



# Smithsonian

*National Air and Space Museum*

## Edward "Eddie" Rickenbacker Letters

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National Air and Space Museum Archives  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Air and Space Museum Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Edward "Eddie" Rickenbacker Letters
<b>Date:</b>	1917 and undated, circa 1918
<b>Identifier:</b>	NASM.1988.0003
<b>Creator:</b>	Rickenbacker, Eddie, 1890-1973
<b>Extent:</b>	0.05 Cubic feet (1 folder)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	Captain Edward V. "Eddie" Rickenbacker was a self-taught automotive engineer, an American fighter ace in World War I, and Medal of Honor recipient. He was also a race car driver, a government military consultant during World War II, and a pioneer in air transportation, particularly as the longtime head of Eastern Air Lines. This accession consists of two letters from Rickenbacker to C. G. [Chris] Sinsabaugh, then editor of Automotive News, written during Rickenbacker's service in World War I.
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Image(s): Edward "Eddie" Rickenbacker Letters</a>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Eleanor Whalen, Gift, 1987, NASM.1988.0003

### Processing Information

Arranged, described, and encoded by Jessamyn Lloyd, 2022.

### Preferred Citation

Edward "Eddie" Rickenbacker Letters, NASM.1988.0003, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

No restrictions on access

### Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

Edward Vernon "Eddie" Rickenbacker (1890--1973) had only a sixth grade education but became a leading aviation figure in both military and civilian circles. He was a self-taught automotive engineer and race car driver who became a fighter ace during World War I, where as a member of the 94th Aero Squadron he shot down 22 German aircraft and 4 observation balloons. He became a colonel in the Army Air Reserves and during World War II helped form the Military Air Transport Services. In October of 1942, during an inspection tour of the Pacific theater, Rickenbacker's Boeing B-17D Flying Fortress went off course and was ditched over water. The surviving seven members of the crew were rescued 24 days later, suffering from exposure, starvation, and dehydration. In the civilian sector, Rickenbacker worked at several airlines, including Fokker Aircraft Corporation and American Airways, before going to work at Eastern Air Lines in 1934. In 1939 Rickenbacker became Eastern's president and chairman, positions he held until 1963.

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## Scope and Contents

This accession consists of two letters from Edward Vernon "Eddie" Rickenbacker to C. G. [Chris] Sinsabaugh, then editor of Automotive News. In the first letter, dated November 10, 1917, Rickenbacker tells his friend "Sincy" of his life as a new soldier, of his interest in aviation, and of becoming a pilot. The envelope is included with this letter. The second letter, undated, is written on a German post card form that Rickenbacker notes he picked up on the battle field at Marne. In this correspondence, Rickenbacker comments on his hospital confinement and on those race car drivers who have not enlisted.

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## Arrangement

Collection is in chronological order.

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Aeronautics
- Air pilots
- World War, 1914-1918

Types of Materials:

- Correspondence