FILE TITLE: MSgt Cecil E. Curtis: 1st Enlisted Man to Reenlist while Airborne.

Reviewed by:

AFEHRI Representative [Signature] date 6 Dec 97

EPC Representative [Signature] date 19 Dec 97

Scanner Operator [Signature] date 19 Dec 97

APPROVED BY: [Signature] GARY R. AKIN, CMSgt, USAF
Director
Air Force Enlisted Heritage Research Institute
28 October, 1993

TO: Senior NCO Academy/MS
     Gunter AFB, AL 36115-5003

I am an Air Force widow. My husband was Master Sergeant
Cecil E. Curtis, -------------. He retired 28 February,
1963. He died in May, 1988. However, all through our years
in the Air Force, I planned to write a book about our lives
as an Air Force family. I, also, worked for the Air Force,
as a civilian employee, for twenty-eight years. During our
active service years, I had no time for writing. Three years
after I retired, my husband died. It was then I purchased a
computer and began writing my book in earnest. The title of
the book is, "Until Death Do Us Part - a True Love Story." I
have used diaries that I had kept, my civilian records, and
my husband's military records to glean facts and dates.

One of the stories I have included was an event which was
one of the highlights of his military career. He was chosen,
from a line of prospective reenlistees, after World War II,
to be the first man ever to be sworn into the Air Force
while flying. Since he was already a well trained aircraft
mechanic, it seemed appropriate that he was chosen. It was a
ceremony that was one of the first to take place after the
Army Air Corps became the Air Force. I am including newspa-
er articles to verify my statements. Naturally, I have used
this story in my book.

Recently, a young man who was formerly an aircraft techni-
cian in the Air Force, was in my home doing repair work for
our cable TV company. He saw the news articles, which I
included in a case with the flag from my husband's funeral.
He told me that he had had a question from his PME manual
concerning that event. I was thrilled to think it had been
included. However, several friends who are retired Air Force
personnel, have researched for me but have found no evidence
that the manual exists. The young man was very certain that
he remembered the event in his questions on his test.

The purpose of this letter is to ask if you can help me find
that manual. I would consider it an important fact to
include in my book. I have included the newspaper clippings
in the picture section of the book. The young man indicated
that it was in a PME manual he was using in some of his
aircraft mechanic training. He said the question was about
the fact that my husband was indeed the first man sworn in
while flying. I know he was the first, but I would like to
know what training material it is included in so that I can
mention it in my book, if the Air Force does not object to my mentioning the material. Also, if it were at all possible, I would be thrilled to have a copy of the manual.

Can you please help me? If someone else is listed in the training manual as first, then the manual is in error. I know Cecil was the first!

Thank you very much for your help. I would like to have this information as soon as possible, since I have just finished the manuscript and am ready to go to the publisher with it. I have been five years in the writing, so I am anxious to get it published.

[Signature]
LENAB CURTIS
A Proud Air Force Wife

2 Atch: 1. Austin, TX paper, 1 Aug '47, articles, (3 pages)
2. Air Force Times, "Stake Your Claim"

I will hold my manuscript until I hear from you. I can easily insert the facts about the manual.

[Signature]
LENAB
GOVERNOR PRESENT ON FLIGHT AS CENTEX MAN REJOINS AAF

Flying at 1,200 feet above the State Capitol, 27-year-old Cecil E. Curtis Friday morning became the first man ever to be sworn into the AAF while airborne.

Wearing neat blue trousers and a white shirt, the shy and serious Central Texan was helped aboard a Braniff DC3 at Municipal Airport by Governor Beauford H. Jester, a few minutes later the plane landed at Bergstrom Field, where Curtis stepped out, dressed in Army khaki, as sergeant in the US Army Air Forces.

The more than one-quarter-mile-high ceremony highlighted Army Air Forces Day here while outside Austin the whole nation was celebrating the 40th anniversary of the AAF.

Standing neatly erect, Curtis was administered his oath of enlistment by Captain Lloyd L. Withers, commandant of the Austin recruiting district.

Near-by was the Governor, Secretary of State Paul B. Brown, Major General K. L. Berry, adjutant general of Texas, General Edwin W. Pilburn, commanding officer of the Texas Military District; Colonel R. Baez Jr., commanding officer of Bergstrom Field, and other prominent state and Army officials.

Braniff Pilot J. E. Douglas, who flew from San Antonio Friday morning especially for the occasion, lifted the plane into the air shortly after 10 a.m.

Rising slowly, the four-engine craft circled sprawling Austin twice. Approaching the Capitol, Douglas dipped the plane's wings, and attractive hostess Lou Humphries announced the altitude.

Gathered somewhat tensely in the rear of the passenger section were Curtis, Withers, the Governor and several radio technicians who made a wire recording of the event.

Without faltering, Curtis answered questions asked by Withers and with a final "I do" became a three-stripe sergeant.

Quickly, while the plane banked sharply for Bergstrom Field, Sergeant Curtis stepped into a small compartment to dress into the uniform in which he was discharged from the AAF some 30 months ago.

Stepping from the plane at the field, he was greeted with music from the post band, and the Governor’s congratulations.

A tire salesman here for the past year, he said he re-enlisted because he desired "financial security for his family." Married to a Taylor girl, he is the father of two children.

In congratulating Curtis, Jester said, "He’s not only giving security to himself, but he’s helping to give security to our nation."

The 450th recruit enlisted by the Army recruiting service here, Curtis with his wife will be given a room by the Austin Hotel where he will spend Friday night. Meals will be furnished by the Tally-He Restaurant.

Others to make the enlistment flight as an honor to Curtis were: Colonel John T. Murray, senior ground instructor of Texas National Guard; Colonel L. B. Miller, San Antonio recruiting district; Dr. A. L. Chapman, head of the Bureau of Research and Education at the University of Texas; J. F. Wheeler, district traffic manager of Braniff at Austin; and Dr. Tom Rayworth, director of the University Radio House.
Centex Man
Will Reenlist
Over Capitol

Man, the latest in Austin on
Army Air Force Day Friday
will be Capt. Curtis C. Curtis,
which will result in the
promotion of his rank.

When Governor Tom F. James
flies to Austin, Curtis will not
appear at the event. He is
in the Air Force Reserve and
will not be called to active
service.

Curtis, who has been employed
as a tire salesman here for the
last year, and was recently
married, is from San Antonio.

A very popular character at the
flies and meets with friendly
people at the various places he
goes.

Curtis, who has been active
in the Air Force Reserve for
more than 10 years, will be
welcomed by the people of
Austin and the surrounding
district.

A wire connecting the city
of Austin with the next
state, will be broadcast on
Thursday, November 8,
1943.

The ceremony will be
broadcast over KVET at
12:30 p.m. Friday.

Cotton, which has been
sold, will show the results
of the year in the
Southwest and the
Middle West.

Willing to carry out
the Governor's
order, General K. E. Barry,
adjutant general of the
Texas National Guard,
and Colonel J. T. Murray,
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diploma to Dr. A. L.
Chambers, head of the
Department of
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Traffic Death Toll Lowered

N. Cotton Market
Still Uncertain

With the lowest August
rate in more than
10 years, the uncertainty of
the market situation is
high. The market is
steadily described as
a "market," and
the speculative activity is
low.

The cotton market is
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Texas.
The Weather

Austin, Texas. With Cloudbursts
And Clear Weather, Rain
Rain is expected to increase;
Total Rainfall Since Jan. 1, 1947, 10 In-

VOL 77—NO. 7

The Austin Statesman

AUSTIN, TEXAS, FRIDAY, AUGUST 1, 1947

B29s Smashed

Elliott Overruled Experts,
Air Corps Chief Testifies

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1—(AP)—Major General Oliver P.
Echols testified Friday that Elliott Roosevelt ticked a Howard
Hughes plane as the best for wartime photo-reconnaissance work
after the Air Force high command turned it down in 1943.

Echols, wartime chief of the Air Corps Material Command,
told the Senate investigating committee that the son of the Late
President Roosevelt in effect re-

arranged the decision by the Air Corps

The Senate agreed that if the
plane could do a claimed 425 miles
per hour it would have been
the Air Corps' fastest plane of the

2 REVISIONS PLANNED BEFORE
INVENTORY ORDNANCE PASSES

Attorney Edward Clark, representing several

Austin Ex-Sub Sailor

Continued on Page 1, Col. 1
STAKE YOUR CLAIM
1945 Jet Kill Listed; More on Downing of MIG by a B-29

By TONY POLOZZOLO

WHO was the first U.S. pilot to shoot down a jet? If you believe he came from the Korean pilot ranks you’re wrong. Word from Itazuke AB, Japan, reveals that on April 4, 1945 Capt. (then Lt.) Raymond A. Dyer shot down a Jet ME-262.

No claim is made as to this being the first jet kill but, until we hear differently, it will stand as such.

The action took place over Germany at 26,000 feet. Dyer was piloting a P-51 as a member of the Eighth AF. He is now with the 36th Fighter Bomber Sq. at Itazuke. We’ve done some research on the subject and haven’t been able to come up with much. It appears at least three other pilots got 262s in the late days of the war during aerial battles. Numerous 262s were shot up on the ground.

It seems that although Germany had the Jet 262 for nearly a year, some German authorities say it was only developed in 1938. Production was held up until Hitler demanded it be used as a bomber—a job for it was highly unsuitable. Best estimate is that more than 1000 were produced but only about 100 got into the air.

If anyone can supply the names of other pilots and the dates on which they shot down German jets, we’ll be glad to pass along the data.

ANOTHER JET controversy is starting to clear up. We reported the first MIG shot down by a B-29 crewmember occurred Oct. 14, 1950. This was denied by a third party who said a Pte. Harry Laveno of the 31st Strategic Recon Sq. got one earlier but two-year total of 173 for other reservists to shoot down. Previously we carried the top navigator who logged 91 hours, 45 minutes in one two-week active duty tour.

AN ADMIRAL is a captain and a Major is an airman at Presque Isle AFB, Maine. Owners of the confusing rankings are Chap. (Capt.) Admiral Phillips and A/C Major Smith.

Thrice CHALLENGES have been hurled at our altitude record for light planes which opened at 13,500 feet. The champion, the moment, is Maj. Sgt. Bailey Shrum, now at Osan AB, Korea, and headed for Fortis AFB, Tex., who in 1943 took a Piper L-4 to 16,400 feet. On the same day, he reports, a Lt. Vincent W. Elam, now a civilian, took an L-4 to 17,200 feet over Henry Field.

Other challenges came from 2d Lt. Paul H. Messinger, Lackland AFB, Tex., who went to 15,300 feet in a Luscombe 65, and CWO V. G. Steele, also of Lackland, who took a Luscombe Silvair to 14,600 feet. Lieutenant Messinger also enters a “gliding” record. In 1942 he shot Lt. M. D. Hall flew a Luscombe 65 for 90 minutes with the engine off at altitudes of 10,000-13,000 feet.

IN 14 YEARS and seven months of amphibian operations, Maj. John H. Hark has completed 9750 water landings. He’s now with the 41st Air Rescue Sq. at Hamilton AFB, Calif., and has been in air rescue work since March 27, 1943 when he made his first water landing at Penasco NAS, N.M., in a PT-31.

The one cigarette proved* significantly superior to all

PHILICO TECH Representative with the 601st A/CW Sq., Alken, S. C.

ANOTHER NEW champion in the “youngest” department is S/Sgt. Russell W. Dodds, Selfridge AFB, Mich., who was named First Sergeant at age 26 years, six months—making him six months younger than the ex-champion.

NEW CHAMPION as the squad’s run with the most Command Pilot assigned is the 73d Bomb Sq. Ramsey AFB, P.R. The 73d has five, one more than the previous leader. The 73d’s CPs are Lt. Col. George, C. Player, squadron commander; Maj. Stany E. Edmiston, Operations Officer; and Maj. Thomas G. Dockworth, Maj. Warren N. Rudy and Capt. James H. Palmer. Two others, Maj. Theodore W. Anderson and Capt. Clarence A. Marcum, are due to receive the rating in November.

ECI REPORTS that the Montgomery AFB, Ala., is the first AF base or station to have a 100-percent enrollment with ECI. The station is commanded by Maj. Gerald A. Moorehead and is comprised of 81 civilians.

UNTIL WE hear differently, the Wilfredo Bomber Sqs., Wethersfield AB, England, will stand as the first airman to go through the sound barrier. He accomplished the feat July 13, 1957 in an F-100F. That was a month prior to our previous champion.

OCTOBER 12, 1957
AIR FORCE TIMES

EARN 4% - INSURED SAFETY!
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Extra dollars with insured safety up to $10,000. Have your Financial Officer deduct a portion of each pay check and credit your Savings Account. Payments postmarked by the 10th of each month earn from the 1st.

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Signature...