

# William Rea Furlong 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.  
2023

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm89078539>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms008030>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2008  
Revised 2023 October

## Collection Summary

**Title:** William Rea Furlong Papers

**Inclusive Dates:** 1892-1985

**Bulk Dates:** 1930-1945

**ID No.:** MSS78539

**Creator:** Furlong, William Rea, 1881-1976

**Extent:** 4,875 items

**Extent:** 17 containers

**Extent:** 6.8 linear feet

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

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm89078539>

**Summary:** Author and United States Navy rear admiral. Correspondence, memoranda, ship diaries, lecture and research notes, drafts of speeches and writings, reports, rosters, biographical materials, photographs, and other papers relating mainly to Furlong's service in the United States Navy.

## 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

Bingham, Donald C. (Donald Cameron), 1882-1946--Correspondence.

Furlong, William Rea, 1881-1976.

Furlong, William Rea, 1881-1976. So proudly we hail: the history of the United States flag. 1981.

Hoover, Herbert, 1874-1964--Correspondence.

McVay, Charles B. (Charles Butler), Jr., 1868-1949.--Correspondence.

Moffett, William A. (William Adger), 1869-1933--Correspondence.

Smith, Margaret Chase, 1897-1995--Correspondence.

### Organizations

American Samoan Commission.

Great Britain. Royal Navy. Fleet, First.

United States. Navy.

### Subjects

Flags--United States.

Navy-yards and naval stations--Hawaii--Pearl Harbor.

Ordnance, Naval.

Pearl Harbor (Hawaii), Attack on, 1941.

Submarine warfare.

Warships--Maintenance and repair.

World War, 1914-1918--Naval operations, American.

World War, 1914-1918--Naval operations, British.

World War, 1914-1918--Naval operations--Submarine.

World War, 1939-1945--Naval operations, American.

### Places

American Samoa--History.

Veracruz Llave (Mexico)--History--American occupation, 1914.

### Occupations

Naval officers.

## Acquisition Information

The papers of William Rea Furlong, author and United States Navy rear admiral, were deposited in the Library of Congress by the Naval Historical Foundation in 1989. The deposit was converted to a gift by the foundation in 1998.

## Processing History

The papers of William Rea Furlong were arranged and described in 1991. The finding aid was revised in 2008 by Kathleen M. Dondanville. The finding aid was updated in 2023 by Maria Farmer as part of a division-wide remediation project by the Inclusive Description Working Group.

## Transfers

Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Maps have been transferred to the Geography and Map Division. Photographs have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the William Rea Furlong Papers.

## Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of William Rea Furlong Papers is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of William Rea Furlong Papers 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, William Rea Furlong Papers, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

Date	Event
1881, May 26	Born, Allenport, Pa.
1898	Graduated, Teachers College, California, Pa.
1905	Graduated, United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.
1905-1909	Ensign on USS <i>Maryland</i>
1910	Married Cora Grover
1910-1912	Commanded the USS <i>Chicago</i> in reserve commission, Boston, Mass.
1914	M.S. in electrical and radio engineering, Columbia University, New York, N.Y.
1914-1916	Fleet radio officer and aide on the staff of the commander-in-chief, United States Atlantic Fleet
1916-1917	Gunnery officer on USS <i>South Carolina</i> and USS <i>Nevada</i>
1918	Gunnery observer on USS <i>New York</i> , operating in European waters Gunnery observer in the war zone with the British Grand First Fleet
1919-1920	Chief of Fire Control Section, Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, Washington D.C. Introduced synchronous fire control system and remote control of guns by power

1921-1923	Aide on the staff and fleet gunnery officer to the commander-in-chief, United States Pacific Fleet
1923-1926	Served in office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D.C.
1926-1928	Executive officer of USS <i>West Virginia</i> Captain of USS <i>Neches</i> Division commander of six destroyers in the Pacific
1928-1931	Chief of Policy and Liaison Section, Office of Island Government, Navy Department, Washington, D.C.
1931-1933	Commander of USS <i>Marblehead</i>
1934-1936	Inspector of ordnance in charge, Naval Proving Ground, Dahlgren, Va.
1937-1941	Promoted to rear admiral and chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, Washington, D.C.
1941, Feb.-Dec.	Commander of Minecraft Battle Force, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; engaged in defense of Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, when his flagship, the USS <i>Oglala</i> , was strafed and torpedoed by the Japanese
1941, Dec.-1945	Commander of navy yard at Pearl Harbor; charged with salvaging and repairing ships sunk during Japanese attack and returning them for use in the Pacific war
1944	Awarded Legion of Merit
1945	Awarded Gold Star in lieu of second Legion of Merit
1946	Retired from United States Navy
1949	Elected commander-in-chief of the Military Order of the World Wars
1950	Presented with the Freedom Foundation award
1976, June 2	Died, Bethesda, Md.
1981	Published <i>So Proudly We Hail: The History of the United States Flag</i> . Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of William Rea Furlong (1881-1976) span the years 1892-1985, with the majority of items dating from 1930 through 1945. The collection primarily documents Furlong's service in the United States Navy, particularly his activities during World War II as commander of the Navy Yard at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and his interests in writing and American history. The papers consist of the following series: [General Correspondence](#), [Military File](#), [Speeches and Writings](#), and [Miscellany](#).

The [General Correspondence](#) series, 1911-1985, contains incoming and outgoing letters, primarily between Furlong and naval officers and colleagues. Most of this correspondence relates to his academic studies at the United States Naval Academy and Columbia University and his military activities and assignments. Correspondence dated after his retirement from the navy concerns personal business and property matters, writing projects, and his membership in various military organizations. A few letters between Furlong's second wife and her relatives, dated after his death in 1976, are included in this series. Frequent correspondents include William A. Moffett, Donald C. Bingham, and Charles B. McVay. Herbert Hoover and Margaret Chase Smith are examples of the more prominent correspondents.

The [Military File](#), 1896-1965, consists of correspondence, memoranda, reports, ship diaries, and other materials that document Furlong's significant assignments in the United States Navy. Dominating the series is material relating to his duties as commander of the navy yard at Pearl Harbor during World War II. Of particular interest are reports documenting Furlong's supervision of the salvage and repair of ships sunk by the Japanese during the 7 December 1941 surprise attack at Pearl Harbor.

Furlong's activities during World War I are also represented in this file. Official correspondence and memoranda from the War Department document his experiences as a gunnery observer in the war zone with the British Grand Fleet and his intelligence work on German submarine activities. Also contained in the series are materials concerning the American Samoan Commission, of which Furlong was an appointed member, American, British and German ordnance, and the American occupation in 1914 of Veracruz, Mexico. Several ship diaries kept by Furlong as an ensign and captain are included.

The [Speeches and Writings](#) series, 1914-1961, is mainly comprised of correspondence, lecture and research notes, and drafts of speeches, papers, and articles by Furlong. Because most of his speeches were given in an official military capacity, they concern such matters as the selling of war bonds, naval ordnance, and military holidays. Articles, papers, and research notes in the series reflect Furlong's strong interest in American history. Included are materials relating to his book, *So Proudly We Hail: The History of the United States Flag*, and the history of Pearl Harbor and American Samoa.

The final series in the collection, [Miscellany](#), 1892-1976, consists of a variety of material. Chiefly relating to Furlong's naval interests, the file contains military journals, naval publications, ship newspapers, and musical scores of old navy songs. Scrapbooks, containing photographs, newspaper clippings, and printed materials, are of special note. They present a visual record of Furlong's more notable military activities and travels, including his experiences during the occupation of Veracruz Llave and his position as gunnery observer with the British Grand Fleet in World War I.

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in four series:

- [General Correspondence, 1911-1985](#)
- [Military File, 1896-1965](#)
- [Speeches and Writings, 1914-1961](#)
- [Miscellany, 1892-1976](#)

## Description of Series

### Container

### Series

BOX 1-2

#### General Correspondence, 1911-1985

Correspondence between Furlong and friends, relatives, colleagues, public officials, and the general public, concerning his military and academic careers, his interest in the history of the United States flag, and his activities after retirement from the navy.

Arrangement is chronological.

BOX 3-9

#### Military File, 1896-1965

Correspondence, memoranda, reports, ship diaries, newspaper clippings, rosters, press releases, photographs, and printed materials documenting Furlong's military career.

Arrangement is alphabetical by topic or type of material, and therein chronological.

BOX 9-11

#### Speeches and Writings, 1914-1961

Correspondence, lecture and research notes, drafts of speeches, papers, and articles, printed materials, newspaper clippings, and photographs relating to Furlong's writing projects and public speaking activities. Speeches given by others and collected by Furlong are also included in this series.

Arrangement is alphabetical by type of material, and thereunder by title or topic.

BOX 12-17

#### Miscellany, 1892-1976

Correspondence, biographical materials, journals, bulletins, magazine articles, newspaper clippings, notes, scrapbooks, photographs, and printed materials, mostly pertaining to Furlong's interest in the United States Navy.

Arrangement is alphabetical by topic or type of material, and therein chronological, although scrapbooks are placed at the end of the file.

# Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-2	<b>General Correspondence, 1911-1985</b> Correspondence between Furlong and friends, relatives, colleagues, public officials, and the general public, concerning his military and academic careers, his interest in the history of the United States flag, and his activities after retirement from the navy. Arrangement is chronological.
BOX 1	1911-1935 (7 folders)
BOX 2	1937-1985 (7 folders)
BOX 3-9	<b>Military File, 1896-1965</b> Correspondence, memoranda, reports, ship diaries, newspaper clippings, rosters, press releases, photographs, and printed materials documenting Furlong's military career. Arrangement is alphabetical by topic or type of material, and therein chronological.
BOX 3	American Samoan Commission
BOX 3	Correspondence, 1923-1933
BOX 3	Hearings, 1930
BOX 3	Legislation and reports, 1929-1931
BOX 3	Newspaper clippings, 1930-1931
BOX 3	British Grand Fleet battle instructions, 1918
BOX 3	Captain's night order book
BOX 3	USS <i>Marblehead</i> , 1931-1933
BOX 3	USS <i>Virginia</i> , 1936-1937
BOX 4	Correspondence
BOX 4	1896-1925 (7 folders)
BOX 5	1926-1958 (5 folders)
BOX 5	Diary as ensign on USS <i>Franklin</i> , 1905
BOX 5	German navy, 1921-1923
BOX 5	Gun salutes, 1925-1937, undated
BOX 6	Naval bases in Guam and the Marianas, 1945
BOX 6	Naval operations in European waters, 1918
BOX 6	Officer rosters, USS <i>California</i> and USS <i>Virginia</i> , 1922, 1926
BOX 6	Ordinance
BOX 6	American, 1918-1937, undated (2 folders)
BOX 6	British, 1914-1943, undated (2 folders)
BOX 6	German, 1921, undated
BOX 6	Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

## Military File, 1896-1965

### Container

### Contents

---

BOX 6	Battle reports, 1941-1942
BOX 6	Civilian housing and navy yard cafeteria, 1946, undated
BOX 7	Gambling on base, 1944-1950
BOX 7	Pacific Bridge Co., 1943
BOX 7	Salvage and repair
BOX 7	General reports, 1940-1944 (3 folders)
BOX 7	<i>New York Times</i> article, 1943
BOX 7	Officers and crew of salvage section, 1942, undated
BOX 7	Ships
BOX 7	USS <i>California</i>
BOX 7	1941-1942
BOX 8	1942
BOX 8	USS <i>Cassin</i> , USS <i>Downes</i> , and USS <i>Raleigh</i> , 1941-1942
BOX 8	USS <i>Nevada</i> , 1942-1943
BOX 8	USS <i>Oglala</i> , 1942, 1965
BOX 8	USS <i>Oklahoma</i> , 1942-1944 (2 folders)
BOX 8	USS <i>Plunger</i> and USS <i>Shaw</i> , 1942
BOX 8	USS <i>Utah</i> , 1942-1944
BOX 8	USS <i>Virginia</i> , 1942
BOX 8	Status of work reports, 1941-1942 (3 folders)
BOX 8	Scrap drive, 1942-1943
BOX 8	SS <i>Manini</i> , 1941
BOX 8	War diaries, 1941-1943
BOX 9	Press releases, 1917-1919
BOX 9	Transpolar air route investigation, 1923-1924
BOX 9	Veracruz, Mexico, occupation, 1914
BOX 9-11	<b>Speeches and Writings, 1914-1961</b> Correspondence, lecture and research notes, drafts of speeches, papers, and articles, printed materials, newspaper clippings, and photographs relating to Furlong's writing projects and public speaking activities. Speeches given by others and collected by Furlong are also included in this series. Arrangement is alphabetical by type of material, and thereunder by title or topic.
BOX 9	Articles
BOX 9	"An Epoch-Making Event in American Samoa History," undated
BOX 9	"The Evolution of the Stars and Stripes and Some Revolutionary War Flags," 1926
BOX 9	"History of Pearl Harbor," undated
BOX 9	"Naval Ordnance," <i>Army Ordnance</i> , Jan.-Feb. 1940
BOX 9	"Political Conditions in Germany," undated
BOX 9	Book project, history of the United States flag
BOX 9	Correspondence, 1921-1931 (3 folders)
BOX 10	Information on arrangement of stars on flag, 1953-1958



## Speeches and Writings, 1914-1961

Container	Contents
BOX 10	Information on flags and pennants, 1929-1952, undated (2 folders)
BOX 10	Photographs, 1924-1926, undated (3 folders)
BOX 10	Footnotes, to unidentified paper, undated
BOX 10	Lectures
BOX 10	"American Samoa," undated
BOX 10	"U.S. Naval Railway Batteries," 1918
BOX 10	Paper, "Russian Naval Mission," 1917
BOX 11	Research materials
BOX 11	History of Pearl Harbor
BOX 11	Articles and excerpts, undated
BOX 11	Newspaper clippings and miscellany, 1944-1945, 1961, undated
BOX 11	Printed reports, 1942-1945
BOX 11	Speeches
BOX 11	By Furlong, 1924-1961, undated (3 folders)
BOX 11	By others, 1914-1954, undated (2 folders)
BOX 11	Thesis, "The Relationship Between British National Policy and Strategy in War, 1777-1783," 1934
BOX 12-17	<b>Miscellany, 1892-1976</b> Correspondence, biographical materials, journals, bulletins, magazine articles, newspaper clippings, notes, scrapbooks, photographs, and printed materials, mostly pertaining to Furlong's interest in the United States Navy. Arrangement is alphabetical by topic or type of material, and therein chronological, although scrapbooks are placed at the end of the file.
BOX 12	Biographical information, 1905-1976, undated
BOX 12	Booklet, "Repair of German Ships," undated
BOX 12	Certificates, 1921
BOX 12	Journals, "The Military Engineer," 1963
BOX 12	Magazine articles, 1917-1970, undated (2 folders)
BOX 12	Miscellaneous publications, 1907-1969, undated (3 folders)
BOX 13	Navy publications
BOX 13	<i>Monthly Information Bulletin</i> , 1918-1924, 1940 (3 folders)
BOX 13	Newspapers
BOX 13	"The Messenger," Naval Supply Depot, 1944
BOX 13	USS <i>Arizona</i> , USS <i>Bushnell</i> , and USS <i>Sumner</i> , 1928-1936
BOX 13	USS <i>Marblehead</i> , 1932-1933
BOX 13	USS <i>West Virginia</i> , 1926-1927
BOX 14	Poems and songs, 1892-1943, undated
BOX 14	Operation Deep Freeze Task Force patch, 1961
BOX 14	Organizational chart, navy ship personnel, undated

## Miscellany, 1892-1976

<b>Container</b>	<b>Contents</b>
BOX 14	United States Naval Academy class of 1905, reunion, 1905-1937, undated
BOX 14	Scrapbooks
BOX 14	1906-1908
BOX 14	1941-1943 (2 folders)
BOX 15	1918-1933
BOX 16	1920-1932
BOX 17	1941-1945