



THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ARCHIVES

NAME OF COLLECTION	William Palstra
ACCESSION NO	1984.0057
CATEGORY ACTIVITY	Other, individuals Pilots University administrators
DATE RANGE	1912-1930
SIZE OF COLLECTION	24 cm (2 archives boxes)
HISTORICAL NOTE	<p>William Palstra was born in Holland in 1891. He immigrated to Australia with his parents and became an officer in the Salvation Army. During W.W.I he served in the trenches in France and in 1918 became a pilot with the Australian Flying Corps. After the war Palstra returned to Australia and became an assistant to the Registrar at the University of Melbourne, graduated B.A. in 1924 and assisted Douglas Copland in the establishment of the Commerce Faculty. Palstra was a member of the peacetime R.A.A.F. rising to the rank of Squadron Leader, and becoming liaison officer between the R.A.A.F. and British Air Ministry. He died 5 October 1930, when the British airship R 101 on which he was a passenger struck a hill at Beauvais in France.</p>
DATE OF TRANSFER	1983-84
ACCESS CONDITIONS	Access: Open This collection may not be available for immediate retrieval. Please discuss with Archive staff.
LISTED BY DATE	Frank Strahan November 21 st , 1984

UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE - ARCHIVES

RECORDS RECEIVED INTO CUSTODY

NAME: PALSTRA, WILLIAM

ADDRESS: Deceased.

MAIN ACTIVITY: Australian Air Force Pilot; University Administrator

NAME OF TRANSFEROR: Mrs. Margaret Thornton, daughter of Palstra.

DATE OF TRANSFER: 1983 - 1984.

ACCESS: By Reference to Mrs. Thornton or nominee.

GENERAL NOTE

PALSTRA

William Palstra was born in Holland on 8 October, 1891. He emigrated to Australia with his parents, and like them, became an officer in the Salvation Army and was dispatched to serve that cause in England. With outbreak of World War I, 1914-18, he joined up, served in the trenches in France, then as a pilot with the Australian Flying Corps. Returning to Australia post-war he became an assistant to the Registrar, University of Melbourne, and graduating B.A. in December 1924 after a part-time course was, as he wrote to his father, 19 January 1925 "the first administrative officer [of the University of Melbourne] to take out academic honours."

He did much well appreciated work assisting (Sir) Douglas Copeland in the establishment of the University's Faculty of Commerce in 1924.

Palstra was a member of the peacetime Royal Australian Air Force, rising to the rank of Squadron Leader. He was prominent as an aide at the official opening of Parliament House, Canberra, 9 May 1927.

As liaison officer between the RAAF and British Air Ministry, on board the British airship R101 as member of an official party en route to India, he was killed when the airship collided with a hill by Beauvais, France, and fell in flames on 5 October, 1930.

Records listed in summary form below are photocopies of originals provided by William Palstra's daughter Mrs. (Maisie) Margaret Thornton for copying and return 1983-1984.

SUMMARY LIST OF RECORDS

1. Letters from Palstra to his parents. 28 August, 1912 - 23 June, 1929.
2. Letters to Palstra from his parents. 31 March, 1916 - 8 September, 1930.
3. Letters from Palstra to his wife. 4 December 1919 - 6 September 1929.
4. Letters to Palstra from his wife. 6 October 1925 and 1 December 1926.
5. Palstra's Diaries, War Service. 3 January, 1916 - 21 December 1918.
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6. War Experiences: Autobiographical recount by Palstra of war experiences. 1 January 1916 - 11 November 1918. Dated Staff College Andover - 23 May 1929.
7. Leadership and Morale: Concise philosophical and practical statement by Palstra as to the title. No date or information as to where it might have been delivered. Note: In the folder with this is a three page dissertation as to derivations and meanings of the name William from cave man time onwards.
8. Lectures, Addresses, Sermons by Palstra.

- 8.1 Australia and the Pacific, lecture by Palstra to the R.A.F. Staff College, 1 October, 1929.
- 8.2 Conceptions of Immortality. No date.
- 8.3 Be Faithful in Little Things. Short statement. No date.
- 8.4 Armistice Day Address, with a headed note 1 Cor. 13: 1-13. 1928.
- 8.5 Is Christianity Doomed? No date.
- 8.6 Can We Understand God. No date.
- 8.7 The Chief Land of Man, with a headed note. Math. VI 33. No date.
- 8.8 Christian Faith and Evolution. No date.
- 8.9 Christianity as a practical philosophy of life. No date.
- 8.10 Prayer. Reply to Br. E. Gifford's Paper Entitled "The passing of Prayer as Petition." No date.
- 8.11 Untitled prose statement, headed 1 Cor. 26-31, commencing with Moses with following comment as to various other biblical characters along with biblical text indicators. No date.
- 8.12 Poem headed, to Eric Gifford on Falling Victim to the Wiles of Cupid. (Gifford was apparently a church scene associate). No date.
9. References. A series of references, mostly for Palstra, but also for his wife to be, Miss M. Holdaway. 1913-1925.
10. Memorabilia. Two invitations to occasions relating to the opening of Parliament House, Canberra, by the Duke of York; also synopsis of Programme for the Official Opening. 1927.
11. The R101 Airship Disaster. Newscuttings with information of the death of Palstra when the airship collided with a hill by Beauvais, France and fell in flames. October 1930.
12. Letters of condolence at death of Palstra. October 1930.

13. Photographs. A number (24) of a troopship departure, British and German World War I aircraft and scenes of combat places; many (34) of events associated with the opening of Parliament House, Canberra by the Duke of York, 1917.

Note: Photographic copies of originals, except for an additional four W.W.I originals.

14. Genealogical Material - compiled by Mrs. Jocelyn Goss, Palstra's daughter. Descendancy Chart - Palstra Family Tree: From Wiebe and Jacoba Palstra, parents of William, through to 1995).

Frank Strahan
University Archivist

November 21, 1984