

Tasker Howard Bliss Papers

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Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Collection Summary

Title: Tasker Howard Bliss Papers

Span Dates: 1864-1933

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1917-1930)

ID No.: MSS13037

Creator: Bliss, Tasker Howard, 1853-1930

Extent: 80,000 items ; 393 containers plus 1 oversize ; 104 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Summary: Army officer, diplomat, and scholar. Correspondence, printed matter, drafts of speeches, lectures, and articles, diaries, memoranda, reports, minutes of meetings, and scrapbooks relating mainly to Bliss's military career and participation in peace negotiations after World War I.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Allen, Henry T. (Henry Tureman), 1859-1930--Correspondence.

Baker, Newton Diehl, 1871-1937--Correspondence.

Bliss, Tasker Howard, 1853-1930.

Crosby, Oscar Terry, 1861-1947--Correspondence.

Grew, Joseph C. (Joseph Clark), 1880-1965--Correspondence.

Harrison, Leland, 1883-1951--Correspondence.

Hoover, Herbert, 1874-1964--Correspondence.

House, Edward Mandell, 1858-1938--Correspondence.

Lansing, Robert, 1864-1928--Correspondence.

Polk, Frank L. (Frank Lyon), 1871-1943--Correspondence.

White, Henry, 1850-1927--Correspondence.

Wilson, Woodrow, 1856-1924--Correspondence.

Organizations

Allied and Associated Powers (1914-1920). Supreme War Council.

Army War College (U.S.)

United States. American Commission to Negotiate Peace.

United States. Army--Foreign service--Cuba.

United States. Army--Foreign service--Philippines.

United States. Army.

United States. War Department. General Staff.

Subjects

Freedom of the seas.

Spanish-American War, 1898--Cuba.

World War, 1914-1918--Peace.

World War, 1914-1918.

Places

Cuba--History--1895-

Europe--Economic conditions--1918-1945.

Europe--Politics and government--1918-1945.

Mexico--History--Revolution, 1910-1920.

Philippines--History--1898-1946.

Occupations

Army officers.
Diplomats.
Scholars.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Tasker Howard Bliss, army officer, diplomat, and scholar, were given to the Library of Congress by Bliss in 1929-1930. Additional material was given by the Carnegie Corporation of New York in 1935, Eleanora Bliss Knopf in 1936, by the trustees of the Bliss estate in 1939, and again by Eleanora Bliss Knopf in 1971.

Processing History

The collection was processed in 1941 and revised in 1947-1948 and 1979. The finding aid was revised again in 2013.

Additional Guides

Card indexes to correspondents in the collection are available in the Manuscript Reading Room.

Transfers

Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Broadsides have been transferred to the Rare Book and Special Collections Division. Maps have been transferred to the Geography and Map Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the Tasker Howard Bliss Papers.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Tasker Howard Bliss 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, Tasker Howard Bliss Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1853, Dec. 31	Born, Lewisburg, Pa.
1875	Graduated, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.
1875-1902	Served in 1st U.S. Artillery
1882	Married Eleanora E. Anderson
1885-1888	Professor of military science, U.S. Naval War College
1897-1898	Military attaché, U.S. Legation, Madrid, Spain
1898-1902	Collector of customs, Havana, Cuba, and chief, Cuban Customs Service

1902	Appointed special envoy to Cuba to negotiate treaty of reciprocity between Cuba and the U.S.
1903	Commandant, Army War College
1909	Member, Army General Staff, and president, Army War College
1909-1910	Assistant and then acting chief of staff, U. S. Army
1911	Commander, provisional brigade on Mexican border
1915	Appointed member, Army General Staff, and assistant chief of staff, U. S. Army
1917	Member, Allied Council
1917-1918	Chief of staff, U.S. Army, with rank of general
1918-1919	Member, Supreme War Council and U.S. American Commission to Negotiate the Peace
1930, Nov. 9	Died, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Tasker H. Bliss (1853-1930) span the years 1864-1933, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1917-1930. The collection is organized into two parts and consists of correspondence, printed matter, speeches, lectures, and articles, diaries, memoranda, reports, minutes of meetings, scrapbooks, and other material chiefly reflecting his military career and participant in peace negotiations after World War II.

Part I

Part I is comprised of a [General File](#) spanning the years 1870-1919 with personal and official papers relating to Bliss's military career from before the Spanish-American War through World War I. Topics include his service in Cuba and the Philippines, association with the Army War College, service on the Mexican border during the revolutions that succeeded the regime of Porfirio Diaz, and duties after being appointed chief of staff of the United States Army in 1917.

Part II

Part II spans the years 1901-1933 and is organized into six series: [Personal File](#), [Office File-Supreme War Council](#), [Family Correspondence](#), [General Correspondence](#), [Speech and Article File](#), and [Miscellany](#). The focus of Part II is on Bliss's work with the U.S. American Commission to Negotiate Peace following World War I and his participation in the Allied and Associated Supreme War Council. Prominent correspondents include Henry T. Allen, Newton Diehl Baker, Oscar Terry Crosby, Joseph C. Grew, Leland Harrison, Herbert Hoover, Edward Mandell House, Robert Lansing, Frank L. Polk, Henry White, and Woodrow Wilson.

In addition to correspondence, Part II contains Bliss's diary from 1917-1919 as well as reports, memoranda, minutes of meetings, and press summaries. Minutes of Supreme War Council sessions are especially valuable, as is Bliss's autograph draft, with copies, of his own report on the council. Included are minutes of: the supreme council meetings (not including the Council of Four) , January 12-December 6, 1919; daily meetings of the American commissioners, January 30-October 9 1919; conferences between the American delegation and American technical advisors, June 3-September 3, 1919; meetings of the Permanent Committee of Military Representatives, February 4, 1918-September 1919; meetings of the Superior Blockade Council, February June 14, 1919; meetings of the Allied Commission on Reparations, February 3-15, 1919; and meetings of the Powers with Special Interests, January 27-March 6, 1919.

There are also copies of resolutions passed at sessions of the Supreme War Council, of decisions of the Council of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers, and of joint notes of the Permanent Military Representative. Included also are S-H

Bulletins, Department of State daily news summaries, New York newspapers summaries, and American and international press comments. Miscellaneous subject files encompass postwar issues relating to topics such as the Italian problem in the Adriatic, Albania, Armenia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Banat, Belgium, Bessarabia, Greece, Holland, Hungary, economic policy, the food situation in Germany, financial data, and freedom of the seas.

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged in two parts composed of seven series:

Part I:

- [General File, 1870-1919](#)

Part II:

- [Personal File, 1917-1920](#)
- [Office File-Supreme War Council, 1917-1930](#)
- [Family Correspondence, 1864-1933](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1892-1927](#)
- [Speech and Article File, 1909-1927](#)
- [Miscellany, 1907-1929](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-243	<u>Part I: General File, 1870-1919</u> Personal and official letters, telegrams, memoranda, diaries, notes, scrapbooks, military reports and orders, indexes, and other material. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 244-317	<u>Part II: Personal File, 1917-1920</u> Diaries, correspondence, memoranda, minutes and reports of the Supreme War Council and various commissions, bulletins, news reports, and other press material, and miscellaneous documents. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 317-387	<u>Part II: Office File-Supreme War Council, 1917-1930</u> Correspondence, reports, minutes, and other material. Arranged by topic or type of material.
BOX 388-392	<u>Part II: Family Correspondence, 1864-1933</u> Letters by Bliss family members, including correspondence with his wife. Arranged by name of correspondent.
BOX 392	<u>Part II: General Correspondence, 1892-1927</u> Letters sent and received. Organized chronologically.
BOX 393	<u>Part II: Speech and Article File, 1909-1927</u> Speeches, articles, and related material. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 393	<u>Part II: Miscellany, 1907-1929</u> Printed matter. No arrangement.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
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BOX 1	Copy of joint resolution of Senate and House, no. 167 (1870) 1884, 12 May, ordnance notes no. 346: thesis by Bliss, "Strategical Value of the Inland Canal Navigation of the United States" (printed copy) Manuscript of above thesis, dated April 1884. [A.D.S.] together with correspondence transmitting it to Chief of Ordnance 1884, 10 June, proceedings and preliminary report of Board of Officers appointed by Special Order No. 111 Typewritten copy of report (translated from Spanish by J. MacD. Sheridan): "Weyler's Campaign, in Mindanao, Philippine Islands" [1890] 1893, 25 May, carbon copy of typewritten report by Capt. Theo. A. Bingham on "Hints to Officers Detailed as Military Attachés" Bliss correspondence, 26 Nov. 1894 to 5 Sept. 1900 Letters to Adjutant General of Cuba 1 Jan. 1899-31 Jan. 1899
BOX 2	1 Feb.-15 Mar. 1899
BOX 3	Copies of official telegrams to and from Bliss, United States Army Headquarters at Cuba, 17 May 1899-17 Nov. 1900
BOX 4	Miscellaneous letters received 27 June 1898-31 July 1900
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BOX 9	8 June 1899-17 Dec. 1900
BOX 10	Matanzas 10 Jan.-14 July 1899
BOX 11	18 July 1899-2 Mar. 1900
BOX 12	23 Mar.-4 Dec. 1900
BOX 13	Letters and telegrams received from Collectors of Customs in Cuba, 1899 Baracoa, 17 Jan.-4 Nov. Batabano, 6 June-20 Nov. Caibarin, 15 June-5 Aug.
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BOX 17	Sagua la Grande, 28 July-22 Dec. Santa Cruz, 7 Feb.-5 Sept. Santiago de Cuba, 22 Feb.-13 Nov. Trinidad, 19 May-19 Dec. Tunas de Zaza, 28 June-15 Dec. Miscellaneous, 26 Aug.-22 Dec.
BOX 18	Special Cases; combination in the Havana Custom House: cases of dishonest practice in Custom House brought to attention of W. Morgan Shuster, Chief of Statistics and Acting Assistant Auditor for Cuba
BOX 19	Continuation of above, with typewritten copy of the proceedings and copies of supporting documents, [15-23 Dec. 1899]
BOX 20	Vouchers for property received from Bliss by Collectors of Customs, [Nos. 1-49], 6 Feb.-29 June 1899 Bliss's report on insular property expanded for fiscal year ending 30 June 1900 Vouchers, 10 July 1900-30 June 1901 [Nos. 1-35] 1900, Oct., papers relating to Bulls-Shuster-Bravo difficulty
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BOX 40	1 Jan.-25 Dec. 1905 Acts of the Legislative Council, Moro Province 1 June 1903-29 Feb. 1904 (printed)
BOX 41	16 Apr. 1904-10 Mar. 1907 General Orders Philippine Division [Nos. 1-60], 7 Jan.-5 Aug. 1905 (printed) Luzon Division, [Nos. 1-21], 2 Jan.-16 Mar. 1906 (printed)
BOX 42	Correspondence, 1906 2 Jan.-27 Feb. [The index bound in this volume is now useless, since the correspondence has been arranged in chronological order.]
BOX 43	1 Mar.-27 June
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BOX 47	Correspondence, stamped "Headquarters Department of Mindanao." [Nos. 1-48], 11 Mar. 1906-13 Sept. 1907. [A typewritten subject index to this correspondence is in Vols. 48- 49]
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Arranged by type of material.

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	Lt. Ralph Hayes, Jan.-Mar. 1919
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	Brig. Gen. Charles A. McKinstry, Dec. 1918
	Maj. Royal Tyler, June-Sept. 1919
	Maj. Gen. W.C. Langfitt, May 1919
	Brig. Gen. Mason M. Patrick, Feb. 1919
	Lt. Col. Francis E. Riggs, June-July 1919
	Gen. H.A. Smith, May 1919
	Col. Stephen L. H Solcum, May 1919
	Col. R.H. Williams, Jan. 1919
	French Military Officers
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