Descriptive Finding Guide for the Louis E. Gordon Personal Papers
SDASM.SC.10058

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San Diego Air and Space Museum Library and Archives
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2001 Pan American Plaza, Balboa Park
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Language of Material: English
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Title: Louis E. Gordon Personal Papers
Identifier/Call Number: SDASM.SC.10058
Physical Description: 0.36 Cubic FeetOne Box
Date (inclusive): 1901-1964
Abstract: Louis E. Gordon was the mechanic on Amelia Earhart's trans-atlantic flight and later worked for TWA. This Collection relates to his life.

Conditions Governing Access
The collection is open to researchers by appointment.

Conditions Governing Use
Some copyright may be reserved. Consult with the library director for more information.

Preferred Citation
[Item], [Filing Unit], [Series Title], [Subgroups], [Record Group Title and Number], [Repository “San Diego Air & Space Museum Library & Archives”]

Immediate Source of Acquisition
The materials in this Collection were donated to the San Diego Air and Space Museum.

Biographical / Historical
Louis Edward “Slim” Gordon was born Lewis Elwood Avaritt on March 4, 1901 in Collin County, Texas. In 1919, Mr. Gordon joined the Army Air Corps as a flier. His love for motors led to his career as a flight mechanic and pilot. Mr. Gordon was transferred to the 20th Bombing Squadron at Kelley Field, San Antonio, Texas for motor school. He then worked on two tri-motored Caproni planes and one Handley Page plane. Gordon became chief mechanic at the proving grounds in Aberdeen, Maryland and later transferred to the bombing squadron at Mitchell Field where he was involved in the International Air Races. During the War he also was foreman of servicing operations in Natal, Brazil which at the time served as the jumping off point for flights to Africa. After seven years in the service, he was honorably discharged from the Army Air Services in May, 1926, with the rank of Staff Sergeant. Gordon then went work as a mechanic at the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Air Service who was operating Fokker tri-motored aircraft. After being laid off in 1926 he went to work as a mechanic for R. J. Reynolds Airways Inc. from May, 1927 to April, 1928 on Ford Trimotors. Mr. Gordon left this job to participate with Amelia Earhart and pilot Wilmer “Bill” Stultz as flight mechanic on a transatlantic flight. The plane named “Friendship” a Fokker FVIIb/3M was built in Holland in 1928 for then Lieutenant Commander Richard E. Byrd for contemplated use in his Antarctic exploration. Commander Byrd then sold the plane to Lady Guest of London, England who sponsored the Earhart flight. The flight left from Trepassey Harbor, Newfoundland on June 17, 1928. It landed at Burry Port Wales, United Kingdom 20 hours and 40 minutes later. Mr. Gordon contracted through Mechanical Science Corporation for $5,000.00 for his services on the flight. The money was deposited with R.E. Byrd at Byrd Antarctic Expedition and held for payment when the contract was fulfilled. Upon returning to the United States, Miss. Earhart and the crew were given a ticker tape parade in New York and a reception with Calvin Coolidge at The White House. Telegrams of congratulations were received from many well-wishers including a telegram from the American Legion. A luncheon was held for the crew of the Friendship by the Women’s Committee of the “Air League of the British Empire” in London on June 25, 1928. He married Miss Ann Bruce of Brookline, Mass., July 20th, 1928 whom travelled with him after the flight to various receptions and events. They subsequently divorced in 193 and a newspaper article quoted Mr. Gordon as saying he just didn't make enough money for her. Mr. Gordon was invited and attended a conference hosted by the Royal Air Club of Italy in Rome for the International Association of Transoceanic Pilots on May 24, 1932. He gave up flying in 1938 after what was termed as “several questionable landings”. On June 2, 1941 Mr. Gordon legally changed his name from Lewis Elwood Avaritt to Louis Edward Gordon. He then went to work for TWA Transcontinental as a Senior Mechanic-Maintenance. He remained with that company until 1964 moving up to Aircraft Inspector at Mid Continental International Airport. He was employed as Chief Mechanic at Scranton Airport with Scranton Airways from August 5, 1939 to May 22, 1941 and left for a position as Senior Mechanic at Transcontinental & Western Air, Inc. (TWA) where he began employment on June 23, 1941 in Kansas City, Missouri. On April 16, 1942 he was promoted to Inspector until June 2, 1942 when he was transferred to the Inter-Continental Division at Washington D.C. His work, described as essential to National Defense, was under contract to Western Air, Inc. and the War Department. In October 30, 1942, while still in Washington D.C., he received another promotion to Crew Chief. He was selected on July 12, 1943 to be Maintenance Relations Coordinator. Then he was designated Air Carrier Aircraft Inspection Representative September 1, 1943, an appointment which was sanctioned by the Civil Aeronautics Administration October 14, 1943. After being transferred to the Service Department on May 1, 1945, Mr.
Gordon reached 20 years employment with TWA on June 13, 1961. Louis Edward Gordon passed away January 11, 1964 in Parkville, Missouri and was survived by his widow Mrs. M. Roberts Gordon.

**Scope and Contents**

One box, containing 7 folders. This collection covers the aviation career of Louis Edward Gordon. Items in the collection include correspondence, telegrams, documents, memorabilia, and newspaper articles throughout his career.

**Related Materials**


**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

- Fokker F.VII Family
- Ford 5-AT Trimotor Family
- United States. Army. Air Corps. Advanced Flying School (Kelly Field, Tex.)
- Earhart, Amelia
- Gordon, Louis E.
- Byrd, Richard E.
- United States. Army. Air Corps
- Western Air Express Corporation
- Stultz, William "Bill"
- Trans World Airways. TWA

**Box 01**

**Folder 01 - TWA Documents (Trans World Airlines/Transcontinental & Western Air, Inc.)**


**Folder 02 - Letters of Reference for Louis Edward Gordon**

Folder 03 - General Correspondence & Contracts


Folder 04 - Newspaper Clippings


Folder 05 - Passports


Folder 06 - Travel Documents, Identification Cards

 Physical Description: 1. I.D. Argentina, June 8, 1929. 2. Chicago Aero Commission, I.D. 3. Pasa Air Transport Command, Parnamirim Field, Natal, Brazil. 4. ACCRA Aerodrome Permit, Airfield pass, Blank. 5. Airport (Airfield) Pasa, Ciampino Italy. 6. Copy of Birth Certificate; Copy of Court Order Change of Name

Folder 07 - Miscellaneous