

The Filson Historical Society

**Carraro, William J., Jr., 1919-1944
Papers, 1909-1984 (bulk: 1941-1944)**

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for these papers, see the Curator of Special Collections.

Size of Collection:
.33 cubic feet

Location Number:
Mss./A/C313

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Scope and Content Note

The William J. Carraro, Jr. Papers contain letters and newspaper clippings about Lt. William J. Carraro, Jr., a navigator on a B-24 Bomber during World War II who was killed in action in 1944. The collection contains letters sent to his family as well as letters his family sent him that were returned following his disappearance. There are also newspaper clippings about Carraro, Jr. and about the Eighth Army Air Force, the unit he flew under. Carraro's letters detail his training as a navigator and his work overseas.

Folder 1 contains letters from Emmet O'Neal, the Kentucky State Representative in 1941 that agreed to look into Carraro's job application to the F.B.I.

Folder 2 contains letters (January 1942-July 1942) from the beginning of Carraro's training as a navigator. They detail his daily activities during preflight school while he waited to be classified as a pilot, navigator, or bombardier.

Folders 3 and 4 contain letters from after Carraro entered navigation school. The letters in Folder 3 are dated August 1942 through December 1942 and Folder 4 spans from January 1943 through April 1943. He was stationed at Kelly Field, Texas; Ellington Field, Texas; and eventually the Army Air Force Navigation School at Hondo, Texas. He graduated from navigation school in April 1943.

Folder 5 contains letters (May 1943-August 1943) from Carraro to his family while he continued his flight training. Some of his training was at the Davis-Monthan air field outside of Tucson, Arizona and an air field in Casper, Wyoming. He mostly discussed his training but includes a little information about the towns. This folder also contains a newspaper clipping about the B-24 Bomber. The clipping contains a diagram of the plane and some other information about the plane.

Folder 6 contains more letters (September 1943-December 1943) about Carraro's training, along with letters after he was shipped to England and began flying missions into Germany. He describes some of his missions and the conditions in England, especially the difficulties caused by rationing.

Folder 7 contains newspaper clippings about Carraro after he was declared missing in action. The articles state that he was reported missing after his plane failed to return from a mission over Germany. The folder also contains the unopened letters his family sent to him while he was missing, which were returned to them.

Folder 8 contains the official War Department letters sent to the Carraro family about the disappearance of Lt. Carraro. He was classified "missing in action" on January 7, 1944. The letters state that his plane was damaged and went into a spin after breaking out of formation somewhere over Western France. The last few letters state that Carraro was confirmed dead after his plane went down on January 7, 1944.

Folder 9 contains letters from family members of Lt. Carraro's crew. They all exchanged correspondence and shared any information they discovered about their loved ones' well being.

Folder 10 contains condolence cards that were sent to the Carraro family after it was discovered that Lt. Carraro was killed in action.

Folder 11 contains miscellaneous material that relates to Lt. Carraro. Some items include a report card from St. Xavier High School, newspaper clippings about the Eighth Army Air Force, booklets about the history of the Army Air Force Navigation School in Hondo, Texas, and three issues of *Log*. *Log* was a magazine issued from the Army Air Force Navigation School in Hondo, Texas. In the April 1943 issue, Lt. Carraro's graduating class photo is included.

Folder 12 contains other miscellaneous items, two of which are writings about the flood of the Ohio River in Louisville in 1937. The other item is a program from a testimonial dinner in honor of Neville Miller, mayor of Louisville in 1937; the program includes an image of Mayor Miller.

Folder 13 contains more miscellaneous items including postcards, playbills, and newspaper clippings of a story about George E. Allen. There is also an advertisement for a whiskey distillery in Louisville, Kentucky called the Lost Cause Distilling Co.

Separation Note

Photographs have been separated to the William J. Carraro, Jr. Small Group Photo Collection (014PC12).

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Biographical Note

William J. Carraro, Jr. was born in 1919 in Louisville, Kentucky to parents William J. Carraro, Sr. and Wilhemina Carraro. He attended St. Xavier High School and then the University of Louisville for two years. He worked at Joseph E. Seagram & Sons, Inc. in Louisville before he enlisted in the Air Corps in April of 1942.

He completed his training at the Army Air Force Navigation School in Hondo, Texas in April 1943. Carraro trained as a navigator for a B-24 Bomber, one of the biggest planes during World War II. In the following months he completed his flight training at bases in Arizona, Wyoming, and Kansas. He was sent to England to fight in September of 1943 and began to fly missions over Germany. On January 7, 1944, Carraro's plane was shot down over Western France and Carraro and four of his crew members died in the crash. Carraro is buried in Epimal, France in a World War II graveyard. He was awarded the Purple Heart posthumously.

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Folder List

- Folder 1: Correspondence, 1941-1942
- Folder 2: Correspondence, January 1942-July 1942
- Folder 3: Correspondence, August 1942-December 1942, undated
- Folder 4: Correspondence, January 1943-April 1943
- Folder 5: Correspondence, April 1943- August 1943
- Folder 6: Correspondence, September 1943 – December 1943
- Folder 7: Unopened Letters Returned to Family, 1943-1944
- Folder 8: War Department Letters Regarding Carraro's Missing Status and Death, 1944
- Folder 9: Correspondence Regarding Carraro's Crewmates, 1944
- Folder 10: Condolence letters, 1944
- Folder 11: Miscellaneous Material on Carraro, Jr., 1934-1943, undated
- Folder 12: Miscellaneous, 1937
- Folder 13: Miscellaneous, 1909-1984, undated

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Added Entries

Air bases – Kansas – Herington.
Air bases – Wyoming – Casper.
Allen, George E. (George Edward), 1896-1973.
B-24 (Bomber)
Davis-Monthan Air Force Base (Ariz.)
Distilleries – Kentucky – Louisville.
Floods – Kentucky – Louisville.
Joseph E. Seagram & Sons, Inc., (Louisville, Ky.)
Kelly Field (Tex.)
Letterheads.
Miller, Neville, 1894-1977.
Navigation School (Ellington Air Force Base, Tex.)
Navigation School (Hondo Army Air Field (Tex.))
Navigation: – Study and teaching.
O’Neal, Emmet, 1887-1967.
Playbills – Kentucky.
Post cards.
United States. Army Air Forces. Air Force, 8th.
United States. Federal Bureau of Investigation.
United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe.
Victory mail.
World War, 1939-1945.
World War, 1939-1945 – Aerial operations, American.
World War, 1939-1945 – England
World War, 1939-1945 – Missing in action.