from Holcomb to Capt Edwin T. Pollock, USN (Ret), Washington, D.C., concerning Marine Corps tags; a copy of a letter from George Akerson, Secretary to the President, to Honorable Ernest L. Jahncke, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, dated 6 May 1930, which relates to an address by President Herbert Hoover on the famous Tientsin evacuation of 1900 during

the Boxer Rebellion; two letters from Holcomb to Vice Commodore Howard Crawford of the Corinthian Yacht Club of Washington, D.C., requesting and then cancelling the use of berth 445 for his "Slow Boat"; a letter to Cdr Pierre Benech, naval attache for the French Embassy in Washington, D.C. thanking him for sending copies of the magazine *Revue des Troupes*; a cover letter to Holcomb from Maj Julian P. Brown, USMC, 10th Bn, New Orleans, announcing that he is enclosing two mementoes for Holcomb to keep; a telegram from Mrs. Cyril Edmunds regarding Frank Holcomb's sailing plans in June; an exchange of notes with Mr. E. F. McDonald of Chicago, Illinois, regarding Holcomb's trip with McDonald on the yacht *Mizpah* on the Potomac River; a thank-you note from Thomas I. Jordan, a former soldier in the 5th Marines during World War I, of Los Angeles, to MajGen Louis McCarty Little praising the Marines and thanking them for the presentation of Purple Hearts; a personal note to Mrs. David Porter of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, relative to the death of Paul Capron; a letter from Richard Heun of Richmond, Indiana, asking Holcomb to autograph a picture of himself; Holcomb's letter of recommendation to the Chevy Chase Club Board of Governors on behalf of Col Holland Smith for summer privileges; a brief letter from Lillian O'Malley Daly, Holcomb's secretary, thanking everyone for her retirement gift.

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**1 June.** BGen John Marston, CG, American Embassy Guard, Peking, China, to Holcomb.

Marston relates Adm Yarnell's favorable impressions after visiting the Marines both at Peking and Tientsin. He then praises Holcomb's successful efforts at getting the Marine Corps included in the provisions of the Selection Bill. He feels that increasing the number of officers is a "most urgent" matter. He hopes that the next big effort will go toward getting comparability pay for the enlisted Marines. He finishes with an optimistic appraisal of local conditions and especially notes the good work of Col William C. James in shaping up the Marines at Tientsin.

**1 June.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little, CG, FMF, MCB San Diego, California, to Col Emile P. Moses.

Little issues this letter of commendation for Moses' outstanding work as his chief of staff for the FMF. Moses' knowledge of particular problems and difficulties in the command were of great value to Little during Moses' whole tour of duty.

**2 June.** BGen John Marston, Peking, China, to Holcomb.

Marston comments on Holcomb's orders in regard to personnel serving in the offices of quartermaster and paymaster in North China. He is only too glad to carry out Holcomb's wishes, but would like Holcomb to make his position clear. A recent inspection had shown that these two offices perform well in the present system.

**2 June.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little to Holcomb.

Little discusses the virtue of not sending any Marine forces to the Atlantic area with the Fleet. He feels that the Anti-Aircraft Battalion especially would gain more by training alongside the FMF at San Clemente. In talks with Adm Bloch, Little found that Bloch is most anxious to cooperate in joint maneuvers in 1940. Little is not so sure such maneuvers would be beneficial.

**6 June.** Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little.

Holcomb expresses surprise that the doctors have released BGen James Meade for active duty, but in any event he has chosen Meade to command the Rifle Range and Recruit Depot at San Diego. This should give Meade plenty of activity. Meanwhile, Holcomb feels that the Selection Bill is "dead," but still hopes to get money for the five buildings at San Diego despite the uncertainty of passage of the Deficiency Bill.

**7 June.** Mr. Robert E. Heun, Richmond, Indiana, to Holcomb.

In thanking Holcomb for sending him an autographed photograph, Heun comments that neither he nor Holcomb have changed much from the old days. He regrets the rapid approach of McDougal's retirement date in 1940. He hopes that they will have a reunion of their families soon. He then interjects a few thoughts on the threats of war in both the Atlantic and Pacific and on the difficulty of understanding the oriental mind and manner.

**7 June.** BGen John Marston to Holcomb.

Marston sends Holcomb a copy of a letter which Adm Yarnell sent to LtCol William James praising his work at Tientsin. Marston firmly endorses this view of James' work and states that he has miraculously transformed the Tientsin Detachment within a matter of eight weeks and brought it up to the Marine Corps' normally high standards.

**8 June.** Holcomb to Mr. Willys R. Peck, U.S. State Department, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb informs Peck that the Army and Navy Club just altered its rules to allow officers of the Foreign Service of the United States to become associate members upon nomination by two regular members. Holcomb is anxious for Peck and any of his colleagues to take advantage of the offer if they wish to do so.

**8 June.** Col Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, USMCR (Ret), Atlantic City, New Jersey, to Holcomb.

Biddle writes to thank Holcomb for his special promotion and vows to work hard in order to live up to it.

**9 June.** Holcomb to Honorable David I. Walsh, Chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb thanks Walsh for introducing and passing the enabling legislation for the Marine Corps to have 40 percent privates first class instead of the previous 25 percent. Holcomb would, of course, have preferred to have 50 percent. He appreciates Walsh's phoning him so quickly with the good news and only hopes that Vinson can now get the bill through the House.

**13 June.** MajGen Charles H. Lyman, CG, Department of the Pacific, San Francisco, California, to Holcomb.

Lyman requests that Holcomb circulate the speech he gave at the Quantico graduation exercises to the entire Marine Corps since it deals with issues of such general importance. Lyman enjoyed visiting with the Holcombs while he was in the East. He specially praises the atmosphere at both Headquarters and Quantico, noting that Breckinridge is doing an excellent job. He finishes with an appeal for Holcomb to make another trip West so that his Marines can be cheered by his "interest in their welfare and efficiency."

**15 June.** Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little.

Holcomb discusses at length the various pieces of legislation most affecting the Marine Corps. He is happy that the bill increasing the percentage of privates first class passed, but he faces a difficult time with building allotments since the second authorization failed. He looks to the Relief Bill to help solve the dilemma. Holcomb promises to keep Little informed of developments.

**15 June.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, MCB, Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb sends an identical letter to McDougal concerning legislative developments.

**20 June.** Holcomb to BGen John C. Beaumont, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb encloses a copy of a letter he sent to Beaumont's friend, Elston Tucker, informing him that he cannot be commissioned into the Marine Corps. He is also very sorry to hear of Beaumont's illness, but he is sure that Beaumont shares his joy in the passage of the Personnel Selection Bill.

**22 June.** Holcomb's unsigned draft of a memorandum entitled "Memorandum on More Important Features of H.R. 9997, As Affecting the Marine Corps."

Holcomb feels that this Personnel Bill would result in the addition of 1 brigadier general, 4 colonels, 10 lieutenant colonels, and 17 majors. He then outlines the similarities and differences between H.R. 9997 and the present Personnel Bill. The only major improvements would involve more humane treatment of those officers not selected "best fitted."

**23 June.** Holcomb to Mr. H. M. McIntyre, Secretary to President Roosevelt, The White House, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb discusses the case of Faustin Edwin Wirkus as requested by the White House. Holcomb feels that the Russian-born Wirkus has done a commendable job in the Marine Corps, but that he aspires to something more lavish as in a political job. He therefore cannot offer Wirkus anything he would want to take without creating a bad precedent for the Marine Corps.

**23 June.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal.

Holcomb relates that the Marine Corps will get building allotments under the Spend Lend Fund. He ascribes this turn of events to the persistence of RAdm Ben Moreell, chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks.

**26 June.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little to Holcomb.

Little heartily congratulates Holcomb on all that has been accomplished in Congress for the Marines. He had talked with Adm Bloch about the whole idea of having the Navy manage the question of increasing the size of the Marine Corps. At the same time, Little emphasizes that the Marines can and must look out for themselves. Bloch did agree to an increased complement of Marines in San Diego. Little then lets off steam to Holcomb about the number of unfinished projects at San Diego which he hopes the commandant of the 11th Naval District will see fit to have completed: officers' mess, recreation center, and new barracks.

**28 June.** Capt James M. McHugh, USMC, Hankow, China, to Holcomb.

McHugh makes a personal plea to Holcomb that his performance be judged on his written record rather than by having to make an appearance before the selection board. He himself is totally swept up by his duties in covering the Sino-Japanese War and he rarely has time to do everything he should. If this request concerning his promotion panel cannot be granted, he asks that it be delayed a year. The bulk of this lengthy letter deals with incidents in the international community and general analysis of economic, political, and military developments in China. He ends by speculating that neither the Chinese nor the Japanese can afford to continue the war, but neither would they consider capitulating. As a result, the British may end up financing the Japanese to save their business interests in Japanese-held areas of coastal China.

**30 June.** Holcomb to MajGen Charles H. Lyman.

Holcomb expresses his pleasure over provisions of the new Personnel Bill which gives the Marine Corps the same percentage of officers as the Navy and ties enlisted strength to 20 percent of the Navy's total. He only regrets the paltry increase of 1,000 men scheduled for 1940. He also mentions the allotment gains made under the Spend Lend Bill. He credits these legislative successes to friends in the Navy Department and the fine team spirit exhibited at Marine Corps Headquarters. In addition, the Navy's commissioning of the USS *Capella* will allow the Marines to transport heavy equipment to the maneuvers. Holcomb praises Adms Taffinder, Ingersoll, and Ghormley for these triumphs.

The good showing of Williams' brigade last year, Holcomb felt, had boosted Marine Corps morale everywhere. He hopes this high motivation will continue. Holcomb himself is very fatigued and plans to take a two-week cruise on "Slow Boat." After that he intends to inspect several New York and New England posts and ordnance depots.

This folder also contains a letter from Harris and Ewings Photographers, Washington, D.C., seeking a Holcomb autograph for one of their clients; a letter from Cyril Edwards of La Jolla, California, regarding his son; Holcomb's letter to Robert Heun of Richmond, Indiana, expressing the hope that Heun will visit Washington in the fall; letters to and from Col William A. Worton, USMC, concerning Mr. C. E. Gauss' visit to Washington for a State Department conference (Gauss is U.S. Consul General at Shanghai); letters to and from Commander General F. B. Gaven of the Naval Order of the United States regarding Holcomb's agreeing to become an honorary member of the order; letters to and from Mrs. Ervin Wilson of Washington, D.C., seeking payment for automobile damages; correspondence with Christopher Ward of the Delaware Tercentenary Commission in Wilmington, Delaware, about Holcomb's attendance at ceremonies; several letters to and from Col John Dooley, USMC (Ret), special representative for the National Lead Co., New York, New York, regarding his arrival in Washington, his introduction to Assistant Secretary of War Louis Johnson, and a supply of lighter fuel being shipped to Holcomb; two letters thanking Postmaster General Roy North for sending commemorative stamps; an exchange of letters with Mr. Elmer J. Beale, Secretary of the Mid-Day Luncheon Club of Springfield, Illinois, asking Holcomb to be their guest; letters to and from Donald McGregor of the American Legion concerning a dinner invitation; a letter to RAdm Ben Moreell, Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, seeking assistance for the daughter of Gen Harry Lee's widow in finding employment; a thank-you note to Col Anthony J. Drexel Biddle for a present; and a copy of the 20th anniversary card of the 2d Division sent to Holcomb by Mr. T. R. McCabe.

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**1 July.** Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little, CG, FMF, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb encloses a confidential memorandum commenting on the proposals for Army participation in landing exercises. In particular, he hopes that Little can persuade the CinCPacFlt, Adm Bloch, that it should be strictly a "naval landing," and that the Army should only come along as observers. His main worry is that the Army will press for a decisive roll in staff planning for the landing and thus deprive the FMF staff of this unique opportunity to be heavily involved. Finally, Holcomb suggests that Little make an effort to size up Bloch's possible reactions.

**2 July.** Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little.

In this letter, Holcomb urges the strictest adherence to all rules and regulations with regard to allotments for San Diego under the Spend Lend Bill. He cites the example of the District of Columbia losing \$18 million for having failed to comply with all the stipulations of the bill. He reiterated that Little must spend the allotted funds only on the projects for which they were intended.

**2 July.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal, Stockton Ville, Cape May, New Jersey.

Holcomb issues an identical warning to McDougal concerning the use of allotted funds from the Spend Lend Bill.

**2 July.** Holcomb to MajGen James C. Breckinridge, CG, MB Quantico, Virginia.

This also is a carbon copy of the letters sent to Little and McDougal.

**12 July.** MajGen Charles H. Lyman, CG, Department of the Pacific, San Francisco, California, to Holcomb.

Lyman issues a number of compliments to Holcomb on the successful work he has done in administering the Marine Corps. He especially likes Holcomb's effort to project "a friendly impression everywhere" for the Marine Corps since this would most likely create a favorable atmosphere in Congress. Lyman himself has just finished inspection tours of Marine facilities at Seattle and Bremerton. He finds the morale of the men very high. Navy commanders are equally pleased with Marine Corps performance but wish to have increased numbers of Marines at their disposal. Lyman closes with a few remarks about proposed changes in uniforms, the need for more men in post detachments, and the current situation at both San Francisco and Quantico.

**18 July.** Holcomb to Chief Quartermaster Clerk Harry Halladay, MB, Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb describes the work and equipment that he wishes Halladay to have performed on Holcomb's yacht the "Slow Boat."

**18 July.** Holcomb to the Honorable Melvin J. Maas (D-Minnesota), House of Representatives, Naval Affairs Committee, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb apologizes for a late reply to Maas' letter of 9 July, but he insists that he will try to get favorable action from the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery on John Z. Wheeler's Naval Examining Board. At the same time, he warns Maas that he has not had much luck on this kind of request in the past.

Upshur has reported to Holcomb favorably on Maas' idea of having the reserve battalions at Quantico training with the FMF. Holcomb also is very pleased that the platoon leaders class is the largest yet.

**9 July.** Honorable Melvin J. Maas to Holcomb.

Maas describes the unsuccessful attempt of John Z. Wheeler to gain a commission in the Marine Corps because the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery believed he might have myopia in his right eye. Maas quickly had Wheeler tested by two eye specialists in St. Paul, Minnesota, who denied that he had a true case of myopia. Maas here pleads with Holcomb to take up the matter with Adm Rossiter of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery to have the results reversed. He will forward the St. Paul test results.

**18 July.** Holcomb to Col Bennet Puryear, Jr., Assistant Quartermaster, MB Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb writes Puryear about the check he sent to pay for the 206 gallons of gasoline purchased for "Slow Boat." He believes the original check went astray. He now wants a receipt from Puryear showing that the state taxes were covered by the seller.

**24 July.** MajGen Randolph C. Berkeley, USMC, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Berkeley requests an extension on his sick leave. He hopes that he will be able to finish his career in the Marines by returning to an "on duty status." He ends with a postscript thanking Holcomb for allowing him to personally deliver his son's commission into the Marine Corps.

**25 July.** Holcomb to Honorable Melvin J. Maas.

Holcomb regrets that he cannot be of any more assistance to Mr. Wheeler because the Surgeon General has ruled that his examination at Great Lakes Training Station proved that he had a defective left eye due to myopia. His only suggestion is to invite the young man to come to Washington for an examination at his own expense.

**26 July.** Holcomb to Col Frank E. Evans, USS *Henderson*, NOB, Norfolk, Virginia.

Holcomb wishes he could have made Evans happy and thought he had succeeded by giving him the New Orleans recruiting job. Evans apparently wants an assignment in Shanghai.

**27 July.** Holcomb to Col John W. Thomason, MCB, San Diego, California.

Holcomb is delighted to learn that Thomason commands Holcomb's old regiment from World War I. He also praises the hardworking nature of the platoon leaders classes which he himself helped nurse along at Quantico in 1935-1936. Holcomb sends condolences to Thomason over his loss of Capt James Monahan, an Oriental language specialist. He then briefly discusses the successful trip his son Frank is having in Germany thanks in part to Thomason's letter of introduction to a senior German officer.

**25 July.** Col John W. Thomason to Holcomb.

Thomason reports that he has taken charge of the 6th Marines and has let his men know that theirs' is the Commandant's own outfit and that Holcomb

is probably keeping an eye on them. He also describes his work with the Western Platoon Leaders Class. He deeply regrets losing the services of Capt Monahan. But he ends with the assurance that things are going very well and "briskly" in San Diego.

**29 July.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little to Holcomb.

In reply to Holcomb's request, Little presents him a copy of a confidential memorandum addressed to the CinCUS which argues the case against Army participation in Fleet Landing Exercises No. 5. In the memo, Little asserts that the exercise is primarily intended to test light, highly mobile naval attacks to seize temporary bases at the beginning of a war. Army involvement would be an anomaly. If they insist on participating, Little recommends that a nominal amount of troops and one officer be attached directly to the staff of the Attack Force Commander.

Also enclosed with this memorandum are confidential letters from CNO (Adm William D. Leahy) to CinCUS, and from Army Chief of Staff (Gen Malin Craig) to CNO. Leahy attempts to accommodate both the wishes of the Army and that of the CinCUS. On the other hand, Craig wants to see the Army given a direct role in organization and planning of landing operations in FLEX No. 5.

**30 July.** President Walter Hullahen, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware, to Holcomb.

Hullahen expresses an interest in having one of his own Delaware seniors become a ROTC representative in the Marine Corps within the next few years. He has already broached the question with his advanced unit seniors. He is delighted that Holcomb is so desirous of having Delaware represented.

This folder also contains the following: letters to and from RAdm Ben Moreell regarding a job sought for BGen Harry Lee's daughter; letters to and from George V. Gordon, chairman of the 20th Annual Convention Committee for the 2d Division Association, AEF, concerning Holcomb's possible attendance at the reunion; letter thanking Third Assistant Postmaster General Roy North for sending him a commemorative stamp (since Holcomb writes North frequently on the same subject future references will be omitted along with routine requests for cigars, photographic, or pleasure boat equipment); letters to Chief QM Clerk Harry Halladay concerning a number of jobs to be performed on the "Slow Boat"; a thank-you note for watermelon sent to LtCol Lyle H. Miller at MB Parris Island, South Carolina; a letter from Arthur J. Murphy, National President, 2d Division Association, AEF, of Chicago, Illinois, sending the Association's greetings to Holcomb and asking him for suggestions on the conduct and running of the organization; a letter to J. Rogers Holcomb of Wilmington, Delaware, regarding automobile and boat insurance policies; a letter to *Rudder Magazine* of New York inquiring about plans to build a sloop cutter, and a similar letter sent to *Yachting* magazine of New York; and two letters exchanged with LtCol Julian P. Wilcox, USMC (Ret) of Bremerton, Washington, discussing Wilcox's request for the transfer of Maj Baldwin Foote from the Marine Corps Reserve to active duty, with a memorandum prepared by BGen William P. Upshur investigating the background of Wilcox's request for Foote.

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**3 August.** Holcomb to Dr. Walter Hullahen, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

Holcomb states that both he and Col Julian C. Smith, a graduate of the University of Delaware, are desirous of having a student from that university join the Marine Corps. He understands that the offer comes too late this year to attract the more outstanding candidates, but that should not be the case next year.

**3 August.** Holcomb to RAdm Harris Laning, USN (Ret), Governor, U.S. Naval Home, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb informs Laning that he is unable to oblige his request for Marine guards owing to the fact that many naval activities have taxed Marine personnel to the limit. The strength increase awarded to the Marine Corps has amounted to "only 25 percent of the numbers considered essential for present active requirements." He points out that the FMF is operating with training allowances instead of full complements. He therefore suggests that Laning seek either civilian watchmen or police protection for the Naval Home.

**22 July.** RAdm Harris Laning to Holcomb.

Laning describes the increase of criminal acts in and around the Naval Home with some "gangsters" even using the Home as a refuge to hide their loot. The admiral asks Holcomb to send him a Marine guard detail or suggest alternative measures since the welfare and prestige of the Navy in the area hinged on some restoration of law and order. (Enclosed are an endorsement from the Bureau of Navigation to Holcomb, dated 8 July 1938, approving Laning's request, and a reply to the Bureau from BGen Clayton Vogel on 14 July, declining to comply.)

**3 August.** Holcomb to Mr. Colgate Darden, Jr., Norfolk, Virginia.

Holcomb congratulates Darden on his election victory in the Virginia primary. He adds that Melvin Maas reported the House Naval Affairs Committee is most anxious to have Darden as a member.

**3 August.** Holcomb to MajGen James C. Breckinridge, CG, MB Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb asks Breckinridge if he has any objections to having 50 or so oldtimers from the training camp days of World War I assemble at Quantico for a reunion dinner. He suggests that since many of them are now in high-ranking positions they soon might prove useful to the Marine Corps. Further, he recommends that LtCol Alfred H. Noble would be the best man to handle the arrangements.

**4 August.** BGen Richard P. Williams, CG, 1st Marine Brigade, FMF, MB, Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Williams reports that most second lieutenants showed up late or not at all to the 1st Marine Brigade, causing significant disruption in combat training. He suggests that in the future they be ordered to appear earlier in the second quarter of the calendar year to make them available entirely for the heavy training months of summer and fall.

**5 August.** Holcomb to Honorable Melvin J. Maas, Member of Congress, Lake Hubert, Minnesota.

Holcomb assures Maas that he will do all he can to secure Wheeler's appointment even though he predicts a lot of red tape. He is especially concerned about

Wheeler's missing important classwork at the Basic School and the practical exercises held in the summer at Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, and Cape May, New Jersey. Finally, Holcomb inquires about the progress of Maas' political campaign.

**1 August.** Honorable Melvin J. Maas to Holcomb.

Maas asserts that he personally will see to the re-examination of John Wheeler. In the meantime, he hopes Holcomb will keep the appointment open for Wheeler. Specialists both in Minnesota and at the Mayo Clinic insist that he has no eye disease. Maas then speaks of the success of his reserve aviation unit during their active duty tour and tells of how well they worked together with the National Guard infantry and artillery.

**6 August.** Holcomb to Gen Malin Craig, USA, Office of Chief of Staff, War Department, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb is stunned by the State Department decision to award the new military mission to Haiti to the Army; he feels that Marine Corps experience in dealing with Haitian affairs should have received top priority. Nevertheless, Holcomb offers both personnel and advice to assist the Army in their new mission. Holcomb himself will be away for two weeks, but he suggests that Craig contact Holland Smith for anything he needs.

**11 August.** Gen Malin Craig, USA, to Holcomb.

Craig affirms that he is just as surprised as Holcomb at the Haiti mission decision since the War Department neither expected nor requested the assignment. He says they will probably take Holcomb up on his offer of assistance.

**22 August.** Holcomb to RAdm Emory S. Land, U.S. Maritime Commission, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb replies to Land's letter of 17 August and thanks him for assisting his cousin, Richard Holcomb, in getting to the office of M. L. Wilcox, director of operations and traffic. He concludes by stating that he had hoped to fish with mutual friends—the Fays—but the fish were too scarce on the Potomac.

**22 August.** Holcomb confidential memorandum to MajGen James C. Breckinridge

Holcomb expresses his dismay over the assignment of the Army to head up the mission to Haiti. He says that both the State Department and the Chief of Naval Operations were a party to the decision. Later the CNO mentioned to Holcomb that he did not realize what a serious "loss of face" this decision could cause the Marine Corps. (Identical memorandums are mailed to MajGen Louis McCarty Little and MajGen Charles H. Lyman on the same date.)

**25 August.** Holcomb to Col Francis C. Endicott, executive officer of the National Rifle Matches at Camp Perry, Ohio.

Holcomb accepts Endicott's invitation to the National Matches dinner. He also informs him that BGen Douglas C. McDougal, one of the early Marine Rifle Team champions, also plans to attend.

**25 August.** Holcomb to Col Edwin Watson, USA, The White House, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb discusses the case of James C. Magee, Jr. He feels that because of Magee's excellent record he should be allowed to take the examination for a Marine Corps commission. Despite the irregularities of the procedure, "circumstances justify" his getting a commission quickly and entering the Basic School. (Holcomb sends a similar letter to Col John P. Wade, U.S. Soldiers Home, Washington D.C., adding the justifications that Magee has an "excellent reputation" and would be "too old for commissioning next summer.")

**26 August.** Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little, CG, MCB, San Diego, California.

Holcomb shows appreciation for Mrs. Little's writing him about the success of the Navy Relief show. He then discusses a radiogram sent to a Mrs. Barker from the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, in regard to the death of her son. He suggests that someone in the battalion tell her how the battalion "recognized his death." Finally, Holcomb tells Little that the Army does not plan to participate actively in the winter maneuvers, but will send observers.

**26 August.** Holcomb to Mrs. Richard Cutts, Dorset, Vermont.

Holcomb informs Mrs. Cutts that the Marine Corps can no longer store her husband's effects. Congress is looking carefully at justifications for things like storage. Holcomb feels she can have them stored cheaply in Norfolk. He ends by discussing personal events in his life such as the return of his son from Europe and the summer cruises on "Slow Boat."

Also contained in this folder are the following: letters to and from Capt Charles D. Baylis, USMC (Ret), of Los Angeles, in regard to Baylis' election as president of the 2d Division, AEF Association of Los Angeles; a letter from Herbert Stone, editor of *Yachting* magazine, in regard to locating building plans for a 25-foot cabin boat (similar correspondence is exchanged with Mr. Daniel Mallett of Hackensack, New Jersey, Mr. S. S. Rabl of Baltimore, Maryland, and Mr. Ralph Wiley of Oxford, Maryland); invitations and replies to Secretary of Commerce Daniel Roper for a watermelon party and to the North American Yacht Racing Union for membership; a dinner invitation from Col F. C. Endicott for the National Matches dinner; and a letter to Dr. Mather Cleveland of New York, announcing the rapid physical recovery of the MGC's son, Frank.

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**6 September.** John Callan O'Laughlin, publisher, *Army and Navy Journal*, Washington, D.C., to Holcomb.

O'Laughlin thanks Holcomb for contributing an article to the 75th anniversary edition of the *Journal* as well as his efforts at promoting an understanding of national defense needs. Many enthusiastic letters of congratulations have been received on the article; even schools for the blind have requested copies of it.

**19 September.** Holcomb to MajGen Charles Lyman, Department of the Pacific, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb expresses his feelings on the matter of getting more entertainment allowances from the Navy to help cover some out-of-pocket expenses that both he and Lyman must endure because of the nature of their jobs. He then dwells on the idea of having a separate Marine Corps Day at the San Francisco Exposition; he agrees with Lyman that it is a bad idea. He also does not wish to encourage too cozy a relationship with the Marine Corps League, especially its West Coast organization.

**15 September.** MajGen Charles Lyman to Holcomb.

Lyman seeks an air mail reply to the question of whether he should endorse the idea put forward by the Marine Corps League that 10 November be set aside at the San Francisco Exposition as Marine Corps Day. He sees some danger involved in it since he does not wish to antagonize the active support given by the Marine Corps League of California. In a postscript Lyman complains that he has not yet received an answer on his request for entertainment fund reimbursement; he has just wined and dined visiting British naval officers from the HMS *York*.

**19 September.** Holcomb to Maj C. A. Wilkinson, U.S. Cavalry, Command and General Staff School, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas.

He opens with a brief discussion of fishing and riding experiences and requests a copy of a map showing the lakes in which Wilkinson has just fished. Holcomb pays tribute to the recently deceased Col C. J. Miller, whom he describes as one of the best liked and most efficient in the Marine Corps. Finally he thanks Wilkinson for his services at Quantico and hopes he can return again.

**14 September.** Maj C. A. Wilkinson to Holcomb.

Wilkinson thanks Holcomb profusely for the many kindnesses shown him during his tour of duty with the Marine Corps. He recalls his detail to Quantico as the most "enjoyable and pleasant" of his entire career. He then describes his summer vacation fishing trip and ends by promising Holcomb a map of the area where he fished.

**20 September.** Capt James M. McHugh, USMC, American Consulate, Hong Kong, China, to Holcomb.

McHugh relates a rigorous journey to Wuchow and then to Hong Kong, where he has set up a residence. He then gives his views on the deterioration of China's financial situation and the possibilities of American help as well as an overall appraisal of American influence and prestige in the region.

**20 September.** Holcomb to LtCol Gilder D. Jackson, Jr., Basic School, MB Philadelphia Navy Yard, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb tells about his plans to come for a reception at the Basic School after inspecting the Depot of Supplies in Philadelphia.

**19 September.** LtCol Gilder D. Jackson, Jr., to Holcomb.

Jackson makes the suggestion that Holcomb wear a blue uniform as this would blend well with what the orders have prescribed for the men at the Basic School. He is also anxious to carry out any instructions Holcomb might wish to send along.

**20 September.** RAdm William H. Allen, Commandant, Navy Yard Charleston, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

Allen broaches the case of his Marine chauffeur, PFC Edward Lloyd, because the admiral feels that PFC Lloyd was unfairly marked down in his service record by Col Joseph A. Rossell. Allen states that since Rossell could not substantiate a charge of dishonesty against Lloyd in the running of the post exchange, his record should not retain permanent blemishes. He therefore asks Holcomb to personally intervene and question Lloyd about it. Rossell refuses to alter the record himself.

**22 September.** Holcomb to LtCol John M. Arthur, Fleet Marine Officer, Asiatic Fleet.

Holcomb intimates that he is especially delighted at Arthur's reporting because the man he replaced had not fostered good relations between Holcomb and the Commander-in-Chief, Asiatic Fleet. He also expresses delight at Colgate Darden's re-election victory in Virginia which assures the Marine Corps smoother sailing in Congressional battles.

**22 September.** Holcomb to MajGen Joseph H. Pendleton, USMC (Ret), Coronado, California.

Holcomb admits that he has been unable to locate correspondence that Pendleton was seeking from the official files, but he encloses copies of other documents containing critical comments by Pendleton on the proposal to move the Sitka, Alaska Marine Barracks to Japonsky Island.

**17 September.** MajGen Joseph H. Pendleton, to Holcomb.

Pendleton requests a copy of a report he did in 1892 recommending the establishment of Marine posts in various parts of Alaska. He wants to see if his memory of the subject is correct.

**23 September.** LCdr Marion N. Little, USN, on board USS *Idaho*, to Holcomb.

Little, who studied at the Marine Corps Schools when Holcomb was Commandant, wishes to be reassigned there as an instructor. He now seeks an endorsement of his project from Holcomb and asks that he send the approval to Little's U.S. Navy detail officer. Little has very fond memories of his experience at Quantico, especially its warmth and hospitality.

**24 September.** Col Joseph A. Rossell, MB Charleston Navy Yard, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

In order to back up his own position with regard to the case of PFC Lloyd, Rossell goes into a very detailed analysis of Adm Allen's letter to Holcomb, showing many inaccuracies or incomplete statements. At the same time Rossell indicates that he is most anxious to get along well with Adm Allen. He points out that his own record in administering the barracks is an excellent one and that he has maintained a close rapport with his men.

**27 September.** Holcomb to Adm Edward C. Kalbfus, USN, on board USS *Maryland*.

Holcomb discusses key Marine Corps officer assignments including Cols William K. Rockey, Charles D. Barrett, and LeRoy P. Hunt. He is happy that Kalbfus wants Rockey to continue with him until next summer, when, Holcomb expects, Kalbfus probably will become Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.

**22 September.** Adm Edward C. Kalbfus to Holcomb.

Kalbfus hopes that Holcomb will allow him to keep Col Rockey on his staff up through his planned cruise beginning in 1939 to the East Coast. Kalbfus notes, however, that he has not been guaranteed his own command as yet.

**27 September.** Holcomb to Maj David R. Nimmer, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

He exchanges stories about summer vacationing, particularly cruising and fishing. He sends his regards to Adm Snyder and to the other Marines attending the Naval War College.

**26 September.** Maj David R. Nimmer to Holcomb.

Nimmer explains the story of his boat surviving the vicious hurricane by the fact that he had used a 300-pound mushroom anchor; other boats ended up sitting on land after a mighty tidal wave pulled them off their moorings. He states that he is enjoying his course work. He is busy working on a "strategical estimate."

**27 September.** Holcomb to RAdm William H. Allen, Navy Yard, Charleston, South Carolina.

He informs Adm Allen that he cannot give Allen a detailed reply until Gen Vogel returns to Headquarters in October.

**29 September.** RAdm Hayne Ellis, Commandant, 9th Naval District, Great Lakes Naval Station, Illinois, to Holcomb.

Ellis acknowledges Holcomb's kind letter of the 26th praising the station's assistance to the two Marine Corps battalions encamped there for the summer. The admiral then adds that he considers the Marine Corps "indispensable to the Navy." He finishes by assuring Holcomb of his plan to continue close cooperation with the Marines.

**30 September.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little, CG, MCB San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Little appreciates the advance notice Holcomb gave him about being ordered to Washington so he could make plans. Senator David Walsh paid a most successful visit to the Marine Corps Base. Little is so pleased at the way everyone conducted himself. He even had the Pressmen Conference come to view the marching of the 2d Brigade, and he encloses the resultant newspaper clippings.

The folder also contains the following: a letter recommending Richard H. Jeschke to the Dean of the Foreign Service School, Washington, D.C.; a letter to his nephew, Thomas Holcomb, in New Castle, Delaware, about possible discounts on purchasing camera equipment; an exchange of letters with Mayor Robert Williams of Miami, Florida, in regard to an invitation to attend the annual All-American Air Maneuvers there; two letters concerning Holcomb's article for *Burke's Peerage* on his family history; letters to and from Dr. Mather Cleveland of New York City regarding the health of his son, Franklin; a letter to Edith Wharton of Chester, Pennsylvania, concerning her grandson's desire to attend the Naval Academy; letters about an invitation from the American Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations; letters of congratulations to Col J. M. Wainwright, U.S. Cavalry, Fort Myer, Virginia, and BGen Robert Beck, Jr., U.S. War Department, Washington, D.C., on their selection for promotion.

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**1 October.** BGen John C. Beaumont, CG, 2d Marine Brigade, FMF, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Beaumont reports on the voyage of the brigade from Pearl Harbor to China. He relates that he has capable officers and good morale among the men despite trying conditions and meagre resources. He then goes into some detail about troop dispositions.

**3 October.** Holcomb to LtCol Leo D. Hermle, USMC, at the U.S. Army War College, Fort Humphreys, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb is happy that Hermle is comfortable at the War College and still has fond memories of USMC Headquarters. He invites him to visit.

**3 October.** LtCol LeRoy P. Hunt, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, to Holcomb.

He congratulates Holcomb on his well deserved promotion to major general in his own right. He stresses that the Marines at the Naval War College are "holding their own."

**3 October.** Holcomb to LtCol Gilder D. Jackson, Jr., USMC Basic School, MB Philadelphia Navy Yard, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb thanks the Jacksons for their congratulatory telegrams. He then assures Jackson that Adm Townsend is very sympathetic to the Marine Corps and knows that he will be glad about the admiral's orders. Finally, he announces his wife, Beatrice, had a broken ankle as a result of an accident aboard the "Slow Boat".

**1 October.** Paul Warley, Charleston, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

Warley writes to tell of the magnificent job the Marines have done assisting the City of Charleston after a disastrous tornado. He and his family escaped without injury.

**4 October.** Maj William E. Riley, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, to Holcomb.

Riley begins by congratulating Holcomb on his two stars and then goes on to describe the activities and attitudes of the Marines attending the Naval War College. He especially compliments Roy Hunt for his positive attitude and hard work. The 1938 hurricane did major damage to the whole area and will involve extensive cleanup efforts.

**6 October.** Capt James M. McHugh, American Consulate General, Hong Kong, China, to Holcomb.

The bulk of this lengthy letter deals with McHugh's reactions and opinions about Evans F. Carlson ("EFC") and the latter's attempts to gain publicity for what are described as his pro-Communist sympathies. Although McHugh has personal respect for Carlson's bravery, he has little but contempt for the obvious maneuvers he has used to gain publicity for himself and his views.

**6 October.** Holcomb to MajGen John A. Lejeune, USMC (Ret), Norfolk, Virginia.

He thanks Lejeune for his letter of congratulations and then assures him that the official Marine Corps history is being carefully edited to avoid any errors or omissions. He also mentions that the history seeks to "avoid controversial matters" and does not overly brag about Marine Corps accomplishments.

**5 October.** MajGen John A. Lejeune to Holcomb.

Lejeune reports that he read about Holcomb's promotion in the paper and heard great compliments given Holcomb at the Navy football game in Annapolis. He then expresses his concern that the Marine Corps history to be published soon should be as "accurate and just" as possible. He advises Holcomb to have very trusted officers personally go over the manuscript.

**6 October.** Holcomb to Col Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb tenders an invitation to Biddle to come to the Marine Barracks in Washington on 31 October for a special honorary parade and review as a token of appreciation Biddle's "long, efficient, faithful service." The Holcombs also want the Biddles to stay with them overnight so they can have special friends in to honor them.

**7 October.** Holcomb to Col Emile P. Moses, USMC, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb thanks Moses for his letter of congratulations and then proceeds to explain the ramifications of the current selection system including the naming of yet another major general.

**3 October.** Col Emile P. Moses to Holcomb.

Moses expresses his great satisfaction at Holcomb's promotion, which he fully expected based on Holcomb's excellent record. He wants to know also whether there will be another selection board to name a temporary major general junior to Holcomb. He continues by describing conditions and damages from the hurricane that hit Newport. His own home was badly hit but still standing.

**8 October.** Holcomb to RAdm John D. Wainwright on board USS *Idaho* at Long Beach, California.

Holcomb answers Wainwright's congratulatory note of 5 October with his own complimentary remarks about the Navy's fine admirals. In addition, Holcomb is very pleased to note that the Marines of Battleship Division No. 3 maintain the leading position in Fleet Problem XIX.

**8 October.** Col Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Atlantic City, New Jersey, to Holcomb.

Biddle considers Holcomb's letter and invitation of 6 October as the "greatest honor of my life" and accepts with both joy and sadness; the latter emotion is due to the knowledge that he will be leaving the Marine Corps, "the world's greatest military organization."

**12 October.** Holcomb to Col Joseph A. Rossell, MB Charleston Navy Yard, South Carolina.

Holcomb had held off replying to Rossell's letter of 24 September until he could get certain information from Gen Vogel. He now upbraids Rossell for stigmatizing one of his Marines as dishonest; he suggests that he should merely have entered a note in the Marine's service record that he had been dismissed from his job at the post exchange "because of unsatisfactory service." In any event, the individual has been transferred. As far as his relations with the commandant of the Navy Yard and his staff, Holcomb urges Rossell to take the greatest pains to get back in good graces, albeit realizing the precarious position he now occupies because the Marine in question had gone over Rossell's head to enlist the support of Adm Allen. He hopes Rossell will be able to leave a "pleasant impression" of himself by the time he has to leave Charleston.

Enclosed with this letter is a copy of a memorandum (restricted) forcing the deletion of certain derogatory remarks from Pvt Lloyd's service record book and the insertion of the phrasing suggested in Holcomb's letter.

**12 October.** Holcomb to RAdm William H. Allen, Commandant, Charleston Navy Yard, South Carolina.

Holcomb announces that he has just completed official replies to Allen's appeal on behalf of Pvt Lloyd. He apologizes that by a staff oversight correspondence that should have been routed through Allen went instead directly to Col Rossell, and he offers to send copies to the admiral if he so desires. He then goes on to discuss Rossell's qualities as an officer and shows willingness to have Rossell detached if Allen wishes that to be done.

**14 October.** Holcomb memorandum for RAdm James Richardson.

Holcomb responds to a memorandum from Richardson on the percentage of officers to be retained. In his opinion, Holcomb says that policy should be based on sensitivity to both Congress and to those officers who think that retention levels will not be radically reduced. He therefore wants the Marine Corps and the Navy to have announced and equal percentage levels on the number of passed-over officers to be retained.

**17 October.** Holcomb to LCdr M. N. Little, USN, on board USS *Idaho*.

Holcomb explains that Little has been pre-empted this year in his desire to attend the Marine Corps Schools by another Navy man, but that he hopes that Little can be selected after his next cruise. He would be more than welcome and it was only by a fluke that he did not make it this time.

**17 October.** RAdm William Allen to Holcomb.

Allen thanks Holcomb for his "generous action" in the case of Pvt Lloyd. The admiral wishes Rossell to remain in Charleston and that he has been very pleased with Rossell's performance with the sole exception of his handling of Lloyd.

**17 October.** Holcomb to LtCol Louis W. Whaley, MB Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Holcomb appreciated his letter of congratulations and is happy that Whaley is enjoying Guantanamo inspite of poor fishing. He himself found Guantanamo very nice in the 1920s and feels conditions have improved since then. He expects Whaley to organize a horse show there.

**11 October.** LtCol Louis W. Whaley to Holcomb.

After noting with pleasure Holcomb's promotion to major general, Whaley describes the preparations that have been made at Guantanamo to receive the U.S. Fleet and improvements in the aviation fields there. He also notes that American and English sugar company owners and their families had come out to visit the station. In addition, he remarks that while many of the horses in the corral are rather old, they appear adequate to provide men with much needed recreation and a method of surveying the boundaries of the station. The fishing thus far has left much to be desired and Whaley has had to order special lures because fish do not seem to like the artificial minnows sold by the post exchange. But he and his wife are very happy with this assignment.

**19 October.** Col Joseph A. Rossell to Holcomb.

Rossell admits that he made a mistake but feels that it was an honest one. He has even gone over the advice that Holcomb offered with other officers so that they could avoid making the same error in the future. He ends by stating that he will endeavor to be back in the good graces of AdmAllen as soon as possible.

**21 October.** LtCol John M. Arthur, U.S. Asiatic Fleet, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Arthur agrees to Holcomb's request that he write him once a month about developments at Shanghai, and in China generally. He briefly describes an inspection tour of Tientsin. He reports everyone and everything to be in excellent condition in North China. He also spent a little time in Peking and still found it delightful in spite of the Japanese presence. He compliments the Marines in Tientsin and Chingwangtao for rejuvenating the old Army barracks and other buildings there. Adm Yarnell is considering sending a battalion to the Philippines for six months of training. The remainder of this letter deals with Marine Corps officers, enlisted personnel, transportation difficulties, relations with Adm Yarnell and his staff, needs of the commands in Cavite and Tientsin, and additional inspections that Arthur plans to do.

**25 October.** Col Joseph E. Fegan, 4th Marines, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

This is a lengthy letter from China in which Fegan describes his initial impressions. He feels that the Japanese are methodically taking over all of Eastern China and that part of their plan for exclusive dominance involves discrediting the British in the eyes of the Chinese. Fegan has some complimentary and amusing remarks about some of the American personnel involved, including Adm Yarnell and several Marine Corps officers. He then goes into a detailed analysis of the military and political situation with a brief summary of the main Chinese factions. He notes that the Communists have been especially successful in consolidating their hold on a number of northern provinces and are prepared for stout resistance to the Japanese as well as the Kuomintang. He also hopes that the Nationalists will be able to rebuild their army and rid the central government of corruption. But he believes that the Communists have the best chance of developing the Chinese will to resist. He ends the letter with a compliment on Holcomb's selection and hopes that he will maintain his health so as to continue his vital service to the Marine Corps until his 64th birthday.

**28 October.** Holcomb to MajGen John H. Russell, USMC (Ret), Coronado, California.

Holcomb thanks Russell for tipping him off about the Maritime Commission using "USMC" on its flag and tells him that he has already written to Adm Land about it. He goes on to discuss Russell's suggestion that the Commandant of the Marine Corps should be a lieutenant general and says that he would rather push for that later.

Holcomb briefly summarizes some of the political infighting in relation to the so-called CNO Bill and relates that President Roosevelt turned Holcomb down on trying to include three Marine Corps staff heads in the provisions of the bill. But Roosevelt indirectly acknowledged to Walsh that the Commandant of the Marine Corps is as important as a Chief of a Navy Bureau but not a Bureau chief. Holcomb then informs Russell that the gymnasium and laundry at Quantico just burned down; yet, he lacks funding for their immediate replacement by permanent buildings. He encloses a photograph of the Commandant's House which he has had painted yellow.

**24 October.** MajGen John H. Russell to Holcomb.

Russell is delighted that they have finally selected Holcomb for Major General. He then brings the matter of the Maritime Commission using the initials

U.S.M.C. on its flag to Holcomb's attention. He expresses great sorrow at the passing of C. J. Miller and admits that he was thinking of Miller as Holcomb's potential successor when his term as Major General Commandant terminated in two years. He then broaches the idea that the Marine Corps should fight for making the Commandant a lieutenant general. Finally, he recommends that Holcomb should actively seek assistance from Colgate Darden whom he expects will return to the Naval Affairs Committee because of his recent reelection; as before, he feels Darden will be most helpful to the Marine Corps.

**28 October.** Holcomb to MajGen Winfield S. Price, New Jersey National Guard, Trenton, New Jersey.

He first discusses the death of a mutual friend, Maj K. K. Casey. Then he responds favorably to Price's suggestion of naming Littleton W. T. Waller, Jr., to be Casey's successor on the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice.

**27 October.** Major Winfield S. Price to Holcomb.

Price relates that he believes Littleton W. T. Waller, Jr., would make an excellent successor to Major K. K. Casey on the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice. For one thing, both men are civilians with military backgrounds. Price therefore has written to LtCol Benjamin W. Wills about the idea. He has told nothing of this to Waller, but he suggests that if Holcomb agrees with his choice that he make some moves to help Waller's appointment.

**29 October.** BGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, MB Parris Island, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

McDougal forwards correspondence he has had with BGen R. C. Berkeley (copies enclosed) regarding the latter's request to take over temporarily quarters at Parris Island so that his son can spend Christmas with his parents. McDougal has to explain to both Holcomb and Berkeley that housing is both dilapidated and extremely short at Parris Island. Thus he asks Holcomb to assist him in blocking any appeals by Berkeley for these quarters especially because he expects the Navy to send a squadron there at any time.

**29 October.** Col Julian C. Smith, MB Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Smith informs Holcomb of his efforts to lobby with members of the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice on behalf of the appointment of Littleton Waller to the Board. He has talked with Col Mills and with Lister, Secretary of the National Rifle Association. There is some question that the appointee might have to come from California in order to heal a squabble between Californians and the NRA [National Rifle Association].

This folder also contains letters to and from Daniel Mallett of Hackensack, New Jersey, regarding plans for a 23-foot sailboat; letters of congratulations to Holcomb from the following individuals: MajGen Henry H. Arnold, BGen Douglas C. McDougal, Maj David R. Nimmer, LtCol William A. Worton, Capt Paul A. Capron, BGen John C. Beaumont, BGen Frederic Bradman, LtCol Marian B. Humphrey, Dr. L. S. Rowe, Maj Campbell Brown, LtCol LeRoy Hun, Honorable Charles A. Edison, Col Edward A. Osterman, Col Joseph A. Rossel, Col Charles R. Sanderson, LtCol DeWitt Peck, RAdm W. T. Cluverius, Mi Samuel E. Barr, RAdm Hayne Ellis, Arthur J. Murphy, LCdr Edwin F. Cochrane, RAdm John D. Wainwright, LtCol Samuel Cumming, Capt A. S. Carpender, Col D. P. Hall, USMC (Ret), Col Dorsey Rodney, USA, RAdm A. W. Johnson

In addition, there is a letter from Holcomb to Capt J. G. Ward at the U.S. Naval Academy about the death of Col C. J. Miller; letter from Capt Francis J. Quigley, USMCR, New York, concerning the arrangements for the Eternal Peace Ball; several more letters to and from Col Anthony J. Drexel Biddle on the festivities to honor his retirement; letters to and from Capt G. W. Driver of Rockville Centre, New York, regarding his son's desire to spend his summer vacation in Quantico's Aviation Department; letters to and from William G. Fay of Leonardstown, Maryland, about an exchange of social visits; letters to and from Dr. Mather Cleveland of New York describing the progress of Holcomb's son since his illness in 1936; a note from Holcomb to the U.S. Navy Athletic Association returning the football tickets for Navy games that he is unable to use; several letters to and from Col Charles R. Sanderson of the Marine Corps Depot of Supplies in Philadelphia regarding the portraits being painted by Capt John J. Capolino for the Holcombs; invitation from James L. Sykes, reunion chairman for the 2d Division Association, AEF, at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and letters to and from T. A. Rymer of the Army and Navy Department of the National Council of the YMCA in New York concerning YMCA personnel in China.

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1938

**1 November.** Col Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Atlantic City, New Jersey, to Holcomb.

Biddle thanks Holcomb for great honors paid him upon his retirement. He is especially pleased at having been a guest in the general's home.

**2 November.** Holcomb to LtCol Keller E. Rockey, on board the USS *California*.

Holcomb announces his pleasure at Rockey's promotion to colonel and looks forward to Rockey's return to Washington next summer to relieve Barrett in the Office of Chief of Naval Operations.

**2 November.** Holcomb to Col Philip H. Torrey, Eastern Recruiting Division, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb congratulates Torrey on his promotion, but then cautions him that he has to be moved from Philadelphia next summer contrary to a previous agreement. He will let him know the details as soon as possible.

**3 November.** Col Philip H. Torrey to Holcomb.

Torrey is very appreciative of Holcomb's warm congratulations. He admits that he is very comfortably settled in the Philadelphia area, but he is perfectly ready to accept whatever new assignment Holcomb gives him.

**5 November.** Holcomb to RAdm A. W. Johnson, USN, on board USS *New York*, Norfolk, Virginia.

He discusses the relief of LtCol Archie F. Howard, USMC, from duty with the admiral and suggests that he will inform Howard that the change is to be made on the basis of his becoming a full colonel rather than for health reasons. Holcomb also tells Johnson that he will send Maj Benjamin W. Gally as his replacement.

**5 November.** Holcomb to MajGen J. C. Breckinridge, USMC, Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb keeps Breckinridge posted on the latest developments with regard to Archie F. Howard; the latter is supposed to go to Quantico after being detached from Adm Johnson's command. He feels Howard is very well qualified to be Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps Schools. Finally, Holcomb compliments the excellent report Breckenridge made about the fire at Quantico and the quick response of the garrison there.

**7 November.** Holcomb to LtCol John W. Thomason, MCB, San Diego, California.

Holcomb thanks Thomason for a sketch of a "cocky PLC" and also praises the script Thomason wrote for him to deliver on a radio broadcast over WNYC of the Mutual System on 9 November. He plans to hang the picture in the Commandant's House.

**3 November.** LtCol John W. Thomason to Holcomb.

Thomason encloses the script for Holcomb's Marine Corps Birthday radio broadcast, which he admits had to be general because his lack of knowledge of events in the East. He then discusses the reactions of the officers in San Diego to the generally good news from the Selection Board. Finally, he encloses a sketch for Holcomb which he had meant to send last summer.

**10 November.** Representative Melvin J. Maas (D-Minnesota), House of Representatives, Washington, D.C., to Holcomb.

Maas appreciates Holcomb's telegram of congratulations and admits that he is himself very pleased about his biggest election victory ever. He looks forward to seeing Holcomb in Washington within several weeks.

**24 November.** Col Joseph G. Fegan, 4th Marines, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Fegan reports that he has set up his living quarters where Charlie Price had been. Adm Yarnell has told him that he wants the regiment to be ready to move at a moment's notice. He praises Arthur's efforts to assist him, but says that the press corps members are a "nuisance and grand liars too." He sees the Japanese as getting more strict with regard to American forces in China, even to the point of putting an economic squeeze on all banking transactions.

**28 November.** Holcomb to LtCol Allen H. Turnage, MB, Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb regrets that he could not find any suitable takers for the football tickets Turnage gave him so he ended up selling them. He now forwards the \$8.80 in proceeds.

**30 November.** BGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, MB Parris Island, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

He discusses the background to the matter of possibly giving the civilian postmaster at Parris Island some quarters on the island in order to comply with a section of the U.S. Code. McDougal expects that the problem will soon be brought to Holcomb's attention and wanted to make sure he had all the facts to make an informed decision. He also mentions the hunting season beginning and hopes that Holcomb and his wife will find some excuse for coming down and paying a visit. In a postscript, McDougal asks for a replacement for Capt Leutze, the mess and farm officer on the post, who has been hospitalized with flat feet.

This folder also contains a letter to the Navy Athletic Association in Annapolis in regard to football tickets, and a regret to an invitation from James L. Sykes to attend the Tri-State Second Division AEF Reunion in Pittsburgh. Holcomb sent out congratulatory letters on promotions received by LtCol Arnold N. Jacobsen at Marine Corps Depot of Supplies and Maj William E. Riley at the Naval War College. Three letters were received from E. N. Wolf of Frankfort, Kentucky, concerning his eligibility for a Silver Star medal for a wound he got at

Bouresches in World War I. Letters were sent to and received from: Elliott Robertson of College Park, Maryland, in regard to Holcomb's attending dinners of the Scabbard and Blade Headquarters Company; J. Rogers Holcomb, concerning the Commandant's insurance on his new Oldsmobile; Col Charles R. Sanderson, Depot of Supplies, about photoduplication and Capolino's return of Holcomb's coat; Sinclair Refining Company, informing it of the cancellation of Holcomb's gasoline credit account; Dr. Mather Cleveland of New York concerning Frank Holcomb's health; and Mr. Edward Naylor of New Castle, Delaware, American Legion Post No. 4, congratulating Holcomb on his promotion to the full rank of major general (similar congratulatory letters received from Henry Autler, Commandant of Veterans of Belleau Wood from East Elmhurst, Long Island, New York, and others both inside and outside the Marine Corps). Holcomb writes to the following political figures regarding their election victories: Hon. Colgate W. Darden, Jr., of Norfolk, Virginia; Hon. Joachim Fernandez of New Orleans, Louisiana; Hon. Patrick E. Drury of Petersburg, Virginia; Hon. J. W. Ditter of Ambler, Pennsylvania; Hon. Robert L. Mouton of Lafayette, Louisiana; Hon. Warren G. Magnuson, Seattle, Washington; Hon. James G. Scrugham of Reno, Nevada; Hon. William H. Sutphin of Matawan, New Jersey; Hon. Charles A. Plumley of Northfield, Vermont; Hon. Ralph O. Brewster of Dexter, Maine (there are several replies from these men). A final letter from nephew Lawrence Holcomb, working with an advertising firm in New York, inquires about whether enlistment in the Marine Corps Reserve would qualify a friend for examination for West Point.

*Folder 23*  
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**28 November.** Col Paul A. Capron, MB Bremerton, Washington, to Holcomb.

Capron tells Holcomb that he would prefer to stay at Bremerton, Washington. The current rumor that would have him relieving Colonel Drum in Hawaii. He then describes the situation at Bremerton as being excellent. Capron seemed well pleased with the officer and staff presently on board.

**1 December.** Holcomb to Col Paul A. Capron.

Holcomb assures Capron that the rumor about his being sent to Hawaii is totally untrue.

**2 December.** Mrs. J. M. Helm, Secretary to Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, The White House, to Holcomb.

The letter seeks information on the status and location of LtCol and Mrs. Joseph Jarlathe Staley, U. S. Marine Corps Reserve.

**3 December.** Holcomb to Mrs. J. M. Helm.

Holcomb reports that LtCol Staley had been an officer in the Reserve, but that the President had directed his discharge on 7 May 1938 "for cause."

**3 December.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, MB, Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb announces that he will send Capt Enk to Parris Island to replace Leutze; he hopes this will prove satisfactory. He is quite pleased at the job the Selection Board did contrary to previous experience. Holcomb is only sorry he cannot visit McDougal.

**3 December.** Col Seth Williams, Headquarters Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., to Holcomb.

Williams discusses McDougal's recent plea that the postmaster at Parris Island be permitted to live on the post. He feels that acceptance of such an obligation by the Marine Corps would set a bad precedent. He therefore forces delaying the decision. He would really prefer the appointment of a mail clerk which would obviate the whole problem of civilian vs. military quarters.

**5 December.** LtCol John M. Arthur, aboard USS *Augusta*, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Arthur remarks that everyone felt Col Price did a great job in China; Arthur feels that Holcomb should be justly proud of the performance of the 4th Marines. He discusses the allocation of officers to his command; he admits they have an excess of officers on the *Augusta* but a deficit elsewhere. He therefore asks Holcomb to assign two additional lieutenants for North China and one for Cavite. As for enlisted men, the 201 surplus will be reduced to authorized levels with the next two shipments home. Other topics in this long letter include space aboard the transports, auditing of the Navy Relief Fund, Navy use of the rifle range at Camp Holcomb, and plans and activities of the Marine officers aboard the *Augusta*.

**9 December.** Col Joseph Fegan, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Fegan begins by stating that Carlson was much more risk-taking and adventurous than most attaches in China by going out and assessing the military situation himself rather than staying in the cities. Fegan goes on at length about personalities both inside the Marine Corps and in the political limelight. He even asks Holcomb if he could send Tony Biddle out to China next year to boost morale. In summary Fegan feels that the 4th Marines have no real problems, though he feels they could make a more lasting contribution to the Marine Corps at home than on police work in China. Still he sees the diplomatic value of having the Marines in Shanghai.

**13 December.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, MB Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb sends McDougal a listing of officer allowances showing that Parris Island is two men above authorized levels. This being so, he will lose Leutze.

**9 December.** BGen Douglas C. McDougal to Holcomb.

McDougal opens the problem of finding a relief for Maj Snow in the position of purchase and finance officer. He hopes that Holcomb can find a replacement without McDougal's having to use his other vital personnel to fill the spot. He states that his complement seems deceptively large, but this is due to the presence of six "makee-learn" lieutenants who cannot be used for the top administrative posts.

**13 December.** Holcomb to LtCol Keller E. Rockey, on board USS *California*, San Pedro, California.

Holcomb regrets that he cannot comply with Rockey's request for immediate transfer to the Office of Chief of Naval Operations. He states that it is not only too soon, but that it is also necessary for Holcomb to consult with the new CNO, whoever that may be. His present plan is to send Hunt out to relieve Rockey in July.

**10 December.** LtCol Keller E. Rockey to Holcomb.

Rockey wants to get his orders for east coast duty in advance so he can facilitate the moving of both his family and furniture, the latter by government transportation.

**13 December.** Col Selden B. Kennedy, Memorandum for General Holcomb.

Kennedy summarizes all the pertinent points with respect to Hunt's relief of Rockey, including information about moving requirements, the Navy's policy on reliefs for the U.S. fleet being timed to coincide with the return of the Fleet to the Pacific, and an agreement between Rockey and Hunt that July would be the right time for the change in positions.

**17 December.** Holcomb to Capt John J. Capolino, USMCR, Depot of Supplies, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb praises the general quality of Capolino's pastel of Mrs. Holcomb, but then attempts to elaborate on features of the hair and eyes that interfere with its being a good likeness. He tells Capolino that he will keep it a little longer for further study.

**19 December.** BGen Douglas C. McDougal to Holcomb.

McDougal writes further of his unhappy personnel situation, complaining that he cannot carry on effectively, especially with Capt Leutze now on the sick list. He foresees worse problems ahead with a "general exodus" of experienced personnel during the next four months. He asks Holcomb if he cannot help spread this out and in addition send him a replacement to fill the breach left by Leutze and Enk. Finally, he comments on both the fine work of the selection board and the departure of the adjutant and inspector party for Washington after inspecting Parris Island.

**19 December** Holcomb to LtCol L. C. Shepherd, Jr., MB Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb thanks Shepherd for sending him a copy of the "History of the Second Battalion, Fifth Marines" and asserts that it will be helpful for indoctrination purposes.

**21 December.** RAdm William H. Allen, Commandant, Charleston Navy Yard, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

Allen points out that four of the six Marine officers assigned to the barracks under his command failed to get an outstanding rating during the recent selection boards. He hopes that Holcomb will personally look over the list of future assignments to Charleston to make sure that Allen gets a better breed. He insists that one rotten officer can spoil it for all the rest. At the same time, he praises the good work of Lt Brown.

**22 December.** Holcomb to Capt. John J. Capolino.

Holcomb acknowledges receipt of the latest portraits by Capolino. He likes the one of his son, Frank, and the one of himself, but does not care at all for the second one of Mrs. Holcomb. They are all very pleased with the oil portrait of Col Miller. He invites Capolino down to discuss them all.

**16 December.** Capt. John J. Capolino to Holcomb.

Capolino announces that he has completed another pastel of Mrs. Holcomb which met with the full approval of Col and Mrs. Jackson. He explains that when Mrs. Holcomb was sitting for him the direct sunlight tended to make her hair appear much lighter. He would like to have the opportunity to make the necessary corrections on her portrait, as he had with the general's. He is most anxious for the general to see his portrait, especially since he feels that it is his finest yet.

**22 December.** Col Selden B. Kennedy, memorandum for General Holcomb.

He provides some pertinent personnel information for Holcomb in order for him to reply to Adm Allen's request of 21 December for the provision of higher-quality personnel to him at Charleston.

**23 December.** Holcomb to Capt John J. Capolino.

Holcomb announces that Mrs. Miller is most happy with the portrait of her husband. She thinks that it is an excellent likeness.

**23 December.** Holcomb to RAdm William H. Allen.

Holcomb assures Allen that he had known for some time of the poor grade of officers sent to Charleston and had planned to do something about it next summer. He blames the problem partly on the fact that the Marine Corps has to keep a large number of "passed over officers who are awaiting retirement." For the moment he is sending 2dLt Lemmer, who will be a good replacement for Brown, and more quality officers will be sent next summer.

**27 December.** Holcomb to RAdm Henry E. Lackey, USN, on board the USS *Omaha*.

Holcomb informs the admiral that he cannot be of any assistance with regard to Lackey's young cousin seeking an appointment in the Marine Corps. Holcomb insists that the ultimate decision for applicants selection from the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) would rest in the hands of the school's superintendent.

**12 December.** RAdm Henry E. Lackey to Holcomb.

The admiral seeks Holcomb's advice and guidance for his young cousin, L. E. Hudgins, Jr., a senior at VMI, who is most anxious to get a Marine Corps appointment.

**27 December.** Col Selden B. Kennedy, memorandum for General Holcomb.

Kennedy gives a bleak picture of Headquarters' ability to assist Gen McDougal with his shortage of experienced personnel; no officer is currently available for Parris Island and few will be ready in May when such places as Charleston will also be hurting with many retirements. Actually, Kennedy finds that McDougal already has an excess of three over authorization.

**27 December.** Holcomb to Col Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Holcomb thanks Biddle for his gift of "refreshment." Then he discusses the happy acceptance of Capolino's portrait of Col C. J. Miller.

**21 December.** Col Anthony J. Drexel Biddle to Holcomb.

Biddle lists the different bottles of liquor he is having delivered to the Holcomb house and asks that the general note and return letter upon their safe delivery from Manhattan.

**28 December.** Holcomb to Col Joseph C. Fegan, 4th Marines, Shanghai, China.

Holcomb thanks Fegan for sending him silk pennants for the "Slow Boat." He believes Fegan must have thought of doing it before he left since he got the exact specifications.

**9 December.** Col Joseph Fegan to Holcomb.

Fegan is genuinely pleased and hopeful at Congress' sympathetic treatment of Marine Corps needs in China. He reports that the regiment is in good shape and quite busy on the drill fields and in observing developments around Shanghai. He then goes on to discuss the impact of the Japanese on the rest of the international community. One of the most interesting developments is the rivalry exhibited between the Japanese army officers and those of the Japanese naval landing party. Fegan prefers the Navy types as a "better lot," especially because of the more brutal techniques employed by the Japanese Army. He finishes with a brief rundown on military developments and Japanese plans for future offensives.

**28 December.** Holcomb to Col Roy S. Geiger, MB Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb thanks Geiger for sending him bookends for Christmas on behalf of Aircraft Squadron One. He admires them greatly and remarks that they actually hold the books up right on his desk; a task which the previous pair failed to do.

This folder also contains an exchange of letters with Judge Kenesaw M. Landis of Chicago, Illinois, in which Holcomb agrees to become a member of the National Baseball Centennial Commission; a personal letter to Mrs. Gilder Jackson of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, concerning a portrait presentation; copies of letters to and from BGen George S. Richards, USMC (Ret) of Staunton, Virginia, with enclosure of a letter from MajGen J. R. Minshull-Ford of the Royal Welch Fusiliers regarding the China situation; letters to and from Miss Henrietta Dunlap of Washington, D.C., regarding the Army and Navy Club reception; a Christmas message addressed to Maj E. H. Brainard of Washington, D.C.; a letter to J. Rogers Holcomb about auto insurance and family matters; letters to and from Mr. Carl G. F. Kern of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, regarding an invitation to be guest of honor at a testimonial dinner on behalf of Honorable Martin J. McLaughlin; and statement of goals, contributors, and results issued by the Institute of Pacific Relations.

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**3 January.** Holcomb to Col Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Holcomb explains that Joe Fegan wants Biddle to come out to Shanghai in May. The general admits that such a trip would be a major expense for Biddle, but he believes that the regiment would greatly benefit from the experience of having him come. While there, he should visit Tientsin and Peking.

**4 January.** Col Joseph C. Fegan, 4th Marines, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Fegan complains of the spiralling inflation in Shanghai; it has caused many of the married NCOs to move into low-cost housing. He is also upset because Shanghai has become clogged with refugees from all over China, Russia, and even German Jews. At the same time, the Japanese have visibly cooled toward

the Americans because of the \$25 million loan to Chiang Kai-shek. This lengthy letter then deals with political, social, and economic trends within the British community, the city of Shanghai, and the Chinese government. As for the Regiment, Fegan reports that he plans to carry through rigid plans to reduce costs and transportation tonnage. He talks about proposed personnel changes, the conduct of training at Olongapo, the promotion of sports at Shanghai, and the financial problems. After wishing that Holcomb would look after his own health in these stressful times, he finishes with his own observation on Holcomb's battle to promote the interests of the Marine Corps in Congress urging him to enlist the aid of several key friends in the publicity field.

**11 January.** MajGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, MB Parris Island, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

McDougal reports that things are going very well at the post, especially with the opening of the new club. He spends most of the letter describing an engine breakdown on the post barge; he hopes that Holcomb will support his point of view in pressing for its repair with the quartermaster.

**12 January.** Holcomb to LtCol James Roosevelt, USMCR, New York, New York.

Holcomb expresses regret he missed seeing Roosevelt over the Christmas holidays and hopes that they can get together the next time he is in Washington. But he is writing mainly to secure the return of the Marine Corps flag which Roosevelt borrowed from Headquarters to adorn his office. He hopes that he is enjoying his new job.

**13 January.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little, CG, MCB San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Little spends much of the letter giving his reactions to upcoming personnel changes, and he asks that the "incumbent" be kept on at San Francisco at least for a brief transition period. He is especially sorry to see Mitchell leave aviation on the west coast because of all his useful contacts.

He then discusses the merits of football for the Marine Corps and suggests that it might be stressed to young officers after Basic School. He mentions the need of the enlisted men at San Diego for a nearby gymnasium.

**18 January.** Col Joseph C. Fegan to Holcomb.

Fegan reports that newspapers in the Far East are full of coverage on the Hepburn Board proposal to beef up Guam's defenses. Capt McHugh has told Fegan of the poor quality and high vulnerability of the French Indo-China Road after having taken Ambassador Johnson from Chungking to Rangoon. Fegan himself has observed that in the financial sphere the Japanese seem to have over extended themselves and are now hoping that the Chinese would start peace feelers. He that both the Japanese Army has overspent on its adventures and that the Japanese commercial penetration of China has hit some serious snags. He goes on to describe the regiment's condition as "very satisfactory," but he warns that Chinese banditry is now a greater threat than the Japanese. He ends with an evaluation of political and military happenings.

**19 January.** LtCol John M. Arthur, U.S. Asiatic Fleet, on board USS *Augusta*, to Holcomb.

Arthur begins by describing his arrival in Manila, the planned overhaul of

the *Augusta*, and the personnel strength of Marine units assigned to the Asiatic Fleet. He expresses great concern that Headquarters not force them to cut back any further; he feels they need an excess of 50 men over authorized allowances. He goes into detail about transport difficulties and particularly complains about the high cost of transporting dependents of NCOs to and from China. The last part of this lengthy letter deals with the issue of which officers might be selected for the various reliefs in the Asiatic Station and what duration of duty assignments should be expected of officers going to the Philippines. Finally, Arthur mentions that he plans to inspect both Cavite and Olongapo soon and outlines the training schedule for the spring and summer.

**19 January.** MajGen Douglas C. McDougal to Holcomb.

McDougal gives a preliminary report on the causes and damages from a fire at the post's NCO and petty officer's club. The cost of repair is so great as to preclude its renovation being considered and the club probably will be moved to the section of the Post Inn that formerly housed the officers' mess. But McDougal wonders if it might not be possible to get "emergency legislation" for the replacement of the club building; he points out that a similar measure was taken to replace the burned-out laundry and post exchange at Quantico.

**21 January.** MajGen Holcomb to Capt John J. Capolino, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Capolino's latest oil painting has received careful scrutiny and while the majority views it favorably, Holcomb has a few changes he would like to discuss with Capolino on his next visit.

**5 January.** Capt John J. Capolino to Holcomb.

Capolino thanks Holcomb for his letters and the deft handling of Col Miller's portrait. He admits that he still has a lot to improve on Mrs. Holcomb's portrait and will get to it as soon as he reports for active duty in Washington. He has just delivered the general's portrait to Col Sanderson, but he advises Holcomb that the frame is only temporary and that the painting still has to be varnished. He hopes that it will prove to be his best portrait.

**22 January.** BGen William K. Upshur, Culebra, Puerto Rico, to Holcomb.

Upshur relates the preliminary activities, including the successful landings by the Marines, in FLEX-5. He reveals several shortcomings: two Navy landing boats were lost in the surf and the Navy forbade Marine observers on board destroyers during the actual maneuvers. The Navy crew of a new Higgins boat did, however, report that it was much more maneuverable in the surf, generally fast, and "very seaworthy." He also reports on problems of contracting with local cattle drivers, setting up umpires and observers, and the reaction of key officers to the exercises. Mention is made of the Army participation.

**23 January.** BGen Philip H. Torrey, Eastern Recruiting Division, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Torrey expresses great satisfaction at knowing of his future assignment to Headquarters as the head of the Reserve Division; he is especially pleased to be following in the footsteps of such men as Upshur and Williams.

29 January. BGen William P. Upshur to Holcomb.

After a week ashore at both Culebra and Vieques, Upshur reports that the Marines, in general, are doing very well. There has been some problem in getting landing boats and their Navy crews, however, because the same crews have other responsibilities on board their battleships. He makes some suggestions for protected gunmounts on whatever type of landing boat is adopted, based on some of the observations here. He paid a visit to Geiger in San Juan and praised the work of Aircraft Squadron One there. He was very proud of beach defense maneuvers displayed by Shepherd's battalion. He finishes by stating some future arrangements to visit the Dominican Republic and the schedule of the remaining exercises.

30 January. Holcomb to Col Robert L. Denig, U.S. Naval Prison, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Holcomb suggests that Denig may very well be detached from his present duty in June, but details of his relief can only be made available in March.

27 January. Col Robert L. Denig to Holcomb.

He announces that he is very surprised by Holcomb's orders sending him to Honolulu. He only hopes that it will come after the first week in June because that is when his son, Jim, is graduating from the University of New Hampshire. He also feels that his wife needs a longer time to recuperate from her recent operation. Finally, he inquires as to who will be his relief and implies that it should be a man who enjoys "shop operations," which are the central hub of activity in the prison.

30 January. LtCol Samuel C. Cumming on board USS *Indianapolis*, to Holcomb.

Cumming lets Holcomb know that Adm Andrews knows of having M. Silverthorn as Cumming's relief. In reviewing his past year in the job, Cumming praises Andrews for giving him a free hand in training and leading the efficient organization of a landing force. Nevertheless, he feels Andrews has very little interest in the Marine Corps *per se*. Finally, he endorses Gilder Jackson's suggestion that young second lieutenants be relieved from east coast duty and be sent on shipboard to gain valuable and practical experience.

30 January. Col Holland M. Smith, Culebra, Puerto Rico, to Holcomb.

Smith recounts his impression of the problems encountered in the FLEX-5. He is especially pleased with the hard-working spirit of the men and sees the boat problem as the most difficult one to surmount.

This folder also contains the following: a letter from Holcomb to Secretary of Commerce Harry L. Hopkins, congratulating him on his appointment to the Cabinet; a similar congratulatory note to Frank Murphy on becoming Attorney General; an exchange of letters with Thomas W. Bowers of New York City regarding the whereabouts of Maj Martin J. Kelleher in China; several letters to and from Col Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, who planned to move from Atlantic City to San Diego; an invitation for the Holcombs to be patrons for the birthday celebration for President Franklin Roosevelt; a letter from his nephew, Thomas Holcomb II of Newcastle, Delaware, asking him to purchase a Weston light meter for him; an exchange of letters with Gen Reckord of the National Rifle Association regarding the annual dinner at which Gen Marshall is to speak; letters to and from Jerome D. Cohen and H. P. Somerville both of Washington, DC regarding dinner invitations.

Folder 25  
1939

**1 February.** Mrs. Louis McCarty Little, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Mrs. Little expresses her admiration and concern for the general's wife, Beatrice, during her illness. She then admits that she is a bit put out that her husband could not have received Quantico as the next assignment instead of San Francisco. Nevertheless, she is resigned to go along with Holcomb's wishes and knows that she will grow to love it and make many friends. Her only major problem now is understanding why they have to move in the sultry month of August instead of waiting until 1 October, which is the actual time Charles Lyman vacates the post.

**1 February.** Holcomb to LtCol James Roosevelt, New York, New York.

Holcomb assures Roosevelt that he can have one of the machine-made Marine Corps flags, but that the hand-made one he now has must be returned since it would cost about \$540 to replace. Holcomb recognizes that Roosevelt was too busy to get together when he was down in Washington for his father's birthday celebration; yet, he hopes they can see each other soon.

**23 January.** LtCol James Roosevelt to Holcomb.

Roosevelt inquires into the possibility of purchasing the Marine Corps flag; he wants to have it next to the American flag he received in Washington for his new office. Naturally, if the general wants it returned, he will comply. He hopes to see Holcomb when he is in Washington.

**2 February.** Holcomb to LtCol John M. Arthur, on board the USS *Augusta*.

Holcomb agrees with Arthur's observation that it would be nice to have a larger number of officers on the Asiatic Station, but he is quick to point out that such a move would mean that fewer officers could attend schools. The general states that he considers the schools the "most important activity." Nonetheless he plans to give Arthur a few second lieutenants in excess of the allowances. He then goes into the increases in officers and enlisted men he is seeking at hearings of the Appropriations Committee, including 50 second lieutenants from the Naval Academy. He mentions that Congressman Ditter is upset over some of the provisions of the new officer selection system. He next summarizes some of the other building programs and appropriations for the Marine Corps that excite him, such as the new barracks at Parris Island and San Diego. He highlights some other news of various key personnel and ends with the request that Arthur keep him well informed of developments in the Asiatic Station.

**3 February.** Justice Pelham St. George Bissell, Municipal Court of the City of New York, New York, to Holcomb.

The justice calls attention to the fact that Capt Evans J. Carlson was imparting "confidential information" in regard to the China situation.

**3 February.** Holcomb to Col James Roosevelt, New York, New York.

Holcomb acknowledges receipt of Roosevelt's payment for a Marine Corps flag and asks him what he wants embroidered on the scroll. Holcomb then asks Roosevelt to have lunch with him.

**2 February.** Col James Roosevelt to Holcomb.

Roosevelt announces that he is returning the hand-made flag and encloses the \$71 to pay for the machine-made variety. He promises to call on Holcomb next Wednesday.

**5 February.** LtCol Charles T. Brooks, on board USS *New York*, Culebra, Puerto Rico, to Holcomb.

Brooks mentions that he has concentrated on the activities of the 1st Battalion as well as functioning as an umpire for FLEX-5. He then describes the actual operation of the battalion on Vieques in preparing a defense section. He sees the main problem there as being the transport of water, but this was solved by using the artillery barge. Brooks proceeds to speculate about the next operations to begin around Culebra tomorrow. He is going to umpire this particular exercise involving two battalions in the attack force, versus one on the defense of Culebra.

**6 February.** Holcomb to Judge Pelham St. George Bissell.

Holcomb was most interested in the Judge's passing along the information that Evans Carlson planned to address the American Committee for Non-participation in Japanese Aggression. Carlson was currently on leave from his duty station at San Diego.

**6 February.** Col James Roosevelt, telegram to Holcomb.

Roosevelt cables Holcomb that he is very pleased with the inscription sewn on his new Marine Corps flag and he hopes to see Holcomb at noon on Wednesday.

**7 February.** BGen William P. Upshur, Camp Johnson, Culebra, Puerto Rico, to Holcomb.

Upshur gives a day-by-day description of the major events during FLEX-5. In the middle of his narrative, he interrupts it to describe a very nearly disastrous confrontation between Navy Capt Nichols of the USS *Wyoming* and Barney Vogel and Holland Smith over mess facilities away from the captain's mess. Upshur reports, on the other hand, that Capt Emmet of the USS *Texas* was most gracious. The rest of the letter contains mostly brief critiques and lessons from each day's activities.

**8 February.** BGen Richard P. Williams, on board USS *New York* enroute to St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, to Holcomb.

Williams states that he has not written before because he felt that Vogel, Smith, and Upshur would keep Holcomb advised of how the exercises were going. His purpose in writing is to give the "personal side." He is very pleased at the enthusiasm exhibited by Adm Johnson for all phases of the Marines' work and that it is shared by most of the other Naval officers. The men and officers are very happy about the prospect of a week at a liberty port after long, hard, and successful work in the exercises on the seizure and subsequent defense of Culebra. The next effort involves operations on Vieques. The whole exercise should run up to a week ahead of schedule and he feels that both umpires and observers have gotten a lot out of it.

**11 February.** Col Joseph C. Fegan, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Fegan describes the Japanese success in Hainan as a cake-walk. Nonetheless, he is critical of the wasteful use of manpower and money by the Japanese. He then speculates that both the British and the wealthy Chinese would like to see Chiang Kai-shek sue for peace, while the "common" Chinese oppose it. Adm Yarnell is after him to cut down on tonnage. Fegan thinks it is a mockery that the U.S. should have such a feeble naval presence and then try to talk toughly on

the diplomatic front. He is very pleased with the training and general performance of the regiment. He views Shanghai as something of a "cesspool," with its horde of refugees and with a smallpox epidemic now raging out of control.

Fegan then inquires what he should do with the gold memorial medal from General Trujillo sent to him by the Dominican Republic. He then goes on to applaud the job Holcomb is doing and assure him he will work hard to keep him in that office. He also praises Holcomb for getting so much money for the Marine Corps. Most of the rest of the letter relates to personal matters.

**13 February.** Holcomb to Senator David I. Walsh, U.S. Senate Naval Affairs Committee.

In regard to a conversation held with Walsh, Holcomb furnishes statistical information on recent promotions resulting from the Marine Corps selection board and comparisons with the Navy selection board. He concentrates on the percentage of those "adjudged fitted" and the numbers of officers retained out of the total eligible.

**14 February.** BGen William P. Upshur, on board USS *Texas*, Ciudad Trujillo, Dominican Republic, to Holcomb.

Upshur begins with an apology that events have overrun him so that he has been remiss in writing. Then he turns to a detailed summation of the FLEX-5 seizure of Culebra operations. He points out notable errors and omissions and lessons to be noted for the next exercises. At the critiques following the landings, he praised Larsen's forceful presentation. He finishes this long letter with brief descriptions of his visit to the Dominican Republic and the viewing of aerial bombing exhibitions at Vieques and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

**14 February.** Holcomb to Mr. John F. Ellis, Pratt, Kansas.

Holcomb sends him a brief outline of the service of his brother, Earl Ellis, whom Holcomb considered as one of his best friends. Ellis and Holcomb served at Marine Corps headquarters together in a group assembled by the then-Commandant, General Barnett. They also worked closely in France in the 6th Marines. Holcomb praises Ellis' strong mentality and distinguished career and deeply regretted his passing away. Holcomb assures Ellis that his brother's memory will not fade in the annals of the Marine Corps.

**15 February.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal, CG, MB Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb relates that the \$50,000 for the replacement of the NCO club at Parris Island has been included in the Second Deficiency Bill, but that otherwise there is little to report about legislative activity. Holcomb wants to know why the Naval Affairs Committee failed to see Parris Island during its trip South. He also is very upset over the introduction of a bill in Congress to prevent implementation of the new personnel selection bill by a "malcontent." Although he feels this measure is unlikely to pass, it has thus far stymied Holcomb's attempt to get an increase of 60 officers for the Marine Corps. Holcomb regrets that he may not be able to travel to Parris Island for his usual spring visit because his wife, Beatrice, is having such difficulty recuperating from a recent operation.

**17 February.** Holcomb to MajGen John A. Lejeune, USMC (Ret), Norfolk, Virginia.

Holcomb expresses dismay and opposition to Adm Wilson Brown's suggestion that Marine Corps applicants draw lots to decide who is to enter. In con-

junction with Lejeune's own letter to the Secretary of the Navy, Holcomb has made the strongest protest about the proposal through the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation. He is of the opinion that the present method of selection is the best one and should not be changed. At the same time, Holcomb takes a firm stand against any kind of favoritism or personal intervention on behalf of friends, including Lejeune himself, who has requested assistance for his grandson. Holcomb denies that he had any hand in getting Lt Berkeley into the Marine Corps; he blames that on a personal arrangement among Secretary Swanson, Adm Andrews, and Gen Berkeley. He thus advises Lejeune that his grandson's case depends on the young man's class standing and that alone.

**16 February.** MajGen John A. Lejeune to Holcomb.

Lejeune tells Holcomb that he has just gotten a special delivery letter from his grandson, James B. Glennon, at the Naval Academy. Glennon reports the Superintendent, Adm Brown, had chosen to use a system of drawing lots to determine which midshipmen would enter the Marine Corps. This change would deprive him of a sure basis for such entrance since he had been counting on his hard work and good class standing to do the job. Lejeune now hopes that even if Brown's ridiculous proposal should be enacted that Holcomb will see to it that his grandson makes it into the Marine Corps. He recalls the precedent of Gen Berkeley's son of the year before.

**19 February.** VAdm Adolphus Andrews, Commander Scouting Force, U.S. Fleet, on board the USS *Indianapolis*, Culebra, Puerto Rico, to BGen R. P. Williams, Camp A. W. Johnson, Culebra, Puerto Rico.

Andrews is delighted at Williams' offer of a complete set of photographs of the admiral's visit to Camp A. W. Johnson. He also praises the "efficiency" of Williams' command and expresses his general admiration for the Marine Corps.

**19 February.** Maj David Nimmer, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, to Holcomb.

Nimmer is very pleased about Holcomb granting his request to be assigned to the FMF on the Atlantic Coast. The remainder of the letter relates to family and personal matters including an offer to help take care of Holcomb's "Slow Boat" while Nimmer is stationed at Quantico.

**20 February.** Col Holland Smith, FMF Culebra, Puerto Rico, to Holcomb.

Holcomb's "assignment sheet" aroused great enthusiasm among the men upon Smith's return to Culebra from St. Thomas and San Juan. Smith says that he appreciated Holcomb's failing to mention his next assignment. He then vents his anger over the proposed bill seeking to repeal the current personnel selection system. He makes passing references to Adms Wainwright, Johnson, and Andrews. Next Smith comments on his ideas for improved tank training and utilization; he even recommends some major changes in personnel. His general observation on the men is that they are tired and upset with the constant changes in schedules and fouling of the combat ranges. He feels many of the delays encountered in FLEX could have been avoided. Smith ends with a brief tribute to Gen Winship, thanking him for the courtesies he showed Smith, Vogel, Upshur, and Larsen.

**20 February.** BGen William P. Upshur to Holcomb.

Upshur is full of praise for the efficient manner in which the Marine Corps has built up and maintains the armed forces for Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. He then gives a detailed reporting on foreign volunteers, armament and ordnance, and the calibre of officers. Upshur was very impressed with the ceremonies dedicating the *Avenida U.S. Marine Corps* for which he suddenly found himself to be the ranking American military officer. Thus he became the center of a great deal of social attention.

On returning to Culebra, the Marines were able to demonstrate landing tanks from tank lighters for Adms Andrews and Johnson. Upshur ends his lengthy letter with a brief description of the testing of several landing craft—the Higgins, Welan, and rubber Goodyear experimental models—and including a short critique.

**20 February.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal.

Holcomb apologizes for the confusion over Capt Leutze's orders. He also regrets that he cannot supply McDougal with any extra captains, but he will try to arrange for an extra second lieutenant to be sent up from Pensacola. He proposes Louis Jones as the next recruiting officer at Partis Island and comments that Jones is both a hunter and fisherman as well as a fine officer. Holcomb then asks McDougal for his reaction to Adm Brown's idea of having a lottery to decide which applicants from the Naval Academy will be accepted into the Marine Corps.

**21 February.** Holcomb to LtCol John M. Arthur, on board USS *Augusta*.

Holcomb responds to some of the points raised in Arthur's recent letter. He certainly encourages Arthur to reduce the number of enlisted men as close to actual allowances as possible. He also discusses the matter of transporting married men and their families at government expense and the problem of "inter-Asiatic transfers." He then goes into some of the specific personalities and jobs involved in this year's reliefs at the Asiatic Station. Holcomb relates that Representative Plumley will specialize in Marine Corps affairs for the upcoming hearings before the House Appropriations Committee. He also alludes to possible infighting as a result of the bill introduced by Senator McKellar to "hold up the retirement of this year's increment due for retirement under the selection law." Holcomb praises the excellence of FLEX-5 in the Caribbean. He finishes by voicing his strong dislike for Adm Brown's proposal for Marine Corps applicants to draw lots.

**21 February.** Holcomb to LtCol John W. Thomason, Jr., MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb informs Thomason that James Roosevelt had come to him several weeks ago with an idea endorsed by both Samuel Goldwyn and President Roosevelt; it calls for a motion picture based on a story about the Marine Corps. Holcomb then had Metcalf search Marine Corps files for good story material. He is now forwarding these ideas to Thomason for his own opinions on their possible value. He is especially desirous of having Thomason compose something which the movie producers could actually mold into a final product; though he, of course, would have to coordinate it with both Goldwyn and James Roosevelt.

**23 February.** Col Henry N. Manney, Jr., Depot of Supplies, NOB Norfolk, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Manney thanks Holcomb for his complimentary letter and hopes that his own request for retirement met all the requirements. He is anxious that Holcomb feel free to set his final date of separation; he is mainly concerned about being near Virginia Beach and not being transferred elsewhere. Manney praises the excellence of the Depot and its efficient running. He also asserts that it has been most helpful to have a high-ranking Marine officer in charge, as he is, because it makes coordination with the naval base that much easier and smoother.

**20 February.** Holcomb to Col Henry N. Manney, Jr.

Holcomb chides Manney about the fact that Holcomb has had him stay on at the Norfolk Depot of Supplies beyond the normal stint, and that Manney holds too high rank for the job. Holcomb also expresses his sadness at Manney's decision to retire, because he felt that the latter had much more growth potential and should never have requested such a deadend job as depot quartermaster.

**17 February.** Col Henry N. Manney, Jr., to Holcomb.

Manney expresses surprise at learning that he has been ordered to Quantico; he claims that he had no knowledge of the three-year detail rule. He now feels that he wants to retire in August rather than go through the strain of moving, especially as he is just completing a house in the Norfolk area.

**15 February.** Holcomb to Mr. R. G. Patton, National Welfare Officer, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Los Angeles, California.

Holcomb responds sympathetically to a letter that Patton wrote to him on 8 February putting forward the need for more assistance to wounded and disabled veterans. Holcomb suggests that Patton's group sponsor legislation to provide remedial aid and that Holcomb would give it his full support when it is forwarded to Marine Corps Headquarters for comment.

**23 February.** Mr. Robert G. Patton to Holcomb.

Patton seems very pleased with Holcomb's response and says that he has passed it on to other colleagues. He is only unhappy that the true soldiers who fought so hard and were wounded generally have not received the jobs or compensation due them, because of their stoicism and goodness, while those who avoided the battlefields have learned the art of "chiseling" benefits. On the whole, he agrees with Holcomb's suggestion for remedial legislation and is very glad of his support for the cause.

**23 February.** BGen Douglas C. McDougal to Holcomb.

McDougal expresses his gratitude to Holcomb for allowing a change in the orders so that Parris Island could get the finest officers for next year. After some comments on individual officers at the post, McDougal goes on to discuss officer procurement for the Marine Corps as a whole, with emphasis on getting more candidates from the Naval Academy and also more college graduates. He points out the profitability of taking some from The Citadel in particular.

**24 February.** BGen Emile P. Moses, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, to Holcomb.

Moses is most appreciative of receiving both his stars and eagles from Holcomb. He comments that his class has completed its first project and has now

moved on to study South America. He passes the word that the Navy likes Holcomb's choice of Cauldwell to replace Moses next year.

**24 February.** Col William Riley to Holcomb.

Riley compliments Holcomb on the fine way he handled Moses' promotion to general. Adm Snyder and the naval officers in general admired Holcomb's gift for Moses and allowing Snyder to present the stars to him.

**25 January.** Col Holland M. Smith to Holcomb.

Smith submits his observations on the progress of 1939 maneuvers in the Caribbean. In general, he has found the Marines to be in excellent spirits and top physical condition. His major objection had nothing to do with the men's performance or even the equipment; Smith felt that Culebra was inadequate as a combat training site. He urges acquisition of more training areas.

**25 February.** Holcomb to Honorable Peter G. Gerry, U.S. Senate.

Holcomb forwards a copy of a telegram from Melvin M. Johnson, Jr., who pioneered the Johnson semi-automatic rifle. He will let Senator Gerry know details of any future demonstration of the rifle.

**25 February.** Holcomb to MajGen John A. Lejeune, Norfolk, Virginia.

Holcomb explains the most recent developments with regard to the system of selecting Marine Corps candidates from the Naval Academy. He himself feels strongly that the Navy must in the future be given an opportunity to get its fair share of the upper fifth of the graduating class because heretofore the Marine Corps, aeronautics, engineering, and other specialties grabbed top honors. Holcomb also firmly opposes the idea of giving preference to Marine Corps heredity in the selection process. Nonetheless, he is happy that Lejeune's grandson will "make it on his own."

**20 February.** MajGen John A. Lejeune to Holcomb.

Lejeune announces that he has just received letters from both his grandson and Adm Brown indicating that his grandson would indeed get a recommendation to go from the Naval Academy into the Marine Corps.

**25 February.** Holcomb to Col Joseph A. Rossell, MB Charleston Navy Yard, Charleston, South Carolina.

Holcomb regretfully turns down Rossell's invitation to see the dogwoods and azaleas in bloom in Charleston. Holcomb has to attend the Appropriations Committee hearings that begin 13 March, and his wife has just been through a very serious operation.

**26 February.** BGen William P. Upshur, Camp Johnson, Culebra, Puerto Rico, to Holcomb.

Upshur expresses his enthusiasm for the list of appointments that Holcomb sent him, though he has a few suggestions for gaps that need to be filled. The bulk of his letter deals with detailed reporting on the exercises at Culebra. Upshur is very pleased at the performance of the Higgins Boat and the transport *Manley* (an old DD). He hopes that the President will come for demonstrations planned for him.

**27 February.** Holcomb to LtCol Field Harris, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb announces that Harris' son will get a commission in the Marine Corps and explains the background of the agreement worked out with the Bureau of Navigation and the Naval Academy on the method of selecting candidates for the Marine Corps.

**27 February.** Holcomb to BGen Emile P. Moses, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb thanks Moses for his note and assures him that he can nearly guarantee Moses' request for a post at Quantico; he has put him in for head of the Equipment Board.

**27 February.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal.

Holcomb begins by discussing personnel transfers and assignments at Parris Island. He then informs McDougal of the action to maintain the old system of selecting Marine Corps applicants from the Naval Academy for one more year.

This folder also contains letters concerning Holcomb's stamp collecting; a stained glass window at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York which contains the figure of Gen Archibald Henderson; and a number of invitations for Holcomb to attend luncheons, and dinners, and to serve as guest speaker.

*Folder 26*  
1939

**1 March.** BGen Richard P. Williams, 1st Marine Brigade, Culebra, Puerto Rico, to Holcomb.

Williams reports on a brief discussion he had with President Franklin Roosevelt, in which Roosevelt exhibited an interest in the development of the latest landing craft and also wished the Marines to take an active role in fortifying and defending Culebra, Guantanamo, and the Virgin Islands. Williams is most enthusiastic about the big turnout of fleet officers for the Marine demonstration at Flamingo Beach.

**1 March.** BGen Emile P. Moses, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, to Holcomb.

Moses and his wife are very glad to be going to Quantico, but Moses admits he would have preferred to be assigned to head the Marine Corps Schools. Nonetheless, he realizes there are fewer good jobs for the higher ranking officers.

**1 March.** LtCol James Roosevelt, Los Angeles, California, to Holcomb.

Roosevelt suggests there may be a possible publicity effort on behalf of the Marine Corps, consisting of Samuel Goldwyn, Inc.; Col John Thomason; and himself. He plans to see Holcomb when he visits Washington and will brief him then on talks with his father, the President.

**27 February.** Holcomb to LtCol James Roosevelt.

Holcomb makes the suggestion that Mr. Goldwyn and Col Roosevelt might use the talents of LtCol John Thomason, Jr., for writing up the historical episodes about the Marine Corps for a Goldwyn motion picture.

**2 March.** Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little, MCB San Diego, California.

After discussing the case of Major Sanderson being sent up before the Retiring Board, Holcomb announces his intention to name Holland Smith his Assistant Commandant, effective 1 April.

**3 March.** Col Joseph C. Fegan, 4th Marines, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Fegan describes the prevailing gloom over Japanese intention to wipe out all remaining "extra-territorial spots" in Shanghai. On the other hand, he feels that the regiment is performing very well and in high spirits. Fegan wishes Holcomb luck at the congressional hearings.

**3 March.** Holcomb to Col Frank E. Evans, Southern Recruiting Division, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Holcomb explains that he must refuse Evans' request to transfer from New Orleans to Philadelphia. He points out that Evans had promised to stay in New Orleans until his retirement and Thomas Clarke told Holcomb that he preferred not to trade his Philadelphia assignment because both his mother and mother-in-law lived in that area.

**4 March.** LtCol Charles T. Brooks, Camp Johnson, Culebra, Puerto Rico, to Holcomb.

He briefs Holcomb on the major outline of the Vieques problem and the success of the demonstration for the admirals in Flamingo Harbor. He then draws some conclusions from the performance of the Marines and some of their equipment. Brooks ends with the suggestion that the Marine Corps could use a training facility more like Fort Benning.

**5 March.** BGen William P. Upshur, on board USS *Texas*, St. Thomas, Virgin Island, to Holcomb.

Upshur gives his version of the meeting with President Roosevelt and found the President to be very intrigued with the Fleet Problem. Roosevelt also showed an interest in Marine Corps training exploits and the testing of new landing craft. Upshur's letter then describes the success of the Marine exercises at Flamingo Bay and also details preparations for the attack and defense of Vieques problem.

**5 March.** BGen Douglas C. McDougal, MB Parris Island, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

Much of this very long letter deals with family matters. He then goes on to describe the visit of a congressional party to Parris Island. He notes with satisfaction that Messers Vincent and Scrugham approved many of the shore development program requirements that McDougal had listed as being very urgently needed for Parris Island.

**6 March.** BGen James C. Breckinridge, MB Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Breckinridge says that he is very pleased with Holcomb's choice of Holland Smith for Assistant Commandant, and also liked Holcomb's outline of duties for personnel stationed at Marine Corps Headquarters. He especially praises Holcomb for dispelling the general feeling of "distrust" of Headquarters by making it one with the rest of the Marine Corps, by elevating its morale, and by getting rid of the "latent hostility and open criticism" that had prevailed there for so long. Breckinridge notes that things are progressing well at Quantico. His only

major complaint is over the possibility that U.S. Route 1 might be turned over to the State of Virginia, thereby complicating life on the rifle ranges. He would instead like to see the Secretary of the Navy revoke the permit for Route 1 right-of-way through Quantico, and then have Virginia foot the bill for re-routing the road.

**6 March.** Col Frank E. Evans, Southern Recruiting Division, New Orleans, Louisiana, to Holcomb.

Evans insists that he did not want to override Clarke's request for the Philadelphia post and will be glad to remain in New Orleans unless war breaks out in Europe or some other national emergency requires his services. He is pleased about the signs of cooperation among all the levels of the service as exhibited at the recent Selective Service Conference held in New Orleans.

**7 March.** Col Clifton B. Cates, 2d Battalion, 4th Marines, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Cates sounds very pleased at the prospect of getting both a detail at the Army War College and the chance to relieve Jackson in command of the Basic School at Philadelphia. He keeps his comment on the Shanghai situation purposely brief, but he notes that the Chinese guerrilla activity is having a visible effect on the Chinese. He praises the Marines for their calm and collected attitude in the face of a very trying situation.

**8 March.** Holcomb to Col Walter E. Noa, St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb is pleased that Mrs. Noa can be close by her husband. He then comments that the Appropriations Committee hearings are later than usual, but he hopes that because many on the Committee are supportive of the Marine Corps, cuts will be kept to a minimum.

**9 March.** LtCol John M. Arthur, U.S. Asiatic Fleet, Manila, Philippines, to Holcomb.

Arthur is extremely pleased about the progress of Holcomb's building program and hopes for continued success in Congress. The bulk of his news about the situation in the Orient is contained in his monthly enclosure letter dated 8 March. Among other topics, Arthur discusses new officer assignments, transport utilization, assignments to Camp Holcomb and the Marine barracks at Olongapo, proposed inspection of the barracks at Cavite, and the favorable exchange of currency rates in China.

**9 March.** Holcomb to Capt A. S. Carpender, USN, NROTC Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

Holcomb replies to Carpender's letter of 7 March seeking information on officer procurement from the universities. He cautions Carpender that the fate of two principal and two alternate candidates from Northwestern's ROTC program hinges on approval by the War Department of Holcomb's plan for the increased procurement of officers and also on the passage of the Naval Appropriations Bill. The failure of the latter could result in elimination of such procurement and limit it to 25 from the Naval Academy and four or five from the ranks.

9 March. Col Holland M. Smith, on board USS *Wyoming*, Culebra, Puerto Rico, to Holcomb.

Smith expresses his joy at Holcomb's vote of confidence to name him Assistant Commandant and generally approves the headquarters reorganization that Holcomb has promulgated. He pledges his continuing loyalty and hard work in the new post and finishes the letter with some personal notes.

6 March. MajGen John A. Lejeune, Norfolk, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Lejeune writes on behalf of several cadets and their parents to see whether VMI graduates stand any chance of being commissioned into the Marine Corps. The former Commandant is also very pleased about the success of his grandson at the Naval Academy. He ends with a suggestion for a new system using class standing and grouping to determine future Marine Corps candidates.

9 March. Holcomb to MajGen John A. Lejeune.

Holcomb informs Lejeune in the same vein as his letter to Carpenter that the commissioning of candidates is dependent upon War Department approval and favorable legislation in Congress. If both are successful, then VMI would have one principal and one alternate candidate for the Marine Corps.

9 March. BGen Douglas C. McDougal, MB Parris Island, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

McDougal is very happy about receiving orders to Washington. He also is grateful for Congressman Vinson's able assistance to Parris Island interests in the Appropriations Committee. In a second letter enclosed and dated 8 March, McDougal comments on Holcomb's reorganization of the headquarters staff pattern. He notes that he wished the Adjutant and Inspector's Department had been abolished because of its previous stifling control over the Marine Corps. He is, however, pleased at Harrington being in charge of Plans and Policies.

12 March. BGen William P. Upshur, on board USS *Texas*, Culebra, Puerto Rico, to Holcomb.

Upshur continues his narrative description of events surrounding the Vieques problem. He is very proud of the performance by both Shepherd and Smith's Red and Blue Forces; unfortunately, the admiral ordered a premature end to the entire exercises as he had done at Culebra. This prevented the learning of many valuable lessons and muddled the outcome.

14 March. Holcomb to LtCol John W. Thomason, Jr., MB San Diego, California.

Holcomb fully approves Thomason's enthusiasm and methods of proceeding on the planned film on the Marine Corps in conjunction with Goldwyn and James Roosevelt. Holcomb hopes to see Roosevelt and is pleased by this opportunity for publicity.

9 March. LtCol John W. Thomason, Jr., to Holcomb.

Thomason discusses the possible geographic location for the Marine Corps film and his desire to have his agent, H. N. Swanson, present for any negotiations with Goldwyn and Roosevelt. He explains that he does not have copyrights on all of his writings, some of which might be used for the movie script. Thomason asks Holcomb to permit him some leeway in the actual working out of arrangements with Goldwyn, though Holcomb would be course retain the final right of approval.

**16 March.** Holcomb to RAdm Harold R. Stark, Cruiser Battle Force, USS *Honolulu*, San Pedro, California.

Holcomb expresses his delight at hearing of Stark's appointment as Chief of Naval Operations and looks forward to his return to the Navy Department in Washington. Holcomb says his sentiments are widely shared throughout the Navy and Marine Corps.

**16 March.** Col Joseph C. Fegan, 4th Marines, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

Fegan applauds Holcomb's attempts to bring strength and glory to the Marine Corps. He also wishes him luck in dealing with the Senate. Fegan then goes on to discuss Marine Corps officer assignments and the delicate situation with regard to Japanese designs on the Shanghai International Settlement. He finishes with words of gratitude for having been given such an interesting assignment and some insights about the nature of the Japanese invasion, the suddenly booming real estate market in Shanghai, and the attitudes of American businessmen, British, and Chinese under Japanese occupation.

**15 March.** Maj William Alfred Eddy, USMC (Ret), Hobart College, Geneva, New York, to Holcomb.

Eddy wants personally to urge Holcomb to come to Hobart to receive an honorary LDD degree and address the first candidates from the Platoon Leaders Class in Quantico who are among the seniors graduating. He announces that the main commencement speaker will be the famous novelist Dr. Thomas Mann from Germany.

**17 March.** Holcomb to Dr. William Alfred Eddy.

Holcomb is overwhelmed by the honor of being offered the degree by Hobart. He decides that the benefit to the Marine Corps as well as the great personal compliment paid him require that he accept Eddy's invitation and cancel his planned attendance at Marine Corps Schools graduations on the same day.

**20 March.** Mr. E. H. Brainard, Washington, D.C., to Holcomb.

Brainard appreciated Holcomb's sharing letters from Gen Upshur on the maneuvers at Culebra and also his political support for Brainard's legislative efforts (the exact nature left unspecified). Then Brainard modifies his praise for the maneuvers by suggesting that the entire Fleet Marine Force and Marine Corps aviation should have participated. He is convinced that the Marine Corps should raise its prestige by more active involvement with the Navy in joint exercises.

**20 March.** Holcomb to BGen Clayton B. Vogel, MB U.S. Submarine Base, Coco Solo, Canal Zone.

Holcomb gives Vogel advance word that he will have command of the 2d Brigade and expects that he will bring the brigade up to the fine standard of landing operation expertise now found in the 1st Brigade. Once the exercises are completed, Vogel is to report back to Washington and then be assigned to San Diego.

**21 March.** Holcomb to Col John Marston, American Legation Guard, Peking.

Holcomb shows his gratitude and appreciation of Marston's part in solving some of the difficulties faced by the Marines in China. He then notes that he is sending a strong new group of officers out to bolster American morale in China.

**12 February.** Col John Marston to Holcomb.

Marston sends greetings from a number of old friends to the Holcombs. After describing social conditions in and around Peking, Marston states that "our military situation is not alarming" and points out only a few inconveniences to the North China force, such as interruption of movies, delays in freight shipments, and radio interference. He feels that his rapport with one of the Japanese staff officers has helped smooth over some of the more controversial problems with the Japanese.

**22 March.** Holcomb to LtCol John M. Arthur, U.S. Asiatic Fleet.

Holcomb brings Arthur up to date on Marine Corps successes in the Naval Affairs Committee, including a huge building program bonus for Parris Island and a model school for children at Quantico. The remainder of Holcomb's letter deals with personnel assignments and reduction in enlisted and NCO strength planned for the Asiatic Station.

**22 March.** Holcomb to Col James Roosevelt, Los Angeles, California.

Holcomb is delighted that Roosevelt has chosen to go and observe the San Clemente maneuvers; Holcomb tells him confidentially that he has sent first-rate replacement officers to head the brigades in these maneuvers. Holcomb is most curious to find out what Roosevelt intends to discuss with him in person and hopes that their meeting can be soon. Finally, Holcomb puts his stamp of approval on Thomason's ideas for the Marine Corps motion picture and hopes that Roosevelt can see to it that Thomason's name be credited properly for preparing its script.

**14 March.** Col James Roosevelt to Holcomb.

Roosevelt announces that he has arranged with Gen Little to be an observer of the San Clemente maneuvers in April. He also hopes to have a chance to convey some special information of interest to Holcomb when he is next in Washington.

**23 March.** Holcomb to LtCol John W. Thomason, Jr., MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb fully endorses Thomason's ideas for the Marine Corps movie, but cautions that Goldwyn must be convinced to present the "psychology of the enlisted man toward his officer." He believes that if this is done correctly that it would be most beneficial to the Marine Corps. Holcomb then discusses the fine performance of the 1st Brigade in the Culebra exercises in front of many admirals; he also notes with pride the improving relations with the Navy and the fine calibre of the new Department heads, including Stark and Nimitz.

**18 March.** LtCol John W. Thomason, Jr., to Holcomb.

Thomason discusses his meeting with Roosevelt and the Goldwyn executives to thrash out the subject matter of the proposed Marine Corps motion picture. He relates that he wishes to build up his story around a humorous, resourceful, and energetic Marine sergeant. The background will be the Marine landing in North Africa in 1805. He hopes to finish the script within two months, realizing he is due to go on maneuvers. Finally, Thomason reports that his battalions are in fine shape and ready for the umpires.

**24 March.** BGen James C. Breckinridge, MB Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Breckinridge insists that it is not proper for a soldier to express preferences, but in the case of Holcomb's most recent officer assignments, he has to admit he is most pleased. Breckinridge then praises the 1st Brigade for its good appearance and high morale as it returns from the maneuvers to Quantico.

**25 March.** Holcomb to Col James Underhill, MB Navy Yard, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Holcomb tells Underhill of the final decision to bring him to Washington as executive officer of the Adjutant and Inspector's Department and to send Harrington to Quantico as chief of staff.

**26 March.** Capt Evans F. Carlson, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Carlson explains the rationale behind his re-submitting of his resignation from the Marine Corps and his desire to take a more vocal role in developing and promoting American understanding of the Far East. His main objection to continuing in the Marine Corps centers on his inability to speak out and interpret openly recent trends in foreign affairs. He ends with a tribute to Holcomb for being so patient with him, and he intends to serve again should the nation go to war.

**27 March.** Holcomb to Capt A. S. Carpender, USN, NROTC Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

Holcomb describes the two pieces of legislation currently hanging in the balance which would effect Northwestern's quota of candidates for the Marine Corps. Holcomb personally hopes that Carpender will just recommend two outstanding candidates and leave it at that, rather than pushing for four candidates.

**29 March.** Holcomb to MajGen James C. Breckinridge.

Holcomb asks Breckinridge if he can manage hosting a Navy-supported outing to Quantico by World War veterans who are members of Congress. Melvin Maas heads the group, which also would include Holcomb himself, as well as dignitaries as Adm Leahy and Gen Craig.

**29 March.** Holcomb to Col James L. Underhill.

Holcomb leads off this personal letter with the statement: "The fact that you have had no previous experience in the A&I Department is one of your most important assets." He wants new officers to breathe some fresh air into Headquarters.

**27 March.** Col James L. Underhill to Holcomb.

Underhill expresses the fear that his lack of experience with the A&I Department would prove to be a "disability" in his serving Gen Ostermann there. He is nervous about living in Washington, but he will accept the new position gracefully if Holcomb feels he can be most useful to the Marine Corps there.

**31 March.** BGen D. C. McDougal to Holcomb.

McDougal mentions the suspension of his head civilian machinist, a Mr. Blume, for participating in political activities in the local Democratic Club against civil service regulations. He has appointed a board of investigation that hopefully will put the whole matter to rest. Two other cases McDougal had to deal with included a morals charge against another civilian worker and a union protest over improper use of a crane operator. McDougal also sends his appreciation to Holcomb for making his visit to Washington much more pleasurable.

This folder also contains numerous dinner invitations and letters requesting Holcomb's attendance at various speeches and functions, and a number of letters to and from dignitaries in the Navy Department, and especially the General Board, regarding copies sent to them of Clyde Metcalf's *A History of the United States Marine Corps*. There also are numerous letters concerning individuals seeking information on assignments and appointments into the Marine Corps. Other letters pertain to genealogy, Delaware history, orchestra tickets, the school for children at Quantico, the playing of the Marine Corps Band at a ground-breaking ceremony, and the guarantee of field glasses recently purchased by Holcomb.

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**1 April.** Holcomb to Honorable Butler Wright, American Ambassador to Cuba, at Havana.

Holcomb writes a strong letter of recommendation and introduction for Col Ross E. Rowell, whom Holcomb has nominated to be U.S. naval attache in Havana. He has great confidence that Wright will find Rowell an excellent member of his staff. Holcomb also invites Wright to come up to visit in Washington.

**3 April.** Holcomb to LtCol John W. Thomason, Jr., MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb is pleased that Goldwyn likes Thomason's script for the movie, but he is alarmed that Thomason's agent got into a fight with them and hopes that he can straighten things out. Unfortunately, he has heard nothing from James Roosevelt.

**31 March.** LtCol John W. Thomason, Jr., to Holcomb.

Thomason reports that he has just had a very favorable reply from Goldwyn's story man, Edwin C. Knopf, on his submission for the Marine Corps movie *Yet*, he also admits that his literary agent had a "row" with the Goldwyn people and he knows he must patch it up somehow. At the same time, Thomason does not wish to be taken for a sucker by the movie people.

**5 April.** Holcomb to Capt Evans F. Carlson, San Diego, California.

Holcomb seems pleased by Carlson's letter about his resignation and passes on the confidential news that President Roosevelt himself wanted Carlson to consider doing intelligence work, possibly in conjunction with ONI, [Naval Intelligence], especially if his civilian activities carry him back to the Far East. Holcomb concurs and hopes that Carlson will consider applying for the Volunteer Marine Corps Reserve upon receiving the acceptance of his resignation. This would allow him to facilitate the connection with ONI.

**5 April.** Holcomb to Capt Archer M. R. Allen, USN, on board USS *Salt Lake City*, Balboa, Canal Zone.

Holcomb appreciates Allen taking the time to let him know of the good work of the Marine Corps Attache, Capt J. C. Munn, and also of his difficulties with an outmoded plane. Holcomb asserts that the Bureau of Aeronautics has promised to deliver a new twin-motored amphibian plane this summer, but until then he is relying on Munn's good judgement and superior flying skills to continue his job.

**25 March.** Capt Archer M. R. Allen, USN, to Holcomb.

Archer explains that he has just been visiting Bogota, Colombia, with Adm Anderson. He has strong praise for Marine Captain Munn's excellent work as Marine Corps Attache in Colombia and appreciates all the arrangements and assistance that Munn rendered to him personally while visiting there. He hastens to add, however, that he is most concerned for Munn's safety in regard to the outmoded amphibian aircraft he flies into the mountainous area. He appeals to Holcomb to send a replacement immediately.

**5 April.** Holcomb to Col Roy A. Hill, USA, Commandant of Cadets, Louisiana State University, Louisiana.

Holcomb states that he will accept Hill's invitation to speak to the ROTC Class of LSU on 17 May; he was somewhat hesitant to follow in the footsteps of the last speaker, Gen Gullion, but he just received a phone call from the general urging him to do so. On the way to LSU, Holcomb plans to inspect various Marine Corps installations in the South, including the activities of the Reserve Battalion at Galveston; Augusta, Georgia; and New Orleans. He also inquires about appropriate uniform for the speech.

**6 April.** Capt Evans F. Carlson, USMC, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Carlson affirms that he will be happy to cooperate with ONI in any way possible and that he places his loyalty to country above all others. For the moment, however, he wants to "get my bearings" and forego applying for the Marine Corps Reserve. He wishes the best for the Marine Corps.

**6 April.** Honorable Butler Wright, Havana, Cuba, to Holcomb.

Wright is delighted at having a man of Colonel Rowell's calibre on his staff. He is glad to have an aviator as naval attache and feels sure he can use his many talents. Wright also sends belated congratulations to Holcomb on his own appointment as Major General Commandant and says that his busy job had prevented his writing earlier.

**5 April.** LtCol Gilder D. Jackson, Jr., Director of the Basic School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Jackson describes in some detail his own medical situation and then announces that things are in readiness for the next class at the Basic School. He hopes that Holcomb can attend and speak at the graduation exercises to be held 1 May; he has also written Gen Buttrick in the same vein hoping to have at least one Marine speaker, while Adm Townshend will represent the Navy.

**7 April.** Charles Brooke, Warm Springs, Florida, to Holcomb.

Brooke relates that President Roosevelt attended an informal lunch with him yesterday and discussed old times as Assistant Secretary of the Navy in charge of the Marine Corps. Roosevelt was also very interested in the Marine Corps exercises at Culebra and particularly the success of the rubber landing boats. Additionally, the President attended the Drum and Bugle Corps demonstration in the afternoon. Brooke then goes on to discuss the Secret Service men stationed there, the presence of some of Roosevelt's key military staff, and the possibility of Marines being posted at Hyde Park to guard the President's home.

**7 April.** Holcomb to RAdm Walter N. Vernon, USN, Commandant, 15th Naval District, Balboa, Canal Zone.

Holcomb congratulates Vernon on obtaining a "sea command" and says that he has issued orders for Cpl Rhyne to proceed to the USS *Tennessee* as Vernon requested. Holcomb praises Maj W. W. Rogers, who is the Marine officer with Battleship Division Two, and assures Vernon that Rogers will most ably assist him in his new command.

**31 March.** RAdm Walter N. Vernon to Holcomb.

Vernon requests that Holcomb detail Cpl Rhyne to his new flagship, the USS *Tennessee* because the admiral has been so pleased with Rhyne's performance over the past three years. When Rhyne's enlistment expires in 1940, Vernon hopes to be able to persuade him to stay on and reenlist.

**7 April.** Holcomb to LtCol Littleton W. T. Waller, Jr., USMCR, Meadowbrook, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb is sending Waller a copy of the *Peiping Marine* for identification of the photograph which Holcomb initially thought was of himself, but on second viewing thinks must be Waller. He also draws Waller's attention to the copy of "the famous old dueling letter" to be found in the same issue of the magazine and which involved Burrows and Lt Caldwell.

**8 April.** BGen Clayton B. Vogel, Ancon, Canal Zone, to Holcomb.

Vogel is ready to depart from the Canal Zone and feels after his inspection that things are in "good shape" and that Hanson and McMillan are maintaining good relations with the Navy people. Vogel also endorses Vernon's request to have Cpl Rhyne transferred to his new command.

**13 April.** Holcomb to MajGen James C. Breckinridge, MB Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb relays his latest plans with regard to two visits to Quantico. He plans to attend the Horse Show, as well as go down with members of Congress.

**15 April.** Col M. H. Silverthorn, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, to Holcomb.

Silverthorn expresses great satisfaction at obtaining orders to the staff of the Scouting Force. While he admits that his years of school work have been helpful, Silverthorn is delighted at the prospect of going to sea duty where he hopes to find something more tangible than the "paper men and paper ships" he has been dealing with at the War College.

**15 April.** Holcomb to LtCol Gilder D. Jackson, Jr.

Holcomb announces that he will not permit the resignation of two Naval Academy graduates short of the two-year required stint. This decision is based on standard practices of the Bureau of Navigation.

**20 April.** Holcomb to MajGen James C. Breckinridge, MB Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb informs Breckinridge that Mr. H. C. Spruks of the State Department's Protocol Division is interested in setting up a special visit to Quantico by the President of Nicaragua. Spruks is a great promoter of the Marine Corps and sees such a visit as not only beneficial to the Corps but also as aiding U.S.-Nicaraguan relations. Holcomb suggests that Breckinridge get in touch with Spruks to finalize details.

**20 April.** Senator Frederick Hale (R-Maine), U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, to Holcomb.

Hale tells Holcomb that he had an opportunity to read Metcalf's *History of the U.S. Marine Corps* while he was in the hospital. He is now interested in going to Quantico to practice with his Springfield rifle and his newest acquisition, a Holland & Holland express rifle. He inquires about the proper type of ammunition and the possibility of having the rifle inspected before he uses it.

**20 April.** Holcomb to Honorable Melvin J. Maas (D-Minnesota), U.S. House of Representatives.

Holcomb sends along the data that Maas requested on warrant officer strength in both the Navy and Marine Corps in the form of statistics and a brief history. Holcomb urges Maas to persuade Vinson to have hearings on the proposed warrant officer legislation as soon as possible. Holcomb will have much more to say on the subject at that time.

**24 April.** Holcomb to Mr. G. Aubrey Davidson, Bank of America National Trust and Savings Association, San Diego, California.

Holcomb responds to Davidson's plea that Gen Little be permitted to stay on at San Diego for another year to complete his plans for the development of the Marine Base. Holcomb assures Davidson that the plans for the base were developed previous to Gen Little's tenure and that in fact the Bureau of Yards and Docks oversees this work. He then goes on to explain that Little has commanded the Fleet Marine Force for two years and that it is now time for another officer to have that command.

**24 April.** Holcomb to Mrs. L. McCarty Little, MCB, San Diego, California.

Holcomb bemoans the fact that he has already spent a lot of time explaining why Gen Little is being sent to San Francisco. He urges the Littles to accept the posting and to "make a fine impression there."

**24 April.** Holcomb to MajGen Joseph H. Pendleton, USMC (Ret), Coronado, California.

Holcomb tells Pendleton that he has refused G. Aubrey Davidson's request that Little be kept on at San Diego, and repeats the same line of reasoning. He is sure Pendleton will understand.

**21 April.** MajGen Joseph H. Pendleton to Holcomb.

Pendleton writes at the urging of G. Aubrey Davidson on behalf of keeping Little at San Diego to advance the work on the Marine Base. Gen Pendleton has cautioned Davidson that such a request might be impossible to arrange. Davidson assured Pendleton that he was mainly interested in the good of the base not in promoting Little per se.

**26 April.** Holcomb to Honorable David I. Walsh, U.S. Senate.

Holcomb sends Walsh a detailed itinerary of engagements that Holcomb has planned for the last half of May including an inspection of Reserve battalions in the South and the award of an honorary degree by Hobart College. Holcomb hopes that should the Senate Naval Affairs Committee hold hearings on the McKellar Bill, in which Holcomb has considerable interest, Walsh will somehow schedule a time when Holcomb could attend and still fulfill the obligations of his May inspection trip.

27 April. Honorable David I. Walsh to Holcomb.

Walsh affirms that he will see to it that no hearings are held on the McKellar Bill until Holcomb finishes his trip. He promises to remain "in touch" with Holcomb on the matter.

27 April. Holcomb to RAdm A. W. Johnson, on board the USS *New York*.

Holcomb is delighted to get an advance copy from Johnson of his report on the landing exercises. Holcomb is especially pleased that Johnson picked up on Holcomb own pet peeve, that the Marine Corps is "woefully deficient in the matter of personnel strength." Holcomb sees it as false economy to keep the Fleet Marine Force so small that it could not effectively and quickly expand in time of national emergency to meet all the needs of the Fleet. He concludes with an appeal asking Johnson to broach the "understrength" issue with President Roosevelt should Johnson be granted an audience.

19 April. RAdm A. W. Johnson, Commandant Atlantic Squadron, Norfolk Navy Yard, Portsmouth, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Johnson sends Holcomb an advance copy of Johnson's report on FLEX-5 and Fleet Problem XX. He is very grateful for the cooperation and good teamwork displayed by the Navy and the Marine Corps in the recent exercise and is so pleased that Holcomb also wrote a report to the Chief of Naval Operations in the same vein.

28 April. Holcomb to Honorable Cordell Hull, Secretary of State.

Holcomb acknowledges his acceptance and appreciation for being asked to the welcoming ceremonies for President Somoza and his wife at the President's Reception Room at Union Station. (In previous correspondence arrangements had been made to have a special reception and parade for the Somozas at the Commandant's House in the Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C.).

This folder also contains lengthy correspondence concerning Holcomb's planned trips in May to the South and to Hobart College; invitations to several veterans' meetings and social affairs; a number of requests for assistance in aiding relatives seeking commission in the U.S. Marine Corps; letters relating to stamps, inventions, photographic equipment, military parades, and the Apple Blossom festival in Rochester, New York; and some very brief correspondence with Gen Lejeune and other retired Marines.

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2 May. Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb is relieved to hear from Little; he feels that Little was probably unaware of the pressure being applied to have his orders changed. Holcomb is also most anxious to read Little's reports on the current maneuvers.

29 April. MajGen Louis McCarty Little to Holcomb.

Little is just returning from the maneuvers and is "appalled" to learn about all the letters written to change his orders. He claims no prior knowledge of such activity and assures Holcomb he will try to squelch them by pointing out that his successor has been chosen for his capacity to perform and lead. As for the maneuvers, Little announces that the Navy has been most helpful and Holcomb should be proud of the performance of the Marine Corps.

**2 May.** Holcomb to MajGen Joseph H. Pendleton, USMC (Ret), Coronado, California.

Holcomb appreciates Pendleton's letter of 29 April which cleared up some of the turmoil surrounding the recent letters urging that Little be retained in San Diego. Holcomb is especially gratified to have heard from Little directly on the matter.

**29 April.** MajGen Joseph H. Pendleton to Holcomb.

Pendleton relates a story about his days in Santo Domingo as military governor in which he refused a plea for clemency by Archbishop Noel on behalf of a young aristocrat. Pendleton advised the archbishop that the aristocrat must set an example for his poorer countrymen. The archbishop then admitted that he did not expect Pendleton to grant his request, but had asked anyway to satisfy his friends. In an oblique fashion, Pendleton compares this "parable" to his asking Holcomb to allow Little to stay in San Diego.

**3 May.** Holcomb to BGen Asa L. Singleton, USA, Fort Benning, Georgia.

Holcomb tries to find out if he can visit Fort Benning on the afternoon of 11 May. This would seem especially appropriate in view of the large number of Marines who have been to the post for training and since Holcomb is in the midst of an inspection trip through the South.

**3 May.** Holcomb to Maj Robert L. Montague, Pensacola Naval Air Station, Florida.

Holcomb asks Montague to arrange for overnight accommodations for him on the night of 12 May. He hopes to inspect the Naval Air Station en route to New Orleans.

**6 May.** Holcomb to Col Roy S. Geiger, MB Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb announces that he has thought over their recent conversation and has decided to place Geiger at the Naval War College. He has taken the step based on Geiger's own preference.

**23 May.** Holcomb to Honorable Josephus Daniels, U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, at Mexico City.

Upon hearing from Adm Wilcox that a copy of the "Marine Corps Hymn" was unavailable for playing at a recent garden party given for Wilcox's squadron, Holcomb decided that he better send Daniels the hymn so he could give it to the band there in Mexico City.

**23 May.** Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb informs Little that he can announce his replacement around 1 July after the meeting of the board to select a major general. Lyman will retire shortly after Little comes to San Francisco to relieve him. Gen Vogel gave high praise for the west coast maneuvers in a brief conversation with Holcomb. He finishes his letter on an optimistic note telling Little that the Naval Appropriations Bill has just passed and the bill on warrant officer strength in the Marine Corps is likely to pass.

23 May. Holcomb to BGen James T. Buttrick, Marine Corps Schools, MB Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb apologizes for not being able to attend the Quantico graduation on 31 May. He explains that he will be Geneva, New York, on 29 May and plans to spend the night of the 30th in his family home in Delaware. He asks Buttrick to pass on his regrets to the candidates and "wish them every success."

23 May. Holcomb to LtCol John W. Thomason, Jr., MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb speculates that Goldwyn has decided to stall on producing the Marine Corps movie unless Jimmy Roosevelt returns to force the issue. Holcomb cautions Thomason to await further developments patiently.

18 May. LtCol John W. Thomason, Jr., to Holcomb.

Thomason reports that Goldwyn vetoed the use of North Africa for the Marine Corps film and requested Shanghai instead. Although Thomason claims to have provided story material to Mr. Knopf, he has not gotten any reaction. He thinks that true to form, the film company has chosen to ignore the Marine Corps ever since Jimmy Roosevelt left.

17 May. RAdm John W. Wilcox, U.S. Special Service Squadron, on board USS *Charleston* at Tampico, Mexico, to Holcomb.

Wilcox notes the absence of the playing of the "Marine Corps Hymn" at the Ambassador's garden party in Mexico City and asks that Holcomb remedy that by sending the sheet music for the War Department Band directly to Ambassador Daniels in Mexico. Wilcox does mention that Daniels was most impressed and admiring of the Marine Corps.

24 May. Holcomb to Mr. Samuel W. Meek, New York, New York.

Holcomb replies to Meek that he enjoyed the "March of Time" newsreel featuring some shots of Marines. He offers the suggestion that the Marines will be marking an appropriate moment for *Fortune* magazine to run a special on the Marine Corps. He hopes Meek can arrange for some good publicity and looks forward to his next visit to Washington.

22 May. Samuel W. Meek to Holcomb.

Meek points out the recent "March of Time" newsreel featuring some coverage of the Marine Corps with respect to Japan; additionally, another newsreel on the Navy will include some material on the Marines. Meek then asks Holcomb whether there is an appropriate anniversary coming soon that could justify *Fortune* publishing an article about the Marine Corps. After commenting on the deteriorating situation in Europe, Meek expresses his desire to work with Holcomb on planning a reunion of the First Officer Graduates at Quantico.

25 May. Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal, MB Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb comments favorably on his southern trip and then goes on to discuss the results of his legislative efforts. He is pleased at the Senate's restoration of Marine Corps collateral expenses and feels that the Marines will receive the increase in the number of warrant officers. Hearings have just begun on the amendments to the selection law in the Senate, and Holcomb believes that the selection board for the new major general will be completed in July.

**31 May.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little to Holcomb.

Little expresses regret over not being able to complete what he has started in San Diego, but realizes that is impossible. He admits that he is basically an "easterner" at heart, and he resents the premature publicity about his leaving San Diego, which caused him some discomfort and emanated from someone who "should have known better."

This folder also contains extensive correspondence and thank-you notes regarding arrangements, receptions, and accommodations for Holcomb on his southern trip as well as his attendance at the Hobart commencement exercises. In addition to a number of letters written to family and friends in Delaware, there are letters about Western High School, stamps, photographs, commissions, and disciplinary problems at Parris Island.

*Folder 29*  
1939

**1 June.** BGen Douglas C. McDougal, MB Parris Island, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

After a discussion of local political controversies, McDougal speaks of the difficult transition period when new officers are finding their bearings. Nevertheless, he is pleased by their "interest and enthusiasm" which outweighs their inexperience.

**2 June.** Honorable Josephus Daniels, U.S. Ambassador at Mexico City, to Holcomb.

Daniels thanks Holcomb for sending along the music for the "Marine Corps Hymn"; he cautions that the Mexicans would not appreciate the words about the Halls of Montezuma, but he expects the band to play the music without the words. Daniels expresses his pleasure over the recent visit of Admiral Wilcox and the other Naval and Marine officers; it reminded him of the days when he was in the Navy.

**5 June.** Holcomb to MajGen James C. Breckinridge, MB Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb informs Breckinridge confidentially that he wants to find out which of Breckinridge's officers requested the commanding officer of the USS *Manley* to bring 150 Marines from Quantico to Washington for purposes of a weekend leave. Holcomb stresses that such a request is both embarrassing and possibly outside the legal scope of the *Manley's* orders. In any event, the *Manley's* purpose is for training only.

**5 June.** Holcomb to Col Ross E. Rowell, Naval Attache, American Embassy, Havana, Cuba.

Holcomb is glad to hear that Rowell got a warm reception in Havana and hopes that he will continue to write about any significant developments there. As for Washington, Holcomb remarks that many people are upset at not being invited to all the galas honoring the British royal visit. The Holcombs, on the other hand, are attending all the main events. Finally Holcomb comments that Gen Meade is attempting to enlist congressional support to legislate him "out of his retirement."

**29 May.** Col Ross E. Rowell to Holcomb.

Rowell discusses the warm welcome he was given by the ambassador and the diplomatic community in Havana and then goes on to describe his living quarters

and his new office. He especially brags about the up-to-date office equipment and decor he has arranged. Rowell explains that he will "check in" with the American minister in the Dominican Republic during the next fortnight. Finally, he sounds very anxious to hear news of the Marine Corps, hoping that Holcomb has been able to extract the necessary increases from Congress. (Enclosed is a note from R. Henry Norweb, American Minister at Ciudad Trujillo, Dominican Republic, to Rowell inviting him over to present his credentials.)

**6 June.** Holcomb to Maj W. S. Van Dyke, USMCR, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studio, Hollywood, California.

Holcomb informs Van Dyke that a good friend of his, Adm J. O. Richardson, will go to the west coast to take over command of the Battle Force from Adm Kalbfus. Richardson and his chief of staff, Capt Taffinder, and another staff member, LtCol LeRoy P. Hunt, are all favorably inclined toward Marine Corps interests, so that Holcomb encourages Van Dyke to make contact with them.

**7 June.** BGen James C. Breckinridge, MB Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Breckinridge reports on his investigation into the request by Colonel Harrington to have the USS *Manley* transport Marine Reservists to Washington for a sightseeing weekend. He finds the behavior of both Harrington and the commander of the *Manley* to be "natural and entirely correct." Nonetheless, he expects that the Navy Department will eventually overrule them both and reject the request. Finally, Breckinridge seeks a clarification on the *Manley's* orders with respect to Quantico.

**9 June.** Holcomb to MajGen Charles H. Lyman, Department of the Pacific, San Francisco.

Holcomb consoles Lyman over his son Andy's resignation from the Naval Academy because of his poor showing in his "steam" course. Holcomb sincerely hopes that Andy eventually will be the stronger as a result of this temporary setback; he compares the difficulties his own son, Frank, had encountered. He tells Lyman that he will be detached from San Francisco on 1 August and then ordered home for retirement.

**3 June.** MajGen Charles H. Lyman to Holcomb.

Lyman recounts the sad news that his son, Andy, had to leave the Naval Academy, crushing his long-cherished dream of having his son be commissioned into the Marine Corps. He is pleased, however, at the excellent education he got at the Academy, the nice letter of recommendation that Adm Brown wrote on Andy's behalf, and his son's good prospects in civilian life. He ends his letter with details about seeking leave and detachment before retiring from the Marine Corps.

**20 June.** BGen Douglas C. McDougal to Holcomb.

McDougal states that heavy rains have severely delayed rifle range practice, but he expects to make it all up by the finishing week. A board of inquiry is meeting to investigate charges of murder against a private involved in an auto accident. McDougal complains that no recent gossip has slipped out of Washington and begs Holcomb to keep him abreast of the latest news. In particular, McDougal is desirous of receiving another lieutenant for Parris Island; the current allotment plans would leave him short two officers.

**26 June.** Holcomb to Capt John J. Capolino, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb gratefully acknowledges receipt of three pastels by Capolino. He also wants Capolino to do an oil painting which he would like to be the official size. He stresses that Mrs. Holcomb should have a say on the final planning of the product, especially the background composition. He will write him soon with details.

**28 June.** Holcomb to Maj S. D. Bedinger, 6th Field Artillery, Fort Hoyle, Maryland.

Holcomb thanks Bedinger for giving him lunch and for showing both Holcomb and Upshur around the post. He reports that the Marine Corps Reservists seem to be very happy and well treated at Fort Hoyle.

**28 June.** Holcomb to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, The White House.

Holcomb appreciates Roosevelt's commendation of Marine Corps and Navy participation in the welcoming ceremonies for the King and Queen of England at the Washington Navy Yard. He also remarks that he will be glad to pass on the President's message to the Marines who were involved in it.

**29 June.** Holcomb to Capt John J. Capolino.

The Holcombs have decided to go along with the idea of having the background of the general's portrait painted gray. They also would prefer a smaller head-and-shoulders portrait which would be easier to accommodate in future households. Holcomb also compliments Capolino on the color photographs.

**18 June.** Capt John J. Capolino to Holcomb.

Capolino presents Holcomb a progress report on various portraits and photographs that he has underway and has finished for the Holcombs. He is especially pleased at the gray background of Mrs. Holcomb's portrait and the corrections made on the general's portrait.

**29 June.** Holcomb memorandum for Mr. Seldon Chapin, Division of American Republics, U.S. Department of State, concerning Trujillo.

Holcomb discusses what honors he wishes to pay to Gen Trujillo during the latter's upcoming visit to Washington. This should include a dinner and a parade on 7 July at the Holcomb's residence in the Washington Marine Barracks and a luncheon and parade at the Quantico Marine Barracks on 10 July to be hosted by Gen Breckinridge. Holcomb has detailed an officer to meet and accompany the "Generalissimo" during his visit. He also prescribes the gun-salute to be given an ex-President. (An undated telephone message from the State Department indicates that Gen Trujillo will not be returning to Washington until 25 July, and that it is not believed necessary for Holcomb to have a dinner honoring him.)

This folder also contains a large number of social invitations, inquiries, and thanks from a number of admirers, family members, and various organizations; several old friends seek favors; there is correspondence on insurance matters, automobiles, boats, and photographic interests; and several letters from ex-servicemen wishing to renew old acquaintance with Holcomb.

Folder 30  
1939

**7 July.** Holcomb to MajGen J. K. Parsons, USA, III Corps Area, Baltimore, Maryland.

Holcomb apologizes for having to miss the Army maneuvers to be held in the Quantico area and that the Marine Corps is unable to participate. He hopes he can attend the maneuvers for one day, but unfortunately they take place during his summer leave.

**10 July.** MajGen J. K. Parsons, USA, to Holcomb.

Parsons gives Holcomb a brief calendar of events in the upcoming National Guard and Regular Army maneuvers in the Quantico area. He hopes that Holcomb will attend all or some of these events as Parson's guest.

**18 July.** BGen James C. Breckinridge, MB Quantico, to Holcomb.

Breckinridge lets Holcomb know that he is perfectly willing to be transferred to Parris Island. He has always spent nearly two years in every assignment, and he is now getting "itchy feet." He announces that he has made some improvements in the gangway for receiving Holcomb's boat at Quantico. He then recounts progress on construction of the new dam and FBI facility at Quantico, and applauds the economies realized through self-help.

**19 July.** Holcomb telegram to MajGen Louis McCarty Little, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb asks if he is right in assuming that Little would like the Quantico assignment. He states that Breckinridge wants Parris Island and McDougal will be sent to San Francisco.

**19 July.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little telegram to Holcomb.

Little assures Holcomb he would like to have the Quantico job, but he would prefer to have an additional month in San Diego to get his personal effects packed.

**19 July.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little to Holcomb.

In his letter, Little goes into more detail about his job preference for Quantico. Both he and Mrs. Little are genuinely pleased at the prospect of returning to the East, and he has never had the Quantico command. He is especially anxious to supervise the crating of their personal belongings for the move, thus necessitating the longer leave. In general, he is most pleased with improvements at San Diego.

**19 July.** Holcomb to BGen Douglas C. McDougal, Cape May, New Jersey.

Holcomb inquires as to the timing of McDougal's promotion examination; he would like them to go together before the Naval Examining Board and for that Holcomb won't be available until 27 July. He also wants McDougal to accompany him to the farewell dinner being given Adm Leahy.

**20 July.** MajGen Douglas C. McDougal to Holcomb.

McDougal accepts Holcomb's invitation to go together to the Naval Examining Board and to attend Leahy's farewell dinner, and he asks for an airplane to pick him up at Cape May. McDougal is grateful for all of Holcomb's help. He then outlines his move to Parris Island.

**20 July.** LtCol Joseph D. Murray, USMC (Ret), Belmont, Maine, to Holcomb.  
Murray is delighted and honored to receive his commission as lieutenant colonel "just twenty-two years after our attack at Soissons." He is especially thankful to Holcomb and the Marine Corps.

**25 July.** Holcomb to LtCol Gilder D. Jackson, MB Philadelphia Navy Yard.  
Holcomb is glad that Jackson's arm is improving. Holcomb acknowledges that part of the problems being encountered by the Basic School reflects the fact that confirmations are slowed when Congress decides to remain in session during the summer. He states that he would enjoy attending a reception in Philadelphia in September but cannot commit himself this far ahead.

**24 July.** LtCol Gilder D. Jackson to Holcomb.  
Jackson announces that the latest x-rays concerning his arm show some improvement and he hopes to avoid more hospitalization. He then describes the difficult conditions he is operating under with regards to diminished enrollment and cramped firing schedules for the Basic School at Cape May. But he predicts that everything will eventually turn out right. He finishes with mention of plans for a September reception.

This folder also contains correspondence relating to a summer concert invitation; to the Infantry Drill Regulation for 1939; and the *Army and Navy Journal*. Also to damage payments on auto accidents and personal family matters; to the critique of a World War I Marine Corps history; to a request for the club-book of the New York Yacht Club; to several declined social engagements; and a mother's thank you note to Holcomb for his expression of sympathy on the death of her son.

*Folder 31*  
1939

**15 August.** Holcomb to Mrs. John C. Beaumont, Detroit Lakes, Michigan.  
Holcomb passes on the sad news that Gen Beaumont's hospitalization costs cannot be covered since his sickness was incurred while on leave. He urges her to transfer Beaumont to the Fargo, North Dakota Veterans Hospital as soon as physically possible, and that once transferred, the government would then cover all his expenses.

**3 August.** LtCol Gilder D. Jackson, Basic School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.  
Jackson writes Holcomb a happy birthday letter. He announces that he will have to put off his planned reception until 10 November, and then to make it into a Marine Corps birthday celebration. He seeks Holcomb's assistance in bringing this about by his presence. Holcomb answers in the affirmative on 15 August.

**15 August.** RAdm Wilson Brown, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, to Holcomb.  
Brown asks that Holcomb find out if he can obtain a "commutation of rations" for his corporal orderly. He has already given up his sergeant orderly to assist the rifle team. Holcomb answers on 17 August that he will take care of the matter as soon as he receives the official request.

**22 August.** Holcomb to Mrs. John C. Beaumont.

Holcomb is pleased at Gen Beaumont's improving condition and wants Mrs. Beaumont to know that while the government cannot pay the civilian hospital bills, the general will not lose any more leave as he was officially placed on the sick list as of 10 August. Holcomb then goes on to describe the sudden and shocking death of Col Matthews as the result of an auto accident.

Mrs. Beaumont's letter of 17 August states that she hopes to get the question of the hospital bill taken care of upon arrival in Washington in September.

**22 August.** Holcomb to LtCol Gilder D. Jackson.

Holcomb admits that he cannot at this time obligate himself to be with Gen Upshur if the latter obtains the post at Quantico, which in turn hinges on whether McDougal decides to retire. Holcomb intimates that the "retirement list" looks good to him, but Holcomb believes there will be a war.

**18 August.** LtCol Gilder D. Jackson to Holcomb.

Jackson reports his observations of the rifle practice at Cape May and is generally very impressed. He hopes to have just as good a record from the next contingent being sent there. He next discusses contingency plans for holding the birthday party 10 November and sees it as a unifying event for the school.

**24 August.** Holcomb memorandum for Adm Stark.

Holcomb thanks Stark for his memorandum praising the good work of Col Barrett. He adds that Barrett will remain at Quantico in command of the 5th Marines, and he is happily able to have contact with enlisted men which had not been the case for years. But Holcomb affirms that Barrett is available for "consultations" when Stark needs him.

**30 August.** Holcomb to RAdm A. W. Johnson, on board USS *New York*, Annapolis, Maryland.

Holcomb asserts that if McDougal retires, he would send Upshur to San Diego to head the FMF and Holland Smith would command the 1st Brigade at Quantico. He decided that Gen Upshur should be the Marine Corps representative at the conference Johnson is holding. He compliments Johnson by stating that the Marine Corps deeply regrets his upcoming change of duty station, as he has been most helpful and sympathetic to the Marine Corps.

**27 August.** RAdm A. W. Johnson to Holcomb.

Johnson announces that he wishes to convene a conference of "principal interested parties" in regard to the planning of the upcoming Fleet Landing Exercise No. 6, since he will be leaving his present command 30 September. He also wants Holcomb to inform him of Gen Upshur's replacement as commander of the 1st Marine Brigade, so as to schedule the conference at a convenient time, and he offers to receive a representative as well from Marine Corps Headquarters.

**30 August.** Holcomb to RAdm Ben Moreell, Army and Navy Club, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb accepts Moreell's invitation to attend the club dinner honoring Dr. Douglas S. Freeman including his lecture on Gen Robert E. Lee.

**23 August.** RAdm Ben Moreell, President of the Army and Navy Club, to Holcomb.

Moreell asks Holcomb to attend Dr. Freeman's lecture and the stag dinner before to honor him on 19 September. Similar invitations are being sent to the Chief of Naval Operations, the U.S. Army Chief of Staff, the Commandant of the Coast Guard, the Director of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, and the Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service.

This folder also contains a cablegram from Rafael Trujillo thanking Holcomb for his "attentions" during his visit to Washington, and letters on the following subjects: oil leaks on Holcomb's boat, cruising on the lower Potomac, duplication of gasoline credit cards, and invitations to various social and patriotic meetings.

*Folder 32*  
1939

**2 September.** Holcomb to Maj William J. Whaling with U.S. Marine Corps Rifle Team at Camp Perry, Ohio.

Holcomb deeply regrets not being present for the rifle matches, but he feels sure the team members will score well and looks forward to receiving their telegrams.

**5 September.** Holcomb to BGen John C. Beaumont, St. Mary's Hospital, Detroit Lakes, Michigan.

Holcomb expresses his delight at Beaumont's improvement but warns him not to expect to return quickly to FMF duty. Holcomb believes McDougal will retire. He has detailed Dick Williams to San Francisco and Upshur will take command of the FMF.

**31 August.** BGen John C. Beaumont to Holcomb.

Beaumont passes on good news from the doctor that he should be able to return to Washington by 20 September. He is sorry to have been laid up at such a crucial moment and is most anxious for news of various duty assignments. As for himself, he would be just as happy to be assigned to the west coast.

**5 September.** Holcomb to Honorable Melvin J. Maas (D-Minn.), St. Paul, Minnesota.

Holcomb acknowledges that he had a good vacation and is now ready to face the work ahead. He then passes on the news of McDougal's and Beaumont's ill health and confirms duty assignments of such emerging figures as Holland Smith, Barney Vogel, Dick Williams, and W. P. Upshur.

**17 August.** Honorable Melvin J. Maas to Holcomb.

Maas brags that Minnesota will soon boast one of the finest Marine Corps battalions. He had discussed plans for it with Holdahl and will confer later with Holcomb as to details. He asks that James be detailed to St. Paul to "check on the whole situation." Maas appreciates Holcomb's thoughtfulness in sending him a copy of the first military fitness reports.

**14 September.** Samuel W. Meek, New York City, New York, to Holcomb.

Meek congratulates Holcomb on the increased Marine Corps allotment. He wants to visit Holcomb while he is in Washington. Finally, Meek urges Holcomb to come to New York so he can introduce him to some of the staff at *Time* magazine.

**15 September.** Holcomb to Samuel W. Meek.

Holcomb, too, is happy about the increasing recognition being given to the Marine Corps. He will be glad to talk with Meek anytime except Saturday or Sunday in Washington. Holcomb remarks that "March of Time" photographers seemed pleased with the footage they shot at Quantico for the program "The Ramparts We Watch."

**11 September.** Capt Joel T. Boone, MC, U. S. Naval Dispensary, Long Beach, California, to Holcomb.

Boone writes on behalf of his friend and fellow World War I veteran, Bert Sibley. He describes Sibley's physical and emotional deterioration and especially his loss of confidence after an automobile accident. He urges Holcomb *not* to recall Sibley to active duty since it might well precipitate a total mental breakdown. As for himself, Boone is fully prepared to return to active service but not in the same manner as previously.

**16 September.** Holcomb to Capt Joel T. Boone.

Holcomb reassures him that Sibley will not be recalled to active duty since only a few retired officers will be used, and they must come forth voluntarily. He wants Boone to pass this on to the Sibleys so as to relieve their anxiety. On the other hand, he is delighted at the prospect of Boone's possible return to active duty.

**19 September.** Holcomb to Mrs. John C. Beaumont, Detroit Lakes, Michigan.

Holcomb inquires as to Beaumont's most recent health prognosis. He then instructs her on the proper procedures for Beaumont to get his travel orders and thus ensure that his travel expenses are covered. He hopes to receive good news about Beaumont's recovery.

**20 September.** Holcomb to RAdm M. H. Simons, Norfolk Navy Yard, Portsmouth, Virginia.

Holcomb stubbornly refuses Simons' request for recommendation of an ex-Marine Corps officer for duty at the Norfolk Navy Yard. He will not go into any detail about him in writing but will gladly go into the problem orally if Simons would pay him a visit. He suggests that he seek assistance from Adm Nimitz to get an officer to fill the slot.

**21 September.** Holcomb to RAdm Wilson Brown, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland.

Holcomb accepts with pleasure Brown's invitation for the Holcombs to join the Browns for lunch and the opening Navy football game. His aide, Capt Julian, and his wife also will accompany them.

**28 September.** Holcomb to Capt John J. Capolino, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb is happy to get the photographs of the portrait and admits that he likes it very much.

**20 September.** Capt John J. Capolino to Holcomb.

Capolino discusses the excellent job done in photographing Holcomb's portrait. He requests that an autographed print be forwarded to Seth Williams, since the latter had shown such a great interest in Capolino's portrait work.

**28 September.** Holcomb to BGen William P. Upshur, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb discusses the possibilities for housing troops at a new camp site at La Mesa. He is asking the Navy Department for authority to lease the land since it is not permitted at the moment to buy the land. He urges Upshur to try to be persuasive with Adm Defrees in convincing him of the need for the expansion of facilities. He forewarns him that Defrees is "crusty." Holcomb finishes with a brief summary of the progress being made in staffing and recruitment for mobilization by Marine Corps Headquarters, of which he is justly proud.

**24 September.** BGen William P. Upshur to Holcomb.

Upshur comes out in opposition to the expansion of the present cantonment plan as totally unnecessary, and claims that Vogel and the other officers agree with him. They feel the present housing facilities can handle all requirements, but on the other hand, he sees great need for expansion of the training area. He suggests the leasing of a 22,000-acre site, and promises to confer with Adm Defrees, despite the latter's seeming indifference to Marine Corps training needs. He then complains of intense heat and a dust storm. The letter concludes with a compliment to the men and officers under his command and pledges to loyally carry out whichever plan Holcomb endorses.

**28 September.** Holcomb to LtCol DeWitt Peck, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb discusses various options for getting Peck's son, Billy, into the Marine Corps Reserve or the Naval Academy next year. He assures Peck that he will have "lots to do in the coming expansion" and feels confident he will like working under Gen Upshur. Holcomb doesn't know Mead.

**20 September.** LtCol DeWitt Peck to Holcomb.

Peck is anxious for Holcomb to intervene on his son's behalf in getting an admission to the Naval Academy in 1940, by looking up Senator James Mead and recommending Billy. Peck reports that recruits are coming in rapidly and look good generally.

**30 September.** RAdm Edward C. Kalbfus, President, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, to Holcomb.

Kalbfus thanks Holcomb for assisting in the case of Sgt Ewing. He then refers to the fine quality of a Czechoslovak enlarger for photographic prints. Kalbfus finishes by praising Holcomb's foresight in preparing staff officers for the War College by putting them through both the Senior Course and the Advanced Course. He approves Col Cauldwell's relief of LtCol Riley.

**28 September.** Holcomb to RAdm Edward C. Kalbfus.

Holcomb announces that he has modified the rules permitting Sgt Ewing to be authorized a subsistence allowance. He then tells the admiral about the Czech enlarger he got on recommendation from one of Kalbfus' acquaintances. Holcomb informs the admiral that he plans to send Cauldwell to replace Riley on the War College staff and would like to know if this would be suitable to Kalbfus. He hopes to see Kalbfus soon and have the chance to talk about photographic matters.

26 September. RAdm Edward C. Kalbfus to Holcomb.

Kalbfus requests an exemption from existing regulations to provide a subsistence allowance for Sgt Ewing because of his long and outstanding service to Kalbfus and others, as chauffeur to the presidents of the Naval War College since 1935. The main reason for the request is that Ewing works such different hours that he often cannot be present at regular meal hours. Kalbfus regrets that while in Washington he was unable to talk to Holcomb about their mutual photographic interest.

This folder also contains a number of letters and invitations involving Holcomb's attendance at various social events and patriotic ceremonies.

*Folder 33*  
1939

9 October. Holcomb to Mrs. Berton W. Sibley, La Jolla, California.

Holcomb sends this letter to reassure the Sibleys that Bert will not be recalled to active duty and that he did more than enough for the nation in the previous war. Holcomb only hopes that Sibley will have a full recovery. Finally, he asserts that he has no jobs for officers at the rank of colonel and above.

9 October. Holcomb to Col A. T. Marix, USMC (Ret), Los Angeles, California.

In reply to Marix, Holcomb asserts that the present Marine Corps organization "is sufficiently flexible to meet our needs," and that the greatest need is for money to set up more Reserve battalions. He agrees that former Marines of suitable age can form the best backbone for such Reserve battalions, but he cannot accept Marix's idea of having these Marines by-pass normal channels of coming in either as regular Marines or as members of the Reserve. Marix's letter of 5 October called for Holcomb to ask the Adjutant General of California to organize a special regiment or battalion of former Marines.

13 October. BGen Richard P. Williams, Department of the Pacific, San Francisco, California, to Holcomb.

Williams indicates that the reason he has not written Holcomb before this is that there are "no real problems" in the Department of the Pacific Headquarters. He states that he was sad to leave San Diego and contrasts its vibrant personalities and activities with the "placid" setting of San Francisco. He does not even find any friction between the Navy and Marine Corps. Finally, he asks if he is to be ordered East soon to sit on one of the selection boards.

14 October. Holcomb to MajGen James C. Breckinridge, MB Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb informs Breckinridge that he has decided to replace the present officer in charge of the Parris Island rifle range with the more experienced Capt J. J. Tavern. The latter had been in charge of several range detachments.

17 October. MajGen John A. Lejeune, USMC, (Ret), Norfolk, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Lejeune forwards a paper to Holcomb which was written by a World War I Marine veteran named Jack Ausland who served in the 4th Brigade. Lejeune also remarks that he is very interested in listening to the Norfolk radio broadcasts of Sgt Kelly, who is in charge of local Marine Corps recruiting.

**18 October.** Holcomb to MajGen James C. Breckinridge.

Holcomb sends along data compiled by Seth Williams to prove that Marine Corps planning for the "development" of Parris Island has not been "haphazard." This was in response to memorandums prepared by Breckinridge. Holcomb expresses his disappointment over the poor showing of Marine Corps recruiters thus far, but he hopes it will improve soon.

**18 October.** LtCol Gilder D. Jackson, Camp Holcomb State Military Reservation, Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Jackson brags about assembling a large number of photographs of Marine Corps activities at Indiantown Gap which he feels might be used for publicity purposes. He adds that he and his men have renamed the reservation in Holcomb's honor. Jackson is very pleased with the school's progress and his own improved health. He then asks Holcomb a number of dress etiquette questions in relation to the Marine Corps birthday party at the Basic School, which Holcomb is expected to attend.

**21 October.** Holcomb to LtCol Gilder D. Jackson.

Holcomb goes into the dress etiquette and itinerary details relating to the Marine Corps birthday party. Col Larsen has given him a "good report" of Jackson's handling of the Basic School. Holcomb ends with a few remarks about future Marine Corps recruiting and training. He does not expect to have to cut short Jackson's training curriculum unless an emergency arises.

**24 October.** Holcomb to LtCol Harvey L. Miller, USMCR, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb regrets that he and his wife will not be able to go to the Miller's 5th Battalion party since Mrs. Holcomb's health remains tenuous. He feels keen disappointment because he has been anxious to see the battalion.

**25 October.** Holcomb to LtCol A. H. Noble, MB Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb has to turn down the Quantico Officers' Club invitation for the Marine Corps birthday party because he has already agreed to attend the party at the Basic School.

This folder contains in addition correspondence relating to social engagements, visits from friends, membership in the Chevy Chase Club, religious-patriotic celebrations at Catholic University, and attendance at a National Guard review.

*Folder 34*  
1939

**5 November.** Mr. Paul Palmer, Washington, D.C., to Holcomb.

Palmer informs Holcomb that he is now an editor and correspondent for *Reader's Digest* in Washington and would like the opportunity to talk informally with Holcomb about his opinions on current events. He asserts this information would never be published and would be for the general edification of the *Reader's Digest* editorial staff only. [Palmer's letter of 23 November indicates that he, a former Marine, did have his interview with Holcomb and assures Holcomb that he would like to continue to be of service to the Marine Corps.]

**6 November.** Holcomb to Capt John J. Capolino, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb states that he and his wife are generally pleased with the photograph showing Capolino's latest portrait, but they would prefer that he omit the Marine Corps ornament on it. Holcomb is also happy to hear of Capolino's commission to paint murals in the Philadelphia Municipal Court.

**6 November.** Holcomb to Col Robert L. Denig, MB Pearl Harbor Navy Yard, Hawaii.

Holcomb informs Denig that his request for increased personnel at Pearl Harbor will be discussed once Denig submits the routine paperwork describing the amount of guard duty now required at the station. Holcomb reveals that present plans call for a defense battalion to be stationed there consisting of 725 men, some of whom might be pressed into guard duty. Holcomb is sympathetic about Denig's plight, but he cautions that he himself is strapped with limited means to meet growing personnel demands everywhere.

**26 October.** Col Robert Denig to Holcomb.

Denig points out the need for additional Marines to cover the shortage in guard manpower. He estimates his present need to be 96 more enlisted men, but that could change as new posts open each day. He hopes to avoid having the Army do guard duty for the Marine Corps, especially on the tank farms.

**15 November.** Holcomb to Mr. Evans F. Carlson, Plymouth, Connecticut.

Holcomb hopes that Carlson will seek a commission in the Marine Corps Reserve, but he cautions him to consider the decision very carefully. He does not want Carlson to join and then embarrass the Marine Corps in some way by untoward behavior.

**15 November.** Holcomb to Maj W. A. Howard, USMC (Ret), Pikesville, Maryland.

Holcomb relates that a Navy transport has been named for Mrs. Howard's famous ancestor, Franklin Wharton. He hopes Howard will come to see him in Washington. And finally, Holcomb inquires as to whether Mrs. Howard has any mementos she might lend to the proposed Marine Corps museum at Quantico.

**15 November.** Honorable Josephus Daniels, U.S. Embassy, Mexico City, to Holcomb.

Daniels expresses his desire that Holcomb facilitate the recall to duty of an able World War I veteran, LtCol C. B. Hatch, whom Daniels has known and respected for many years. Daniels has heard that other officers have been recalled and feels Hatch is especially gifted.

**15 November.** Holcomb to BGen Hugh Matthews, USMC (Ret), Loudon, Tennessee.

Holcomb sounds out Matthews on the idea of being president of Clemson College. He feels Matthews is capable of understanding youths, making budget representations to the state legislature, and delivering speeches. He urges him to contact Holcomb quickly if he wants the job. He briefs Matthews on some news of the old-timers in the Marine Corps and then states that there should be 25,000 Marines by February.

**16 November.** Holcomb to Adm Thomas Hart, Commander-in-Chief of the Asiatic Fleet.

Holcomb implores Hart to understand the physical problems that caused him to have Joe Fegan ordered home immediately, without waiting for his relief to arrive. He then turns to praising DeWitt Peck's capabilities as a good officer and expresses complete confidence that the 4th Regiment will do well under Peck.

**20 November.** BGen Hugh Matthews to Holcomb.

Matthews is greatly touched by Holcomb's honoring him with the invitation to apply as president of Clemson. But, as with Gen Lejeune's offer to succeed him at the helm of VMI, Matthews feels he cannot accept because he never finished his own matriculation for a bachelor's degree, which he feels is a vital prerequisite. Finally Matthews is alarmed to hear about Joe Fegan's ill health.

**21 November.** Maj W. A. Howard to Holcomb.

Howard's wife is very pleased about the transport being named for Col Wharton and promises to loan something appropriate to the Marine Corps Museum when it is completed.

**22 November.** LtCol C. B. Hatch, USMC (Ret), West Grove, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Hatch offers his services to Holcomb, and is especially anxious to serve in some administrative or leadership capacity at the Philadelphia Quartermaster's Depot. He has extensive executive experience in the automotive field and in the area of purchasing and inspection of material supplies. Hatch believes also that his knowledge of Philadelphia and its people might be useful in countering possible sabotage.

**22 November.** Holcomb to Mr. Frank Jervej, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb repeats the contents of Gen Matthews' reply regarding consideration of him as a candidate for president of Clemson, and asks if indeed a college degree is mandatory for the job. Holcomb considers Matthews an altogether perfect candidate in all other respects. He provides further details about Matthews' fine career in the Marine Corps which make him eminently qualified.

**25 November.** Holcomb to Captain John J. Capolino

Holcomb acknowledges receipt of the scratch-board drawing of the Commandant's House. The Holcombs want to frame it, and the general would like to know how the process is done. The Holcombs, however, had already picked out a Christmas card. In Capolino's letter of 19 November, he suggested that the Holcombs might want to use the drawing as a basis for their Christmas card.

**26 November.** Holcomb to BGen Albert L. Cox, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb congratulates Cox on the fine appearance of his troops at the review held in Washington of the District of Columbia National Guard and the Marine Corps Reserve Battalion. He especially enjoyed the hot dinner after a very "chilly" review. Holcomb is grateful to Cox for inviting him to both.

**27 November.** Holcomb to Mr. Evans F. Carlson.

Holcomb assures Carlson that there is no immediacy required in his signing up for a Marine Corps Reserve commission, and that in fact it would probably be advantageous to wait. Nevertheless, Holcomb hopes that Carlson will consult with him first before considering any other offers.

**19 November.** Mr. Evans F. Carlson to Holcomb.

Carlson appreciates Holcomb's reticence in wanting him to sign up for fear of future embarrassments to the Marine Corps. Yet, Carlson makes clear the reasons for his previous resignation from the Marine Corps and feels that as a private citizen he is serving his country well by speaking out on some controversial

issues. As for the commission, Carlson insists that he is *not* soliciting one, but merely making it known to Holcomb that his services are available if needed. Furthermore, if Holcomb judges that any embarrassment might arise from his getting a commission, he would "prefer not to have one."

**27 November.** Holcomb to Honorable Josephus Daniels.

Holcomb announces that Col Hatch's application for a job is now on file. But Holcomb cautions Daniels that for the present Hatch would not be considered, both because of his high rank and because he has been retired 23 years.

This folder also contains correspondence regarding invitations to social, political, and military functions; more about the quick, unexpected return of Joseph Fegan to the United States; the award of two stars to MajGen P. H. Torrey; the publication of *Burke's Landed Gentry*; and tickets and parties related to the Army-Navy football game.

*Folder 35*  
1939

**4 December.** Holcomb to Col Roy S. Geiger, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb asks Geiger to let him know whether he prefers taking the Advanced Course at the Naval War College next fall, or whether he would rather go to St. Thomas. He feels sure Geiger will be selected as a brigadier general by then, but he would like to assist him in getting his preference.

**4 December.** Holcomb to Col Samuel M. Harrington, MB Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb admits that he is very pleased to see Harrington get promoted and knows it will gain general approval.

**4 December.** Holcomb to BGen Hugh Matthews, USMC (Ret), Loudon, Tennessee.

Holcomb asks Matthews to reconsider his position on rejecting the bid to be president of Clemson. Holcomb consulted with the selection board, which said that a degree was not mandatory. Holcomb also explained that he talked with Gen Lejeune about Matthews turning the VMI post down and that Lejeune agreed that it was ridiculous to insist on the degree as a prerequisite. Holcomb hopes Matthews will change his mind and contact him quickly about the job.

**4 December.** Holcomb to Col John Marston, Central Recruiting Division, Chicago, Illinois.

Holcomb sends congratulations on Marston's promotion and promises to let him know where he will be posted soon.

**4 December.** Holcomb to Col Ross E. Rowell, American Embassy, Havana, Cuba.

Holcomb is especially delighted at Rowell's promotion, because it seems to validate his premise that an aviator would not be discriminated against by the selection boards.

**7 December.** BGen Richard P. Williams, Department of the Pacific, San Francisco, California, to Holcomb.

Williams submits his request for retirement and announces he would like to leave San Francisco in February. Although he failed to get his promotion from the selection board, he still believes in the system.

**8 December.** Col Roy Geiger to Holcomb.

Geiger expresses his appreciation for Holcomb's concern about his duty assignment. He opts for continuance at the Naval War College because he considers selection for the Advanced Course as the "greatest professional privilege."

**9 December.** Holcomb to Gen Rafael T. Trujillo-Moline, Trujillo City, Dominican Republic.

Holcomb admits that he is embarrassed to receive Trujillo's "gracious" thank-you letter, because he feels that as head of the Marine Corps he should have done more. But he trusts that the opportunity to entertain Trujillo will arise again. He hopes to visit the Dominican Republic someday. Holcomb is especially touched that Trujillo has named one of his principal streets for the U.S. Marine Corps because of services rendered in 1930 to alleviate the distress of Trujillo's people.

**30 November.** Gen Rafael T. Trujillo to Holcomb.

Trujillo writes Holcomb to thank him for the various courtesies shown him by the Marine Corps during his recent visit to the United States. He briefly describes his naming of an avenue in Trujillo City "U.S. Marine Corps" in gratitude for rescue and humanitarian efforts performed by Marine Corps aviators in the wake of a deadly hurricane there in 1930. Finally, he invites Holcomb to visit him in return. [Both letters cleared through the Dominican Legation.]

**9 December.** Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little, MB Quantico, Virginia.

Harrington is expected to leave his post in January, Holcomb therefore asks Little if he has any preferences on a new chief of staff.

**9 December.** Holcomb to Col John Marston.

Holcomb reveals his plans confidentially, that as a result of Dick Williams' decision to retire he wants to name Marston as chief of staff in the Department of the Pacific. He is confident that Marston can handle this and knows Upshur will be pleased to have him under his command. He wants to detach him 1 February.

**11 December.** Col Ross E. Rowell to Holcomb.

Rowell was both pleased and surprised to find his name at the top of the selection list. He asserts that his selection should indicate that "all Marine Officers stand on equal ground." Rowell mourns the passing away of the U.S. Ambassador to Cuba.

**11 December.** Col Charles F. B. Price, Naval Examining Board, MB Washington, D.C., to Holcomb.

Price appreciates Holcomb's sensitivity to his feelings about this duty assignment. Price would like to remain in Washington because he was of the assumption that his tour was to be two years. He claims that he will feel no animosity toward a recently selected officer being placed over him because most of them are his friends anyway.

**9 December.** Holcomb to Col Charles F. B. Price.

Holcomb is concerned about the probability that the next general officer to be put in charge of the Naval Examining Board will be someone formerly junior to Price and that he might prefer to be assigned elsewhere. Holcomb suggests alternative spots to be the Central Recruiting Division and command of the New York Navy Yard Marine Barracks.

**11 December.** Col John Marston to Holcomb.

Marston is delighted at the prospect of serving in San Francisco and plans to leave Chicago by mid-January. He then gives plaudits to the outstanding service rendered by Capt Tighe as officer in charge of the recruiting district in Chicago. He has been most imaginative and thorough as shown by the impressive record of his office. [Holcomb annotates the letter with several order changes addressed to Col Kennedy's attention.]

**11 December.** Holcomb to Col Ross E. Rowell.

Holcomb informs Rowell that since he is an upcoming brigadier general, the Marine Corps cannot afford to leave him at his present post. Naval Intelligence has agreed to expedite his replacement at the embassy, and either Gen Mitchell or Holcomb will let Rowell know when he can expect new orders. Holcomb's preference is to "organize" the wing headquarters at San Diego and put Rowell in charge. Geiger has chosen to stay at the Naval War College.

**12 December.** Holcomb to Col Charles F. B. Price.

Holcomb agrees that Price can remain in his present job.

**16 December.** Col Harold L. Parsons, Department of the Pacific, San Francisco, to Holcomb.

Parsons asks Holcomb to delay his reassignment until late June so his son can complete his second year in high school in a bid to prepare for the Foreign Service School at Georgetown. Parsons wants Holcomb to know that he is delighted at the prospect of a command and does not wish to jeopardize it by his request. Finally, he pledges continued maximum effort and loyal service in spite of his being passed over by the selection board.

**17 December.** LtCol John M. Arthur, U.S. Asiatic Fleet, Olongapo, Philippine Islands, to Holcomb.

Arthur discusses the ramifications of his being promoted to colonel; particularly he points out that Adm Hart would probably like a major to replace him, while Arthur feels the job requires a lieutenant colonel and preferably one with a law background. Arthur hopes that Holcomb can send his relief by June, since he does not wish to remain there long as a colonel due to Hart's views on staff ranks. Arthur ends with a brief description of his duties, gratitude for the opportunity to serve in the Asiatic Fleet, and a reiteration of his desire for a job in Washington, Quantico, or at the Army War College.

**18 December.** Adm Thomas C. Hart, U.S. Asiatic Fleet, Manila, Philippine Islands, to Holcomb.

Hart expresses his sadness over Joe Fegan's having to go home for treatment and how this affected the weakening U.S. position in North China. He hopes Peck will get a chance to learn more about Shanghai before something disastrous happens. Hart then complains about the huge radio traffic load handled by the USS *Augusta* having to do with Marine Corps personnel matters. He hopes for some moderation or at least some improvement in this area, implying that Holcomb's headquarters occupied too much valuable radio time with administrative matters better handled at the local level. Hart then goes into the question of Arthur's replacement by an officer with less seniority so as better to fit in with his wardroom. Hart cautions Holcomb against detailing senior officers to impress him.

**19 December.** Holcomb to RAdm Clark H. Woodward, New York Navy Yard.

Holcomb asks Woodward if he can manage to survive until summer with LtCol Walter H. Sitz, because the next choice for commander of the Marine Barracks, Col Parsons has asked for an extension on the west coast. If this is unsatisfactory, Holcomb promises to deny Parsons' request because he has no one else to fill the job at the New York Navy Yard.

**19 December.** Adm William Wilcox, U.S. Special Service Squadron, Balboa, Canal Zone, to Holcomb.

Wilcox complains that the chief Marine officer with the squadron, LtCol Holmes, is the senior officer except for Wilcox himself. He dubs Holmes a "white elephant," and asks Holcomb to send him a captain instead.

**19 December.** Holcomb to LtCol LeRoy P. Hunt, on board USS *California*, San Pedro, California.

Holcomb appreciates the fact that Adm Bloch wished to have the Marine Corps included in the joint exercises even if he did not succeed. He then informs Hunt that he wants him to try to get the 2d Brigade included in some form of exercise during next year. Holcomb advises the colonel's son, young Roy Hunt, to "get busy on those subjects which he did not have at college" to pass the Reserve examination. He cannot depend only upon his good record to receive a commission; he must take the examination.

**15 December.** LtCol LeRoy Hunt to Holcomb.

Hunt expresses his pleasure at being allowed to remain under Adm Snyder in the U.S. Fleet Battle Force. Hunt then describes his attempts to get the FMF included in the joint exercise through the kindly intervention of Adm Richardson and Block. But the Army appears to have won out in the matter of manning the landing boats, though the weather remains the deciding factor in the actual operation. He mentions his son Roy's enthusiasm for obtaining a regular commission, but he realizes he is lacking in some subjects for the Reserve examination. He ends with a favorable comment about establishment of a Marine station in San Juan to try to forestall a total Army takeover in that area.

**20 December.** Holcomb to Col Robert L. Denig, MB Pearl Harbor Navy Yard, Hawaii.

Holcomb divulges some of his plan to make the base defense battalions in Pearl Harbor into regiments. He plans to put Pickett in charge of one and later in charge of the whole post. But for the moment, he needs to know whether Denig prefers to stay in Pearl Harbor or would like to be detached to Bremerton.

This folder also contains a draft for a talk entitled "For the Good of the Service . . .", plus correspondence relating to retired Marines seeking reactivation; gratitude for tickets to the Army-Navy game; social and patriotic invitations; and Holcomb's inquiries about razor blades and book binders. The draft talk is undated and unsigned, but appears to have been the script for a radio broadcast by Gen Holcomb written by John Thomason in December 1939.

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**2 January.** Holcomb to LtCol Gilder D. Jackson, MB Philadelphia Navy Yard, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb sends along application papers and information on seconding letters for Jackson and his wife to become non-resident members of the Chevy Chase Club.

**2 January.** Holcomb to BGen Ross E. Rowell, American Embassy, Havana, Cuba.  
Holcomb sends along Rowell's one-star insignia and wishes him all the best on his new promotion. He also thanks him for the Cuban cigars.

**2 January.** Holcomb to Col Harold L. Parsons, Department of the Pacific, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb has finally received the green light from Adm Woodward so that he can approve Parsons' request to remain in California until June.

**2 January.** Holcomb to BGen Samuel M. Harrington, MB Quantico, Virginia.  
Holcomb congratulates Harrington on his promotion and hopes he will be happy. Holcomb himself is most pleased.

**22 December.** Col LeRoy P. Hunt, U.S. Fleet Battle Force, San Pedro, California, to Holcomb.

Hunt reports that he had a good talk with Adm Richardson and found him to be "kindly disposed" toward the Marine Corps and sympathetic to the FMF. Richardson apparently plans to use the 2d Brigade at San Clemente sometime after the fleet exercise in April. Richardson even wrote to Adm Stark about protecting Marine Corps interests from Army intrusions. Adm Snyder also gave some positive plugs to the Marine Corps' efforts at a joint luncheon with the Army brass.

**2 January.** Holcomb to Mr. Robert D. Heidl, Heidl News Service, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb thanks Heidl for his congratulatory note about Holcomb's radio broadcast. Holcomb has to admit that the script for the broadcast was written by John Thomason and thus he could take no "personal credit."

**29 December.** Mr. Robert D. Heidl to Holcomb.

Heidl proudly applauds Holcomb's radio broadcast effort of 28 December and says that he has written to Columbia Broadcasting System for a copy of his script. He speculates that the Marine Corps could really make a "grand show" on television.

**2 January.** Holcomb to LtCol John M. Arthur, on board USS *Augusta*, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb has notified Adm Hart that Arthur's replacement will be Col Clement who should not get a promotion until at least the summer of 1942. He plans to send Arthur to the FMF at San Diego, where he should command the new regiment, the 8th Marines. Holcomb hopes Adm Hart will like Colonel Peck.

**3 January.** Holcomb to Col Joe C. Fegan, c/o Capt W. L. Mann, USN, Embassy Hotel, San Diego, California.

Holcomb welcomes Fegan back to the USA and hopes Fegan will come to see him soon. The Holcombs want him to stay with them. Both "Chinese Orphans," Joe Fegan, Jr. and William Peck, have been staying at the Commandant's House during the holidays.

**8 January.** Capt Fielding Robinson, USMCR, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Robinson states that since his discussion with Holcomb over the possibility of doing some Marine Corps "publicity," he has talked the matter over with Gen

Harbord. He has struck on the idea that if Holcomb could attend the annual dinner of the Second Division A.E.F. committee, he could establish some vital contacts for publicity with a number of New York businessmen. Robinson also suggests the possibility of the North American Newspaper Alliance sending a representative (as himself) to attend the February maneuvers or at least syndicate some articles about the maneuvers.

**8 January.** Maj Frank B. Goettge, Basic School, Philadelphia Navy Yard, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Goettge requests an autographed photograph of Holcomb which he wishes to place next to that of Adm Stark and the Secretary of the Navy in the officers' mess. The facility is just about finished and he expects it to be one of the "finest of service clubs." The tennis courts have been banked like the ones in Peking for ice skating.

**9 January.** Holcomb to Honorable Pete Jarman (D-Ala.), the House of Representatives

Holcomb appreciates Jarman's letter of congratulation on his promotion to major general but he is quick to point out that his term as Major General Commandant of the Marine Corps is not over until 1 December 1940, at which time he will have served for four years. He then explains that his selection for promotions occurring in 1934 (to brigadier general) and 1938 (to major general) had nothing to do with his duties as Major General Commandant.

**6 January.** Honorable Pete Jarman to Holcomb.

Jarman makes the inaccurate assumption that since Holcomb was listed in the *Congressional Record* as just being promoted to major general that his tenure as MGC was over. He congratulates him on the promotion and wishes him happiness in the performance of his "new duties."

**9 January.** Holcomb to the Board of Governors, Chevy Chase Club, Chevy Chase, Maryland.

Holcomb presents his recommendation on behalf of Gilder D. Jackson for non-resident membership. He assures the board that Jackson is most suitable for membership and gives some biographical details including a long list of citations and awards.

**9 January.** Capt Robert D. Workman, USN, Head of Chaplain's Division, Bureau of Navigation, Washington, D.C., to Holcomb.

Workman relates his impressions of meetings of the National Council of the Young Men's Christian Association in October 1939 which were geared to coping with the vast expansion of naval shore establishments. The council has decided to increase its personnel and equipment for work with naval personnel through a big fund-raising campaign. Workman seeks Holcomb's help in this effort by providing his advice, a general statement, and a photograph.

**9 January.** Holcomb to Capt John J. Capolino, USMCR, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb notes that he and his wife have been looking carefully at the new portrait and find it more pleasing than the official one. He expects Capolino to bill him for the frame.

**10 January.** Holcomb to Mr. T. A. Rymer, Young Men's Christian Association, New York, New York.

Holcomb agrees to endorse the YMCA expansion program and fund-raising effort. He points out his own good experience with YMCA maintaining high morale among his men, especially during his tour of duty as commanding officer, American Embassy Guard, in Peking, China.

**10 January.** Holcomb to Capt Fielding Robinson, USMCR.

Holcomb asks Robinson to give him an exact date on the Second Division dinner in New York so he can give a more definitive answer to his invitation. As for publicity on the maneuvers, Holcomb declares that department policy for bids sending a newspaper representative along, but he will put his publicity man, A. A. Vandegrift, in charge of seeking some syndicated articles. As far as Fielding himself, Holcomb believes he can get him placed on active duty with Holland Smith's 1st Brigade during the time of the maneuvers in Puerto Rico. Holcomb ends with the comment that he feels his radio broadcast on CBS on 28 December may have had a buoying effect on recruitment levels.

**11 January.** T. A. Rymer, Army and Navy Department, YMCA, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Rymer thanks Holcomb for his photograph and statement, which he feels will be most helpful. Rymer is intensely interested in meeting the challenge of expanding the YMCA effort through this fund-raising campaign.

**12 January.** Holcomb to Mr. Aubrey Williams, National Youth Administration, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb goes into great detail as to why he is unable to endorse the return of LtCol Hatch to active duty status. Holcomb's main argument is that he has only 50 slots for bringing retired officers to active duty and Hatch has been out of the service for 23 years, which means his association with recent Marine Corps activities is tenuous at best.

**12 January.** Holcomb to Honorable Clifton A. Woodrum (D-Virginia), House of Representatives.

Holcomb is very pleased to learn that Woodrum's committee has approved in its 1940 supplemental budget a recommendation giving the Marine Corps the exact monies asked for. Holcomb feels this is an endorsement of the honest and thorough work of Holcomb's budget staff.

**12 January.** Holcomb to MajGen H. H. Arnold, USA, Chief of the Air Corps, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb returns the parking authorization sticker and ID card Arnold sent him for the purpose of attending the Bolling Field exhibit of Army airplanes and regrets that he will not be able to attend.

**6 January.** MajGen H. H. Arnold, Chief of the Air Corps, to Holcomb.

Arnold invites Holcomb to attend a special exhibit of the latest developments in Army airplanes and equipment. He encloses an identity card and parking pass to enable Holcomb to come to the restricted showing on 19 January.

**15 January.** Holcomb to Capt Charles F. Schell, Wilmington, Delaware.

Holcomb is glad to hear that Gilder Jackson proved suitable to meet Capt

Schell's requirements and that Jackson took advantage of the meeting to launch the Marine Corps' "political campaign." He also is happy to have the support of the Reserve Officers Association.

**15 January.** BGen William P. Upshur, on board USS *New York* at sea, to Holcomb.

Upshur hopes to reach Culebra early tomorrow. Upshur describes his voyage from Washington and the warm greeting he received from Adm Ellis. He then goes on to tell about assembling the equipment, the umpires, and various instructions. Upshur remarks that the battleships are nearly up to a full complement of sailors—1,100 instead of the 675 a year ago—and each carries three VO aircraft with aviators. One plane and its pilot had to be rescued during a drill. He notes that among the landing boats aboard is a Higgins which had been altered since last year. Next he details the schedule of events for the next few days. Upshur ends his letter with a show of gratitude for Holcomb's personally swearing him into office.

**16 January.** Maj John M. McHugh, Shanghai, China, to Holcomb.

McHugh pays a great compliment to the 4th Marines because of an incident relating to the Yangtze Patrol, which he promises to explain in full to Holcomb later. McHugh also expresses thanks for Holcomb's full support during these trying times. Then he briefly describes several inspection trips both past and future in various parts of China. He finishes with comments on Japanese political and military prospects.

**17 January.** Holcomb to LtCol Gilder D. Jackson, MB Philadelphia Navy Yard, Pennsylvania.

The Holcombs send their condolences on the death of Jackson's brother. Holcomb will plan to attend the Basic School graduation exercises on Friday, 3 May, even though he planned to go boating on the Potomac that weekend.

**16 January.** LtCol Gilder D. Jackson to Holcomb.

Jackson announces the sad, shocking news that his brother has dropped dead suddenly of a heart attack. At the funeral, Jackson mentioned to mourners that he might return and assume some political office in Delaware after retirement. Finally, Jackson hopes that Holcomb can alter his plans and attend the new date for the Basic School graduation.

**17 January.** Holcomb to MajGen Milton A. Reckord, National Rifle Association, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb regrets that unforeseeable developments prevent him from attending the National Rifle Association dinner where he was to be a guest speaker. He hopes Reckord can now get a "really inspiring speaker."

**17 January.** Holcomb to Capt John J. Capolino, USMCR.

Holcomb replies to Capolino that there should not be any more alterations on the official portrait. Holcomb eventually will want to take the smaller portrait with him, and leave the big one behind at the Commandant's House.

**14 January.** Capt John J. Capolino to Holcomb.

Capolino is delighted that the Holcombs find the latest portrait the best likeness. But Capolino himself feels the official portrait is the "handsomest

portrait" he has ever done. He asks the Holcombs to compare the two portraits carefully and see where the difference exists between the two, and he asks that they be sent back for any desired alterations. Finally, Capolino requests that he be permitted the honor of redoing the portrait of Burrows, which is the only Commandant's portrait not painted in oils.

**17 January.** BGen Robert L. Denig, MB Pearl Harbor Navy Yard, Hawaii, to Holcomb.

Denig requests assignment to the east coast because he wants to save his son "transportation costs." If this is not suitable, Denig will accept a posting at Bremerton.

**21 January.** BGen William P. Upshur, Culebra, Puerto Rico, to Holcomb.

Upshur begins his description of FLEX-6 with reference to improved equipment, namely larger tents, and to the closeness of the Marine Corps leaders headed by Holland Smith. He is especially impressed by the rapidity with which a pilot and his smashed airplane were rescued by the crew of the USS *New York*. After chatting briefly about his busy social schedule including dining with Adm Ellis and the Governor of St. Thomas, Upshur ends with a brief overview of the exercise schedule.

**23 January.** Honorable Carl Vinson (D-Georgia), Chairman of the House Committee on Naval Affairs, to Holcomb.

Vinson sends Holcomb a printed copy of the hearings held on 13 June 1939, in which Holcomb among others commented on the proposed Marine Corps reorganization bill. Vinson is very grateful for Holcomb's remarks on this matter.

**24 January.** Honorable Pete Jarman (D-Alabama), House of Representatives, to Holcomb.

Jarman is relieved to find out that Holcomb's tenure as Commandant of the Marine Corps will not expire until December. He is most happy that his mistaken impression has been cleared up and is appreciative of Holcomb's clarification on his promotion to major general. Jarman himself has been closely identified with military matters since his Army service in World War I and his work with the National Guard since 1922.

**25 January.** Maj Bernard S. Barron, USMCR, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Barron announces that he has accepted Senator Walsh's plea to come and inspect the 3d Reserve Battalion because he feels it is a unique opportunity to promote the good name of the Marine Corps. Walsh is chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee. The Senator approved of Barron's plan to invite Holcomb and other officers involved with the Reserve program to come for the inspection and a dinner honoring Walsh. Barron assures Holcomb that he and his wife could have an entire weekend in New York without any expenses. Holcomb regrets he cannot attend.

**28 January.** BGen William P. Upshur, Culebra, Puerto Rico, to Holcomb.

Upshur reports that the exercises for the 1st Brigade went very well. Charlie Barrett and Holland Smith discussed the merits of getting more landing experience versus sticking to the assigned schedule; Holland Smith and the schedule won the day. Upshur admires both men and sees Smith as injecting important feelings of responsibility and initiative in his men. Upshur predicts Barrett will keep the umpires very busy because of his active mind.

**29 January.** Holcomb to Honorable Carl Vinson, House of Representatives.

Holcomb thanks Vinson sincerely for sending him a copy of the committee reports on the June hearings and admits that they are "very interesting and well worth study."

**30 January.** Col Roy S. Geiger, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, to Holcomb.

Geiger has some difficulty recalling a conversation of about three years ago with Gen Lyman. He believes that the latter was of the opinion then that aviators would probably never be selected for promotion above the rank of colonel in the Marine Corps. Lyman, Maas, and Geiger had a heated discussion on the matter at Quantico which lasted an entire afternoon as he recalls. Geiger refers Holcomb to Congressman Maas for a more accurate reading of what transpired.

**30 January.** RAdm William Wilcox, U.S. Special Service Squadron, Balboa, Canal Zone, to Holcomb.

Wilcox admits that he has been unable to learn anything about Maj Holmes' scheduled replacement, one Maj Ballentine. Nevertheless, he trusts that Holcomb has made a worthy selection and he wants Holcomb to know he will help Maj Ballentine should he need it.

**31 January.** MajGen Douglas C. McDougal (Ret), Coronado, California, to Holcomb.

McDougal writes that he is concerned about the conflicting dates given in the *Army and Navy Register* about when his son, David, is to be returning from Shanghai. He would prefer that David come home the latter date so he can be present for his brother's wedding. McDougal expresses his pleasure to be away from the political in-fighting going on with relation to the Senate Naval Affairs Committee; he especially sympathizes with Holcomb for having to manage the "cat fight." McDougal would like to be kept informed of "current events."

This folder also contains correspondence relating to the following topics: social, political, and patriotic engagements and invitations; individuals seeking promotions; Marine Corps commissions or other political favors for relatives or friends; critiques and complimentary notes on Holcomb's; radio broadcast; and other personal letters about family visits or presents.

*Folder 37*  
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**2 February.** Adm James O. Richardson, CinCUS, on board USS *Pennsylvania* to Holcomb.

Richardson remarks about the excellent performance of the Marine Corps officers at the critique program in Monterey on the recent joint Army and Navy exercise. He especially praises the speaking efforts of LtCol Hunt and LtCol Rogers. Even the Army Gen Peek was impressed by them.

**4 February.** Col Julian C. Smith (telegram), Culebra, Puerto Rico, to Holcomb.

Smith wants Holcomb to be aware that some military news periodicals are spreading stories critical of the Marine Corps selection system and have wrongfully dragged Smith's name into it. Smith insists that he favors the present system and would like to affirm for the record that he is definitely not in favor of any reform or modification.

**4 February.** BGen William P. Upshur, Culebra, Puerto Rico, to Holcomb.

Upshur passes on a very favorable report on the training exercises; the morale of the men was so good after being permitted swimming privileges that a very small number took advantage of weekend liberty. He briefly describes the 2d Battalion's week at Vieques for field training and then evaluates the different types of training and how well prepared the men are compared with last year. He recommends after several landing boat accidents that they be furnished with an air compressor for inflating the boats. He states that except for a few cases of malaria, the men's health has been excellent, water is satisfactory, and very little equipment has been damaged.

**5 February.** Holcomb to Col Harry K. Pickett, FMF, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb informs Pickett that his departure from duty there has been set for 15 June, but he admonishes him not to repeat such requests, especially in the form of a personal letter. He tells Pickett that once in Honolulu he will reside in Denig's house and LtCol Pepper and Jackson will be his executive officers.

**6 February.** Col John M. Arthur, on board USS *Augusta*, Manila, Philippine Islands, to Holcomb.

Arthur appreciates Holcomb's congratulations on his selection for promotion and only hopes his service will merit the new rank. Now he feels sad because a recently developed hernia may delay the professional examination needed to get the commission; his sergeant can ably carry on Arthur's duties while he is in the hospital. Arthur is very pleased about LtCol Clement's selection to be his replacement; not only would he himself have chosen Clement but also the admiral appears satisfied. Arthur enjoyed working under Adm Hart. He spends most of the letter commenting on the various posts and on the space problems aboard transports and how successfully the Marine Corps has used its limited allotments to save the government money. Arthur ends this long letter with thanks to Holcomb for appointing him to the FMF in San Diego and hopes that he can command the 8th Marines.

**7 February.** Carleton Penn, Attorney at Law, Roanoke, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Penn thanks Holcomb for sharing a copy of his letter to Judge Woodrum. He makes this statement about Woodrum: "I believe that we have him thoroughly interested in the needs of the Marine Corps." Whenever Penn is in Washington he tries to introduce Marine Corps friends to the judge and they all showed well. He is looking forward to the convening of the Marine Corps Reserve Policy Board next month in Washington. He wants to help the Marine Corps whenever possible.

**8 February.** Holcomb to Adm James O. Richardson, San Pedro, California.

Holcomb very much appreciates Richardson "taking the trouble to write" about the excellent critique presentations given by Hunt and Rogers at Monterey. He is especially delighted to learn that Richardson plans to use the 2d Brigade, the FMF, and one of the Defense Battalions in the upcoming San Clemente exercises and hopes they go well.

**8 February.** Holcomb to RAdm George Pettengill, Washington Navy Yard, Washington D.C.

Holcomb praises the effort of Pettengill and his associates to make the Navy Relief Ball such a stunning success. He has heard many favorable comments about the way the ballroom was decorated and the courteousness of the personnel.

**9 February.** Col John Marston, Department of the Pacific, San Francisco, California, to Holcomb.

Marston forwards to Holcomb a copy of the letter he wrote to Senator James J. Davis of Pennsylvania. In the letter, Marston pleads for the senator's support of the present Marine Corps Selection System in the face of stiff opposition from "passed over" malcontents who seek to disrupt or change it. He only wishes the Marine Corps colonels could take the passing-over as well as the Navy captains and recognize the selection boards are legally constituted and that even the President has sanctioned their decisions. Marston offers to assist Holcomb in any way to combat the acrimony.

**9 February.** MajGen Douglas C. McDougal, USMC (Ret), Coronado, California, to Holcomb.

McDougal blames Col Price for the "campaign of defamation" against the Marine Corps Selection System. He sees Price as being behind the effort to smear the boards for selecting inferior officers on purpose to lessen the competition to the senior officers. He wishes Holcomb well in his battle to save the system and hopes that he will remain the Commandant until age 64. McDougal is most upset at the "disloyal element," which has been crying over spilt milk and initiated the congressional investigation. He hopes it will end soon.

**9 February.** Mr. Robert Heun, Richmond, Indiana, to Holcomb.

Heun writes to congratulate the Marine Corps under Holcomb for reaching its authorized strength of 25,000 through its successful recruiting effort. Heun, a former Marine Corps rifle team member, remarks that he was sad to have just missed Holcomb at the Camp Perry rifle matches last summer. But he hopes to see Holcomb soon in Washington.

**11 February.** BGen William P. Upshur, Culebra, Puerto Rico, to Holcomb.

This letter constitutes a continuation of the detailed personal comments and critiques offered to Holcomb in Upshur's letters of January and early February 1940. He enumerates the major events and progress in testing and training as well as failures of the Marines participating in FLEX-6. In an additional letter, Upshur discusses the controversy swirling around the congressional investigation into the Marine Corps Selection System.

**12 February.** Governor Burnet R. Maybank, Columbia, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

Maybank has heard that Holcomb has set aside \$12 million for post improvement programs at Quantico, San Diego, and Parris Island. As an interested party, Maybank asks special consideration for developing the new officers' quarters, the mess hall, and the hospital at Parris Island. He claims these would all be in the "best interest of national defense."

**12 February.** Holcomb to Mr. Robert E. Heun.

Holcomb himself is very pleased at the tremendous job done by Marine Corps recruiters in getting up to authorized strength in five months, in view of the stiff competition from the other military branches and private industry.

**12 February.** BGen James C. Breckinridge, CG, MB Parris Island, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

Breckinridge puts himself on record as being ready to come at a moment's

notice to aid Holcomb in regard to the selection system investigation. He is very sympathetic toward Holcomb's fate of having to deal with all kinds of "madness" and "unreasonableness." He longs to help Holcomb. At the same time, he understands high-calibre men like Julian Smith being upset at failing of selection. Breckinridge states emphatically that Holcomb is "the best Commandant" ever and has gained the complete confidence and loyalty of Marines. He has no axe to grind nor does he boot-lick. He hopes the Holcombs will come visit and recuperate as the Beaumonts have just done. Breckinridge ends by stating that he expects Holcomb will leave office in December and he would like his last act to be the acceptance of Breckinridge's retirement.

**12 February.** Holcomb to Col P. A. Capron, MB Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Washington.

Holcomb lets Capron know that regrettably he cannot have his first choice of going to New York because Col Parsons insisted that he wanted to go there. The orders have already been cut so Capron will have to be satisfied with his second choice. This is in answer to Capron's letter of 3 February 1940, asking for the job of commanding the Marine Barracks at the New York Navy Yard. He mentions that the Commandant there is a personal friend.

**12 February.** Holcomb to RAdm Edward C. Kalbfus, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb informs Kalbfus that Cauldwell is still to be on the admiral's staff. He briefly describes the timing of the Marine Corps assignment system which consists of planning changes in January and announcing them en masse in February. He then mentions his two main hobbies of photography and boating.

**4 February.** RAdm Edward C. Kalbfus to Holcomb.

Kalbfus wishes to get the latest word on whether orders have been issued for Col Cauldwell so that his staff for the next year can be finalized. He also thanks Holcomb for his recommendation on purchasing a piece of photographic equipment.

**14 February.** Holcomb to GySgt Faustin E. Wirkus, USMCR, Marine Corps Recruiting Office, New York, New York.

Holcomb asks Wirkus confidentially to advise him on the "numbers and characteristics of the cattle on Gonave Island and what experience you have had with them." Holcomb has received a classified report which states that the cattle have disappeared from the Island.

**15 February.** Col Pat Evans, USMCR, Southern Recruiting Division, New Orleans, Louisiana, to Holcomb.

Evans has passed on to the field teams the commendation letter Holcomb sent him on the recruiting effort, and states that the success was due to team spirit. While he hates to stop recruiting actively when the apparatus seems to work so well, he has shifted to establishing "waiting lists" for future recruiting campaigns. He ends by commiserating on the selection system investigation.

**15 February.** Holcomb to Gov. Burnet R. Maybank.

Holcomb asserts that Maybank was misinformed about the \$12 million allotment for port improvements. He goes into great detail on explaining to the governor that the Congress has the final say on which projects and specific buildings at a particular post can be approved for funding. Last year's Naval appropriation,

for instance, included only money for the building of the mess hall (\$300,000) at Parris Island, and the prospect for this year's session appears little better. Holcomb agrees that Parris Island improvements are urgently needed, but states that Congress generally has turned a deaf ear to such requests.

**17 February.** Col Holland Smith, 1st Marine Brigade, FMF, to Holcomb.

Smith describes the successful running of the "Makee-Learnee" problem in which he affirmed that the brigade had a major role in the "running of the problem" for the first time. He also feels that having the umpires go along with the units is the most effective method of getting the most out of the exercise. He praises the spirit of cooperation and eagerness among the men and he lists only a few discipline cases. The only drawback was the outbreak of malaria in Ponce, which despite normal precautions caused 14 cases among the Marines. He has written Holcomb less frequently because he understands Upshur is writing weekly letters on the details of the training.

**19 February.** Maj C. J. E. Guggenheim, USMC, Recruiting District of Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio, to Holcomb.

Guggenheim is grateful to know that his relief from the present job consists of a routine change of duty station to the New York Navy Yard, rather than relief for "failure to perform my duties satisfactorily." He will of course do his utmost to perform efficiently in New York.

**19 February.** Col Holland Smith to Holcomb.

Smith continues his detailed reporting on the FLEX-6 maneuvers. He discusses personnel and supply problems as well as training and equipment. Smith is fully satisfied with his staff and Adm Ellis is especially pleased at the lack of confusion in the conduct of the Marines' exercises.

**19 February.** Holcomb memorandum to MajGen James C. Breckinridge.

This memorandum, on the one hand, praises the Marines at Parris Island for their cheerful and efficient spirit in plodding on despite cramped conditions and an abbreviated training schedule. On the other hand, Holcomb shows displeasure with Breckinridge for permitting rifle qualification firing on 24 January under such bad weather conditions because it can only tend to dampen the spirits of these young Marines.

**20 February.** Holcomb to LtCol Gilder D. Jackson, MB Philadelphia Navy Yard, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb hopes to go to Parris Island after the congressional investigation and the appropriations bill passage. He reports that he, Price, and Ostermann had to give testimony in an unrecorded executive session. Holcomb has not heard any more on the committee's plans to investigate formally.

**20 February.** Col George S. Patton, Jr., USA, Commanding Officer, 3d Cavalry, Fort Myer, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Patton invites the Holcombs to attend the Exhibition Drill at the Fort Myer Riding Hall, for which Adm Stark has already accepted. Patton would like the Holcombs to join him for lunch prior to the drill. (Holcomb's reply of 23 February indicated that he and his wife, and Capt and Mrs. Juhan, would be happy to attend both the drill and luncheon.)

**21 February.** Holcomb memorandum for the President.

Holcomb tells Roosevelt that he sent along the President's memorandum on the "cattle situation on the Island of Gonave" to GySgt Wirkus. He now provides the President with two reports by Wirkus and a photostatic copy of a map of Gonave. Holcomb further states that Joe Fegan recalls seeing a large number of cattle there.

**13 February.** President Franklin D. Roosevelt memorandum for the Major General Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Roosevelt asks Holcomb to get GySgt Wirkus to confirm or deny a recent report by Mr. Walton that he saw only a few "dry cows" on the Island of Gonave in Port-au-Prince Bay. Roosevelt recalls seeing many wild cattle there on a trip over the island in 1917. Wirkus is an expert on the island.

**21 February.** LtCol William E. Riley, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, to Holcomb.

Riley is delighted at the prospect of being sent on sea duty—he has been longing for this over many years. He also applauds Holcomb's choice of Cauldwell to replace him, and he recommends that Cauldwell be assigned to participate in the upcoming two problems of the Senior Class to prepare him for his job at the Naval War College. Riley finally extends a cordial invitation for the Holcombs to inspect Newport and stay with the Rileys.

**23 February.** Holcomb to Honorable Guy M. Gillette, United States Senate.

Holcomb inquires as to whether Gillette and his subcommittee plan to hold any more hearings concerning the investigation of the Marine Corps selection system. Holcomb is hoping to make an inspection trip to the South beginning 1 March and needs the information to plan accordingly.

**23 February.** MajGen James C. Breckinridge to Holcomb.

Breckinridge is very pleased that the Holcombs have decided to come to visit Parris Island and stresses that they are welcome anytime. He then tries to reassure Holcomb that he should feel no guilt or anxiety over the investigation of the selection system because it was the board and president who bore responsibility for their choices, not Holcomb. Breckinridge thinks the end result is not diminishment for the Marine Corps' reputation but rather for the individuals who started the whole mess.

**26 February.** Holcomb to LtCol William E. Riley.

Holcomb is glad that Riley appreciates his fine new job. Unfortunately, matters in Washington are so "hectic" that he sees a visit to Newport as very unlikely.

**28 February.** Holcomb to BGen Ralph S. Keyser, USMC (Ret), Falls Church, Virginia.

In reply to Keyser's inquiry for information on requirements for Reserve commissions, Holcomb announces that Keyser's friend Detrich would not be suitable. In recent years, Holcomb affirms that Reserve commissions have not been given to anyone over 28. Holcomb is afraid he will not be able to visit with Keyser before his trip to Parris Island, but he agrees they have a lot to discuss.

This folder also contains correspondence about visits and social engagements; photographic equipment; hospital charges; club membership fees; and letters exchanged with Jean Arnold, manager of the Oleanders Hotel in Eau Gallie, Florida.

**5 March.** Holcomb to RAdm Hayne Ellis, on board USS *Texas*, FPO New York. Holcomb informs Ellis that unfortunately he cannot accede to Ellis' wishes in retaining LtCol Gally on his staff, because Gally's services are needed at Headquarters in the Personnel Division. On the other hand, Holcomb highly recommends Gally's replacement, LtCol Riley, who has had more FMF experience and will make a valuable contribution to Ellis' staff. Holcomb wishes he could help, but the change requested is too complex. Holcomb ends with praise for the Navy and especially Ellis' cooperation on the highly successful exercises at Culebra.

**27 February.** RAdm Hayne Ellis, U.S. Fleet Atlantic Squadron, Culebra, Puerto Rico, to Holcomb.

Ellis compliments the fine efforts of Holland Smith and his staff in handling FLEX-6 and also the excellent performance of the Marines in general. Col Andre, commandant of the Garde d'Haiti, paid a visit and credited the Marine Corps for his own personal rapid advancement. Trujillo is staying on board the USS *Texas* to observe as Ellis' guest.

Ellis then indicates that he has talked to and gotten verbal agreement from LtCol Gally about staying on until next year's FLEX-7. He has the highest regard for Gally's capabilities and the admiral is disturbed over news of Gally's transfer to Washington. Ellis asks that his orders be recut as a personal favor. He emphasizes that Gally has been the key link in planning the landing exercises successfully to the "mutual benefit of both the Navy and Marine Corps."

**5 March.** RAdm Wilson Brown, Superintendent, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, to Holcomb.

Brown shares his dismay over the case of Midn Henry B. Wharton whose marks were so low that the Academic Board could not permit his continuance without jeopardy to its reputation of consistency. Brown admires Wharton and hates to lose him.

**6 March.** Holcomb to Capt Cortland Baughman, on board USS *New Mexico*.

Holcomb regrets that he cannot extend 2dLt E. H. Hurst's service on the USS *New Mexico*. There have been many such requests for extension. Because of that and because of Holcomb's desire to give new officers some experience with the fleet, he has had to make an arbitrary rule of one year for such sea duty for the second lieutenants. He apologizes for the hardship to Baughman and the fleet, especially as all three of the Marines on the *New Mexico* will be retrieved soon. (Baughman's letter of 4 March sought a one year extension for Hurst).

**6 March.** RAdm Wilson Brown to Holcomb.

Brown seeks the services of 1stLt Louis B. Robertshaw to assist Maj Larson in coaching the Navy football team next fall. He realizes this may cause Holcomb some problems, "but success means so much to all of us that I hope you may be able to find your way clear to help us out once again."

**21 March.** Honorable Charles A. Plumley (R-Vermont), House of Representatives, to Holcomb.

Plumley requests Holcomb's special consideration for giving a civilian clerk, Mrs. Ethel M. Richards, working in the Adjutant and Inspector's Office, a \$60 step increase. He asks Holcomb not to give him any weak excuses why this can-

not be done, but instead proceed rapidly with its fulfillment. Mrs. Richards is the widow of a Marine Corps officer and mother of Lieutenant Robards, a Navy man.

**23 March.** Holcomb to Honorable Charles A. Plumley.

Holcomb turns Plumley's argument around and indicates that the record shows Mrs. Richards is being overpaid \$60 based on her efficiency rating. He indicates that her rating has not been high enough in the last 10 years to justify a promotion. Holcomb rejects the theory that Mrs. Richards' background automatically entitles her to a promotion or other special consideration.

**26 March.** Honorable Charles A. Plumley to Holcomb.

Plumley shows great displeasure at the "bureaucratic" reply given him by Holcomb, full of "whys and wherefores," when in fact Plumley had expected immediate action on behalf of Mrs. Richards. He ends by questioning the Marine Corps personnel who do the rating of employees and at the same time writes Holcomb to "drop the matter."

**22 March.** Holcomb to RAdm Wilson Brown.

Holcomb accedes to Brown's wishes in regard to ordering 1stLt Robertshaw home from the Asiatic Station by 1 September to help the Navy football team. He feels that it is a shame to interrupt Robertshaw's normal tour of foreign duty in midstream, but Holcomb agrees it is a necessary sacrifice on behalf of "bigger and better football."

**25 March.** RAdm Wilson Brown to Holcomb.

Brown expresses his gratitude for Holcomb's decision on sending Robertshaw to help the Navy football team and says he realizes the sacrifice involved. Brown asserts that the Naval Academy "will try our best to bring home the bacon."

**25 March.** BGen James C. Breckinridge, MB Parris Island, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

Breckinridge regrets the fact that the Holcombs could not stop at Parris Island during their southern trip. Breckinridge blames the slow pace at the post on the lingering cold weather. It is even too cold to fish. Breckinridge hopes to invite Adms Stark and Nimitz down once it improves. He finishes with an added invitation to Holcomb, assuring him that Parris Island is a great place for a rest.

**30 March.** Col Holland Smith, 1st Marine Brigade, FMF, MB Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Smith had a long talk with Mr. Hobbs of Alabama, who had gone to see Senator Walsh at Smith's urging to try to soften Walsh's position on the Senate investigation of the Marine Corps selection system. Hobbs, a "friend of the Corps," seemed happy to intervene on behalf of Holcomb and the Marine Corps. Hobbs reports that Meade seems to be the leader behind the investigation effort. At the same time, Hobbs found Walsh appreciative of support for Holcomb among some of the "good officers of the Corps." Smith, finally, concludes that the Marine Corps seems to have several key friends on the Hill.

This folder also contains correspondence relating to family business; social and patriotic invitations; receipt of a stop watch; and several letters asking favors.

Folder 39  
1940

**2 April.** Holcomb memorandum for the President.

Holcomb quotes some of a letter addressed to Sergeant Wirkus in French concerning the subject of cattle on Gonave Island.

**2 April.** RAdm Spencer S. Wood, Secretary and Treasurer of the Navy Relief Society, Washington, D.C., to Holcomb.

Wood reports that a "Sergeant O'Toole" had come to his office and caused great anxiety and upset. O'Toole complained of the sloppy bookkeeping habits of the loan service of the Navy Relief Society's auxiliary in Shanghai. Wood now submits Navy Relief Society loan reports to Holcomb in hopes that they can be rationalized. He finds O'Toole's bookkeeping methods rather questionable.

**3 April.** Holcomb to the Director, Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb informs the Director of his correct address at the Commandant's House and tells him that no personnel are living aboard his yacht, the "Slow Boat."

**4 April.** Holcomb to RAdm Spencer S. Wood.

Holcomb apologizes about the intrusion of quartermaster clerk O'Toole on Adm Wood's valuable time. On the other hand, Holcomb defends O'Toole's motive for visiting the admiral; the Marine Corps' Discipline Section had instructed O'Toole to assist in the Navy Relief Society's investigation of bad loans. Holcomb claims that O'Toole did not intend to criticize the "methods" of the Society, nor was he seeking to be impolite to the admiral or his staff.

**6 April.** MajGen Louis McCarty Little, CG, MB Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Little puts in a plea to have the new naval hospital at Quantico become a true "hospital in name and in reality." He says that it remains woefully short on beds and certain services, and he does not want it to remain just a satellite hospital to the facilities in Washington. In addition to more beds, he would like to see it have a garage, a morgue, a family hospital, a sick officers' quarters, and residences for the medical officers.

**23 April.** Holcomb to LtCol John F. Lucas, Field Artillery Board, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Holcomb explains to Lucas the system for assigning Marine Corps commission quotas to colleges. He states that "college authorities have the exclusive duty of filling the quota." Holcomb insists that the Marine Corps never interferes in the selection.

**25 April.** Holcomb to LtCol Gilder D. Jackson, MB Philadelphia Navy Yard, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb discusses the logistics and timing of his upcoming visit to Philadelphia and notes that the Holcombs will probably only stay for the afternoon.

**19 April.** LtCol Gilder D. Jackson to Holcomb.

Jackson goes over the arrangements and schedule for Holcomb's visit to the Philadelphia Navy Yard for the special exercises at the Basic School.

25 April. MajGen William P. Upshur, CG, MCB San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Upshur relates in detail the visit of the Secretary of the Navy and Congressmen Scrugham and Plumley from the Naval Affairs Committee. They inspected various projects for which funding was needed; Upshur had already submitted to them a priority list of such items. They flew over the Camp Kearney combat area and the La Jolla rifle range. He then describes some social affairs given in honor of the visitors.

Upshur mentions that Mr. Scrugham had a pet project, namely an air field near Boulder Dam, which he felt would be useful to the Marine Corps in cross-country flights. Capt McClain, the commander of the naval air station at North Island, tells Upshur confidentially that the proposed field would be worthless. But Moore, who accompanies Scrugham on a flight to Boulder Dam, contradicts that opinion and said it would be a useful training field for cross-country flights. Later Upshur submits a priority list of equipment for the FMF to the Secretary of Navy. The two men particularly discuss rifles. Edison seems to thoroughly enjoy his visit to San Diego. In his speeches he promotes preparedness.

This folder also contains correspondence concerning social and patriotic invitations, and letters of congratulations on several Army appointments. Adm Brown asks Holcomb to attend boat races at the Naval Academy. Mrs. Louis McCarty Little writes from San Diego.

Folder 40  
1940

1 May. RAdm A. E. Watson, Commandant, 4th Naval District, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Watson asks Holcomb to seek authorization for having the band of the 6th Battalion, FMCR, play at the launching ceremonies of the USS *Washington* at the Philadelphia Navy Yard 1 June. He would like the entire Reserve battalion activated for one day to "assist in policing the Yard" on that day.

3 May. MajGen William P. Upshur, CG, MCB San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Upshur encloses a photographic diary of shots taken during the Secretary of the Navy's recent visit. He proudly announces work is proceeding rapidly on finishing the various ranges at Camp Holcomb. Each battalion of the 2d Brigade will get one week of intense combat training there before they take part in the San Clemente exercises.

7 May. RAdm A. E. Watson to Holcomb.

Watson adds here that the President may attend the launching ceremonies. If so, he might want the 6th Battalion and its band to "render honors." This would lift their morale and help Watson.

13 May. Holcomb to MajGen William P. Upshur.

Holcomb acknowledges receipt of Upshur's excellent reports on the Secretary of the Navy's visit to San Diego and especially the photographs of the event.

13 May. Holcomb to RAdm A. E. Watson.

Holcomb authorizes the activation of the 6th Battalion for the services Watson wanted for 1 June. Holcomb also says he will do anything necessary to make the launching ceremony a big success, but he regrets that he himself will be unable to attend.

20 May. Holcomb to MajGen Charles H. Lyman, USMC (Ret), San Diego, California.

Holcomb tells Lyman that his son, Andy, will be commissioned into the Marine Corps Reserve in June and that he can take the same examination Roy Hunt and others are receiving for a chance to get into the regular Marines. This is the only avenue available to Holcomb, given Andy's situation.

16 May. MajGen Charles H. Lyman to Holcomb.

Lyman asks Holcomb to take an interest in and "friendly consideration" of the case of Lyman's son, Andy, who last year flunked out of the Naval Academy, but who still would like to be commissioned in the Marine Corps. The boy got a fine letter of recommendation from Wilson Brown and has done well in a private industry job. He feels Andy has all the qualities to make a good officer. Lyman ends with a broad compliment to Upshur for measuring up to his high expectations of him as commanding general of the FMF in San Diego.

22 May. Samuel W. Meek, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Meek, who works for the advertising firm, J. Walter Thompson Co., sends along samples of a "brushless shaving cream," called "Glider," and suggests that Holcomb pass some along to other officers who might wish to "improve their personal appearance." Meek looks forward to seeing Holcomb after he visits Quantico.

24 May. LtCol R. L. Montague, MB Pensacola Naval Air Station, Florida, to Holcomb.

Montague talks of his own knee dislocation that has added to an already serious officer personnel shortage. He has already put in a request for three more officers because he has been saddled with covering the most routine duties, normally handled by clerks, and much of the courtmartial work has to be done after regular working hours. He claims that, overall, "the mission and prestige of the Marine Corps at this station is seriously handicapped by lack of officers."

25 May. Holcomb to Samuel W. Meek.

Holcomb keeps the biggest shaving cream and "Aqua Velva" containers for himself, but will pass out the other samples. He finds them very satisfactory and appreciates Meek's generosity. He ends his brief letter with mention of the newspaper story reporting that the Senate thinks it has increased the Marine Corps by 9,000 men. He will explain the actual situation when he next sees Meek.

27 May. MajGen Charles H. Lyman to Holcomb.

Lyman appreciates Holcomb's consideration and thoughtful answer concerning Andy Lyman's possible entrance into the regular Marines. Lyman realizes that Andy may not make it through the examination, but he is glad the boy will be given a chance to keep the Lyman name in the Marine Corps.

27 May. Mr. Samuel Meek to Holcomb.

Meek insists Holcomb keep the next shipment of shaving materials all for himself. Meek now comes forth with an offer to do all he can to educate the public on the value of the Marine Corps in overall national defense preparation. As a start, he proposes that someone write a newspaper article (either a Marine or a retired soldier) about the vital Marine Corps role in defending "strategic points" or "outlying possessions." He suggests that the article could be placed in the *Greenwich Times*, a most prestigious suburban newspaper, which also could offer it to UPI and API [United Press International and Associated Press wire service].

**28 May.** Holcomb to Samuel Meek.

Holcomb offers the services of John Thomason to write an article along the lines suggested by Meek. Holcomb agrees that now is a very strategic time to get publicity for the Marine Corps.

**29 May.** RAdm A. E. Watson, Commandant, 4th Naval District, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Watson has learned the Marine Corps Headquarters plans to order a retired officer to relieve Maj Curry as that 4th Naval District legal officer. He asks that Holcomb ensure that the relieving officer be versed in legal matters, as he has only one instructor who can help.

**29 May.** Holcomb to Col Frank E. Evans, USMC (Ret), Southern Recruiting Division, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Holcomb informs Evans that to date the Marine Corps has not used any retired officers over age 64 and he plans to use only a few, who are ranked as high as colonel. Nonetheless, Holcomb will let Evans know if he can find a proper position for him.

**31 May.** Holcomb to Col Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, USMCR (Ret), Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Holcomb replies to Biddle's letter of 30 May and endorses Holland Smith using Biddle as an instructor at the Marine Barracks, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, this summer. He also gives his permission for Biddle to stop off en route in Newport and provide instruction there as well.

This folder also includes correspondence relating to charity functions and social and patriotic events; several letters to and from Col Biddle about Holcomb's visit to Philadelphia and other matters; an exchange of letters with Adm Kalbfus about a Marine's right to re-enlist; and requests from several friends and families of Marines, seeking enlistment favors.

*Folder 41*  
1940

**3 June.** Holcomb to RAdm A. E. Watson, Commandant, 4th Naval District, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb is glad to solve Watson's personnel problem over losing his legal officer, Maj Curry. He announces that Capt Leo F. S. Horan, USMC (Ret), will come aboard very shortly as the relief. Horan is a lawyer and already has had legal experience at the Philadelphia Navy Yard.

**4 June.** Maj J. M. McHugh, U.S. Naval Attache Peking, China, to Holcomb.

McHugh describes in great detail an inspection trip he took to various parts of China and southeast Asia, including Canton, Changsha, Hankow, Chungking, Rangoon, Hongkong, Bangkok, Shanghai, Kunming, Chengtu, and Keveilin. The second half of this long letter deals with his analysis of Chiang Kai-Shek's and Japan's military and political intentions. He ends with the recommendation that the U.S., and especially local U.S. officials, should be very firm in any dealings with the Japanese, even though he realizes Washington may not always back such a "strong" foreign policy. McHugh is very sad that Adm Yarnell, the first exponent of such a strong policy, now has to go home. McHugh is of the belief that the Japanese would never dare to call the American bluff for fear of offending the country. Thus America has everything to gain from maintaining

a tough stance on China. He cites only one diplomat in place as being able to maintain such a policy—Mr. Gauss in Shanghai. McHugh is willing to stay as long as he is needed.

**4 June.** Samuel W. Meek, New York, New York, to Col John W. Thomason, Marine Corps Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

Meek hopes that Thomason can write some valuable articles to publicize the value of expanding the Marine Corps. Meek is very “eager to see the Marine Corps get its proper place in the sun.” He notes the dangerous problems arising just on the periphery of the Western Hemisphere as the best reason for needing an expanding Corps.

**6 June.** Mr. Melvin M. Johnson, Jr., President of Johnson Automatic Inc., Boston, Massachusetts.

Johnson first expresses his gratitude for the “courtesies and cooperation” given him by Holcomb and his staff. He regrets that a controversy has arisen over semi-automatic rifles following the demonstration of such weapons at Fort Belvoir, Va., on 9 May 1940. But he and his company are most grateful for the candid and honest comments given in testimony before the Senate Military Affairs Committee by LtCol Merritt A. Edson and Capt George O. Van Orden. Johnson says that the directors of his company thank the two Marines for making the facts in the case clear and “that the Marine Corps should be very proud to have such officers on its rolls.”

**7 June.** MajGen J. K. Parsons, USA, III Corps Area, Baltimore, Maryland, to Holcomb.

Parsons invites Holcomb and his training section to attend a demonstration at Fort Hoyle. He also describes development of a new Army field jacket which is warmer and lighter than the conventional blouse now worn. Gen Marshal has approved the purchase of 15,000 of them for one of the new divisions. Parsons send pictures of the jacket.

**11 June.** Holcomb to MajGen J. K. Parsons.

Holcomb thanks Parsons for sending him the jacket and expresses interest in considering it for use. He then lists the officers he is detailing to attend the demonstration at Fort Hoyle. Holland Smith is especially happy at the prospect of being able to fire at Fort Hoyle in August.

**12 June.** Mr. Samuel W. Meek, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Meek says that he has not yet heard from John Thomason about his latest letter. Meek wonders whether he can get another writer should Thomason not accept his proposal.

**12 June.** Holcomb to MajGen James C. Breckinridge, MB Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb wants Breckinridge to consider whether he wishes to retain Col Jeschke as his chief of staff or would he “care for” Col Roux for the job. Holcomb has thought of possibly sending Jeschke to serve in one of the regiments, but wants to leave the choice to Breckinridge.

**10 June.** MajGen James C. Breckinridge to Holcomb.

Breckinridge is willing to release Jeschke for service in a “soldier’s job”; he

has not thought of whom he wishes for a replacement, but states he is willing to accept a retired officer. At the same time, he would like to see Jeschke command some new organizations to be based at Parris Island for a while.

**13 June.** Holcomb to Samuel W. Meek.

Holcomb informs Meek that Thomason has been ordered to come East in less than a fortnight, so he probably will not be able to assist Meek. He suggests as an alternative that he try Col Frank E. Evans at the Southern Recruiting Division in New Orleans.

**20 June.** MajGen James C. Breckinridge to Holcomb.

Breckinridge says he will be satisfied with either Manney or Patchen as relief for Jeschke. He also approves the idea of "stabilizing" personnel at Parris Island with the infusion now of Reserve and retired officers before the rush begins. He then reports that the Engineer of the U.S. Roads Administration promises to build a military road to Hilton Head and fill in Archer's Creek, a big help to the development at Parris Island.

**24 June.** Holcomb to Mr. W. C. Spencer, Southern Railway System, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb replies to Mr. Spencer's letter of 21 June in which he spoke of Southern Railway's promotion of national defense preparedness and urging young men "to enlist in the U.S. Army." Holcomb points out that the Southern slogan should include both enlisting in the Navy and the Marine Corps as well as the Army.

**24 June.** Holcomb to Mr. Thomas Holcomb, New Castle, Delaware.

Holcomb urges his namesake nephew to start looking for a defense-related job. He suggests that the younger Holcomb's photographic expertise might be useful to the Army or the Army Air Corps.

**27 June.** Holcomb to RAdm M. H. Simons, Norfolk Navy Yard, Portsmouth, Virginia.

Holcomb regrets he cannot follow Simons' wishes in ordering Maj Joseph Ward, USMC (Ret), to active-duty status as a special assistant to Adm Simons in formulating defense and security measures for the Norfolk Navy Yard. Holcomb feels this job can be handled adequately by the commanding officer of the Marine Barracks. Holcomb is authorized to bring retired officers back to active duty only when a regular officer can be released thereby to duty with a more active unit.

**27 June.** Holcomb to LtCol Fred G. Patchen, USMC (Ret), MB Philadelphia Navy Yard, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb seeks Patchen's services for the position of Breckinridge's chief of staff at Parris Island. Holcomb is anxious to have Patchen fill the slot both because Holcomb has confidence in Patchen's abilities and because Patchen would be staying there through the duration of the "emergency." Holcomb had envisioned Patchen's Philadelphia assignment as temporary and beneath his capabilities. Holcomb would like his answer as soon as possible.

**28 June.** MajGen John A. Lejeune, USMC (Ret), Norfolk, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Lejeune would like the photographs that Holcomb mentions to him in a letter of 27 June. Lejeune is very anxious to keep abreast of all the latest news on the Marine Corps and is only disappointed at how little appears in the "service papers." He regrets not being able to travel much to Washington.

This folder also contains correspondence regarding invitations to attend social, charitable, and patriotic events; a note from John Thomason on how Holcomb might go duck hunting in Mexico; a note to John Marston asking him to buy candy for the departing Jacksons (?); letters relating to personal and service favors sought by friends; a letter about a discipline case in San Diego; and Holcomb's acceptance of symphony tickets in Washington.

*Folder 42*  
1940

**1 July.** Holcomb to MajGen William P. Upshur, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb urges Upshur to take the initiative in the conduct of organizing and planning Marine training. He tells Upshur that the latter is in a better position to tell whether he should consult with the district commandant or go ahead on his own to hold a carnival.

**1 July.** Holcomb to LtCol F. G. Patchen, USMC (Ret), MB Philadelphia Navy Yard, Pennsylvania.

On the basis of Patchen's letter of 28 June, Holcomb states that "it would be unwise to order" Patchen to Parris Island for fear of harming his health.

**2 July.** Col William H. Rupertus, Office of Naval Attache, American Embassy, Havana, Cuba, to Holcomb.

Rupertus discusses his talks with the American Ambassador, Mr. Messersmith and the resultant push for completing the Guantanamo Bay building project. Messersmith suggests that this project could be expedited by using two American contracting firms in Havana and that its major importance was to exhibit American determination to defend the hemisphere. Rupertus plans an inspection trip tomorrow.

**5 July.** MajGen William P. Upshur to Holcomb.

Upshur decides it is best to have a carnival because it will provide the men a strange challenge and develop the spirit of teamwork and cooperation. Above all it will further good relations with the people of San Diego as well as other Navy personnel on the base. He has the data from the 1938 carnival to help assemble it. BGen Clayton Barney Vogel has been put in charge of this year's carnival. He can foresee continuing the tradition as long as it brings in funds for the Navy Relief Society. Finally, he assures Holcomb that he will prevent it from "needlessly" interrupting training.

**10 July.** Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little, MB Quantico.

Holcomb informs Little that he has heard that Quantico Marines have been appearing very untidy lately. In both of the towns of Quantico and Triangle, Marines have been seen with "shirts unbuttoned" and "without scarfs." Holcomb asks that Little put an end to this disgraceful behavior.

**12 July.** Holcomb to Col William H. Rupertus, MB Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Holcomb praises Rupertus for his fine evaluations of the Guantanamo project and asks that he be present for the Bureau of Yards and Docks conference to be held with the contractors in Washington. Holcomb also wants Rupertus to find out if weapons firing exercises are practicable at Guantanamo should the brigade be based there instead of at Vieques or Culebra.

**12 July.** Holcomb to MajGen William P. Upshur.

Holcomb assigns Upshur to find out if and why Rowell has established a second office at the naval aviation base as well as at the Marine Corps headquarters in San Diego. Adm Towers is very upset at this possibility. Holcomb advises Rowell to vacate the second office immediately, unless there is a very good reason for it. On the subject of recruiting, Holcomb reports it is going very well and predicts the Marine Corps will reach 34,000 men by October.

**17 July.** Holcomb to Maj George F. Eliot, New York, New York.

Holcomb tells Eliot how much he enjoyed chatting with him and hopes he will drop by again when in Washington. Holcomb forwards to Eliot charts of Marine Corps distribution at both the 34,000- and 50,000-men levels and promises to give him whatever detail he needs. As regards new Secretary of the Navy Knox, Holcomb waxes enthusiastic: "we now have a real Secretary of the Navy, and it is quite obvious that he intends to take charge." He feels that this is most healthy and a change long overdue.

**18 July.** Holcomb memorandum for the Commanding General, MB Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb announces that the Secretary of the Navy is planning to inspect Quantico for the purpose of witnessing Marine Corps training methods and equipment usage. Holcomb asks that a conference be held as soon as possible with the CG, First Brigade, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps Schools to plan a schedule of events and submit it to him for approval.

**18 July.** MajGen William P. Upshur to Holcomb.

Upshur encloses a copy of Rowell's memorandum on "Marine Aircraft Wing" and relays his own opinions on what is said in great detail. He interjects some interesting comments on the growth of rival cliques within the Marine Corps aviation officer corps and on the need for continued close cooperation with the Navy to keep abreast of expansion in material, training facilities, and tactical doctrine. He promises to get Rowell moved back to the base by August. Upshur ends with a description of the recruits swamping the facilities. He begs for more NCOs.

**20 July.** Maj George F. Eliot to Holcomb.

Eliot appreciates the personnel distribution estimates he received from Holcomb. He now wishes to have a further breakdown on what is "included under permanent and temporary foreign stations" and more detail as to Marine aviation squadrons and types and the increasing size of defense battalions under the 50,000-man plan. Eliot finishes by praising Holcomb for superb planning for the emergency situation and only wishes he could spread this planning to the other services.

**22 July.** Holcomb to Mr. Samuel W. Meek, New York, New York.

Holcomb asks Meek to take a look at LtCol Daniel Campbell's Marine detachment at the New York World's Fair to see if it would be wise to have Campbell's drum and trumpet corps sounding off at the opening performance of "The Ramparts We Watch." He then tells Meek to contact Campbell if he thinks the idea is a good one. The musicians' union would, of course, probably have to be consulted for permission to do such a stunt.

**24 July.** Holcomb to Honorable Carl Vinson, House of Representatives.

Holcomb complies with Vinson's oral request and submits the draft of an act to put Marine Corps strength at 50,000 men and to peg it in the future to one-fifth of the Navy's authorized strength, as in the wording of the 1938 act. The Judge Advocate General, he presumes, will check the wording of the draft once it is submitted to the Navy Department for comment.

**24 July.** Holcomb to Maj George F. Eliot.

Holcomb sends along a new distribution table based on a 50,000 man Marine Corps. He hopes that it answers the additional question Eliot broached. He passes on the word confidentially that Vinson requested a draft bill for 50,000-men. Holcomb then praises Eliot for boosting the Marines on his radio broadcast, even though he missed hearing it. Holcomb discourses on his own efforts to keep the Marine Corps Schools afloat despite commissioned officer shortages, unlike the Army which has closed the War College and Leavenworth. As for old retirees seeking reactivation, Holcomb reveals that his sympathy goes only so far; he feels most are basically too old to be valuable to the Marine Corps and he certainly will not waste regular personnel to train them. Finally, Holcomb expresses disappointment at the way "The Ramparts We Watch" was handled; it should have used current pictures from Quantico instead of "rehashing 1918 film."

**28 July.** Maj George F. Eliot to Holcomb.

Eliot hopes Holcomb will look at today's *Herald Tribune* to see Eliot's laudatory comments about the Marine Corps. Eliot is very happy about Holcomb's effort to keep the Marine Corps Schools open, especially with the need for so many "new developments to be studied." Eliot is anxious for Holcomb to know that a new movie, "The Defense of the Americas," is in preparation and will use much of the photographic material specially prepared for "The Ramparts We Watch." The new movie will appear at the same time as Eliot's new book by the same title. Eliot feels that at the very least "Ramparts We Watch" will have the positive effect of awakening public "consciousness" on defense.

**24 July.** Holcomb to MajGen William P. Upshur.

Holcomb in the midst of more flak from Adm Towers, implores Upshur to move Rowell quickly away from the naval air station. Holcomb states that "the real purpose of Rowell's office is to coordinate the training" of the two Marine air groups, to be a staff adviser to Upshur on air matters, and only "to command the two groups as a wing if and when they serve together." Holcomb is slightly peeved at Rowell for having gone beyond his status at the naval air station as an observer.

**29 July.** Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little, South Dartmouth, Maine.

Holcomb passes on the schedule of events for the Secretary of the Navy's visit to Quantico on 8 August. He leaves it up to Little whether he wishes to return to

Quantico for the occasion. The Moses' plan is to give a luncheon for the Secretary. Holcomb remarks that Little is fortunate to be away from the heat in Washington.

This folder also contains correspondence relating to social and patriotic invitations; a cancelled request to the Bureau of Ordnance concerning the proposed visit of the platoon leaders' class to the Indian Head facility; an invitation from LtGen H. A. Drum, USA, to attend the First Army maneuvers to be held near Plattsburg, New York; a few letters of introduction and recommendation for old friends; and a letter regarding Holcomb's son's academic future.

*Folder 43*  
1940

**4 August.** Col William H. Rupertus, MB Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to Holcomb.

Rupertus reports that he has had a preliminary conference with his public works officer and the resident engineer of the contractors, going over "every detail" of the project before sending Riley up to Washington and Quantico. The latter will consult with Holcomb personally. The rest of the letter discusses supply monies and buildings. He compliments the job Riley has done.

**6 August.** Honorable Albert Thomas (D-Texas), House of Representatives to Holcomb.

Thomas congratulates Holcomb on doing a "magnificent job" and thanks him for being so "gracious" to him when Thomas called on him at Headquarters.

**12 August.** Holcomb to MajGen William P. Upshur, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb relays an itinerary of the Holcombs' trip to California, including a scenic stopover at the Grand Canyon. He is looking forward to the break from the hectic pace in Washington.

**17 August.** Maj George F. Eliot, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Eliot is now convinced that the Marine Corps will have to expand as rapidly as possible, even planning beyond the 50,000-man strength he and Holcomb now support. He would like Holcomb to fill him in on how Marine Corps Reserves might be used to bring the Corps up to war strength during full mobilization and release regular units from such things as routine guard duty.

**19 August.** MajGen James C. Breckinridge, CG, MB Parris Island, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

Breckinridge presents in an eight-page letter his account of the chaotic and oftentimes heroic events which occurred 12 August and in succeeding days as the 3,000 Marines and several thousand civilians tried to cope with the hurricane which hit Parris Island. He describes many of the major buildings and facilities as severely damaged, but he sees the whole thing as a great toughening experience for the Marines. He recognizes that the post will never be the same, but eventually it may be a better place.

**21 August.** Holcomb to BGen John Marston, Department of the Pacific, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb first discusses his proposed wardrobe for various activities on his visit to San Francisco. After mentioning several dinner engagements, Holcomb says that he wants Marston to accompany him on inspection visits.

**21 August.** Holcomb to BGen Alexander A. Vandegrift, Marine Corps Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb replies to Vandegrift while en route to the West. He is happy that Secretary Knox is going to visit Quantico, though he wishes he could be with him there. He appreciates the great job Vandegrift and others did at Parris Island; he hopes they can get the massive appropriations bill to aid in its renovation.

**22 August.** BGen Alexander A. Vandegrift, Washington, D.C., to Maj George F. Eliot.

Vandegrift substitutes for Holcomb while the latter is away, in replying to Eliot's letter of 17 August about the Marine Corps Reserve. He explains that the Fleet Marine Corps Reserve (1,912 men) and the non-organized Volunteer Marine Corps Reserve (7,170 men) would combine in an emergency to fill out vacancies in guard duty at many navy yards and other activities to release as many regulars as possible for active duty. The Organized Marine Corps Reserve is made up of 23 battalions around the country which train with regular units of the FMF; present plans are to merge these with similar units of regular Marines in an emergency. [Eliot sends along his thanks for this information in a note of 24 August.]

**28 August.** RAdm D. W. Bagley, Commandant, Mare Island Navy Yard, California, to Holcomb.

Bagley expresses his pleasure at having a visit from Holcomb on his recent tour of inspection and forwards photographs to remind him of Mare Island.

This folder also contains correspondence relating to social, political, and military engagements; birthday greetings to Holcomb; a number of personal and service-related favors sought by letters; letters to and from Mrs. George Barnett relative to a boat christening and a pamphlet she wrote entitled "What the Mothers of Marines Should Know"; a brief insurance letter from J. Rogers Holcomb; a questionnaire from *U.S. News*; a letter of complaint to the postal service; letters of recommendation; and an invitation to inspect the Naval Ammunition Depot in Nevada.

*Folder 44*  
1940

**3 September.** Holcomb to Mr. F. J. Hall, Editor, *U.S. News*, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb acknowledges Hall's letter of 29 August, but refuses to comment on Wendell Willkie's idea of establishing a Department of Aviation with cabinet status equal to that of the War and Navy Departments. Hall's letter asks whether such a "cabinet appointee should have control over all the air forces of the United States?" Hall adds that he has sent similar letters to other authorities.

**4 September.** Holcomb to RAdm D. W. Bagley, Mare Island Navy Yard, California.

Holcomb thanks Bagley for sending the photographs of his inspection trip to Mare Island and expresses his pleasure at seeing Bagley and the facilities there. Holcomb only wishes he were back in California.

**9 September.** RAdm J. K. Taussig, Naval Operating Base, Norfolk, Virginia, to Holcomb.

After discussing a personnel action of concern to a third party, Taussig comments that there is very little to report on about the Marines there except for the development of the Marine force landing boats and policing duties. He is

disappointed that they have to hire so many civilian guards but understands Holcomb's dilemma. He hopes for future change to more Marine guards when the Corps expands. [Holcomb's reply of 10 September is very short and cryptic and makes no reference to the guard situation.]

**10 September.** Holcomb to Maj Evans F. Carlson, New York, New York.

Holcomb thanks Carlson for sending him a copy of his book, *Twin Stars of China*, and hopes that he can get Carlson to autograph it for him.

**12 September.** Holcomb to Samuel W. Meek, New York, New York.

Holcomb outlines for Meek the general plan for beefing up the Marine Corps through organizing Reserve battalions and the establishment of a platoon leaders class in November made up of 400 candidates from 200 colleges. Holcomb asks Meek to help by "contacting recent graduates who you think would make good officers."

**16 September.** Holcomb to Dr. William Alfred Eddy, Hobart College, Geneva, New York.

Holcomb appreciates Eddy's offer to serve as a Marine Corps representative on the Army-Navy Selective Service Committee. Holcomb explains he already has 12 Reserve officers specialized in handling this matter. He promises to call on Eddy later if he can find a slot for him.

**18 September.** Samuel W. Meek to Holcomb.

Meek asks Holcomb to forward to him a copy of the circular on the plan for recruiting platoon leader candidates from the colleges. He assures Holcomb that he will contact relevant groups at Yale and Wesleyan about this program.

**18 September.** Holcomb to Maj Morris L. Shively, Marine Corps Rifle and Pistol Team, Camp Perry, Ohio.

Holcomb regrets that he cannot make it to the national match as he had planned. But he sends his best wishes to the team and expects "A splendid score on the big day."

**20 September.** Holcomb to Col John C. Dooley, USMC (Ret), President, National Lead Co., New York, New York.

Holcomb promises to send Dooley the six targets he was seeking. Holcomb then describes briefly the highlight of his western trip: the review of 8,000 Marines on the parade ground at San Diego. In addition, the Marines have a beautiful new 19,000-acre training area where they can have target practice with ball ammunition. [Dooley in his letter of 18 September explains that he needs the six 600-yard targets for instructing "two or three departments on the riot shot gun, rifle and revolver."]

**24 September.** Holcomb to MajGen George A. Lynch, USA, Chief of Infantry, War Department, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb appreciates Lynch's note congratulating the Marine Corps team on winning the national matches. Holcomb, is of course, very happy and observes that in the last four years, the Marine Corps team has won twice and the Army team twice. He only regrets that he could not have attended it in person.

**25 September.** Holcomb memorandum for Cdr Riggs.

Holcomb states that he knows Capt Meek and feels that he would be very useful to Naval Intelligence in a public relations capacity. Meek wants a commission to enter the Naval Reserve.

**25 September.** RAdm John D. Wainwright, Commandant, Portsmouth Navy Yard, New Hampshire, to Holcomb.

Wainwright informs Holcomb that he has inspected the naval prison and the Marine barracks at the Portsmouth Navy Yard and finds both commands to be in "excellent shape." Holcomb sends a note of thanks for this letter on 26 September.

This folder contains correspondence relating to social and patriotic engagements to which Holcomb has been invited; requests for favors, especially relating to reactivation of veterans or commissioning of young friends and relatives; transmittal of photographs taken on Holcomb's visit to California; and some suggestions for personnel and assignment changes.

*Folder 45*  
1940

**1 October.** MajGen William P. Upshur, MCB San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Upshur reports that he has been studying carefully how to move the FMF should any emergency arise elsewhere. He is worried about manpower strength in the 2d Brigade because of the proposed dispersal to form guard units for the Unalaska Defense Force. Even more of a handicap would be the removal of strategic weaponry for the new units; he fears the Navy does not understand the problems dispersal can cause Marine units.

Upshur then goes into details of the proposed acquisition of Camp Elliott and theorizes that government publicity of such a purchase could raise prices paid five- and 10-fold. He hopes Holcomb can get the government to delay announcement until the Grosmont Park Co. gets all the land options under the auspices of Senator Fletcher. He finishes by saying that his greatest needs are for more weapons and more officers and men.

**1 October.** Holcomb to RAdm Wilson Brown, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland.

Holcomb is happy that Maj Larson is still providing capable leadership in running the Navy football team and hopes that the team can win "the big game" again. Holcomb regrets that he cannot attend any of the Navy games, but he needs to get away from the hectic weekday routine by going on his boat weekends. [Brown writes 28 September asking the Holcombs to lunch with him.]

**3 October.** Holcomb to Col Clifton B. Cates, CO, Basic School, Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, Annville, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb agrees with Cates that he should come up and observe the Basic School class at the reservation for a day or so. He asks Cates to look into accommodations for the Holcombs at the Hershey Hotel. [Holcomb sends a second letter re accommodations. Cates answers on 4 October about routing and tourist accommodations].

**7 October.** Holcomb to Mr. Robert E. Heun, Richmond, Indiana.

Holcomb says that he is uncertain as to whether the Garand rifle is any better than the 1903 model for landing operations. He has therefore ordered some testing to be done to make a final determination.

24 October. Mr. Otis Peabody Swift, *Life*, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Swift sends along a complimentary copy of the 28 October issue of *Life* which includes extensive photographic coverage of the U.S. Navy. Swift says that he would appreciate Holcomb's comments.

24 October. Holcomb to Dr. William A. Eddy, Hobart College, Geneva, New York.

Holcomb is delighted at the prospect of Eddy coming to visit in Washington, but he fears that Eddy will come too late for him to be a guest at the Commandant's House. Holcomb suspects that his term as Commandant will end 1 December, but he has no way of knowing until mid-November, after the presidential elections. Should he be reappointed, he would of course like the Eddys to stay with the Holcombs in Washington.

25 October. Holcomb to Mr. Samuel W. Meek.

Holcomb exhibits great displeasure over the skimpy treatment afforded the Marine Corps in the Navy Day issue of *Life*. He is especially upset because *Life* photographers spent a whole day photographing the 1st Brigade at Quantico, totally disrupting their training, and the only photograph printed was that of a Marine's locker.

28 October. Dr. William A. Eddy to Holcomb.

Eddy reassures Holcomb that he need not be anxious about the Eddys accommodation in Washington on 6 December because Mrs. Eddy has a sister there. As regards Holcomb's future, he feels confident that neither Roosevelt nor Willkie would be so foolish as to lose Holcomb as Major General Commandant.

28 October. Samuel W. Meek to Holcomb.

Meek informs Holcomb that he is speaking with the managing editor of *Life* and will try to see to it that the Marines get better coverage.

29 October. Holcomb to Mr. Otis Peabody Swift.

Holcomb's comments on the Navy Day issue of *Life* center on the slighting of the Marine Corps in the coverage of the U.S. Navy. He states that there are only "four small pictures even remotely connected with the Corps" and none particularly complimentary. He is especially displeased at such treatment in view of the one whole day of training lost at Quantico to help satisfy *Life* photographers.

This folder also contains special and patriotic event invitations; letters relating to job favors sought especially by retired officers and relatives of young men seeking commissions or other assistance; letters concerning football tickets; and the purchase of a stove.

Folder 46  
1940

5 November. Holcomb to Gen George C. Marshall, USA, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb describes briefly the attributes of the Roebling amphibian or Alligator boats and invites Marshall or his representatives to attend a demonstration at Quantico. He feels the amphibian will be most helpful in landing operations. [Marshall replies on 6 November that he himself will be unable to attend but he is sending several Army officers to Quantico on 8 November]

**6 November.** Mr. Crosby Maynard to Holcomb.

Maynard forwards a copy of the 11 November issue of *Time* and thanks Holcomb, Gen Vandegrift, and Col James for their assistance in preparation. He hopes Holcomb will like it and find it "accurate and discursive."

**7 November.** Holcomb to Gen George C. Marshall, USA.

Holcomb regrets that he will have to cancel the amphibian demonstration planned for 8 November at Quantico. He has found it suddenly necessary to ship the Roebling amphibian to Norfolk, and then the West Indies.

**7 November.** BGen Philip H. Torrey, Commandant, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Torrey implores Holcomb to honor the students of the third graduating class of Reserve officers at Quantico by his attendance at the graduation exercises on 15 November. He feels the presence and participation of the Major General Commandant would please the students and "leave a lasting impression."

**No date.** Col Clifton B. Cates, Director, Basic School, Philadelphia Navy Yard, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Cates encloses some photographs and an article on the night demonstration of machine-gunning that his class conducted at Indiantown Gap. He notes that the class suffered no casualties there and came back inspired by the training. Local officials assured Cates that the Marines would be welcomed back for future training. Finally Cates remarks that he was very pleased by the Holcombs' visit.

**No date.** Samuel W. Meek, J. B. Williams Co., Glastonberry, Connecticut, to Holcomb.

Meek asks Holcomb not to write any comments on the 11 November issue of *Time*. He thinks that possibly Holcomb's acid comments to *Life* on its poor coverage of the Marine Corps had caused a change of heart.

**9 November.** Holcomb to Gen George C. Marshall, USA, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, War Department, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb thanks Marshall for his letter of congratulations on the Marine Corps' anniversary. Holcomb then remarks on the kindnesses shown by the Army in its treatment of Marines attending Army schools in the past. He feels these "associations have developed a comradeship which will always endure."

**No date.** Gen George C. Marshall to Holcomb.

After congratulating the Marine Corps on its 165th anniversary, Marshall praises the close association and consequent friendship generated between the Army and the Marines.

**12 November.** Holcomb to MajGen James G. Harbord, USA (Ret), RCA, New York, New York.

Holcomb expresses his gratitude for NBC's broadcast of the Marine Corps' birthday celebration and for arranging it to be broadcast on short wave so more people could hear the program.

**21 November.** Mr. Daniel Longwell, *Life*, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Longwell goes into a detailed explanation of why the Marines appeared to be largely ignored in the big Navy Day issue of *Life*. Longwell states that the editorial staff had to make the tough decision of putting off coverage of the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard, and the Merchant Marine in order to tell the complex story of the Navy fleet with some completeness and to provide some lighter sides.

But Longwell promises to have a special Marine Corps story early in the new year. He wants to consult with Holcomb personally about it and arrange for a meeting with the Marine Corps "press department" about pictures other than the ones taken at Quantico to give the "complete, exciting story" which can be done on the Marines.

**12 November.** Holcomb to Mr. Samuel W. Meek, New York, New York.

In spite of Meek's warning not to write, Holcomb insists that he wants to compliment *Time* for the "swell job" they did in the 11 November 1940 article. He then jokes that he might complain about the excessive coverage of himself in the article. He hopes Meek will visit him soon.

**12 November.** Holcomb to BGen Philip H. Torrey, Marine Corps Schools, MB Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb states that he will be happy to attend the 15 December closing exercises at the Marine Corps Schools. But he promises only to "give them a few words of hope and cheer," not a formal address.

**12 November.** Holcomb to Senator-elect Ralph O. Brewster, Dexter, Maine.

Holcomb congratulates Brewster on his election to the Senate and especially his service on the Senate Naval Affairs Committee. He hopes to see Brewster in January if Holcomb is still in Washington then. [Brewster formerly was on the House Naval Affairs Committee.]

**12 November.** Holcomb to Senator-elect C. Wayland Brooks, Republican State Headquarters, Chicago, Illinois.

Holcomb hopes that Brooks also will manage to get appointed to the Senate Naval Affairs Committee since he would make a very important friend as an ex-Marine.

**12 November.** Holcomb to Mr. Henry R. Luce, *Time*, New York, New York.

Holcomb acknowledges the great honor paid him by *Time*, whose 11 November issue featured Holcomb on the cover and a very complimentary article. He feels such publicity will benefit the Marine Corps.

**13 November.** Mr. Otis Peabody Swift, *Life*, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Swift hopes that Holcomb is now satisfied that having a separate article on the Marine Corps will be more helpful and that Longwell's explanation of the previous meager coverage was adequate.

**14 November.** Holcomb to Mr. Daniel Longwell.

Holcomb is most gratified at the prospect of a big article on the Marine Corps in *Life* in the new year. It will "serve as a most useful shot in the arm to the American Republic which is prone to doze off at times." Holcomb assures Longwell that he will be happy to meet with him at any time and aid in furnishing additional photographs.

14 November. Holcomb to Mr. Otis Peabody Swift.

Holcomb writes Swift in a similar vein expressing his delight at the prospect of a *Life* article devoted strictly to the Marine Corps.

15 November. LtCol Gilder D. Jackson, Jr., MB Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, to Holcomb.

Jackson states with great relief that he has just heard that Holcomb will be reappointed Major General Commandant. He then passes on the compliment that some unnamed naval officer considered Holcomb not only the best Marine Corps Commandant he had ever seen but also the "best informed officer of any of the services . . . ."

15 November. Mr. Henry R. Luce, *Time*, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Luce expresses gratitude for Holcomb's assistance to Roy Alexander and is very happy that Holcomb feels the recent story in *Time* will contribute to fairer coverage of the Marine Corps as an integral part of national defense.

15 November. Mr. Samuel W. Meek to Holcomb.

Meek remarks that it may have been better that the Marine Corps not get emphasized in the Navy Day issue of *Life* so it could have its own coverage later.

16 November. Holcomb to Mr. Ed J. Ikerman.

Holcomb is pleased to receive letters from an old China hand like Ikerman, with whom he served in Peking. He states that he has been back to China numerous times since his tour of duty with Ikerman. But Holcomb warns that "the place is terribly changed now" and he does not care to return. [Ikerman's letter of 10 November tells Holcomb how much he enjoyed serving under him in Peking 1908-09.]

16 November. Holcomb to Mr. Edgar Allan Poe, Jr., Baltimore, Maryland.

Holcomb appreciates Poe's offer of assistance to the Marine Corps and assures him that he will inform him of any opportunity to do so should it arise.

18 November. Capt R. H. Williams, Long Beach, California, to Holcomb.

Williams Praises the *Time* write-up on the Marine Corps. He has put in an official request for parachute duty. He points to the stunning results the Germans have achieved in the Low Countries using parachute troops. He is personally interested in becoming involved in the training and development of parachute units.

18 November. Mr. C. Wayland Brooks, U.S. Senator-elect, Chicago, Illinois, to Holcomb.

Brooks appreciates Holcomb's letter of congratulations on the victory in his senate race. Brooks assures Holcomb he will do everything in his power to become a member of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee and once there push for all legislation favorable to the Marine Corps. He has always been proud of having been a Marine himself.

22 November. Holcomb to LtCol W. P. T. Hill, Marine Corps Depot of Supplies, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb acknowledges Hill's letter of 20 November about the auction of a portrait of Samuel Nicholas. Holcomb had already planned to send Metcalf over to place a bid on it and pay for it out of Headquarters Post Exchange funds.

**22 November.** Holcomb to Capt R. H. Williams, on board USS *Oklahoma*, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb asserts that he has no way of knowing yet whether Williams' application for parachute duty can be accepted. The Marine Corps is hard pressed to replace any officers at sea. He also states that it would be in Williams' own best interest to have an entire cruise as a captain for future advancement purposes.

**25 November.** Holcomb to Capt F. J. Foy, USN, on board USS *Oklahoma*.

Holcomb reverses his negative position on Williams' application for the parachute troops based on Foy's letter of 22 November (not found in collection). Holcomb hopes that Foy can maintain his command with just two Marine lieutenants until the next summer, since captains are just not available for replacing Williams.

**25 November.** Mr. Daniel Longwell, *Life*, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Longwell expresses appreciation for Holcomb's letter. Longwell can't promise to place the *Life* story on the Marine Corps in the very first 1941 issue, but as soon as possible thereafter.

**25 November.** Holcomb to BGen F. S. Clark, USA, Coast Artillery School, Fort Monroe, Virginia.

Holcomb thanks Clark for his letter of 23 November praising the eight Marines attending the Artillery School, four of whom finished 1, 2, 3, 4 in class standings. Holcomb then states that "no one can find out whether or not I am to be reappointed" Commandant on 1 December.

**27 November.** Adm Harold R. Stark, Office of Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C., memorandum for General Holcomb.

Stark asks Holcomb to congratulate the four Marines who finished at the top of their class at the Fort Monroe Coast Artillery School. Stark remarks that he feels the Marines are "one of the Navy's greatest assets" and is glad they all travel in the "same boat." He is forwarding a copy of Clark's letter to the President.

**27 November.** Holcomb to Mr. Richard de Rochemont, managing editor, *The March of Time*, New York, New York.

Holcomb is grateful for Rochemont's letter of 26 November (not in collection) informing him about the great progress shown by two Marines who were trained in motion picture work by *The March of Time* staff. Holcomb assures Rochemont of his pleasure at learning of this and that copies of his letter will go into the official personnel records of the two men.

**28 November.** Mr. Samuel W. Meek, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Meek explains that the staff of *Life* will persist in getting the story on the Marine Corps with Meek's personal supervision.

**28 November.** Holcomb to MajGen William P. Upshur, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb makes brief allusion to "Jimmie" (probably James, son of President Roosevelt); then he discusses the importance of the Rifle Board to the Marine Corps and war preparations. He regrets having agreed to assign Maj William B. Croka to that board.

**29 November.** Mr. Samuel W. Meek to Holcomb.

Meek teases Holcomb about "J. B. Williams" shaving products having kept him in such "good shape" that he had to be reappointed Commandant. In any event Meek is happy about the news and praises Roosevelt for his sagacity.

**29 November.** Holcomb to Samuel Meek.

Holcomb states that he likes Meek's draft article and feels it will be "helpful." He then relates to Meek that he learned of his re-appointment from a friend on the Hill. Holcomb would like to get some advice from Meek the next time he is in town.

This folder also contains correspondence relating to social and patriotic invitations; requests for favors by Marines and their families relating to health matters and change of duty station; naming of transports; cancelling of the amphibian exhibition; historical anecdotes about the Holcomb family genealogy and period pieces; congratulations on both the *Time* article on the Marine Corps and the re-appointment of Holcomb as Major General Commandant—the latter includes messages from many prominent officers of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Army, and other branches of the Government.

*Folder 47*  
1940

**1 December.** LtCol David R. Nimmer, Culebra, Puerto Rico, to Holcomb.

Nimmer is greatly relieved to hear that Holcomb has been re-appointed for another term. He praises the Navy's cooperative spirit in trying to iron out mutual problems.

**1 December.** Maj Charles Dunbeck, Hawthorne, Nevada, to Holcomb.

Dunbeck extends his heartiest congratulations to Holcomb. He then notes that he is trying hard to make his desert outfit "one that the Marine Corps will be proud of."

**3 December.** Honorable Melvin J. Maas (D-Minnesota), House of Representatives to Holcomb.

Maas is very pleased to have been the first to tell Holcomb officially of his reappointment. Maas claims this news means more to him than his own reelection. He feels it not only shows recognition of Holcomb's leadership capabilities but also his contribution to national defense. Maas knows Holcomb might prefer a long-deserved retirement but hopes he will continue to make this sacrifice on behalf of the Marine Corps.

**7 December.** Honorable Ralph O. Brewster (R-Maine) House of Representatives, to Holcomb.

Brewster thanks Holcomb for his letter of congratulations, especially the favorable comment regarding his possible service on the Naval Affairs Committee. During a trip to Hawaii, Brewster observes that a few companies of Marines "are considered adequate to handle the entire Japanese front in guarding the Naval Ammunition Reserves."

**18 December.** Mr. Samuel W. Meek, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Meek wants to throw a small dinner celebration at the Yale Club of New York to honor Holcomb's reappointment. He wants to invite Gen Harbord as well as a few former Marine Corps officers. [Holcomb on 19 December tentatively accepts Meek's offer. Meek's letter of 26 December sets the date.]

**20 December.** Holcomb to Col John T. Dooley, USMC (Ret), National Lead, Co., New York, New York.

Holcomb expresses his pleasure over the reappointment, but goes on to say "you know what a headache this job is."

**23 December.** Holcomb to RAdm Edward C. Kalbfus, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb regretfully asks Kalbfus to release Col L. H. Miller for duty on the Examining Board in February, in spite of his previous desire not to allow any detachment of Marine Corps students from the Naval War College.

**26 December.** RAdm Edward C. Kalbfus to Holcomb.

Kalbfus points out that Miller would be unable to get his diploma if he were detached in February but could be awarded it if he were allowed to stay until April. Kalbfus is concerned both for Miller's sake and because the Advanced Class now has only five students and would be mortally disrupted by Miller's absence. He speaks out because of the "military importance" of the question, not for any personal reason.

**27 December.** Holcomb to Col William G. Fay, USMCR, Miami Beach, Florida.

Holcomb acknowledges that both Leahy and Stark had a hand in his reappointment. He only learned later that Leahy was involved. Holcomb states that he will blame his "headaches" on both of these men.

**27 December.** Holcomb to Maj George F. Eliot, New York, New York.

Holcomb describes the testing of the new Garand rifle by the Marine Corps and comparative firing now being conducted among the Garand, Johnson, Winchester, and 1903 magazine rifles. Holcomb cannot guarantee revelation of the test data to Eliot but he will keep Eliot in mind. He does promise to discuss the organization of two triangular divisions with Eliot the next time they get together.

**21 December.** Maj George F. Eliot to Holcomb.

Eliot wants to know if it is true that the Marine Corps is conducting tests of the Garand and Johnson rifles at San Diego. He has avoided getting involved in the controversies whirling about these weapons in Congress and the War Department but he feels that the Marine Corps' findings on the two rifles would be final proof for him.

**27 December.** Holcomb to MajGen John A. Lejeune, USMC (Ret), Norfolk, Virginia.

Holcomb thanks Lejeune for his congratulatory note, but he expresses regret over the fact that the worsening world situation has prevented him from getting the retirement he had always expected.

**27 December.** Holcomb to Honorable Melvin J. Maas, House of Representatives.

Holcomb praises Maas for his staunch loyalty to the Marine Corps and above all for his valuable assistance in the position of senior minority member on the Naval Affairs Committee.

**27 December.** Holcomb to Mr. William Wiegman, Bethlehem Steel Co., Sparrows Point, Maryland.

Holcomb recalls his introduction to working at the Bethlehem plant at

Sparrows Point in the midst of a blizzard in 1899. He indicates he would like to return sometime to take a look at the coppersmith shop where he worked.

**4 December.** Col O. R. Cauldwell, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, to Holcomb.

Cauldwell begins by complimenting the fine presentation given by the Marine Corps Schools and wonders how they "make such fine slides." He then goes on to praise the hard work, imagination, and impressive results shown by the Marine students at the Naval War College. Finally, he notes that the lectures on amphibious operations have been altered, which has caused him a lot of additional work. [Holcomb thanks him for this information in a note of 27 December.]

**28 December.** RAdm Wilson Brown, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, to Holcomb.

Brown asks Holcomb to permit Maj Larson to continue on as the Navy football team coach because of his successful and invaluable services rendered. Brown needs to know Holcomb's decision as soon as possible in order to plan accordingly.

**30 December.** Holcomb to Mr. J. L. Gleason, Choteau, Montana.

Holcomb replies to Gleason's glowing letter of congratulation and reminiscences from World War I service together at Soissons. Gleason also wished to know why such a good man as Col Cates was just commanding the Basic School. Holcomb asserts that Cates holds a strategic job as all new officers come under his purview and sway.

**30 December.** Holcomb to BGen Richard P. Williams, USMC (Ret), Ridgeland, South Carolina.

Holcomb invites Williams to stay with the Holcombs should he come to Washington. He has informed Kennedy to authorize Williams' physical examination at Parris Island as Holcomb is now anxious for Williams to return to active duty by February (instead of 1 March).

**31 December.** Maj George F. Eliot to Holcomb.

Eliot hopes that Holcomb will be able to fill him in on the results of the rifle tests. He believes that an important error has thus far been overlooked and he feels it would be in the national interest to correct it as soon as possible. Eliot definitely wants to discuss the triangular divisions with Holcomb and expects to see him within two weeks.

This folder contains a large number of congratulatory messages in the form of notes, letters, and telegrams concerning Holcomb's reappointment as Major General Commandant. In addition, there are letters relating to social and patriotic invitations and family matters; and an agenda describing the First Army maneuvers held at Plattsburg, New York, in August 1940.

*Folder 48*  
1941

**2 January.** Holcomb to Col James McE. Huey, USMC (Ret), U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot, Hawthorne, Nevada.

Holcomb thanks Huey for his congratulatory letter but refuses to budge on the question of calling any retired officers to active duty who are over 64 years old "at this time."

**30 December.** Col James McE. Huey to Holcomb.

Huey praises Holcomb and says that most of the officers on the retired list feel he has been a wonderful Commandant. The Commandant at the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard recommended in early 1940 that Huey be recalled to active duty to fill in at the operation office. The doctors certify that Huey is both physically and mentally capable of doing the job. He could thereby release a younger officer to active service with troops.

**2 January.** Holcomb to RAdm Wilson Brown, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland.

Holcomb agrees to leave Maj Larson in charge of the Navy football team for another year, but he warns that unforeseen circumstances may force him to change his mind. [Brown's reply of 3 January indicates both gratitude and understanding of Holcomb's position.]

**2 January.** Holcomb to RAdm Edward C. Kalbfus, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb has discovered another officer who can take Col Miller's place on the Examining Board, so he has decided to leave Miller at the Naval War College until early April to receive his diploma. Nevertheless, he warns Kalbfus that conditions in the world crisis might force him to reverse this decision.

**6 January.** Col Clifton B. Cates, Basic School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Cates invites the Holcombs to attend Basic School graduation exercises on 17 February 1941, and since they are early in the morning, he hopes the Holcombs will plan to come a day early for a "family visit."

**7 January.** Holcomb to Mr. Perry Daubenfeld, Chicago, Illinois.

Holcomb is thankful for Daubenfeld's lengthy New Year's letter recalling mutual experiences at Olongapo in the Philippines in 1902 [Daubenfeld's letter is in this collection]. Holcomb brings him up to date on the whereabouts of other officers who served there at that time. He is intrigued by some reminiscences such as the "pig incident" and the collapse of the bridge over the Kalaklan River, which he himself had forgotten.

**9 January.** Holcomb to Honorable Carl Vinson, House of Representatives.

In accordance with Vinson's oral request for information on Marine Corps needs, Holcomb submits a detailed breakdown on personnel strength, transport, munitions, training areas, and special personnel legislation. Of enlisted personnel, Holcomb wishes to have 60,000 regular Marines and 11,000 Reservists. These estimates are based on the actual creation of a civilian police force to release many Marines from guard duties. Recruiting has stopped, but he implies that he needs to recruit at a faster pace to have more trained personnel at the time of any crisis.

He then asks for 14 troop transports and six cargo vessels to meet the needs of two new divisions. Holcomb mentions also the need for lead time to train personnel in handling transports.

Holcomb then turns to woeful shortages in weaponry and ammunition, and explains that part of the problem has been the difficulty of negotiating with the War Department, which is in charge of such procurement.

He then impresses upon Vinson the urgency of obtaining the large training area in North Carolina which he has recommended for purchase to the Secretary of the Navy. Neither Quantico nor Parris Island are well suited for training large combat units. It is especially important to get the new training area for training the 1st Division, because that unit cannot remain satisfactorily at Guantanamo or in a tropical climate. Finally, Holcomb asserts that the Marine Corps is woefully short on housing—its present barracks capacity is for only 34,000 men; housing is needed for full strength.

Finally, Holcomb indicates the vital need for new legislation for the temporary promotion of Marine Corps officers. Promotion from lieutenant to captain requires at least six years' service, which makes a rapid expansion of higher-level officers impossible in the present national emergency. Holcomb thanks Vinson for this opportunity to air his views and says he is confident of Vinson's sympathetic support.

**9 January.** Holcomb memorandum for Adm Stark.

Holcomb briefly summarizes the various points he has made to Vinson in his letter of the same date.

**9 January.** Holcomb to Col Clifton B. Cates.

Holcomb accepts Cates' kind invitation to attend the Basic Schhol graduation and plans to stay in Philadelphia Sunday evening also.

**13 January.** Mr. Samuel W. Meek, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Meek catches Holcomb up on the latest preparations for his honorary dinner at the Yale Club of New York. Meek has decided not to invite any current Marine Corps officers, but rather it is "A dinner given by ex-officers of the Marine Corps." Gen Harbord plans to attend. Meek would like to know if the Marine Corps has a projector and 16mm motion picture on current Marine Corps activities for showing at the dinner. [A notation on the letter indicates " 'Soldiers of the Sea'—Pathe—No Projector."]

**13 January.** Holcomb to Honorable Carl Vinson.

Holcomb regretfully has to turn down Vinson's appeal for an exception to the commissioning rules for Sgt James J. O'Connell, USMCR, who is five years older than the upper limit for a commission in the regular Marines. Holcomb has to point out that if he broke the rules for one, he would be forced to give waivers in other cases. And he personally believes the 28-years-old maximum is a good rule.

**13 January.** Holcomb to Honorable Carl Vinson.

Holcomb replies to Vinson's oral request for consideration of promoting Lt Woodrum. Holcomb finds that there is a four-years-in-grade requirement for such a promotion. Woodrum was commissioned a first lieutenant in June 1940. Therefore, Holcomb refuses to allow Woodrum to be advanced over the heads of his fellow officers. On the other hand, Holcomb points out that if Woodrum continues his excellent service record in the 1st Division, and if the temporary promotion bill passes, Woodrum has a good chance to get the promotion at a "later date."

**15 January.** Holcomb to RAdm Husband E. Kimmel, Commander, Cruiser Battle Force, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb congratulates Kimmel on his new appointment and apologizes for his tardiness in writing. Holcomb then makes the suggestion that Kimmel might like to have a Marine officer on his staff. He asks him to request one by radio.

**15 January.** Holcomb to Mr. Samuel W. Meek.

Holcomb is happy about Meek's arrangements for the dinner. He reports that the Marine Corps has a short film called "Soldiers of the Sea" by Pathe which could be shipped up along with a projector from the Philadelphia Depot of Supplies. He suggests that Meek could pick them up at the New York Navy Yard or at the Marine Corps Recruiting Office.

**15 January.** MajGen Philip H. Torrey, Commandant, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Torrey thanks Holcomb for all his help and special consideration and especially for the command of the Marine Corps Schools, which has been his favorite assignment.

**17 January.** Holcomb to RAdm C. S. Freeman, Commandant, Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Washington.

Holcomb assures Freeman that he has arranged for the transfer of Maj Cyril W. Martyr to Bremerton as Freeman had requested.

**13 January.** RAdm C. S. Freeman to Holcomb.

Freeman seeks to have Maj Martyr assigned to relieve Capt J. D. Blanchard at Bremerton. Freeman personally knows Martyr and has heard that he is anxious to serve in the Alaskan sector. After briefly discussing the military prospects for the Alaskan area, he points out the good leadership attributes of Maj Martyr and the fact that Martyr always maintains good relations with naval personnel. He requests that Holcomb not to make the transfer if it would in any way harm the young man's future career.

**17 January.** Holcomb memorandum for Capt Callaghan.

Holcomb gives a brief up-to-date summary of the situation with regard to the proposed Marine training area at New River, North Carolina. He hopes for a decision on its purchase and development from Secretary Knox and Adm Stark on the next day. He ends with the statement: "You will know how much of this should be communicated to Mr. Crain. All budget matters are, of course, treated as confidential until the President transmits them to the Congress."

**17 January.** Capt F. A. L. Vossler, USN, Acting Superintendent, U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, to Holcomb.

Vossler invites the Holcombs to attend the graduation exercises on 7 February; provision also will be made for Holcomb's aide. [Holcomb on 24 January accepts for himself.]

**21 January.** Col Clifton B. Cates, Basic School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Cates wishes to make all the final arrangements for Holcomb's visit to Philadelphia to attend the graduation exercises. Cates feels sure that this graduating class from the Basic School "will be a valuable asset to the Marine Corps." [Holcomb replies on 27 January.]

**21 January.** MajGen Charles H. Lyman, USMC (Ret), Chairman of San Diego Chapter of the American Red Cross, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Lyman congratulates Holcomb on his reappointment and affirms that "it would have been a calamity had anyone else attempted to take over the job." Lyman has been recuperating in Honolulu.

**22 January.** Holcomb to Col DeWitt Peck, 4th Marines, Shanghai, China.

Holcomb thanks Peck for his congratulatory note. He then informs Peck confidentially that he wants to bring Peck back to Washington to fill an important position. He compliments Peck for the excellent job he has done in China.

**27 January.** RAdm Husband E. Kimmel, Commander, Cruiser Battle Force, U.S. Fleet, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, to Holcomb.

Kimmel appreciates Holcomb's wishing him well in his new command and the fact that Mrs. Holcomb called his wife when the decision was released to the press in Washington. Kimmel admits he has been too busy to give Holcomb's plea for a Marine officer on his staff much thought. Once he makes up his mind, he knows he can rely on Holcomb for assistance.

**28 January.** Holcomb to Maj William A. Eddy, USMC (Ret), Hobart College, Geneva, New York.

Holcomb wants to know how quickly Eddy could report for active duty should the opportunity arise—as Holcomb now thinks it will.

**28 January.** Holcomb to Mr. Samuel W. Meek.

Holcomb thanks Meek for the big dinner party at the Yale Club, especially because he saw so many of his old "companions in arms." He hopes these men will have been inspired to put in a favorable word for the Marine Corps whenever possible.

**28 January.** Holcomb to MajGen Holland M. Smith, 1st Marine Division, U.S. Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Holcomb informs Smith that President Roosevelt has just approved Holcomb's request that Smith and Vogel be promoted to the temporary rank of major general upon assumption of command of the newly organized Marine divisions. Ernest F. King has also endorsed the idea of having major generals command the divisions. Holcomb congratulates Smith and wishes him every happiness.

**28 January.** Holcomb to MajGen Clayton B. Vogel, 2d Marine Division, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb writes Vogel in a similar vein. He admits the new rank of major general for Smith and Vogel "doesn't mean much but it looks fine." Then Holcomb goes on to tell Vogel confidentially that if his plan for a "redistribution" is approved, Vogel will receive the regular rank of major general by 1 March.

**30 January.** Holcomb to Col LeRoy P. Hunt, USS on board *California*, Puget Sound Navy Yard, Washington.

Holcomb thanks Hunt for his congratulatory note of 3 December 1940 and then expresses his dismay over Kimmel's decision not to retain Hunt in the Fleet. Holcomb had wished to place Hunt with the 1st Division, but on learning of Hunt's wish to stay in San Diego, he has ordered him to join the 2d Division.

**30 January.** Holcomb to BGen Charles G. Long, USMC (Ret), South Dartmouth, Massachusetts.

Holcomb thanks Long for his congratulatory card and apologizes for this tardy reply. Holcomb postulates that the Marine Corps will grow to almost 50,000 by the Spring, but he still feels that size to be inadequate for the job. He then reveals the fact he has just authorized the establishment of the 1st and 2d Marine Divisions.

**30 January.** Holcomb to Honorable George Messersmith, American Ambassador to Cuba, Havana, Cuba.

Holcomb hopes to visit the 1st Division during the last half of February but is not sure he will have enough time to call on the Messersmiths in Havana.

**30 January.** Holcomb to BGen E. P. Moses, Key West, Florida.

Holcomb thanks Moses for his assistance in the selection of the Hercules motor for the amphibian tractor and the fine way in which he handled the matter. He goes on to explain the general plan for 40 officers and 1,000 Marines to man and operate 200 amphibian tractors, which includes having instructors and a Marine inspector to be stationed at the amphibian plant. Maj McHenry will be in charge of training personnel.

**19 January.** BGen Emile P. Moses, Marine Corps Equipment Board, Key West, Florida.

Moses is glad that he went South, not only for the warmth but also because he straightened out some of the "kinks" in the production of the Alligators at the Roebling plant. He was able to persuade Roebling and the Bureau of Ships to go along with the heavier, more powerful Hercules motor. Barrett asked Moses to check into the logistics of having Marines come to observe and learn about the Alligator. Finally, Moses reports that there is a lot of naval activity in Key West.

**30 January.** Holcomb to MajGen Douglas C. McDougal, USMC (Ret), Coronado, California.

Holcomb catches McDougal up on news of the new Marine divisions. He believes that Holland Smith is getting along well with Adm King, but becomes "depressed at times." Holcomb then turns to the exciting prospect of the Marine Corps obtaining a huge 100-square-mile tract of land on the New River in North Carolina, including many miles of beach front. He hopes to get the 1st Division up to New River by late Spring, especially since Guantanamo is such a poor place for training. Holcomb complains of the shortage of troop and cargo transports, but feels that the new division will manage.

**30 January.** Holcomb to Col W. H. Rupertus, MB Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Holcomb thanks Rupertus for his congratulatory letter and praises him for the fine performance record from his command. He states that Holland Smith is always remarking on the "hearty cooperation" received from Rupertus.

**30 January.** Holcomb to MajGen and Mrs. John H. Russell, Coronado, California.

Holcomb apologizes for the delay in answering the Russells' kind telegram of 29 November. Holcomb hopes that the Russells are satisfied with the portrait done of Russell. He then goes on to discuss improvements begun at the Commandant's House, including a new ladies' room and the planned repainting of

the exterior. Finally, Holcomb describes the condition and changes in the help at the Commandant's House.

**31 January.** Holcomb to Maj William A. Eddy.

Holcomb acknowledges Eddy's telegram of the previous day and admits that he is unsure as to whether Eddy will be brought back to active duty.

**31 January.** RAdm J. K. Taussig, 5th Naval District, Naval Operating Base, Norfolk, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Taussig wants to call to Holcomb's personal attention the deplorable condition (a veritable firetrap) of the present Marine Barracks at Norfolk and to alert him to Taussig's official request to the Secretary of the Navy seeking the erection of new Marine Barracks. He feels that Norfolk will become a key transshipment point for future Marine Corps operations abroad and should have suitable barracks.

This folder also contains correspondence on the following subjects: congratulation on Holcomb's reappointment; invitations to social, political, and patriotic engagements; requests for favors, including those seeking new commissions or reactivation to Marine Corps duty; requests for Holcomb to read manuscripts on national defense and for photographs of Holcomb; James Roosevelt's request for leave to attend his father's third presidential inaugural; a Naval student's appraisal of the Naval War College; family health matters, vacation plans, and the career aspirations of Holcomb's son, Frank; and requests for Holcomb to be a patron or to sponsor charitable organization.

*Folder 49*  
1941

**3 February.** Col A. F. Howard, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Howard invites Holcomb to be the keynote speaker at the graduation exercises for the First Candidates' Class at Quantico. Howard asks that if Holcomb cannot do it, that he nominate the Director of the Marine Corps Reserve or other pertinent individual to give the address. [In his reply, Holcomb agrees to send Gen Harrington, Director of the Reserve, to take his place.]

**3 February.** Holcomb to Mr. Ira Wight, Jr., St. Louis, Missouri.

Holcomb follows up previous discussion with Wight about the possibilities of Wight getting proper training and credentials to get into active service with the 1st Division.

**4 February.** Holcomb to RAdm C. S. Freeman, Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Washington.

Holcomb informs Freeman confidentially that he cannot leave Denig at Bremerton, both because he will become too high-ranking as a brigadier general and because Holcomb plans to use him on active duty with the Equipment Board at Quantico. He plans to send Col A. E. Randall to relieve Denig and believes Randall will be perfect there. [Freeman's letter of 31 January deals with a number of Marine Corps personnel actions at Bremerton and ends up with a plea to know as soon as possible about Denig's possible relief and a statement on the importance of the job beyond barracks duties].

**4 February.** Holcomb to Maj W. A. Eddy, USMC (Ret), Hobart College, Geneva, New York.

Holcomb assures Eddy that for the moment it appears unlikely Eddy will be called to active duty, but Holcomb promises to inform Eddy quickly should there be any change. [Eddy's letter of 2 February shows his concern for finishing up the college year at Hobart and at the same time trying to meet Holcomb's wishes for him to return to active duty at an appropriate time.]

**4 February.** Holcomb to Col Henry L. Larsen, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb agrees to Larsen's request to be informed as to who will go to China. Holcomb knows Larsen is doing the best job with his present command opportunity and is glad to hear he has started officers' schools.

**27 January.** Col Henry L. Larsen to Holcomb.

Larsen asks for Holcomb's advice on the pros and cons of going to China. Larsen affirms that he is very happy in his present job of commanding one of the six FMF infantry regiments. He describes the organizing of officers' schools within the regiment concerning landing operations, bayonet, and field fortifications. He has also promoted boxing, swimming, and other athletics within the regiment. He hopes the school and training center concepts he has started will become the future prototypes for the entire San Diego base. He ends up by placing the China assignment matter totally in Holcomb's hands.

**3 February.** Mr. F. E. Turin, Chairman of the National Defense Committee of the Norfolk Council of the American Legion, Norfolk, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Turin encloses copies of a resolution (and other papers), sponsored by Turin at the Norfolk American Legion meetings, which he hopes will be taken up and adopted by the U.S. Senate eventually. The resolution calls for Congress to raise the Commandant of the Marine Corps to the rank of lieutenant general in accordance with the strategic importance of the Marine Corps to the national defense. [Holcomb's reply of 4 February expresses his gratitude for Turin's "interest in the matter."]

**4 February.** Holcomb to RAdm J. K. Taussig, NOB, Norfolk, Virginia.

Holcomb agrees with Taussig's assessment of the importance of the Norfolk Marine Barracks because of the likelihood of large personnel movements through there. He assures Taussig he will do all he can to see that a new barracks is built in Norfolk.

**4 February.** BGen C. Barney Vogel, Camp Elliott, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Vogel expresses his delight at becoming a major general in command of a division; he thanks Holcomb and President Roosevelt for making this possible. He proudly describes the first showing of the division to the public on 1 February in front of 2,500 spectators. The Los Angeles newspapers gave it "glowing accounts."

**6 February.** Holcomb to Adm Thomas C. Hart, CinC, Asiatic Fleet, on board USS *Houston*, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb hopes that his efforts to cut down the radio traffic with the Asiatic Fleet on personnel matters has been helpful and successful. He then goes into detail as to key changes in personnel planned for the summer and asks that if Hart has any feelings or objections to Holcomb's choices he let him know now. He

wants to bring Peck and Turnage back from China and put LtCol Ray A. Robinson in command of forces in North China. Holcomb ends with brief reflections on changing conditions in Washington. "The pleasant life we used to live here is about over."

**6 February.** Holcomb to Honorable Herbert C. Bonner (D-North Carolina), House of Representatives.

Holcomb confirms in writing his understanding of the conference talk he had with Representative Bonner. The latter had requested that the Marine Corps consider purchasing a site for an airfield in Beaufort County, North Carolina. Holcomb at first warns that this may be too far from a proposed training area elsewhere in North Carolina and then agrees to at least have a reconnaissance done of the county for possible sites and have discussions with local town mayors.

**6 February.** Honorable Josephus Daniels, U.S. Embassy, Mexico City, to Holcomb.

Daniels in this "personal and confidential" letter announces that he has carried out his mission to discuss the proposed Marine Corps training area in North Carolina with President Roosevelt. He stressed this training area was essential for the U.S. defense preparedness program. He notes that the President seemed quite interested but admitted that he had not heard of the plan before; Daniels wishes Holcomb success on it.

**10 February.** Holcomb to Honorable Harry F. Byrd (D-Virginia), U.S. Senate.

Holcomb requests that Byrd hold off on sponsoring a bill to lift the rank of the Commandant of the Marine Corps to lieutenant general. While Holcomb agrees that in principle, it is a good idea, he wants to consider further its consequences and is especially desirous not to seek any personal gain that would harm or interfere with efforts to get favorable legislation for the Marine Corps.

**11 February.** Holcomb to Col Cilfton B. Cates, Basic School, Philadelphia Navy Yard, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb discusses his itinerary and costume, his desire to meet with the Commandant of the Naval District, and finally the question of gun salutes, in regard to his attending the commencement exercises of the Basic School. [This is followed by two letters from Cates dated 11 and 13 February and one more by Holcomb dated 14 February all establishing the groundwork for Holcomb's visit.]

**11 February.** Holcomb to Honorable Josephus Daniels.

Holcomb thanks Daniels for the excellent job of introducing the idea of the Marine Corps training area in North Carolina to President Roosevelt. He notes that this talk seems to have persuaded the President to accept the idea if the land can be purchased cheaply. Holcomb then expects funding for construction would be easier to get once the land is acquired.

**11 February.** Holcomb to Adm Ernest J. King, CinC, Atlantic Fleet, on board USS *Texas*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Holcomb announces the itinerary for his visit to Guantanamo on 20-25 February. He hopes that he will be able to see King personally to congratulate him and to discuss the 1st Marine Division.

**11 February.** Adm Ernest J. King to Holcomb.

King is delighted that Holcomb is coming to look things over firsthand and expresses utter confidence in the 1st Marine Division as the FMF for the Atlantic Fleet. King also relates that his other letters and dispatches should give Holcomb all the ammunition he needs to fulfill Marine Corps requirements.

**14 February.** Cdr G. H. Mills, U.S. Naval Air Station, Lakehurst, New Jersey, to Holcomb.

Mills forwards three photographs taken of Holcomb during his visit to Lakehurst on 12 February. He is only sorry Holcomb did not get to view the wide variety of activities of the station.

**15 February.** Holcomb to Adm H. E. Kimmel, CinC, U.S. Fleet on board USS *Pennsylvania*, Long Beach, California.

Holcomb reminds Kimmel that he promised in a 27 January letter to consider the possibility of a Marine officer on his staff. He feels this is especially important in view of the fact that Kimmel commands the Pacific Fleet as well as the U.S. Fleet to which the new 2d Marine Division will be attached. Holcomb would like to see Kimmel request a Marine lieutenant colonel to be assigned as his war plans officer and to be the fleet gunnery officer in preparation for any intended landing operations. Holcomb has a candidate in mind.

**18 February.** BGen A. A. Vandegrift to Adm C. S. Freeman, 13th Naval District, Seattle, Washington.

Vandegrift replies on behalf of Holcomb who is enroute to Guantanamo. He informs Freeman that his request for the replacement of Denig with Col DeCarre has to be declined because DeCarre's services are required at the Central Recruiting Division in Chicago. Holcomb has authorized Vandegrift to suggest LtCol R. M. Montague (soon to be colonel) as Denig's relief, because of the latter's "excellent work" in Shanghai and Cavite. Holcomb will see to it that another candidate be made available if Montague appears unsatisfactory to Freeman.

**13 February.** Adm C. S. Freeman to Holcomb.

Freeman expresses his desire to have a Marine Corps replacement with whom he is already familiar and a competent one who could handle affairs of the outlying stations, even in Alaska, for him. He suggests DeCarre, since the latter had once asked for the job.

**26 February.** RAdm John D. Wainwright, Commandant, Portsmouth Navy Yard, New Hampshire, to Holcomb.

Wainwright urges Holcomb to allow DeCarre to stay on and manage the naval prison until next fall; he has heard rumors to the effect that DeCarre was to be transferred to recruiting duty in Chicago. Wainwright asserts that DeCarre has done an excellent job in prison administration and that he would want to give him up only if DeCarre were being sent to a militarily active job, not recruiting.

**28 February.** Honorable Colgate W. Darden (D-Virginia), House of Representatives, to Holcomb.

Darden is announcing his resignation from Congress effective tonight. He wants Holcomb to know how much he admires the fine job he has done as head of the Marine Corps and has enjoyed working with him.

**28 February.** Col Clifton B. Cates to Holcomb.

Cates extends his gratitude for Holcomb's presence at the Basic School graduation exercises. He then describes the nature of the new class and his pleasure at the prospect of six weeks' training at Indiantown Gap. He points out that the PLCs scored best in the graduating class, those from the Naval Academy did the worst.

**28 February.** Holcomb to RAdm John D. Wainwright, Portsmouth Navy Yard, New Hampshire.

Holcomb announces that DeCarre will not leave his duty post until summer. He is pleased that DeCarre has been helpful to Wainwright and trusts his relief will be too. He then describes Holland Smith's success as Commanding General of the 1st Division, which Holcomb has just visited in Guantanamo.

This folder also contains social and patriotic invitations, family business messages; request for favors; letters concerning disciplinary actions; a continuation of correspondence with Hobart President William A. Eddy regarding his possible reactivation; letters of recommendation; correspondence concerning an administrative error in notifying Col Melvin Maas that he was disenrolled; a letter from a former Marine who had served with Holcomb in China; letters enclosing gifts of photographs of Lakehurst, and one endorsing a knife from Remington Arms Co.; letters regarding a *Life* magazine article on the Navy; and several letters about Holcomb's visit to the Basic School.

*Folder 50*  
1941

**2 March.** Capt John J. Capolino, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Capolino thanks Holcomb for the complimentary remarks he has made about Capolino's paintings. Mrs. Watson has asked him to paint a portrait of Adm Watson. He now awaits photographs of Mrs. Holcomb.

**3 March.** Holcomb to Mr. Roy Alexander, *Time* Inc., New York, New York.

Holcomb praises the quality of the *Time* article, "Magic at Quantico." He suggests only one correction, in the matter of the invention of the "Cole Carts" during World War I by Marine LtCol Edward B. Cole.

**3 March.** Holcomb to W. R. Macatee, District Engineer, the Asphalt Institute, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb thanks Macatee for his letter of 1 March and the enclosure of the *Time* article on Quantico. He replies that the article was written by Roy Alexander, who was a Marine sergeant at Parris Island during World War I. [A copy of the article is enclosed.]

**3 March.** Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little, MB Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb asks Little to relieve Julian Smith of all extraneous duties so that he can complete the vital report he is preparing on the development of the new training area in North Carolina. Holcomb wants all details on the area ironed out before work begins on it. Finally, he wants to know when Little expects to show off the new auditorium to Holcomb and Ben Moreell.

**3 March.** Holcomb to MajGen Clayton B. Vogel, MCB, San Diego, California.

Holcomb confidentially informs Vogel that Holcomb has decided to send Sam Howard to Shanghai to relieve DeWitt Peck. He also promises to appoint Archie

Howard as Vogel's chief of staff, which Holcomb hopes will be satisfactory to Vogel. If Archie Howard is unsuitable, Holcomb needs to know immediately so he can assign Howard elsewhere.

**4 March.** Holcomb to Col Robert Blake, USMC, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb announces he has ordered Blake to the 1st Division after he graduates from the Naval War College.

**5 March.** Holcomb to Adm Thomas C. Hart, CinC, U.S. Asiatic Fleet, on board USS *Houston*, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb discusses the method for recalling Peck from duty in Shanghai by having Adm Glassford "break joints" with Peck's departure. Holcomb assumes that Hart will release Peck once his relief (Sam Howard) arrives unless it is "not in the best interests of the Government" to do so.

**20 February.** Adm Thomas C. Hart, Manila, Philippine Islands, to Holcomb.

Hart agrees with the naming of Marine officers Robinson and Brown as respective reliefs for command posts at Peking and Tientsin, but he takes hearty exception to Holcomb's idea of relieving Col Peck at Shanghai. He disputes Holcomb's notion that Peck would fill a more important vacancy with the Chief of Naval Operations than as Hart's key Marine.

**6 March.** Holcomb to Col Clifton B. Cates, MB Philadelphia Navy Yard, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb expresses his gratitude for the pleasant visit he had in Philadelphia with the Cates family and remarks that Cates' letter outlining the various class standings of different groups at the Basic School was of "great interest" to him. He reports that he was most impressed with the diligent work of the 1st Division in Cuba.

**7 March.** Holcomb to Marine Gunner Claude N. Harris, MB Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb is so pleased that Harris took the trouble to have the target Holcomb fired at Parris Island framed; he promises to hang it in the Office of Target Practice at Headquarters. Holcomb affirms that it marks the "only shot I have fired from a rifle in 27 years."

**7 March.** BGen Ralph S. Keyser, USMC (Ret), Falls Church, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Keyser is sorry to have missed Holcomb but admits that "Congress waits for no man" and just hopes that Holcomb was able to extract what he wanted from Congress. For himself, Keyser is delighted to learn from Vandegrift that Holcomb intends to bring Keyser back to active duty at Headquarters.

**7 March.** Adm H. E. Kimmel, CinCUS, on board USS *Pennsylvania*, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, to Holcomb.

Kimmel reports that he would like Holcomb to select a Marine officer to be on his staff whose main duties would entail war planning and general direction of fleet landing exercises. He leaves the choice up to Holcomb, confident of his ability to select a man suitable to Kimmel's needs.

**7 March.** MajGen Clayton B. Vogel, CG, 2d Division, FMF, MCB San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Vogel acknowledges that he is happy to get Arch Howard as relief for Sam Howard and he looks forward to a visit from Holcomb in the not-too-distant future.

**6 March.** Col L. R. Jones, MB Parris Island, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

Jones sends Holcomb a number of photographs showing him firing the rifle at Parris Island, along with Harris' firing-line worksheet on Holcomb's firing.

**10 March.** Holcomb to RAdm C. C. Bloch, 14th Naval District, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Holcomb affirms that the Chief of Naval Operations made the decision on troop deployment raised in Bloch's letter of 28 February. He will be happy to try to answer any inquiries by Bloch on the disposition of Marine Corps personnel in Bloch's naval district.

**10 March.** Holcomb to BGen Ralph S. Keyser.

Holcomb regrets that he missed seeing Keyser, but he hopes that the doctors will allow Keyser to return to active duty by summer.

**10 March.** Holcomb to RAdm E. J. King, CinC, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, on board USS *Texas*, New York, New York.

Holcomb seeks King's approval for *Life* magazine to photograph certain activities of the 1st Marine Division for publicizing the Marine Corps' strategic role in amphibious warfare within the fleet as a whole. He points out that such publicity would reinforce public conception of the Marine Corps as part of the Navy, and not the Army. It would also help in getting recruits and appropriations.

Holcomb then moves on to explaining the need for using new and better training facilities being purchased and developed in North Carolina for purposes of preparing the 1st Marine Division for battle. He stresses the urgency of this training and hopes that King will release the division to North Carolina in time for the training area's opening in May.

**10 March.** Holcomb to MajGen Holland M. Smith, 1st Marine Division, U.S. Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Holcomb informs Smith that he is asking Adm King for permission to detail both Smith and Nimmer to Headquarters. He then discusses President Roosevelt's approval of the \$15-million purchase of the New River, North Carolina, training area and hopes Congress will pass it quickly so that construction can begin immediately. He ends by noting that he hopes Adm Stark on his visit to Guantanamo saw some of the good work of the 1st Marine Division.

**11 March.** Holcomb to the Honorable David I. Walsh, U.S. Senate.

Holcomb first discusses a personal request made by Walsh for the transfer of a second lieutenant to Washington, which Holcomb in effect tries to sidestep. Then he thanks Walsh for the prompt action on getting the Marine Corps authorization bill through so quickly. He is hoping for similar action in the House Appropriations Committee hearings, thanks to assistance from Carl Vinson.

**12 March.** Holcomb to Mr. Samuel W. Meek, New York, New York.

Holcomb is hoping that he will get approval from Adm King for "our photographic expedition to the West Indies."

**13 March.** Holcomb to Adm Husband E. Kimmel, on board USS *Pennsylvania*, Long Beach, California.

Holcomb announces he has selected LtCol Omar T. Pfeiffer to be the Fleet Marine Officer on Kimmel's staff, and he has every confidence that Pfeiffer will fill Kimmel's needs admirably well. Holcomb asserts that Pfeiffer will be on his way out to Kimmel once he has finished some very important work for Adm Ghormley.

**15 March.** RAdm Edward C. Kalbfus, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, to Holcomb.

Kalbfus pays great tribute to the work done by Col Geiger during his two years at the Naval War College. He also compliments another Marine Corps graduate of the Advanced Class, Col Lyle Miller, and trusts both men will serve their country very well. [Holcomb replies on 17 March concurringly, and hopes that Kalbfus will give Geiger an excellent fitness report.]

**17 March.** Holcomb to Maj A. T. Mason, American Embassy (c/o Office of Naval Intelligence), London, England.

Holcomb expresses his gratitude to Mason for forwarding copies of British Gen Wavell's speeches. He feels the speeches deserve "the thoughtful consideration of everyone."

**17 March.** Holcomb to MajGen Holland M. Smith.

Holcomb informs Smith confidentially that Holcomb wants the 1st Division to begin moving back to the United States on 1 April and that he is leaving it up to Smith which units will come first. Holcomb is most anxious to get them home, and has found space at both Quantico and Parris Island until the new training area becomes fully available.

**25 March.** LtCol R. L. Montague, MB Navy Yard, Cavite, Philippines to Holcomb.

Montague reports that he has discovered he is to be assigned to the General Recruiting Division in Chicago and wants to be on record as seeking a combat duty job as soon as possible therefore in an expected theatre of war. As a second choice, he states that he would like to work with Col Barrett in Operations and Training. Now he will "strive to be one of your best recruiters." He then describes the training and recreational programs devised for the men at Cavite. He praises the high quality of men Holcomb has been furnishing him. As a result of Montague's tour of duty coming to an end in Cavite, he feels free to recommend that Holcomb should dispatch an executive officer to handle the extra problems and pressures in case the post commander should become incapacitated.

**25 March.** Col Merwin H. Silverthorn, U.S. Pacific Fleet Scouting Force, on board USS *Indianapolis*, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, to Holcomb.

Silverthorn thanks Holcomb for his new assignment. Silverthorn then goes on to outline some recommendations regarding closer coordination between the FMF and the fleet especially in developing theoretical and practical landing exercises. VAdm Brown, now in charge of the Scouting Force, seems very sympathetic to more rehearsals of landing operations and has put in a request to order some of the 2d Marine Division's key personnel to Pearl Harbor to help Navy personnel work out detailed training schedules. Finally, he strongly supports the suggestion to place a Marine officer on the staff of the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet.

**28 March.** Holcomb to MajGen William P. Upshur, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb promises to try to collect such necessary equipment as transport planes (for parachute practice) and rubber landing boats for the use of the 2d Marine Division at San Diego. He briefly goes into questions of construction funds for San Diego, the Senate hearings on appropriations for New River, and a circular order regarding active duty requirements for Reservists seeking to be married.

The folder also contains numerous social and patriotic invitations; a smaller number of requests for personal favors from relatives, friends, and service personnel; several letters concerning BGen R. P. Williams' short-lived attempt to become Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police; letters regarding books and media coverage of U.S. defense preparations for war, and *Life* stories on the war in Europe; several notes exchanged with Samuel Meek about personal matters; letters sent out about the naming of troop transports for former Marine Corps officers; the cover letters of photographs and other memorabilia forwarded to Holcomb from Marines wishing to commemorate his visits to Guantanamo Bay and Parris Island; correspondence regarding Colgate W. Darden's resignation from Congress to run for Governor of Virginia; a letter requesting boxes of fruit from Florida; a thank-you note regarding Marine Corps cooperation in the execution of the Sixth Memorial Service for John Philip Sousa; Holcomb's official request for a leave of absence on 29 March; and a letter of apology from American Airlines for causing Holcomb an unscheduled layover in Memphis on his flight to Los Angeles.

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**1 April.** Holcomb to RAdm Wilson Brown, Commander, Scouting Force, on board USS *Indianapolis*, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb regrets he cannot send either Riley or Thomason as relief for Silverthorn. Holcomb feels confident that Brown will like LtCol John T. Selden, who is to be placed on Brown's staff in the summer, and trusts that Silverthorn will be able to continue on through the spring maneuvers. He then discusses the fact that armor materially cuts down the speediness and maneuverability of the landing boats and affirms that the Marine Corps is opposed to its use. It is no longer possible to protect the boats from the latest anti-boat guns which are primarily .50-calibre.

**15 March.** RAdm Wilson Brown to Holcomb.

Brown appeals to Holcomb to delay Silverthorn's pending detachment until his present work has been completed. Brown would like to have either Thomason or Riley made available for Silverthorn's eventual replacement. Finally, Brown requests information on the possibility of installing lightweight metal armor on the landing boats to protect crew, passengers, and engines.

**1 April.** Holcomb to Col William O. Hawthorne, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb would like to get Hawthorne's reaction to having Capt Dixon Goer as an aide to Holcomb and hopes Hawthorne is happy about his own assignment to the 1st Division.

**1 April.** Holcomb to Col Henry L. Larsen, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb says he wishes he could spend more time in the field "watching live Marines doing their stuff." He was most pleased by what he saw on his

recent trip to California and especially impressed by Larsen's regiment. Holcomb then seeks Larsen's opinion of Holcomb getting Capt Dixon Goen of Larsen's regiment as an aide.

**4 April.** Holcomb to Maj Frank R. Armstead, USMC, Seattle, Washington.

Holcomb describes the rationale and development of the system used to select midshipmen of the Naval Academy for the Marine Corps. He explains that the chief reason for switching systems recently was that too many of the top-ranking midshipmen were opting for the Marine Corps, leaving a smaller percentage for the Navy specialty groups. He is sorry that Armstead's son may not get a Marine Corps commission. But Holcomb believes the system is best for both the Navy and Marine Corps. Finally, he disapproves of the idea of favoring Marines' sons. [This is an answer to Armstead's letter of 2 April which encloses a letter of complaint from his son (undated). The younger man does not see why sons of Marine officers should not get the same preferential treatment given former-Marines, and requests his father to write to Holcomb to intervene on his behalf.]

**8 April.** RAdm John D. Wainwright, Commander, Portsmouth Navy Yard, New Hampshire, to Mrs. Thomas Holcomb.

Wainwright congratulates Mrs. Holcomb on her designation as sponsor for the launching ceremonies of the USS *Drum* to be held at Portsmouth on 12 May. He seeks a listing of friends she would like to invite plus the nomination of a maid of honor for the occasion.

**9 April.** Holcomb to RAdm Edward C. Kalbfus, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb is now seeking detachment of both Cols Blake and Hawthorne by 1 May and calls upon Kalbfus to see to it that they get their diplomas. Hawthorne is needed for vital service with the 1st Division and Blake is needed for a special operation requiring his Spanish language ability. Holcomb hopes the request will not "embarrass" Kalbfus. [The admiral replies on 11 April affirming the award of diplomas upon the early release of Hawthorne and Blake, and sending his thanks to Holcomb for keeping up Marine representation at the War College so well].

**14 April.** Holcomb to RAdm John D. Wainwright.

Holcomb accepts the invitation to sponsor the USS *Drum* on behalf of both the Holcombs and notes that Mrs. Holcomb would like to have a fish as a memento of the christening of the USS *Drum*. He submits a list of friends to be invited.

**22 April.** Holcomb to Col Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia.

Shepherd invites Holcomb to attend the graduation exercises of the Second Candidates and Fourth Reserve Officers' Classes at the end of May at Quantico. He feels sure with Holcomb's interest in "the education and development of these young officers" he would benefit from seeing them at work. [Holcomb in a letter of 23 April decides to accept the invitation for the Reserve Officers' Class graduation only; he doubts his busy schedule would allow him to go to Quantico any sooner to see the men at work.]

24 April. Holcomb to LtCol Clark W. Thompson, USMCR, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb wants to know confidentially whether Thompson might be interested in joining the next five-month course at the Naval War College. He then emphasizes that Thompson should get as much experience as possible with landing operations before attending. Holcomb explains that Kalbfus came to see him personally about getting another officer for the class. Holcomb has no regulars available for it.

This folder includes social and patriotic invitations; letters requesting and concerning personal favors from Holcomb; several letters regarding family matters, including the christening of the USS *Drum* by the Holcombs; a favorable letter to American Airlines; and a brochure about the Soldiers and Sailors Club of New York, Inc., with a note seeking Holcomb as a patron.

Folder 52  
1941

2 May. Holcomb to Col Robert L. Denig, MB Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Washington.

Holcomb discusses the possibility of assigning Denig as President of the Marine Corps Examining Board once he retires. He had hoped previously to get Denig the job at the Equipment Board, but was unsuccessful. He finishes the letter with recommendation on how Denig should apply for his detachment.

3 May. LtCol Clark W. Thompson, USMCR, MCB San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Thompson expresses his gratitude for Holcomb's gesture of confidence in Thompson by wishing to nominate him for the Naval War College slot. Thompson then tells Holcomb how happy Thompson has been serving Col Larsen. Thompson explains that his original request for assignment to the Naval War College was based on his desire to get enough schooling to be able to return to his outfit and "assume my full share of responsibility."

5 May. Holcomb to MajGen Clayton B. Vogel, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb announces his plan to send Thompson to the short course at the Naval War College, knowing that Adm Kalbfus is anxious to have Marine participation. Holcomb inquires whether Watters also would be interested.

6 May. Col Clifton B. Cates, Basic School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Cates extends an open invitation for the Holcombs to visit "at any time." He briefly refers to present and future training at the Basic School and then suggests a driving itinerary and accommodations for Holcomb's tour of inspection to the training facility at Indiantown Gap. Finally, he invites Holcomb to the 31 May graduation exercises.

9 May. Col Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., Commandant, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Shepherd has decided to consolidate the graduation exercises for the Fourth Reserve Officers' Class and Second Candidates Class on the 29th of May and certainly hopes Holcomb can attend. Shepherd plans to have a parade.

**10 May.** Holcomb to Col Clifton B. Cates, MB Philadelphia Navy Yard, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb has to beg off both his inspection trip to Indiantown Gap and his attendance at the Basic School graduation. He explains that he has already planned to go to the Quantico graduation exercises and also hopes to get away for a few days on his yacht.

**10 May.** Holcomb to Col Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb accepts Shepherd's invitation to lunch and the Quantico graduation exercises on 29 May.

**14 May** RAdm W. H. Allen, Commandant, Charleston Navy Yard, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

Allen inquires whether it is possible for Holcomb to change his mind about detaching Col Russell for duty at the Portsmouth Naval Prison. Allen wants Russell to stay on because Allen is going through a very sensitive stage in developing a security plan for the Charleston Navy Yard; a procedure in which Russell plays a key part. Allen assures Holcomb that Russell did not have any say or influence in Allen's making of this request.

**15 May.** Holcomb to Col Henry L. Larsen, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb is very complimentary of Larsen's good working relations with his regiment and looks forward to seeing it again later in the summer. Much of Holcomb's letter deals with the matter of his son, Frank, joining the Marine Corps Reserve, and his wife's physical health problems. He concludes with a brief description of the progress being made at New River. Holcomb thinks the whole division can move in shortly (at least 3,000 men during July).

**10 May.** Col Henry L. Larsen to Holcomb.

Larsen reports on the 180-mile hike just completed by his regiment—the only medical evacuations were made for hiking blisters caused by “dirty sox.” A day of heavy rain provided valuable experience for actual fighting conditions. There were no “stragglers,” but rather the companies competed to see which one could hike the farthest. The men are in great physical shape and their morale is very high. All activities were continued by ingenious use of available resources. The regiment got great newspaper and movie news publicity without seeking it, and a *Life* photographer also appeared on his own.

**16 May** Holcomb to RAdm W. H. Allen.

Holcomb insists that it would be “most inconvenient” to alter the plans to switch Russell to Portsmouth. LtCol Coyle will be in charge of the Marine Barracks in Charleston until LtCol Hamner is detailed there to relieve him. Holcomb has great confidence in Coyle's ability to fill the job.

**17 May.** Holcomb to MajGen John A. Lejeune, USMC (Ret), Norfolk, Virginia.

Holcomb announces to Lejeune the War Department approval of ROTC honor graduates being brought into the Marine Corps. Holcomb recalls that Lejeune had asked Holcomb to let Lejeune know when such a policy was adopted. Holcomb explains that 75 principal candidates and 75 alternates were to be appointed from 75 colleges of which Lejeune's beloved Virginia Military Institute was one.

26 May. Col Clifton B. Cates to Holcomb.

Cates is very disappointed that Holcomb will not attend the graduation exercises, but asks that Holcomb send along a brief message to the class. Cates states that the class exercises at Indiantown Gap were most successful and included warm cooperation from the Army's 28th Division. [Holcomb sends the requested message in a letter of 27 May.]

This folder also contains invitations to political, social, and patriotic gatherings; the forwarding by letter to Holcomb of political studies for his critique; applications for favors such as particular jobs in the Marine Corps; a letter of recommendation on behalf of a son of one of Holcomb's friends; letters discussing details of the Holcombs' visit to New York and New England en route to the ceremonies launching the USS *Drum*. A man offers his services to assist in developing landing boats. Another letter discusses a comascope.

Folder 53  
1941

2 June. MajGen Louis McCarty Little, CG, MB Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Little states that he has broken one of Holcomb's rules by making one of Little's younger regular officers his aide. He realizes that Holcomb wants all younger men to be used in "front line" duties. Little also expresses his displeasure at the lack of tact exhibited by the new "Reserve" officers sent to Quantico.

3 June Holcomb to MajGen Louis McCarty Little.

Holcomb goes over the shortage of captains with Little and insists that for the moment Little consider one of the Reserve captains available as his aide. Little might be able to get a regular captain after the selection board process is completed in July.

3 June. Holcomb to MajGen John A. Lejeune, USMC (Ret), Norfolk, Virginia.

Holcomb discusses his efforts to persuade the Judge Advocate General that Lejeune's rank should be upgraded to lieutenant general. The JAG believes that the Officers' Act of 1938 did not apply to those already on the retired list.

1 June. MajGen John A. Lejeune to Holcomb.

Lejeune encloses a copy of an article appearing in the *Army and Navy Register* which would seem to indicate that retired officers could be advanced in rank if commended in World War I by the head of an executive department.

4 June. MajGen John A. Lejeune to Holcomb.

Lejeune indicates he will take the "injustice," in the matter of advancement of retired officers, to the Senate and House Naval Affairs Committees and hopes for Holcomb's full support.

5 June. Holcomb to MajGen John A. Lejeune.

Holcomb replies that he will assist in any effort to amend the present law to correct the "injustice" if Lejeune will see to it that someone will "introduce an amendment to that effect." Holcomb cautions that Congress may be too busy to get involved in it. Finally, he informs the general that Keyser is soon to return to Headquarters on active duty as head of the Reserve Section.

**7 June.** Holcomb to RAdm Edward C. Kalbfus, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb brings it to Kalbfus' attention that neither Col Blake nor Col Hawthorne received his diploma from the War College as originally promised. He would appreciate Kalbfus assisting him in rectifying this.

**9 June.** Col Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Shepherd states that the Schools are now running smoothly and he now hopes that Holcomb will release him for active duty in the Fleet Marine Force because of the tense international situation. He feels Harrington can carry on as Commandant of the Schools.

**9 June.** MajGen J. G. Harbord, USA (Ret), RCA, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Harbord is sending an NBC official and former Army colleague, Maj Frank E. Mason, to talk with Holcomb. Harbord feels it is important for Holcomb and Mason "to know each other" at this crucial time and insists they have much in common. Wesson has "some shadowy relationship" with the Secretary of the Navy.

**10 June.** Holcomb to Col Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr.

Holcomb is sympathetic to Shepherd's desire to be in the Fleet Marine Force but for all practical purposes there are no jobs available. After Harrington has gained more experience, Holcomb will consider the possibility of shifting Shepherd. Finally, Holcomb informs Shepherd that it is Holcomb's policy to keep a number of fine men like Shepherd in reserve to cover any emergencies.

**12 June.** Holcomb to Mr. Samuel W. Meek, New York, New York.

Holcomb seeks Meek's assistance in getting *Life* magazine to help cover special Marine Corps activities at Quantico on 27-29 June and to assist the new Marine Corps publicity man, Maj John S. Winch, in getting established on the west coast by proper introductions.

**13 June.** Holcomb to Col Henry L. Larsen, 8th Marines, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb is delighted at receiving Larsen's scrapbook of the 8th Marines' hike. He finds it both informative and of high quality.

**17 June.** Holcomb to MajGen J. G. Harbord.

Holcomb reports that he had a very useful discussion with Maj Mason about Marine Corps publicity. Holcomb states: "we need all the honest publicity we can get." Holcomb feels confident that he can rely on Harbord to keep the Marine Corps and its recruiting needs constantly in front of the American public.

**18 June.** Mr. H. L. Holcomb, Sherman K. Ellis Co., New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Lawrence Holcomb tells his uncle that he had put pressure on Willis Cooper, script writer for the new CBS radio program on the Army and Navy, and expects he will deliver excellent publicity on the Marine Corps. The third show of the series would be devoted exclusively to the Marine Corps. Cooper will be in Washington during the next two weeks and should come to see Holcomb for

help on the program. Lawrence Holcomb expresses great confidence in Cooper's capabilities and says he is very deserving of any help he can get from Marine Corps Headquarters. [Holcomb replies affirmatively on 21 June.]

**18 June.** MajGen J. G. Harbord to Holcomb.

After discussing the apparent success of Maj Mason's visit with Holcomb, Harbord assures Holcomb, "You can always count on me for anything that I can do." Harbord says he always compliments the Marine Corps whenever an opportunity arises.

**24 June.** Mr. Samuel W. Meek to Holcomb.

Meek announces that *Life* is planning some excellent photographs of the Marine Corps to be published in its 7 July issue. This issue will also have a Peter Hurd painting of a machine gun range.

This folder also contains social and patriotic invitations; a request for Capt Brown to prepare the "Slow Boat" for the installation of a new radio and a weekend outing; letters regarding a visit by a British Naval Reserve officer; requests for employment favors and for critiquing new publications; a note complimenting a Holcomb decision from Harry Hopkins of the White House staff; additional correspondence with Gen Lejeune and Sam Meek; letters regarding R. P. Williams' nomination to be superintendent of defense for the State of New Jersey; and a request by Holcomb for special Senate consideration of the hardship endured by the widow of Maj Richard M. Cutts.

*Folder 54*  
1941

**3 July.** Holcomb to Capt John J. Capolino, USMCR, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb writes Capolino to apologize for not acknowledging the second portrait he has done of Mrs. Holcomb. They both like it but prefer the first one of her. The general's picture is also much admired. He then discusses the composite portrait made of Col Burrows.

**5 July.** Mrs. J. Frederick Essary, Women's National Press Club, Washington, D.C.

Mrs. Essary thanks Holcomb for going to the trouble of getting Col Santelmann and the Marine Corps Band to play at the club's annual dinner. She claims the band was the success of the party.

**9 July.** Maj Charley Dunbeck, Naval Ammunition Depot, Hawthorne, Nevada, to Holcomb.

Dunbeck brags that he has the best command on the west coast. He bases this assessment on inspection reports from the Department of the Pacific. However, Dunbeck would like to be considered for a more responsible position, preferably command of a publicity division or a recruiting district.

**11 July.** Lewis B. Hershey, Director, Selective Service System, Washington, D.C.

Hershey asks Holcomb to participate in the lottery drawing of the Selective Service on 17 July. He wants to assure the public of absolute fairness by picking participants of Holcomb's calibre. [Holcomb replies that he cannot attend in a letter of 14 July.]

**14 July.** Holcomb to Maj Charley Dunbeck.

Holcomb says he will keep Dunbeck in mind for other "responsible duty." But he disputes Dunbeck's inference that the depot command is unimportant and also denies that officers are entitled to move just because they have been in a job for two years. Holcomb, however, is pleased with the good reports on the Depot.

**17 July.** Honorable J. G. Scrugham (R-Nevada), U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, to Capt E. R. Hagenah, HQ USMC.

Scrugham announces that 900 Marines were said to have been packed aboard the USS *Little* with totally inadequate food, unsanitary quarters, and no bathing facilities. He says that there have been calls for a congressional investigation, but he will first call upon the Marine Corps for an explanation before making such a move.

**18 July.** Honorable Harold Cooley (D-North Carolina), House of Representatives, to Holcomb.

Cooley remarks that he has received Holcomb's letter plus a call from Adm Stark. Cooley hopes that conditions were not as bad as he had heard on the USS *Little*, but if they were, he assumes Holcomb will move swiftly to "correct" them.

**18 July.** Holcomb to Honorable Harold Cooley.

Holcomb has just returned from a visit to the New River training area where he witnessed no signs of the low morale Cooley indicated. Holcomb insists that Holland Smith is the type of commander who always sees to it that his men are treated well. Naturally, Holcomb promises to have the matter investigated thoroughly. He is very grateful for Cooley's bringing it up and wonders if he would be willing to tell Adm Stark in person.

**21 July.** Holcomb to Honorable David I. Walsh, U.S. Senate (D-Massachusetts) U.S. Senate.

Holcomb thanks Walsh profusely for the assistance he has rendered to Marine Corps recruiting through his broadcast speech to the nation. While Holcomb was unable to pick it up on his boat "due to atmospheric conditions," he read it in the *Congressional Record* and is sure hundreds of thousands of people heard it.

**22 July.** MajGen James C. Breckinridge, MB Parris Island, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

The majority of Breckinridge's letter deals with personal matters related to his retirement and purchase of a new home. Then he remarks that it will take several years of effort to get Parris Island into the "neat, clean" appearance of Quantico. He mentions that wherever he goes, there seems to be a water shortage. Breckinridge also reports that Congressman Rivers seems bent on pouring money down the drain at Parris Island to compete with North Carolina. Breckinridge sees no need to spend any more than has already been budgeted for Parris Island.

**25 July.** Holcomb to MajGen James C. Breckinridge.

Holcomb wishes Breckinridge had purchased a new home in Southern Maryland as the Holcombs have just bought an estate there called Rosecroft. Holcomb hopes to spend weekends at Rosecroft and then retire there permanent-

ly. He admires Breckinridge for staying on duty to the very end, and Holcomb promises he can order him to whatever location Breckinridge wishes upon retirement. Holcomb is "very annoyed" at publicity put out by Congressman Richards trying to promote a deepwater channel to Parris Island. Holcomb is opposed to the idea. He and his wife are very sad not to be able to visit Breckinridge at Parris Island any longer; they have many happy memories of the place.

**25 July.** Holcomb to Mr. George Rothwell Brown, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb assumes direct responsibility for the so-called "yoo-hoo incident" in which girls were photographed alongside Marines at Quantico as a publicity stunt for recruiting purposes. Holcomb deeply regrets the way the whole thing was handled and promises Brown that the whole Marine Corps publicity campaign will be carefully monitored in the future to prevent such regrettable incidents. He hopes it can be forgotten. [Reply from Brown on 29 July shows he is grateful for Holcomb's letter.]

**31 July.** Holcomb memorandum for Adm Stark.

Holcomb asks permission to invite Mr. Higgins of landing-boats fame to the landing-boat exercises to be held at New River in August so that he can perhaps more quickly observe and discover the "fault" which needs correcting. Holcomb wants Stark to clear this with Adm King.

The folder also contains routine requests for favors over pensions, personnel assignments, and applications for employment, even one from one of his own family members (Bankson T. Holcomb); requests to critique articles; a communication with Stanley Hornbeck of the U. S. State Department; a note about the use of his yacht, "Slow Boat"; and correspondence about the usefulness of comasopes for the Navy and Marine Corps.

*Folder 55*  
1941

**1 August.** Holcomb to Mr. A. J. Higgins, Higgins Industries, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Holcomb confirms his intent to invite Higgins to the landing-boat exercises at New River and hopes for speedy corrections of any defects in the newer boats thereby. Holcomb regrets that the Marine Corps cannot pick up the tab on any of Higgins' costs in coming and advises him to keep his party small because of limited accommodations in the area. But the Marine Barracks will provide a car to meet him at the train station in Wilmington.

**1 August.** Mr. A. J. Higgins to Holcomb.

Higgins outlines his company's policy of assisting the Marine Corps and Navy through free instruction courses in the handling of the latest Higgins boats. He cautions that while testing of the boats by a small Navy group at San Diego exhibited no major defects in the boats' handling and performance, he feels strongly that photographs show the boats' strength characteristics have not been fully utilized to date. Higgins says that the boats should be driven as fast as the waves and driven right up on the beach. He ends with a concrete recommendation on speedy retraction of those 36' boats having a loading ramp, otherwise engine weight might cause grounding of the stern once unloaded.

**4 August.** Holcomb to MajGen William P. Upshur, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb wants Upshur to show Sam Meek around San Diego. Holcomb affirms that Meek is a "thorough-going Marine" and deserving of all courtesies. Holcomb would like the latest information on the health of Lyman and McDougal. [Holcomb also sends Upshur an undated telegram confirming Meek's visit.]

**7 August.** Holcomb memorandum for Congressman Vinson.

Holcomb gives Vinson a current update on the number of "absentees" from Marine units located in Iceland. Of the 66 reported absentees, Holcomb notes that "50 have since surrendered, 3 have been apprehended, and 13 as of this date are still absent."

**12 August.** MajGen John A. Lejeune, USMC (Ret), Norfolk, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Lejeune wants Holcomb to find out from Nimitz what is holding up the officers bill. Holcomb had endorsed the bill which would effectively raise Lejeune's rank in retirement to lieutenant general. Lejeune claims he would never ask such a favor except he felt a number of other officers were also unduly deprived of promotion by the present law. He ends with a compliment to the "efficient organization" of the Marine Corps under Holcomb.

**19 August.** Holcomb to MajGen John A. Lejeune.

Holcomb announces that he has just received a copy of Nimitz's endorsement of the Bill (S.1630) about which Lejeune has written. Nimitz, in addition as Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, has stated that it would apply to *all* officers of the Navy and Marine Corps. Holcomb hopes the bill will be enacted soon. [A copy of Nimitz memo to the Judge Advocate General on S.1030 is enclosed.]

**19 August.** Holcomb memorandum for Adm Stark.

Holcomb shares the ideas of several of his staff and himself that the Marine Corps units now stationed in Shanghai should be withdrawn. A Marine Corps officer recently commanding the troops in Peking underlined the timeliness of such a withdrawal in view of Japanese-American relations.

**21 August.** MajGen John A. Lejeune to Holcomb.

Lejeune is grateful for the support of Nimitz and Holcomb on S.1630, and he plans to write his friends on the Senate Naval Affairs Committee once he has gotten word of the Navy Department's approval of the bill.

**22 August.** Holcomb to Adm William D. Leahy, American Ambassador to Vichy France.

Holcomb thanks Leahy for his inquiries about Mrs. Holcomb's sister believed to be in Paris. He reports on Holland Smith being placed in charge of a joint training group of elements of the 1st Marine Division and the Army's 1st Division. Holcomb comments on the rapid growth of the Marine Corps (now 55,000) and the acquisition of 100,000 acres of land for the New River training area. Then he states that he feels awkward as the "oldest man in the Department," but feels warmly supported by such subordinates as Charlie Barrett. Finally, Holcomb wishes Leahy luck in his trying post.

**30 July.** Adm William D. Leahy to Holcomb.

Leahy informs the Holcombs that Miss Clover is alive and well. The admiral reports that Vichy France is cut off from information from occupied parts of France and gets very little news from home. He misses the "old gang" and feels especially frustrated because diplomacy seems to accomplish so little in this region. He long for the time when the Navy and Marine Corps "can take charge" of the bad situation.

**27 August.** RAdm John D. Wainwright, Commandant, Portsmouth Navy Yard, New Hampshire, to Holcomb.

Wainwright looks forward to having the energetic Kalbfleisch come to command the Marine Barracks. Wainwright guesses that Worton by now has gone to Iceland. Rumors have it that the Army will eventually relieve the Marines in Iceland, once they "can be permitted to do something besides peeling potatoes." Wainwright admits he is busy but sympathizes with Holcomb's greater problems.

**29 August.** Holcomb to RAdm John D. Wainwright.

Holcomb agrees to get an order concerning Kalbfleisch's "new status." He then reports that a British major general found Worton's battalion to be highly praiseworthy. Holcomb chides Wainwright, another Delawarean, for considering Vermont for retirement, but then admits the Holcombs have just bought Rosecroft in Maryland.

**30 August.** MajGen William P. Upshur, MCB San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Upshur pleads the case for blocking any further incursions by Consolidated Aircraft Corporation into territory recently taken over by the Marines for training at San Diego. Consolidated wants the land for a bigger parking lot and seems to be winning even the ear of the Secretary of the Navy. Upshur hopes Holcomb can stem the tide.

**No date.** Holcomb telegram to Gov. Colgate W. Darden, Jr.

Holcomb and the Marine Corps congratulate Darden on his primary victory in the campaign for Governor of Virginia.

This folder also includes correspondence concerning recommendations, favors, and requests for employment; birthday greetings for Holcomb, along with personal messages exchanged with his closest friends inside and outside the Marine Corps; correspondence about the work of the Gideons in delivering copies of New Testament Bibles to servicemen; and a number of letters from former Marines who had served with Holcomb.

*Folder 56*  
1941

**3 September.** Holcomb to Maj George Fielding Eliot, New York, New York.

Holcomb reveals uneasiness at information imparted to him by Eliot in his letter of 1 September. Holcomb says that he will write Eliot at length about the matter, after thinking it over for a few days. Holcomb thanks Eliot for forwarding the letter from the lady, because Holcomb is intensely interested in the subject she discussed.

**9 September.** Holcomb to BGen John Marston, 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, Iceland.

Holcomb upbraids Marston for complaining about the Army sending Maj-Gen Bonesteel to take command of operations in Iceland. Holcomb wants to keep good relations with the Army and thinks it only reasonable that it should now run the show, as the Army has more troops there than the Marines do. He further cautions Marston about being so foolish as to request a transfer; Holcomb feels the Marines need Marston there now more than ever to look after the 4,200 Marines still present. Holcomb does regret the fact that Marston and his men probably will be "detached for service with the Army." Holcomb tried to prevent this to maintain the principle of unity of command, but he has been overruled, especially in view of rumors of a "raping episode." Holcomb demands that Marston make a full report on the episode because of the damage it has caused to the prestige of the Corps, which was so high before.

**10 September.** Holcomb memorandum for Adm Stark.

Holcomb sets out for Stark the legal situation in force when Marine units are detached to Army service and then back to the Navy. He understands that the four Marines involved in the rape case in Iceland are now being tried by Navy general court martial. Nevertheless he would like Stark to ask JAG for an opinion on the legality of these proceedings.

**15 September.** Adm Harold R. Stark memorandum to Holcomb.

Stark says he received a visitor who greatly praised the Marine Corps for its "snappiness and appearance" in contrast with some of the other branches of service. Stark asks Holcomb to give his men a pat on the back and "read between the lines," referring obviously to the comment above of comparing the services.

**19 September.** Holcomb "personal" letter to Adm Harold R. Stark.

Holcomb hopes Stark can see his way to nominating BGen Russell B. Putnam (currently Paymaster of the Marine Corps) to the prestigious post of Secretary-Treasurer of the Navy Mutual Aid. It would not only be a great plum for Putnam, who has worked 33 years in the Pay Department and longs for this job as a way to an honorable retirement post, but it also would be a great shot in the arm for the Marine Corps.

**23 September.** Honorable Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury, Washington, D.C., to Holcomb.

Morgenthau forwards a victrola recording of the "Ballad of the Leatherneck Corps" which was aired recently on one of the "Treasury Hour" broadcasts. The ballad praises the Marines who occupied Iceland and it has been requested by Marine Corps admirers from all over the country. Morgenthau thought Holcomb would like a copy. [Holcomb on 24 September sends an appreciative thank-you note].

**26 September.** A. E. Eggleston, *Life*, New York, New York to Holcomb.

Eggleston insists that Holcomb feel under no obligation to acknowledge or comment each time he receives advance copies of relevant *Life* issues. But Eggleston assures Holcomb he will continue to send the copies and, of course, any comments Holcomb has will be most welcome.

**29 September.** Holcomb to BGen Emile P. Moses, MB Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb is relieved to hear that the water shortage is not as bad as first believed. Holcomb hopes to visit Parris Island sometime in the winter because he enjoys "the quiet life" there and the chance to do some shooting.

This folder also contains social and patriotic invitations; correspondence about the Marine Corps League and the desire of its members to assist Holcomb; requests for favors from friends (including Alfred V. Dupont) and family; a letter of reminiscences from World War I; thank-you notes for photographs sent to Holcomb; correspondence about the observation of Gen Pershing's birthday; personal letters to and from Sam Meek; correspondence concerning the University of Delaware's conferring an honorary doctor of laws degree on Holcomb; routine business letters on taxes and insurance; and a telephone bill.

*Folder 57*  
1941

**3 October.** Holcomb to Capt H. A. Baldrige, USN, U.S. Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Maryland.

Holcomb is glad at the possibility of acquiring some "Eaton relics" from the Naval Academy Museum.

**4 October.** Holcomb to BGen Philip H. Torrey, 1st Marine Division, MB New River, North Carolina.

Holcomb briefly describes a heated conference he had with top Navy brass, including Adm King, in which Holcomb was able to extract a go-ahead for maneuvers to be held at New River in December. Holcomb then instructs Torrey to spend the next two months "training for combat," since many of his division's weapons have never been used and must be tested. He wants Torrey to help him convince Adm King of the value of the New River training area. Holcomb plans at some point to invite Assistant Secretary Bard to accompany him on an inspection of New River. Holcomb also announces that Torrey's orders to become Commanding General, 1st Division, await only Holland Smith's confirmation. He also plans to bring Vandegrift from the west coast to be Torrey's number-two man, which Holcomb considers to be a "really great personal sacrifice."

**7 October.** Holcomb to Maj George Fielding Eliot, New York, New York.

Holcomb thanks Eliot for giving him a copy of Eliot's article in October *Foreign Affairs*, which he found to be both "timely" and "interesting." He hopes Eliot will look him up when he is in Washington next.

**17 October.** Col Frank Evans, Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii, to Holcomb.

Evans discusses planning for future Marine Corps employment and discharge policies to tie in with the transition from the present war emergency conditions to peacetime. He finishes with a high compliment to the recruiting service of the Marine Corps.

**17 October.** Holcomb to Col Clifton B. Cates, Basic School, MB Philadelphia Navy Yard, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb informs Cates that his busy schedule won't permit him to visit Indian town Gap as he had hoped. But he promises to pass the invitation on to Col James and Gen Vandegrift.

**18 October.** Holcomb to Adm Harold R. Stark, CNO, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb states that both Gens Smith and Torrey agree with his recommendations that the Atlantic Amphibious Force and the 1st Division continue "field training" at New River until after 1 January. They are all pleased with Stark's "action in the matter."

**21 October.** Holcomb to BGen Emile P. Moses, MB Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb discusses the fact that he cannot bend any rules to assist one of Moses' friends to get an appointment as second lieutenant. He emphasizes that he is already under great pressure and that any breach or exception to the rules would cause havoc. He finally states that he has yet to talk with Seth Williams in detail about his visit to Parris Island.

**24 October.** Holcomb to Maj Henry Leonard, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Holcomb outlines in some detail the officer procurement plan in effect for the Marine Corps from the Naval Academy and from the college ROTC programs, and from a small number of select enlisted men. With the National Emergency, he has adopted a fourth source—the Candidates' Class, which sends highly qualified college graduates through six months of training.

Holcomb then goes on to point out that the Marine Corps does not feel it wise or economical to set up its own system of ROTC candidates in competition with the Army and Navy. He emphasizes that the Marine Corps wants as wide a cross-section as possible from across the country. He foresees a much heavier use of enlisted men promoted temporarily to officers to meet any wartime emergency, as happened in the First World War. Holcomb looks forward to seeing Maj Leonard in Washington. [Leonard's letter of 22 October appears to be lacking an important enclosure and seems to ask Holcomb for help without actually stating what kind of help is sought.]

**25 October.** BGen Emile P. Moses to Holcomb.

Moses thanks Holcomb for his explanation of the ways by which officers are being brought into the Reserves and tells Holcomb that he and Seth Williams "accomplished a great deal" in their talks at Parris Island. Moses wishes he could see active service in the Far East if and when matters deteriorate there, but he implies that he is now too close to retirement age to do so.

**28 October.** Holcomb to Col Gilder D. Jackson, Jr., MB Pearl Harbor Navy Yard, Territory of Hawaii.

Holcomb sends a message for all Marines gathering in Hawaii to celebrate the Marine Corps' birthday. It speaks of appraising the problems and accomplishments of the past year and rededication to the ideals and principles of the Marine Corps during its 166-year existence. [Jackson's letter of 18 October requests the message and notes that the camp is in preparation for receiving the 2d Division].

**28 October.** Holcomb to MajGen William P. Upshur, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb assures Upshur that Holcomb can comply with Upshur's request for Fields' service in the 11th Marines, after the latter completes a course at Fort Sill. Holcomb then asks Upshur who he wants as his chief of staff at San Francisco. Holcomb makes a brief commentary on conditions at the new Headquarters building in Arlington. He finishes by noting that he is pleased that Joe Fegan and Henry Larsen passed officer selection, but sorry that Jeschke and Charlie Brooks did not make it.

29 October. Holcomb memorandum for Capt J. R. Beardall, Naval Aide to the President.

Holcomb announces that he is in agreement with Beardall on the impropriety of having President Roosevelt proclaim 10 November as Marine Corps Day, since the Marines technically already participate in Navy Day. But Holcomb would like to know whether Beardall could arrange for the President to send "a brief personal message" to the Marine Corps on its 166th birthday. Holcomb declares that this would be most appreciated throughout the Marine Corps and might even trigger new growth in the currently lagging Marine Corps recruiting effort.

30 October. Holcomb to The Most Rev. John F. O'Hara, New York, New York.

Holcomb states that he, too, is distressed over the lack of a chapel at the Marine Corps Base in San Diego, but he impresses upon the bishop that limited funding to date has forced the Marine Corps to focus upon such basic subsistence items as food and shelter. Holcomb hopes that action will soon be taken to remedy the situation, as he understands Adm Nimitz currently is making a survey of the chapels and construction needs for others throughout the naval establishment. [O'Hara's letter of 27 October contains a plea for opening a chapel at MCB San Diego.]

This folder also contains social and patriotic invitations; the announcement that Holcomb's name will appear in the latest edition of *Who's Who in America*; and that the Military Order of the Dragon has voted to send Holcomb "a complete insignia of the order" as a "historical memorial to the U.S. Marine Corps"; an invitation for Holcomb's life to be portrayed in *True Comics* to inspire American children (which Holcomb declines); a letter from George Messersmith expressing his joy over Holcomb's receipt of an honorary degree from the University of Delaware; and business letters relating to telephone service, the cost of health care, and the repair of his watch.

Folder 58  
1941

1 November. Josephus Daniels, *The News and Observer*, Raleigh, North Carolina, to Holcomb.

Daniels states that he has left Mexico briefly at the request of President Roosevelt and during that absence would like to meet with Holcomb for a few days in North Carolina. His paper, *The News and Observer*, has already come out welcoming a Holcomb visit to the Raleigh-New Bern-New River area. [Holcomb's reply of 13 November extends his deepest regret over not going to meet Daniels, but insists Holcomb has to guide the budget through Congress, including \$18 million for New River's completion.]

3 November. RAdm A. E. Watson, Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Watson wants it known that he does not wish to have Maj A. L. W. Gordon, USMC (recently returned to active duty), assigned to his district. He asserts that Gordon is unfit for duty. [Holcomb's letter of 7 November assures Watson that his desire will be observed in regard to keeping Gordon out of the 4th District.]

6 November. LtCol Clark W. Thompson, USMCR, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, to Holcomb.

Thompson expresses his gratitude for the rich experience of taking the course

at the Naval War College. He feels it will equip him not only for better service to the Marine Corps but also for making him better able to promote national defense as a civilian. Now he is anxious to get back with the Marine Corps and would like to be with Gen Vogel's division. [Holcomb's reply of 10 November announces that both Thompson and Watters will be assigned to the FMF on the west coast.]

**7 November.** Holcomb to Col Frank Halford, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Holcomb asserts that as far as he is concerned "there will be no more political appointments to the Marine Corps Reserve." He writes this in connection with Halford's letter of 28 October [not in the collection], which apparently referred to the desire of a certain state governor to be appointed to the Reserve. Holcomb disagrees and sees it as a bad precedent.

**12 November.** Holcomb to MajGen Philip H. Torrey, 1st Marine Division, MB New River, North Carolina.

Holcomb relates his delight at inspecting Torrey's division first-hand. He found the division looking very good and expects it will be "competent to meet any problem," once it has a chance to develop facility in the use of all its weaponry. Holcomb now asks Torrey to reconsider his policy on relaxing liberty leaves; Holcomb would like him to grant leave at other times than the weekends. Holcomb is happy he could get Torrey a temporary promotion.

**13 November.** RAdm W. H. Allen, Commandant, Navy Yard, Charleston, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

Allen asserts that, after a five-month testing period, he sticks to his original opinion that the assignment of LtCol Coyle, USMC (Ret), as head of the Marine Barracks was not helpful. He now suggests very strongly that he would like an officer from the active list detached to fill Coyle's position. [Holcomb's reply of 18 November goes into great detail about how the Marine Corps' active officer list has been stretched to the utmost to fit the most pressing needs of the service, so that no other officer is available for transfer to Charleston. Also, Holcomb strongly disagrees with Allen's opinion that a retired officer is not suitable for a Marine Barracks command at a navy yard; Holcomb further asserts that Coyle has all the experience needed and is *not* too old.]

**13 November.** BGen John Marston, 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, Iceland, to Holcomb.

Marston apologizes for not being able to have the Marines in Iceland broadcast a part in the Marine Corps birthday-party program. The Army refused to cooperate and communications with the USA were bad anyway. Marston has learned from a Navy inspector that there probably will be relief for the Marine brigade by February.

**17 November.** MajGen Philip Torrey to Holcomb.

Torrey gives his opinion and that of the other officers on the question Holcomb put to him in his letter of 12 November. Torrey was pleased at Holcomb's visit. Torrey then reports that there are some "malcontents" among the officers who are creating difficulties because they cannot take the hard work and harsh living conditions. He has them under close scrutiny. He announces that combat firing has been ordered increased and leave policies somewhat liberalized. He expects that a lot of the early housekeeping problems soon will be mastered.

**12 November.** Holcomb to RAdm Russell Willson, Superintendent, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland.

Holcomb has decided to order Larson to attend the Naval War College preparatory to his going to sea. Holcomb realizes this may be a burden, but hopes Willson can release Larson soon. [Willson replies on 18 November that Larson's departure will be a great loss but he will have him ready to go to the Naval War College in January.]

**19 November.** Holcomb to MajGen William P. Upshur, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb goes into detail about quarters requirements for Rupertus, Vogel, Price, and Fegan; they should all get houses. He hopes Upshur can give Rupertus some duty at San Diego that will prepare him for taking over command. Holcomb then briefly comments on his new office at Arlington and the necessity to drive to the Department every morning. He suggests that extending business hours to Saturdays should indicate the seriousness of the National Emergency.

**22 November.** Holcomb to BGen John Marston.

Holcomb asserts that Headquarters "will leave no stone unturned" to get the brigade back to the USA. He then dwells on the naming of camps for living commandants and insists that none be named for him. He moves on to discuss key assignments and notes that he will miss Vandegrift after four years of working closely with him. Barrett will do well, but "such changes are rather saddening."

**22 November.** Holcomb to MajGen James C. Breckinridge, USMC (Ret), Summit Point, West Virginia.

Holcomb asks Breckinridge to give an address for him in front of the American Military Engineers Society in December. The president of the club is the son of their old friend, Adm Mayo. Holcomb is concerned at the drop-off in recruiting results; Holcomb would like to have 75,000 men by early spring. Holcomb hopes Breckinridge will drop in and see him at the new Headquarters' location, which he likes.

**25 November.** Holcomb to Adm C. C. Bloch, Commandant, 14th Naval District, Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii.

Holcomb discusses with Bloch the constitution of a new Marine command to be called Marine Defense Forces, 14th Naval District, which would bring together the Marine barracks and defense battalions. He wants Bloch to help him in the choice of a suitable commander. Holcomb would prefer Henry Larsen for the job, with Col Griffin as his chief of staff. Both men have excellent service records and in-depth technical education. In any event, Holcomb would like Bloch to release Pickett from duty as district Marine officer and have Gilder Jackson take over that duty.

**25 November.** Holcomb to Maj J. M. McHugh, American Embassy, Chungking, China.

Holcomb assures McHugh he will put in a good word with the Office of Naval Intelligence to have McHugh raised to a temporary lieutenant colonel and try to provide a good relief for Sgt Osborn. Holcomb hopes McHugh will continue to keep him informed of developments in China. He then fills McHugh in on all the latest news of Marine Corps growth and important officer assignments.

This folder also contains an invitation to attend the Naval Academy graduation exercises in December; correspondence about personal and service favors sought; invitations to social and patriotic meetings; a number of letters about Navy football tickets; letters from political figures in Virginia and California; a long newsletter from the Yale-in-China program; a letter detailing arrangements for a hunting trip to Georgia; and articles from A. J. Higgins.

*Folder 59*  
1941

**3 December.** Holcomb to Governor-Elect Colgate W. Darden, Jr., Norfolk, Virginia.

Holcomb suggests that he would like very much for 475 members of the candidates' class and a band to attend Darden's inauguration as Governor of Virginia, but he is afraid that the only way it can be arranged is if the state will foot the bill for lunch and railroad transportation to and from the event. Holcomb certainly hopes it will transpire because of the good publicity likely. He himself plans to attend Darden's inaugural.

**3 December.** Holcomb to Maj Emery E. Larson, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland.

Holcomb congratulates Larson and the Navy football team on the third victory over Army while under his tutelage.

**4 December.** RAdm C. C. Bloch, Commandant, 14th Naval District, Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, to Holcomb.

Bloch and Kimmel believe that all Marine activities should be placed in the hands of one commander, who should be district Marine officer as well. At the same time, Bloch wants the command of the Marine Barracks at Pearl Harbor separated from the other command and given to Col Jackson. Bloch intimates he would much prefer to keep Pickett on as the number one Marine in the district because of his excellent performance and knowledge of the area; but if Holcomb insists, Bloch will accept Larsen and expects he also will do a fine job.

**5 December.** MajGen John A. Lejeune, Norfolk, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Lejeune thanks Holcomb for all his efforts on behalf of S. 1630, a bill which would advance Lejeune in rank. He feels sure it will pass the Senate now, and once it does, he intends to contact chairman Vinson, head of the House Naval Affairs Committee to move in like manner. [Holcomb reports on 11 December that S. 1630 passed the Senate and went to the House].

**11 December.** Holcomb memorandum for the Secretary of the Navy.

Holcomb gives Secretary Knox the latest bits of information on the defense of Wake Island. While the Marine defenders lost nine out of 12 of their fighting airplanes in the first waves of Japanese attacks, the last three planes managed to sink two Japanese vessels and the defenders sounded determined to resist stoutly against a likely invasion.

**12 December.** Holcomb memorandum for Adm Nimitz.

Holcomb asks Nimitz to check to see if he has a bill in his bureau (Navigation) relating to the payment of one year's salary to families of missing persons. Holcomb feels both the Navy and Marine Corps are in need of such legislation.

Next he discusses Vinson's request for the exact number of Navy and Marine Corps personnel needs. Holcomb mention 150,000 to 200,000 for the Marines and hopes to maintain present 1:5 ratios with the Navy. Holcomb would like Nimitz to answer this one immediately as the Marine Corps is fast approaching authorized levels.

**13 December.** Holcomb to MajGen Clayton B. Vogel, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb asks Vogel to place Capt Jimmy Roosevelt, the President's son, in any job within his division that seems suitable. Roosevelt had personally requested to serve under Vogel after having spent some time with Donovan in the Office of the Coordinator of Information. Holcomb wants to be informed of the final disposition in the matter.

**13 December.** Holcomb to Gen George C. Marshall, USA, Chief of Staff, War Department, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb has sent special orders by personal courier to three companies in Miami to carry out the operation agreed to by Marshall. Holcomb asks Marshall to have the copy of written orders in his custody "destroyed or put in your confidential files."

**15 December.** Holcomb to the Under Secretary of War, War Department, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb requests the return of Col Frank Whitehead, who had been detached to head the Army Industrial College. Holcomb has great need of his services, but he thanks the Army for having paid such a compliment to the Marine Corps by selecting him in the first place.

**16 December.** MajGen Clayton B. Vogel, Second Joint Training Force, Camp Elliott, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Vogel reports that the 1st Aircraft Wing, under Geiger, is already under the Joint Training Force and Vogel hopes to bring the 2d Aircraft Wing under his command once everything is organized.

**22 December.** Holcomb to BGen Roy S. Geiger, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Naval Air Station, San Diego, California.

Holcomb discusses the assignment of ground unit officers to aircraft wing commanders for the defense of airfields. He regrets the shortage of officers above the lieutenant level, but assures Geiger that recruiting is being increased dramatically. [Geiger outlines his problems with the aircraft wing in his letter of 20 December and the collection contains a memo from Charlie Barrett to Geiger of 29 December giving specific answers to each of Geiger's points.]

**22 December.** Col Gilder D. Jackson, Jr., MB Navy Yard, Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, to Holcomb.

Jackson relates some of the heroic actions of the Marines at Pearl Harbor in shooting down Japanese aircraft. He and his men came through the attack without casualties. But Col Whaling is coming to Washington and will brief Holcomb in more detail. Jackson states that the bigger risk now is trying to "avoid being shot by Army and Navy sentries who are stationed in our immediate vicinity."

22 December. B. S. Barron, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Barron has just dined with Senator Walsh and is most excited and happy for Holcomb upon hearing about the bill to promote Holcomb in rank. He is also pleased to say that he passed a physical examination. [In Holcomb's reply of 26 December, Holcomb cautions that the bill to make him a lieutenant general is "a long way from becoming law."].

27 December. Holcomb to Mr. Marshall Andrews, Staff Writer, *The Washington Post*, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb upbraids Andrews for the note of discouragement and defeatism in his *Washington Post* article on the probable loss of the Midway Islands. Holcomb assures him that the Marines stationed there do not feel sorry for themselves and are determined not to lose. He suggests that Andrews would do the country a great service by dropping this defeatist talk.

30 December. Holcomb to MajGen Philip H. Torrey, 1st Marine Division, MB New River, North Carolina.

Holcomb regrets he may be too busy to come down for the maneuvers to be held at New River. He appreciates Torrey's offering to put up the Holcombs plus whatever guests they wanted.

This folder contains numerous Christmas greetings; several offers of services to the Marine Corps from retired officers; an announcement of the naming of Holcomb as an honorary chairman of the Boys Club of the Washington Metropolitan Police; inquiries about Marines missing in action from Hawaii and Wake Island; messages from friends and ex-servicemen seeking favors; letters about the death of Pat Evans in Hawaii; cancellation of Marine participation in Colgate Darden's inauguration; letters of introduction for the new air attache of the Chinese Embassy; several letters about Capolino's official portraits and a mural for Colgate Darden; social invitations turned down; a letter in which the Marine Corps League extends its offer to publicize Marine Corps interests; and an invitation from two friends to do some duck shooting in the South. Also Johnson Automatics Inc., sends Holcomb its latest instruction manual on the Johnson light machine gun, and A. J. Higgins encloses a special report on Higgins Industries, Inc., efforts to publicize the Marine Corps on its radio programs. Retired Adm Lackey writes Holcomb a glowing letter of praise. Copies of Holcomb's letters to the wives of Col Ashurst and Maj Brown, who were captured in North China by the Japanese are included.

Folder 60  
1942

1 January. Holcomb memorandum for the Chief of Naval Operations.

Holcomb requests that the Wake garrison be "cited immediately by the President or the Secretary of the Navy for its gallant defense of that island." He goes on to recommend the development of a special decoration for organizations involved in one or more gallant actions against the enemy and to base it on the concept of the French *foutragere*. Holcomb encloses a draft for the citation and also a proposed dispatch from the Secretary of the Navy to the beleaguered remnants of the 1st and 6th Defense Battalions stationed at Johnston, Palmyra, and Midway Islands.

**1 January.** Holcomb to Col Henry L. Larsen, 8th Marines, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb announces that Larsen will gain a temporary promotion to brigadier general and Holcomb is trying to facilitate the paperwork for him to assume the rank and wear the uniform. Holcomb expects Senate confirmation tomorrow.

**2 January.** Holcomb to Capt John J. Capolino, USMCR, Depot of Supplies, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb informs Capolino that he is passing along his portraits of Knox to the Secretary of the Navy. Holcomb feels sure that Capolino can at least be considered an applicant to do the Secretary's official portrait.

**3 January.** Holcomb to Col John C. Dooley, National Lead Co., New York, New York.

Holcomb tells Dooley that the Senate bill to make him a lieutenant general was approved by Senator Walsh's Committee on Naval Affairs after appropriate hearings, but Chairman Vinson has not yet introduced such a bill into the House. Holcomb surmises that the legislation may eventually succeed in raising his rank.

**3 January.** Holcomb to RAdm Edward C. Kalbfus, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb announces that he will have to order LtCol Gale Cummings to sea upon the request of Adm King and thus cut short his stay at the Naval War College. He is to replace Col Riley, whom King has ordered to go to Washington with him. Holcomb regrets having to make the change, but is sure Kalbfus understands. [Kalbfus agrees to Holcomb's request in his reply of 5 January.]

**7 January.** Holcomb memorandum for Adm Stark.

Holcomb deals with his own views about the life and death of Maj Earl Ellis in this brief memorandum reply to Stark. Holcomb considered Ellis one of his best friends and one of the most talented Marines of all times. He believes that Ellis died from "some tropical disease." Ellis had signed a resignation from the Marine Corps before going on the mission so it could be disavowed if necessary. Holcomb hopes that no story will be published on him.

**5 January.** BGen Samuel M. Harrington, Commandant, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Harrington invites Holcomb to come down and be present at the graduation exercises for the current Base Defense Weapons Class, the Reserve Officers' Class and the Candidates' Class. He warns Holcomb, however, that he will have to shake hands with 794 graduates. [Holcomb accepts this awesome duty in a brief reply of 6 January, but then a notation appears "can't make it."]

**12 January.** Holcomb to VAdm R. A. Ingersoll, CinC, Atlantic Fleet, New York, New York.

Holcomb gives Ingersoll the option of having Cummings relieve Riley at the end of January or possibly waiting until June if King allows it. Holcomb says that he misses having Ingersoll in Washington and states that a "lot of amusing things continue to happen in the midst of a lot of tragic things."

16 January. MajGen Charles F. B. Price, CG, 2d Marine Division, FMF, Camp Elliott, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Price expresses his fear that commissioning Donovan, Coordinator of the Office of Information, presented a danger to the Marine Corps in that someday "the tail might end up wagging the dog." Price realizes, of course, that higher authorities are possibly forcing Donovan upon Holcomb and that he may have no choice. Price then suggests other preferable leaders for the proposed "Commando Service." He fears Marine Corps personnel and resources are already stretched to the limit to undertake it.

17 January. Holcomb to MajGen Charles F. B. Price.

Holcomb's reply to Price's letter appears to be directed to an earlier letter that came through official correspondence channels, as it does not answer Price's questions raised in his 16 January letter. In this one, Holcomb apologizes for the tragic tearing-up of Price's command, but asserts that the detachments were fully justified. Holcomb then turns to his latest appearance before the Appropriations Subcommittee and describes it as a "love feast" in which he could have obtained \$1 million living expenses if he had merely asked. He finishes by saying that Fegan and Price have both been authorized to hold onto their "red stripes."

19 January. Holcomb to Mr. Samuel W. Meek, New York, New York.

Holcomb seethes with anger over a Mr. Palmer's attempt to get his story on Earl Ellis published in *Life* and the way in which Palmer expressed his attitude to Adm Stark: Holcomb asks Meek to see to it that the article is stopped. Holcomb was happy about having the opportunity to meet Henry Luce at Meek's dinner party with the Holcombs. Then Holcomb goes on to praise the very excellent treatment of the defense of Wake Island on the "March of Time."

Finally, Holcomb expresses great foreboding and sadness over the possibility that William Donovan may be forced on the Marine Corps. He foresees great resentment among both commissioned and enlisted personnel at having an outsider come in and take over the Marine Corps' biggest role—amphibious operations. He himself feels threatened by probable loss of respect from his men because he permitted such outside interference.

20 January. Holcomb to MajGen William P. Upshur, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb asks Upshur to draft a detailed plan for decentralizing the Marine Corps. Holcomb himself is in favor of decentralizing as much as is "practicable."

19 January. Col Clifton B. Cates, Basic School, MB Philadelphia Navy Yard, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Cates congratulates Holcomb on his promotion to lieutenant general and hopes it will bring him happiness and "not an additional gray hair." Cates says his students are busy trying to make up nearly three weeks of class time lost while on maneuvers. He feels they did gain valuable seagoing experience as well as practice in landing operations. Finally, he would like Holcomb to be guest speaker for commencement 31 January. [Holcomb replies 20 January that FDR has not yet signed for his promotion to lieutenant general; he regrets that he has previously accepted Harrington's invitation to the Quantico graduation for the same day—Holcomb will go to the next one in Philadelphia if sufficient notice is given.]

**21 January.** Holcomb to MajGen Douglas C. McDougal, USMC (Ret), New Bern, North Carolina.

Holcomb says that McDougal's congratulations came at the perfect moment, as he had just learned from ticker tape that the President signed the bill making him lieutenant general. He sees it as a "just recognition of the importance of the Marine Corps" and Holcomb is also pleased it happened while he is Commandant.

**22 January.** Mr. Samuel Meek, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Meek asserts that the Maj Ellis story has been blocked as requested by Holcomb and he need not worry about it for the present time. If it surfaces again, Meek asks Holcomb to let him know so he can talk to whomever.

**23 January.** Holcomb memorandum for Adm Moreell.

Holcomb apologizes for the \$4,000 cost of an unnamed tunnelling operation that had to be done under a pre-existing building. He compared the effort to the building of railroad tunnels through the Swiss Alps. The subject of the memo is only referred to by the initials "T.H.C.," but was apparently a Marine facility of some type ordered built by Holcomb. The latter acknowledges Moreell's generosity in the matter and looks forward to a big party. [Moreell's letter of 22 January indicates that the \$4,000 expended on "T.H.C." construction was well worth it; he does not ask for any reimbursement.]

**27 January.** BGen Charles Barrett, MB Parris Island, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

Barrett tells of first impressions on arriving at Parris Island Headquarters and finding Moses calmly in control of things. He feels that the quality of officers and fresh recruits is very high. He plans to inspect the buildings today at Parris Island and Hilton Head and then check out the recruit depot tomorrow. He will give a full report upon his return to Washington.

**27 January.** MajGen John A. Lejeune, Norfolk, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Lejeune informs Holcomb that S. 1630 has favorable backing now in the House Naval Affairs Committee and should come up for a vote before the full House on 22 February.

**28 January.** Holcomb memorandum to Adm Charles R. Train.

Holcomb lists for Train the available statistics on Marine Corps casualties from 7 December 1941 to date. The total of Marine Corps deaths is 144; missing, 2; prisoners of war, 762; and died from wounds, 8.

**30 January.** Holcomb to BGen John Marston, 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, Iceland.

Holcomb announces that once Marston's men get back to the U.S., they have been ordered to go by rail back "to the delightful post from which they came," i.e., San Diego, California. They will help reconstitute the depleted units already there. Holcomb mentions that he has dispatched Barrett, who was recovering from a collapsed lung, to visit and inspect Parris Island and New River; Holcomb feels it is a good idea for officers from headquarters to travel a bit and see "what the lads are doing on the spot." Holcomb then remarks that his three stars still feel strange, but the Navy has thus far taken it all very amicably. He knows it was a compliment directed at a much deserving Marine Corps.

**7 January.** LtGen H. H. Arnold, USA, Chief of the Army Air Force, to Holcomb.

Arnold says he has just received from Adm Towers the report on the "gallant defense" of Wake Island by the Marines; it is the first account he has read and shows what "magnificent work" the Marines did there. He says members of all the services should try to emulate their heroism. [Holcomb replies 15 January profusely thanking Arnold for expressing his feelings about the Marines at Wake and states that he will send copies of Arnold's message to the families of all Marine aviation personnel participating in the defense of Wake.]

**30 January.** Holcomb to MajGen Charles F. B. Price, 2d Marine Division, San Diego, California.

Holcomb announces that he will have the Marines returning from Iceland sent out to Price in San Diego as quickly as possible. Holcomb says that in this one instance common sense seems to have "prevailed."

This folder contains a large number of political, social, and patriotic invitations; an equally great quantity of requests for special favors, including numerous requests for positions in the Marine Corps; another letter from the Yale-in-China group; a few letters bearing gifts or congratulations on Holcomb's advancement to lieutenant general; several notes from Senators; routine requests for transfers or assignment changes; letters concerning newspaper articles about Holcomb and Marine activities; a number of personal cablegrams; and a few routine business letters.

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**20 January.** MajGen Clayton B. Vogel, 2d Joint Training Force, MCB San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Vogel is pleased at Holcomb's order that a new rifle range be built at Camp Elliott; it will give the Division unhampered access to a range. Then Vogel asks Holcomb to use his clout with regard to procuring more transport planes from the Bureau of Aeronautics, since the Division is now lacking any for parachute training. He also discusses the availability of Army transport ships and the employment of officers from the 2d Marines. [Holcomb's reply of 2 February shows that he is in agreement with Vogel's requests for transport planes.]

**2 February.** Holcomb to BGen Emile P. Moses, MB Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb tells Moses of his idea to have LtCol Barron, an experienced lawyer, help deal with FBI reports on new recruits. Barrett and Williams have brought back glowing reports of the progress made at Parris Island. Holcomb is pleased that "our people can meet an emergency so cheerfully and satisfactorily."

**29 February.** MajGen Charles F. B. Price, 2d Marine Division, FMF, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Price is delighted at the possibility that the 6th Marines would come back to San Diego and add some experienced veterans to what he feared would become a "rookie outfit." He seems disturbed over the fact that recruitment priorities produce a situation where the best recruits are skimmed off for Aviation, Sea School, Signal School, and Base Organization, leaving the chaff for his Division. He especially wants better talent for filling key jobs and NCO slots. Above all, he would like to have a reliable colonel to head the 9th Regiment, preferably Clifton Cates. Price says he is even willing to accept some Reserve officers,

provided they have some skill. He pleads for adequate ammunition for the training and proficiency of the entire division with weapons at hand. Price asks Holcomb if he could not lift the restriction against married Marines getting regular commissions since many of them are extremely talented. He also seeks a special intelligence fund to defray transportation costs for his agents who are trying to uncover enemy who are active in the area. Finally he asks to be allowed to calm the "widows and relations of the departed" about the "safe arrival of Henry and his gang."

**4 February.** Holcomb to MajGen Charles F. B. Price.

Holcomb assures Price that the first elements of the "wanderers" should get to San Diego about the 13th. He also plans to send some of Edson's men to help build up a nucleus within Vogel's force for carrying out amphibious raids. Holcomb also plans to detail Lemuel Shepherd, instead of Cates, to Price by 1 April. As for ammunition, Holcomb asserts that it is a "common problem" throughout, but he is trying as much as he can to solve this. Holcomb assures Price that "Henry's outfit" has arrived safely, but warns strictly against any publication of troop movements. Holcomb asks Price to place all official business matters in official correspondence and "confine your personal letters to juicy bits of gossip" which Holcomb obviously wants. As far as better quality recruits, Holcomb informs Price that recruiting will soon have to wind down and consequently the Marine Corps can be more selective and allow longer recruit training periods.

**5 February.** Holcomb to MajGen Philip H. Torrey, 1st Division, MB New River, North Carolina.

After briefly discussing officer transfers and a disciplinary problem, Holcomb asks about Torrey's preference in the adoption of a cloth belt in the Marine uniform instead of the Sam Browne belt. Holcomb hopes to make it to New River by the end of the month.

**16 February.** Col William J. Donovan, Coordinator of Information, Washington, D.C., to Holcomb.

Donovan reports he will have six Marines and Navy officers, working for COI, available for sea duty. He then cautions Holcomb to be very careful in selecting their replacements. He needs men with both scholastic background and "practical experience in the field." He stresses that he does not want "reserve and retired officers." Donovan obviously wants the very best, but he is willing to accept some men from among "those who, regardless of their proficiency as officers, have been retired for physical reasons."

**18 February.** Holcomb memorandum for Secretary Knox, regarding "Reserve Commission for Governor H. E. Stassen of Minnesota."

Holcomb realizes that Stassen is a "fine man," but he has difficulty accepting a basic defect—Stassen is known to have pulmonary tuberculosis. Additionally, Holcomb feels strongly that it is an error to commission any governor while in office. There would be claims by others that Stassen was "seeking favorable publicity with a Marine Corps uniform." Holcomb alludes to his rejection of the Governor of Louisiana on the same grounds. He states finally that Stassen should be accepted only if he resigns from office and "then only if his military background and physical condition justify it."

**19 February.** Holcomb to Col William J. Donovan.

Holcomb affirms that orders have been drawn up to send LtCol William W. Buckley as Col J. T. Smith's replacement for the COI job with the CNO. Holcomb will allow Smith to stay a few days longer to show Buckley the ropes. Buckley has performed a wide variety of duties during more than 30 years of service.

**20 February.** Holcomb to BGen Richard P. Williams, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Executive Department, Trenton, New Jersey.

Holcomb commiserates on Williams' having to resign from his new job because of New Jersey's scandal-ridden administration. Holcomb regrets that he cannot assist Williams in finding a new job at the moment, but Holcomb will keep him in mind. [Williams' letter of 17 February shows that his resignation is due to the fact that the Republicans would not accept him; he writes Holcomb to "offer his services to the Marines."]

**26 February.** Holcomb to BGen Emile P. Moses, MB Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb announces his desire to stay over at Parris Island 6-7 March on his return from Florida. He is especially anxious to see Parris Island in its "expanded condition."

**27 February.** Holcomb to MajGen John A. Lejeune, USMC (Ret), Norfolk, Virginia.

Holcomb informs Lejeune of the successful passage and signing of S.1630 into law. The Navy Department is accumulating the names of all officers eligible for advancement under the stipulations of the law. Once the Secretary of the Navy approves a report by the Board of Awards, Lejeune will get his commission as lieutenant general. Holcomb will attempt to get FDR to sign Lejeune's commission, though it is no longer the practice for the President to sign. [Lejeune's letter of 21 February alludes to the bill passing the House and he wants to know what action he must take to get his commission. He also would like his signed by the President.]

**28 February.** Holcomb to RAdm Edward C. Kalbfus, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Holcomb finds it necessary to recall Col Cauldwell from the Naval War College in spite of his previous assurances to the contrary. Cauldwell's talents are perfectly suited to managing the Marine group within the command of Adm Brainard, Naval Attack Force commander in the Atlantic Fleet. He hopes Kalbfus will understand and not "feel handicapped" by Cauldwell's detachment.

The bulk of additional correspondence in this folder consists of letters of congratulations upon Holcomb's promotion to lieutenant general; social and patriotic invitations; pleas for favors; the forwarding of clippings by friends and admirers; discussions of the Navy Relief Fund and other charitable causes; correspondence on the awarding of an honorary degree to Holcomb from John Marshall College; routine letters on assignments; arrangements for Holcomb's trip to Florida; several memoranda to Adm Stark involving personal matters; letters to youngsters appreciating their interest in the Marine Corps; letters about the large contribution from the workers of the Personal Products Corporation of Milltown, New Jersey, to the Navy Relief Society on behalf of the "heroic defenders of Wake Island;" and message regarding the naming of Niland Artillery Training Area in California.

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**6 March.** MajGen John A. Lejeune, Norfolk, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Lejeune acknowledges his pride in the Marine Corps' fine record in the present conflict and praises Holcomb's "efficiency" and his "unselfish service." He is deeply grieved at the passing away of Gen Breckinridge, whom he felt almost to be a brother. Gen Lejeune hopes that Holcomb can get FDR to sign his commission; it would make an excellent remembrance.

**9 March.** Holcomb to BGen Joe C. Fegan, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb refers to their effort to block "D" [?] from getting a job, and asks if Fegan can do anything further to prevent it. Holcomb then comments on his visit to Parris Island and remarks that the "Greyhound Platoons are working hard" and that he found the glider training there very impressive. After another trip to New River in April, Holcomb hopes he can return to the west coast to visit Fegan.

**16 March.** Holcomb to Mrs. James C. Breckinridge, Summit Point, West Virginia.

Holcomb is most grateful for Mrs. Breckinridge's notes about her husband's death and the forwarding of Gen Breckinridge's last letter, which he had never mailed, to Holcomb. On Holcomb's visit to Parris Island recently, his thoughts drifted back to Breckinridge's regime there before the fire. Holcomb remarks that there are now 12,000 recruits at Parris Island. He fondly recalls Breckinridge as an "officer and a gentleman" and one of Holcomb's oldest friends in the Marine Corps.

**18 March.** Holcomb to MajGen Clayton B. Vogel, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb states that he is not upset by the release of information about the "Oceanside project," because it has been approved. Holcomb then goes on to ask Vogel to write to Holcomb personally about Vogel's objections to Holcomb's plan for developing company, as opposed to battalion, messes. Holcomb feels the loss of economy in personnel is more than outweighed by the experienced and better feeding gained for actual battlefield conditions. He also asks Vogel to express his opinion about the housing plan at Oceanside. Holcomb ends by announcing his desire to visit Vogel in his "shack" rather than staying with the Fegans.

**18 March.** Holcomb to BGen Emile P. Moses, MB Parris Island, South Carolina.

After telling Moses why he should not be retained in an active command, especially a combat command, Holcomb finally acquiesces to leaving Moses in command at Parris Island, because all is going so well there. He affirms that Moses should "feel flattered" at being retained after his retirement.

**16 March.** BGen Emile P. Moses to Holcomb.

Moses requests of Holcomb that Moses be given a chance to have a "command in the active areas" during "this war." He points to excellent fitness reports and the high regard that Adms Richardson, Reeves, Hepburn, and Bloch have for his work and knowledge of Marine operations within the fleet. If Holcomb is unable to grant his first choice, then Moses seeks to remain in command at Parris Island.

**23 March.** MajGen Clayton B. Vogel, CG, Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet, Camp Elliot, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Vogel looks forward to having Holcomb visit and stay with Vogel on 7 April. He plans to have finished his study of "company versus battalion mess" ready for Holcomb to move to a final decision. Vogel goes on to discuss the type of

barracks construction he wants for Santa Margarita. He ends with a plea for Holcomb to stay longer than five days, because he will have such a large area to cover when he comes.

**23 March.** Holcomb memorandum for Capt J. L. McCrea.

Holcomb reports on his efforts to get special Presidential backing for the detail of BGen Ralph S. Keyser as Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps. He goes on to list Keyser's impressive record and background. He is especially pleased at the job which Gen Keyser has done in officer procurement during his year as Director of Reserve. Holcomb has ordered Barrett [the former Assistant Commandant] to field duty, and would feel that he was slighting any other younger officer by taking him away from active duty in the field. Keyser is less than 59.

**23 March.** Holcomb to BGen John Marston, USMC HQ, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb announces his intention to place the 2d Division under Marston's command. Holcomb will thus put Marston in for a temporary promotion to major general. Holcomb assures Marston of Holcomb's great confidence and admiration for the job Marston did in Iceland. Holcomb hopes to see Marston on the West Coast.

**24 March.** MajGen Charles F. B. Price, CG, 2d Marine Division, FME, Camp Elliott, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Price discusses at length his thoughts about the officers and men of the 2d Division at the moment of his leaving them. He describes the high degree of battle-worthiness of the Division and brags "they can lick their weight in wildcats of any description." He praises the fine work of Rupertus in handling the base efficiently and affirms that Barney Vogel has maintained an excellent rapport. The remainder of this lengthy letter deals with proposed staffing and quarters.

**30 March.** Holcomb to MajGen Charles F. B. Price.

Holcomb is glad that things are working out well for Price. Marston has let Holcomb know that Marston is happy to have Keller Rockey remain in San Diego and serve on his staff at least until he is promoted. Marston should not force the Prices to move out of their quarters any faster than comfortably necessary.

**30 March.** Holcomb to Col Clifton B. Cates, Marine Detachment, Indiantown, Gap, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb regrets he can't attend graduation ceremonies because of the pressure of duties and multiple inspections. He hopes later on to get to Indiantown Gap to see the new classes "at work." Holcomb then asks Cates if he would like to go to the 1st Division as a regimental commander. He must know soon. Holcomb trusts Beckett can run the school.

**26 March.** Col Clifton B. Cates, Director, the Basic School, Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Holcomb.

Cates invites the Holcombs to attend the Basic School graduation on 20 April in Philadelphia and also hopes the Holcombs will come up for a breather at Indiantown Gap, where he will be with the class for the next few weeks.

**31 March.** Holcomb to MajGen Clayton B. Vogel, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb tells Vogel that after thinking over their telephone conversation of yesterday, Holcomb agrees to have "battalion mess halls and Navy type construction." He then gives Vogel a detailed itinerary of his trip to California, including his preferences on what he would like to see in San Diego. He looks forward to the trip greatly.

This folder contains extensive correspondence of a peripheral interest to the mission and activities of the Marine Corps and can be summarized in the following subject categories: social and patriotic invitations; requests for favors regarding entrance into the Marine Corps; general letters from old friends and former military colleagues; specific Navy and Marine Corps requests concerning changes in duty assignments; recreation, quarters, morale, discipline, and regulations; family business and exchanges of information; references to articles, publications, and even poems on the war effort; and additional correspondence on Holcomb's honorary degree from John Marshall College.

*Folder 63*  
1942

**2 April.** Holcomb to Adm Harold R. Stark, USN, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb begins by expressing his deepest regret at not being able to honor Stark Saturday night upon his leaving. Holcomb then relates an anecdotal story of how Stark aided the Marine Corps from the very outset of Holcomb's relationship with Stark, who was Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance in August 1937. As Chief of Naval Operations, Stark is credited by Holcomb as the chief proponent within the Navy Department of expanding Marine Corps personnel from 17,000 to 112,000, and Holcomb says that they shared much joy and grief together over Stark's battles at the White House on behalf of the Marine Corps. Holcomb claims that Stark was one of the few people Holcomb felt he had angered, but still benefitted from Stark's sympathetic and patient attitude. Finally, Holcomb wishes Stark success in his new job with the JCS and states that the Marines at Headquarters "are pleased to have been [Stark's] shipmates."

**4 April.** MajGen Joseph T. McNarney, USA, Acting Chief of Staff, Washington, D.C., to Holcomb.

McNarney thanks Holcomb for his kind congratulations to the Army on their anniversary; Army and Marine Corps have never worked in closer cooperation than they have throughout the present war.

**6 April.** Holcomb to MajGen William P. Upshur, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb (presumably writing en route to or actually from San Diego) tells Upshur that much as he would like to visit with him in San Francisco, his busy schedule in San Diego prevents it this time. He intimates that he could do so on another trip west next fall.

**9 April.** MajGen Emile P. Moses, MB Parris Island, South Carolina to Holcomb.

Moses informs Holcomb of the details of Secretary of the Navy Knox's visit to Parris Island. Moses states that Knox was impressed with his honor guard greeting and then went on to inspect the rifle range, recruits at drill, and the glider field. Moses wishes Knox could have stayed longer but felt that he was pleased with what he saw.

13 April. Holcomb to MajGen Clayton B. Vogel, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb relays his appreciation of Vogel's fine hospitality on his recent visit to San Diego and compliments the quality of his house, called "Casa Parissima." Since Hermle had not left, Holcomb has decided to revoke Hermle's orders "and will leave him with the Division." Holcomb understands the doctors are going to put Vogel's leg in a cast and hopes he will remain quiet so as to allow it to heal.

13 April. Adm Chester W. Nimitz, CinC, U.S. Pacific Fleet, to Holcomb.

Nimitz appreciates Holcomb's note of 11 April delivered by Carlson, who is now studying some of the local problems. Nimitz assures Holcomb that he will accept "without question" any man Holcomb assigns to Nimitz as senior officer and fully trust Holcomb's judgement. Nimitz briefly discusses the Army's desire to swap the Munitions Building for the Arlington Annex occupied by HQ USMC. Then Nimitz ventures the opinion that in spite of the recent move by Knox to lift the ban on bringing "Negros" into Reserve enlistments there probably will be very few qualified enough to pass the stringent entrance examinations for either the Navy or Marine Corps.

As for the war situation, Nimitz is adamant that he will not be satisfied until he has enough airplanes to gain air superiority over the Japanese. He points to the unhappy experience of the British ships where Britain lost air superiority to the Japanese. Finally, he sends Holcomb long overdue congratulations on his promotion to lieutenant general and hopes he will have "further promotion."

13 April. Holcomb to MajGen John Marston, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb sends \$10 to cover the flowers Marston ordered sent for John Beaumont's funeral. Holcomb then shows his happiness that Hermle could be kept with the 2d Division, because Cates was moving to the 1st Division. Holcomb tells Marston how much he enjoyed his visit to San Diego.

13 April. Holcomb to Mrs. Joseph Pendleton, Coronado, California.

Holcomb apologizes for not having visited Mrs. Pendleton while in California, but he knows that Gen Pendleton would have been proud and happy about the large, new training area named Camp Pendleton in his honor. Holcomb spent a whole day touring the length of the new tract.

14 April. Holcomb to MajGen C. H. Bonesteel, USA, U.S. Army Forces Iceland.

Holcomb remarks at how well the joint Marine and Army units performed in Iceland. Holcomb is sure that Bonesteel's "cooperative spirit" had much to do with that success. Finally, Holcomb announces his intention to place Bonesteel's complimentary letter of 1 March in Marston's official record.

13 April. LtGen John A. Lejeune, Norfolk, Virginia, to Holcomb.

Lejeune thanks Holcomb for his efforts in helping to get the legislation passed which enabled Lejeune to receive a promotion to lieutenant general. Lejeune finishes his letter by saying that the Marine Corps has not only maintained its efficiency but even advanced in quality under Holcomb's leadership.

15 April. Holcomb to LtGen John A. Lejeune.

Holcomb is also pleased that he could send Lejeune his commission signed by President Roosevelt. He notes that the same act gives promotions to Matthews, Porter, Campbell, Dyer, Fryer, Harllee, Turrill, and Reid.

**20 April.** Holcomb to the Honorable David I. Walsh, U.S. Senate.

Holcomb thanks Walsh for his assistance in getting "favorable action" on the confirmations of Gens Keyser, Williams, and Mitchell.

**20 April.** Holcomb to Mrs. Mary Breckinridge, Wendover, Kentucky.

Holcomb pays tribute to the key part played by Gen Breckinridge in training both a large number of the officers and the newly enlisted recruits through his commands at Quantico and Parris Island. Holcomb feels the deep loss of a beloved friend and associate. He especially recalls with fondness the relaxing times spent at Parris Island with the Breckinridges. [Mrs. Breckinridge, sister of Gen Breckinridge, in her letter of 16 April, asks questions about the general's service in the Marine Corps.]

**20 April.** Holcomb to RAdm Edward C. Kalbfus, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island

Holcomb informs Kalbfus that he can no longer leave LtCol Cummings at the War College; his services are needed on Adm Ingersoll's staff. Holcomb apologizes that Cummings is being recalled before he finishes his course. [Kalbfus' letter of 3 March discusses the detailing of Col Cauldwell for an important task and the current condition of the War College.]

**29 April.** Holcomb to BGen Roy S. Geiger, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMF, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb thanks Geiger for photographs (rectorgraphs) of the whole California coastal area, but he really had wanted a rectorgraph of the Santa Margarita Ranch area specifically showing the land the Marines intended to purchase. [Geiger's letter of 20 April transmits both the photographs and the polaroid glasses; he asks Holcomb if he wants more photos.]

**30 April.** Col David Nimmer, MB Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to Holcomb.

Nimmer describes drill exercises of the Marines posing as raiders and remarks that Holcomb would not recognize his old stomping grounds. Nimmer also relates one unscheduled raid which he feels should end up as general courts martial for the men involved. Nimmer complains that his brig has room for four men, but that he has "17 tramps in the hoosegow now." He plans to go into conference with the commandant of the station to iron out troop disposition and training. He ends by requesting a separate infantry battalion.

This folder also includes correspondence relating to the following topics: requests for favors and information; invitations to social and patriotic events; a report from Dr. and Mrs. Pettus on the activities of Yale-in-China; Holcomb's applying for a photographic course; exchanges of photographs; letters relating to lives of several key Marine officers who passed away (Joseph Pendleton, John Beaumont, Pat Evans, James Breckinridge); the awarding of honorary membership to Holcomb by a number of clubs, associations, and societies; family correspondence; the offer of field glasses used by Lejeune in World War I; exchange of news with Josephus Daniels, Jack Dooley, and other friends; and an interesting letter in which Holcomb explains his policy on *not* accepting gifts from subordinates.

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1942

8 May. Holcomb to BGen Emile P. Moses, MB Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb rejects the idea of expanding the Parris Island facilities to 20,000 capacity. He feels that Parris Island can successfully absorb 9,000 new recruits every two months at the current rate. Holcomb also reports that he is currently breaking in a new secretary, Maj Frederick C. McConnell, to replace Schmidt. Holcomb plans to have McConnell visit Parris Island after his present trip to New River. Holcomb thus asks Moses to brief McConnell on all aspects of his post including the defense battalions.

6 May. BGen Emile P. Moses to Holcomb.

Moses has heard rumors that Holcomb wants to place more troops at Parris Island. Moses points out that that will require more building and would result in less training area per man. Moses suggests that Holcomb might consider acquiring all of Hilton Head for the additional training areas, ranges, and housing. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) is already busily erecting a much larger docking area at Hilton Head (Jenkin's Landing), that could accommodate a 500-ton lighter. Additionally, Moses thinks Holcomb should give consideration to Burton for more training area, since the government is already condemning property in the area. Finally, he discusses the progress made in antisubmarine defenses at Hilton Head.

15 May. Holcomb memorandum for Capt John L. McCrea, USN, Naval Aide to the President.

Holcomb explains the background and incidents surrounding Marine Corps plans for acquisition and construction of training facilities at Niland, California. Because President Roosevelt authorized an increase in the Marine Corps to 130,000 men, Holcomb had urged the Secretary of the Navy to approve the acquisition of the Santa Margarita Ranch site for new facilities and major construction, and to deemphasize building at Niland. He left it up to Gen Vogel to decide exactly what needed to be built at Niland so as to avoid unnecessary duplication. Holcomb insists that there was no "outside" pressure to make these changes in policy.

15 May. Holcomb memorandum for the Secretary of the Navy.

In reply to a question relayed by Secretary Knox from President Roosevelt, Holcomb briefs Knox on the overall status and precise organizational relationship between the Marine Corps Headquarters and its Division of Aviation, headed by BGen Ralph J. Mitchell. Holcomb points out that his office keeps in constant contact with Mitchell and his staff, and that Headquarters employs a total of 12 Marine aviators. The Division of Aviation also serves as an integral part of the Bureau of Aeronautics.

13 May. Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox memorandum for Gen Holcomb.

Knox tells of discussions held with President Roosevelt about Holcomb's request for retention of Col Kennedy on his staff and the President's anxiety over the reported lack of aviation officers attached to Marine Corps Headquarters. Knox approves Kennedy's retention, but he points out that a colonel should be in charge of a regiment and not be relegated to four years of staff work.

7 May. Holcomb to Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox.

Holcomb asks for a special exemption for Selden Kennedy from detachment from Headquarters as per Public Law No. 536, based on the essential nature of his duties as Director of Personnel. Holcomb wants to retain Kennedy for an additional year.

**16 May.** Holcomb to LtGen John A. Lejeune, Norfolk, Virginia.

Holcomb replies to Lejeune's query of 11 May about a current list of Navy and Marine Corps officers who have died. Holcomb states that the Navy Department lacks the clerical personnel to compile such a list. Holcomb further reports that only one Marine officer has died since Holcomb's last communication with Lejeune on the subject. [Lejeune's letter and a letter from the HQ USMC Casualty Division are in the collection.]

**19 May.** Holcomb to Agnes Taylor Hirshinger, Edison Electric Institute, New York, New York.

Holcomb responds to Hirshinger's letter of 16 May that a women's auxiliary for the Navy is currently under consideration. But he denies that the Marine Corps is thinking about having a women's component. He adds that such an event would be widely publicized in the newspapers. [Hirshinger's letter indicates that she would much prefer to join a Marine Corps women's auxiliary than Navy or Army, and this is why she pressures Holcomb for advance information on the possibilities of women's units in the Marine Corps.]

**20 May.** Holcomb memorandum for the Secretary of the Navy.

Holcomb explains the differing policies on first assignments given Reserves and regulars. In the case of the second lieutenant (Finucane) in question, who is graduating from the Reserve Officers Class, Holcomb tells Secretary Knox that the lieutenant will receive challenging, hazardous duty with the FMF amphibious troops. Holcomb says that regular officers are assigned seagoing duty right off because of the value of such experience for those "making a career in the Marine Corps." Reserve officers generally go directly to the FMF.

**23 May.** Holcomb to RAdm M. H. Simons, Naval Operating Base, Norfolk, Virginia.

Holcomb thanks Simons for notifying him about "property" disputed by the Army and Navy. Holcomb sent Seth Williams to a conference on the problem, and Holcomb personally discussed the matter with Adm Horne.

**25 May.** Holcomb to Honorable Melvin J. Maas, House of Representatives.

Holcomb urges the quick passage of a bill that would lift restrictions "concerning the detail of officers in Headquarters Marine Corps." He submits both an amendment to H.R. 3152 and a substitute bill which he feels will get the job done best.

This folder also includes letters asking for favors; a number of invitations to social, patriotic, and educational events; a report of activities of Yale-in-China; some memoranda regarding employment of retired officers; requests for the services of Col Biddle; a thank-you note from Mrs. Pat Evans for the funeral arrangements made for her husband at Arlington; letters relating to purchasing of a "servi-cycle"; correspondence to and from Dean Alexander Orinsby regarding Holcomb's being honored at graduation ceremonies at John Marsha College; the forwarding of books, articles, and cartoons regarding the war and the Marine Corps; family news and genealogy; several business letters regarding bills, dues, and purchases; and a suggestion of using salt water for survival.

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**1 June.** Holcomb to Col John W. Beckett, Basic School, Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Holcomb regrets that he is prevented from his planned trip to Indiantown Gap because Gen Keyser has become ill and it is difficult for Holcomb to leave. He hopes he can come later. [Beckett's letter of 29 May announces that he is still expecting Holcomb and has arranged a special demolitions course exhibition for him at Indiantown Gap.]

**4 June.** Holcomb to RAdm Henry K. Hewitt, Commander, Amphibious Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, New York, New York.

Holcomb points out that the addition of Army officers to Hewitt's staff would seem to obviate the need for Col Cauldwell's services. Holcomb would like, if possible, to have Cauldwell released for other duties "without inconvenience" to Hewitt.

**11 June.** Holcomb to LtGen D. C. Emmons, USA, Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii.

Holcomb sends his appreciation of the glowing reports on Marine Corps participation in the Battle of Midway which came from Emmons' headquarters. Holcomb notes that "in this battle there certainly appears to have been enough glory to go around." Holcomb finishes with the hope that the Army and Marines should find more opportunities to fight side by side.

**13 June.** MajGen William P. Upshur, Department of the Pacific, San Francisco, California, to Holcomb.

Upshur asks for permission to grant liberty to the Marines who are currently stuck in San Francisco for lack of shipping space, and who are forced to stay in very cramped quarters.

**13 June.** Honorable Melvin J. Maas, House of Representatives, to Holcomb.

Maas passes along a proposal for legislation to protect the just expectation of regular servicemen for some form of advancement, "during the suspension of permanent promotions by selection." He hopes Holcomb will back him in this move.

**15 June.** Holcomb to VAdm S. M. Robinson, USN, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb requests the release of Maj Frank Wagner from duty with Robinson for special assignment in the Quartermaster's Department. He will be providing estimates on raw material requirements and conservation. Wagner's experience in the Marine Corps and in the steel industry make him highly qualified to carry on this strategic job. Holcomb stresses that the Marine Corps is very desirous of providing the most "accurate information" to Robinson's office.

**17 June.** Holcomb to BGen Samuel Harrington, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb notifies Harrington that Holcomb has asked the Surgeon General to give Harrington a special physical examination to determine definitely whether he is "fit for field duty."

**17 June.** Holcomb to VAdm John W. Greenslade, USN, 12th Naval District, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb agrees to the idea of raising Capt Thornton Wilson, USMC, (Ret),

to the rank of major by spot promotion, in order to satisfy Greenslade's need for a District legal officer. Holcomb states that Wilson had failed selection recently to become a major because he had less than a year of active duty.

**17 June.** Holcomb to BGen Julian C. Smith, MB Quantico, Virginia.

Holcomb has agreed to convene a board for the selection of officers for temporary promotion and would like Smith to have a physical examination before the board meets. [On 17 June, Holcomb forwards a memorandum to the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery asking for physical exams for both Smith and Harrington to determine what type of duty they can handle. Ross T. McIntyre subsequently replies that the exams have been arranged.]

**17 June.** Secretary of the Navy memorandum to Holcomb.

Secretary Knox encloses a memorandum from President Roosevelt on the new status of senators and congressman serving in the armed forces i.e., they must decide to remain on active duty for the duration of the war before 1 July or be placed automatically on inactive duty. Knox asks Holcomb to "issue the necessary order to give this effect."

**11 June.** Holcomb to LtGen H. H. Arnold, USA, Army Air Corps, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb expresses his gratitude for the praise lavished on the Marine Corps by the Army Air Corps, particularly by Gen Emmons' Headquarters. This is the first public praise since Wake. He ends with congratulations on the "fine work your people did." [Arnold's reply of 13 June compares the lot of the two services in having to accomplish a great deal with meager resources.]

**30 June.** Holcomb to BGen James J. Meade, USMC (Ret), Long Beach, California.

Holcomb thanks Meade for his idea about setting up a Marine Corps officer procurement center in Los Angeles, but states that this need is already covered by a Joint Army and Navy Board which "carries out the plan for officer procurement and the Marine Corps is assigned a quota. [Meade advances his proposal in a letter of 21 June.]

This folder also includes letters requesting various favors; a report from Yale-in-China; the presentation of a copy of the "First Sergeant's Handbook" from the author, Marine Gunner Walter R. Hooper; exchange of personal notes with Col William Fay, USMC (Ret) stationed at Charleston Navy Yard; miscellaneous letters concerning ships illustrations, an automobile accident, rumors of possible moves of Marines from San Diego Base, and the sale of Holcomb's Servi-Cycle through his friend Sam Meek; a transcript of the speech of the Dean of John Marshall College bestowing an honorary doctor of laws degree upon Holcomb; a letter to Mrs. Harry Lee in which Holcomb explains the way undergraduates who seek to enter the Marine Corps via the Reserve Officers Class are being handled; and in a letter to Sam Meek Holcomb gives recommendations for finding training assistance for Meek's "Home Guard in Greenwich" and comments on the Marine Corps League.

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**No date.** Holcomb to BGen Allen H. Turnage, MCB New River, North Carolina.

Holcomb remarks that he has received a visit from the Australian representative to the JCS, LtGen E. K. Smart, who expressed an interest in visiting New River and learning more about amphibious warfare. Holcomb instructs Turnage to let him "see whatever may be going on" at New River.

**4 July.** LtGen Delos C. Emmons, USA, CG, Hawaiian Department, Fort Shafter, Territory of Hawaii.

Emmons appreciated Holcomb's letter of 11 June and reports that an inspection of installations on Midway Island revealed that the Marines were "doing a swell job." Emmons points out: "we enjoy serving with them."

**6 June.** LtCol James Snedeker, USMC, 14th Naval District, Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, to Holcomb.

Snedeker submits that he has just completed a book of poems entitled *Marines, Fall In* and would like Holcomb to have two copies. Snedeker goes briefly into the history of his collecting these poems from servicemen in Nicaragua and says he felt they might prove inspirational so he had them published in a small-enough covering that servicemen could place them easily in knapsack or ditty box. Snedeker assures Holcomb he will get no royalties. [Holcomb thanks Snedeker in a letter of 1 July noting his interest in poems.]

**7 July.** Holcomb to Honorable Francis Case, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb describes the Presidential directive concerning active-duty status for congressmen. He then encourages Case to remain full-time as a congressman rather than seek active-duty status with the Marine Corps. He assures Case that his work in Congress will be far more valuable to the war effort. [Case's letter of 2 July sought current information on his request to serve in the Marine Corps in light of press statements about a change in government policy relative to active service.]

**14 July.** Holcomb to RAdm Henry K. Hewitt, Commander, Amphibious Force, Atlantic Fleet, Naval Operating Base, Norfolk, Virginia.

Holcomb calls upon Adm Hewitt to return two Marine Corps officers, Col Wallace and Maj Hudnall, both communications experts whose services are vitally needed at Headquarters to perfect the overall procurement planning. Holcomb notes that failure at Headquarters would have devastating effect on personnel in the field. His next references are unclear but he mentions that he would like to see Army-Navy cooperation in making a success of a special operation headed by the Army. He ends with statistics showing how thin Marine Corps officer strength is, especially in experienced officers.

**23 July.** Adm Harold Stark, London, England, to Holcomb.

Stark forwards to Holcomb a very complimentary report from Louis Mountbatten's commando specialist LtCol L. E. Vaughan, who had high praise for the U.S. Marine Corps men and officers taking part in a British commando training course in England. Vaughan states that the Marines "have undergone an arduous commando training with an exceptionally unconquerable spirit which never wavered during the course."

**24 July.** Holcomb to BGen Emile P. Moses, USMC, MB Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb announces his desire to inspect Parris Island and New River next week, provided that is acceptable to Moses.

**27 July.** MajGen Clayton B. Vogel, CG, 2nd Joint Training Force, to Holcomb.

Upon returning to San Diego, Vogel has had talks with Adm M. F. Draemel and worked out a "program . . . satisfactory to all hands." Rockey will do the

job Holcomb planned for him, and Noble will become Draemel's assistant chief of staff. Draemel would like an intelligence officer of Holcomb's choosing. Marston desires to have DeCarre as assistant division commander, Hermle as chief of staff, and Jackson to command the 6th Regiment.

**31 July.** Holcomb to Capt G. A. Eubank, USN, Coordinator for War Savings Bonds, Navy Department, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb upbraids Eubank for the lack of any mention of the Marine Corps in the national radio broadcast celebrating the completion of the most recent War Savings Bonds campaign. Holcomb appreciates the recognition given the Marine Corps in the official Navy press release, but he points out that at least one or more of the speakers could have given the Marines a real boost in recruiting efforts by at least some mention of Marine war exploits. [Eubank's letter of 28 July 28 stressed his gratitude for Marine Corps assistance in the bond campaign and the boost given by having the Marine Corps Band play in special ceremonies, but he insisted no particular division was to be mentioned during the 15-minute radio broadcast.]

**31 July.** Holcomb to RAdm M. F. Draemel, Commander, Amphibious Corps, Pacific Fleet, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb answers two letters from Draemel (21 and 24 July) by discussing the creation of a section to assist in making topographic models of key islands in the Pacific, and gives his opinions on Draemel's keeping Selden, if he wants him, as well as Vadnais and Lamson-Scribner. Holcomb asserts that he will have to wait until later to announce a selection of an intelligence officer.

This folder also contains a report from Yale-in-China; a number of letters asking for favors; more correspondence about the sale of Holcomb's Servi-Cycle; the mailing of some shot-gun shells to his son, Frank Holcomb, in Tangier; a letter from George Hetherton, who worked with Holcomb in 1899 at the Bethlehem Steel shipbuilding plant at Sparrows Point, Maryland; letters to and from Clarence Dillon on the success of the Navy Relief Society; a letter from the British naval attache in Washington, RAdm H. Pott, wondering if Holcomb would approve the assignment of a Royal Marine to the Staff of the British Admiralty delegation in Washington; Holcomb's denial of a request for him to speak at the University of the South in Suwanee, Tennessee; family letters; and the offer of a lifetime membership for Holcomb in the Marine Corps League.

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**5 August.** Adm Chester W. Nimitz, CinC, U.S. Pacific Fleet, to Holcomb.

Nimitz has high praise for Gen Breckinridge and is pleased Holcomb passed on a letter written by him. But Nimitz is grateful that Holcomb did not have to act on one of Breckinridge's ideas, to ship convicts out to fight in the war. The admiral hopes that Holcomb can get all the men he is seeking and that they soon will be coming to aid Nimitz.

**1 August.** Holcomb to Adm Chester W. Nimitz.

Holcomb sends along Breckinridge's letter, knowing that he and Nimitz had been close friends. The letter had been written only a few days before the general's death. His wife found it in his desk later. Holcomb notes that it is a great relief to get away weekends to his country home, Rosecroft, since Washington is very hot.

**7 August.** MajGen Clayton B. Vogel, CG, Amphibious Corps, Pacific Fleet, Camp Elliott, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Vogel forwards a letter from Frank E. McAvoy praising the antitank artillery range site located by Majs Forney and Dekruyff at Santa Margarita. Vogel confirms that all construction and material arrangements for the range have been settled. [McAvoy's letter of 3 August is enclosed.]

**4 August.** Gen George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, War Department, to Holcomb.

Marshall sends birthday congratulations and mentions his concern for Holcomb's health; Marshall hopes that Holcomb is getting plenty of "exercise and relaxation" time in spite of the pressures of business. Marshall praises Holcomb's leadership in maintaining the Marine Corps' world-renowned "efficient organization" and him for even greater successes. [Holcomb's reply of 7 August outlines his approach of balancing long work hours with relaxation time on weekends at Rosecroft].

**9 August.** RAdm M. F. Draemel, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Amphibious Force, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Draemel expresses his regret that his situation has "suddenly changed" and will prevent his continuation with the Marine Corps. But he wants Holcomb to know that his brief time with the Marines' has reinforced his high opinion of the Corps.

**10 August.** Col J. T. Selden, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Selden is hoping that, since Draemel has been detached as Commander of Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet, he can now apply for duty with one of the Marine Corps divisions. Draemel, before he left, endorsed the idea of Selden's change and also wanted Holcomb to know how glad he was that a map reproduction section had been set up in the division organization.

**12 August.** Adm Robert L. Ghormley, South Pacific Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet to Holcomb.

Ghormley is most pleased with Peck's performance and is glad Holcomb will allow his promotion. The admiral would like to send Holcomb a long letter but he is just too busy. Nonetheless, he states that the "Marines did a grand job."

**12 August.** Holcomb to Gen Rafael C. Trujillo, President of the Dominican Republic.

Holcomb regrets that he cannot continue the practice of aiding Trujillo's army with supplies of such strategic materials as rubber, aluminum, webbing, and textiles, because the Marine Corps itself has run very short. He recommends that Trujillo seek assistance through the Office of Lend-Lease Administration.

**14 August.** Holcomb to MajGen Douglas C. McDougal, Coronado, California.

Holcomb glows with pride about the Marine landing at Guadalcanal under Vandegrift's capable leadership. He notes that it is "the first offensive operation in the war on the part of any American troops." Holcomb wishes he could speak directly to the Marines on Guadalcanal. He feels they probably have the answers to a lot of questions Holcomb and his staff have had about operations against the Japanese and amphibious warfare. Finally, Holcomb notes that he plans to take off for a week and join his wife at Rosecroft.

**14 August.** Holcomb memorandum for the Secretary of the Navy.

Holcomb questions why the Marine Corps was omitted from Secretary Knox's order to have active-duty officers over 57 years old take a physical examination. Holcomb feels that Marine Corps officers should participate and has asked the Surgeon General to make arrangements for their inclusion.

**15 August.** Holcomb to MajGen Clayton B. Vogel, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb asks that Vogel report for a physical examination at Mare Island, but he has decided that the exams for Marston and Rowell should be scheduled for a later time, when more convenient to fit in with their duties. Holcomb, finally, admits he is very interested in the anti-mechanized artillery range at Camp Pendleton.

**24 August.** Holcomb to Col Gilder D. Jackson, Jr., 2d Marine Division, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb remarks that "it is strange indeed to see a 5th Regiment man commanding the 6th." But then he offers his best wishes to Jackson in his new command anyway. He chides him that 6th Regiment men have headed the 5th, but not vice-versa. He hopes that Jackson's arm will get better.

**16 August.** BGen Henry L. Larsen, to Holcomb.

Larsen announces that he has discontinued his periodic reporting on the general situation because he felt Headquarters would keep Holcomb informed. He is distressed at Gen Keyser's illness. Larsen is heartened by news of increased war production results on the home front; he only hopes that these materials will get into the hands of the "well-trained" troops as quickly as possible. He is proud that Marine units are the first to partake of offensive operations. Larsen reports that his outfit now has classes in communications, Japanese, machine guns, artillery, and the defense battalion, all at the brigade training center. The men are kept busy from 0600 to 2200. The intelligence section will soon send Holcomb a contour map of the island (?).

This folder also contains correspondence relating to the following subjects: the Marine Corps League; friends and ex-servicemen seeking favors; radio broadcasts, motion pictures, magazines, and books about the war; birthday greetings; routine personnel changes; memo of telephone conversation regarding James Roosevelt in the Battle of Midway; Holcomb's acquisition of a Colt .38 pistol; orders for shirts with LtCol B. S. Barron; social and patriotic invitations; individuals and service organizations' praise for Marines' exploits; news of family; gifts of cigars; and reminiscences.

*Folder 68*  
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**1 September.** Holcomb to Capt. W. D. Puleston, USN (Ret), Washington D.C.

Holcomb thanks Puleston for his complimentary note on Marine Corps operations in the Solomon Islands and is especially glad that Puleston recognized the large contribution of the Quantico schools to their success. Vandegrift wrote Holcomb about the effectiveness of naval aviation support for the landings which was largely responsible for the lack of casualties. Holcomb is thrilled by this amphibious victory because it will inspire confidence among other Marine units in the rightness of their training.

**2 September.** Holcomb to Mrs. Frank Goettge, Nantucket Island, Massachusetts.

Holcomb releases his impression of how her husband, Col Goettge died in heroic fighting on Guadalcanal based upon testimony of the few survivors of Goettge's ill-fated patrol. Holcomb hopes that her knowledge of the heroic way in which Goettge gave his life may be of some comfort to her in this most sad time.

**3 September.** Adm Harold Stark, American Embassy, London, England, to Holcomb.

Stark sends his congratulations on the Marines' showing at Guadalcanal and his pride at being part of a winning team. He is especially glad that Holcomb is still at the helm and hopes to hear from him.

**4 September.** Holcomb to Capt. L. L. Pratt, USN, U.S. Naval Hospital, Jacksonville, Florida.

Holcomb tells the story of how Pratt's brother likely died heroically in action while on special advance patrol at Guadalcanal. Holcomb's information is based on the eyewitness account of a survivor, Sgt Few. The latter survived by swimming several miles away from the tragic ambush back to American lines.

**4 September.** Adm Harold Stark to Holcomb.

Stark informs Holcomb that he is sending Frank Hart back to the U.S. and would like Holcomb to replace him with a "good live-wire" who can present his ideas well and has amphibious warfare talents as well as planning skills. Stark explains that Hart appears very tired to him, and that while Stark wouldn't mind having Hart come back, Stark would prefer a fresh replacement.

**8 September.** Holcomb to Adm Chester W. Nimitz, CinC, Pacific Fleet, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb is pleased to get Nimitz's agreement to Holcomb's planned trip to the Pacific beginning 10 October. He then goes on to answer the queries in Nimitz's letter of 31 August and the flap over Jimmy Roosevelt's appearance in John Ford's film on the Battle of Midway. Holcomb says the culprit of the mistaken press release has been reprimanded.

**31 August.** Adm Chester W. Nimitz to Holcomb.

Nimitz seeks to find the source of the misleading press release claiming Jimmy Roosevelt was under fire in the Battle of Midway. Nimitz does not want to diminish Roosevelt's fine record to date, but he is anxious to help maintain "accurate news releases."

**11 September.** Holcomb to Col Samuel A. Woods, Jr., MB New River, North Carolina.

Holcomb requests Woods to make an up-to-date report on his first impressions of how the new battalion is performing.

**10 September.** Holcomb to MajGen Clayton B. Vogel, MCB San Diego, California.

Holcomb informs Vogel that BGen Jolley and Maj Drysdale will be making a three-month tour of the U.S. and will arrive in San Diego next Sunday. Holcomb would like Vogel to "make them feel a part of the family" and acquaint them with all the latest activities there. Holcomb thinks Vogel will like Jolley.

**15 September.** Holcomb to Mrs. Frank Goettge.

Holcomb sends Mrs. Goettge a copy of a note her husband wrote to Holcomb shortly before he died at Guadalcanal. Holcomb points out that Col Goettge's memo is the "first memorandum written to me with which a captured Japanese flag was transmitted to the Marine Corps." The flag itself is, of course, historically valuable as it is among the first taken by Marines in the Guadalcanal offensive.

**15 September.** Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes to Holcomb.

Ickes writes to call to Holcomb's attention the reckless waste of gasoline and rubber by a Marine Corps employee who was caught speeding at 48 miles per hour on the Memorial Bridge. President Roosevelt and other top officials have appealed for conservation through safe driving; it is especially reprehensible to find a government employee disregarding his advice.

**15 September.** Holcomb to MajGen Alexander A. Vandegrift, CO, Marine Corps Unit No. 730, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb asks Vandegrift to write to him as often as possible; he greatly enjoyed Vandegrift's second letter. Holcomb then shares news about Barrett, Keyser, Harry Schmidt, and the convening of the "Benzine Board" to inquire about possible retirements. Holcomb goes on to explain about his trip to visit Vandegrift in the Pacific. Holcomb feels strongly that if he and his party can make it through to see Vandegrift, "we ought to come back better able to organize, train, equip, supply, and otherwise serve the forces in the field."

**15 September.** Holcomb to Adm Chester W. Nimitz.

Holcomb inquires as to whether the Japanese flag brought back to Holcomb by Cdr Gingrich was the same one described by Frank Goettge, or one captured at Tulagi. Holcomb sends Nimitz a copy of Goettge's note about the capture of a flag with a mutilated center as this one has.

**15 September.** Holcomb to Mr. Louis de Rochemont, "The March of Time," New York, New York.

Holcomb is delighted to learn that de Rochemont is happy with the quality of motion picture film produced by PFC Arthur L. Stackler on Marine Corps activities leading up to the offensive in the Solomon Islands. Holcomb assures "The March of Time" producer that Stackler is a graduate of one of de Rochemont's training schools; he only wishes he could have gotten closer to the action himself.

**15 September.** Holcomb memorandum for Capt L. P. Lovette, USN, Director of the Office of Public Relations, Navy Department.

Holcomb urges Lovette to use the word "Marines" as much as possible in connection with "favorable publicity."

**16 September.** Holcomb to Adm Harold Stark.

Holcomb agrees that Frank Hart should be relieved so as to give him some variety. Holcomb then praises the combined Navy and Marine Corps efforts in making Guadalcanal a successful landing. Vandegrift was full of praise for naval air. Holcomb pats Stark on the back for making possible all the big increases in Marine Corps strength. Now Holcomb misses his important chats with Stark.

**16 September.** Holcomb to MajGen Joseph C. Fegan, Camp Pendleton, Santa Margarita Ranch, Oceanside, California.

Holcomb comments that any proposal for Dominicans to train with the Marine Corps should be handled from Washington and hopefully a request originating with the Dominican Republic. [The collection contains an undated letter from Fegan thanking Holcomb for his "two stars" and commenting on the training of Latin American officers, the progress on setting up Camp Pendleton, and his desire to have it become the raider battalion center.]

**21 September.** BGen Emile P. Moses, CG, MB Parris Island, South Carolina, to Holcomb.

Moses describes a trip to New Orleans to be part of an affair honoring the Marine Corps and Higgins Boats. Then he discusses the possibility of the Marines taking over Hilton Head entirely. Moses then turns to an appeal for including amphibious training in the regular schedule for recruits at Parris Island and also seeks additional officers to assist in the training effort.

This folder also contains numerous letters seeking favors; family letters; correspondence and cablegrams from the Marine Corps League; routine correspondence about personnel changes, arrivals, and departures; a letter regarding a portrait of Holcomb done by LCDr McClelland Barclay; and transmitted news of relevant motion pictures, exhibits, broadcasts, and various publications relating to the war effort.

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1942

**10 October.** Adm Harold R. Stark, American Embassy, London, England, to Holcomb.

Stark expresses satisfaction over the change in Marine Corps detail announced by Holcomb.

**20 October.** Col J. A. Rossell, U.S. Naval Prison, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to Holcomb.

Rossell discusses his impending retirement and hopes that at the very least he can somehow retain his present post at Portsmouth. He then seeks to justify his promotion to next higher rank in retirement by virtue of his "relentless" fighting against the bandits in Nicaragua. [Schmidt writes in reply that Holcomb intends to keep Rossell on active duty at Portsmouth despite his retirement, but he could not agree to this if Rossell were raised to brigadier general on the retired list].

**23 September.** Adm Harold R. Stark, London, to Holcomb.

Stark pays tribute to Holcomb's "foresight and head and heart and hand, during the past few years. . . ." He asserts that the Marine Corps is upholding all of its finest traditions. Finally, Stark prays that all of "those splendid units" in the Pacific will get reinforced quickly to hang onto their gallant victories.

**26 October.** VAdm R. R. Waesche, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, to Holcomb.

Waesche expresses his gratitude for Marine Corps help in giving Coast Guard publicity a boost. He especially praises the work of Gen Denig in getting his correspondents to give Coast Guard support and participation in the war effort full credit. [Schmidt replies on behalf of Holcomb on 28 October that Waesche's letter will become part of Denig's record and he shares the admiral's joy at seeing the close cooperation between the two services.]

No date. BGen Joseph C. Fegan, Camp Pendleton, California, to Holcomb.

Fegan tells some amusing stories about visitors to Camp Pendleton and discusses the dedication of the camp, water conservation, construction projects, and plans to grow guayule rubber.

This folder also contains correspondence on the following subjects: family business matters; reminiscences and requests for favors by friends and former associates; a brief flap over publicity involving MajGen Louis McCarty Little; the exchange of old newspaper clippings, photographs, and books; news of the Marine Corps League and its activities; notifications and pleas for promotions and changes in station; preparations for a dinner honoring Gen Harbord; greetings to Holcomb from the Soviet naval attache; and the monthly report about Yale-in-China.

*Folder 70*  
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**3 November.** Adm Harold R. Stark, London, England, to Holcomb.

Stark reiterates his pride in the fine job the "Marines are doing" and remembers happily his struggle along with Holcomb to convince Congress of the need for an enlarged corps. He feels lonely in London now that the Marines have left, but he is confident they will assist in the final victory. [Stark sends a second letter of that same date wishing the Marine Corps a happy birthday and more successes.]

**4 November.** Senator Robert A. Taft (R-Ohio) to Holcomb.

Taft quotes a letter from a mother of a Marine from Toledo stating the horrors endured by her son on Guadalcanal. Taft feels confident that Holcomb is considering some type of replacements, and hopes "that conditions are such that men may be withdrawn from the Island . . . for a rest period" similar to those of the European war. [Harry Schmidt responds for Holcomb on 7 November by stating that the "health and welfare" of the Marines is topmost in the minds of Headquarters staff and that the Marines on Guadalcanal will be withdrawn for rest and recreation as soon as possible.]

**10 November.** Holcomb to Mrs. Charles F. B. Price, San Diego, California.

Holcomb briefly describes his visit for four days with Gen Price at Noumea in the South Pacific and mentions that Price is both liked and respected.

**10 November.** Holcomb to Mr. George H. Haertlein, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Holcomb replies on behalf of President Roosevelt to a letter of "indignation" from Haertlein (his letter is in the collection), representing a group of unhappy fathers of Marines, who basically feel their sons on Guadalcanal are not being given adequate backup and supplies. Holcomb assures Haertlein that his "fears are unfounded"; Holcomb's 27,000-mile inspection tour of the South Pacific reveals a great job being done by all parties. He also states that the President is being constantly advised on current conditions there. If corrective measures are needed they will be taken immediately.

**11 November.** Holcomb to LtGen John A. Lejeune, Union Memorial Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland.

Holcomb is sorry to hear on his return about Lejeune's operation and hopes for his speedy recovery. Holcomb reports that he visited Marines all over the

Pacific and was particularly pleased with the fine job Vandegrift was doing with his men on Guadalcanal. Holcomb calls it an important "second front."

**12 November.** Holcomb to Honorable Josephus Daniels, *The News and Observer*, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Holcomb thanks Daniels and his newspapers for all their efforts on behalf of the Marine Corps. Holcomb praises the spirit of Marines everywhere and particularly Vandegrift's men, who have been fighting for more than three months. He says of them: "They are tired but determined. Too much praise cannot be given them, especially our aviation." [Daniels writes on 10 November praising the New River Marine Base and enclosing a copy of one of his articles in which he inserted a citation given Holcomb for gallantry at Chateau-Thierry in World War I.]

**16 November.** Holcomb to MajGen Holland M. Smith.

Holcomb informs Smith that he wants him to show LtGen Ben Lear, USA, Commanding General of the Second Army around San Diego Marine training facilities. Holcomb states that Lear "is a hardboiled Cavalryman." Holcomb would rather have stayed out in the Pacific than return to Washington's hectic pace. He ends by commenting that the Japanese are likely to continue a fierce fight for Guadalcanal. [Smith's reply of 20 November indicates that he knew Lear before and was happy to give him a tour. He then goes on to discuss training, organization, and equipment problems. Smith would like to see more of the reports made on Holcomb's journey to the Pacific.] [Lear's telegram of thanks to Smith for touring San Diego, undated, is included in the collection.]

**20 November.** Holcomb to the Director, Division of Public Relations.

Holcomb praises the fine publicity work performed by the Division in honor of the Marine Corps' birthday anniversary.

**25 November.** Holcomb to MajGen Charles F. B. Price, USMC Unit No. 705, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb praises Price for his fine hospitality and points to it as one of the highlights of Holcomb's trip. He notes that the trip to the Pacific was "a grand one, very useful, and one that none of us will ever forget."

**25 November.** MajGen Holland M. Smith to Holcomb.

Smith reports that Gen Lear was very pleased with the techniques and results of the Marine training program at San Diego. Smith believes Lear's mission was orchestrated by Gen Marshall. Smith boasts that Marine Corps success is due to camaraderie among Marines and loyalty up and down the organization. Smith says that Lear spoke well of Holcomb's capabilities. He feels the visit was of benefit to all concerned.

**27 November.** BGen Julian C. Smith, CG, Training Center, FME, MB New River, North Carolina to Holcomb.

Smith urges Holcomb to come down for a visit and do some hunting as well as inspecting the new building just completed.

**27 November.** Holcomb to Mr. Forrest Davis, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb informs Davis that he cannot approve the publication of Gen Vandegrift's letters to Holcomb because of the recent and sensitive nature of the operations and because Holcomb will not do it without Vandegrift's consent.

**24 November.** Holcomb to Capt Joel T. Boone, MC, USN, U.S. Naval Air Station, San Diego, California.

Holcomb discusses Gen Lejeune dying of prostate cancer and notes that his death "marks the passing of an era." He had an impressive funeral. Holcomb then comments that the Marines at Guadalcanal "are the same Marines that you and I knew in France." Finally, Holcomb remarks that Gen Keyser's heart condition forced him back onto the retired list, which was a great disappointment for Holcomb who found him a most helpful assistant. [Boone's letter of 24 November sends hearty congratulations on Marine successes, records memories of World War I, and offers condolences on Lejeune's death.]

This folder also contains correspondence on the following subjects: submission of poems, articles, and books relating to the Marines and/or the war; congratulations on the Marine Corps anniversary and its exploits in the war; friends and family seeking favors regarding admission to the Marine Corps or changes in station; requests for or thanks for copies of Holcomb's addresses on radio; thanks for copies of addresses by Senator David Walsh and Honorable Carl Vinson in honor of Marine Corps efforts in the Pacific; routine communications with Mrs. John Philip Sousa, Chaplain A. F. Hohl, LtGen H. H. Arnold, RAdm A. Farenholt, Maj E. Barclay Wharton, Adm H. R. Stark, Solon Buck (Archivist of the U.S.), Col Arthur Worton, LCdr McClelland Barclay; letters concerning hunting license, football tickets, *Life* and *Time* magazines publicity, social invitations; Mrs. Holcomb's sponsorship of the launching of an aircraft carrier; and a House bill (HR 7808) making the Commandant's rank, pay, and allowances equal to that of the lieutenant general commanding the U.S. Army.

Folder 71  
1942

**3 December.** Holcomb to Honorable James G. Scrugham, House of Representatives.

Holcomb appreciates Scrugham's letter [his 2 December letter is in the collection praising Ed Hagenah's promotion] and thanks him for fine work on the House Appropriations Committee. Holcomb wishes Scrugham well in the Senate and hopes he gets a good assignment.

**3 December.** Holcomb to Mr. F. M. Blodget, Spencer Trask Co., New York, New York.

Holcomb responds sympathetically to Blodget's letter of 1 December (included in the collection), which denounces the idea of women in the Marines. Holcomb states that the idea of female soldiers in the Marine Corps was not attractive to him, but that he reluctantly came around to the idea of using women to fill such non-combat jobs as telephone operators, chauffeurs, and messengers. This would release men for combat abroad.

**19 December.** Holcomb to MajGen Alexander A. Vandegrift, San Francisco.

Holcomb asks Vandegrift to look into the circumstances surrounding the death of Capt Jacob Joseph, killed on Guadalcanal the day Holcomb visited (22 October). His parents should be notified; his father is a state senator in Albany, New York. He then tells Vandegrift that he has recommended two citations for the division, including one for their landing phase and one for the remaining time on Guadalcanal. He is anxious to hear Vandegrift's impressions of the new rest area and what the situation of the division is at present.

**21 December.** Holcomb to Josephus Daniels, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Holcomb passes on the good news that the Secretary of the Navy has approved naming the New River complex Camp Lejeune; he knows how much Daniels revered Lejeune.

**2 November.** BGen N. K. Jolley, Royal Marine Office, Admiralty, London, England, to Holcomb.

Jolley offers some critical comments on training and classroom conduct at Quantico, but on the whole he is very complimentary of the determined fighting spirit he saw in the U.S. Marines. He offers the criticisms only out of admiration for the Corps and in hopes of its betterment. [BGen Keller E. Rockey provides a follow-up memorandum dated 23 December which evaluates the validity of each of Jolley's criticisms.]

**23 December.** Holcomb to BGen Norman K. Jolley.

Holcomb thanks Jolley for complying with his request for a critique from Jolley's observation of the U.S. Marine Corps. Holcomb comments that both the rapid expansion of the Corps and numerous material shortages have caused the necessity of "shortcuts" in training. He hopes Jolley will come again.

This folder also contains letters on the following topics: the Marine Corps League; seeking of favors, publicity, speeches, articles; the naming of Camp Lejeune; charity, social invitations, cigars, Christmas cards; compliments for the Marines; a ship's commissioning; gifts to Holcomb and the services; family matters; an Army orientation course; preservation of Marine Corps documents; portraits and photographs of Holcomb; and marksmanship and uniforms.

*Folder 72*  
1943

**11 January.** Holcomb to MajGen Emile P. Moses, MB Parris Island, South Carolina.

Holcomb writes that he has been ill for weeks with laryngitis. He then discusses bringing blacks into the Marine Corps and mentions confidentially "we are certain to have to take a lot more under the draft than was originally provided for. . . ." He sees the solution as to place blacks as messmen and orderlies. Holcomb hopes to visit Parris Island in February.

**30 January.** Adm Chester W. Nimitz, CinC, Pacific Fleet, to Holcomb.

Nimitz asks Holcomb to make an exception to Marine Corps promotion policy and promote 1stLt Ralph H. Hobbs, who had piloted Nimitz and Secretary of the Navy Knox around the South Pacific.

This folder also contains correspondence on the following topics: favors sought; family business; photographs, articles, books, films, speeches; charities; price regulations; posters; quarters; sighting scopes for rifles; advertising media; sales receipt for garden seeds; appeals for comments from book publishers; transportation of dependents policy; social and political invitations; presentation of British Royal Marines film; Boy Scouts of America and the new *Air Scout Manual*; landing boat engine production; and ordering of cotton cloth from Sears, Roebuck, and Company.

*Folder 73*  
1943

**3 February.** Holcomb to Adm Chester W. Nimitz, CinC, Pacific Fleet.

Holcomb points out that Hobbs actually got three promotions during 1942—from Marine gunner through first lieutenant; Mitchell had opposed

further spot promotion because Hobbs had "been well taken care of" and had not yet seen combat. Holcomb states that Hobbs will probably get his captaincy later in the year in "regular rotation," but Holcomb will get it for Hobbs now if Nimitz insists. Holcomb hopes Nimitz had a good trip in the South Pacific. Holcomb then explains that he has Vandegrift home to show off in Washington. He has appeared before both houses of Congress.

**4 February.** Col Maurice E. Shearer CO, MB Navy Yard, Mare Island, California, to Holcomb.

Shearer asks Holcomb if Shearer can remain at this station for his last six months before retirement, rather than transfer. Shearer also wonders whether President Roosevelt might not extend Holcomb's tour of duty past the mandatory age of retirement. Shearer wishes he could "stay on and die in harness." [Holcomb's letter of 19 February refuses to endorse Shearer's request to stay on at higher rank.]

**27 January.** Holcomb to Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox.

Holcomb asks the Secretary to have the Marine Corps League investigated by proper government agency to determine if it is "acting beyond the scope of its lawful authority," which might indirectly discredit the Marine Corps.

**16 February.** Holcomb to MajGen Julian C. Smith, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Holcomb announces that at long last he will get to visit with Smith at New River after two days inspecting Parris Island. He will go by plane without Adm King. (A similar letter is sent to MajGen Emile P. Moses at Parris Island.)

This folder also contains correspondence on the following topics: favors sought for commissions into the Marine Corps and for various types of information; submission of booklets, articles, and photographs; new verses to "The Marines' Hymn"; and biographical information on leaders of the Royal Marines. There are brief exchanges with Virginia Governor Colgate Darden, Adm H. R. Stark, A. J. Drexel Biddle, Andrew J. Higgins, and James Forrestal. A book publisher offers a method for increasing the life of chrome-plated cutting tools. Other letters mention the Women Marines and higher IQs among Navy draftees. An exchange of letters with Adm Adolphus Andrews concerns his son's desire to join the Marine Corps. There are letters to and from Col William Fay regarding storm damage to their homes in St. Mary's County, Maryland. Holcomb's correspondence with Henry Luce of *Time* magazine correct some items that were published about BGen Saunders duty. Other items concern family business matters and an invitation to join President Roosevelt for a special intercession service at St. John's Church, Washington, D.C.

Folder 74  
1943

Holcomb to Col William J. Donovan, OSS, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb complains bitterly at the foul treatment dished out to a female Marine, Louise Stewart, by *Collier's* magazine. She is pictured on the front cover in uniform, and underneath is a teaser for the lead story, "Concerning a Woman of Sin. . . ." Holcomb feels nothing can be done now to stop this slur against a friend of Donovan's family, and the Marine Corps generally, but he hopes the young woman will sue *Collier's*. [Donovan in his reply of 27 March has a different interpretation of the *Collier's* cover and believes that it was *not* libelous to the Marine.]

This folder also contains numerous letters asking for favors in regard to home leave, commissioning into the Marine Corps, and changes of duty; thank you notes; family business letters; communications to and from the Royal Marines; a letter to William Foy asking about coal suppliers in St. Mary's County; several letters concerning the assignment of officers for special duty outside the Marine Corps; a message from Holcomb to the "Rally of Hope and Courage" on behalf of Jewish people under Nazi tyranny; brief exchanges of notes with Gen H. H. Arnold on the fine performance of Army Air Forces in The Battle of the Bismarck Sea; discussion of the problem of whether to put Marine Corps insignia on automobile tags for general officers; a Marine Corps League appeal for visiting privileges at Marine bases; and information regarding Col Goettge's gold football.

**14 April.** Adm Chester W. Nimitz, CinC, Pacific Fleet, to Holcomb.

Nimitz asks that either Thomason or Nimmer be sent to replace the invaluable Pfeiffer on Nimitz planning staff; he notes that he will sorely miss Pfeiffer because the latter has been "associated with naval planning agencies" since graduating from the Naval War College in 1936. If Pfeiffer is to go to CominCh staff, Nimitz asks that Pfeiffer get to tour the South and Southwest Pacific first, so as to have the most "current picture" of events there.

**19 April.** Holcomb to MajGen Holland M. Smith, Camp Elliott, California.

Holcomb assures Smith that he is to remain in San Diego. Holcomb suspects that John Marston will end up at New River, while Nimitz has asked for John Thomason. Holcomb would like Smith to expedite Thomason's departure for his new job. [Holcomb writes Thomason about this on 19 April.] [Thomason writes Holcomb back in appreciation for job on 24 April.] [Holcomb explains all of these changes in a letter to Barney Vogel of 26 April.]

**26 April.** Holcomb to Adm William F. Halsey, Third Fleet, FPO San Francisco, California.

Holcomb asks if Halsey will accept William Riley for Halsey's staff and allow Holcomb to bring Gen Peck home. Holcomb wants to assemble a number of key officers with experience in the Pacific at Headquarters.

This folder also contains correspondence on the following topics: commendation of the efforts of U.S. Navy medical officers serving with Marine organizations; Adolphus Andrews tenders thanks for his son's commissioning as a Marine; family business; John Marston's malarial condition as revealed by a special medical board; discussion of the Marine brevet medal; proposed visit of Sam Meek to Rosecroft; Holcomb's desire to have John Roy as his new aide after Brunelli leaves; inquiries for various favors and assistance; deferment from the draft of civilian employees at Marine Headquarters denied by Holcomb; Price's request that Holcomb remove an objectionable officer who damaged Navy-Marine Corps relations; Mrs. Barnett's request for the Marine Corps Band; Herbert Hoover's invitation for Holcomb to address the Boys Club of America; a four-page report on Yale-in-China activities; payment of prisoner-of-war allotments to wives and dependents; the attempt of Capt Castleman, USN, to intercede on behalf of a Marine captain threatened with discharge; Holcomb's insistence that women Marines not be called "Marinettes"; commission for civil aviators; report from China by Naval Attache C. C. Brown; Holcomb's Boys Club address; swimming qualifications at Parris Island; Adm Stark's praise of the job that Clement has done in London; Arthur Godfrey's sending along of war-related puns and verses

from Marines; Clarence Dillon appreciation for Holcomb's support for a Navy Relief Society drive; Holcomb's rejection of the idea of a weekly Marine Corps picture magazine called "G.I.," as he feels *Leatherneck* covers all needs; and Holcomb's recommendation of Arthur Godfrey for membership in the New York Yacht Club.

Folder 76  
1943

21 May. Capt William D. Puleston, USN (Ret), Board of Economic Warfare, Washington, D.C., to Holcomb.

Puleston describes his positive impressions of the 1st Marine Division while on an inspection tour of the Pacific with Adm Halsey. Puleston especially praises the high quality of training exercises conducted by Vandegrift. Puleston would like to see Holcomb and elaborate on these observations. [Holcomb sends his grateful reply on 25 May.]

25 May. Honorable Josephus Daniels, Raleigh, North Carolina, to Holcomb.

Daniels states that his association with the Marine Corps in World War I marked his most "satisfying" moment in public service and that his heart again swells with pride at the great Marine victories in this war.

27 May. Holcomb to MajGen Charles F. B. Price, CG, Samoan Group, FPO San Francisco, California.

Holcomb discusses assignment changes, administrative procedures, the varied success of "three new projects" (blacks, women, dogs), the establishment of a training college at New River, and personal notes on gifts and visits.

27 May. Holcomb to Adm Chester W. Nimitz, CinC, Pacific Fleet.

Holcomb hopes that Thomason will be a satisfactory relief for Pfeiffer. Nimmer was sent to CominCh. Holcomb then describes his battle to oust LtCol Stern from the Marine Corps as requested by Vogel, Halsey, and Nimitz.

This folder also contains correspondence on the following topics: friends seeking favors; Georgetown University's wish to confer an honorary degree upon Holcomb; his speech for the Boys' Club with collaboration of Sam Meek; family matters; submission of pictures, books, and articles to Holcomb; birthday wishes to Josephus Daniels; Seth Williams' appeal for an award or citation for his services; Holcomb's attempt to remove an active service Marine, LtCol Stern, from non-military duties with the Office of War Information or change his status to a civilian in the Reserve; a copy of Holcomb's acceptance speech at Georgetown University when awarded an honorary degree, and a copy of the commencement program; the Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, John W. McCormack, sends Holcomb an inspirational poem by one of his constituents; routine social invitations and askings of favors; letters of congratulations on Holcomb's honorary degree and the fine job he and the Marines are doing, including one from William H. Hobson, who received the same degree and is serving the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Personal letters are sent to Gilder Jackson and John Marston, expressing concern for their physical well-being. Holcomb rejects an offer to become honorary national commandant of the Marine Corps League.

Folder 77  
1943

24 June. Holcomb to MajGen Holland M. Smith, Camp Elliott, California.

Holcomb is most anxious to hear all about Smith's activities in the Pacific.

Holcomb then makes allusions to a job he had sent up for Smith to do in September (preparations for Tarawa operations), but he has not yet received final details from Nimitz.

**28 June.** Holcomb to MajGen C. D. Barrett, CG, 3d Marine Division, FPO San Francisco, California.

Holcomb expresses to Barrett the concerns registered by Adm Ben Moreell, who had a letter of complaint from a "Seabee" battalion commander attached to Barrett's division. The complaints centered on Barrett allegedly breaking the men physically by severe exercises, and above all, on his practice of splitting up the "Seabee" units into separate shore parties. Holcomb recommends that Barrett write directly to Moreell to explain his reasoning; Moreell is a valuable friend to the Marine Corps. Holcomb ends by wishing Barrett 100 percent success.

**28 June.** Holcomb to Honorable James E. Forrestal, Under Secretary of the Navy.

Holcomb broaches the question of his tendering his "voluntary request for retirement" in August, when he reaches the mandatory retirement age of 64. Holcomb hates to give up the reins mid-way through the war, but he sees definite advantage in bringing on a younger, distinguished officer to carry on the office.

**30 June.** Col Evans Carlson, U.S. Naval Hospital, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Carlson relays the content of a discussion he had with Under Secretary Forrestal about the merits of rubber landing boats, including problems with the Evinrude motors. Carlson turns briefly to the "proposed change in the responsibility for training," a plan which apparently had not been widely accepted. He then asks Holcomb's permission to help produce a movie in Los Angeles on the Makin raid. Carlson shared speaking time with Forrestal in Eugene, Oregon, and discussed the raider battalion concept as proof of Navy-Marine Corps adapting to "new conditions of warfare."

This folder also contains correspondence relating to the following topics: favors sought by friends and former acquaintances and strangers; photographs and paintings of Holcomb; information about the Navy's V-12 program; publicity difficulties related to *Time* magazine; application for additional gas coupons; reminiscences; letters of congratulations; social invitations; proposals for Holcomb's membership of various committees and societies; Colonel Donovan's request for Maj H. A. Jones' promotion; the status of Coast and Geodetic Survey officers serving with the Marine Corps; Holcomb's plan to retire to Rosecroft in September; gifts sent to Holcomb; manufacturing of knives for the Marine Corps; and assemblage of emergency kits for Marines in the field.

*Folder 78*  
1943

**3 July.** Holcomb to Adm Harold R. Stark, American Embassy, London, England.

Holcomb decides to send DeCarre to relieve Clement in London and hopes that will be suitable to Stark. DeCarre has extensive amphibian experience. Holcomb tries to remain "cheerful" in spite of the rigors of the "Battle of Washington," as instructed by Stark.

**8 July.** Holcomb to MajGen Holland Smith, Camp Elliott, California.

Holcomb replies to Smith's question about admitting wives of prisoners of war into the Marine Corps by quoting the Navy's firm prohibition against the idea, a ruling which will be enforced by Holcomb also. The remainder of his letter deals with staff changes, including Jimmy Roosevelt's new assignment. [Holcomb writes to Jimmy Roosevelt on 8 July.] [Roosevelt replies on 14 July that he will gladly work for Adm Rockwell later in July.]

**13 July.** Adm Harold R. Stark, U.S. Fleet, London, England, to Holcomb.

Stark firmly turns thumbs down on Holcomb's idea of sending BGen DeCarre to replace Col Clement on Stark's special staff. Stark would much prefer to keep Clement, who has done such fine work in setting up the Intelligence Section. If necessary, Stark would consider a more junior officer to give Clement a chance for combat duty.

**13 July.** MajGen Charles D. Barrett, 3d Marine Division, San Francisco, to Holcomb.

Barrett expresses optimism over the progress of the 3d Division and wants it in the field soon. Barrett hopes that Vandegrift's recently announced change of station means that Holcomb will stay in Washington as Commandant. Barrett is firmly convinced that Holcomb is the best man to remain in the job.

**15 July.** Holcomb to MajGen Alexander A. Vandegrift.

Holcomb broaches the problems of poor handling and maintenance of Marine Corps supplies and equipment by "using forces" under Vandegrift's command. Holcomb and Headquarters are trying to correct the defects in the supply and maintenance systems by dispatching specialists to the field. But Holcomb points out that officers and men already in the field seem to lack an appreciation of the shortages and difficulties in allocating scarce raw materials for production of equipment, shipping space, and supplying manpower. Holcomb recommends that Vandegrift begin indoctrinating his men against waste, and that each time a unit moves that someone carefully inspect the vacated area for materials left behind. Holcomb further complains that much equipment has been neglected or ruined because the specialists sent to deal with it have been diverted to other, extraneous duties. Holcomb ends with an appeal to Vandegrift to furnish any suggestions for possible improvements from Headquarters.

**16 July.** MajGen Charles D. Barrett to Holcomb.

Barrett encloses two copies of letters he wrote to Adm Moreell explaining the role of the "Seabees" in the reinforced regiments [copies included in the collection]. Barrett is happy that the men gradually are being broken in to the rigors of the tropics, but he is concerned that malaria might cut their fighting efficiency, so he orders numerous precautions. He has purposely refrained from pushing his men into rigorous training as the terrain is very treacherous; it has already cost one of his best officers in a fatal fall.

**18 July.** MajGen John H. Russell, USMC (Ret), Coronado, California, to Holcomb.

Russell expresses his joy at news that Holcomb is to stay on as Commandant. Russell realizes the appeal of retirement to Holcomb, but he asserts "the Marine Corps needs you more than ever." He sees the need for a very steady hand to guide the Corps through the challenges ahead, especially Marine forays into the Pacific. [Holcomb's reply of 26 July questions Russell on his source as Holcomb only plans to stay a few months.]

**24 July.** Gen H. H. Arnold, CG, Army Air Forces, to Holcomb.

Arnold passes along condolences of the entire Army Air Forces on the death of Gen Upshur during an airplane accident in Sitka, Alaska. He pays tribute to Upshur's fine career, especially his leadership in the Pacific campaign. [Holcomb replies 26 July.]

**26 July.** Holcomb to Adm Harold R. Stark.

Holcomb agrees that a brigadier general would be too high in rank to replace Clement, and promises that when the time comes, he will send a lieutenant colonel.

**26 July.** Holcomb to MajGen Joseph C. Fegan, Camp Pendleton, California.

Holcomb sends condolences on the death of Fegan's mother. Then he protests at the persistent rumor that he is supposed to continue on as Commandant. It is not official yet that he will stay for a few more months. Finally, he joins Fegan in expressing shock of Upshur's sudden death.

This folder also contains correspondence on the following topics: emergency kits for Marines; favors sought on behalf of relatives and friends; answers to congressional inquiries on behalf of constituents; correspondence with Col Donovan on promotions of Marines in the OSS; Evans Carlson being sent to serve with the 4th Division upon recovering his health; a discussion of private life insurance policies being offered to Marines; disciplinary cases, including a strong letter of reprimand to John Thomason; other letters of minor importance to and from Moses, Marston, and several family members; a letter from Holcomb to Judge Ormsby of the Marine Corps League rejecting the League's attempt to get Holcomb promoted to the rank of general; and miscellaneous social invitations.

*Folder 79*  
1943

**2 August.** Holcomb to Gen George C. Marshall, USA, U.S. Army Chief of Staff.

Holcomb sounds out Marshall on Holcomb's idea to have four lieutenant colonels (USMC) ferret out useful lessons directly from the successful Army amphibious operations in Sicily. He has not gone through channels yet because he hoped to get an evaluation from Marshall first. [Marshall's answer of 3 August assures War Department approval for Holcomb's idea.]

**2 August.** Holcomb to BGen Henry L. Larsen, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Holcomb inquires about the naming of the dog camp at New River. He hopes that it was named Camp Fala in honor of President Roosevelt's dog. He ends by stating that he will miss the fine services of his assistant, Harry Schmidt.

**5 August.** Col William T. Clement, U.S. Fleet, London, England, to Holcomb.

Clement asks Holcomb to get someone at Headquarters to organize a six-week tour of USMC facilities for LtCol J. F. Cornwall of the Royal Marines, particularly focusing on amphibious training activities. Clement believes that relations with the Royal Marines are in very good shape.

**9 August.** BGen Henry Larsen to Holcomb.

Larsen states that black troops are housed in the area Holcomb refers to as "Camp Fala," in addition to the dog-training facility. He therefore recommends that the present name of Camp Knox be retained, but that the woods where the dogs are trained be renamed "Fala Forest." (Holcomb on 12 August states his preference for "Fala Woods.")

**12 August.** Holcomb to Mr. Samuel Meek, New York, New York.

In response to a request for an opinion, Holcomb is critical of recent Navy Department efforts to centralize its "personnel direction" at a time when expansion would seem to call for decentralizing. Holcomb puts forth the theory: "any large organization to be successful, must be headed by a personality; one possessed of those qualities of leadership which command respect and loyalty; which inspire in all hands the determination, and, which is more important, the compelling desire, to work together for a common end." He feels printed regulations and charts do not make for leadership.

**14 August.** Holcomb to LtGen George S. Patton, Jr., USA, CG, Seventh Army, FPO New York, New York.

Holcomb praises the gallant efforts of the Seventh Army in the Sicilian campaign. He is planning to send five Marine officers to observe Patton's operations and hopes to gain useful information thereby. [Holcomb writes a similar letter to Adm Hewitt on 14 August.] [Holcomb's letter to Col W. T. Clement on the same day asks Clement to hold these five officers in England for a week to "look things over."]

**14 August.** Holcomb to Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower, North African Theater of Operations.

Holcomb sends hearty congratulations on the successful conclusion of the Sicilian operation by the Army. He mentions to Eisenhower the five officers visiting his theater of operations and asks that they be allowed to view any operations—amphibious or otherwise—from which they could learn lessons.

**14 August.** Holcomb to LtGen Hunton, C.B., M.V.O., O.B.E., Adjutant General of the Royal Marines, London, England.

Holcomb introduces the five Marine officers preparing to visit England and the Mediterranean: E. R. Hagenah, J. P. Berkeley, N. Huss, H. O. Deakin, and J. W. Scott (all lieutenant colonels). Holcomb expresses his pleasure at the close friendship and cooperation existing between members of the U.S. Marine Corps and the Royal Marines. He is also "intrigued" by Hunton's views on a combined U.S. Marine-Royal Marine "postwar mission."

**16 August.** Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox to Holcomb.

Knox informs Holcomb that he has received Holcomb's comments on the management engineer's survey of Marine Headquarters. Knox is happy that Holcomb feels the survey will help increase "administrative efficiency."

**21 August.** Col Samuel A. Woods, Jr., Montford Point Camp, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, to Holcomb.

Woods thanks Holcomb for staff assistance rendered by Headquarters and especially the CMC Confidential Letter of Instruction No. 421 (14 May 1943). He surmises that full compliance with the letter would spell success for "the colored units," while failure to live up to the spirit of the letter would create difficulties. [Woods and Holcomb exchange two other letters, 14 and 17 August respectively, on Woods' future.]

**26 August.** Col Claude A. Larkin, 3d Marine Aircraft Wing, Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point, North Carolina, to Holcomb.

Larkin responds to a letter by Holcomb reporting some mistreatment of

female Marines by male Marines. Larkin is upset at this news, but he assures Holcomb that such behavior is not to be found at Cherry Point. He has interviewed the women there and finds them generally enthusiastic. He admits that the men "kidded" the first women and showed great interest in them. He now finds that the women are most capable and fully accepted.

**28 August.** MajGen Alexander A. Vandegrift, I Marine Amphibious Corps, FPO San Francisco, to Holcomb.

Vandegrift follows up on Holcomb's letter of 15 August asking for strict conservation measures to halt the waste of supplies and equipment. Vandegrift encloses a copy of a directive promoting conservation practices within his command and states that inspection and disciplinary procedures will give teeth to the directive. The remainder of Vandegrift's letter deals with a possible solution to proper personnel utilization and efficient replacement of specialists.

**30 August.** MajGen Charles F. B. Price, Defense Force, Samoan Group, to Holcomb.

Price describes the hectic pace of administering bases hundreds of miles from each other and the complex headaches arising out of varied naval tactical and logistical support for his forces. Price, however, is greatly pleased with the fine work of his chief of staff, Col Miller. He is also thrilled by the rapid buildup of air power. The remainder of his long letter discusses blacks, women, lack of recreational facilities, and his overstrained staff.

**30 August.** Holcomb to BGen Henry S. Larsen, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Holcomb urges Larsen "not to worry too much about the Women's Reserve" but to follow Holcomb's general guidelines. Maj Ruth Streeter reports that conditions have improved. Holcomb finishes with a rundown on personnel changes and notes that Larsen will remain at New River for the present.

**31 August.** BGen John Marston, Camp Elliott, San Diego, California, to Holcomb.

Marston is pleased about his assignment to head the Department of the Pacific and promises to do all he can to advance the interests of the forces in the "combat zones" with as little headache to Holcomb as possible. Marston also expresses his confidence in the results of the Pendleton and Elliott training centers.

This folder also contains correspondence relating to the following topics: personnel transfers, changes, and policy; Marines visiting the Sicilian front; birthday congratulations to Holcomb; the question of Holcomb's retention as Commandant past the mandatory retirement age; forwarding of gifts, articles, books, and photographs to Holcomb; discussion of Holcomb's vegetable gardening and produce prices; introductions for Samuel Meek to the Norfolk Marine Barracks; Holcomb's plan to attend graduation at the Marine Corps Schools; and reports on relations with the Royal Marines by Col W. T. Clement stationed with Stark's command in London, Holcomb sends out copies of the pamphlet "They made me a Leatherneck" to a number of political and military figures. There are also: an exchange of complimentary letters with Josephus Daniels; reminiscences from old friends and soldiers; a letter to Gen Moses regarding the number of servants permitted for general staff officers and the special rations granted them; several letters asking personal favors, especially from retired officers seeking active duty posts; condolences extended on the death of Gen Upshur by

Raphael Trujillo; a thank-you letter from Claude Larkin for Holcomb's donation of oil paintings to the Marine Corps Air Station at Cherry Point, North Carolina; and a report from Col E. R. Hagenah upon his arrival in London to replace Col Clement, giving his first impressions of the British.

*Folder 80*  
1943

**1 September.** MajGen Harry Schmidt, CG, Camp Pendleton, California, to Holcomb.

Schmidt gives Holcomb an initial glimpse at his command of Camp Pendleton's training activities. Schmidt praises the cooperative, helpful spirit pervading the camp and the smart, efficient look of the troops. He then invites Holcomb to visit and asks him to pass on Schmidt's high commendation of the "Seabees" performance record to Adm Moreell.

**5 September.** Pvt James D. Lourman, Marine Aviation Detachment, Jacksonville, Florida, to Holcomb.

Lourman wishes Holcomb a late but heartfelt happy birthday. Lourman announces that his aim is to keep up the morale of the Marine Corps. Pvt Lourman states that Marine life has proved good to him, but he admits that like most others he looks forward to returning home. He left a fireman's job in Pennsylvania in order to join up and serve his country. He ends his letter by telling Holcomb that he plans to attend an aviators' course.

**5 September.** Holcomb to MajGen Joseph C. Fegan, Camp Pendleton, California.

Holcomb expresses his regret at not being able to visit Camp Pendleton. He has had to fight several reorganization attempts within the Navy Department, which if they had been totally successfully would have placed the Commandant directly under the control of the CNO or Vice CNO. Consequently, he feels obliged to stay in Washington.

**10 September.** Holcomb to LCdr Felipe Cadenas, naval attache to the Cuban Embassy, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb thanks the Cuban government for the presentation of Cuba's Order of Naval Merit, first class. Holcomb will wear it with pride, especially since his only other foreign decorations, those from France, are from World War I.

**24 September.** LtGen George S. Patton, Jr., USA, 7th Army, New York, to Holcomb.

Patton states that he admired the clear observations made by Marines participating in the first landings in Italy. Patton wishes he had been able to see Holcomb's son, Frank, when he was in the area.

This folder also includes correspondence on the following topics: more discussion of Holcomb's remaining as Commandant for several months; requests for information and personal favors; reports from Col Hagenah and Col Clement on the situation of the Royal Marines within the overall British command structure; thank-you notes for gifts; articles, speeches, and photographs; a genealogical note on the first Holcombs in America; the Marine Corps League; personnel transfers and changes; letters exchanged with Sam Meek about Holcomb's radio broadcasts; two letters touching on the V-12 program; and the procurement of football tickets.

Folder 81  
1943

**1 October.** Holcomb to Dr. David G. Cogan, Boston, Massachusetts.

Holcomb briefly replies to Dr. Cogan's inquiry of 29 September on the nature of the gas used against the 78th and 96th Companies Holcomb commanded at Belleau Wood during June of 1918. Holcomb believes that it was mustard gas, but he urges Cogan to take up the matter with the Chemical Warfare Service.

**1 October.** Holcomb to Mr. Samuel W. Meek, New York, New York.

Holcomb states that Marines assisted the following Army divisions with their amphibious training: the 1st, 3rd, and 9th, all in Europe or North Africa, and the 7th, which operated in the Attu and Kiska operations. Next Holcomb enlists Meek's assistance in evaluating a recent book on the Marine Corps by Capt W. P. McCahill, entitled "First to Fight." Metcalf is upset at its boastful style, but Denig has endorsed it with a foreword.

**11 October.** Holcomb to BGen Henry L. Larsen, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Holcomb confides that Adm King has decided to pay a brief but important visit on 20 October, and Holcomb would like Larsen to plan and submit a schedule for King's tour there. Holcomb notes that King should specifically see the activities of black and women Marines, and the specialists' schools. Holcomb must have Larsen's ideas soon to pass on the schedule.

**10 October.** Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower, CinC, Allied Forces, to Holcomb.

Eisenhower appreciates Holcomb's congratulatory letter and has only delayed his reply in order to report on "the young officers you sent over here." He placed these Marines in the care of the Navy to ensure that they saw all they wanted. Eisenhower hopes they got all the observations Holcomb desired.

**13 October.** Adm Richard K. Turner, 5th Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet, San Francisco, California, to Holcomb.

Turner praises the four staff officers Holcomb sent him last year (Linscott, Harris, Weir, and Nicholson) and admits they helped in the solution "of our difficult problems in the South Pacific." He now asks Holcomb to do him the favor of having Col Knighton removed as his assistant chief of staff and having him replaced with a more experienced Marine capable of winning the respect of V Amphibious Corps. He is happy to have Jimmy Roosevelt on board and assures Holcomb that he and Holland Smith will persevere together successfully in spite of personal differences.

**21 October.** Holcomb to Mr. John Archer Carter, c/o J. Walter Thompson, New York, New York.

Holcomb admits that he likes Carter's script for Holcomb to use in the radio broadcast "What's New," except for the idea of keeping "women on active duty after the war." Holcomb at present opposes that notion and has modified the script accordingly.

**23 October.** MajGen Charles F. B. Price, USMC Unit No. 705, San Francisco, California, to Holcomb.

Price asks Holcomb to provide a replacement for Col Legette, who is now commanding one of Price's defense battalions; Legette just cannot inspire his troops. The difficult operations coming up require a more "dynamic personalty." At the

same time, Price shows some sensitivity by refraining from official criticism of Legette that might permanently prevent his recovery from the recent death of his wife.

**23 October.** Holcomb to BGen Henry L. Larsen, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Holcomb announces his intention to accompany Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox on his inspection visit to Camp Lejeune, 14-16 November. They intend to see activities in the field, and Knox will address the graduation of the Women's Candidate Class.

This folder also contains correspondence on the following topics: expressions of sympathy and condolences on the death of Marines including Charlie Barrett; forwarding of books, articles, and radio scripts; plans for the graduation of the Women's Reserve Class at Camp Lejeune; The Military Order of the World War seeks Holcomb as its vice commander-in-chief; discussion with representatives of the J. Walter Thompson Co., about Holcomb's views on women in the service for a radio script; Harry Schmidt's favorable impression of the progress of the 4th Division; Holcomb's willingness to help test shotgun shells for the Western Cartridge Co., once he gets away from Washington; miscellaneous travel arrangements for family; letters of introduction written for Fred D. Thompson of *Reader's Digest* to visit Marine Corps installations; acquisition sought of a back issue of *Maryland Historical Magazine*; repair of a thermometer; a contest on the Marines in World War II by the Daughters of the Confederacy; granting of a personal favor to MajGen John Russell, former Commandant; Holland Smith's proposed candidacy for membership in the Chevy Chase Club; invitations from the Marine Corps League; receipt of commemorative postage stamps; and personnel questions and favors sought.

*Folder 82*  
1943

**1 November.** MajGen Harry Schmidt, 4th Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, California, to Holcomb.

Schmidt describes a friendly and sympathetic conversation he had with Adm Davis relating to difficulties in providing ships and boats to the Marines. Davis feels that all elements are functioning smoothly and effectively toward making the 4th Division "the most efficient organization possible." He is sending temporary observers to view combat techniques in the V Corps that should aid in Schmidt's training program.

**1 November.** Holcomb to RAdm Richard K. Turner, Fifth Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb has delayed his reply to Turner's letter to find a replacement for Knighton on Turner's staff. He is delighted that Holland Smith was willing to release Hogaboom for the job. Holcomb wishes Turner and the 5th Amphibious Force every success in the coming campaign.

**2 November.** Holcomb to BGen Henry L. Larsen, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Holcomb inquires as to whether Larsen still wishes membership in the Chevy Chase Club. He then discusses the impending visit of Holcomb and Secretary Knox to Camp Lejeune. Holcomb asks Larsen to see if he can arrange some bird-shooting for the Secretary. Finally, Holcomb states that Larsen should get his two stars shortly.

4 November. Holcomb to MajGen Charles F. B. Price, USMC Unit 705, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb has directed that Col Paige relieve Legette quickly and wants Price to detach Legette for service with the 5th Division immediately. Holcomb is pleased that Price is continuing "to make a good job of it." Holcomb had originally desired to make Price an area commander, but he intimates that the Army interfered with his plan. Holcomb hopes that Vandegrift will be returning to the USA soon to begin preparation to take over as Commandant on 1 January; Holcomb cautions Price not to mention this, since no public announcement has yet been made.

6 November. Holcomb to Mr. Henry R. Luce, Editor, *Time* Magazine, New York, New York.

Holcomb thanks Luce for the "fine tribute" given to the late MajGen Charlie Barrett in *Time*; Mrs. Barrett was very pleased, as was Holcomb at the fitting and appropriate nature of the article.

8 November. Holcomb to Senator David I. Walsh, Chairman of Senate Naval Affairs Committee.

Holcomb expresses the appreciation of the entire Marine Corps at Walsh's kind and thoughtful gesture to invite Holcomb and others to attend and participate in the raising of the first American flag flown over Guadalcanal above the Capitol building on 10 November. [An identical letter goes out to House Naval Affairs Committee Chairman Vinson on the same date.]

9 November. Mr. Albert L. Furth, Executive Editor of *Fortune* Magazine, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Furth goes to great length to allay Holcomb's fears about the prejudicial and misleading nature of a *Fortune* article on "War Neurosis," involving comparisons of Carlson's Raiders and the Marines suffering psychological trauma from the Guadalcanal fighting. [Holcomb sends a somewhat apologetic reply on 11 November stating that he did not draft the letter sent to Furth on 26 October.]

10 November. Adm Ben Moreell, Bureau of Yards and Docks, Navy Department, to Holcomb.

Moreell wishes the Marine Corps a happy anniversary, calling the Corps the "greatest fighting organization in the world." He then goes on to describe a practical joke "Seabees" were now using on Marines to counter the image of "Seabees" being "grandpappies." The "Seabees" would issue a "junior 'Seabee' badge" to any Marine serving at least three months with the "Seabees." [Holcomb replies postively on 18 November saying Marines would be proud to wear such a badge.]

8 November. MajGen Harry Schmidt to Holcomb.

Schmidt reports briefly on the first exercises conducted by the division as a whole and expresses great optimism at being able to work well with Adm Connelly. The latter has been most friendly and helpful; Schmidt seems quite confident of good Navy-Marine Corps rapport.

12 November. Holcomb to Mrs. Roy S. Geiger, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb sends Mrs. Geiger a transcript of Holcomb's broadcast for "The March of Time" in which he praised her husband's heroic effort. Geiger had taken

command of the Bougainville operation, which Holcomb assures her is going very well.

**12 November.** Holcomb to Maj George Fielding Eliot, New York, New York.

Holcomb praises the tenor of Eliot's anniversary article on the Marine Corps. He states that it is "a most timely article" and is likely to be very useful. He encourages Eliot to write more of the same.

**19 November.** Holcomb to LtGen Alexander A. Vandegrift, MCB San Diego, California.

After welcoming Vandegrift back to the mainland, Holcomb turns to serious questions such as the effort of the Navy to usurp certain Marine Corps functions and restrict "the independence of action of this Headquarters." Holcomb warns Vandegrift to be constantly on guard to counter these expansionist tendencies by the Navy. He sends along appropriate reading matter for Vandegrift to study. Holcomb then turns to the strained relations between Holland Smith and Adm Turner and states that he is not expecting "trouble" because both men realize such in-fighting would be disastrous. He then urges Vandegrift to observe the progress of the 3rd Division. He ends with some "gossip" on possible promotions.

**19 November.** Holcomb to Albert T. Fisher, Jr., *Time Inc.*, Washington, D.C.

Holcomb thanks Fisher for sending along the complimentary article on Gen Geiger. Holcomb goes on to explain that his high estimation of Geiger's abilities rests not only on his capabilities as an aviation leader but also on his strong sense of wanting to integrate aviation with the needs of the ground forces. He had a lot of ground combat experience in Nicaragua. Holcomb has great confidence in Geiger.

**20 November.** Holcomb memorandum to Chief of Bureau of Personnel.

Holcomb asks that the portrait of him painted by LCdr McClland Barclay be officially hung in the Commandant's quarters as is customary on the departure of a Commandant.

**23 November.** Holcomb to LtGen Alexander A. Vandegrift.

Holcomb is expecting Vandegrift to arrive in Washington on 29 November just in time for a press conference. After briefly noting Marine Corps successes in the Gilbert Islands, Holcomb gives some reassuring figures on Corps personnel strength for 1944 and some advice on how to use and improve on the overall deployment of this added strength. He advises some caution in working to set up the 6th Division to prevent premature cuts. Holcomb ends with a few notes on possible staff changes.

**25 November.** Holcomb to MajGen Julian C. Smith, CG, 2d Marine Division, San Francisco, California.

Holcomb sends hearty congratulations to Smith and the men of the 2d Division on the "splendid outcome of the Tarawa operation." Holcomb is particularly gratified because it involved an atoll attack. He is fearful of heavy casualties, but hopes the 2d Division will continue to break records.

**30 November.** Holcomb memorandum to Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox.

This memorandum sets forth Holcomb's reasons for seeking retirement and handing over the reins of Commandant at this particular time. He thus makes

a formal request that the President grant him his retirement after more than 40 years of service. [A carbon copy of Knox's letter to the President on these same lines is enclosed.]

This folder also includes correspondence on the following topics: A tribute to Filipinos and members of the 4th Marines who died defending the Philippines; social and patriotic engagements; notes of condolence for deaths and to make funeral arrangements; copies of photographs, speeches, books, articles, transcripts of broadcasts transmitted and discussed; refusals to endorse Marine Corps League fund drive; personal favors sought; memberships in the Chevy Chase Club; salutations on the Marine Corps' anniversary; comments on Holcomb's radio broadcasts; Holcomb's praise for Harold Ickes's son, Raymond's perfect rifle firing score; comment on the flag-raising ceremony; Holcomb's retirement status; the chapel at Quantico; and family business.

*Folder 83*  
1943

**1 December.** Holcomb to Mrs. William P. Upshur, Annapolis, Maryland.

Holcomb promises to keep an eye on Mrs. Upshur's pension. He returns the papers in which the 5th Marines honored Upshur. Holcomb admits that he was very pleased that Secretary of the Navy Knox came personally to Holcomb's office to pay him high compliments and to announce Vandegrift as his successor.

**1 December.** Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox to Holcomb.

Knox acknowledges Holcomb's request for retirement and states that it will be effective 31 December 1943. But Knox further says that he will accept Holcomb's retirement very reluctantly because Holcomb's "organizing ability" has possible the growth of the Marine Corps from 15,000 to 305,000 men. He especially praises Holcomb's ability to instill an "esprit de corps" with a Marine Corps this large, and points to the heroism exhibited on the beaches of Tarawa as the end result of Holcomb's handiwork. Knox ends with thanks for Holcomb's spirit of cooperation and support and wishes that Holcomb will have many fine years of well-deserved leisure. [Holcomb's reply of 2 December notes that among his greatest regrets on retiring is "the termination of the most pleasant relations" between him as Commandant and the Secretary. Holcomb praises Knox for his sympathetic support of the Marine Corps' vast expansion.]

**15 December.** Mr. Daniel Longwell, Editorial Office, *Life*, New York, New York to Holcomb.

Longwell applauds the idea of bringing together Marine Corps photographers and writers who were at the Battle of Tarawa to write a "quick, readable book on that action." He is absolutely amazed at the quality of the motion pictures shot by the Marine photographers at Tarawa and offers to assist in any way possible to publicize the story and pictures. He sees the film as the best footage shot during the war.

**20 December.** Holcomb to Honorable Melvin J. Maas, House of Representatives.

Holcomb thanks Maas for the complimentary remarks given upon the introduction of a bill to award Holcomb a Distinguished Service Medal. Holcomb expresses his fond hope that they can continue to associate with one another, especially as Holcomb plans to remain active in and around Washington. [Holcomb sends a similar but perhaps less enthusiastic thank-you note to Honorable Carl Vinson on 20 December.]

This folder includes additional correspondence on the following topics: letters of commendation praising the gardener and the janitors who served the Holcombs from 1936 to 1943; letter quoting Holcomb's favorite prayers and listing his decorations pictured on his official portrait; thank-you notes for letters of congratulations upon retirement; support for Boys Club and Boy Scouts; arrangements for Mrs. Holcomb's baggage and transportation to Florida; proposed meetings with friends and family and a testimonial dinner; Moses' comments on the current situation at Parris Island; requests for favors and social invitations; and booklets, articles and autographs.

Folder 84  
1944

1 January. Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox to Gen Holcomb, USMC (Ret).

Knox transmits Holcomb's commission, which appoints him a full general on the retired list, in conformity with U.S. Code Title 34, Section 404 (1). Holcomb's advancement is specifically based on his award of the Navy Cross in World War I for "personal courage and fearlessness in the face of the enemy. . . ." Knox sees this as further recognition of Holcomb's outstanding service record.

17 January. Gen Holcomb, Navy Department, Washington, D.C., to Mr. Samuel W. Meek, New York, New York.

Holcomb explains that he had a fine trip to California and was able to see Jimmy Roosevelt in San Diego. Holcomb confides that his future plans with the Navy have not been settled yet, but he is pleased to get more sleep. Holcomb hopes that Meek will come to see him in Washington; Holcomb is residing at the Statler Hotel.

14 February. Paul R. Rinard, Adjutant General of Delaware, to Holcomb.

Rinard conveys to Holcomb, via General Order No. 2, the Conspicuous Service Cross of the State of Delaware, not just for 44 years of outstanding service in the Marine Corps, but also for the fact that Holcomb has "the distinction of being the first man in the history of the United States to attain the grade of full General in the United States Marine Corps."

22 February. Holcomb to Mrs. Edward A. Mulrooney, Wilmington, Delaware.

Holcomb expresses his pride and delight in the warm, sincere efforts put forth by one and all in the testimonial dinner given in his honor at Wilmington. He and his family very much appreciated the gifts, awards, and plaudits paid him.

24 February. Holcomb to Dauber and Pine, New York, New York.

Holcomb asks this publishing house to procure a copy for him of the publication *South and East African Yearbook and Guide*. This may be the first indication of Holcomb's awareness of his impending assignment as U.S. Minister to South Africa.

21 March. George Fielding Eliot, New York, New York, to Holcomb.

Eliot shows his hearty disapproval of President Roosevelt's decision to "waste" Holcomb's talents as an expert in amphibious warfare by appointing him to a diplomatic post. Eliot promises to use his newspaper clout to let his displeasure be known widely, especially since the U.S. is about to embark on one of the greatest amphibious operations ever undertaken. Finally, he wishes Holcomb luck in South Africa and hopes to see him before he departs.

29 March. Col James Roosevelt, USMCR, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Amphibious Training Command, San Francisco, to Holcomb.

Roosevelt reveals surprise at Holcomb's appointment to be minister to South Africa because he thought that Adm Leahy was setting up a special job for Holcomb. Nevertheless, Roosevelt agrees with Holcomb that the South African job may prove to be much more "profitable" and "enjoyable" as well as drawing upon Holcomb's capabilities more heavily. Roosevelt very much appreciates Holcomb's writing to him and the sentiments expressed in his letter. He will miss Holcomb and hopes to see him on his return. While Roosevelt agrees with G. Fielding Eliot's criticism of wasting Holcomb's talents, he does see Holcomb's appointment as a broad compliment to the Marine Corps for creating a man with such diverse talents.

13 July. Gen Alexander A. Vandegrift, to Holcomb.

Vandegrift thanks Holcomb for writing and is pleased that Holcomb is happy in South Africa. Vandegrift then proceeds to describe the successful but deadly Marine campaign for Saipan. He lists the various offensive and defensive maneuvers and remarks at the high percentage of Marine casualties being due to the tardy entry of the Army into the battle. Also he brings forward the first sketchy details of Holland Smith's personal battle with Army Gen Ralph Smith over the latter's failure to obey orders.

7 March. Holcomb to Mr. Samuel W. Meek, New York, New York.

Holcomb encloses a formal letter of citation for Meek's outstanding and "unselfish" service on behalf of publicizing the Marine Corps to the American people (the enclosure is dated 31 December 1944 [1943]). Holcomb remarks in his more recent letter that the South African government accepted his being appointed American minister and that final approval was up to the Senate.

This folder also contains brief thank-you notes from Holcomb to Mr. Edward R. Stettinius, BGen Samuel Harrington, Col Bagley, Mr. W. William L. Chenery (*Collier's Magazine*), Col A. B. Miller, Mr. John Price Hyatt (President of the Delaware State Society of the Cincinnati), Maj George Fielding Eliot, and Col Samuel Woods; several letters to J. Rogers Holcomb discussing personal business and the family; letters of regret regarding the invitations to Holcomb's testimonial dinner; a brief reminiscence with Charles C. Hubert about working at the Bethlehem Steel plant at Sparrows Point, Maryland; Holcomb requests Maj Capolino to correct and store the oil painting he did of the general for Mrs. Holcomb while they are in South Africa; and details of Holcomb's trans-Atlantic voyage sent to Colonel Jeschke.

*Folder 85*

This folder consists of a letter of congratulations from Maj Guy Richards at USMC Headquarters in Washington to Maj Franklin P. Holcomb, USMCR, upon his marriage, in which Richards has enclosed a rough draft of part of a manuscript, entitled "The Damndest Assignment." Young Holcomb, the son of Gen Thomas Holcomb, is, according to the manuscript, involved in a spy chiller. Franklin Holcomb was sent to North Africa by the Office of Strategic Services to extricate a valuable Free-French pilot from the clutches of pro-Axis forces and succeeds through a bizarre ruse and heroic escape.

## Other Manuscript Collections

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*Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers*, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York  
RG 10 contains a few letters from the White House staff to General Holcomb concerning pieces of information sought by the President and routine matters of protocol.

Diplomatic Branch, National Archives, Washington, D.C. RG 59, the central files of the U.S. State Department, includes many of the reports and correspondence emanating from South Africa during Holcomb's tenure as minister there.

Navy and Old Army Branch, National Archives, Washington, D.C. RG 127, records of the Headquarters of the Marine Corps from 1900 to 1938, contains scattered official documents generated by Holcomb, especially during the last few years of his commandancy, concerning the Marine Corps Schools and administration of the Corps.

General Archives Division at the National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland. RG 127, records of the Office of the Commandant (USMC) continues from 1939-43. RG 84, records of diplomatic posts and legations, includes the consular and post files from South Africa for 1944-48, of which many documents were originated by Holcomb and his immediate staff.

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