



Special Collections

Research Guide – The RAAF and Aviation History

This guide is an introduction to UNSW Special Collections manuscript and rare book sources relating to the Royal Australian Air Force and aviation history more generally.

The list is a selective one to get you started – you can search for additional manuscripts using our [Finding Aid Index](#) and for rare books in the [Library Catalogue](#) (refine your search results by Collection > Special Collections to identify rare books).

If you would like to view Special Collections material or have any questions, please submit your enquiry via our [Make an Enquiry](#) form and we will be happy to help you.

Please refer to the [Special Collections](#) website for further information.

Manuscripts

[MSS 2 – Papers of Christopher Clark](#)

Manuscript papers and related material produced and accumulated by Chris Clark for *Australia's military map-makers: the Royal Australian Survey Corps 1915-96*, including correspondence, research notes, drafts, photographs and motion pictures.

Example: Box 11/Folder 88 – Research material relating to *Australia's military map-makers*, including photocopy of 'Operations record book', No. 1 Squadron, RAAF, Point Cook, 1925-1932

[MSS 12 – World War 1914-1918 photograph collection](#)

Black and white photographic record of Australian Infantry Forces during and after World War I.

Example: Folder 1 - E4609: The wreckage of two British aeroplanes which collided in flight near Ypres, Belgium, 20th September 1917; Folder 2 - E3767: An enemy armour-plated, two-seated fighting biplane brought down early in October near Sonia Wood, Bearevoir sector, France, 10th October 1918; Folder 3 - E4145: German aeroplane wrecked on the Bickendorf Aerodrome, near Cologne, Germany, December 1918, when the 4th Squadron Australian Flying Corps, was established there, E5122: Electric landing lights used in connection with the observation tower for sighting aeroplanes, erected by the Germans at Flavion, Belgium, 25 April 1919, B1601: A view of Jerusalem, photographed from an aeroplane of the Australian Flying Corps, B5989: 'Above the Clouds in Palestine', Australian aeroplanes in battle formation; Folder 6 - Hun plane which surrendered in mid-air to Australian airmen, Bailleul Aerodrome

[MSS 25 – Papers of Roy G. Bettiens](#)

The papers chiefly comprise press clippings, notebooks and scrapbooks relating to Australian aviation history, Bert Hinkler and Charles Kingsford-Smith. Also included is Molly Rackemann's research collection on Charles Kingsford-Smith, which she donated to Bettiens.

Example: Folder 17 – Aviation history, General; Folder 21 – scrapbook photo album, including Harry Butler and Bert Hinkler

MSS 75 – Papers of Vice-Admiral Sir Henry Mackay Burrell

Example: Letter from F.H. Kelly, The Bristol Aeroplane Company Limited, 27 February 1953, photograph taken when three Bristol Sycamore MK50 aircraft were delivered to HMAS *Vengeance* at Weymouth.

MSS 95 – Papers of Frank Korbl

Comprising 50 scrapbooks (including newspaper cuttings, brochures, invitations, letters, maps, menus, newsletters, photographs, postcards, programs, receipts, souvenirs) principally relating to his service as an RAAF Vietnam War pilot.

Example: Folder 9 – RAAF news, 'Golden Jubilee 1921-1971' issue, March 1971; Folder 20 – Scrapbook, January-April 1981, relating to RAAF history and Diamond Jubilee

MSS 161 – Papers of George Odgers

Manuscript of *Aces wild* (1988) by George Odgers, official World War II historian and former RAAF Group Captain who served in Korea, Malaya and Vietnam. In 1965 Odgers was appointed Head of Public Relations, Department of Air, and in 1975, Head of Historical Studies, Department of Defence.

Example: Box 1/Folder 2 – typescript manuscript of 'Aces Wild', with editorial corrections

MSS 176 – Papers of John Croyston

Radio producer with the ABC Drama and Features Department, writing and producing many dramas (including a feature on the bombing of Darwin) and co-producer of *The Poet's Tongue*.

Example: Folders 34-43 – Bombing of Darwin research for ABC television dramatisation: including plan and photographs of RAAF Station Darwin 1942

MSS 182 – Papers of Robert Alexander Little

Typescript notes, photocopies of biographical and military material and photographs collected by Vera Brettell relating to the life of Captain Robert Alexander Little, who served with the Royal Naval Air Service in Squadrons 1, 3 & 8, and with the Royal Air Force in Squadron 203 during World War I.

MSS 200 – Papers of the 1st Australian Parachute Battalion

Nominal Roll, 4 Platoon, B Company Roll Book, diary extracts, newsletters, newspaper cuttings, poster, cloth colour insignia badges and photographs relating to the 1st Australian Parachute Battalion collected by former officer Michael Fleming.

MSS 231 – Papers of General Sir John Wilton

Box 5/Folder 2 – souvenir photo album (b&w) documenting Unison 65 (the Commonwealth Inter-Service Study, Cranwell, England), including images of RAF flying display

MSS 336 – Richard Northam – Plan cabinet

This collection contains photographs, plans, cards, leaflets, booklets and miscellaneous on US and British aircrafts, mostly from WWII and the 1950-60s

MSS 355 – Papers of John McCarthy

This collection comprises photocopies of Australian government documents relating to World War II and research material for various publications by the historian and academic John McCarthy.

Example: Folders 4-7 – Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS) and other air matters

MSS 366 – Papers of John Coates

Research material used for the publication of Coates' *Bravery above blunder: the 9th Division at Finschhafen, Sattelberg and Sio* (1999). It includes photocopies of military archival material held in Australia, the United States and Britain, detailing the Huon Peninsula Campaign in New Guinea in 1943-44; interviews with Japanese prisoners of war and, post-war Japanese commanders; audio cassette interviews with Australian commanders; and maps of the Huon Peninsula area, and selected maps used for *An atlas of Australia's wars*.

Example: Japanese Navy prisoners-of-war interrogation reports – No. 71 – Japanese naval land-based air operations in western New guinea; No. 77 – Operations of 22nd air flotilla in Malaya; No. 97 – Air operations by Japanese Naval Air Forces based at Rabaul; No. 116 – Japanese land-based air operations – Celebes and Rabaul

[MSS 371 – Papers of Brian Beddie](#)

Papers and reference material assembled by Professor Brian Beddie relating to Australian defence policy and administration.

Example: Box 27/Series 10/Folder 9 – Notes on organisation of the RAAF; Box 46/Series 10/Folder 10 – RAAF history and development

Rare Books

WWI

[Reports of movement of the enemy's aircraft](#)

; Great Britain. Army ;

France : Army Printing and Stationery Services, 1918

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (D 600 .R46 1918)

[Souvenir of ninety-four gift battle-planes which helped us to victory August 4th 1914 to November 11th, 1918](#)

C. Alma. Baker

London : The Field Press, 1920

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (UG 1242 .B35 1920)

[The struggle in the air, 1914-1918](#)

Charles C. Turner (Charles Cyril), 1870-

London : Edward Arnold, 1919

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (D602 .T8 1919)

[War planes of the First World War](#)

J. M. Bruce (John McIntosh)

London : Macdonald, 1965- .

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (TL 685.3 .B785 1965)

Post-WWI

Training

[Royal Air Force flying training manual. Part I, Flying instruction.](#)

; Great Britain. Air Ministry. ;

London : H.M.S.O., 1923

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (TL710 G73 1923)

[Royal Air Force flying training manual Part II Applied flying.](#)

Great Britain. Air Ministry

London : H. M. Stationery Office, 1927

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (TL710 .G73 1927)

[Royal Air Force flying training manual part III, seaplane flying.](#)

Great Britain. Air Ministry

London : H. M. Stationery Office, 1928

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (TL710 .G73 1928)

WWII

Aircraft

[Aircraft national markings](#)

; Australia. Air Board ;

Melbourne, Vic. : Victorian Railways for the Air Board Melbourne, 1942

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (TL603 .A37 1942) – Plan cabinet

[War planes of the Second World War](#)

William Green 1927-2010.

London : Macdonald, 1960-1968

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (TL685.3 .G728 1960)

Asia

[Air operations in Burma and Bay of Bengal January 1st to May 22nd, 1942](#)

London : H.M.S.O, 1948

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (folio D767.6 .A4 1948)

[Nippon's army air force : Japanese army aircraft colours and markings in the Pacific war...and before](#)

Ian K. Baker

Camberwell, Vic. : Ian K. Baker, 1992

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (VG 95.J3 B35 1992)

[Nippon's naval air force : Japanese navy aircraft colours & markings in the Pacific war - and before](#)

Ian K. Baker

Rev ed., Camberwell, Vic : I.K. Baker, 1991

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (VG95.J3 B35 1991)

Europe

[Air operations by the Allied Expeditionary Air Force in N.W. Europe from November 15th, 1943 to September 30th, 1944](#)

Trafford Leigh-Mallory 1892-1944

London : H.M.S.O., 1947

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (folio D786 .L45 1947)

[There's freedom in the air : the official story of the Allied Air Forces from the occupied countries](#)

; Great Britain. Air Ministry ; Great Britain. Ministry of Information ;

London : H.M.S.O., 1944

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (D785 .G7)

RAAF - WAAAF

[Glory in chaos : the RAAF in the Far East in 1940-42](#)

E. R. Hall ; ; Sembawang Association ;

West Coburg, Vic : Sembawang Association, c1989

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (D 785.U63 H35 1989)

[Handbook of administration in the Royal Australian Air Force](#)

; Australia. Air Board ;

Melbourne : Air Force Head-quarters, 1941

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (UG675.A8 H3 1941)

[Life in the R.A.A.F. 1942-1945](#)

Richard Noel Levy ; ; Australia. Royal Australian Air Force. ;

Bendigo, Vic : Richard Levy, 1993

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (UG635.A8 L48 1993)

[Plane speaking](#)

; Australia. Royal Australian Air Force. RAAF Base Archerfield ;

Archerfield, Queensland : Printed by J. Mills, 1941-1942

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (TL712 .P5 1941)

[**R.A.A.F. ground defence : Australia, New Guinea, South West Pacific areas, 1939-1940-1945-Korea**](#)

J. J. Baker (Jack J.)

Geelong, Vic. : J.J. Baker, 1971

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (UA870 .B35 1971)

[**RAAF log**](#)

Australia. Royal Australian Air Force

Canberra : A. C. T., Pub. for the Royal Australian air force by Australian war memorial, 1943

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (D792.A8 A5 1943)

[**Royal Australian Air Force gallantry awards, 1939-1945 war**](#)

Leonard L. Barton

Mosman, N.S.W : L.L. Barton, 1992

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (D796.5 .A8 B37 1992)

[**Royal Australian Air Force specification**](#)

Australia. Royal Australian Air Force. ; ; Australia. Dept. of Air ;

Melbourne : Royal Australian Air Force, 19--]-[195-?

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (folio UG1240 .A9)

[**The RAAF ground staff of the desert air force squadrons**](#)

E. S. Johnston (Eric S.), 1991-

Point Lonsdale, Vic : E. Johnston, 1992

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Main Collection (D 792 .A8 J6 1992) and other locations

[**The Royal Australian Air Force at Parkes, New South Wales during world war two : a historical account**](#)

Grahame C. Menzies

Forestville, N.S.W : G. Menzies, 1989

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (UG635.A8 M46 1989)

[**These eagles; story of the R. A. A. F. at war**](#)

Australia. Royal Australian Air Force. ; ; Australian War Memorial ;

Canberra : A. C. T., Australian war memorial, 1942

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (D792.A8 A5 1942)

[**They speed the eagles : the story of the W.A.A.F. \(the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force\)**](#)

Patricia Massey-Higgins ; ; Australia. Royal Australian Air Force. ;

Sydney : F.H. Johnston, 1943

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (UG635.A8 M3)

[**Those air force days : being the true story of an enlisted man in the Royal Australian Air Force from 1942 to 1946 : the everyday life of its airmen, the air war in Darwin and a pre war and post war autobiography**](#)

Gordon Wallace 1918-

Surrey Hills, Vic : G. Wallace, c1986

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (D767.8 .W3 1986)

[**Victory roll : the Royal Australian air force in its sixth year of war**](#)

Canberra : Australian War Memorial for the Royal Australian Air Force, 1945

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (D792.A8 V5 1945)

[**We were WMMs : the war of the airwaves - stories of the RAAF wireless and radio mechanics**](#)

Don Brown 1923-

Ainslie, A.C.T : D. Brown, 1992

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (D736 .W4 1992)

POST-WWII

The RAAF in Vietnam

[The RAAF in Vietnam : Australian air involvement in the Vietnam war 1962-1975](#)

C. D. Coulthard-Clark (Christopher David), 1951- ; ; Australian War Memorial ;
St. Leonards, N.S.W : Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, 1995
Available at Canberra, Academy Library Main Collection (DS558.6 .A8 O3 vol.4 1995) and other locations

[Salute to Vietnam Veterans 17-20 August 2006 : 40th Anniversary Battle of Long Tan](#)

A Royal Australian Air Force forward air controller flies a Cessna Bird Dog over a forward area, Vietnam, 1967 (Australian War Memorial image PO1953.010)

A Royal Australian Air Force flight nurse ensures her patients are comfortable for their trip home in a RAAF Hercules, September 1966 (Australian War Memorial image VN/66/0055/12)

; Australia. Dept. of Veterans' Affairs. ; Australian War Memorial. ;

Canberra : Dept. of veteran's Affairs, 2006

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (plancab DS558.6 .A8 S2 2006)

Middle East

[Flight from the Middle East : being a history of the Royal Air Force in the Arabian Peninsula and adjacent territories, 1945-1972](#)

David Lee 1912-

London : Ministry of Defence, Air Historical Branch, 1978

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (UG635 .G7)

[The strategic air lessons of the Gulf War](#)

Gary Waters 1951- ; ; Australian Defence Studies Centre ;

Canberra : Australian Defence Studies Centre, University College, University of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy, 1992

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Folio Collection (DS 79.72 .W37 1992) and other locations

Today

[RAAF news](#)

Australia. Royal Australian Air Force

Canberra : Australia Department of Defence, [1941]-1997

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (folio UF635.A8 R33)

[Unit badges of the Royal Australian Air Force](#)

Richard J. Cluley

South Yarra, Vic : RAAF Association Foundation, 1989

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (UG1185 .A8 C58 1989)

[What it takes to become an air force officer in five easy steps.](#)

; Australian Defence Force Academy ; Australia. Dept. of Defence ;

Canberra : Dept. of Defence, s.d.]

Available at Canberra, Academy Library Special Collection (folio UB415.A8 W43)

Updated: Aug 2020