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Harold B. Miller Papers

AR/660

Name of Creator: Miller, Harold B., 1903-1992

Extent: 6 Hollinger Boxes
3.02 Cubic feet

Date Range of Creation: 1915-1990

Classification Level: Unclassified; Confidential – 2 folders

Restrictions: Some materials in this collection are published. Copyright belongs to the publishers.

Record Formats: Paper, Photographs

Arrangement

The records were arranged into 5 series. Within each series, the records were arranged alphabetically and thereunder chronologically.

- Series I. Correspondence
- Series II. Ephemera
- Series III. Photographs
- Series IV. Publications
 - Newspapers
 - Other
 - Periodicals
- Series V. Research & Writings

Scope and Content Notes

This collection contains materials created by and collected by Harold B. Miller. The bulk of the materials are related to naval aviation. The collection also has materials related to Miller's time

at the United States Naval Academy and his classmates. The collection has materials related to commercial and private aviation.

Biographical History

Rear Admiral Harold B. "Min" Miller (ret.) was born on January 4, 1903 in Newton, Iowa. He first experienced the power of the United States Navy in 1908, when his mother took him to San Pedro, California to view the Great White Fleet. The experience left a lasting impression on Miller. In his teen years, with an education overseen by the headmaster of the Westlake School for Boys in Los Angeles, Miller began the process of competing for an appointment to the United States Naval Academy. After two rounds of testing, Miller received an appointment to the United States Naval Academy in 1920. He graduated into an ensign commission in June 1924.

The stories of Miller's time in the United States Navy could fill volumes. Following his graduation from the Naval Academy in 1924, he served for two years as a sailor aboard the battleship USS California (BB-44). Then, in 1926, he reported for naval aviation school at Naval Air Station Pensacola. After completing his training in 1927, Miller spent two years flying naval aircraft based on battleships and aircraft carriers. From 1929-1932, he served as an instructor at the flight school at Pensacola. In 1932, he was assigned to the Heavier-Than-Air (H.T.A.) unit attached to USS Akron (ZRS-4), a lighter-than-air (LTA) rigid airship. Following the sinking of USS Akron in April 1933, he was assigned to the HTA unit attached to USS Macon (ZRS-5), another rigid airship. He served in this position until USS Macon was lost in February 1935.

Between early 1935 and 1940, Miller served in a number of billets as a naval aviator. Then, in June 1940, he was assigned to the position of Aide & Flag Secretary to Rear Admiral Arthur L. Bristol. Miller served in this position until February 1942. For his performance in this position, Miller was awarded the Legion of Merit. Following his time serving Rear Admiral Bristol, Miller worked in Washington D.C., where he organized and served as head of the Navy Department's Training Literature Section in the Bureau of Aeronautics. He served in that position until November 1943. At that time, he was assigned to the American Embassy in London where he served as U.S. Naval Air Attaché and Assistant Naval Attaché. During this period, December 1943 to August 1944, he also worked on the staff of the Commander, U.S. Naval Forces in Europe.

In August 1944, Miller was handpicked by Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal to reform the Pacific Fleet (CINCPAC) public relations office and improve the relationship between the office and the working press. Admiral Nimitz was immediately impressed with his new public relations officer. Over the next several months, under Miller's leadership, the CINCPAC public relations office grew tremendously. New policies and programs instituted by Miller reshaped American perceptions of the Navy. By March 1945, the CINCPAC public relations office was well prepared to handle quick and efficient press coverage of the Battle of Iwo Jima. The role Miller played in this press coverage was highlighted in some unexpected places. A small blurb, which appeared in the May 1945 issue of *Boys' Life* magazine, said, "Few readers of *Boys' Life* can know (unless we tell them) that an old friend and *Boys' Life* author is given credit for the swift flow of news and news photographs of the invasion of Iwo Jima. In 17 1/2 hours after the Marines landed on Iwo the first photographs were being published in the United States. The man

responsible for this quick transmission was Captain Harold B. (Min) Miller who, as press chief for Admiral Nimitz, set up a system for quick clearance and transmission of news materials from the battle front, for which he has been complimented.”¹ For his service in the Pacific, Miller was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the second Legion of Merit.

Due to Miller’s successes in the Pacific, Secretary of the Navy Forrestal appointed Miller to the position of Director of Public Relations for the entire Navy and ordered Miller to return to Washington D.C. When he reported for duty in late April 1945, Miller was promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral at the age of 42. At the time, he was the youngest to ever hold the rank. Following a year of service in Washington D.C. as the Director of Public Relations, and later the director of the Bureau of Naval Information – a position created specifically for Miller, he retired from active duty with the permanent rank of Rear Admiral in June 1946.

In the decades following his retirement from the Navy in 1946, Miller served in a number of high profile positions in the public and private sectors. He worked as a vice president for Trans World Airlines (1946-1947), served as Executive Director of the Congressional Aviation Policy Board (1947-1948), and worked as the Director of Information for the American Petroleum Institute (1948-1957). He served as Executive Director of the President’s Committee for Traffic Safety (1953-1957) and held two different high-level positions at Pan Am Airways (1957-1968). After serving as Vice President for University Affairs at Hofstra University, Miller retired in 1974.

During his time serving in the United States Navy and in the decades that followed, Miller spent much of his free time writing. In 1937, his full-length work, *Navy Wings*, was published. *Navy Wings* was one of the first works to detail the early history of aviation in the U.S. Navy. In addition to *Navy Wings*, he also wrote numerous articles about naval aviation and the Navy’s use of airships. Along with his first wife, Miller wrote short stories for *Boys’ Life* magazine. He maintained correspondence with individuals who shared his passion for aviation. Miller also worked to document the lives and stories of his classmates from the United States Naval Academy for *Shipmate* magazine.

In addition to his service in the U.S. Navy, his professional forays following his retirement from active duty, and his writing pursuits, he was also a father and husband. Miller and his first wife shared a daughter. With his third wife, Miller had two sons.

Following a lifetime of contributions to the history of aviation and the history of the United States Navy, Miller died on May 15, 1992.

1. “Honors For an Old Friend,” *Boys’ Life* Vol. 35 No. 5, page 42, May 1945.

Box and Folder Lists:

Box 1: Correspondence

Box 2: Ephemera & Photographs

Box 3: Photographs, Publications: Newspapers, & Publications: Other

Box 4: Publications: Other & Publications: Periodicals

Box 5: Publications: Periodicals

Box 6: Research & Writings

Box 1: Correspondence

- F01 Correspondence: 1934: Letters to Ward Harrigan written aboard USS Macon
- F02 Correspondence: 1934: USS Macon Heavier-Than-Air (H.T.A) Unit
- F03 Correspondence: 1935
- F04 Correspondence: 1944
- F05 Correspondence: 1956
- F06 Correspondence: 1958
- F07 Correspondence: 1960
- F08 Correspondence: 1962
- F09 Correspondence: 1964
- F10 Correspondence: 1965
- F11 Correspondence: 1966
- F12 Correspondence: 1968
- F13 Correspondence: 1969
- F14 Correspondence: 1969-1978: Related to Bruno Collection donated to Hofstra University
- F15 Correspondence: 1970
- F16 Correspondence: 1971
- F17 Correspondence: 1972
- F18 Correspondence: 1973
- F19 Correspondence: 1974
- F20 Correspondence: 1975
- F21 Correspondence: 1976
- F22 Correspondence: 1977
- F23 Correspondence: 1978
- F24 Correspondence: 1979
- F25 Correspondence: 1980
- F26 Correspondence: 1981
- F27 Correspondence: 1982
- F28 Correspondence: 1983
- F29 Correspondence: 1984
- F30 Correspondence: 1985
- F31 Correspondence: 1986
- F32 Correspondence: 1987
- F33 Correspondence: 1988
- F34 Correspondence: 1990

Box 2: Ephemera & Photographs

- F01 Ephemera: Aviation Companies [Brochures, Promotional Materials], 1964-1965, 1969, 1985, undated
- F02 Ephemera: Certificates of Membership & Recognition, 1970, 1973, 1987
- F03 Ephemera: Dedications & Memorial Services for Friends & Naval Aviators [Programs, Information Sheets], 1976-1980
- F04 Ephemera: First Day Covers & Stamp Cancellations [Stamp Collecting], 1915, 1931, 1972-1978, undated

Box 2, cont.

- F05 Ephemera: Lighter-Than-Air (L.T.A.) Reunion at Naval Air Station Lakehurst [Program], 1971
- F06 Ephemera: L.T.A. Reunions at Naval Aviation Museum at Pensacola, Florida [Programs, Rosters, Event Information], 1979-1984, undated
- F07 Ephemera: Materials Related to Aviation [Souvenir Prints, Information Booklets and Sheets], 1968, undated
- F08 Ephemera: Museums & Memorials Dedicated to Aviation and the United States Navy [Programs, Booklets, Brochures], 1975-1976, 1977, undated
- F09 Ephemera: Nassau County Museum and Long Island Aviation History [Brochures, Information Sheets, Promotional Materials], 1969-1979, undated
- F10 Ephemera: Naval Airship Association [Rosters, Information Sheets], 1984-1990
- F11 Ephemera: Naval Aviation Memorabilia [Souvenir License Plate, Cloth Print featuring British Naval Fleet Planes], circa 1961, undated
- F12 Ephemera: "Souvenir of Visit of the American Fleet to New Zealand" [Booklet], August 1925
- F13 Ephemera: Special Reproductions of Newspaper Articles Related to the USS Macon Wreckage Discovery gifted by the Naval Postgraduate School Public Affairs Office, 1990
- F14 Ephemera: "Training Film Fandango – or – Profusion of Confusion in Fillum Distribution," a poetry book written for Harold Miller by colleagues with cover art by Bob Osborn, presented to Miller upon his transfer from the Naval Training Literature Section, 1943
- F15 Ephemera: U.S. Naval Academy – Blaine Miller, Class of 1978 [Parents Weekend Program, Graded Report], 1974, undated
- F16 Ephemera: U.S. Naval Academy – Class of 1924 [Academy Rules, June Week Program, Lucky Bag Program, Reunion Program], 1921, 1924, 1974
- F17 Ephemera: Zeppelins [Passenger Luggage Tags, Postcard, Hindenburg Baseball Card], circa 1928, 1978, 1985
- F18 Photographs: Aviation (See List in Appendix I)
- F19 Photographs: Examples of Attempts to "Float" Aircraft, 1910s-1940s
- F20 Photographs: London/Soviet Naval Commission, 1944 [CONFIDENTIAL]
- F21 Photographs: Pacific War Correspondents, 1945
- F22 Photographs: PanAm Building, New York City, 1967

Box 3: Photographs, Publications: Newspapers, & Publications: Others

- F01 Photographs: Personal (See List in Appendix II)
- F02 Photographs: Prince Phillip Visit, New York City, 1966
- F03 Photographs: Scenes at the U.S. Naval Academy: Event on Parade Grounds, "Reina Mercedes," VAdm. Wilson, undated
- F04 Publications: Newspapers: Account of the Airship Atlantic, July 1859 [Reproduction]
- F05 Publications: Newspapers: Aviation on Long Island, New York, 1943, 1973
- F06 Publications: Newspapers: Cartoons Featuring Airships, 1976, undated
- F07 Publications: Newspapers: General Articles about Airships and Aviation, 1973-1978, 1982, 1986

F08 Publications: Newspapers: Hindenburg Disaster, 1937

Box 3, cont.

- F09 Publications: Newspapers: Lindbergh Trans-Atlantic Flight, 1975-1977
- F10 Publications: Newspapers: Navy Dirigible USS Shenandoah (ZR-1), 1924-1925
- F11 Publications: Newspapers: Navy Dirigible USS Akron, 1932, 1975, 1978
- F12 Publications: Newspapers: Navy Dirigible USS Macon, 1990
- F13 Publications: Newspapers: Navy Dirigible ZR-3, 1924
- F14 Publications: Newspapers: Obituaries for Naval Aviators and Individuals in Aviation, 1974-1977, 1985
- F15 Publications: Newspapers: Radio Free Europe, 1975
- F16 Publications: Newspapers: The Wright Brothers, 1903 [Reproduction], 1973, 1975
- F17 Publications: Other: "45 Year Cruise of the Class of 1924," 1969
- F18 Publications: Other: "Aviation in the United States Navy," Naval History Division, Washington, 1961
- F19 Publications: Other: Bureau of Naval Personnel Pamphlets: "Career Plotting Sense," 1950; "Conference Sense," 1950; "Discipline Sense," 1951
- F20 Publications: Other: Excerpt, "United States Naval Aviation, 1910-60," Prepared at the Direction of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air) and the Chief of the Bureau of Naval Weapons, 1960
- F21 Publications: Other: "F8F in Action-Aircraft Number 99," Charles L. Scrivner, Squadron/Signal Publications, 1990
- F22 Publications: Other: Materials Published by the Admiral Nimitz Foundation, 1971-1975
- F23 Publications: Other: "One Day at Kitty Hawk," John Evangelist Walsh, 1975

Box 4: Publications: Other & Publications: Periodicals

- F01 Publications: Other: "Our Air Navy," National Interest Photos, Washington D.C., 1928
- F02 Publications: Other: Promotional Books and Calendars sent by Goodyear in 1978
- F03 Publications: Other: "SAC: Proud Heritage," General John T. Chain, Jr., The Newcomen Society of the United States, 1988
- F04 Publications: Other: Service Information Summary Souvenir Issue, Douglas Aircraft Company, January-February 1962
- F05 Publications: Other: U.S. Naval Academy Promotional Materials, circa 1970s
- F06 Publications: Periodicals: 1957, 1962-1969
- F07 Publications: Periodicals: 1971-1972
- F08 Publications: Periodicals: 1973
- F09 Publications: Periodicals: 1974-1976
- F10 Publications: Periodicals: 1977-1979
- F11 Publications: Periodicals: 1982-1984, 1989
- F12 Publications: Periodicals: 1991

Box 5: Publications: Periodicals

- F01 Publications: Periodicals: *American Aviation Historical Society Journal*, 1961, 1972-1973, 1975
- F02 Publications: Periodicals: *Buoyant Flight: The Bulletin of the Lighter-Than-Air Society*, 1974-1979, 1980-1988
- F03 Publications: Periodicals: *Naval Aviation News*, 1961-1962, 1974-1977

F04 Publications: Periodicals: *Naval Aviation News*, 1980-1984

Box 5, cont.

F05 Publications: Periodicals: *Shipmate*, 1968, 1973, 1976-1977, 1983, 1987-1988

F06 Publications: Periodicals: *Shipmate*, Updates on Class of 1924, 1981-1988

F07 Publications: Periodicals: "That Great Hook-Up in the Sky," Robert C. Mikesch, *Wings* Vol. 5 No. 1, February 1975

F08 Publications: Periodicals: Undated Articles

F09 Publications: Periodicals: *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, 1961, 1966, 1968, 1973-1976

F10 Publications: Periodicals: *Wingfoot Lighter-Than-Air Society Bulletin*, 1965-1966

F11 Publications: Periodicals: *ZR(S) Posts Newsletter* – Universal Ship Cancellation Society Akron/Macon Study Group, 1986-1990

Box 6: Research & Writings

F01 Research & Writings: Amelia Earhart, 1986-1988

F02 Research & Writings: Aviation, 1960, 1981, undated

F03 Research & Writings: Contributions to *Shipmate* on the Class of 1924, 1977-1985

F04 Research & Writings: Contributions to *Shipmate* on the Class of 1924, 1985-1988

F05 Research & Writings: "Covered Wagons of the Sea," Lieut. H.B. Miller, *United States Naval Institute Proceedings* Vol. 57 No. 11, 1931 (cover page only)

F06 Research & Writings: "Doctrine of Plane Operations," undated; "Types of Airplanes Required Aboard an Airship," undated [CONFIDENTIAL]

F07 Research & Writings: L.T.A. and H.T.A. Papers & Lectures + Notes, 1971-1973, undated

F08 Research & Writings: "Navy Skyhooks," Lieut. H.B. Miller, *United States Naval Institute Proceedings* Vol. 61 No. 2, February 1935

F09 Research & Writings: Reproductions of U.S. Naval Photographic Center Microfilm Reel: "Film on USS Macon," 1970

F10 Research & Writings: Story about Harold Miller in Class of 1924 Updates, *Shipmate*, March 1982

F11 Research & Writings: "The Airplane Carrier: Problems Involved in the Landing & Storing of Naval Airplanes on the Decks of their Motherships," Lieut. (JG) H.B. Miller, *Mechanical Engineering*, June 1932

F12 Research & Writings: "The Violent Death of America's Last Dirigible," RAdm. Harold B. Miller (Ret.), *True*, August 1963

F13 Research & Writings: USS Macon-USS Houston (CA-30) Operations, 1982

Appendix I

Box 2, Folder 18: Photographs: Aviation

1. Glider Flight from USS Los Angeles (ZR-3), January 31, 1930, Pilot Ralph S. Barnaby
2. Plane Landing on USS Lexington (CV-2) [One of the First Aircraft Carriers], Pilot Unidentified, 1928
3. Five photos of Miller, Frederick N. Kivette, & Jesse L. Kenworthy in F9C-2 Sparrowhawks on the USS Macon, 1934
4. USS Macon at Mooring, undated
5. F9C-2 Sparrowhawk in Flight, Pilot Unidentified, circa 1935

6. Last Departure of the USS Macon, February, 11, 1935
7. USS Macon Spy Basket, 1934
8. USS Akron Promotional Photo, undated
9. USS Macon Promotional Photo, undated
10. 3 unidentified individuals with an early naval aircraft, circa 1920s
11. Loening OL-9 catapulting off the USS West Virginia (ACR-5), Pilot Unknown, 1927
12. Cartoon Drawing of an L.T.A. Craft w/ Attached Aircraft, W. Paiko, undated
13. Naval Aircraft Hanger, undated
14. Blank Card with Image of F9C-2, undated

Appendix II

Box 3, Folder 01: Photographs: Personal

1. Crew aboard the USS California, "Mostly Class of 1924," 1929 [possibly misdated]
2. RAdm. Pickens USN ComCruDi S-4 with LTCOMR H.B. Miller USN CO UP-33
3. H.B. Miller, "My Office at 10,000 ft. above Nicaragua Keeping Cool," 1939
4. H.B. Miller, Bill Wheatley, Leo Cullinaire, Bob Farrington, and 2 Others at Party Celebrating Miller's Retirement from the U.S. Navy, 1946
5. Mr. Cork, Lisbon, 1965
6. Queens Chamber Lunch, New York Airways Sky Club, July 1966
7. "HBM Halady, Cons. Jack, Wife," Lindbergh Luncheon, 1967
8. St. Ignatius Retreat, 1968
9. Members of the American Legion Post No. 501 presenting Sen. Barry Goldwater with Award, March 1974
10. H.B. Miller with Sen. Henry Jackson at Hofstra University, May 1974
11. H.B. Miller giving a speech at Naval Aviation Commandery event, April 26, 1984