

Walter J. Binder Papers, 1917-1919 (7 Folders)

Processed by Chuck Hill (2004) and Malcolm Tabor (2007)

Restrictions

None.

Biographical Sketch

Walter J. Binder served with the 487th Aero Squadron, Air Service of the Army (ASA), from March 1st 1918 to May 23rd 1919.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists primarily of photographs that Walter Binder took or acquired while serving in WWI. Binder served with the 487th Aero Squadron of the Army Air Service, Allied Expeditionary Forces. Printed material is comprised of official forms of enlistment and discharge as well as notes on postcards and the backs of photographs. Some photographs are captioned (presumably by Binder) but otherwise there is little to identify the location or contents of photographs. All other information given on these photographs is from the processor's research, and is subject to change or correction as needed.

Donor Information

Donated by ECU Alumnus Mary Jean Giltner in honor of her father, Walter J. Binder (2004-026).

Folder List

- f.01 Two postcard albums from 1918 or 1919. “Les Ruines de Ham” (The Ruins of Ham, 2004-026-0125) and “Chauny – Dynamite par les Allemands” (Chauny – Dynamited by the Germans, 2004-026-0126). Both sets of postcards bear the phrase “Souvenons-nous” (we remember) on the upper right corner of each postcard. Each album contains photographs of various streets and city structures (for example, town halls or chateaus) destroyed or damaged by the German retreat of 1918. Each bears a caption in French and poorly translated English.
- f.02 Certificate of appointment for non-commissioned officer (N.C.O.), 1918. This certificate appoints Walter J. Binder to the rank of Sergeant 1st Class on March 1, 1918 (2004-026-0127).
- f.03 Certification of honorable discharge, May 23, 1919. Discharges Binder from service as Sergeant 1st Class in the 487th Aero Squadron, A.S.A. with due honors (2004-026-0128 and 0129). Included in this folder is a leather case meant to contain this discharge and “keep it clean.” With the case is a paper which must have initially come with the case (2004-026-130). The leather is separated from the papers with a sheet of acid-free paper to prevent any deterioration.

Folders 04-07 contain photographs in photo sleeves and are labeled by the sleeve number in the folder: PS 01, PS 02, etc. **If requesting copies, please refer to the folder number and sleeve number.** The original order of the photographs is unknown, as are most of the locations unless captioned on reverse side.

- f.04 Most of the photographs in this folder are in the nature of a tourist/sightseer’s album.

PS 01: Small photographs of a wayside cross (2004-026-0001), Walter Binder (2004-026-0002), American soldiers playing cards (2004-026-0003), the Chateau de Moulin exterior (2004-026-0004), women washing at riverside (2004-026-0005), a smashed building (2004-0006), Chateau de Moulin inside courtyard (2004-026-0007), American soldiers at mess (2004-026-0008).

PS 02: Walter Binder with German grave cross (2004-026-0009), ruined street (2004-026-0010), three naval vessels (possibly transport in foreground, transport or cargo ship in background, tugboat or minesweeper farther off. All designations are best guesses (2004-026-0011).

PS 03: Ruined French village/town, 1918; soldier with steel helmet in street (2004-026-0012), soldier on pile of crumbled bricks and roofless buildings (2004-026-0013), old ruined building overgrown with weeds and dirt street (2004-026-0014). Soldier in photograph may be Binder or a comrade.

PS 04: Forms of civilian transportation, donkey cart on road with old women (dated June 23, 1918 “A very common type of cart” (2004-026-0015)), horse drawn wagon in town (2004-026-0016), and one unidentified truck with ruined town in the background (2004-026-0017). Signpost in this later photograph reads “Essey Pannes Beney” and indicates direction.

PS 05: Town church with scaffolding on bell tower (2004-026-0018), women and children washing clothes at riverside (2004-026-0019), old rural house (captioned by Binder “One of the older houses. Rather Numerous – from two to five hundred years old” and dated June 23, 1918 (2004-026-0020)).

PS 06: Copy of 2004-026-0020. Other photographs labeled [Monaco] but not by Binder. “Chateau au Pruniers, Residence of Le Major” dated April 1918 (2004-026-0021). Four officers and a dog posing in an alley (2004-026-0022), four officers and dog posing in different alley (2004-026-0023).

PS 07: Officers and dates at café (2004-026-0024), road beside tree-lined canal (2004-026-0025), calm Intersection and street (2004-026-0026), large museum or concert building on the river (or sea?), function unknown (2004-026-0027). Photographs probably taken in France and/or Monaco.

PS 08: Two officers (one Binder) in front of a building with a sign reading “La Buissonniere”(2004-026-0028) and two chateaus (2004-026-0029 and 0030).

PS 09: Waterfront park, possibly Paris (2004-026-0031), two photographs of an expedition/display of captured German war materiel in the Place de la Concorde, Paris . First photograph depicts two late-war Albatross or possible Fokker fighter planes and Maxim machine gun on sled mount (2004-026-0032). Second photographs shows front ends of several different aircraft and a vast assortment of artillery and field pieces spread all over the square. Visible pieces are German 77mm light field guns, but several other pieces of varying calibers extend throughout the background of the photograph (2004-026-0033).

PS 10: Filled-out postcards of Jeanne d’Arc (2004-026-0034) and Orleans (2004-026-0035 and 0036), dated July 21 1918.

PS 11: Labeled postcards from Villefranche. Labeled postcard “Paysage du Berry” dated Oct. 2, 1918, Binder wrote “These crucifixes are quite common at country roads”(2004-026-0037); “Villefranch sur Cher – Quartier de la Croix”, June 9 1918, Binder wrote “Notice the well just behind the cross. Incident of the old woman and her pail and bucket” (2004-026-0038); “Villefranch sur Cher – L’Eglise”, June 9 1918 (2004-026-0039). Binder wrote “12th century church. Built by the owner of the castle (Photo herewith)”, referring to 2004-026-0029 and 0030.

PS 12: Labeled postcards of rural scenes and people dated Oct. 2, 1918. Charcoal burner with implements of his trade (2004-026-0040), Binder wrote “Note the home-made tools.” “wash boat” (2004-026-0041), and “The public wash-boat. Here all the women bring their laundry and wash it in the river. A power laundry, or the use of soap, doesn’t seem to be known in this part of the country at all. Notice the man fishing in 20 inches of water for 5 in. chubs. Quite ordinary.” Old woman with vegetables (2004-026-0042), Binder wrote “A market woman showing her wares. Notice the inevitable bottle of ‘Pinard.’”

PS 13: Labeled postcards from Romorantin, dated October 2, 1918. Rue Delavarenne (2004-026-0043), Binder notes “A view of the main street of Romorantin, showing about how many people are usually out. Of course, on Wednesdays (market day) and Sundays (since our arrival the streets are crowded.” L’Avenue de la Gare (2004-026-0044), Binder notes “This is a front view of the station. It is almost time for the noon train, otherwise there would not be near so many people around.”

PS 14: L'Arc du Triumph (2004-026-0045). Gazebo prominently displaying American flag (2004-026-0046).

f.05 Aircraft assembly and related photographs.

PS 01: Two photographs of a DeHavilland-4 two-seat light bomber aircraft inspected by (presumably) the staff, ground crew, and pilots of Binder's base (487th Aero Squadron). The first photograph is labeled "Romorantin, May 17, 1918"(2004-026-0047 and 0048).

PS 02: Four wing sections of a DeHavilland-4 (DH-4) partially in shipping crate (2004-026-0049). Assembled DH-4 fuselage without wings or tail section, crew apparently engaged in fine tuning landing struts (2004-026-0050).

PS 03: Copy of previous photograph. Hangar full of DH-4 fuselages in process of assembly (mostly complete). Dated August 31, 1918 and labeled "Fuselage assembly - View B Day Plant 1.A" and also contains female workers in left lower corner (2004-026-0051).

PS 04: DH-4 fuselage assembly in two separate stages (2004-026-0052). Work on engine and props for DH-4 (2004-026-0053).

PS 05: Two photographs of a DH-4 "I am Ship No. 1000" upon assembly in France (there exists a published photograph of this aircraft's fuselage in America prior to shipment¹) One Photograph is smaller than the other (2004-026-0054).

PS 06: Photograph of a DH-4 taking off (2004-026-0055). A wrecked DH-4 with tail in the air, appears to have run into a ditch, as fuselage has no tears from bullets in it and aircraft appears undamaged other than its precarious position (2004-026-0056).

PS 07: Captured German aircraft of unknown type, appears to be a spotter or light bomber (2004-026-0057). Wings of captured German aircraft (possibly a Fokker or Albatross) on railway flatcar for shipment (2004-026-0058).

PS 08: Two photographs of Nieuport 27 or 28 aircraft displaying fuselage art depicting Civil War to Great War soldiers on one (2004-026-0059) and an Old West cavalryman (possibly General Custer) on the other (2004-026-0060). Photograph of the skeletal remains of a captured Fokker aircraft, dated September 11, 1918 (2004-026-0061).

PS 09: Large wooden crates on flatcars(2004-026-0062) and filling a warehouse (2004-026-0063). Possibly captured material for export to the United States. Boxes on flatcar are just legible, "To N.Y."

PS 10: Group of men testing instrument panels, presumably for a DH-4 (2004-026-0064). Two men assembling landing gear of a DH-4 (2004-026-0065).

PS 11: Series of small photographs. French 400mm rail gun at rest (2004-026-0066), covered with camouflage net (2004-026-0067), side view with raised barrel (2004-026-0068), and shot from front with raised barrel (2004-026-0069). Two photographs of overturned fighter plane, probably an older Nieuport (2004-026-0070 and 0071). Two photographs of Caquot observation balloon being filled (2004-026-0072) and preparing to raise (2004-026-0073).

PS 12: Four photographs of Caquot observation balloon being raised from its wooded cover and attended by ground crew(2004-026-0074 to 0077). Final photograph shows it

¹Historical Office of the Army Air Forces, *The Official Pictorial History of the Army Air Forces*, Arno; New York, 1979, orig. pub. 1947 by Duell, Sloan, and Pearce; New York, 52.

in the air ascending. Some sort of armored or specialized car appears in the bottom right corner of the third photograph.

PS 13: Top two photographs show the observation balloon crashing to the earth in smoke and flames, with soldiers just visible on the horizon (2004-026-0078 and 0079). Third photograph shows US soldiers and ground personnel approaching smoke in the distance (presumably the crashed balloon from the previous photographs (2004-026-0080). Two wheeled carriages of unknown purpose and four men. The carriages may be part of the balloon support team (2004-026-0081).

f.06 Kelly Field, Texas and Base in France. Kelly Field trained many US aviators prior to their deployment to France, including Walter Binder. Postcards are from Kelly Field. Photographs are probably from France as it is unlikely that Binder would have been allowed a camera in training. The base in France may be at Romorantin (from photograph in f.05). Photographs in France are presumed to be the base of the 487th Aero Squadron, but may have served other units as well. Several photographs have numbers written in pencil on their backs which may pertain to other units.

PS 01: Three postcards from Kelly Field labeled on their front with white ink, two of which bear writing on their backs from Binder. A mess line(2004-026-0082), Binder wrote “See our stove? And the hungry expressions? We dress this way the year round in Texas.” Mud, tents(2004-026-0083) and barracks (2004-026-0084), Binder notes “The lucky fellows live here.”

PS 02: Three postcards from Kelly Field, labeled on their fronts and written on by Binder. Subjects are cacti (2004-026-0085), for which Binder wrote “The piece (leaf) I am sending you was cut from a bush like this.” A tarantula (2004-026-0086), Binder notes “Life size! How would you like to have a dozen or so of these for bed partners.” A tent with stove (2004-026-0087), Binder wrote “A ‘close up’ of the stove and interior of the kitchen.”

PS 03: Five transport trucks and four men hanging their washing to dry (2004-026-0088). Two railway carriages with dismounted American servicemen (2004-026-0089).

PS 04: Wide view of bare field, presumably initial site of airbase before construction (2004-026-0090). Hangar or warehouse under construction, with a long line of men carrying long rafter into position (2004-026-0091).

PS 05: Five men in an open field (2004-026-0092). Barracks completed and under construction (2004-026-0093). Photographs are faded.

PS 06: Men digging defensive works for base or possibly practice trenches (2004-026-0094). Two men in foreground. Men digging defensive works from different angle (2004-026-0095). These photographs are rather faded.

PS 07: Men at lumber yard or wood shop surrounded by cut timber for use in construction (2004-026-0096), two copies.

PS 08: Completed barracks and men at rest (2004-026-0097). Assembly or mess hall exterior, with staff car at side of building (2004-026-0098).

PS 09: Interior of assembly hall, displaying flags of England, France, Japan, Belgium, and America. There are paper lanterns hanging from the ceiling, possibly as decoration for Chinese laborers (2004-026-0099). This particular photo may be better placed in f.07

but seems more appropriate in this folder. Large group photograph of 493rd [labor group, unsure which specific unit (2004-026-0100)].

PS 10: Graves, presumably of pilots. Headstones (crosses) not legible (2004-026-0101). Base infirmary (2004-026-0102).

PS 11: Beds and wards curtained off (2004-026-0103). Men in hospital beds (2004-026-0104).

PS 12: Coffin draped with American flag attended by two men (2004-026-0105).

PS 13: Walter Binder studying at University of Wisconsin, 1917 (2004-026-0106). Walter Binder in pilot's gear in front of a truck, 1918 (2004-026-0107).

PS 14: Walter Binder with bucket, washrag, and cigar (2004-026-0108). Binder in captured German leather helmet with spike (2004-026-0109).

PS 15: Binder in dress uniform (2004-026-0110), photograph torn; unknown unit on parade (2004-026-0111), Binder in uniform portrait (2004-026-0112).

PS 16: General Pershing speaking with Joseph Joffre (2004-026-0113). Walter Binder's commanding officer Major R. E. Bates, dated May 1918 (2004-026-0114).

f.07 Chinese Laborers and related published article. The article describes the history of Chinese laborers from Shantung Province in China. 100,000 of these men worked in various places and occupations behind Allied lines in France. It was published in *Military Affairs* Vol. 40, No. 3 (Oct 1976), pp. 102-108.

PS 01: Laborers at work on barracks under supervision of American officer (2004-026-0115). Three finished structures, possibly mess halls or larger barracks (2004-026-0116).

PS 02: Laborers and American officers posing with partially completed defensive works or trench (2004-026-0117). Full group of laborers in loose parade order, four abreast (2004-026-0118).

PS 03: Posed, digging with spades beside barracks (2004-026-0119). Pose with many felled trees (2004-026-0120).

PS 04: "A study in Oriental expressions" three men, dated May 1918 (2004-026-0121). Two men, labeled by Binder, "Types." (2004-026-0122) "The Chinese Office" four officers, "Baldwin, checker, Mon pere, a priest-soldier who represents the French Interests, Provost-clerk, and Bernardi, clerk" written by Binder on the back of the photograph, dated June 23, 1918 (2004-026-0123). Full group photograph of laborers, officers, and flags, including five-color Chinese flag at right (2004-026-0124).