

Military Collection
State Archives of North Carolina

William S. McKimmon Papers (WWI 126)

[World War I]

Collection Number: WWI 126

Title: William S. McKimmon Papers

Dates: 1917-1919, 1944, 1948-1951, undated

Creator: William S. McKimmon; Jane S. McKimmon; and various individuals.

Abstract

The William S. McKimmon Papers is composed of military service records, a flight log book, U.S. Air Service combat orders, an American Expeditionary Forces identification card, three sets of flight school notes, a photograph, a WWII war ration book, and a Christmas presents and cards sent notebook, documenting primarily the World War I service of William S. McKimmon of Raleigh, N.C. McKimmon served as a pilot in the 27th Aero Squadron, 1st Pursuit Group, U.S. Army Air Service, while in Europe. He served from October 1917 through April 1919.

The collection has a number of long, short strips of paper with combat orders printed on them for McKimmon to attack German observation balloons while he was with the U.S. Army Air Service. There is his American Expeditionary Forces' identification card with his WWI photograph in it. Of interest are three sets of military flight school student notes made by McKimmon on the theory of flight and maintenance of an aircraft. These notes of handmade drawings by McKimmon, including beautiful illustrations of early biplanes, including Curtiss Jennies. Present also is a photograph of William McKimmon's older brother Charles, which was kept by their father Charles M. McKimmon during WWI.

The most important item in the collection is McKimmon's original pilot's flight log book, which includes all of his military training course flight training hours and dates, military flight missions in Europe, and personal information on his military service in WWI. It is a rare, complete example of a U.S. Army Air Service's flight log. McKimmon kept the log from his entrance into the Air Service when it was the U.S. Army Signal Corps Air Section in October 1917 through the end of his flying in France up to October 1918.

Physical Description: 12 folders.

Language(s): English, French

Repository

State Archives of North Carolina, 4614 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-4614

Restrictions on Access: There are no restrictions on accessing this collection.

Restrictions on Use: There are no restrictions on the use of this collection.

Preferred Citation

[Folder Numbers], William S. McKimmon Papers, WWI 126, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C.

Acquisition

The materials in the collection were donated to the Military Collection at the State Archives of North Carolina by Flo Winston of Raleigh, N.C., in May 2012.

Related Material

Two original World War I maps have been relocated to the WWI Maps Collection from the William S. McKimmon Papers as the following maps: Chalons [France; in French], revised in 1912 [numbered as MilColl.WWI.Maps.512]; and Metz [France; in French], revised in 1912 [numbered as MilColl.WWI.Maps.513].

Processing Information

The collection was originally titled as the WWI serviceman's full name "William Simpson McKimmon Papers." The collection's name was changed to the "William S. McKimmon Papers" in order to better match the new Military Collection collection titling practices of using initials for a person's middle name. The materials in this collection were originally organized in two regular folders. The collection was reprocessed from its prior arrangement and storage in order to separate the materials in the collection into smaller groups by format, to allow for better long-term preservation of the collection. Also, fragile materials were stored in custom enclosures within the collection.

Two of McKimmon's original military service records were so fragile, that the two documents were placed in acid-free archival photograph sleeves, with them customized to open like a sleeve with three open slides of the sleeve. This was done to stabilize the documents, and allow for researchers to handle the pages without causing further physical damage to them. McKimmon's WWI flight log book was determined to need a custom enclosure during storage. In order to stabilize the flight log book while it is in long-term storage, an adjustable acid-free book box was used to house it. The book box has four flaps that interlock, and are fastened with Velcro buttons.

The photograph in the collection has been individually stored in an acid-free, archival plastic sleeve to allow for researchers to handle the original image without causing damage to the image's surface, and to improve preservation during long-term storage. The photograph has been

numbered with a soft HB No. 2 pencil on the back, according to the collection number, the folder number, and an individual image number. For example, the number “WWI 126.F10.1” should be interpreted as “WWI 126 collection, Folder 10, Photograph 1.” The identification of this image has been created in the finding aid, but not written on the photograph itself during this processing of the collection.

McKimmon’s original American Expeditionary Forces ID card’s black material covering has residue of the adhesive keeping it attached to the card’s cardboard structure, that has seeped through the surface over time. Pieces of paper were stuck to one side of the cover at some point in the past. A French franc paper note was stuck to the over side of the cover, and was damaged when it was removed. This franc was removed from the collection according to State Archives’ processing practices. The ID card was stored individually within a file folder, so as to not stick to any other archival items. It was decided not to put the card in a white acid-free paper envelope, because it is believed the card would stick to the inside of the envelope and make it difficult to remove over time in storage. A paper envelope would have been a better storage option to keep the card from sliding around in the folder, were it not for the unique situation of the adhesive coating the ID card’s surface.

Processed by: Matthew M. Peek, June 2018.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged by format or purpose of the materials within folders.

Biographical Note

William Simpson McKimmon was born on November 9, 1894, in Raleigh, N.C., to Charles M. and Jane Simpson McKimmon. Charles McKimmon was a U.S. Civil War veteran who served in the 1st Regiment, North Carolina Artillery, which later became Company A, 10th Regiment, North Carolina Infantry. By 1900, the McKimmon family was living on North Blount Street, and Charles McKimmon was working as a merchant. William McKimmon attended Raleigh High School for three years. He would attend college for his freshman year in 1912-1913 at the North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering (now North Carolina State University) in Raleigh, where he studied civil engineering for three years. McKimmon spent three years in various civil engineering field work. He would then work for two years as an assistant (and listed by 1918 as a bacteriologist) at the North Carolina State Laboratory of Hygiene in Raleigh.

William McKimmon enlisted for military service in World War I on October 6, 1917, in the U.S. Army Signal Corps Air Section in Greensboro, N.C. He actually signed up through the Army’s Enlisted Reserve Corps (ERC). McKimmon was sent for eight weeks of training at the School of Military Aeronautics in Atlanta, Georgia, where he graduated on December 15, 1917.

McKimmon was discharged from the ERC on March 28, 1918, in order to accept a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Signal Corps’ Air Section on March 29, 1918.

McKimmon was sent for flying instruction on a Curtiss airplane at Park Field in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was serving in a Headquarters Detachment in the Air Section. He would next spend four weeks drill instruction at Camp Dick in Dallas, Texas.

On May 19, 1918, McKimmon left from the U.S. aboard a troop transport ship for Europe. He went for two and a half months for aircraft machine gun and flying training at Issoudun, France, finishing his training on August 21, 1918. McKimmon next spent nine days studying aerial gunnery at Cazaux, France, beginning on September 28, 1918. He finished his studying at Cazaux on September 3, 1918. McKimmon was assigned to serve in France in the 27th Aero Squadron, 1st Pursuit Group, U.S. Army Air Service (a reformed version of the Air Section, U.S. Army Signal Corps), at Rembercourt, France, on September 9, 1918. He was involved in his unit's work on the St. Mihiel-Verdun front in September 1918 in what McKimmon refers to as the "Amex drive."

McKimmon conducted air patrols and aerial photography missions along the St-Mihiel, Verdun, and Argonne Forest in September 1918. He would also fly into Germany on a 90-minute photography mission on September 20, 1918. On October 5, 1918, McKimmon was slightly injured at the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. After the Armistice in November 1918 at some point, McKimmon was assigned to Casual Company 1969. He arrived back in the U.S. from France on a troop transport ship on March 26, 1919, and assigned to Camp Albert L. Mills on Long Island, New York (one of the main U.S. military embarkation ports on the Atlantic coast). McKimmon was transferred to Mitchel Field at Hempstead Plains on Long Island, New York. It is believed he was honorably discharged at Mitchel Field from active military service on April 22, 1919.

After the war, it is unknown where he lived and what he was doing for work (though it is believed he returned to Raleigh, N.C.). William McKimmon would marry Kathrine L. Crews on January 12, 1921, in Wake County, N.C. By 1930, the McKimmons were living in Raleigh, and William was working as a broker for the Brotherhood Accident Company. The company insured members of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows fraternal organization only. By 1934, McKimmon was working as a clerk.

By 1936 at the height of the Great Depression, William McKimmon was working for the North Carolina State Board of Health's Division of Sanitary Engineering. By 1939, he was working as a sanitary engineer with the North Carolina State Board of Health. By 1940, the McKimmons had moved in with Kathrine's mother in her Raleigh house. McKimmon continued working through the 1940s as a sanitary engineer with the State Board of Health, where he would retire from later in life. William S. McKimmon died on September 30, 1967, in Durham, N.C., and was buried in Oakwood Cemetery in the same city.

Scope and Content

The collection is composed of military service records, a flight log book, U.S. Air Service combat orders, an American Expeditionary Forces identification card, three sets of flight school notes, a photograph, a WWII war ration book, and a Christmas presents and cards sent notebook, documenting primarily the World War I service of William S. McKimmon of Raleigh, N.C. McKimmon served as a pilot in the 27th Aero Squadron, 1st Pursuit Group, U.S. Army Air Service, while in Europe. He served from October 1917 through April 1919.

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The collection also has an address book repurposed as a list of people to whom Christmas presents and cards were received and sent by William McKimmon's mother Jane McKimmon, from 1948 through 1951.

Subject Terms

Persons/Families

McKimmon, William S. (William Simpson), 1894-1967

Places

Camp Dick (Tex.)
Cazaux (Gironde, France)
Issoudun (France)
Park Field (Memphis, Tenn.)
Raleigh (N.C.)

Subject—Topical

Argonne, Battle of the, France, 1918.
North Carolina. Sanitary Engineering Division
North Carolina. State Board of Health
United States. Army. Air Service
United States. Army. Air Service. Aero Squadron, 27th
United States. Army. Enlisted Reserve Corps
World War, 1914-1918--Campaigns--Meuse River Valley

Material Types

Logs
Military records

Photographic postcards

Collection Inventory

Folder	Description	Date
1	Military Service Records	1917-1919
2	U.S. Air Service Combat Orders	August-November 1918
3	McKimmon's War Risk Insurance	December 29, 1917
4	McKimmon's American Expeditionary Forces Identification Card	Undated
5	McKimmon's WWI Pilot's Log Book	1917-1918
6	American-French Flight Log Pages with McKimmon's Name	Undated
7	McKimmon's Flight School Student Notes: "Theory of Flight"	Undated
8	McKimmon's Flight School Student Notes: "Theory of Flight—Care of Machine"	Undated
9	McKimmon's Flight School Student Notes: "Flight Rigging"	Undated
10	Photograph	Undated

WWI 126.F10.1: Real-photo postcard of Charles McKimmon, wearing a dark suit, standing outside on a dirt road next to a runabout vehicle. The photograph was taken apparently while he was a student at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. Charles was the oldest brother of William S. McKimmon (undated).

11	McKimmon's WWII War Ration Book	1944
12	Jane S. McKimmon's Christmas Cards and Presents Sent Book	1948-1951