

TITLE: Richard H. McLeRoy Photograph Collection

DATE RANGE: 1940s-1950s

CALL NUMBER: FP FPC #6

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1.5 linear feet (3 boxes)

PROVENANCE: It is believed that this material was donated by the widow of Richard McLeRoy to Ruth Reinhold during research for the book *Sky Pioneering*. See Source under biographical note. Donated to the Arizona Historical Society in 2012 by the Arizona Historical Foundation.

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RESTRICTIONS: This collection has no restrictions.

CREDIT LINE: Richard H. McLeRoy Photograph Collection, FP FPC 6, Arizona Historical Society

PROCESSED BY: Rebekah Tabah, November, 2007

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: Richard H. McLeRoy was born 1905 in the Oklahoma Territory. His father was a traveling auditor for the Cotton Belt Railroad and the family moved around frequently. While in New York young McLeRoy joined the National Guard and served until 1925. That same year he joined the Hollywood Movie Flyers headed by Captain Roy Wilson who billed McLeRoy as “Daredevil Dick.” His movie stunts included the “leap of death,” aerial trapeze, plane changes, wing walking, and parachute jumps.

In February of 1927 McLeRoy enlisted in the U.S. Army and was assigned to the 2nd Motorcycle Company. Almost immediately he transferred to the Army Air Corps and was sent to Brooks Field, Texas. In 1930, he received an assignment in Hawaii, then considered overseas duty. McLeRoy spent his free time flying and working as a mechanic at Olin V. Andrew’s Flight School in Hawaii. While providing passenger short hop flights, McLeRoy received his transport license and multi-engine rating.

At March Field in 1933, McLeRoy met and married his wife Ruth Wilsey of Buena Park, California. During this time, he completed hundreds of successful parachute jumps while stationed there. He also assisted in the development of Kuster Airport in Corona, California. In June 1941 the McLeRays were transferred to Everett, Washington to build Paine Field. He was promoted to Master Sergeant and then deployed to England with the 2nd Military Air Convoy.

While in England, McLeRoy organized and ran a transport service for the 8th U.S. Air Force Service Command running supplies, personnel and equipment to all Air Force units

in the United Kingdom. He also was in charge of a transport service for the return and repair of battle damaged aircraft during WWII.

In 1945, McLeRoy returned as a Captain at Norton Air Force Base in San Bernardino, California. Four years later he was assigned to Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico where he served in various experimental intelligence positions for atomic operations. By 1953 he was a Major with the 4930th Test Supply Group at Indian Springs Air Force Base, chief of the special weapons section, and coordinator for all continental and over seas nuclear test shots, including the Marshall Islands.

McLeRoy retired in 1957 as a Lieutenant Colonel after more than 30 years of continuous military service. McLeRoy and his wife relocated to Parker, Arizona. Later, McLeRoy and his brother-in-law started the Parker Valley Air Service which provided ambulance and charter flights. McLeRoy not only flew the aircraft but also managed the field from 1960 to 1969.

In the fall of 1969, McLeRoy embarked on an emergency ambulance flight from Parker to Phoenix. Seven minutes into the flight, the plane crashed – cause unknown. There were no survivors.

Source: The Ruth Reinhold Collection, MSS # 14, Box 4, Folder 3.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Original order is unknown. The collection is arranged by subject and date and contains several hundred images. These document McLeRoy’s long and varied military career. Included are many aerial views of European cities before and after WWII bombings, U.S. Air Force bases, atomic testing, his flight crews and officers. Most of the individuals are unidentified. Condition of the photographs range from good to excellent and all photographs are originals.

CONTAINER LIST:

Box	Folder	Title	Date
1	1	Photographs: Aerials of Cities in Belgium	1940s
	2	Photographs: Aerials of Cities in England	1940s
	3	Photographs: Aerials of Cities in France	1940s
	4	Photographs: Aerials of Cities in Germany (1of 2)	1940s
	5	Photographs: Aerials of Cities in Germany (2of 2)	1940s
	6	Photographs: Aerials of European Cities (unidentified)	1940s
	7	Photographs: Battle Damaged Aircraft (1of 2)	1940s
	8	Photographs: Battle Damaged Aircraft (2 of 2)	1940s
2	1	Photographs: Buildings After Bombings (Europe)	1940s
	2	Photographs: England	1940s
	3	Photographs: Family	1940s
	4	Photographs: Indian Springs Air Force Base	1950s
	5	Photographs: Kirtland Air Force Base	1950s
	6	Photographs: Marshall Islands and South Pacific	1950s

	7	Photographs: Military Bases (unidentified)	1940s- 1950s
	8	Photographs: Military Officers	1940s- 1950s
3	1	Photographs: Military Planes (unidentified)	1940s- 1950s
	2	Photographs: Nuclear Tests	1950s
	3	Photographs: Paris	1940s
	4	Photographs: Personal Portraits	1940s- 1950s
	5	Photographs: Pilots in a Bar	1940s
	6	Photographs: Plane Nose Art (various)	1940s
OV	folio	Photographs: Richard McLeRoy and other pilots in front of plane, England (signed)	1940s