

Inventory of the

Gordon John Read
DeKalb, Illinois

Papers

In the

Regional History Center

RC 258

INTRODUCTION

Joann Adrian donated the papers and materials from Gordon John Read and his family to the Regional History Center on October 22, 2003.

Property rights in the collection belong to the Regional History Center; literary rights are dedicated to the public. There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

Linear feet of shelf space: 3
Number of containers: 7
Northern Illinois Regional History Center
Collection 258

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The majority of the materials in the Gordon John Read Papers date from 1949 to 1953. Included is correspondence from “Gordy” Read to his parents from January to September 1951 while serving in the Marine Corps. Researchers will find here a scrapbook of materials from Gordon’s boot camp days at Parris Island, South Carolina, and Camp Pendleton, California, photographs relating to Marine Corps activities, and the flag that draped his coffin at the Memorial Service held January 20, 1952. Also of interest are the letters Mr. and Mrs. Read received following Gordon’s death, as well as newspaper accounts relating to Gordon Read. Also found here are class notes, assignments, text books, programs and other publications that belonged to Gordon Read while attending High School in Elgin (1947) and DeKalb (1948-1949), and Northern Illinois State Teachers College (1949-1950). In addition, there are several folders with material relating to his parents Anna and John G. Read.

This collection gives voice to the life of an ordinary young man serving his country during the Korean War period. The letters received by his parents, and especially those of Mrs. Marguerite Richardson to Anna Read following Gordon’s death show the feelings of those who struggled with the losses suffered because of this war.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Gordon John Read was born December 9, 1930, in Elgin, Illinois, the only child of Anna Irene Romke and John George Read. He attended schools in Elgin until his junior year of high school when the family moved to DeKalb. Following graduation from DeKalb Township High School in 1949, Gordon enrolled at Northern Illinois State Teachers College, also in DeKalb, where he was taking courses in preparation for a career as a dentist.

With the outbreak of the conflict in Korea, Gordon Read enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. He reported for duty January 22, 1951 and went to Parris Island, South

Carolina for Basic Training. In April, Private First Class Read traveled by train to Camp Pendleton in Oceanside, California for advanced training. In mid-July his regiment boarded a ship for Korea, arriving August 3. On September 22, 1951, just nine months after entering the Marine Corps, Read was killed in action at "Heartbreak Ridge" in eastern Korea. Only 20 years old, he was as assistant automatic rifleman with the First Marine Division at the time of his death. Gordon's body was returned to the states in January 1952 and a Memorial Service was held January 20, 1952 at the First Lutheran Church in DeKalb, with burial in the Hampshire Center Cemetery. He was awarded the Purple Heart Medal posthumously.

SUBJECT TRACINGS

DeKalb Township High School
 Elgin (Ill.)
 Korean War
 N.I.U.
 Read, Gordon John
 United States Marine Corps.

COLLECTION INVENTORY

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
1	1	Elgin High School Memorabilia, 1947
	2	DeKalb High School Memorabilia, 1948-1949
	3	German Class - Notes and Small Text, 1948 Northern Illinois State Teachers College
	4	Handbooks and Publications, 1949-1953
	5	Small Notebooks (2), 1949-1950
	6	Subject Notebook Pages, ca. 1950
	7	Biology - Notes and Assignments, ca. 1950
	8-9	Student Notebook Pages - Zoology, Chemistry, English, Psychology, and Math, ca. 1950
	2	1
2		Chemistry, Text, Notes, Tests, 1950
3		Math - Notes and assignments, ca. 1950
4		Physics - Notebook and Final Exam Review, ca. 1950
5		Term Paper on United Nations, n.d.
6		Term Paper on "Wetting Agents," n.d.
7		Dental Schools, Booklets and Correspondence, 1949-1950

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	3
3	1	Read, Gordon John, Biographical Materials, Photographs, (1930-1950)	
	2	Marine Corps Training Materials, Spring 1951	
	3-9	Gordon Read Correspondence to his Parents, January - September 1951	
	10	Gordon Read, Envelopes without letters, 1951	
	11	Newspaper Clippings, January, April, September 1951	
4	1	Marine Corps - Photographs, Correspondence, and Related Documents, January 1951-January 1952	
	2	Memorial Service in Korea, November 1, 1951	
	3-4	Gordon Read's Obituary Clippings, September 1951 - January 1952 (photocopies and originals)	
	5	Gordon Read - Memorial Service, January 20, 1952	
	6	Gordon Read, mentioned in Church Bulletins, (September 1951-March 1956)	
	7	Correspondence to Mr. and Mrs. John G. Read from Marine Corps and Government following death of Gordon Read, (1951-1956)	
	8	Correspondence to Mr. and Mrs. John Read following Gordon Read's death, September 1951-January 1952	
	9	Richard S. Guthrie, Correspondence to Gordon Read's Parents, and the <i>Northern Illinois</i> , 1951-1952	
	10	David Richardson, Correspondence to Gordon Read's Parents, 1951-1952	
	11	Marguerite Richardson, Correspondence to Anna Read, 1951-1953	
	12	Correspondence to Gordon Read from his cousin, Charles "Glen" Romke, 1943-1944	
	13	Correspondence to Gordon Read from Jack Reuter, June 1944	
	14	Anna Romke Read (Wiseman), Mother of Gordon Read, (1944-1990)	
	15	John George Read, Father of Gordon Read, (1905-1966)	
	16	Read Family Reunion, 1994	
	17	Friends of Gordon Read in the Service, 1951, 1953	
	18	Marine Corps War Memorial Foundation, Letter and Photographs, 1953	
	19	Korean War Newspaper Clippings, September 1951	
	20	Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Elgin, Illinois, Newspaper Clipping, May 1955	
	21	Robert L. Swanstrom, Property Title, September 1954	

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	4
5	1	<i>The Pendleton Scout</i> , May, June 1951	
	2	<i>The Veterans' Quarterly</i> , (1951-1955)	
	3	"A Salute to Veterans," <i>MidWeek</i> , November 11, 1992	
		"Gold Star" Magazines, May-September 1953 (4)	
		"American Legion" Magazine, September 1951	
		"Leatherneck" Magazine of the Marines, December 1951, March 1953 (2)	
		"Look" Magazine, January 1952	
		"Life" Magazines, October and December 1951 (3)	
		Scrapbook of Gordon Read's Activities, January - June 1951	
		Pin and Name tag worn by Gordon Read at Lutheran Youth Convention in Duluth, Minnesota, June 1949	
		Slide Rule and Booklet	
		Pen Set	
6		American Flag presented to Mr. and Mrs. John Read following Gordon Read's death in Korea	
7		Textbooks used by Gordon Read while attending DeKalb High School (German), and Northern Illinois State Teachers College, 1949-1950 (13)	
		<i>The "True" Mystery Solved</i> , by Anna P. Wright, presented to Gordon Read for selling the largest amount of Christmas cards for his Sunday School, December 1941	
		"Reader's Digest" Magazine, with Gordon Read's name on it, November 1950	
Oversize Drawer 13	11	Photograph, "A" Company, 1 st Infantry Training Battalion Tent Camp #1, Camp Joseph H. Pendleton, California, May 26, 1951	