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First World War: Royal Flying Corps

Collection Summary

Title:	First World War: Royal Flying Corps
Call Number:	MS 86-11
Size:	1.5 linear feet
Acquisition:	Purchased from Sotheby's, London Branch, 1985
Processed by:	AG, 2-1986; MN, 10-2008; LMM, 7-24-14
Restrictions:	None

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Content Note

The collection includes a precis of a war diary written during operations in France and Belgium, 1914; a report of operations and intelligence in Italy, 1918, with an account of a raid on Vienna by Gabriele d'Annunzio, who undertook the project to take photographs and drop propagand leaflets; two books of aerial photographs of Belgian battlefields, Messines and Passchendale; and the papers of Brigadier General R. M. Groves. Groves's documents embody a brief biographical sketch of his life and accomplishments, with documentation, and two sets of essays written by himself on numerous military matters. In the report of the raid on Vienna there is a communique on the shooting down of a plane piloted by "Mick" Mannock, Fighter Ace, in July 1918.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1	FF 1	Biographical sketch of Brigadier General R. M. Groves, C.B., D.S.O., A.F.C., who was born in 1880, served in the Mediterranean 1912-1914, went into the Royal Naval Air Service in 1915, became commander of the No. 1 Wing of the Dover Patrol in 1916 "to help eliminate the scarcity of responsible senior officers in the service"; and was killed while flying at Heliopolis in 1919. Sources of the information are included. 1880-1919.
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- Box 1 FF 2 Paper folder containing a letter from Commodore W. Maucken, November 19, 1916, to Captain R. M. Groves, returning Grove's two sets of papers (essays) re. the Air Service. The essays are dated from July 1916 - September 1919. Numbers 1-7 are in regard to the Royal Naval Air Service. Numbers 8-19 are miscellaneous papers. There are also four items, numbers 20-23 from the inside of paper covers. The titles are: 1) Remarks on Future Development in the Air; (2) Future Development of Aviation; (3) Relations between Royal Air Force and Navy; (4) British Aviation -- Future Policy and Relations between Navy and the Air Force -- Remarks on War Cabinet Paper G. T. 6478, 12th December 1918; (5) Future Conditions of Service Life -- Revolutionary Propaganda; (6) Future of Airships; (7) Inshore Patrol Work by Aeroplanes; (8) Relations between Training and Staff Work; (9) Memorandum of Aircraft Torpedo Work; (10) General Report on the Design of Seaplanes; (11) Notes on Marine Aircraft Construction and Design Policy; (12) Memo Re. Furtherance of Work of Design of Aircraft for Marine Use; (13) Organization of the Technical Department; (14) Supply and Design; (15) Remarks on Definition of Routes by Ground Signals; (16) Remarks on Female Staff in Operations and Intelligence Directorates; (17) Remarks on the Peace Conference (also notes by C.A.S.); (18) Method of Payment of R.A.F. Officers; (18A) Remarks on Misuse of Controls in Inherently Stable Machines; (19) Remarks on Universal Railway Strike; (20) A "Secret" map of the Proposed Existing Airship Patrols and Proposed Protected Lanes, Great Britain and Ireland; (21) A Letter from _ . _ . Steel to Wing-Captain F. R. Scarlett transmitting Captain Groves' "Notes on Marine Aircraft Construction and Design Policy"; (22) Letter from "Rear Pink," Wing Commander and Inspector of Recruiting, R.A.F., to Mr. Albin, n.d., transmitting data relative to pay in the Service; (23) Letter dated September 26, 1919, from R. Pink to Messrs. Cox & Co., transmitting a request for income tax refund. July 1916-September 1919; (24) Drafts; (25) How the news reached us; (26) Draft only: Points referring to the relation between the Air Ministry and Admiralty; (27) Draft only; The Future of the British Aerial Forces.
- Box 2 FF 1 Plastic folder with an I. D. note "Flying Corps, Royal Precis of War Diary, 19-31 Aug. 1914 with Intelligence Summaries and Summaries of Tracings. (Drawn on back of tracing giving results of 31.VIII.1.) Summaries of operations are combined with two maps, one of a battleground near Brussels, and the second of the "German Advance through Belgium, 1914." These papers are reasonably well preserved. August 19-27, 1914.
- Box 2 FF 2 Book I of two paper-covered sets of aerial photographs of battlegrounds. Vol. I covers the Battle of Messines near Ypres, Belgium. The book includes approximately 86 "Photographs taken from approximately 8000 ft., showing results of artillery fire before and after the battle." There is a brief summary inside the front cover indicating that Barnold and James piloted the planes from which the pictures were taken. This summary includes a few interpretations of the photographs. Despite the flimsy paper covers, the pictures are well preserved through faded. June 1917.

- Box 2 FF 3 Book II of the aerial photographs of battlegrounds, this one entitled, "The Second Army Offensive in Flanders, July 31st to October 26th, 1917. B.I.S. Xth Corps, No. 6 Squadron, R.F.C." The "flyleaf" notation is: "Photographs taken from approximately 8000 ft., showing results of shell fire before and after the Battle." This was the Battle of Passchendale. There is an air photo of Ypres in addition to approximately 72 of the battle area--Menin Road before and after, Bassevillebeek, Veldhoek, Dumbarton Lakes, Ghedvelt, Moorslede, and of the Ypres-Comines Railway and Canal. These pictures, also, are somewhat faded but otherwise well preserved. July 31-October 27, 1917.
- Box 3 FF 1 Paper-bound book of aerial photographs of a raid on Vienna, Austria, by the British Royal Air Force on August 9, 1918. The 1,000 kilometer round trip was led by Major Gabrielle d'Annunzio, Italian poet and dramatist. The confidential book is entitled, "British Force in Italy, 14th Wing, Royal Air Force, Summaries and Reports, Operations, Etc., No. 9, August 6th - August 19th 1918 inclusive." It contains a brief typed summary of the contents, and is a diary-summary of the attack on Vienna. Included are a portion of a map showing the battle area with corrections which were made possible by aerial photography, and seven aerial photos of the area. Considering the flimsy paper cover, the documents are in fairly good condition. August 6-19, 1918.
- Box 3 FF 2 An envelope identified as "Reports/Notes, 14 Wing RAF in Italy, August 1918. The envelope provided a tight cover for the book of photographs during transit from England. August 1918.

For information, please contact us at:

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