

Robert R. Furman Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

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Manuscript Division, Library of
Congress

Washington, D.C.

2010

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Collection Summary

Title: Robert R. Furman Papers

Span Dates: 1944-1985

ID No.: MSS85571

Creator: Furman, Robert R., 1915-2008

Extent: 350 items; 1 container; .4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Civil engineer and United States Army officer. Correspondence, memoranda, diary notes, interviews and writings, notes and notebooks, and miscellaneous items relating to Furman's service with the Manhattan Project during World War II.

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

Furman, Robert R., 1915-2008.

Organizations

Indianapolis (Cruiser)

Manhattan Project (U.S.)

United States. Army. Corps of Engineers. Manhattan District.

United States. War Dept. Alsos Mission.

Subjects

Atomic bomb--Germany.

Atomic bomb--United States.

Nuclear weapons--Research--Germany.

Nuclear weapons--Research--United States.

World War, 1939-1945--Military intelligence.

World War, 1939-1945--Science.

World War, 1939-1945.

Places

Tinian (Northern Mariana Islands)

Occupations

Army officers.

Civil engineers.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Robert R. Furman, civil engineer and United States Army officer, were given to the Library of Congress by Furman's son, David E. Furman, in 2010.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Robert R. Furman is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Robert R. Furman 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, Robert R. Furman Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Robert R. Furman, born Aug. 21, 1915, graduated from Trenton (N.J.) High School, 1932, and the school of engineering, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J., 1937. In 1940, Furman joined the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Manhattan District, and in 1942 was assigned to the office of Leslie M. Groves, the military director of the Manhattan Project, the Allied effort to develop an atomic bomb during World War II. In 1944, Furman was attached to the Alsos Mission, an intelligence operation conducted to investigate German nuclear capabilities. Furman delivered nuclear components on board the *Indianapolis* (cruiser) to Tinian Island for final assembly of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, 1945. After the war, Furman traveled to Japan to interview Japanese scientists to examine the state of that country's nuclear program. Furman died in 2008.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Robert R. Furman (1915-2008) span the years 1944-1985 and consist of correspondence, memoranda, diary notes, interviews and writings, notes and notebooks, and miscellaneous material. The collection contains material relating to Furman's service with the Manhattan Project, the code name for the Allied effort during World War II to develop the first atomic bomb. In July 1945, Furman was instructed to transfer the most crucial element of the bomb, a sub-critical mass of uranium 235, from the project's research laboratory at Los Alamos, New Mexico, to its final assembly point on Tinian Island in the Pacific. Furman's diary notes and post-mission interviews and writings cast light on the details of the highly secretive transport that culminated with the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6, 1945, by the B-29 aircraft *Enola Gay*. The collection includes memoranda and retrospective material concerning the *Indianapolis* (cruiser), the United States Navy ship used to transfer the nuclear component and one of the last naval vessels sunk by enemy action, four days after its delivery to Tinian.

The papers also address Furman's participation in the Alsos Mission, an intelligence operation associated with the Manhattan District, designed to gather information regarding Germany's nuclear weapons program, seize German strategic materials and resources, and interrogate scientific and research personnel. The papers contain a file of diary notes, writings, and miscellaneous items concerning the mission.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged alphabetically by topic and type of material.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1	Alsos Mission, 1944-1947
BOX 1	Correspondence, 1944-1945, 1955-1957
BOX 1	Diary notes, 1945
BOX 1	Directory of officers, 1946
BOX 1	Interviews and writings, 1957, 1974, 1982-1985, undated (3 folders)
BOX 1	Miscellany, 1944-1945, 1958-1959, 1970
BOX 1	Notes and notebooks, circa 1945