

ment Woodlawn Cemetery.

HAMMER—Major William J., on March 24, 1934, at the Shelton, New York City, after a short illness, beloved husband of the late Maud White Hammer and father of Mabel Hammer Assheton, Port Chester, N. Y. Funeral services Tuesday, March 27, at 2 P. M., Church of the Heavenly Rest, New York City. Full military funeral, Arlington National Cemetery, 3 P. M. Wednesday.

HAMMER—The American Society of the French Legion of Honor records with deep regret the death of its late member, William Joseph Hammer, Chevalier of the Legion of Honor.

WM. NELSON CROMWELL, President.

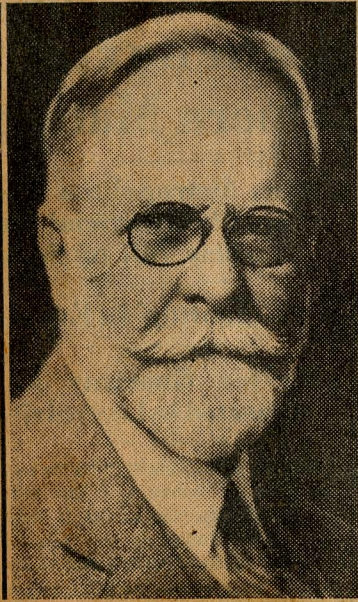
HARRISON—On Sunday, March 25, 1934, Henry Carleton, beloved son of Eliza.

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File in folder of Wm J Hammer

Edison's Chief Assistant



Major William J. Hammer

Maj. Hammer, An Edison Aid Since '79, Dies

Electrical Engineer and Inventor Called 'Most Valuable Assistant' by Chief

Installed London Plant

Repeated Success in Reich; Made First Flashing Sign

Major William Joseph Hammer, electrical engineer and inventor, described by the late Thomas Alva Edison as "my most valuable assistant," died early yesterday morning of pneumonia in his apartment at the Shelton, Lexington Avenue and Forty-ninth Street. He was seventy-six years old.

Funeral services will be held at the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Heavenly Rest, 2 East Ninetieth Street, at 2 p. m., Tuesday. Surviving are a daughter, Mrs. Thomas C. Assheton, of Port Chester, N. Y.; a half-brother, Edwin W. Hammer, of South Orange, N. J., and a half-sister, Mrs. Mary Lawton Francis, of Bronxville, N. Y. Major Hammer's wife, the former Alice Maude White, of Cleveland, whom he married in 1894, died in 1906.

Major Hammer first became associated with Mr. Edison in December, 1879, when he was made an assistant in the inventor's laboratory at Menlo Park, N. J. Since 1890 Major Hammer had practiced as a consulting electrical engineer, with offices, at the time of his death, at 228 East Forty-fifth Street.

Went to England in 1881

In the fall of 1881 Mr. Edison sent him to England where, as chief engineer of the old English Edison Company, he established in London the first central station for incandescent electric lighting in the world. While in London Major Hammer also installed a large separate plant of twelve Edison dynamos at the Crystal Palace Exhibition in 1882. He put on display there the first electric light sign, which he had invented the previous year. Major Hammer's success in England was repeated in Germany in 1883, when he became chief engineer of the German Edison Company. He installed many electrical plants throughout the empire and, in Berlin, invented the first automatic flashing and spelling electric sign.

He returned to the United States in 1884 to take charge of Mr. Edison's personal interests and of eight Edison subsidiaries at the Franklin Institute Electric Exhibition in Philadelphia. He served thereafter as one of the incorporators and trustees of the Sprague Electric Railway and Motor Company, trolley car manufacturers; chief inspector of central stations of the parent Edison company throughout the United States for two years and later as general manager of the Boston Edison Company. The latter had been a losing investment, but he put it on a dividend basis of 12 per cent in a single year.

In 1887 he installed the 8,000-light plant of the Ponce de Leon Hotel at St. Augustine, Fla., the largest private plant in the world at that time. While in Florida, he was instrumental in erecting the first electric lighting plant ever operated by artesian well power. In 1888 he was made consulting electrical engineer and contractor at the Cincinnati Centennial Exposition.

From Cincinnati Major Hammer was sent to France as Mr. Edison's personal representative at the Paris Exposition of 1889, at the close of which he accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Edison to the German Science Congress at Heidelberg.

The same year he made a balloon trip of more than 100 miles over France, making meteorological, magnetic and electrical observations and testing methods of signaling from war balloons.

Among other inventions of Major Hammer's were the frosted light bulb, the radium luminous preparations used for watches, clocks, airplane and automobile instruments and the flashing red and white signal lights used to indicate whether an elevator is ascending or descending. He wrote the book "Radium and Other Radioactive Substances," the first ever published on the subject. He was an early advocate of the use of radium in cancer treatment.

Named Major in War

At the entrance of the United States into the World War, he was appointed a major on the General Staff of the Army in the inventions section of the War Plans Division, and later in the Operations Division of the Army War College at Washington. He was an early aviation enthusiast and was the owner of one of the first airplanes sold to an individual. In 1907 he was an editor of "Navigating in the Air," the official book of the Aero Club of America.

Major Hammer was the son of William Alexander and Martha Beck Hammer and was born in Cressona, Pa., on February 26, 1858. He was educated in the schools of Newark, N. J., and then attended lectures at the University of Berlin and the Technische Hochschule there.

His first professional work was as assistant to Edward Weston, of Newark, in the Weston Malleable Nickel Company. The following year, after a visit to the Edison laboratories in Menlo Park, he received an appointment as an assistant to Mr. Edison. He first undertook work with the telephone and only later transferred his activity to the field of electric lighting.

During his career, Major Hammer was awarded many honors, including the Elliott Cresson Gold Medal for his collection of incandescent electric lamps, the John Scott Legacy Medal and Premium for his long-distance sound experiments, St. Louis Exposition of 1903 Medal, grand prize of the St. Louis Exposition of 1904, and the rank of Chevalier of the Legion of Honor of France. In 1909 he served as secretary and expert of the Aeronautics Committee of the Hudson-Fulton Celebration Commission. He had been chairman of the Jamestown Exposition International Aeronautical Congress two years before.

He was a fellow, life member and past vice-president of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, a founder and former president of the Edison Pioneers; former president of the National Conference on Standard Electric Rules, the Franklin Experimental Club; former historian general of the Military Order of the World War, and a member of the Citizens Committee of One Thousand, the National Security League, the New York Electrical Society, the Franklin Institute, the Society of American Military Engineers and the American Aeronautical Association.

He also was a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Physical Society, the American Acoustical Society, the American Electrochemical Society, the Mineralogical Society, the National Electric Light Association, the International Society of Electricians and the American Society of the French Legion of Honor.