



# Smithsonian

*National Air and Space Museum*

## Francis Gary Powers Collection

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National Air and Space Museum Archives  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Air and Space Museum Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Francis Gary Powers Collection
<b>Date:</b>	1929-1986 (bulk 1952-1977)
<b>Identifier:</b>	NASM.1994.0010
<b>Creator:</b>	Powers, Francis Gary, 1929-1977
<b>Extent:</b>	1.53 Cubic feet (2 legal document boxes, 1 flat box)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	This collection consists of material relating to Francis Gary Powers's flying career in the Air Force, Central Intelligence Agency, and later pursuits. The majority of the documents deal with the May 1960 U-2 incident, in which Powers was shot down over the Soviet Union during a reconnaissance mission and imprisoned. Materials include: logbooks; flight records from his military and civilian careers; a pocket diary and journal he kept during his Soviet imprisonment; letters to his parents; materials collected by his parents as his father attempted to visit him including a telegram from Nikita Khrushchev and a New Testament given to Powers by his mother during his Soviet trial; Congressional hearing material; newspaper articles; Life magazine; and several photographs of Powers.
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Image(s): Francis Gary Powers Collection</a>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Claudia Sue Powers, Gift, 1994, NASM.1994.0010.

### Processing Information

Arranged, described, and encoded by Elizabeth C. Borja, 2018.

### Preferred Citation

Francis Gary Powers Collection, Acc. 1994.0010, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

No restrictions on access.

## Conditions Governing Use

Material is subject to Smithsonian Terms of Use. Should you wish to use NASM material in any medium, please submit an Application for Permission to Reproduce NASM Material, available at [Permissions Requests](#).

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## Biographical Note

Francis Gary Powers (1929 -1977) learned to fly during high school. He enlisted in the United States Air Force after graduating from Milligan College in 1950. In 1956, he resigned from the Air Force to become a "civilian employee" of Lockheed on loan to the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, authorized to fly Air Force aircraft. In reality, he was a covert employee of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), training for Operation Overflight—U-2 reconnaissance missions.

Powers was captured and imprisoned after his U-2 was shot down over the Soviet Union during an aerial reconnaissance mission on May 1, 1960. Powers was placed on trial and exchanged nearly two years later for Rudolf Abel, a Soviet agent. After his return to the United States, Powers continued to work for the CIA, but then left to work at Lockheed. Powers was working for NBC's Los Angeles affiliate KGIL in 1977, when his helicopter ran out of fuel and crashed, causing his death.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection consists of documents relating to Francis Gary Powers and his aviation career, particularly the 1960 U-2 incident with the Soviet Union. Materials include: logbooks; flight records from his military and civilian careers; a pocket diary and journal he kept during his Soviet imprisonment; letters to his parents; materials collected by his parents as his father attempted to visit him including a telegram from Nikita Khrushchev and a New Testament given to Powers by his mother during his Soviet trial; Congressional hearing material; newspaper articles; Life magazine; and several photographs of Powers.

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## Arrangement

This collection is arranged into three series: Early Career, the U-2 Incident, and Post U-2 Incident Life and Career.

Series 1 contains materials relating to Francis Gary Power's early career with the United States Air Force before resigning to join the CIA, including his birth certificate, military orders and forms, and his individual flight records.

Series 2 contains materials relating to the U-2 incident, in which Francis Gary Powers was shot down over the Soviet Union and imprisoned. The first set of materials relates to Powers' imprisonment, including his prison journal, pocket diary, New Testament, correspondence, and the subsequent congressional hearing. The second set of materials relates to the Powers family during the incident, including correspondence and telegrams with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and the United States government and Oliver Powers' passport. The third set of materials relates to the media reactions to the incident, including complete newspapers, article clippings, a television script, and artwork.

The Soviet Prison Journal and Soviet Prison Pocket Diary were on display in the Looking at Earth Gallery when the collection was digitized. The photocopies were scanned for digital access.

Series 3 contains materials from Powers' life and career after his return to the United States, including logbooks, public relations documents, flight training and insurance records, an employment application, and memorial items.

Documents with personally identifiable information (PII) have been redacted or not digitized.

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Subjects:

- Aerial reconnaissance
- Aeronautics
- Aeronautics and state
- Aeronautics, Commercial
- Aeronautics, Military
- Air pilots
- Cold War
- Lockheed U-2 Family
- Periodicals
- Photographic reconnaissance systems
- United States -- Foreign relations -- Soviet Union

### Types of Materials:

- Clippings
- Correspondence
- Diaries
- Logs (records)
- Photographs
- Telegrams

### Names:

- Khrushchev, Nikita Sergeevich, 1894-1971
- Lockheed Aircraft Corp
- Powers, Francis Gary, 1929-1977

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Early Career, 1929-1977

Scope and Contents: This series contains materials relating to Francis Gary Power's early career with the United States Air Force before resigning to join the CIA, including his birth certificate, military orders and forms, and his individual flight records.

Materials are arranged chronologically.

Box 1, Folder 1	<a href="#">Birth Certificate, 1929</a>
Box 1, Folder 2	<a href="#">Certificate, Confederate Air Force, 1952</a>
Box 1, Folder 3	<a href="#">Appointment as Second Lieutenant, Air Force Reserve, 1952</a>
Box 1, Folder 4	<a href="#">Air Force Orders, Forms, and Honorable Discharge Certificate, 1952-1956, 1977</a>
Box 1, Folder 5	<a href="#">Individual Flight Records, 1952-1960</a>

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## Series 2: The U-2 Incident, 1960-1976

**Scope and Contents:** This series contains materials relating to the U-2 incident, in which Francis Gary Powers was shot down over the Soviet Union and imprisoned. The first set of materials relates to Powers' imprisonment, including his prison journal, pocket diary, New Testament, correspondence, and the subsequent congressional hearing. The second set of materials relates to the Powers family during the incident, including correspondence and telegrams with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and the United States government and Oliver Powers' passport. The third set of materials relates to the media reactions to the incident, including complete newspapers, article clippings, a television script, and artwork.

Materials are arranged chronologically within the three topics.

The Soviet Prison Journal and Soviet Prison Pocket Diary were on display in the Looking at Earth Gallery when the collection was scanned. The photocopies were scanned for digital access.

Box 1, Folder 6	Soviet Prison Journal [original], 1960-1962
Box 1, Folder 7	<a href="#">Soviet Prison Journal [photocopy], 1960-1962</a>
Box 1, Folder 8	Soviet Prison Pocket Diary [original], 1960-1961
Box 1, Folder 9	<a href="#">Soviet Prison Pocket Diary [photocopy], 1960-1961</a>
Box 1, Folder 10	Soviet Prison New Testament, 1960-1962
Box 1, Folder 11	<a href="#">Soviet Correspondence Log and First Letter Received by Powers from His Family, May 1960</a>
Box 2, Folder 1	<a href="#">Correspondence Regarding Captivity, 1962, 1971</a>
Box 2, Folder 2	<a href="#">Hearing before the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, 87th Congress, Second Session, On Francis Gary Powers, March 6, 1962</a>
Box 2, Folder 3	<a href="#">Photographs, 1960-1970</a>
Box 2, Folder 4	<a href="#">Correspondence, Oliver Powers and Nikita Khrushchev, 1960</a>
Box 2, Folder 5	<a href="#">Correspondence, Powers Family and United States Government, May 1960 - June 1960</a>
Box 2, Folder 6	<a href="#">Passport, Oliver Powers, 1960</a>
Box 2, Folder 7	<a href="#">Letter from Life Magazine to Mrs. Ida Powers, July 21, 1960</a>
Box 2, Folder 8	<a href="#">Prayer Card with Poem by Oliver Powers, between 1960 and 1962</a>
Box 2, Folder 9	<a href="#">Powers Family Genealogy, undated</a>
Box 3, Folder 3	<a href="#">Roanoke Times, May 8, 1960</a>

Box 3, Folder 4	Evening Star (Washington, DC), May 16, 1960
Box 3, Folder 5	Evening Star (Washington, DC), May 20, 1960
Box 3, Folder 1	Life Magazine, August 29, 1960
Box 2, Folder 10	<a href="#">Newspaper Clippings, April 1961 to May 1961</a>
Box 3, Folder 6	Evening Star (Washington, DC), February 10, 1962
Box 3, Folder 7	Washington Post, February 11, 1962
Box 3, Folder 8	New York Mirror, February 12, 1962
Box 3, Folder 9	Washington Post, March 7, 1962
Box 2, Folder 11	<a href="#">"Francis Gary Powers: The True Story of the U-2 Spy Incident" Television Script and Program, 1976</a>
Box 3, Folder 10	Art Print by Robert Carlin [Rolled], undated

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## Series 3: Post U-2 Incident Life and Career, 1962-1986

Scope and Contents: This series contains materials from Powers' life and career after his return to the United States, including logbooks, public relations documents, flight training and insurance records, an employment application, and memorial items.

Materials are arranged chronologically.

Box 2, Folder 12	<a href="#">Public Relations Materials, approximately 1970</a>
Box 3, Folder 2	<a href="#">Oversize Photographs for Operation Overflight, 1970</a>
Box 2, Folder 13	Logbooks, Folder 1 of 2
Folder 13, Item 1	<a href="#">Air Force and Lockheed, 1962-1968</a>
Folder 13, Item 2	<a href="#">Lockheed, 1967-1976</a>
Folder 13, Item 3	<a href="#">Multi-engine Lockheed, 1968</a>
Box 2, Folder 14	Logbooks, Folder 2 of 2
Folder 14, Item 1	<a href="#">Pilot's Progress Flight Log, Multi-Engine Land (MEL) Flight Training, 1969</a>
Folder 14, Item 2	<a href="#">Senior Pilot Log, 1969-1973</a>
Folder 14, Item 3	<a href="#">Campbell Flight Rating Logbook [KGIL], 1974</a>
Folder 14, Item 4	<a href="#">Standard Pilot Logbook, 1976-1977</a>
Box 2, Folder 15	<a href="#">Personal History Statement [possibly application for CIA], 1971</a>
Box 2, Folder 16	<a href="#">Flight Training Records, Golden West Skyways [KGIL], 1971-1973</a>
Box 2, Folder 17	<a href="#">Insurance Company of North America, Pilot's History, 1972</a>
Box 2, Folder 18	<a href="#">Francis Gary Powers Memorial Items, 1977</a>
Box 2, Folder 19	<a href="#">Certificate, Distinguished Flying Cross Award, 1986</a>

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