

"A truly unique work of seminal research, "War Wings: A Guide to the World War I Aviation Documentary Motion Pictures Held in the U.S. National Archives" is an impressive contribution to Military Studies; Aviation Studies; and Motion Picture History Studies reference collections. A member of the American Aviation Historical Society, the League of World War I Aviation Historians; and the Military Writers Society of America; Phil Stewart has applied his considerable research skills to amass a body of information with respect to identifying and listing more than 2,500 individual scenes of filmed aerial action that took place in the skies of the European theater during World War I as military aircraft evolved from crude observation platforms to attack vehicles for airborne as well as land-based targets. Additionally, hundreds of other filmed action scenes are summarized for the benefit of the reader. The state of movie making technology was one of using cumbersome wooden boxes with crude brass-encased glass lenses, metal hand cranks, and ungainly tripods. The results were to range from the mundane to the spectacular. There are scenes of pilot training, airplane manufacturing, and post-Armistice testing of enemy planes. The time frame involved ranges from 1917 to 1919. "War Wings" must be considered as an indispensable resource for scholars, aviation history enthusiasts, World War I buffs, and students of the history of motion picture technology. With an informed and informative listing of historical film footage arranged in chapters focusing on the training of airmen, the building of the planes, transporting aircraft to the European theater of war, the A.E.F. over France; other combatants (including German aviators), and a roster of 'The B List films', academic librarians and museum curators should consider "War Wings" as a core addition to their reference collections."

James A. Cox, Editor-in-Chief, Midwest Book Review/Small Press Bookwatch: May, 2008