

# Guide to the Raymond Deghels papers

ALSC MS 0003



compiled by Adrienne Pruitt

September 2023

Arts Library Special Collections  
180 York Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
203-432-1712  
haasalsc@yale.edu

<https://web.library.yale.edu/arts/alsc>

---

## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	3
Requesting Instructions .....	3
Administrative Information .....	3
Immediate Source of Acquisition .....	3
Conditions Governing Access .....	3
Conditions Governing Use .....	4
Preferred Citation .....	4
Biographical / Historical .....	4
Scope and Contents .....	4
Arrangement .....	4
Collection Contents .....	5
Selected Search Terms .....	6

---

## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Robert B. Haas Family Arts Library Special Collections  
Arts Library Special Collections  
180 York Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
203-432-1712  
haasalsc@yale.edu  
<https://web.library.yale.edu/arts/alsc>

**CALL NUMBER:** ALSC MS 0003

**CREATOR:** Deghels, Raymond, 1896-1964

**TITLE:** Raymond Deghels papers

**BULK DATES:** 1939–1955

**BULK DATES:** 1939–1955

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** .42 linear feet (1 legal-sized archive box)

**LANGUAGE:** Materials are mostly in French with some English.

**SUMMARY:** The Raymond Deghels papers document the life and career of a Belgian inventor who created a non-reflective paint to disguise military aircraft during World War II. The collection contains literary manuscripts, patents and supporting material such as paint samples, correspondence, legal documents, photographs, and personal effects.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/ead.arts.alsc.0003>

---

## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/ead.arts.alsc.0003>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

---

## Administrative Information

---

### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Jason Rovito, Bookseller, 2021.

---

### Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

## Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

---

## Preferred Citation

Raymond Deghels papers, Robert B. Haas Family Arts Library, Yale University.

---

## Biographical / Historical

Raymond Deghels (1896-1964?) was born in Ternat, Belgium, and served in the Belgian Armed Forces during World War I, including time spent as a prisoner of war, for which he later received a veteran's medal. He received his graduation certificate from the Union Coloniale Belge in 1920. In 1939, he filed a patent for a non-reflective "luminophobe" paint to camouflage military aircraft. This invention proved of interest to the Belgian, British, French, and Swedish governments.

Under the German occupation of Belgium during World War II, he was conscripted – perhaps forcibly – into the Luftwaffe. When the occupation ended in 1944, he was arrested by the Belgian government and imprisoned for nearly five months for "economic collaboration" with the enemy. Deghels fought this charge until the case was finally dismissed in 1955. The experience led him to write a two-part autobiographical novel, "Luminophobe: ou l'avion invisible," relating his travails. "Réveil dans le ténèbres" and "Secrets de L'invisible" are the first and second volumes, apparently never published despite a prospectus soliciting subscriptions. His legal difficulties did not stop him from filing a patent for a "Chromatophore" paint in 1955, designed to ensure "the complete and permanent concealment of mobile military vehicles and objectives."

Deghels was married to Marcelle Henriette Rougier in 1922. His death date could not be verified but is possibly 1964.

---

## Scope and Contents

The Raymond Deghels Papers document the inventions and legal struggles of a Belgian inventor who patented a non-reflective ("luminophobe") paint to disguise military aircraft during World War II. The collection contains two literary manuscripts and a related prospectus; patents and supporting materials (including paint samples and color swatches); correspondence from military and government officials, suppliers, and aeronatic engineers; legal documents concerning both the acquisition of the paint for military purposes, and Deghel's conflicts with the Belgian government for his alleged enemy collaboration in WWII; and a small number of photographs and personal effects, including his marriage and graduation certificates and official documents related to his veteran status.

---

## Arrangement

This collection is arranged alphabetically by folder title. Document groupings identified by the seller were for the most part retained.

## Collection Contents

b. 1, f. 1	Correspondence Correspondence with suppliers and American, Belgian, British, and French military officials. Chronologically arranged by vendor.	1932-1949
b. 1, f. 2	Correspondence Correspondence with suppliers, engineers, and American, Belgian, British, and French military officials. In original folder titled "'Luminophobe' documents anciennes et étrangères et quelques copies." Maintained in original order.	1940-1963
b. 1, f. 3	Legal correspondence and summary Selections from correspondence between Deghels and Belgian officials, along with a summary of grievances. 4 copies in original folder titled "Copies lettres Ministre & Aud Mil."	circa 1955-1956
b. 1, f. 4	Legal documents Contains a 1941 agreement between Deghels and the Belgian government for use of the "luminiphobe" paint, and two passports seized from Deghels, along with accompanying police forms.	1939-1948
b. 1, f. 5	"Luminophobe: ou l'avion invisible" literary prospectus	circa 1962
b. 1, f. 6	Paint samples	circa 1930s-1950s
b. 1, f. 7	Patent documentation	circa 1930s-1940s
b. 1, f. 8	Patents	1939, 1955
b. 1, f. 9	Photographs and personal effects Photographs include two photo postcards of Raymond and Marcelle Deghels, and one news agency photograph of a man appearing to be Deghels being removed from a plane on a stretcher. Personal effects include a graduation certificate, marriage certificate, and documents related to his service in World War I.	1920-1944
b. 1, f. 10	"Réveil dans le ténèbres: roman par Raymond Deghels, victime civile; déshonorée, ruinée, et suppliciée par la 'Justice Militaire Belge'" typescript	circa 1962
b. 1, f. 11	"Secrets de l'invisible: roman par Raymond Deghels" typescript	circa 1962

## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

Camouflage (Military science)  
Color

### **Names**

Deghels, Raymond, 1896-1964

### **Acquired From**

Jason Rovito Bookseller , seller