
Guide to the Robert B. King Fuze Collection Documents, 1943-1945

Archives

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Robert B. King Fuze Collection Documents,

Date (inclusive): 1943-1945

Creator: King, Robert Burnett, 1908-1995

Extent: .5 linear feet

Repository: California Institute of Technology. Archives.
Pasadena, California 91125

Abstract: The Robert B. King Fuze Collection Documents, 1943-1945, donated with the fuzes, include a set of the Confidential Bulletins of Section L (OSRD Contract OEMsr-418), as well as several technical manuals published by the U.S.Navy. All materials have been declassified.

Language: English

Access

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Preferred Citation

Biography

A native of Pasadena, Robert Burnett King (1908-1995) was the son of Arthur S. King, an eminent spectroscopist, who served as director of the physical laboratory of the Mount Wilson Observatory in Pasadena under George Ellery Hale. Robert King graduated from Pomona College in 1930 and received his PhD in astronomy from Princeton in 1933. During the 1930s he taught at MIT and then returned to Pasadena to the Mount Wilson Observatory as a research fellow, beginning what would be his principal research work for the rest of his life—the measurement of so-called f-values for spectral lines of astronomical importance. After the reorganization of the Observatory following World War II and its association with Caltech, King was named professor of physics at Caltech in 1948, a position he held until his retirement in 1968.

During the war King was head of the Fuze Group within the Caltech rocket project, headed by Charles Lauritsen and funded by the Office of Scientific Research and Development (OSRD) under contract OEMsr-418. The project was also known as Section L (for Lauritsen). The Fuze Group designed more than fifty fuzes, including the successful "Mousetrap" antisubmarine rocket fuze, so-called for its shipboard launching mechanism, which was used in combat as early as 1942. King and his group received several awards for their work, including the Presidential Certificate of Merit.

The Robert B. King Fuze Collection, donated by King's daughters, contains thirty-four rocket fuzes and parts, designed and manufactured by Caltech for the U.S. armed services, mostly the navy, during World War II. The entire fuze collection has been photographed and may be viewed online through the Caltech Archives' web page (<http://www.caltech.edu/~archives>) on PhotoNet.

Box Box 1	CIT News Letter/Confidential Bulletin, published by Section L, Division 3, NDRC, under OSRD Contract OEMsr-418
Folder 1.1	No. 1-4 1944 May-July
Folder 1.2	No. 5-10 1944 Aug-Nov
Folder 1.3	No. 11-17 1944 Nov-1945 Mar
Folder 1.4	No. 19-24 1945 Apr-July [No. 18 missing]
Folder 1.5	Military Pyrotechnics (War Department Technical Manual TM g-1981) 8 Dec 1943
	U.S. Navy Bomb Disposal School publications
Folder 1.6	Enemy Bombs and Fuzes: German Bombs & Fuzes, Land Mines & Igniters 15 March 1944
Folder 1.7	United States Bombs and Fuzes: United States Rockets and Fuzes (Additions and Corrections to U. S. Bombs and Fuzes No. 6) 15 May 1945
Folder 1.8	U.S. Navy Projectiles and Fuzes June 1945
Folder 1.9	United States Bombs and Fuzes: Pyrotechnics 1 Sept 1945