



Smithsonian
National Air and Space Museum

Wesley Archer (Cockburn-Lange Hoax) Collection

2001

National Air and Space Museum Archives
14390 Air & Space Museum Parkway
Chantilly, VA 20151
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<http://airandspace.si.edu/research/resources/archives/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Arrangement.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	1
General.....	2
Names and Subjects	2

Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	Wesley Archer (Cockburn-Lange Hoax) Collection
Identifier:	NASM.1986.0008
Date:	1916-1960
Extent:	5.45 Cubic Feet ((5 records center boxes) (1 16x20x3 flatbox)) 5.2 Linear Feet
Creator:	Archer, Wesley David
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

John W. Charlton, gift, 1985, 1986-0008, Unknown

Restrictions

No restrictions on access

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

In 1933 the anonymous "Death in the Air: The War Diary and Photographs of a Flying Corps Pilot" purported to be the record of a Royal Flying Corps (RFC) pilot during World War I, and included photos allegedly taken by the pilot during aerial combat. The photos were supposedly owned by a Mrs. Gladys Maud Cockburn-Lange, but had actually been faked by Wesley David Archer, an American pilot who had served in the RFC. The Cockburn-Lange hoax persisted until it was exposed by Peter M. Grosz, a German aviation author (Princeton, NJ), and Karl S. Schneide, from the Aeronautics Department of the National Air and Space Museum, in the early 1980s.

Scope and Contents

This collection documents the Cockburn-Lange hoax. The material includes the photos used in the book, as well as correspondence and journal articles detailing Grosz and Schneide's unraveling of the hoax. The collection also includes personal correspondence from Archer and various maps.

Arrangement

Arrangement: 1) Photographs published in DEATH IN THE AIR (1933), arranged by page number 2) unpublished photographs, unarranged 3) Peter M. Grosz & Karl S. Schneide journal articles and correspondence 4) Wesley David Archer correspondence arranged chronologically, 1915-1960 5) photographs of family, travel and friends 6) books 7) maps 8) artifacts 9) oversize photographs

General

NASMrev

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Aeronautics
Cockburn-Lange Hoax

Types of Materials:

Audiotapes
Maps
Scrapbooks

Names:

Archer, Wesley David
Cockburn-Lange, Gladys Maud
Grosz, Peter M.
Schneide, Karl S.

Preferred Titles:

Death in the Air: The War Diary and Photographs of a Flying Corps Pilot