Guide to the

**Thomas D. Watson Papers**

1951-1959

.5 linear feet

Collection Number 255

Prepared by Kathie Bordelon
May 2009

CITATION: The Thomas D. Watson Papers, Collection No. 255, Box number, Folder number, Archives and Special Collections Department, Frazar Memorial Library, McNeese State University.

Archives and Special Collections Department
Frazar Memorial Library
McNeese State University
Biographical Sketch

Tom Watson was born in Lake Charles, Louisiana, in 1929. He received his Ph.D. in History from Texas Tech University and taught at McNeese State University in Lake Charles where he retired as Professor and head of the Department of History. He is married to Carol LeBlanc, and they are the parents of a son and a daughter.

During the Korean Conflict, Watson served with the 343rd Bomb Squadron, 98th Bombardment Wing, stationed at Yokota Base, Japan. He flew B-29 combat missions over Korea during the first half of 1953. He flew as radar operator and used either Shoran or the APQ 23 radar set to drop bombs. Neither involved direct visual sighting of the target. Inasmuch as all sorties were flown during nighttime hours when the moon was down (to lessen probability of fighter attacks) the bombardier went along to oversee the bomb load (ten tons) and to act as the nose gunner against MIG 15s. Several of the photographs in the collection are strike photos of bomb runs made during this time.

Watson went on active duty June 13, 1951. His service time added up to four years, two months and twenty-two days. After completing 28 combat missions, he flew out of Tokyo on a contract transport plane homeward bound via Alaska on June 27, 1953, the very day the seemingly unending truce between the divided Koreas began. He was discharged from active duty on September 5, 1955.

Scope and Content Note

The collection contains photographs of the crews with which Watson served in Korea and aerial photographs of bombing sites. The collection also contains official papers pertaining to Watson’s enlistment and service in the United States Air Force from 1951-1959.

Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Flight records 1952-1955, includes Lake Charles Air Force Base; Lowry ABF in Colorado; Mountain Home in Idaho; Davis-Monthan in Tucson, Arizona; James Connally in Waco, Texas; Ellington AFB in Houston, TX; and San Francisco</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bombing summaries, special orders, supply officer issue slips</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Special orders, other papers relating to duty and assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Honorable discharge certificate 1959  Photographs: Felker’s crew, Yokota Air Base Japan 1953; B-29 crew; 98th Bomb Wing, 343d Bomb Squadron 1953; bombing sites</td>
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