



Smithsonian
National Air and Space Museum

Dr. Joseph Foa Photograph Collection

Melissa A. N. Keiser

2021

National Air and Space Museum Archives
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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Arrangement.....	2
Names and Subjects	3

Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	Dr. Joseph Foa Photograph Collection
Identifier:	NASM.1990.0033
Date:	1935-1939
Extent:	0.1 Cubic feet (2 folders; 43 copy photographs)
Creator:	Foa, Joseph Victor, Doctor, 1909-1996
Language:	English .
Summary:	<p>Dr. Joseph Victor Foa (1909-1996, born Giuseppe Vittorio Foa) was an aeronautical engineer, aircraft designer, research scientist, and university professor. This collection includes photographs of Dr. Foa and the aircraft he worked on between 1935 and 1938 in Italy at the Studio Caproni Reggio Emilia and later Piaggio & Co. where he designed the Piaggio P.23R and the Reggiane Ca 405 Procellaria. Photographs of the Piaggio P.23R show both the initial design (1935) and the second design (September 1938). One photo shows the Piaggio P.32-II in March 1937. A group of photos taken in July 1937 show the Reggiane Ca 405 Procellaria; these two aircraft were built for an Istres-Damascus-Paris race held in August 1937, but were not finished in time to enter.</p>
Digital Content:	Image(s): Dr. Joseph Foa Photograph Collection

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Dr. Joseph V. Foa, gift, 1990, NASM.1990.0033

Processing Information

Arranged and described by Melissa A. N. Keiser, 2001; revised, and encoded by Melissa A. N. Keiser, 2021.

Preferred Citation

Dr. Joseph Foa Photograph Collection, Acc. NASM.1990.0033, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

No restrictions on access

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Giuseppe Vittorio Foa was born July 10, 1909, in Torino (Turin), Italy. He received a degree of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Torino in 1931, and graduated as Doctor of Aeronautical Engineering from the University of Rome in 1933. Between 1935 and 1937, Foa was Chief Engineer at the Studio Caproni Reggio Emilia (Italy) where he worked on the design of the Piaggio P.32-II (a.k.a. Reggiane P.32bis) and its adaptation for transport use. From 1937 to 1939, Foa was a Project Engineer at Cantieri Aeronautici Piaggio (the Piaggio & Co. works at Finale Ligure Marina, Italy) where he designed the Piaggio P.23R and the Reggiane Ca 405 Procellaria. In 1939, Foa was forced to leave his job because of his anti-fascist beliefs and because he was Jewish. After being arrested, imprisoned, and released several times, Foa fled to Zurich, Switzerland, to escape further persecution. In September 1939, Foa immigrated to the United States (changing his name to Joseph Victor Foa) where he worked as a research engineer for the Bellanca Aircraft Corp. and later at the Aeronautical Research Laboratory of the Curtiss-Wright Corporation (both in Buffalo, New York), which became the Cornell Aeronautical Laboratory following World War II. From 1952 to 1970, Foa was a Professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (Troy, NY); Foa was Chairman of their Dept. of Aeronautical Engineering and Astronautics from 1956 to 1967. From 1970 to 1980, Foa was Professor of Engineering and Applied Science at George Washington University (Washington, DC), becoming Professor Emeritus in 1980. Foa died March 31, 1996, in Bethesda, Maryland.

Scope and Contents

This collection includes photographs of Dr. Foa and the aircraft he worked on between 1935 and 1938. All photos were copied from a personal photo album which Dr. Foa loaned to the National Air and Space Museum (NASM) for copying in 1990. Photographs of the Piaggio P.23R show both the initial design (1935) and the second design (September 1938). One photo shows the Piaggio P.32-II in March 1937. A group of photos taken in July 1937 show the Reggiane Ca 405 Procellaria; these two aircraft were built for an Istres-Damascus-Paris race held in August 1937, but were not finished in time to enter. One photo of the Piaggio P.23R, labeled as being taken at Montecchio, December 30, 1938 (probably taken at a ceremony for the record-setting aircraft), carries the handwritten notation "non c'e un ebreo sul campo" ("not a Jew on the field"). Joseph Foa, designer of the P.23R, was barred from attending this event as he was a Jew.

Arrangement

In March 1990, photographs in this collection were copied by the National Air and Space Museum (NASM) from an original photo album loaned to the museum by Dr. Joseph Foa; the resulting 4 x 5 inch black and white copy negatives were assigned Smithsonian Institution (SI) negative numbers (SI 90-3181 to SI 90-3223) which are used as item-level image reference numbers.

The images copied from the original photo album are presented in the roughly chronological order in which they had appeared in the album (not in SI negative number order). The few images which had appeared twice in the album have been reproduced only once, and are presented in the first position in which they had appeared.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Aeronautics
- Aeronautics -- Italy
- Airplane racing
- Airplanes -- Design and construction
- Piaggio P.23R
- Piaggio P.32-II (P.32bis)

Types of Materials:

- Photographs

Names:

- Foa, Joseph Victor, Doctor, 1909-1996
- Piaggio (Industrie Aeronautiche e Meccaniche Rinaldo Piaggio SpA)
- Reggiane (Officine Meccaniche Reggiane, SA, Caproni)