
Linear feet shelf space occupied: 30.4
Approximate number of Pages: 58,500
Approximate number of items: 10,000

In October 1974 Mr. Collins executed an instrument of gift for these papers. Literary property rights in the unpublished writings of J. Lawton Collins in these papers and in other collections of papers in the Eisenhower Library have passed to the people of the United States.

By agreement with the donor the following classes of documents will be withheld from research use:

1. Papers relating to private business affairs of individuals and to family and personal affairs.

2. Papers relating to investigations of individuals or to appointments and personnel matters.

3. Papers containing statements made by or to the donor in confidence unless in the judgment of the Director of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library the reason for the confidentiality no longer exists.

4. All other papers which contain information or statements that might by used to injure, harass, or damage any living person.
May 1, 1896  Born, New Orleans, Louisiana

1917  Graduated from U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York

1919-1920  Occupation duty in the Rhineland, Germany (Rank--captain)

July 15, 1921  Married Gladys Easterbrook

1921-1925  Instructor, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York

1925-1927  Attended Infantry School at Fort Banning and Field Artillery School at Fort Sill

1927-1931  Instructor, Infantry School, Fort Benning

1932  Promoted to major

1931-1933  Attended Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

1933-1936  Served in the Philippines as Brigade Executive (23rd Brigade) and as Operations and Intelligence Officer, G-2-3, of the Philippine Division

1936-1937  Attended Army Industrial College, Washington, DC

1937-1938  Attended Army War College, Fort Humphreys

1938-1940  Instructor, Army War College

1940  Served on Secretariat, Army General Staff

1941  Chief of Staff, VII Army Corps, Birmingham, Alabama--participated in Tennessee, Arkansas, and Louisiana maneuvers

1941-1942  Chief of Staff, Hawaiian Department

Feb. 1942  Promoted to brigadier general

May 1942  Promoted to major general

1942-1943  Commander, 25th Infantry Division, Pacific Theater

1944-1945  Commander, VII Army Corps, European Theater
1945   Promoted to lieutenant general
1945-1947   Chief of Public Information, War Department
1947-1949   Deputy and vice chief of staff, U.S. Army
1948   Promoted to four-star general
1949-1953   Chief of Staff, U.S. Army
1953-1956   U.S. representative on NATO’s Military Committee and Standing Group
1954-1955   Special representative of U.S. in Vietnam with rank of ambassador
March 31, 1956   Retired from U.S. Army
1956-1957   Director and vice chairman, President’s Committee for Hungarian Refugee Relief
1957-1969   Vice chairman, board of directors, Pfizer International Inc. and member, board of directors, Charles Pfizer and Co., Inc.
Sep. 12, 1987   Died, Washington, DC

BOOKS PUBLISHED:

War in Peacetime: the History and Lessons of Korea (1969)

Lightning Joe: An Autobiography (1979)
DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

SERIES I: MILITARY CAREER, 1930-1945

SUBSERIES A. Pre-War Period, 1930-1941

Although J. Lawton Collins graduated from West Point in 1917, we have very little documentation concerning the first two decades of his military career. Documentation for the pre-World War Two period consists of a few items of correspondence, two reports by Collins, and some Army War College course materials, including two lectures by Collins. Additional lectures, reports, and studies by Collins for this period are located in Series VI (Speech, Statement, and Lecture Series) and VII (Writings Series). The materials in this subseries are organized in chronological order.

SUBSERIES B. World War II, 1941-1945

Five days after Pearl Harbor was attacked by Japanese forces, Colonel J. Lawton Collins was ordered to proceed to Hawaii to serve as Chief of Staff to General Delos C. Emmons, commander of the Hawaiian Department. Collins was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General in February 1942 and to Major General in May of the same year. From May 1942 to December 1943 he commanded the 25th Infantry Division which he led on campaigns in Guadalcanal and New Georgia. In early 1944 Collins was ordered to England to participate in the preparations for Operation Overlord. He was placed in command of VII Corps, whose mission was to seize Utah Beach and drive toward Cherbourg. General Collins remained with the VII Corps on its drive through France and into Germany.

Collins’ “201 File” contains orders and personal correspondence which are organized in chronological order by folders and in reverse chronological order within the folders. His wartime correspondence includes letters from well-known generals, including Mark Clark, Dwight D. Eisenhower, George C. Marshall, Bernard Montgomery and George S. Patton. The letter file for 1943 includes interesting comments on military tactics and fighting in the Pacific Theater and on the malaria problem in the region. A discussion regarding racial disturbances at Negro Red Cross clubs in England can be found in the letter file for 1944. Also in that file are comments on the relief of an armored division commander. Collins described German losses in the Battle of the Bulge in correspondence with Montgomery in early 1945.

This series includes an overall history of the 25th Infantry Division and an account of its operations in the Central Solomons in 1943.

Material on the VII Corps includes field orders, map overlays, and account of its role in Operation COBRA, and two slightly different histories (one is illustrated with photographs) of VII Corps from June 1944 to April 1945.
The final item in this series is a photocopy of a diary which was kept by aides of General Courtney Hicks Hodges. The original diary is located in box 25 of the Hodges Papers.

SERIES II: CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. ARMY, 1949-1953

The most important material in this series is found in the small correspondence, subject, and trip files (boxes 17, 22, and 23). The remainder of the series consists of congratulatory letters (4 boxes) sent to General Collins after his appointment as Chief of Staff, printed copies of testimony he gave before Congress (5 boxes), and press clippings for August 1949 to August 1953 (4 boxes). This series is organized into six subseries—four of these are arranged in chronological order and two, the correspondence and subject subseries, are arranged in alphabetical order by folder title.

The Correspondence Subseries contains communications with other military leaders, including Mark W. Clark, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Alfred M. Gruenther, Thomas T. Handy, and Matthew B. Ridgway. Subjects discussed in this correspondence include the Korean War, Vietnam, U.S. Army tank programs, U.S. forces in Germany, Yugoslavia, NATO Standing Group, NATO meetings and exercises, Marshal Juin and the French Government, Turkey, SHAPE force requirements, defense of Western Europe, British forces in the Baltic Sea, European Command Headquarters, and integration of the U.S. Army.

The Subject Subseries is comprised of memoranda, reports, charts, and correspondence concerning a variety of topics, including air support for NATO, armored vehicles, atomic artillery data, the B-36 bomber, integration of the armed forces, the European Command, the Korean War, the Quantico Conference, reorganization of the Department of Defense, equipment tests, standardization of small arms, the 280 mm gun, and the West Point Honor System.

The Trip Subseries contains reports, schedules, itineraries, diaries, and memoranda regarding trips to Korea, the Middle East, South America, and around-the-world. Collins made at least five trips to Korea as Chief of Staff, and the materials on these visits provide insights into U.S. conduct of the war. His round-the-world trip in October 1951 included a stop in Yugoslavia and discussions with several of its leaders.

Although a good share of this series is routine, the Correspondence, Subject, and Trip Subseries contain important materials, particularly on such topics as NATO and Korea. The file of correspondence between Collins and Alfred Gruenther is particularly significant.

SERIES III. SPECIAL MISSION TO VIETNAM SERIES

Some of the richest historical materials in the Collins Papers are found in the Vietnam Series. General Collins’ mission to Vietnam followed the defeat of French colonial forces by the Vietminh at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954 and the subsequent Geneva Conference which formally ended the fighting. The mission, which ran from November 1954 to May 1955, occurred at
time when South Vietnam was in great ferment. A new national government under President Ngo Dinh Diem was struggling to assert itself while various sects and private armies were competing for power and territory. Vietminh agents and sympathizers were stirring up the populace and taking advantage of the general chaos. Also French military forces were still an important factor in the country. Finally, a great influx of refugees from North Vietnam added to the confusion and further strained the resources of South Vietnam.

The purpose of General Collins’ mission was to assess and evaluate the highly volatile situation and to recommend a program of United States aid to stabilize the situation by strengthening the national government and thus preventing a Communists takeover. President Eisenhower had personally requested Collins’ involvement in this project, and Collins was appointed to the rank of ambassador to carry out the assignment.

The series contains the records Collins accumulated while engaged in this effort to assist Diem’s government. Collins donated all of his papers to the Eisenhower Library in 1974 but requested that the Vietnam papers be held in courtesy storage at the National Archives until a granddaughter had utilized them for her doctoral dissertation. The National Archives organized a special review project (NND 809053) to apply declassification guidelines to the classified documents in this series. As a result, over 90 per cent of this series has been declassified; the remainder, about 500 pages of documents--many dealing with intelligence matters--are still classified in whole or in part. This series was released to the Library by Collins’ granddaughter and shipped to Abilene in 1986. The nine-box series has been organized into five subseries based upon the categories of material already established by Collins and his staff.

**SUBSERIES A. Briefing Book**

The Briefing Book Subseries consists of the background materials General J. Lawton Collins received from the Foreign Operations Administration in early November 1954 to help prepare him for his mission to Vietnam. The first volume is arranged topically, and the “tabs” are arranged chronologically. There are indexes near the front of the material.

Types of documents found in the Briefing Book include reports, telegrams, messages, press releases, notes, minutes of meetings, treaties, international agreement, and briefing papers. These materials contain a detailed chronology of events in Indochina from 1940 to 1954, and they document such matter as U.S. policy on Indochina, Franco-American talks on Indochina, Vietnam’s major problems, guidelines for Collins’ mission, Collins’ staff and official contacts in Saigon, U.S. economic aid to Vietnam, and the Michigan State College project in Vietnam.

**SUBSERIES B. Daily Activity Book**

The Daily Activity Book Subseries, which is arranged chronologically, contains Collins’ daily appointment schedules from October 31, 1954 to May 5, 1955. Minutes of staff meetings for this period, notes and a list of accomplishments of Collins’ mission to Vietnam are also found in this subseries. Some of the topics and personalities referred to include Collins’ briefings in Washington, D.C., training the Vietnamese armed forces, refugee relief, pacification programs,
the Military Assistance Advisory Group, the problem of religious sects, the French Expeditionary Corps, the Vietminh, Colonel Edward Lansdale, General John W. (Mike) O’Daniel, Cambodia, land reform, Dr. Wesley Fishel, Dr. Phan Huy Quat, General Paul Ely, President Ngo Dinh Diem, Defense Minister Minh, and the Phan Rang-Phan Thiet incident.

SUBSERIES C. Monthly Papers

The Monthly Papers Subseries is comprised largely of telegrams from the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, the State Department in Washington, D.C., or the U.S. Embassy in Paris, France. They are arranged chronologically by month from November 1954 to May 1955. Other types of documents found in this subseries include letters, messages, press releases, reports, memoranda, papers, and lists. Some of the themes or topics discussed in this documentation are the policies of the U.S. and France toward Vietnam, the development, organization, and training of the Vietnamese National Army, refugees, President Diem’s government, the National Assembly, land reform, economic and military aid to Vietnam, Vietnamese elections, the problem of the sects, alternatives to the Diem government North Vietnam, aid to Cambodia and Laos, the Bandung Conference, Diem’s Catholicism, French aid to the sects, trilateral meetings in Paris, and anti-French sentiment in Vietnam.

Personalities and organizations mentioned in these papers include Mendes-France, Bao Dai, the Vietminh, General Paul Ely, Dr. Phan Huy Quat, Binh Xuyen, Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, John Foster Dulles, Nguyen De, Ambassador Jean Daridan, Police Chief Lai Van Sang, the Military Assistance Advisory Group, and the Foreign Operations Administration. Both Collins’ report to the NSC on Vietnam in January 1955 and his final report in Vietnam in May 1955 are contained in this subseries.

SUBSERIES D. Name and Subject

The folders in the Name and Subject Subseries are arranged alphabetically by title. The most common types of material found in this subseries are memoranda, cross-reference sheets, route slips, reports, notes, and letters. Other materials filed in this subseries include lists, plans, government decrees and directives, position and policy papers, interview transcripts, newspaper clippings, invitations, maps, charts, tables, and telegrams.

This subseries combines the various name and subject files which originally made up three subseries, the Alphabetical File, the Subject File, and the Miscellaneous Papers, in Collins’ Vietnam Series as it arrived from the National Archives. We have combined them due to the similarity of material found in the three subseries.

The Name and Subject Subseries contains folders with the names of key figures in Vietnam during this period--Boa Dai, Ngo Dinh Diem, Paul Ely, Edward Lansdale, Phan Huy Quat, and General O’Daniel; with key problems affecting Vietnam in the 1950’s such as pacification, refugees, and economic matters; and with key organizations and groups active at this time such as the armed forces, Binh Xuyen, Cao Dai, National Assembly, sects, United Front, and Vietminh. Simply checking the folder for an individual or topic, however, will not give you an
adequate perspective on what this subseries has to offer on the person or topic. Important
documentation in this subseries can be found under such innocuous titles as “Memos for
Record,” “Miscellaneous Top Secret Files,” “Policy Papers,” and “Special Staff File,” thus, we
recommend surveying the entire subseries if you have an interest in an aspect of Vietnam during
this period.

There are references in this subseries to numerous topics, individuals, and organizations not
described by folder titles.

A small sampling of these include the Revolutionary Committee, the Ba Long affair, the
International Control Commission, Ambassador Jean Daridan, General Trinh Minh The, the Dai
Viet Party, Chinese Communist activities in South Vietnam, the conflict between the Vietnamese
National Army and the sect forces, anti-French sentiment, French subsidies to the sects, Police
Chief Lai Van Sang, Cardinal Spellman, and the evacuation of people and industrial equipment
from North Vietnam.

SUBSERIES E. Telegrams

The Telegrams Subseries is divided into two parts--Telegrams Sent (to the American Embassy in
Saigon) and Telegrams Received (by the American Embassy in Saigon). Within these two
segments the folders are arranged in chronological order. The first folder for each of the two
segments contains a list of the telegrams sent or received by the Saigon Embassy from

A wide variety of subjects and personalities are discussed in these telegrams. Bao Dai, Dr. Phan
Huy Quat, President Ngo Dinh Diem, Defense Ho Thong Minh, Dr. Wesley Fishel, General Paul
Ely, General Vy, General Hinh, General John W. O’Daniel, Cardinal Spellman, General Phuong,
General Soai, General Gambiez, Trinh Minh The, John Foster Dulles, Mendes-France, M. Edgar
Faure, and Ambassador Saintenay are among some of the individuals whose names appear
frequently in these communications. Subjects referred to in these documents include such
matters as U.S. policy on Vietnam, the Michigan State College project, the Vietminh, the
recovery of Military Defense Assistance Program equipment from North Vietnam, refugee
settlement and land reform, U.S. military and economic aid to Vietnam, the International Control
Commission, Vietnamese National Army force levels and training, pacification programs,
Cambodia, Laos, integration of certain sect forces in VNA, French aid to the sects, the VNA
versus the sects, Diem’s Catholicism, the Revolutionary Committee, anti-French propaganda,
French policy on Vietnam, and the Pathet Lao. Some telegrams contain detailed accounts of
specific incidents and others contain official reports by Ambassador Collins summarizing the
general state of affairs in Vietnam.

SERIES IV: POST-MILITARY PERIOD, 1957-1965

The Post-Military Period Series is a combination subject and correspondence file for the years,
1957-1965. It is organized in alphabetical order by folder title and in reverse chronological
order within the folders. The “Miscellaneous Correspondence” folders contain a considerable quantity of his personal correspondence for this period.

This series reflects General Collins’ involvement in a wide variety of activities. In 1957 he became a director of Pfizer International Inc., a leading producer of chemicals and pharmaceuticals. He held this position until 1966. Collins also made significant contributions in the area of public service during this period. He served as vice chairman and director of the President’s Committee for Hungarian Refugee Relief, 1956-1957. He also participated in the Limited War Panel of the President’s Science Advisory Committee, and he was a member of the Board of Visitors of the United States Military Academy. His civic-mindedness also included stints as a member of the board of directors of the Foreign Student Service Council and as a member of the USO National Council.

Besides documentation regarding the above-mentioned activities, this series contains correspondence on both personal matters and public issues. Included is correspondence with Dwight D. Eisenhower, John Foster Dulles, General Lauris Norstad, Lyndon Baines Johnson, and a number of business acquaintances and former military colleagues. Some of the topics discussed in this correspondence include U.S. foreign trade policy, events and personalities of World War II, Vietnam, the Boxer rebellion, and the U.S. armed forces. In addition to correspondence, this series contains speech notes and drafts, interview transcripts, and a book review by Collins. An article by Colonel Edward G. Lansdale on “Political Developments and Problems” in Vietnam, circa 1958, is also located in this series.

SERIES V: APPOINTMENT BOOKS, 1948-1955

This series contains nine appointment books, 1948-1955, and a folder of items withdrawn from the 1953 book.

SERIES VI: SPEECH, STATEMENT, AND LECTURE SERIES, 1939-1972

This series contains materials on nearly two hundred presentations by Collins, including speeches, statements, lectures, and interviews. The earliest speech was given in 1939 and the latest is from 1972. The bulk of the speeches run from 1946 to 1955. The series is organized primarily in chronological order. However, many of the speeches were already organized in segments, such as “Speeches and Statements, 1946-1949” and “Service School Speeches, 1940, 1948-1955”; these segments have been kept intact within the overall chronological order. Each of these segments has an index in the first folder of the segment.

Most of the speeches, statements, and lectures are either typed or printed final copies, but there are also drafts of a few speeches, plus handwritten and typed notes and outlines for a number of speeches.

Some of the groups General Collins spoke to included service school classes, military units, civic
and veterans’ organizations, educational institutions, and various committees of Congress. He also participated in interviews conducted by numerous members of the media. Although Collins intended to speak on topics relating to the U.S. military, national security, and U.S. foreign policy, he also spoke occasionally on general patriotic themes and domestic problems and policies. There are about 4,000 pages in this series, none of it security-classified.

SERIES VII: WRITINGS, 1928-1970

The Writing Series is divided into two subseries—a one-box subseries consisting of articles, papers, and reports dating from 1928 to 1967 and a five-box subseries containing drafts and research materials for two books authored by General Collins. Some early articles by Collins which may be of particular interest to researchers are his 1933 study on the “Conduct of a Holding Attack,” a 1937 report on “Utilization of Economic Resources,” and notes on “Third Army Maneuvers” in Louisiana in May 1940. A paper Collins wrote in 1967 on the Vietnam situation provides insight into his viewpoint on U.S. involvement there.

The second subseries contains three boxes of drafts for Collins’ book on the Korean War, War in Peacetime, and two boxes of drafts and background materials on the book, Lightning Joe, An Autobiography. Besides the drafts for War in Peacetime, this subseries also includes reviews of the book, correspondence relating to it, and lists of corrections and changes to be made in the drafts.

There are some interesting documents in the folders containing background materials for various chapters in Lightning Joe, An Autobiography. A 1914 letter from Collins to his mother is one of the unique items found among the background materials for chapter 1. A 1920 report by General John J. Pershing on military organization and tactics is located with the source materials for chapter 3, and the materials relating to chapter 4 include two papers written by Collins in the mid-1930s while stationed in the Philippines. One is a paper on the “Proposed Organization of an Infantry Division,” and the second is a paper concerning a 1936 training march by the “Philippine Division,” complete with map and photographs.

The background materials for Lightning Joe also contain information on Collins’ two major commands during World War II—the 25th Infantry Division in the Pacific Theater and the VII Corps in Europe. The source materials for chapter 9 include the order of battle for Japanese forces in Guadalcanal (1943) as well as an account of enemy operations on Guadalcanal. Some of the background materials consist of original documents, and others are simply xerographic copies of documents ordered by General Collins from various records centers and archives in the course of conducting research for his book.

Although the book drafts which make up the bulk of this series will probably be of interest only to the biographer of Collins, the articles and reports by Collins and the background materials for his autobiography contain documentation that will be of interest not only to scholars working on Collins’ military career but also to those researching such topics as developments in the U.S. Army from the 1920s to 1940, the pre-war Philippines, the 25th Infantry Division, the battle for
Guadalcanal, and the operations of the VII Corps. There are about 4,800 pages in this series, and no documents remain classified.

SERIES VIII: PRINTED AND MISCELLANEOUS MATERIALS, 1939-1974

The first fifteen boxes of this series contain bound copies of congressional hearings which General Collins collected. They are arranged in chronological order and date from 1947 to 1958. Some of these volumes contain testimony by Collins, and others apparently contain testimony or information that was of interest to him. The largest concentration of the hearings covers his years as Chief of Staff, 1949 to 1953. Annotations by Collins can be found in several of the volumes.

The Book Subseries, which occupies three and one-half boxes, contains the pre-publication drafts of two books that Collins was asked to review or critique. One volume is on the Battle of the Bulge and the other is on the racial integration of the U.S. military.

The Articles, Brochures, Papers, and Periodicals Subseries is comprised of printed and manuscript materials collected by General Collins, including articles and papers on such topics as Vietnam, Korea, and World War II.

The Clippings Subseries contains a little over one box of clippings dating from 1939 to 1974. The bulk of the clippings are related to World War II or anniversaries of D-Day, June 6, 1944.

SERIES IX: PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS SERIES, 1900-1974

This series contained about 700 photographs which have been transferred to the audiovisual collection. A little over one-half of these photos cover the four years in which Collins served as Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, 1949-1953. Other subjects illustrated by the photographs include Collins’ youth, Collins’ early military career, World War II, and D-Day anniversary ceremonies.

Approximately eighty-five maps have been transferred from this series to the Map Collection. A number of these maps are related to the World War II European Theater, including some that have annotations. Collins served in Germany from 1919 to 1920, and his papers contain several maps that he utilized during this period. There are also several maps of Vietnam, mostly from the 1960s. A unique map found in this collection is a Japanese aeronautical chart of Guadalcanal which was retrieved in 1943 from a captured Japanese command post on Guadalcanal.

A number of smaller maps and World War II overlays have been folderized and retained in this series.
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Atomic Artillery Data, 1950-1952

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