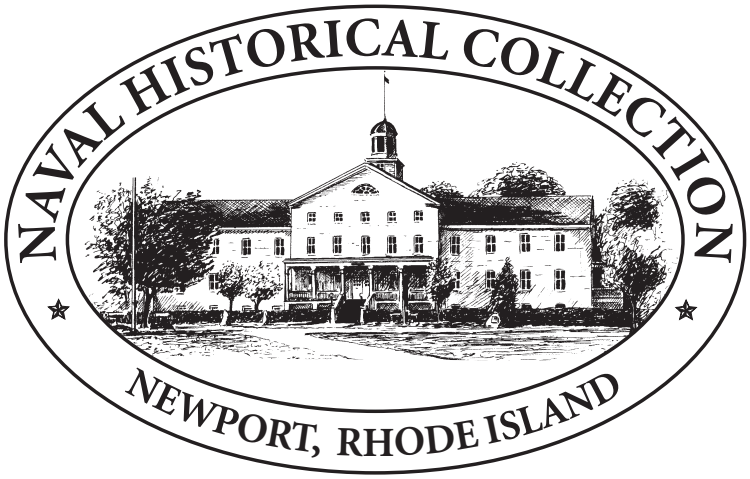
Register of the Harris Laning Papers



Naval War College
Newport, RI

REGISTER OF THE PAPERS OF HARRIS LANING

Compiled by
Evelyn M. Cherpak, Ph.D.

Manuscript Register Series
No. 21

Naval Historical Collection
Naval War College, Newport, RI
1991

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Biographical Sketch	1
Career Outline	3
Description of Papers	4
Arrangement of Papers	5
Appendix: Other Research Sources	10
Published Books and Articles	12

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The publication of this register would not have been possible without the assistance of Auli Skeen who helped to organize aspects of the collection and typed the manuscript.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Harris Laning, one of the Navy's most important peacetime admirals and an expert in gunnery and tactics, was born in Petersburg, Illinois on October 18, 1873, the son of Caleb Barrett and Mary Esther Harris Laning. He attended Peekskill Military Academy in Peekskill, New York, before enrolling in the United States Naval Academy in 1891. Graduating in 1895, he spent two years on the Pacific Station in the PHILADELPHIA and OREGON before being commissioned ensign.

When the Spanish-American War began, he was assigned to the monitor MONADNOCK and then commanded the gunboat PANAY during the Philippine insurrection. Laning then returned to the Naval Academy in 1900 for two years. His first association with the Newport area occurred during that period as he was assigned to the Naval Torpedo Station for instruction in torpedo and electrical engineering. After a tour in the DOLPHIN, he returned again to the Academy where he was an instructor in the Department of Ordnance and Gunnery and captained the Navy Rifle Team which won the national championship in 1907.

After three years as navigator in the battleship NEBRASKA, in which he made a round the world cruise with the fleet, he returned again to the Academy as chairman of the Navigation Department. In 1912, the Navy's Rifle Team, of which he was again captain, competed at the Olympic Games in Stockholm, Sweden, and won the match. Command of the USS CASSIN in 1913-14 was followed by assignment to the Sixth Division, Torpedo Flotilla during the Mexican campaign of 1914. He stayed on with the Torpedo Flotilla and commanded its first and second divisions in 1916, later renamed Flotilla One.

When World War I broke out, he was assigned to the Bureau of Navigation, personnel division, where a year later he became acting chief and supervised the demobilization of naval personnel at the war's end. In 1919, he was Chief of Staff to Commander, Destroyer Force, Atlantic Fleet and in that capacity was involved in arranging the first transatlantic airplane flight of the NC-4 flying boat from Newfoundland to Portugal in May of that year. Laning ordered destroyers to be stationed at fifty mile intervals so that communications could be maintained with the aircraft during the flight. In 1919, he became Chief of Staff to Commander Destroyer Squadron Three, Atlantic Fleet, a post he held for two years.

In 1921 he was a student at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. After graduation in 1922, he remained on the staff as head of the Tactics Department for two years. One of the high points of his career was command of the battleship PENNSYLVANIA from 1924 to 1926, which participated in a goodwill cruise to Australia and New Zealand. He then went to the Naval Training Station in San Diego, California, as commander. After two years as commander of Battleship Division Two, Scouting Fleet, he returned to the Naval War College as president for three years. During his presidency, Pringle Hall, housing an auditorium, war game area and offices, was built.

Sea duty in USS CHICAGO as Commander Cruisers, Scouting Force, U.S. Fleet was followed by command of the Battle Force in USS CALIFORNIA in 1935. He retired on November 1, 1937 after serving as Commandant, Third Naval District and Commandant, Navy Yard, New York, where, during his tenure, the cruisers BROOKLYN and HONOLULU, two coast guard cutters and a gun boat were launched. Laning was Governor of the Naval Home in Philadelphia until his death in 1941.

His medals include the Navy Cross, the Spanish Campaign Medal, the Philippine Campaign Medal, the Mexican Service Medal, the Dominican Campaign Medal, the China Relief Expedi-

tionary Medal, and the World War I Victory Medal. Foreign decorations include the Military order of Aviz, Commander, Portugal and the Medal and Diploma, Fifth Olympiad, Sweden.

His clubs were the Army and Navy Club of Washington, the New York Yacht Club, and the Washington Army, Navy and Marine Corps Country Club. He was a member of the Masonic Order as well.

Laning married Mabel Claire Nixon of Santa Barbara, California, in 1900. The couple had one daughter, Mrs. D. Sargeant Pepper, who resides in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania.

CAREER OUTLINE

1873	Born, October 18, Petersburg, Illinois
1895	Graduated, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland
1897	Commissioned Ensign; Served in USS PHILADELPHIA (C-4); USS OREGON (BB-3); USS MARION (SlpW); and USS MOHICAN (ScSlp), Watch and Division Officer
1898-1899	USS MONADNOCK (ScStr); USS PANAY (Gbt), CO
1900-1902	U.S. Naval Academy and U.S. Naval Torpedo Station Instruction, Newport, Rhode Island
1902-1905	USS DOLPHIN (PG-24)
1905-1907	U.S. Naval Academy; Captain of the Navy Rifle Team
1907-1910	USS NEBRASKA (BB-14), Navigator
1910-1913	U.S. Naval Academy, Chairman, Department of Athletics
1913-1914	USS CASSIN (DD-43), CO; Sixth Division, Torpedo Flotilla, Atlantic Fleet
1914-1916	Reserve Torpedo Flotilla, Atlantic Fleet, CO; First and Second Division, Torpedo Flotilla, CO
1916-1917	Office of the Chief of Naval Operations
1917-1919	Bureau of Navigation, Assistant Chief and Acting Chief
1919	Commander Destroyer Force, Atlantic Fleet, Chief of Staff
1919-1921	Commander Destroyer Squadron Three, Atlantic Fleet, Chief of Staff
1921-1924	Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, Student and Chairman, Department of Tactics
1924-1926	USS PENNSYLVANIA (BB-38), CO
1926-1927	Naval Training Station, San Diego, California, CO
1927-1928	Commander, Battle Fleet, Chief of Staff
1928-1930	Commander Battleship Division Two, Scouting Fleet
1930-1933	Naval War College, President
1933-1935	Commander Cruisers, Scouting Force, U.S. Fleet; Commander Cruisers, U.S. Fleet and Cruiser Division Five in USS CHICAGO (CA-29)
1935-1936	Commander Battle Force in USS CALIFORNIA (BB-44)
1936-1937	Third Naval District and Navy Yard, New York, Commandant
1937	November 1, Retired from the U.S. Navy
1937-1941	Naval Home, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Governor
1941	February 2, Died, Naval Hospital, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

DESCRIPTION OF PAPERS

The papers of Harris Laning, Naval War College President, 1930-1933, were given to the Naval War College Foundation for deposit in the Naval Historical Collection by his daughter, Mrs. D. Sargeant Pepper of Gladwyne, Pennsylvania, in November 1990. The collection consists of six boxes as well as folio size materials that document his naval career. It is divided into six series.

Series I, correspondence, contains several letters sent, but, by far, the bulk of the material consists of letters received during the years 1902-1941. Most of the correspondence is of an official nature; there are a few personal letters from family members, however. Congratulatory letters on his retirement were received from Admirals Harold Stark, H. Kent Hewitt, Reginald R. Belknap and Richard L. Conolly as well as from Herbert Lehman, Eugene Wilson and Arthur Hays Sulzberger. Naval orders, thank you letters and correspondence regarding his funeral complete the series.

Speeches form the second series and contain an address given at Laning's High School graduation in Petersburg, Illinois, in 1890 and one at his retirement dinner in 1937. The rest were given by Laning on various occasions, including a commencement speech at Peekskill Military Academy, his alma mater, in 1936, and at various navy events.

Writings, Series III, contain a cruise journal which Laning kept aboard the MONADNOCK in 1898, an article on the navy he had published in Navy Day, and both a holograph and typed version of his unpublished autobiography entitled "An Admiral's Yarn." The latter will be published as part of the Naval War College Historical Monograph series.

Series IV contains photographs of naval career situations and is one of the largest segments of the collection. Photos of most of Laning's ships, the U.S. Navy Rifle Team at the Olympic Games in Stockholm, Sweden, the USS PENNSYLVANIA in Australia and New Zealand, change of command ceremonies, the visit of Marshal Petain to the Naval War College in 1931, ship launchings, the U.S. battle line, and portrait shots of Laning can be found here. There are photographs of Admirals William D. Leahy and Joseph M. Reeves as well. Laning's fitness reports are stored with the folio photographs.

Miscellany, Series V, contains a potpourri of souvenir programs, dinner menus, invitations, citations and awards, imprints on navy topics, scrapbooks of cruises, newsletters, identification cards and other printed material which Laning collected during his forty-six year naval career.

Newspaper clippings, Series VI, are another large portion of the collection. The clippings cover major events in Laning's naval career and are stored in folio envelopes.

This is an important collection of a peacetime naval officer and president of the Naval War College. A surface line officer, a tactician, an expert shot, a sportsman, and an educator, Laning only saw action in the Spanish-American War, and that at the very beginning of his career. His papers reflect the career pattern of a flag officer who held vital battleship and shore commands and high naval academic posts during the first three and a half decades of the twentieth century.

ARRANGEMENT OF PAPERS

Manuscript Collection 115

Series I

Correspondence (1/4 box)

Box	Folder	
1	1	Correspondence, letters sent, 1908
	2	Correspondence, letters received, undated
	3	Correspondence, letters received, 1902-1925
	4	Correspondence, letters received, 1936
	5	Correspondence, letters received, March 16, 1937 - September 30, 1937
	6	Correspondence, letters received, October 11, 1937 - December 29, 1937
	7	Correspondence, letters received, 1938
	8	Correspondence, letters received, 1940-1941

Series II

Speeches (1/4 box)

1	1	Speeches, Address given at Laning's graduation from Petersburg, (Ill) High School, 1890
	2	Speech given at a banquet at Trommer's, 1936
	3	Farewell address given by S.S. Conklin at the Pacific Coast Club, March 24, 1936
	4	Speech given at Yale ROTC Unit, New Haven, Ct, February 15, 1937; Address at the 104th Commencement of the Peekskill Military Academy, June 6, 1937

Series III

Writings (1/2 box)

Box	Folder	
1	1	Journal of a cruise in the USS MONADNOCK, 1898
	2	Writings, "Why a Navy - What Navy" in Navy Day, October 27, 1936
	3	Holograph and typed manuscript of "An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 1
	4	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 2
	5	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 3
	6	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 4
	7	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 5
	8	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 6
	9	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 7
	10	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 8
	11	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 9
	12	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 10
	13	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 11
2	14	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 12
	15	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 13
	16	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 14
	17	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 15
	18	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 16
	19	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 17
	20	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 18
	21	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 19
	22	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 20
	23	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 21
	24	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 22
	25	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 23

2	26	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 24
	27	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 25
	28	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 26
	29	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 27
	30	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 28
	31	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 29
	32	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 30
	33	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 31
	34	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 32
	35	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 33
	36	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 34
	37	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 35
	38	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 36
	39	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 37
	40	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 38
	41	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 39
	42	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 40
	43	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 41
	44	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 42
	45	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 43
	46	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 44
	47	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 45
	48	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 46
	49	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 47
	50	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 48
	51	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 49
	52	"An Admiral's Yarn," Chapter 50
	53	Holograph notes containing Laning's reminiscences
3	54	Typescript, with corrections, of "An Admiral's Yarn"

Series IV

Photographs (2 1/4 boxes)

Box	Folder	
3	1	Photographs of Midshipman's cruise, 1893
		Photographs, 4"x 5" and 5"x 7", of Admiral Laning, Naval War College, USS CUMMINGS, USS PENNSYLVANIA, USS NEVADA, USS LEXINGTON, Navy Rifle Team, USS CALIFORNIA and U.S. Battle Line, 1890-1935
4	[illegible]	Photographs, 8"x 10", of naval career situations, 1891-1937
5	Folio	Photographs, 8"x 10" and 11"x 14", of naval career situations; Officer's Record of Fitness, 1897-1936

Series V

Miscellany (1 box)

6	1	Miscellany, souvenir programs from launching of USS BROOKLYN, 1936
	2	Programs
	3	Scrapbook of Naval Cadet Cruise containing programs and invitations, 1895-1896
	4	Dinner menus
	5	Invitations
	6	Citations and awards
	7	Imprints, Anchors Aweigh, 1936-1937
	8	Imprints, "Capture of Hawaiian Islands by the United States Battle Fleet" by V.Y. Dallman
	9	Newsletters, USS CHICAGO, 1935, and U.S. Naval Academy newsletter, New York Chapter, 1936
	10	Nametags and identification cards
	11	Passenger lists, cards, and lists

Series VI

Newspaper clippings, undated-1937

Box	Folder	
Folio	1	Miscellaneous clippings, undated
	2	Newspaper clippings, 1897-1900
	3	Newspaper clippings of U.S. Navy Rifle Team, 1907-1910
	4	Newspaper clippings, 1920, William S. Sims - Josephus Daniels controversy
	5	Newspaper clippings, 1920s
	6	Newspaper clippings, 1930-1934
	7	Newspaper clippings, 1935-1936
	8	Newspaper clippings, 1936
	9	Newspaper clippings, 1936-1937

APPENDIX: OTHER RESEARCH SOURCES

NWC ARCHIVES

Record Group 2, Administrative Records

War College Memorandum regarding Laning's Death, 1941

Record Group 4, Publications

The Naval War College and the Relation between it and the Fleet, August 1922
Major Tactics at Jutland, March 1923
The Battle of the Marianas, May 1923
Outline of the Course in Tactics for the Naval War College, July 11, 1923
The Battle of Emerald Bank, 1923
The Navy Battle, March 1, 1924
"The Navy in National Defense," an address given at the Providence City Club, March 19, 1924
Tactical Problem II (Battle of Siargao), 1924
Tactical Problem III (Battle of Siargao), 1929
Opening Address to Class of 1931
The Naval Battle, May 1933
Opening Address to Class of 1933

Record Group 8, Intelligence and Technical Archives

Cruiser types being considered by the General Board, XTYV, 1913-21
The Destroyer Force--Its mission in the fleet and the Organization to Enable it to Best Fulfill its Mission, XTYV, 1919-80
Destroyers and Destroyer Tenders, XTYV, 1931-27

Record Group 10, Addresses

Opening Address, July 1930
Opening Address, July 1932

Record Group 13, Student Theses, 1912-1974

Tactics, 1922, 70 pp.

Record Group 15, Lectures, 1894-1976

The Department of Tactics at the Naval War College; The Relation Between it and the Fleet, 1922

Record Group 28, Presidents' Files, 1884-1989

Biographical information on Admiral Laning

Letter, Admiral Mark Kerr to Laning, January 22, 1931, regarding copies of Kerr's lectures and remittance of a copy of Nelson's signals at the Battle of Trafalgar

Manuscripts

Manuscript Collection 12, Raymond A. Spruance Papers

Letters sent, November 16, 1918 and December 3, 1918

Manuscript Item 15

Unpublished autobiography entitled "An Admiral's Yarn." np, n.d.

PUBLISHED BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Laning, Harris. A Practical Manual of the Compass: a Short Treatise on the Errors of the Magnetic Compass: with the Methods employed in the U.S. Navy for Compensating the Deviations, and a Description of Service Instruments, including the Gyrocompass/prepared with the approval of the Bureau of Navigation, Navy Department. 146 pp. illus. Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1916.

Laning, Harris. "Team Rifle Shooting." U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 33, No. 1 (March 1907), pp. 153-186.

_____. "Rifle Shooting at Olympic Games of 1912." U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 39, No. 1 (March 1913), pp. 249-276.

_____. "Necessity of Protecting Our Athletes." U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 39, No. 2 (June 1913), pp. 705-714.

_____. "Searle's Method of Finding a Ship's Position." U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 39, No. 3 (September 1913), pp. 1053-1055.

_____. "On 'The Great Lesson from Nelson Today.'" U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 40, No. 3 (May-June 1914), pp. 815-816.

_____. "Officer Personnel of the Navy." U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 45, No. 10 (October 1919), pp. 1673-1690.