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National Air and Space Museum

Nose Art Color Slides [Schirmer]

2001

National Air and Space Museum Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	Nose Art Color Slides [Schirmer]
Date:	1946-1947
Identifier:	NASM.2000.0021
Creator:	Schirmer, Frank
Extent:	0.1 Cubic feet ((2 folders))
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Tom Britton, gift, 1999, 2000-0021, NASM

Restrictions

No restrictions on access

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

At the end of World War II, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base (then Davis-Monthan Field) outside of Tucson, Arizona, was selected by the U. S. Army Air Forces as a storage site for hundreds of decommissioned aircraft, particularly excess Boeing B-29 Superfortresses and Douglas C-47 Skytrains. The C-47s began to arrive at the field in January 1946, and in September 1946, Lt. Colonel R. Frank Schirmer took command of the newly formed 4105th AAFBU (Acft. Stg.) [Army Air Forces Base Unit (Aircraft Storage)]. By 1947 a large number of B-29s had arrived at the field, and the 4105th began a preservation project to cocoon (or "mothball") a group of 479 B-29s. The cocooning process consisted of covering the aircraft with four layers of heavy sprayed-on plastic in four colors: yellow, red, black, and silver-the final coat was of heat-reflecting aluminum.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of copies of 107 color slides taken by Col. Schirmer at Davis-Monthan Field, Tucson, Arizona, circa 1946-1947. The collection also includes a copy of lecture notes for a slide presentation given by Col. Schirmer in 1981 entitled, "4105th Army Air Force Base Unit (Aircraft Storage) Davis-Monthan Field Arizona 1946-1947 and a Glimpse into the Past of MASDC and Davis-Monthan Air Force Base." (MASDC, the U. S. Air Force's Military Aircraft Storage and Disposition Center, is now known as the Aerospace

Maintenance and Regeneration Center, or AMARC.) Many of the slides referenced in the lecture notes do not appear in this collection. The color slides depict predominantly B-29 aircraft of the 58th Bomb Wing (58BW) and its component units (40BG, 444BG, 462BG, and 468BG), but several B-29s of the 73BW, 313BW, and 314BW are also seen. Also included are 19 slides of C-47 aircraft, and a group of about a dozen slides that detail the cocooning process. Most photographs are close-up views which show aircraft nose art, nicknames, unit insignia, mission marks, and victory marks. A few historic aircraft are also pictured: the Boeing B-29 "The Great Artiste", the record-setting Boeing YB-29J "PacusanDreamBoat", the Boeing XB-19, and the Consolidated C-87 used during WWII by Wendell Wilkie. There is one slide that shows Lt. Col. Schirmer.

General

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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:

- Aeronautics
- Aeronautics, Military
- Airplanes, Military -- Collection and preservation
- Airplanes, Military -- Decoration
- Boeing B-29 Superfortress
- Douglas C-47 Skytrain Family
- World War, 1939-1945

Types of Materials:

- Notes
- Photographs
- Slides (photographs)

Names:

Schirmer, Frank

Places:

Davis-Monthan Air Force Base (Ariz.)