The Descriptive Finding Guide for the Bernt Balchen Personal Papers
SDASM.SC.10012

Finding aid prepared by Natasha Stanbury Harris
San Diego Air and Space Museum Library and Archives
2001 Pan American Plaza, Balboa Park
San Diego, CA, 92101
(619) 234-8291
May 2006
Title: Colonel Bernt Balchen, 1899-1973 Personal Papers
Identifier/Call Number: SDASM.SC.10012
Contributing Institution: San Diego Air and Space Museum Library and Archives
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 0.4 Cubic feet1 manuscript box
Date (bulk): Bulk, 1903-1973
Date (inclusive): 1903-2002
Abstract: This collection contains the papers of Bernt Balchen, a renowned cold-weather aviator.
Location note: San Diego Air & Space Museum
creator: Balchen, Bernt, 1899-1973
Preferred Citation note
Biographical/Historical note
World renowned aviator Bernt Balchen was born in Tveit, Norway on October 23, 1899. Colonel Balchen, a native Norwegian, started flying in 1921. He became a U.S. citizen in 1930. His career spanned 35 years, serving both governments in cold-weather aviation. His many accomplishments include: pilot of the “America” transoceanic flight, searching for Amundsen, Byrd Antarctica expedition, building a secret air base in Greenland, rescues of downed planes, flying arms to Norwegian Resistance movement, rebuilding SAS Airlines, the DEW Line, and many other notable achievements. He retired from the USAF in 1956. He received many honors for his contributions to aviation. Colonel Balchen passed away in 1973 and was buried on his 74th birthday.
Scope and Contents note
This collection covers Bernt Balchen’s admirable career as a cold weather aviator who made many valuable contributions to the aviation world. This collection contains family photos of Colonel Balchen as a child in the early 1900’s and ranges to articles and letters received by his wife and family in the early 2000’s. The materials cover a wide time span and consist of a variety of materials relating to the life and achievements of this great aviator.
Immediate Source of Acquisition note
Most of the collection was donated to the Museum in the early 2000’s.
Conditions Governing Access note
The collection is open to researchers by appointment.
Conditions Governing Use note
Some copyright may be reserved. Consult with the library director for more information.
Related Archival Materials note
Secondary Sources: http://www.nationalaviation.org/balchen-bernt/
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Cold-weather aviation
Scandanavian Airlines System

Box 01
Articles & News Releases (Including Photocopies & Byrd the North Pole debate).


Awards


Booklets & Brochures


Colonel Balchen’s Notes

Donation Information & Letters to and from Mrs. Balchen

Honorary Degree
Physical Description: 46. Honorary degree: Doctor of Science University of Alaska 1954.

Invitations and Dinner Programs

Letters

Miscellaneous Photo Captions
Physical Description: Captions Flygoperation Balchen (Lulea, Sweden) pages 1-4.
Newspapers


Obituary

Photos

Physical Description: 71. Kjeller, Norway, Handley-Page Aircraft Balchen 2nd from right. 72. Sparta Athletic Club 1919 Norway Balchen on the right seated. 73. Balchen’s civilianized B24 at Torslanda Air Field surrounded by Swedish observers 31 March 1944.

1945 Lt to R: Prof Vogt (Norwegian) Balchen, Grive ENGR, MAJ Keith Allen Pilot, 1st LT Bob Durham NAV, Balchen Command Pilot, TSGT Albert Sage, Radio OP, CAPT David Schreiner Co-Pilot, ZDLT Robert Withrow Asst NAV.

Photocopies


Pilot’s License and Business Card

Physical Description: 166. Pilot’s License #941 Dec 31 1936. 167. Pilot’s License #941 July 31 1937.

Records


Sketches


Telegrams

Physical Description: 174. 3 telegrams of congratulations to Bernt Balchen on efforts to open commercial polar routes. 175. Original telegram to Balchen from Balbo May 24 1932. 176. Original telegram to Balchen from Amelia Earhart May 22 1932. 177. 3 telegrams of congratulations to Bernt Balchen on efforts to open commercial polar routes.