The Descriptive Finding Guide for the Harold E. Fischer Personal Papers
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San Diego Air and Space Museum Library and Archives
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URL: http://www.sandiegoairandspace.org/
Abstract: This collection contains the personal papers of Harold E. Fischer, who was an Air Force pilot during the Korean War. He was captured and held as a prisoner of war from 1953-1955.

Biographical / Historical

The collection of Colonel Harold E. Fischer, Jr. describes his military career and personal life before, during and after his service as a fighter pilot in the Korean War. He was credited with shooting down 10 Soviet-made Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-15 (MiGs) fighters, enough to qualify him as a double ace during the Korean War. On April 7, 1953, he parachuted into enemy territory, just north of the Yalu River, which separates North Korea from China and held captive for more than two years by the Chinese government. Harold E. Fischer, Jr. and the other pilots captured during the Korean War were released May 31, 1955. Harold E. Fischer, Jr. was born May 8, 1925 and grew up on a farm outside of Lone Rock, Iowa. As a child he enjoyed reading magazines about World War I Flying Aces. After attending Iowa State University for two years, he enlisted in the United States Army. He transferred to the Air Force in 1950 and attended flight school at Williams Air Force Base in Chandler, AZ. After his release from captivity, Colonel Fisher returned to Iowa State University to pursue a master’s degree in Industrial Administration. During the Vietnam War, he flew 200 helicopter missions. His final active-duty assignment was with the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Fischer was married three times. His first marriage to Dorothy Herron and they had a son named Harold E. Fischer, III. The marriage ended in divorce shortly before he was captured by the Chinese government. Harold, III, was six years old when he was reunited with his father after being release from his captivity. An Air Force widow, Mary Jane Erickson, wrote to Fischer during his captivity and the two married shortly after his release. His wife had a six-year-old daughter. Later, Colonel Fischer had two more sons with Mary Jane, named Kurt and Clint, and a daughter who died in infancy. After the couple divorced, he was married to Jean Cramlin. They had no children together and the marriage also ended in divorce. He died on April 30, 2009. He was survived by his children and his companion at the time, Tsai Lan Gerth.

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open to researchers by appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

Some copyright may be reserved. Consult with the library director for more information.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The collection was donated to the Museum.

Related Materials

Related Research Institutions:


Subjects and Indexing Terms

Korean War 1950-1953
United States. Air Force
Fischer, Harold E.
Eisenhower, Dwight D. (Dwight David)
Box 01 - 13 Video Cassette Recordings


Box 02

Physical Description: Box 2 Size: 15” x 5” x 10.5”

Folder 01 - Four Report Cards from Harold E. Fischer 6th, 7th, 10th and 12th grade.
Folder 02 Folder: Photographs I: Pages 1-30 of Photo Album.
Folder 03 - Photographs II: Pages 31-61 of Photo Album.
Folder 04 - Official U. S Government Photographs I
Folder 05 - Official U. S. Government Photographs II

Physical Description: 1. Thirty-five Official U. S. Government 8” x 10” photographs all signed by Colonel Harold E. Fischer, Jr.

Folder 06 - Personal Photographs

Physical Description: 1. Nine 8” x 11” color photograph of Colonel Harold E. Fischer, Jr’s flight jacket. 2. One 8” x 11” signed color photograph of his airplane. 3. One 8” x 12” 2002 Sino-American WW II Vets Reunion in Beijing. 4. One 8” x 12” 2002 Sino-American WW II Vets Reunion in Beijing in a cardboard folder.

Folder 07 - Draft of “Arms Transfers to Less Developed Countries”


Folder 08 - The Transfer of the U.S. Korean War POWs to the Soviet Union
Folder 09 - The Story of My Ten MiGs

Physical Description: 1. Three page typed document titled “My Ten MiGs by Colonel Harold E. Fischer, USAF (Retired) America’s 22nd Jet Ace describes his flying encounters with enemy MiGs.


Folder 11 Personal Letters 1950-1953 (Before Capture)
Folder 12 - Correspondence Fischer’s Parents and the U. S. Government 1953-1955

Physical Description: Many letters he called “A Diary” Harold E. Fischer wrote to friends and his parents during his imprisonment by the Chinese government.
Folder 14 - Letters Dated 1985-2002

Folder 15 - Letters written with No Dates or Envelopes

Physical Description:
1. Two page typed letter (no date) from Han De Cai to Harold E. Fischer, Jr. and the draft of “The Fischer Fund.”
2. One page handwritten and typed (no date) from Roy (no last name to Harold) wishing him a Merry Christmas.
3. One page handwritten letter (no date) from Mrs. Moore to “Dear Friends.”
4. One page handwritten note (no date) regarding Harold E. Fischer Jr. capture by the Chinese.
5. One page handwritten note (no date) from “EF” to “Hi There” about having a baby.
6. Four page handwritten letter (no date) from “Your son” to Mom and Dad.
7. Two page typed letter (no date) from “Your son” to “Dad” regarding selling a car, voting for Eisenhower and other news.
8. Two page typed letter (no date) to “Dear Dad and Mom” from “Your son” regarding flying in combat.
9. Two page handwritten letter (no date) to “Dear Mom and Dad” from “Your son” regarding the T-33.
10. Two page handwritten letter (no date) to “Hello” from “Your son” regarding release from the hospital.
11. One page typed letter (no date) to “Dear Dad and Mom” from “Your son” regarding his friends transfer to other places. He is in Japan at the time of the letter.
12. One page typed letter (no date) to Hi Dad and Mom, from your son regarding the radio his father was to receive for Christmas.
13. Two page handwritten letter (no date) to Dear Mom and Dad from your Junior regarding move to Chase Field near Corpus Christi, Texas.
14. Two page typed letter (no date in poor condition) regarding people who were captured.
15. One page typed letter (no date) to Dear Mother and Father from your son regarding missions he flew and the radio he sent to his father.
16. One page handwritten letter (no date) to Dearest Mom and Dad from your son regarding the F-80 he was flying.
17. One page handwritten letter (no date) to Dear Mom and Dad from your son regarding his missions.
18. Two page handwritten letter in Chinese (no date).
19. Two page typed letter describing an unknown author’s interest in “The Flying Tiger”.

Folder 16 - POW MEDSEARCH

Physical Description: 1. A four-page document about searching for information about people who were POWs.

Folder 17 - Official Credit for Destruction of Enemy Aircraft

Physical Description: 1. A four-page document regarding the Official Credit for Destruction of Enemy Aircraft.

Box 03

Folder 18 - Bergin-Interview with Lt. Gen. Han

Physical Description: 1. An eleven-page document describing an interview with Lt. Gen Han about flying in combat. The document is missing pages one and two.
Folder 19 - Various Newspaper Clippings about Colonel Harold E. Fischer, Jr

Folder 20 - Oversized Newspaper Clippings


Folder 21 - Newspaper Clippings of Harold E. Fischer’s Release from China.

Physical Description: 1. One 11” x 14” Blown up newspaper photograph (no author, no date) titled: “A Happy Foursome” about the pilot’s release from captivity. 2. Newspaper article, from the Mason City Globe-Gazette, July 18, 1955 titled “5000 Take Part in Aviation Day: Fischer Honored at Fete after his release from captivity”. 3. Newspaper article from Des Moines Register dated February 25, 1955 regarding a photo of Capt. Harold E. Fischer and two of his companions in prison. One 5.5” x 8” laminated photograph of Captain Fischer and three fellow airmen. 4. One 5” x 6” laminated photograph of three U.S. Fliers after their release from captivity.

Folder 23 - The Star and Lamp of Pi Kappa Phi: November 1953: Pages 4-5.
Folder 24 - The Reference Materials of the Background about Chang-ning
Folder 28 - Scrapbook about Harold E. Fischer, Jr.’s Release from Chinese Prison

Physical Description: 1. The first twenty-seven pages are newspaper clippings of his release from a Chinese prison camp and his reunion with his son Harold E. Fischer, Ill. 2. Pages 28-31 are about his marriage to Mary Jane Peterson.


Folder 30 - The Jet Set Magazine Article, 1969


Folder 32 - Newspaper Clippings written in Chinese
Physical Description: 1. Story about “Chinese MiG Ace over Korea” on page 38.

Folder 34 - Various Memorabilia

Folder 35 - Various dated and undated envelopes.
Physical Description: 1. Many of these undated envelopes were from when he was held captive by the Chinese government. 2. Most of the dated envelopes are addressed to his parents before his capture, during his imprisonment and after his release. 3. Two envelopes held photographs that were sleeved in previous folders.

Folder 36 - Magnetic Advertisement for “The Paper Tiger”
Folder 37 - Various Awards from 1949 to 1997


Folder 38 - Additional information about Colonel Harold E. Fischer, Jr
Folder 39 - Previous Paperwork Regarding the H. Fischer Collection