

**Archives Branch
Naval History and Heritage Command
805 Kidder Breese Street, SE
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5060**

Processor: Elysia Hamelin (January 2019)
Accession Number: RF 2016/99

Harold M. Bemis Papers

AR/650

Name of Creator: Bemis, Harold M., 1884-1970

Extent: 1 Hollinger Box, 4 Clamshell Boxes (OV1), 1 Oversized Box (OV4)
2.59 Cubic feet

Date Range of Creation: 1900-2008, predominant 1907-1944

Classification Level: Unclassified

Record Formats: clippings (information artifacts), correspondence, photographs, postcards, scrapbooks, ships' logs

Arrangement

The materials were kept in original order with a few rearrangements made during processing to maintain the original chronological order. Loose material was removed from the scrapbooks and placed in folders.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of personal papers that document the naval career of Rear Admiral Harold Medberry Bemis. The majority of the collection is comprised of scrapbooks that document Bemis' early and mid-career in the United States Navy. Some key places and events documented in the scrapbooks are: The Battle Fleet Cruise of the Pacific of the Great White Fleet, the Australian Goodwill Cruise, Coco Solo, Panama, China, and the Philippines. Also included are some photographs from the end of Bemis's career.

Biographical History

Harold Medberry Bemis was born in Oshkosh, Wisconsin on the 15th of July 1884. He attended the United States Naval Academy from June 1903 until he graduated in September 1906 as part of the Class of 1907. After graduation he was assigned to the U.S.S. Maine for 2 years and participated in the Battle Fleet Cruise of the Pacific of the Great White Fleet.

After his service on the U.S.S. Maine, Bemis served on several gunboats in the Asiatic Station from 1908 to 1909 before he was transferred to the Great Lakes in 1910. From 1911 to 1913, he served on the U.S.S. Iowa, the U.S.S. Illinois, and the U.S.S. Georgia. Bemis then went on to teach ordnance, gunnery, and seamanship as an instructor at the United States Naval Academy from September 1913 to July 1915. During this 7-year period, Bemis was promoted from a commission of Ensign on the 13th of September 1908 to Lieutenant on the 4th of March 1915.

On the 8th of July 1915, Bemis underwent submarine instruction on the U.S.S. Columbia. He was then assigned to the 3rd Division Submarine Flotilla, Atlantic Fleet and the U.S.S. Fulton for further instruction. On the 31 of August 1917, Bemis was commissioned a Lieutenant Commander and given command of the 5th Division Submarine Flotilla, the only American submarine division operating in British waters during World War I.

Bemis earned a Distinguished Service Medal while commanding the 5th Division Submarine Flotilla for operating against German submarines during World War I. Two events from his service were highlighted with this medal. The first, was a voyage with a tug and 3 submarines from Bermuda to the Azores under difficult conditions. The second, was for taking command of a British submarine and conducting a successful patrol for 5 days off the German coast while the submarines' officers and two-thirds of the crew were sick with influenza.

After World War I, Bemis continued to serve in submarines until 1921 when he was put in charge of the Submarine Division in the Office of Naval Operations, Department of the Navy. He was commissioned a Commander on the 3rd of June 1922. He would then serve on the U.S.S. New Mexico from 1924 until June 1926 which included taking part in the Australian Goodwill Cruise. On the 20th of November 1926 he married Hazel Garris Haynes.

Bemis served as Assistant Commandant of the 15th Naval District from 1926 to 1928 before assuming command of the Submarine Base, Coco Solo, Canal Zone in August 1928. Bemis would go on to command Submarine Division 16, later redesignated Submarine Division 9, Asiatic Fleet from July 1929 to April 1931 and served as Fleet Coordinator of the First Area, Boston, MA from July 1931 until July 1933. He was commissioned a Captain on the 1st of August 1933.

Bemis attended the United States Naval War College from July 1933 until he graduated in May 1934. After graduation he served on the U.S.S. Indianapolis until August 1936 when he was

made Naval Attaché and Naval Attaché for Air at the American Embassy in Tokyo, Japan. Bemis served as Attaché until May 1939 when he took command of the U.S.S. California.

On the 11th of January 1941, Bemis was designated Commandant of the 16th Naval District, Navy Yard, Cavite, Philippines with the rank of Rear Admiral. He was detached from this assignment, along with the rank, when he assumed duty as Chief of Staff and Aide, Commandant, 12th Naval District, Seattle, Washington in November 1941. He served at this post throughout World War II becoming Assistant Commandant, 13th Naval District in November 1943.

Bemis was commissioned a Rear Admiral on the 18th of April 1946 before he retired from service on the 1st of August 1946. After retiring, he worked for the Lummus Engineering Company until 1955 heading their operations in Venezuela as president of Compania Anonima Venezolana Lummus, an engineering and construction firm.

Rear Admiral Harold Medberry Bemis died on the 16th of February 1970 at 85 years of age.

Box and Folder List

<u>Folder Title, Date Span</u>	<u>Box Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
The Battle Fleet Cruise of the Pacific Scrapbook, 1907-1908	1	1
Early Career Scrapbook, 1909-1913	1	2
Australian Goodwill Cruise Scrapbook, 1925	2	1
15 th Naval District Panama Scrapbook, 1926-1928	2	2
Central America and Coco Solo Scrapbook, 1928-1930	3	1
Panama, China, and the Philippines Scrapbook, 1926-1931	4	1
Loose photographs and postcards from the Battle Fleet Cruise of the Pacific Scrapbook, 1907-1908	5	1
Printouts of scanned images on the Naval Historical Center website From the Battle Fleet Cruise of the Pacific Scrapbook, 2008	5	2

<u>Folder Title, Date Span</u>	<u>Box Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
Loose clippings, photographs, and postcards from the Early Career Scrapbook, 1909-1913	5	3
Loose clippings and photographs from the Australian Goodwill Cruise Scrapbook, 1925	5	4
Loose clippings, correspondence, and postcards from the Panama, China, and the Philippines Scrapbook, 1926-1931	5	5
Photographs of Harold M. Bemis, undated	5	6
Photograph of Oshkosh Football Team, 1900	5	7
Photograph of midshipman formation, c. 1905	5	8
Correspondence and photograph of the launching ceremony for YMS 216, 1942	5	9
Photographs of launching ceremonies, c. 1940's	5	10
Photographs of Rear Admiral Taffinder and the staff of the 13 th Naval District, 1943-1944	5	11
Photographs of the Naval Academy class of 1907 reunions, undated	5	12
Navigational Log of the U.S.S. Bushnell, 1917-1918	5	13
Photograph of U.S.S. Hartford Officers and Crew, 1906	6	1
Photograph of a Naval Parade in San Francisco, CA, 1908	6	2
Photograph of International Aviation Meet in Chicago, IL, 1911	6	3
Photograph of the Inauguration of President Wilson, 1913	6	4
Clipping of Wisconsin's 'Sea Dogs', 1942	6	5
Photograph of the Naval Academy class of 1907, undated	6	6