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Research in the Naval Historical Collection: Gifts and Acquisitions

Evelyn M. Cherpak

The Naval Historical Collection is the Naval War College's depository for archives and manuscripts. The collection has recently acquired a number of manuscripts treating diverse topics and spanning the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The manuscripts were either purchased by or deposited through the Naval War College Foundation, which supports the college's educational and cultural programs.

Among the papers are the manuscripts of both Rear Admiral George E. Belknap (1832-1903) and his son, Rear Admiral Reginald R. Belknap (1871-1959). The senior Belknap played an important role in the Civil War, during which he participated in the attacks on Fort Fisher and in the final attack on Charleston, South Carolina. His major ship commands included the USS *Hartford* (1867-68), which was involved in an attack on Formosa; the USS *Tuscarora* (1872-74), which surveyed the Isthmian Canal route and took soundings between Hawaii and Japan for a trans-Pacific telegraph cable; the receiving ship USS *Ohio* (1874-75); and the USS *Alaska* (1881-83), in which he conducted ocean research off the South American coast. He also served as commander-in-chief of the Asiatic Station from 1889-92.

Most of his papers consist of letters to his wife and focus on his naval assignments and family matters. His wife's letters to her mother from Kobe and Yokohama, Japan, during the 1890s (also among the new acquisitions) give an interesting account of navy life in the Far East one hundred years ago.

Reginald R. Belknap obtained an appointment to the Naval Academy in 1887. Highlights of his career included heading the Red Cross Expedition to rebuild the city of Messina, Italy, following a devastating earthquake there in 1908; command of the "Yankee Mining Squadron," which left Newport to lay the North Sea Mine Barrage in 1918; the chairmanship of the War

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College Strategy Department (1921-23); and command of the new battleship *Colorado* (BB 45) (1923-25).

The Reginald Belknap correspondence, all personal, contains letters sent and received, with most of them addressed to his mother.

The papers of Vice Admiral Joseph K. Taussig are a recent gift from his children, Mrs. William A. Sherman of Newport and Captain Joseph K. Taussig, Jr., USN (Ret.) of Annapolis. Immediately after graduating from the Naval Academy in 1899, he was sent to the Asiatic Station and saw action during the Boxer Rebellion. He was wounded there and advanced four numbers in grade, but did not receive his Purple Heart until 1943, over forty years later. During World War I, he commanded the first U.S. destroyers to be sent to war, in May 1917. It was he who responded with the famous phrase, "We are ready now, sir," in reply to Vice Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly's query as to his newly arrived ships' readiness for sea.

Admiral Taussig was associated with the Naval War College for over a decade. He attended the senior course in 1919 and then served on the staff, becoming Chairman of the Strategy Department from 1923-25. Following a tour as commanding officer of the cruiser *Trenton*, he returned to the college as Chief of Staff from 1928-30.

Admiral Taussig retired from the navy just before the outbreak of World War II. His testimony in 1940 before a Congressional committee, where he predicted war with Japan, created a furor in political circles. He received an official reprimand, although this was rescinded shortly after his son was injured in the USS *Nevada* during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The Taussig papers document the Admiral's naval career from 1899 until his death in 1947. The collection is an especially rich one and contains extensive correspondence up to and including his controversial 1940 testimony. Diaries from the USS *Wadsworth* (DD 60) (1915-17), *Little* (DD 79) (1917-18) and *Trenton* (CL 11) (1926-27), all of which he commanded, along with several others dating from the 1930s, are significant research items. Professor William Still, SecNav Fellow at the Naval Historical Center, is preparing an edited version of the *Wadsworth* diary for the college's Historical Monograph Series.

Manuscript registers have been published for both the Taussig and Belknap papers. The registers contain a list of college archival documents that supplement these collections.

The personal papers of Herbert F. Rosinski (1903-1961) were presented by Dr. Richard P. Stebbins through the good offices of the late Rear Admiral Henry E. Eccles, longtime friend of the Naval War College and renowned logistician. Rosinski, a scholar of international relations and military history, immigrated to the United States in 1940 from Germany via England. Over the years, he was affiliated with the Voice of America, Tufts University, the Institute for Advanced Study, and the Council on Foreign Relations. He

lectured at the Naval War College and the National War College in the 1950s. His *magnum opus*, *The German Army*, was published in 1940, and his articles on military topics appeared routinely in *Brassey's Annual*, *The New York Times Magazine* and *The National Review*.

The Rosinski papers document both the life and career of this prolific scholar. Personal and biographical materials as well as medical and estate records are a segment of the collection. The bulk of the materials, however, consists of correspondence with military and political figures, friends, publishers and academic associations regarding his scholarly work, publications, and lectureships. Some of the most interesting letters were written in German to the Stebbinses during his trip to India in 1948-49 to consult with Nehru and generals of the Indian Armed Forces. Rosinski considered this trip the highlight of his career. There are also a series of letters to Eccles, who was both a friend and intellectual mentor of Rosinski.

The collection contains copies of Rosinski's major books, *Power and Human Destiny* and *The German Army*, as well as articles, book reviews, letters to the editor, and pamphlets on such topics as sea power, strategy, Clausewitz, Alfred T. Mahan, national defense, and German and Japanese naval power. Unpublished writings, lectures, seminar presentations, and notes and outlines on a variety of topics complete the collection. A biography entitled *The Career of Herbert Rosinski: An Intellectual Pilgrimage*, by Richard P. Stebbins, was published in 1989 and is a fine addition to his papers.

The Rosinski papers are important to scholars of twentieth century military affairs, military strategy and international relations. In his writings, Rosinski sought to develop a comprehensive theory of strategy and warfare, and grappled with the issue of power in the evolution of human history as well. He never quite achieved his goal, nor did his ideas or works receive the recognition he felt they deserved. His intellectual struggles, his personal struggles as an alien in America, and his achievements as a scholar are fully documented in this manuscript collection.

The research source collection of Richard S. West, naval historian, professor at the U.S. Naval Academy, and author of *The Second Admiral* and *Admirals of the American Empire*, was recently acquired by the Naval Historical Collection. West had just finished a manuscript on the history of amphibious warfare (from the age of oar to Inchon) before his untimely death in 1968. This collection contains several drafts of the work as well as extensive research files, interviews with naval officers, and notes on the history of amphibious warfare. One of the most interesting parts of this archive is Admiral H.K. Hewitt's detailed comments on the book's chapters. Hewitt, who took part in the major Allied landings in North Africa, Sicily, Salerno, and Southern France during World War II, also wrote the foreword to the book. There are a number of letters from him, as well as from other World War II commanders—Raymond A. Spruance, Walter Ansel, and Ernest

Eller—who also read and commented on the manuscript. West's manuscript remains suitable for publication today.

Admiral Herbert O. Dunn, a native of Westerly, Rhode Island, and a member of the class of 1911 at the Naval War College, developed the Dunn Anchor, the trade name for the modern stockless anchor. This recent accession contains over 100 letters (1889-97) regarding the anchor and his other inventions, along with patents from Germany and England and letters and testimonials from naval officers.

Several items pertaining to the Naval Torpedo Station, the first naval facility established in Narragansett Bay (in 1869), were recently purchased. They include a notebook of drawings and diagrams of Lieutenant Commander Charles O'Neill from a course on torpedoes given at the Newport facility in 1876. Accompanying this are two volumes: one on the Whitehead Torpedo and the other on the Mark I, II, and III torpedoes. Both of these were prepared at the Naval Torpedo Station.

For scholars interested in World War II, the reminiscences of Captain LeRoy Taylor, USN (Ret.), who served in destroyers during the battles of the Coral Sea, Midway and Santa Cruz in 1942 and in motor torpedo boat squadrons in the Northern Solomons in 1943-44, will prove enlightening, as will the memoirs of Captain John Roenigk, who was one of a small number of naval officers who received Japanese language training prior to World War II and then served on the radio intelligence staff in Hawaii from 1942-44. In addition, a volume entitled *Dear Ones* contains letters, certificates, naval orders, reminiscences, and notes on seamanship of Lieutenant Ralph M. Atherton, who trained at Camp Shelton, Virginia, and served in the merchant ship *Nathaniel Currier* in the South Pacific (1944-45).

Other manuscript items of interest include a letterbook of Henry S. Craven, a civil engineer for the Navy Department, who was involved in the planning and construction of the Naval Training Station (1882-83); a 1980 letter of Commander Lloyd Bucher in which he discusses his imprisonment in North Korea in 1968 as commanding officer of the *Pueblo* (AGER 2); a rare broadside of an account in verse of the battle of Lake Erie in 1813, lauding Oliver Hazard Perry and Jesse D. Elliott; and miscellaneous letters of Stephen B. Luce, Samuel DuPont, Thomas Mooror, Chester Nimitz, David Farragut, George Dewey, Tasker Bliss and John Dahlgren, among others.

The Naval Historical Collection, a division of the Naval War College Library, is located on the first floor of Mahan Hall. The collections, which focus on the history of the college, naval warfare studies, and the navy in Narragansett Bay, are open to scholars and interested researchers Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., except on Federal holidays. Collection guides and manuscript registers may be obtained by writing to the Curator, Naval Historical Collection, Naval War College, Newport, RI 02841-5010 or by calling (401) 841-2435 (Autovon 948-2435).