

William C. Lambert Papers

MS – 221

Special Collections and Archives
Wright State University

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Introduction

The papers of William C. Lambert cover the years 1917 – 1982. The bulk of the papers are from his World War activities, (1917-22) and from the writing of his first book to his death (1969-82). The papers consist of correspondence, hand drawings of aerial flights, photographs, and the handwritten and typed copies of the manuscript for his book, *Combat Report*.

The original collection was loaned to Special Collections and Archives on October 9, 1978 by William C. Lambert. The addition was donated to Special Collections and Archives on March 15, 2006 by Samuel J. Wilson of Rio Grande, West Virginia. The Collection consists of 2 oversized folders and 4 Hollinger boxes. They occupy 2 linear feet.

Copyright restrictions were placed on the original donation. Since that time Mr. Lambert has passed away and there are no known descendants. See archivist for further information.

The Collection is divided into the following series:

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|------------|---------------------------------|
| Series I | General Correspondence |
| Series II | Correspondence to Mrs. Lambert |
| Series III | Professional Life |
| Series IV | Publishing |
| Series V | Photographs and ink drawings |
| Series VI | Saved publications and writings |
| Series VII | Maps |

Note: Published *Combat Report* by William Lambert is located in Special Collections and Archives, Wright State University. Call number **TL 540.L27 A33 1973**

Biographical Sketch

William Carpenter Lambert was born (but no record of his birth was recorded) on August 18, 1894 to William G. and Mary Lambert. He also had a younger brother Carl who was born in circa. 1895. He spent his early childhood in Ironton, Ohio. When Mr. Lambert was ten or eleven years old, an aviator brought a Wright Flyer to Ironton for a July 4th celebration. Lambert was given a ride and allowed to handle the controls. This early experience with aviation led to his career as an aerial fighter.

In 1915, Lambert quit his job as a chemist in Buffalo, New York and went to Canada to enlist in the British Artillery. Not immediately receiving an enlistment, he found other work. In 1917 he was able to join a Canadian training unit of the Royal Flying Corps, fore runner to Britain's Royal Air Force.

In four months, from April 7 until August 10, 1918, Lambert shot down 21 ½ German Aircraft. Two of them were balloons and half the credit for one plane went to another pilot. The British Air Ministry credits him with assisting in the destruction of three other enemy balloons. British records also show that during these four months, Lambert engaged in aerial activity thirty-two times. He was a leading World War I ace, have the second most kills of any American, (Eddie Rickenbacker had 26 kills).

Authorities agree there may have been more victories for Lambert, but record keeping of take-downs was sometimes lost during the heat of battle. In August of 1918, Lambert was hospitalized with combat fatigue and given home leave. He rested at his home for the remainder of the war. England awarded Lambert the Distinguished Flying Cross. Lambert would receive the award in 1919 in a private ceremony from the Prince of Wales at the British Embassy in Washington, DC.

After the war, Lambert spent a year barnstorming with air shows in the eastern United States. He also went into an airplane building business with a friend in Dayton, Ohio and flew the U.S. air mail route from Washington to Cleveland.

In the 1920s, Lambert enlisted in the U.S. Air Corps reserve. He was called to active duty in the early days of World War II, serving as an engineer. After the war, Lambert remained in the reserves until in 1954 when, at age 60, he retired as a Lieutenant Colonel.

In 1973, William Lambert published a book concerning his war activities in western France entitled, *Combat Report*. In 1980 Lambert would publish a second book concerning his barnstorming days entitled, *Barnstorming and Girls*. Lambert also drew many sketches of his flying days, and later in life would sell various prints of them.

William Lambert married Chloe Forson (nee Hale) circa. 1921. Chloe had a daughter, Clyda M., from a previous marriage. Chloe died in Ironton in 1971. William Lambert died on March 19, 1982 at the age of 87. There are no descendants known to be living at this time.

Scope and Content

The William C. Lambert papers consist mostly of correspondence. Also included are ink and chalk drawings, representing flights that William Lambert participated in. The collection also contains handwritten and typed manuscripts of his book *Combat Report*, and writings of interest to Lambert. Correspondence is arranged alphabetically by its creator unless otherwise noted.

The researcher should be aware that chalk drawings must be handled with care, as constant rubbing or friction could remove the imprint.

During his life Mr. Lambert received letters containing the signatures of J. Edgar Hoover and Eddie Rickenbacker, both of these letters can be found in Box 2, File 12.

A book on the Royal Air Force was included in the original accession of the papers and was cataloged and shelved in the Special Collections and Archives Reading Room.

Royal Air Force 1918 edited by Christopher Cole, Call Number **D602.C63**

Series I: General Correspondence

The correspondence contained in this series span the entirety of William Lambert's adult life, although the bulk of the letters were written after 1972, the year he published *Combat Report*. This is the largest series in the collection, and has been broken apart into four different time periods to make it more manageable for researchers: 1917-22 which is almost entirely made up of correspondence relating to the WW I, 1923-45 which is post-WW I through his service in WW II, 1946-72 from WW II until publication, and 1973-82 post-publication.

Series II: Correspondence to Mrs. Lambert

The vast majority of the letters in this series were written by Mr. Lambert during World War II. In addition to these letters there are greeting cards from both Mr. Lambert and Clyda, Mrs. Lambert's daughter from her first marriage.

Series III: Professional Life

The materials in the professional life series are from the 1930s and 1940s. Included in are invention suggestions to automobile and aviation companies, patent correspondence, and letters from his employment from 1939 – 1941. Of note in this series are two letters that bear the signatures of Eddie Rickenbacker and J. Edgar Hoover, both of which can be found in Box 2, File 12.

Series IV: Publishing

This bulk of the materials are from Mr. Lambert's first book *Combat Report*. Included are Mr. Lambert's letters to publishing companies and a literary agent, invoices and other sales records, and a typed and handwritten manuscript of *Combat Report*.

Series V: Photographs & Drawings

The bulk of the photographs in this series are from World War I. There is also one 11 x 8 World War II portrait photograph, and the remainder are from later in his life. The drawings are all from World War I, and include ink and chalk drawings. One drawing has been separated from the main collection and is being stored in Oversize Location 52, File 1.

Series VI: Publications & Writing of Interest

This series is made up of documents that Mr. Lambert chose to save throughout his lifetime. A sampling of the documents included are newspaper clippings, jokes, Patton's D-Day invasion speech, and a short story.

Series VII: Maps

This series consists entirely World War I era large sized maps of Europe, France and Germany. Of note, the maps are in French and German. Due to their size the maps have separated from the main collection and are being stored in Oversize Location 52, File 2.

Container Listing

Series I General Correspondence

Box	File	Description	Date
1	1	Correspondence	1917-22 Scattered
1	2	Correspondence	1923-45 Scattered
1	3	Correspondence	1946-72 Scattered
1	4	Correspondence	1946-72 Scattered
1	5	Correspondence	1946-72 Scattered
1	6	Correspondence	1946-72 Scattered
1	7	Correspondence – Includes a list of “kills”	1946-72 Scattered
1	8	Correspondence	1946-72 Scattered
1	9	Correspondence	1973-82
1	10	Correspondence	1973-82
1	11	Correspondence	1973-82
1	12	Correspondence	1973-82
2	1	Correspondence	1973-82
2	2	Correspondence	1973-82
2	3	Correspondence	1973-82
2	4	Correspondence	1973-82

Series II: Correspondence to Mrs. Lambert

2	5	From William Lambert	1934, 1942-43
2	6	From William Lambert	1943-45
2	7	Undated from William Lambert & From Others	n. d.

Series III: Professional Life

2	8	Invention Suggestions	1940
2	9	Patent Correspondence	1930-31
2	10	Patent Correspondence	1931-32
2	11	Shopping of Inventions	1932, 1940
2	12	Employment Search	1940-41
2	13	Employment Search	1931, 1939-41
2	14	Video: “Out of the Sun” Subject-Bill Lambert	Undated

Series IV: Publishing

2	15	Publishing Correspondence	1970-71, 1974, 1979-81
2	16	Publishing Correspondence	1971
2	17	Sales Records from William Kimber Co.	1973-77

Box	File	Description	Date
2	18	Sales Records from other publishers	1975-76, 1979-80
		<i>Combat Report</i> – Handwritten	
3	1	Note, Contents, Acknowledgements, Prologue, Epilogue	1969
3	2	Chapter 1	1969
3	3	Chapter 2	1969
3	4	Chapter 3	1969
3	5	Chapter 4	1969
3	6	Chapter 5	1969
3	7	Chapter 6	1969
3	8	Chapter 7, pgs. 1 – 110	1969
3	9	Chapter 7, pgs. 111 – 212	1969
3	10	Chapter 8, pgs. 1 – 124	1969
3	11	Chapter 8, pgs. 125 – 254	1969
3	12	Chapter 8, pgs. 255 – 346	1969
3	13	Chapter 9, pgs. 1 – 42	1969
3	14	Chapter 9, pgs. 43 – 185	1969
		<i>Combat Report</i> – Typed	
3	15	Forward, Prologue, Contents, Preface, Acknowledgements	1969
3	16	Chapter 1	1969
3	17	Chapter 2	1969
3	18	Chapter 3	1969
3	19	Chapter 4	1969
3	20	Chapter 5	1969
3	21	Chapter 6	1969
3	22	Chapter 7	1969
3	23	Chapter 8	1969
3	24	Chapter 9, Epilogue	1969
3	25	Appendices 1, 2, 3	1969
Series V		Photos & Drawings	
4	1	Photographs – World War I	1917
4	2	Photographs – World War I	n. d.
4	3	Photographs – Post-World War I	1943, n. d.
4	4	Hand drawings of aerial flights – “We Escort the 9.3 (D.H.9) Bombers, France” Note: A larger scale version will be found in OS 52 Folder 1	1918
4	5	Ink Drawings of aerial flights	1918

Box	File	Description	Date
4	6	Photocopies of original drawings	1917-18
OS 52	1	Drawing titled "We Escort the 9.3 (D.H.9) Bombers, France" 18 x 23	1918
Series VI		Saved Publications & Writings	
4	7	Pamphlets	1976-77, 1981, n. d.
4	8	Newspaper clippings	n. d.
4	9	Printed Famous Speeches	n. d.
4	10	Other Writings of Interest	n. d.
4	11	Other Writings of Interest	1947, n. d.
Series VII		Maps	
OS 52	2	Carte Index des Itinéraires du Guide des Routes de France publie. (Guide to Public Roads in France) 14x15	n. d.
OS 52	2	Military Map of the Western Front in France 20x38	n. d.
OS 52	2	Brandeville, France 28x42	1918
OS 52	2	Nouvell Carte de l Europe Centrale. (Political Map of Central Europe) 34x41	n. d.
OS 52	2	Militarische Verkehrskarte fur den Bereich des XVIII. (Zones of the Occupation in Germany) 32x43	n. d.
OS 52	2	Nouvelle Care de France, Belgique, Bords du Rhin Suisse. (Map of France, Belgium, and edges of the Swiss Rhine)	n. d.
OS 52	2	Dun-sur-meuse, France 30x42	1918