



## Smithsonian Institution

*Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives*

### Edgar S. Gorrell Collection - What! No Airplanes, E.S. Gorrell, undated

Extracted on Apr-19-2024 04:46:20

**The Smithsonian Institution thanks all digital volunteers that transcribed and reviewed this material. Your work enriches Smithsonian collections, making them available to anyone with an interest in using them.**

The Smithsonian Institution (the "Smithsonian") provides the content on this website ([transcription.si.edu](https://transcription.si.edu)), other Smithsonian websites, and third-party sites on which it maintains a presence ("SI Websites") in support of its mission for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge." The Smithsonian invites visitors to use its online content for personal, educational and other non-commercial purposes. By using this website, you accept and agree to abide by the [following terms](#).

- If sharing the material in personal and educational contexts, please cite the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives as source of the content and the project title as provided at the top of the document. Include the accession number or collection name; when possible, link to the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives website.
- If you wish to use this material in a for-profit publication, exhibition, or online project, please contact Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives or [transcribe@si.edu](mailto:transcribe@si.edu)

For more information on this project and related material, contact the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives. [See this project](#) and other collections in the Smithsonian Transcription Center.

and preparation in aeronautics. When the war in Europe began, our country ranked fourteenth among the nations of the world in amounts appropriated for aviation. Our appropriations were less than those of China, Bulgaria, Brazil and Spain. When war started in Europe in 1914, the development of the airplane followed under the intense conditions of war. When America entered the war in April of 1917, we were without experience and still in the novitiate stage of creating airplanes for modern warfare.

In all aviation history to that date, America had not built a single plane fitted for use in battle. No American factory had made more than an unsuccessful experimental attempt at creating battle planes. We had, up to that period, made a few small types of engines and a few training planes. Our country had never owned a modern service plane such as were then being used in Europe.

Our Army Air Service appropriation had for years been running only from \$150,000 to \$300,000 a year. From 1908 to 1916 a total of but 59 airplanes of all types and for all purposes had been delivered to our Army. The various nations involved in the World War, under the stress of wartime necessity, had spent vast sums for designing, engineering, producing airplanes and creating wartime aircraft industries in their respective countries.

Precisely what the different warring nations had accomplished in aeronautics was then unknown to the United States. Through fear that we might enter the war against them or otherwise aid their enemies, none of the warring powers had been willing to allow America to learn the details of its wartime aeronautical accomplishments. Our military observers in each of the warring countries were deliberately kept in ignorance of the details of the vital aeronautical accomplishments achieved on any of the fronts. By virtue of this attitude our unexpected Allies, when our country declared war against Germany, we found ourselves with no definite idea of what to build for the requirements of the western front, or of the engineering and performance characteristics of the airplanes, engines and accessories essential for efficient action, either at the time we declared war, or by the date it would be possible for us to have an American Army under the American flag in Europe.

In the spring of 1917, each of the allied nations hastened to send civil and military missions to the United States to tell America how to manage its part in the World War. Ideas in each of these missions differed vastly. We had

-44-

and preparation in aeronautics. When the war in Europe began, our country ranked fourteenth among the nations of the world in amounts appropriated for aviation. Our appropriations were less than those of China, Bulgaria, Brazil and Spain. When war started in Europe in 1914, the development of the airplane followed under the intense conditions of war. When America entered the war in April of 1917, we were without experience and still in the novitiate stage of creating airplanes for modern warfare.

In all our aviation history to that date, America had not built a single plane fitted for use in battle. No American factory had made more than an unsuccessful experimental attempt at creating battle planes. We had, up to that period, made a few small types of engines and a few training planes. Our country had never owned a modern service plane such as were then being used in Europe.

Our Army Air Service appropriation had for years been running only from \$150,000 to \$300,000 a year. From 1908 to 1916 a total of but 59 airplanes of all types and for all purposes had been delivered to our Army. The various nations involved in the World War, under the stress of wartime necessity, had spent vast sums for designing, engineering, producing airplanes and creating wartime aircraft industries in their respective countries.

Precisely what the different warring nations had accomplished in aeronautics was then unknown to the United States. Through fear that we might enter the war against them or otherwise aid their enemies, none of the warring powers had been willing to allow America to learn the details of its wartime aeronautical accomplishments. Our military observers in each of the warring countries were deliberately kept in ignorance of the details of the vital aeronautical accomplishments achieved on any of the fronts. By virtue of this attitude our unexpected Allies, when our country declared war against Germany, we found ourselves with no definite idea of what to build for the requirements of the western front, or of the engineering and performance characteristics of the airplanes, engines and accessories essential for efficient action, either at the time we declared war, or by the date it would be possible for us to have an American Army under the American flag in Europe.

In the spring of 1917, each of the allied nations hastened to send civil and military missions to the United States to tell America how to manage its part in the World War. Ideas in each of these missions differed vastly. We had

-44-

Edgar S. Gorrell Collection - What! No Airplanes, E.S. Gorrell, undated  
Transcribed and Reviewed by Digital Volunteers  
Extracted Apr-19-2024 04:46:20



## Smithsonian Institution

*Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives*

The mission of the Smithsonian is the increase and diffusion of knowledge - shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world. Founded in 1846, the Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex, consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park, and nine research facilities. Become an active part of our mission through the Transcription Center. Together, we are discovering secrets hidden deep inside our collections that illuminate our history and our world.

Join us!

The Transcription Center: <https://transcription.si.edu>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SmithsonianTranscriptionCenter>

On Twitter: [@TranscribeSI](https://twitter.com/TranscribeSI)

Connect with the Smithsonian

Smithsonian Institution: [www.si.edu](http://www.si.edu)

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Smithsonian>

On Twitter: [@smithsonian](https://twitter.com/smithsonian)