



Smithsonian
National Air and Space Museum

National Air & Space Museum
Technical Reference Files

NASM Staff

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National Air and Space Museum Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	National Air & Space Museum Technical Reference Files
Identifier:	NASM.XXXX.1183
Date:	Ongoing
Extent:	1,900 Cubic feet
Creator:	National Air and Space Museum. Archives Division.
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Restrictions

The majority of the Archives Department's public reference requests can be answered using material in these files, which may be accessed through the Reading Room at the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, Virginia. More specific information can be requested by contacting the [Archives Research Request](#).

Scope and Contents

The [Technical Reference Files](#) comprise an artificial collection that currently contains 1,900 cubic feet of aviation and space related materials, organized in 22 subject series. File materials include photographs, press releases, clippings, correspondence, reports, and brochures, on individuals, organizations, events, and objects.

Arrangement

List of Series

Organized in 22 subject series

Aircraft (240 cubic feet)

Heavier-than-Air (180 cubic feet)

Human-carrying, heavier-than-air craft which are supported primarily by dynamic lift, including airplanes (powered fixed-wing aircraft), gliders and hang gliders (unpowered, fixed-wing aircraft), helicopters (powered-rotor rotorcraft), and autogiros (unpowered-rotor rotorcraft). Also included are unmanned vehicles that were originally designed as man-carrying aircraft. (Aircraft designed from the start as unmanned vehicles can be found in the Space History reference files with missiles and rockets.)

Lighter-than-Air (LTA)(60 cubic feet)

History, science, and art of airships and balloons from the 18th century to the present.

Propulsion (175 cubic feet)

Engines

Air-breathing engines. (Other power plants for aircraft (including rocket motors) are filed under the Space Propulsion subseries.)

Accessories Accessories and components which support air-breathing engines; also fuels, coolants, and lubricants.

Propellers Specific models, listed by designer or manufacturer; also general topics.

Space Propulsion

All methods of spacecraft propulsion (even "passive" concepts such as the Solar Sail), spacecraft power sources (such as solar batteries and fuel cells), all rocket motors (including those used to power aircraft and other vehicles), and all accessories and components.

Biographical (261 cubic feet)

Information on specific people involved in the history of aviation and space exploration listed alphabetically by name.

Organizations (27 cubic feet)

Aviation and space related organizations.

Corporations (15 cubic feet)

Basic information about aviation and space corporations.

Air Transport (105 cubic feet)

General

Broad air transport topics such as air cargo; economics; insurance; refueling and maintenance; regulation; salvage; and statistics.

Airlines

Specific regularly scheduled passenger and/or cargo carrying airlines.

By Region or Nation Materials covering air transportation topics within specific world regions.

Airports

Specific U. S. and foreign airports; also general topics such as airport equipment, planning, and security.

Air Mail

Basic history of air mail services, foreign and domestic.

Electronics and Communications (24 cubic feet)

General

Electronics and communications equipment; also related topics such as air traffic control, navigational aids, and radar.

Avionics

Avionics equipment by manufacturer.

Education (42 cubic feet)

Type Recognition

Aircraft recognition training programs and materials, both U. S. and foreign (predominantly World War II). Includes various aircraft spotter's guides and information on WWII's National Model Building Program.

Schools

General topics; also specific aviation schools (predominantly U.S.) Training Guides Documents used for training.

Events, Air Expositions, Meets, Races, and Shows (42 cubic feet)

By Date and Location

Information organized by date (1868 to the present) and location of event; includes assorted ephemera such as brochures, programs, advertisements, and tickets.

By Subject

Information dealing with broad categories of flights or events, for example: transatlantic, around-the-world, and altitude attempts.

Awards and Trophies (12 cubic feet)

Specific awards and trophies by name; also general topics pertaining to many awards.

Equipment (54 cubic feet)

General

Assorted aviation-related general equipment topics; includes the Brodie System, specialized tractors and trucks, and general information on markings, insignia and camouflage.

Clothing, Flight Gear, and Insignia

Information on clothing and related flight gear, and the insignia used on them (both U.S. and foreign). Does not include pressure suits and g-suits, which appear in a separate subseries below.

Oxygen

Information on oxygen equipment.

Parachutes

Information on the history of parachutes; also some specific types.

Pressure Suits and G-Suits

Information on pressure suits and g-suits.

Instruments

Instruments by type (altimeter, compass, air speed indicator, etc.) and by manufacturer. Also includes general topics such as instrument illumination, lubrication, and testing.

Space History (270 cubic feet)

Topics related to space exploration, astronomy, missiles, rocketry, or remotely piloted vehicles. Also includes technologically related programs and vehicles that were designed to function entirely within the Earth's atmosphere.

General Aviation (12 cubic feet)

Non-scheduled civil aviation.

General

General topics such as aerial refueling, aerobatic flying, and business aviation.

Regional

General aviation by state; also some information on general aviation in other countries.

Uses of Aircraft

Agriculture, advertising, fire fighting, insect control, meteorology, and tourism.

Government (12 cubic feet)

National and international government agencies and regulations.

Arts and Literature (12 cubic feet)

Aviation and space exploration as depicted in art, literature, motion pictures, radio, and television; also includes aircraft nose art.

Military (84 cubic feet)

International

Military aviation by country (non-U.S.); includes general information on aces.

USA

U.S. military aviation, including selected Air Force bases and units, basic information on aircraft carriers, and military flight demonstration teams.

Armament

Guns, bombs and bombing, bombsights, ammunition, gun mounts, gun turrets, gun sights, chemical warfare, anti-aircraft guns and accessories.

Wars (12 cubic feet)

Aviation's role in various wars and conflicts, from the 1914 Mexican Punitive Expedition through Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

Museums (144 cubic feet)

General

Non-Smithsonian aviation and space museums around the world, by name.

Smithsonian

Basic information on the National Air and Space Museum, and related past and present Smithsonian Institution facilities and exhibits. Researchers seeking detailed information on the history of the Museum or its past exhibits should contact the Smithsonian Institution Archives.

Models (9 cubic feet)

Various types of scale aircraft models and related topics; also wind tunnel test models.

Safety (15 cubic feet)

Includes basic information on topics such as accident investigation, safety equipment, medicine, rescue, survival training, noise abatement, and windshear.

Miscellaneous (33 cubic feet)

General

Very small subseries of miscellaneous topics such as natural flight (birds and insects), preservation of air- and spacecraft, sonic booms, and toys.

National or Regional Histories

Documents regarding aviation history within specific regions.

Navigation

Air navigation history, equipment, and systems.

Photography

Aerial photography history and equipment.

Engineering

Engineering related to specific types of aircraft systems, such as landing gear, rotors, materials, tires, seats, and wings. Also information on wind tunnels.