

# John L. McCrea Papers

## A Finding Aid to the Papers in the Naval Historical Foundation Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress  
Washington, D.C.  
2007

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm92081333>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms007084>

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Revised 2013 March

## Collection Summary

**Title:** John L. McCrea Papers

**Span Dates:** 1898-1984

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1914-1966)

**ID No.:** MSS81333

**Creator:** McCrea, John L. (John Livingstone), 1891-

**Extent:** 5,255 items

**Extent:** 14 containers

**Extent:** 5.2 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English

**Location:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm92081333>

**Summary:** Naval officer, aide to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and insurance executive. Correspondence, speeches, writings, subject files, and photographs relating primarily to McCrea's career as a naval officer.

## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

### People

Berkey, Russell S. (Russell Stanley), 1893-1985.

Blandy, William H. P. (William Henry Purnell), 1890-1954.

Campbell, E. H. (Edward Hale), 1872-1946.

Conolly, Richard L. (Richard Lansing), 1892-1962.

Denfeld, Louis E. (Louis Emil), 1891-1972.

Dennison, Robert L. (Robert Lee), 1901-1980.

Fechteler, W. M. (William Morrow), 1896-1967.

Hart, Thomas Charles.

Hassett, William D., 1880-1965.

Hicks, Walter A. (Walter Alexander), 1892-

Ingram, Jonas H. (Jonas Howard), 1886-1952.

McCandlish, B. V. (Benjamin Vaughan), 1886-

McCrea, John L. (John Livingstone), 1891-1990.

Nimitz, Chester W. (Chester William), 1885-1966.

Pugh, Herbert Lamont, 1895-

Quiggle, Lynne C. (Lynne Cline), 1906-1958.

Rodman, Hugh, 1859-1940.

Roosevelt, Franklin D. (Franklin Delano), 1882-1945.

Smith, A. E. (Allan Edward), 1892-1987.

Smith, Arthur St. Clair, 1873-1942.

Stark, Harold R. (Harold Raynsford), 1880-1972.

Tolley, Kemp, 1908-

Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972.

### Organizations

Combined Chiefs of Staff (U.S. and Great Britain)

Germany. Kriegsmarine--History--World War, 1914-1918.

Iowa (Ship)

United States. Navy--Foreign service--Central America.

United States. Navy--Foreign service--Guam.

United States. Navy--Foreign service--Pacific Area.

United States. Navy. Asiatic Fleet.

United States. Navy. Cruiser Division One.

United States. Navy. Naval District, 1st.  
United States. Navy. Pacific Fleet.  
United States. Navy. Special Service Squadron.  
United States. Office of the Chief of Naval Operations.

### **Subjects**

World War, 1914-1918--Europe.  
World War, 1914-1918--Naval operations, American.  
World War, 1914-1918--Naval operations, British.  
World War, 1939-1945--Alaska.  
World War, 1939-1945--Soviet Union.

### **Places**

Aleutian Islands (Alaska)--History.  
Camp David (Md.)  
France--Armed Forces--Mobilization.  
Guam--Politics and government.  
Guam--Social conditions.  
Kuril Islands (Russia)--History.  
Nicaragua--Politics and government--1909-1937.  
Nicaragua--Social conditions.  
Panama--Politics and government--1903-1946.  
Panama--Social conditions.

### **Titles**

*John L. McCrea papers (Naval Historical Foundation collection)*

### **Occupations**

Insurance executives.  
Naval officers.

## **Provenance**

The papers of John L. McCrea, naval officer, aide to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and insurance executive, were deposited in the Library of Congress by the Naval Historical Foundation in 1990 and converted to a gift in 1998.

## **Processing History**

The papers of John L. McCrea were arranged and described in 1993. The finding aid was revised in 2007.

## **Transfers**

Some photographs have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division where they are identified as part of the John L. McCrea Papers.

## **Copyright Status**

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of John L. McCrea is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of John L. McCrea are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

## Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, John L. McCrea Papers, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

Date	Event
1891, May 29	Born, Marlette, Mich.
1915	Graduated, United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.
1915-1919	Served aboard <i>New York</i> (battleship)
1919-1921	Served aboard <i>New Mexico</i> (battleship) Aide to Admiral Hugh Rodman, commander in chief, United States Pacific Fleet
1921-1922	Served aboard destroyers <i>Burns</i> , <i>Babbitt</i> , and <i>Zeilin</i>
1922	Executive officer, <i>Ramapo</i> (fuel oil tanker)
1923-1924	Attended Naval War College, Newport, R.I.
1924-1926	Commanded <i>Bittern</i> (mine sweeper)
1926-1929	Assigned to judge advocate general
1929	Received bachelor of law degree, George Washington University, Washington, D.C.
1929-1931	Aide and flag secretary to the commander, special service squadron operating in Central American waters
1932-1934	Aide to Orin G. Murfin, judge advocate general
1934	Received master of law degree, George Washington University, Washington, D.C.
1934-1936	Navigator, <i>Astoria</i> (cruiser)
1936-1937	Executive officer of naval station and aide for civil administration, Guam
1938-1940	Executive officer, <i>Pennsylvania</i> (battleship)
1941	Aide to Harold R. Stark, chief of naval operations Naval secretary at the first meetings of the Combined Chiefs of Staff
1942-1943	Naval aide to President Franklin D. Roosevelt
1943-1944	Commanded <i>Iowa</i> (battleship)
1944-1945	Commanded Cruiser Division One in attacks on Japanese installations in the Aleutian and Kurile islands
1946	Deputy chief of naval operations
1948-1949	Deputy commander, United States Pacific Fleet
1949-1952	Director of staff, Personnel Policy Board, United States Navy
1952-1953	Commander, First Naval District
1953	Retired from Navy Vice-president for client relations, John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Co.
1966	Retired from John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Co.
1990, Jan. 25	Died, Needham, Mass.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of John L. McCrea (1891-1990), Franklin D. Roosevelt's naval aide during the early part of World War II, span the years 1898-1984, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1914-1966. The collection is organized into general correspondence, speeches and writings, and subject files. The general correspondence is arranged chronologically and spans most of McCrea's naval career (1914-1953), a second career as an insurance executive (1953-1966), and his postretirement through 1984. McCrea served from 1915 to 1919 aboard the battleship *New York*, flagship of Adm. Hugh Rodman's Division Nine, a force of United States warships cooperating with the British Grand Fleet in European waters during World War I. Correspondence from this period relates to relations between the United States and the British navies and to the surrender of the German High Seas Fleet in 1918. McCrea also served under Rodman as an aide (1919-1921) during the admiral's command of the United States fleet in the Pacific. McCrea and Rodman maintained a correspondence well into the 1930s. From 1929 to 1931, McCrea was aide and flag secretary to E. H. Campbell and Arthur St. Clair Smith, successive commanders of a special service squadron operating in Central American waters. Correspondence from this period is a rich source on military, political, and social conditions in Nicaragua and Panama.

McCrea's service with the Naval Government of Guam (1936-1937), as executive officer of the naval station on the island and as aide for civil administration, generated correspondence with governor B. V. McCandlish and others about social, military, and political conditions on Guam. During the period 1941-1943, McCrea served as aide to chief of naval operations Harold R. Stark, as naval secretary at the first meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, and as naval aide to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. From 13 December 1940 to 31 January 1941, while working for Stark, McCrea traveled to the Philippines to appraise the battle readiness of the United States Asiatic Fleet and the fitness of its commander, Thomas C. Hart. Included in the correspondence for the period 1941-1943 are memoranda from Roosevelt and correspondence with several White House staffers, especially William D. Hassett, personal secretary to Roosevelt, and Harry S. Truman.

Prominent in the general correspondence are many letters from McCrea's duty aboard a variety of naval vessels, including billets as navigator of the cruiser *Astoria* (1934-1936), executive officer of the fuel oil tanker *Ramapo* (1922) and the battleship *Pennsylvania* (1938-1940), and commander of the mine sweeper *Bittern* (1924-1926) and the battleship *Iowa* (1943-1944). McCrea maintained correspondence with former shipmates, commissioned and enlisted, over long periods of time. Prominent in this group were Allan E. Smith and Lynne C. Quiggle. Other areas of McCrea's naval career well documented in the general correspondence include his command of Cruiser Division One against Japanese installations in the Aleutian and Kurile islands during 1944-1945 and his postwar service as deputy chief of naval operations, deputy commander of the United States Pacific Fleet, director of staff for the Personnel Policy Board, and commander of the First Naval District. Prominent correspondents not previously cited include Russell S. Berkey, William H. P. Blandy, Richard L. Conolly, Louis E. Denfeld, Robert L. Dennison, W. M. Fechteler, Thomas C. Hart, Walter A. Hicks, Jonas H. Ingram, Chester W. Nimitz, Earle T. Oakes, Herbert Lamont Pugh, and Kemp Tolley.

The subject file contains topical files that dovetail with subjects covered in the general correspondence, such as Nicaragua and Guam. Of interest are files related to McCrea's service as a presidential naval aide, the battleship *Iowa*, and Anna M. Rosenberg, who was assistant secretary of defense for manpower during the Korean War. Of interest in the speeches and writings file is McCrea's account of his midshipman days, which included a memorable 1914 summer cruise to the Mediterranean aboard the battleship *Idaho*. This experience afforded McCrea the opportunity to witness the French mobilization for World War I. Also included are a diary covering McCrea's stint as naval aide to Franklin D. Roosevelt, an account of the establishment of the presidential retreat at Camp David, Maryland, and McCrea's history of the *Iowa*.

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged alphabetically by type of material.

# Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	General correspondence
BOX 1	1915-1940 (5 folders)
BOX 2	1941-1942 (4 folders)
BOX 3	1943-1945 (5 folders)
BOX 4	1946-1947 (6 folders)
BOX 4	1948
BOX 4	Jan.-Mar.
BOX 5	Apr.-Dec. (4 folders)
BOX 5	1949
BOX 5	Jan.-Aug. (3 folders)
BOX 6	Sept.-Dec. (2 folders)
BOX 6	1950 (4 folders)
BOX 6	1951
BOX 6	Jan.-Mar.
BOX 7	Apr.-Dec. (4 folders)
BOX 7	1952-1953 (3 folders)
BOX 8	1954-1960 (7 folders)
BOX 9	1961-1984, undated (10 folders)
BOX 9	Speeches and writings
BOX 9	Speeches
BOX 9	By McCrea
BOX 9	1943-1949 (2 folders)
BOX 10	1950-1966, undated (9 folders)
BOX 11	By others, 1945-1949 (2 folders)
BOX 11	Writings
BOX 11	By McCrea
BOX 11	Account of the beginnings of Camp David presidential retreat, undated
BOX 11	Accounts of incidents aboard <i>Iowa</i> , undated
BOX 11	Diary, presidential naval aide, 1942

## Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 11	<i>History of the USS Iowa</i> , undated
BOX 11	Narrative of naval career, 1911-1918, undated
BOX 11	Notes on naval operations against the Kurile Islands and Franklin D. Roosevelt's health, undated
BOX 11	By others
BOX 11	Charlton, Linda, "Camp David: Secluded Retreat of Presidents," 1972
BOX 11	Kahn, David, "Roosevelt, Magic, and Ultra," undated
BOX 11	Pugh, H. L., "A One Man Safari," 1948
BOX 11	Whitehill, Walter M., "A Postscript to Fleet Admiral King," undated
BOX 11	Subject file
BOX 11	Appointment books
BOX 11	1949
BOX 12	1950
BOX 12	Biographical materials
BOX 12	Biographies, 1945-1963, undated
BOX 12	Clippings, 1944-1966, undated
BOX 12	Photographs, 1942-1958, undated
BOX 12	Clippings and press releases, 1944-1958, undated
BOX 12	Duty assignment orders, 1915-1953 (2 folders)
BOX 12	Guam and the Mariana Islands, 1898-1947, undated
BOX 13	Hassett, William D., 1943-1965
BOX 13	<i>Idaho</i> (battleship), page from logbook, 1914
BOX 13	<i>Iowa</i> (battleship)
BOX 13	Clippings, 1943-1951, undated
BOX 13	Franklin D. Roosevelt's cruise, 1948-1958, undated
BOX 13	Investigation of grounding, 1943
BOX 13	Miscellaneous, 1943-1952, undated
BOX 13	Photographs, 1943, undated
BOX 13	Speeches, 1943
BOX 13	Miscellaneous, 1941-1946, undated
BOX 13	Nicaragua, 1928
BOX 13	Officer's qualification jacket, 1938-1951
BOX 13	Roosevelt, Franklin D.
BOX 13	Death of, 1945
BOX 13	Handwritten note and drawing by, undated
BOX 13	Photographs, 1942, undated
BOX 13	Rosenberg, Anna M., 1951
BOX 14	Social engagements
BOX 14	Calendars and memoranda, 1948-1949
BOX 14	Invitations, 1949-1951, undated
BOX 14	Surrender of the German High Seas Fleet, 1918
BOX 14	Unification of the armed services, 1949
BOX 14	United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.
BOX 14	Class of 1915, 1955-1957
BOX 14	Holloway plan and related material, 1949
BOX 14	Warm Springs Foundation, 1947, undated