

Curtis E. LeMay Papers
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Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

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Collection Summary

Title: Curtis E. LeMay Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1918-1969

Bulk Dates: 1943-1969

ID No.: MSS29918

Creator: LeMay, Curtis E.

Extent: 131,550 items

Extent: 243 containers plus 14 classified and 4 oversize

Extent: 90 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm82029918>

Summary: Aviator and U.S. Army and Air Force officer. Correspondence, diaries, speeches, teletype messages, flight orders, mission reports, strategic plans and operation reports, appointment calendars, maps, photographs, commissions, scrapbooks, and other papers chiefly concerning LeMay's career as an aviator and officer in the U.S. Army and Air Force and as a vice-presidential candidate in 1968.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

LeMay, Curtis E.

Wallace, George C. (George Corley), 1919-1998.

Organizations

American Independent Party.

United States. Air Force.

United States. Air Force. Strategic Air Command.

United States. Army Air Forces. Air Matériel Command.

United States. Army.

United States. Army. Air Corps.

Subjects

Aeronautics, Military--Research--United States.

Aeronautics, Military--United States.

Bombing, Aerial--Japan.

Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962.

Nuclear weapons--United States.

Strategic forces--United States.

Vice-Presidents--United States--Election--1968.

World War, 1939-1945--Aerial operations.

World War, 1939-1945--Burma.

World War, 1939-1945--China.

World War, 1939-1945--India.

World War, 1939-1945--Japan.

World War, 1939-1945--United States.

Places

Berlin (Germany)--History--Blockade, 1948-1949.

United States--Defenses.

United States--Foreign relations--1961-1963.

United States--Military policy.

United States--Politics and government--1963-1969.

Occupations

Air Force officers.

Army officers.

Aviators.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Curtis E. LeMay, aviator and U.S. Army and Air Force officer, were deposited and then given to the Library of Congress by LeMay in 1965. Additions were received as gift from him in 1966 and 1969.

Processing History

The LeMay Papers were processed in 1968. The finding aid was revised in 2014.

Transfers

Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Some photographs and other pictorial material have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. Some maps have been transferred to the Geography and Map Division. Motion picture films, tape recording, soundscriber recordings, and phonograph recordings have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the LeMay Papers.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Curtis E. LeMay in these papers and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is reserved. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division for further information.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Curtis E. LeMay are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Security Classified Documents

Government regulations control the use of security classified material in this collection. Manuscript Division staff can furnish information concerning access to and use of classified materials.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Curtis E. LeMay Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1906, Nov. 15	Born, Columbus, Ohio
1928	Commissioned second lieutenant, Field Artillery Reserve and enlisted in regular army

1929	Graduated, Air Corps Primary Flying School, March Field, Calif., and commissioned second lieutenant in Air Reserve
1930	Commissioned second lieutenant, Air Corps, regular army, assigned to 27th Pursuit Squadron, Selfridge Field, Mich.
1932	Graduated, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
1934	Married Helen Estelle Maitland and transferred to 18th Pursuit Group, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii
1935	Commissioned first lieutenant
1937	Operations and intelligence officer of 49th Bombardment Squadron, Langley Field, Va.
1939	E-17 airplane commander
1940	Promoted to captain and transferred to 41st Reconnaissance Squadron, Langley Field, Va.
1941	Transferred to 34th Bombardment Group Promoted to major Pioneered ferry routes to Africa via South America and to England via the North Atlantic
1942	Promoted to lieutenant colonel and colonel Made commanding officer of the 305th Bombardment Group which he trained and led to England as part of the 8th Air Force
1943	Awarded Air Medal for five combat missions over Europe in 1942 Led mission of Flying Fortresses from England to target at Regensburg, Germany Promoted to brigadier general
1944	Promoted to major general Made commander of 20th Bomber Command (China-Burma-India theater)
1945	Commanding general, 21st Bomber Command Became chief of staff to General Carl Spaatz of the United States Strategic Air Forces Appointed special deputy to the Army Air Forces Air Matériel Command, Wright Field, Ohio Appointed deputy chief of air staff for research and development, Washington, D.C.
1947	Placed in command of United States Air Forces in Europe after the air force had become a separate service
1948	Directed the Berlin Airlift Head, Strategic Air Command
1957-1961	Vice chief of staff, U.S. Air Force
1961-1965	Chief of staff, U.S. Air Force
1965	Retired
1968	Ran for vice president with George Wallace on the Independent Party ticket
1990, Oct. 1	Died, March Air Force Base, Calif.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Curtis Emerson LeMay (1906-1990) span the years 1918-1969, with most of the material dated between 1943 and 1969. The material consists of correspondence, diaries, speeches, teletype messages, flight orders, mission reports, strategic plans and operation reports, appointment calendars, maps, photographs, commission, scrapbooks, and other papers that document LeMay's career in the army and air force and his 1968 campaign for vice president on the American Independent Party ticket. The papers are organized into ten series: [Special Personal Correspondence](#), [Command Assignment Papers](#), [Miscellany](#), [Campaign papers](#), [Classified](#), [Top Secret](#), [Restricted Data \(Classified\)](#), [Restricted Data \(Top Secret\)](#), [North Atlantic Treaty Organization](#), and [Oversize](#).

The bulk of the collection is centered in the [Command Assignment Papers](#) series. Starting chiefly with flight books from LeMay's service in the United States Army Air Corps in 1928, it treats his commands in the European and China-Burma-India theaters during World War II and his charge of strategic air operations against Japan involving saturation bombing of Japanese cities. Included in addition to plans, orders, mission reports, bombing surveys, and intelligence reports are diaries, minutes of commanders meetings, and correspondence from 1943-1945.

After World War II, LeMay was assigned to Headquarters Air Materiel Command, and later to the Pentagon to be the first deputy chief of air staff for research and development. In 1947, he was named the first commander of the United States Air

Force Europe, where, during his tenure, he oversaw the Berlin Airlift of 1948. Files for the period include a diary, official correspondence, and reports on the status of the airlift. Material from his tenure as head of the Strategic Air Command, 1948-1957, contains diaries, personal and official correspondence, aircraft operations reports, subject files, and speeches and statements before the public and congressional committees. As chief of staff of the air force from 1961 to 1965, LeMay was an advocate of increased defense spending, notable for promoting an aggressive nuclear strategy and clashing with the John F. Kennedy administration over the Cuban missile crisis. Documents from this career phase, like most of the collection, are organized and described as compiled by LeMay or his staff. They include, in addition to extensive official correspondence files, a "Top Secret File" of documents maintained by his office as a separate grouping because of their government-security classification. Although the original designation and order have been retained, most of the documents in the grouping have been declassified and made available for research.

Scrapbooks in the [Miscellany](#) series cover the range of LeMay's military career, while the [Campaign Papers](#) series focuses on his run in 1968 as the vice presidential candidate on the American Independent Party ticket led by Alabama Governor George Wallace. Included are correspondence, speeches, clippings, and other material from the campaign.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in ten series:

- [Special Personal Correspondence, 1935-1964](#)
- [Command Assignment Papers, 1918-1965](#)
- [Miscellany, 1918-1965](#)
- [Campaign Papers, 1968-1969](#)
- [Classified, 1947-1964](#)
- [Top Secret, 1948-1964](#)
- [Restricted Data \(Classified\), 1948-1964](#)
- [Restricted Data \(Top Secret\), 1948-1964](#)
- [North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1954](#)
- [Oversize, 1951-1952](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX A1-A7	<p><u>Special Personal Correspondence, 1935-1964</u></p> <p>Letters received and copies of letters sent, together with enclosures and attachments. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.</p>
BOX B1-B205	<p><u>Command Assignment Papers, 1918-1965</u></p> <p>Official correspondence of letters received and copies of letters sent, teletype messages, flight orders, mission reports, strategic plans and operation reports, speeches, diaries, appointment calendars, miscellaneous documents, semiofficial and personal correspondence and miscellaneous nonofficial papers. Arranged according to LeMay's command assignments and organized within by topic or type of material.</p>
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BOX D1-D4	<p><u>Campaign Papers, 1968-1969</u></p> <p>Correspondence, telegrams, speeches, and printed matter. Arranged by type of material.</p>
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BOX OV 1-OV 4	<p><u>Oversize, 1951-1952</u></p> <p>Maps and photographs. Arranged and described according to the series and folders from which the items were removed</p>

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	Official correspondence
	Chief of Staff daily log, 1962-1964
	(3 folders) (Container B123)
BOX CL 3	Air Force Council
	General, 1961-1964
	(4 folders)(Container B126)
BOX CL 4	Chief Scientists/Rand/SAB, 1961-1963 (Container B127)
	Consultants (Container B128)
	Projects

	Exercises/projects, 1961 (Container B128)
	FORECAST, 1963-1964 (Container B128)
	Air Force, Office of the Secretary
	General
	1962 (Container B128)
	1963 (Container B129)
	Office of Information, 1963 (Container B130)
	Air Force personnel matters
	Awards/trophies, 1964 (Container B132)
	Recognition, letters of, 1961 (Container B132)
	Promotion, 1964 (Container B133)
	Air staff actions
	General
	1961-1963 (Container B134)
	1964 (Container B135)
	Aircraft, 1962-1964 (Container B135)
BOX CL 5	AR-15 rifle, 1961-1962 (Container B136)
	Civil Air Patrol & Civil Defense, 1961 (Container B136)
	Investigation, 1961-1964 (Container B136)
	Missiles, 1961-1964 (Container B136)
	Nuclear testing and space matters, 1961-1962 (Container B137) <i>See Restricted Data: Classified</i>
	Air staff replies to inquiries addressed to the Chief of Staff, 1962-1963 (Container B138)
	Commands
	General, 1962-1964 (Container B139)
	Airborne Command Post, 1961 (Container B140)
	Air Defense Command, 1961-1964 (Container B140)
	Air Force Logistic Command, 1963-1964 (Container B140)
	Air Force Systems Command, 1961-1963 (Container B141)
	Air University, 1964 (Container B142)
	Alaska Air Command, 1963 (Container B142)
	Military Air Transport, 1963 (Container B143)
	NATO/SEATO, 1961-1964 (Container B143)
	Pacific Air Forces, 1961-1964 (Container B143)
	Strategic Air Command, 1963-1964 (Container B144)
	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), 1961 (Container B144)
	Tactical Air Command, 1962-1963 (Container B144)
	United States Air Forces in Europe, 1961-1964 (Container B145)
	United States Strike Command, 1961-1964 (Container B145)
BOX CL 6	Conferences/Meetings/Committees/Briefings/Boards, 1963-1964 (Container B146)
	Congressional, 1962-1964 (Container B147)
	Defense Department
	General (Office of the Secretary), 1961-1964 (Container B148)
	Joint Chiefs of Staff and Weapons Systems Evaluation Group, 1963 (Container B148)
	Foreign

Container Contents

	General, 1961-1964 (Container B149)
	Countries, 1962-1964
	A-F (Container B149)
	G-L (Container B150)
	M-R (Container B150)
	S-Z (Container B151)
	Other Government agencies
	General, 1962-1964 (Container B151)
BOX CL 7	Army, 1962-1964 (Container B152)
	Navy/Marine, 1962-1964 (Container B152)
	State Department, 1964 (Container B152)
	White House
	1961 (Container B152)
	1963 (Container B153)
	Miscellaneous
	Presidential visit, Eglin air show, 1962 (Container B153)
	Chief of Staff meetings, 1961-1962 (Container B153)
	Chief of Staff memoranda, 1962-1965 (Container B154)
	Telecons and radio messages
	1961 (Container B167)
	1962 (Container B168)
	1963 (Container B169)
	1964 (Container B170)
	Speeches (cleared copies)
	1957-1961 (Container B171)
BOX CL 8	1962-1964 (Container B172)
	Speeches, articles, and statements
	1961 (Container B173)
	1962-1963 (Container B174)
	Statements
	1962-1963, (Container B175)
	1964 (Container B176)
BOX CL 9	Unprocessed command papers
	Trip to Pacific Proving Grounds, 10-14 Apr. 1954 (Container B184)
	Tape recording, 1961, July 25 (Container B188)
	Official correspondence, miscellaneous, 1948 (Container B189)
	Miscellaneous command papers
	Top Secret File, 1948-1964
	B-3629 to B-6551 (Container B195)
	B-6599 to B-6618 (Container B196)
	B-10174 (Container B197)
	B-11637 to B-14277 (Container B198) <i>See Top Secret</i>
	B-14967 (Container B199) <i>See Top Secret</i>
	B-17,784 (Container B200)
	B-18440, B-20905 (Container B201)
	B-B22072 (Container B202)

B-23874 to B-27392 (Container B203) *See Top Secret*
B-29184, B-29886 (Container B204)
B-45480 to B-53179 (Container B205)
B-54240 to B-58186 (Container B206)
SAE 982 to SAE 11106 (Container B207) *See Restricted Data*
Additional top secret files
(3 folders) (Container B208)

BOX TS 1-TS 2

Top Secret, 1948-1964

Government-security documents.
Arranged and described according to the series and folders from which the items were removed

BOX TS 1

Command Assignment Papers
VI Strategic Air Command, 1948-1957
Miscellaneous matters
Diary (LeMay)
1951
Miscellaneous command papers
Top Secret File, 1948-1964
B-4481
B-9151
B-9750 to B-10794
B-11637 to B-14277
B-14967
B-17904

BOX TS 2

B-19985 to B-21413
B-22193, B-23089
B-23874 to B-27392
B-29616 to B-37691
B-37772 to B-53282
B-53826 to B-58059
Additional top secret files

BOX RD 1

Restricted Data (Classified), 1948-1964

Government-security documents.
Arranged and described according to the series and folders from which the items were removed

BOX RD 1

Special personal correspondence
Power, Thomas, 1956
Command Assignment Papers
VI Strategic Air Command, 1948-1957
Official correspondence
General officers
Selser
Twining, Nathan
Miscellaneous
A-J, 1957

Restricted Data (Classified), 1948-1964

Container

Contents

- Project Rand reports
- Miscellaneous matters
 - Diary (LeMay)
 - 1953-1954
 - Items of interest for the Commander in Chief
 - 1955, June-1957, Mar.
- VII Vice Chief of Staff, USAF, 1957-1961
 - Official documents
 - Miscellaneous matters
 - Rand
- VIII Chief of Staff, USAF, 1961-1965
 - Official correspondence
 - Air Force Council
 - General, 1961
 - Chief Scientists/Rand/SAB, 1961-1964
 - Projects
 - FORECAST, 1964
 - Air staff actions
 - General, 1963
 - Missiles, 1962
 - Nuclear testing and space matters, 1961-1962
 - Commands
 - Air Force Systems Command, 1962-1964
 - Strategic Air Command (SAC), 1962
 - Defense Department
 - General (Office of the Secretary), 1962
 - Other Government agencies
 - General, 1963
 - Army, 1962
 - Miscellaneous
 - Presidential visit, Eglin air show, 1962
 - Chief of Staff meetings, 1961-1962
 - Telecons and radio messages, 1962-1963
 - Speeches and articles, 1962
 - Miscellaneous command papers
 - Trip to Pacific Proving Grounds, 10-14 Apr. 1954
 - Top Secret File, 1948-1964
 - B-5584
 - SAE-1236 to SAE-11082
 - Additional top secret files

BOX RD 2

Restricted Data (Top Secret), 1948-1964

Government-security documents.
Arranged and described according to the series and folders from which the items were removed

BOX RD 2

Command Assignment Papers
VI Strategic Air Command, 1948-1957

Restricted Data (Top Secret), 1948-1964

Container	Contents
	Miscellaneous matters Diary (LeMay) 1953-1954
	Miscellaneous command papers Top Secret File, 1948-1964 B-1300 to B-6065 B-7081 to B-9151 B-9814 B-24572 to B-29104 B-35151 to B-36249 B-40563 to B-49753 B-54091 to B-58556 SAE-982 to SAE-10845 Additional top secret files
BOX NATO 1	North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1954 Government-security documents. Arranged and described according to the series and folders from which the items were removed
BOX NATO 1	Command Assignment Papers Miscellaneous command papers Top Secret File B-37772
BOX OV 1-OV 4	Oversize, 1951-1952 Maps and photographs. Arranged and described according to the series and folders from which the items were removed
BOX OV 1	Command Assignment Papers Miscellaneous command papers Warner engine design, 1951-1952, undated (Container B183)
BOX OV 2	Night photography from A3 Ejector tests (Container B189)
BOX OV 3	Map folio, "P-47 Fighter Rendezvous" (Container B191)
BOX OV 4	U.S. Air Force target complex mosaic series maps (Container B191)