The Descriptive Finding Guide for the Walter Pentecost Personal Papers
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San Diego Air and Space Museum Library and Archives
July 2017
2001 Pan American Plaza, Balboa Park
San Diego 92101
URL: http://www.sandiegoairandspace.org/
The material primarily relates to his days with the AVG-Flying Tigers from early 1941 through July 4, 1942, as well as later correspondence and documents relating to AVG-Flying Tigers publications. Included are aircraft records and service logs, maps and blueprints, newspaper clippings, photographs, and souvenirs.

Physical Description: The Walter W. Pentecost collection is housed in two 10-inch tall flip-top archival boxes.

Date (bulk): bulk

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Biographical / Historical

Walter W. Pentecost was one of the original American Volunteer Group-Flying Tigers in China, before the United States' involvement in World War II. He was born in Anderson, Indiana in 1912. Upon graduating Anderson Indiana High School in 1932, Pentecost attended Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Corporation's jet engine school on the J-75 and J-50 engines, in Hartford, Connecticut. From 1941 to 1942, he was assigned to General Claire L. Chennault and the Flying Tigers in Rangoon, Burma. Being an aircraft specialist, his duties included training and supervising the Chinese mechanics in the assembly of P-40 aircraft, performing flight-test inspections, and supervising the flight test program. Pentecost acted in an operation and engineering capacity while stationed in China. After the assembly of the P-40s, he established and managed an overhaul depot in China for P-40 aircraft that were damaged in combat. Pentecost moved back to the United States after his duty in China, and worked as a Field Service Representative. He was employed first with Curtiss-Wright Aircraft Co., in Buffalo, NY, from 1942 to 1943, working on the P-40 and C-46 aircraft. He was then employed by Convair, in San Diego, CA, from 1943 to 1945, working on the BT-1, BT-15, B-24, PBY, A-31, and A-35. As a Field Service Representative, he was involved in operations, maintenance, and the flight-testing of the various aircraft. In 1947, he went to work for Douglas Aircraft Co., as an Experimental Mechanic. His duties included design, fabrication, and installation of new parts on the C-74 and C-124 experimental aircraft. From 1949 to 1951, he was a Flight Inspector for Northrop Aircraft Corp. serving as a flight test inspector on the F-89 aircraft. From 1950 to 1959, Pentecost was again employed by Convair in San Diego, CA; this time as a Field Service Engineer. He monitored the flight test programs of the F-102 and F-106 aircraft at Edwards Air Force Base and Holloman Air Force Base. He also monitored the armament development program on the F-102, which consisted of launching the GAR-1 and -2 Genie missiles. He was assigned to the Air Defense Command (ADC) in Colorado Springs, CO in charge of the F-102 and F-106 aircraft being integrated into the ADC inventory. Pentecost also served as Assistant Office Manager of the Convair Corporate office for 1-1/2 years, where he advised staff-level personnel and had direct contact with general officers on operations, maintenance, and combat capabilities of the F-102 and F-106 type aircraft. In 1959, Pentecost became Senior Engineer at Thiokol Chemical Corporation in Huntsville, AL. He was assigned to the Falcon, Persing, and Zeus rocket motor programs. Pentecost monitored nearly all Nike Zeus rocket motor launches at White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico for over four years. He performed these duties until 1965. During his various employments, Walter Pentecost always maintained a connection with his AVG-Flying Tigers days. In the later part of his life, Pentecost continued correspondence with those people he had met in China and Burma, and pursued publications on the Flying Tigers. Walter Pentecost lived in Southern California until he passed away in 1991.

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open to research by appointment. Some restrictions may apply

Related Materials

Flying Tiger AVG Collection

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945
China Burma India Theater (CBI)
China
Series I: Correspondences

Folder 1 -- Correspondence - Employment in China
Physical Description: Correspondence to/from General Chennault and others regarding employment in China, March 2, 1948 - October 27, 1948.

Folder 2 -- Letters of Recommendation

Folder 3 -- Correspondence - AAHS Journal Article, AVG

Folder 4 -- Correspondence: Walter Pentecost Personal Letters
Physical Description: Collection of handwritten and typed correspondence to and from Walter Pentecost, 4/3/1942 - 9/11/1942.

Folder 5 -- Miscellaneous Correspondence

Folder 6 -- Museum Correspondence

Series II: Documents

Folder 7 -- Interviews

Folder 8 -- Vultee Aircraft, Inc. Employment Agreement
Physical Description: Employment agreement with Vultee Aircraft, Inc., January 12, 1943 (12 pages).
Folder 9 -- Employment and Military Records

Folder 10 -- Personal Daily Calendar
Physical Description: Handwritten daily calendar mounted on board, 5/11/1941 - 12/3/1941, pilot and ship notes.

Folder 11 -- Ferry Pilot Forms - Aircraft Record of Reception
Physical Description: 1. Multiple records of reception, The Intercontinent Corporation, September 4, 1941 - November 28, 1941.

Folder 12 -- Aircraft Service Logs, Maintenance & Operational Procedures

Folder 13 -- Maps and Blueprints

Series III: Newspapers

Folder 1 -- News Clippings
Physical Description: 1. Miscellaneous news clippings regarding AVG-Flying Tigers and Walter Pentecost, aeronautical engineer (sleeved).

Series IV: Articles / Periodicals

Folder 2 -- Article, "Advance of the Flying Tigers"

Folder 3 -- Walter Pentecost Publications, AVG (#1 of 2)
Folder 4 -- Walter Pentecost Publications, AVG (#2 of 2)

Folder 5 -- Notes for AVG Book
Physical Description: 1. Notes for possible Flying Tigers book.

Series V: Photographs

Folder 6 - Photographs
Physical Description: 1. Two small black & white pictures of Walter Pentecost.

Folder 7 -- Log Book of Photo Negatives
Physical Description: 1. Walter Pentecost Picture Negative File Book.

Series VI: Miscellaneous

Folder 8 -- Souvenirs