



# Smithsonian

*National Air and Space Museum*

## Naval Aircraft Escape Systems Collection [Thomas]

2014

National Air and Space Museum Archives  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Air and Space Museum Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Naval Aircraft Escape Systems Collection [Thomas]
<b>Date:</b>	(bulk 1954-1985)
<b>Identifier:</b>	NASM.2014.0024
<b>Creator:</b>	Thomas, William., 1925-2008
<b>Extent:</b>	6.5 Cubic feet ((5 boxes))
<b>Language:</b>	English .

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Jefferson Thomas, Gift, 2014

### Preferred Citation

Naval Aircraft Escape Systems Collection [Thomas], Accession 2014-0024, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

No restrictions on access.

### Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

William C. Thomas, Jr. (1925-2008) worked for the US Navy for 31 years (1954-1985) where he designed aircraft escape systems (ejection seats, parachute systems and escape capsules.) Thomas facilitated the launch of the initial introduction of Martin-Baker ejection seats in military aircraft, and started efforts to incorporate automatic sequenced ejection in multiplace aircraft. He was the project engineer for the development and incorporation of a supersonic capable ejection seat in the North American A3J-1 (A-5A) Vigilante and was instrumental in the development of the General Dynamics F-111 capsuled escape module. In 1970 he was the founder and chairman of the Emergency Egress Committee; this committee, which was comprised of representatives from the major manufacturers of Navy aircraft, coordinated the development and improvement of escape systems for all Naval aircraft.

## Scope and Contents

This collection consists of 9 cubic feet of material collected by the donor's father, William Thomas, during his Navy contractor career, 1954-1985. The collection is mostly textual, including reports, manuals, brochures, memorandum, and correspondence; however, the collection also contains 16 mm film and photography. All of the material relates to Thomas' ejection escape systems work for aircraft, primarily for the General Dynamics F-111, the Rockwell B-1 Lancer, and the North American A3J-1 (A-5A) Vigilante.

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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
- Aircraft industry

### Types of Materials:

- 16mm motion picture film
- Brochures
- Manuals
- Photographic prints
- Reports