



# Smithsonian

*National Air and Space Museum*

Northrop P-61 Black Widow  
Photographic Material [Bost]

2015

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>      | Northrop P-61 Black Widow Photographic Material [Bost] |
| <b>Date:</b>       | (bulk 1940s to 2000s)                                  |
| <b>Identifier:</b> | NASM.2015.0017   |
| <b>Creator:</b>    | Bost, Louis L.   |
| <b>Extent:</b>     | Enter vol amt Boxes (.47 (3 boxes))                    |
| <b>Language:</b>   | English .  |

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

James L. Bost, Gift, 2015

### Preferred Citation

Northrop P-61 Black Widow Photographic Material [Bost], Accession 2015-0017, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

No restrictions on access.

### Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

The Northrop P-61 Black Widow was the first U.S. aircraft designed to locate and destroy enemy aircraft at night and in bad weather, a feat made possible by the use of on-board radar. The prototype first flew in 1942. P-61 combat operations began just after D-Day, June 6, 1944, when Black Widows flew deep into German airspace, bombing and strafing trains and road traffic. Operations in the Pacific began at about the same time. By the end of World War II, Black Widows had seen combat in every theater and had destroyed 127 enemy aircraft and 18 German V-1 buzz bombs. Louis L. Bost served with the 422nd Night Fighter Squadron as a radar operator/navigator on P-61 aircraft in the European Theater during World War II and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for valor. After World War II, Bost went on to serve a total of nearly 21 years in the United States Air Force, including serving as aircrew for Lockheed F-94 Starfires, before retiring at the rank of major. Bost was also deeply involved in the restoration of a P-61B at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum in Reading, Pennsylvania, a project that began in the early 1990s. Bost died in February 2015 at the age of 93.

## Scope and Contents

This collection contains approximately 0.47 cubic feet of material relating to Louis L. Bost's service in the 422nd Night Fighter Squadron during World War II. A large portion of the collection consists of photographs, mostly black and white and mostly dating to the World War II era. Prints range in size from 2.5 by 2.5 inches up to 8 by 10 inches and there is also one panoramic photograph which measures approximately 31 by 8 inches. The photographs were taken at various stations of the unit including Chateaudun Airfield, France; Florennes Airfield, Belgium; Strassfeld Airfield/Euskirchen, Germany; Langansala Airfield, Germany; and Kassel, Germany. The photographs show many members of the squadron as well as numerous aircraft including the Northrop P-61 Black Widow; Lockheed P-38 Lightning; Douglas A-20 Havoc; Douglas A-26 (B-26) Invader; Douglas P-70; Messerschmitt Bf 110; Heinkel He 111; Junkers Ju 87 Stuka; Junkers Ju 88; Messerschmitt Bf 109; Focke-Wulf Fw 190; and the Heinkel He 162 Spatz (Sparrow), Volksjäger (People's Fighter). Named aircraft shown in the collection include the Lockheed P-38J Lightning Les Vin, Les Femmes, et Les Chansons and the following Northrop P-61 Black Widow aircraft: Double Trouble; Little Audrey; Midnight Menace; Tactless Texan; Lady Gen; Little Linda; Moonlight Wreck-Wizishun; Sleepy Time Gal; No Love! No Nothing!; No Love No Nothin' II; Shoo-Shoo Baby; Borrowed Time; Wacky Wabbit; Impatient Widow; Laura Lil; and Tennessee Ridge Runner. The collection also contains a spiral bound copy and copies on CD of the history of the unit entitled "422nd Night Fighter Squadron WWII" by Charles McEwen, Jr., as well as a folder of photographs and a certificate of appreciation relating to the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's restoration of a Northrop P-61B Black Widow aircraft. Finally included in the collection is a reproduction map showing a "kill" made by Bost and Leonard Koehler.

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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:

- 422nd Night Fighter Squadron
- Aeronautics
- Aeronautics, Military
- Northrop P-61A Black Widow
- World War, 1939-1945

Types of Materials:

- Photographs