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## **The Descriptive Finding Guide for the Carl Gwartney Photo Collection SDASM.SC.20220**

San Diego Air and Space Museum Library and Archives

2018

2001 Pan American Plaza, Balboa Park

San Diego 92101

URL: <http://www.sandiegoairandspace.org/>

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**Language of Material:** English

**Contributing Institution:** San Diego Air and Space Museum Library and Archives

**Title:** Carl Gwartney Photo Collection

**Identifier/Call Number:** SDASM.SC.20220

**Physical Description:** .6 Cubic FeetThe collection is comprised of photographs of varying sizes and quality, and one book.The collection consists of two gray archival boxes, one flip-top box 12 x 7 x 10-1/2 inches, and a flat box 12 x 3-1/4 x 15-1/2 inches.

**Date (bulk):** bulk

**Abstract:** Carl Gwartney was born June 11, 1920 in Hooper, Colorado. He grew up in that rural state until hearing about the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Carl was 21, newly married, and still living in his hometown. He was a part owner of a light plane, had a pilot's license and had amassed more than 300 flying hours. During the Second World War, he was a glider pilot in the 29th Troop Carrier Squadron

**Physical Description:** Description: The collection consists of two gray archival boxes, one flip-top box 12 x 7 x 10-1/2 inches, and a flat box 12 x 3-1/4 x 15-1/2 inches. Content notes: The collection is comprised of photographs of varying sizes and quality, and one book.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/sdasmarchives/albums/72157701798943531>

### **Biographical / Historical**

Carl Gwartney was born June 11, 1920 in Hooper, Colorado. He grew up in that rural state until hearing about the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Carl was 21, newly married, and still living in his hometown. He was a part owner of a light plane, had a pilot's license and had amassed more than 300 flying hours. When the United States joined the war, the cry went out for young men to become pilots in America's Army Air Corps. But, only single men could apply for training in powered aircraft because they were considered dangerous. In the strange ways of war, married men could not become pilots of powered aircraft, but they could become part of the brand new dead-stick, non-powered group of glider pilots. So, when he reported to the local Army recruiting office to join up, he was quickly selected for glider training. Carl said he was being trained to fly a glider, although the contraptions had not yet been designed or built. "To be a glider pilot you had to go through special training," Gwartney said. He added, "In the early days, you had to have 300 hours of flight time. We flew light planes and turned the engine off. In January of 1943, the first glider plane was built. We tried it for two months and were sent to a tactical outfit, where we trained with the famed 82nd Airborne Division." "It was an ugly aircraft, but it was very effective," he said. The glider pilots played a major and dangerous role in World War II owing to their ability to quietly drop first-strike paratroopers into remote areas without being detected. The CG-4As had the capacity to carry 4,000 pounds, which translated to 16 men, fully equipped. They had an 83-foot wingspan and were 47 feet long. The CG-4As were considered single-use planes. "The planes would be towed to their destination by a C-46 airplane and then cut off to glide," Carl said. "They would then glide, sometimes up to six hours, to reach the target." After dropping off their cargo of paratroopers, the glider pilots would try to head back to a base, or look for a place to land and abandon the plane. They then would walk or hitch a ride back to a base, fighting alongside other troops. Gwartney said, "In addition to flying the glider planes, the pilots were used on all aircraft during the war. We were used as co-pilots on the C-47 and C-46 engine planes, and also as navigators in other planes." The first use of the gliders in Africa proved to be a disaster. Gwartney said, "Twenty-five pilots and planes were used during that first mission. They did a lousy job of flying the planes. The whole thing was bad. Some of the planes dropped into the ocean and some of our own Navy shot a few of the aircraft down." Despite the ill-fated inaugural mission, 13,909 CG-4A planes would be built and used throughout Europe in Normandy, southern France, Holland and Bastogne. The plane was designed by Waco Aircraft of Troy, Ohio, and built by the Ford Motor Company, Cessna and other manufacturers. "If it hadn't been for the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, they would have used the gliders to go into Japan," Carl added. Already an avid amateur photographer, Carl carried with him a simple Brownie 120 box camera. Ignoring wartime prohibitions against photographing military men, equipment, or operations, Carl began taking pictures as soon as he went in as a glider pilot trainee. By the time he reached his first overseas assignment in Tripoli, he had worked out a way to create a portable darkroom out of heavy army blankets and three combat helmets. He amassed a collection of his own photos and many taken by members of his unit, detailing his military service from training through the end of the war. The collection comprises more than 550 digitized photographs, most of people and places associated with Carl's unit, the 29th Troop Carrier Squadron. Also included, but not digitized, are several hundred very small or duplicate photos whose resolution precluded scanning. After his military service, Carl moved to San Diego in 1950 and worked as a printer at the San Diego Union until he retired in 1982. He was an avid remote control plane flyer until his death on April 19, 2013.

### **Immediate Source of Acquisition**

The collection was donated to SDASM and is open to researchers. Some restrictions may apply.

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**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

World War, 1939-1945 -- Campaigns -- France -- Normandy

Gliders (Aeronautics)

Parachuting

Waco (OH) G-4C Hadrian

29th Troop Carrier Squadron

Gwartney, Carl

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**Box 1 of 2**

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**Series I: Documents****Folder 1 -- Carl Gwartney Miscellaneous Biographies and Information**

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**Series II: Photographs**

**Folder 2 -- Photographs 0001 - 0073**

**Folder 3 -- Photographs 0074 - 0154**

**Folder 4 -- Photographs 0155 - 0235**

**Folder 5 -- Photographs 0236 - 0281**

**Folder 6 -- Photographs 0282 - 0360**

**Folder 7 -- Photographs 0361 - 0424**

**Folder 8 -- Photographs 0425 - 0553**

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**Series III: Book**

**Item 9 -- Book, "We Are The 29th! Troop Carrier Squadron - WWII," Col. Joseph Harkiewicz, USAF Retired and Members of the 29th, Copy 114 of 500, 1990**

**Box 2 of 2**

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**Series II: Photographs**

**Physical Description:** Box 2 contains several hundred loose and unsorted photographs. These photographs have not been digitized because they are either very small or duplicates, and/or the resolution precluded scanning.

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