



Smithsonian  
*National Air and Space Museum*

Robert Love Collection

2013

National Air and Space Museum Archives  
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## Collection Overview

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| <b>Repository:</b> | National Air and Space Museum Archives |
| <b>Title:</b>      | Robert Love Collection                 |
| <b>Identifier:</b> | NASM.2013.0057                         |
| <b>Date:</b>       | (bulk 1947-1989)                       |
| <b>Extent:</b>     | 3 cubic feet ((5 boxes))               |
| <b>Creator:</b>    | Love, Robert J.                        |
| <b>Language:</b>   | English                                |

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Ron Burda, Gift, 2013

### Preferred Citation

Robert Love Collection, Accession 2013-0057, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

No restrictions on access.

### Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

Major Robert J. "Bob" Love (1917-1986) had an impressive military and civilian aviation career. Born in Grand Prairie, Alberta, Canada, his family moved to New York when he was young. Love learned to fly in 1940 and before the United States entered World War II, he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force. After the United States joined the war, Love joined the United States Army Air Corps and flew a variety of aircraft, including Lockheed P-38s and North American P-51 Mustangs, but was kept in a training command stateside. Love represented the USAF in the 1947 and 1949 Cleveland Air Races. In the late 1940s, Love left the Air Corps to become a Commanding Officer in the Air National Guard. His unit was activated for the Korean War, and he was eventually transferred to the 4th Fighter Interceptor Wing, where he flew North American F-86 Sabre jets. He flew over 50 combat missions between January - March 1952 and became an ace by shooting down six MiG MiG-15 Fagots. After the Korean War, Love left the military

to become a test pilot for Northrop Aircraft where he tested the Northrop F-89 Scorpion, Northrop F-20 (F-5G) Tigershark, and Northrop T-38 Talon. After his stint at Northrop, he spent time in Central America as a mercenary fighter pilot in the wars between El Salvador and Nicaragua, and later tried to establish a rubber tree plantation in Guatemala. He returned to the United States and had a career flying as an executive pilot for a number of firms, including for Golden Industries. In 1964, Love raced a Mustang in the inaugural Reno Air Races; he crossed the finish line first, but lost the championship on points based on previous heats. He continued to be active in the Reno Races and for many years was the official Reno Race Check Pilot, approving new race pilots and recently modified World War II fighter-racers. Love was also active in the western United States air show circuit where he had a featured aerobatic act flying his Mustang P-51D.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection consists of 3 cubic feet of materials relating to Robert Love's career in aviation: both his military career, especially relating to his exploits in the Korean War; and his civilian career, most notably his time as a test pilot with Northrop and his involvement with the Reno Air Races. This collection consists of the following types of archival material: photographs, color slides, 16 mm motion pictures films, U-matic videos, technical manuals, certificates, military records, correspondence, licenses, individual flight records, Northrop publications, and interviews of Love on audio tape cassettes.

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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
- Airplane racing
- Korean War, 1950-1953
- Korean War, 1950-1953 -- Aerial operations
- Test pilots

Types of Materials:

- Correspondence
- Interviews
- Motion pictures (visual works)
- Photographs
- Technical manuals -- 20th century

Names:

- Northrop Aircraft, Inc.