

AFEHRI File 19-10

**Research Materials/Source Documents
ENLISTED FIRSTS**

FILE TITLE: 1st Commander of Edwards AFB, CA - MSgt Harley J. Fogleman

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Records prove 'Fogie' founded Edwards

H181
1930s

By DR. CHARLES GROSS
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Andrews AFB, MD

Soldiers in the ranks have been virtually anonymous figures throughout history. Until the mid-19th century, most of them were illiterate and left no written accounts of their lives. Until well into the 20th century, most military history was written by professional officers who, like the Duke of Wellington, had little interest in the common soldier.

After World War II, many civilian scholars began writing about military history. But they concentrated on operations, technology, policy, institutions and the leadership of senior officers.

Only during the past 20 years, with the growing interest in social history and the disenchantment with large American institutions, have scholars, journalists, novelists and film makers begun to take some interest in the lives of enlisted men and women.

The general neglect of enlisted members also is evident in the history of the Air Force Systems Command. One individual who deserves to be an exception to that rule is MSgt. Harley J. Fogleman. Fogleman founded the Army Air Corps installation that became Edwards AFB, Calif. He was a career soldier with many years of service. Nothing else, however,

is known about his background.

In 1933, while assigned to March Field, he was ordered by Lt. Col. "Hap" Arnold to establish a bombing and gunnery range at Muroc Dry Lake, Calif. That September, he and 20 of his troops created the first remote camp at Muroc. Its flat, sandy lakebed and year-round flying conditions made Muroc an excellent location for bombing and gunnery practice. The land was already owned by the government.

"Fogie," as he was nicknamed, and his troops lived in tents heated by coal-fired stoves. They depended upon an old generator for their electric power. Food, fuel and equipment were all brought in from March Field. According to an eyewitness account, "Fogie" took the quarter-ton truck and driver out daily for the [supply] run to either Lancaster or Muroc, with a stopover at Charlie Anderson's on the way back. Charlie sold wine in bulk out of the barrel, and Fogie always sampled some on his way in...."

During the winter, the entire camp was rained in for months at a time. The range was never a popular duty location. According to Fogleman, "We couldn't get a commanding officer. Commissioned officers would come up from Los Angeles, take one look at the place, and take off for L.A. again without even shutting off the motors of their planes." Fogleman's Range Maintenance Detachment was called "The Foreign Legion of the Air Corps" by local residents.

Fogleman remained in charge until 1940 when the land was turned over to the War Department. At that time, it was officially activated as the Muroc Bombing and Gunnery Range.

After America entered World War II, Muroc's military population grew rapidly. Some 6,300 soldiers were "sentenced to" the base by the end of 1942.

It continued to be an unpopular assignment. Soldiers fought against terrible food, boredom and dust. Transportation to Lancaster and other towns was spotty at best. Sports provided relief from the tedium of base life. Monthly dances were the most popular events for the troops but there was always a shortage of women at them. Fogleman served as the range's NCOIC until he retired in 1942.

After the war, the range became Edwards Air Force Base, and today is the home of the Air Force Flight Test Center. As for Fogleman, he disappeared into obscurity after his retirement. (*Material for this article was gathered through the cooperation of Dr. Jim Young, AFFTC historian, Edwards AFB, Calif.*)

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE



SEPTEMBER 18, 1947

From Edwards AFB history
1942-1945

EAFB

Muroc, California, was a "whistle stop" railroad station used as a loading center for the Santa Fe Railroad. Located in the middle of a sandy waste dotted with sage brush and Joshua trees it owed its very existence to the fact that it was an accessible spot to ship the products of the mines located in the area.

Muroc, despite the fact that the name sounds like some American Indian phrase, is the backward spelling of the name "Corum" and gets its quaint designation from the fact that an early settler named Corum owned the site of the present Army Air Field at one time and reversed his name to apply to the land.

Early details of the place's history are rather vague, consequently all material used herein is a combination of local folklore, and the tales of W/Sgt. Harley J. Fogleman, recently retired from the Air Force, who was one of the first soldiers stationed here.

Rogers Dry Lake, a flat, sandy stretch of what was once the bed of a long-evaporated lake, offered an ideal setting for both racing and testing speedy automobiles. Natural conditions adapted themselves to this purpose without artificial contrivances of any kind. Racing drivers from Los Angeles and nearby cities began to utilize the lake bed for this purpose. Among these early speed demons was Peter De Paula, now a captain in the Air Force.

Pioneers in the airplane world recognized Muroc as a natural air base, for it combined a level terrain with year-round flying conditions. Its waste spaces also provided an excellent site for practice bombings. September 1933, according to Sgt. Fogleman, a cadre was sent up from March Field to lay out a bombing range and to maintain it for training bomber crews.

Approximately twenty men were assigned here on D.S. from March Field and it was really "detached" service. All fuel, lumber, and other equipment was brought in from the "mother" field. Personnel lived in tents heated by coal which was freighted in to them. Electricity was furnished by an old power generator which was always failing.

Fogleman was in charge of the detachment with the rating of technical sergeant. "We couldn't get a commanding officer," he asserts, "Commissioned officers would come up from Los Angeles, take one look at the place, and take off for L.A. again without shutting off the motor of their plane."

Eventually a commanding officer took over. This officer was Lieutenant (Now Colonel) Max R. Fimmel. The place was made into a training center. Squadrons of bombers would land on the dry lake bed, bivouac beside their planes, and spend periods of time bombing the nearby ranges.

Local farmers complained that the explosions were breaking windows, causing cows to "freshen" prematurely, scaring sheep, hens and all manner of livestock and generally disrupting agricultural conditions. Government directives were issued placing all target ranges used for bombing a specified distance from farm houses. Eventually it was necessary for the Army to condemn property and evacuate the tenants of the nearby farms that the ranges might be utilized to their fullest advantage.

Fogleman's account of the place lays particular stress on the winter seasons when the entire camp would be "rained in" for months at a time. He gives a glowing account of their fire department which consisted of fifteen water buckets manned by the entire detachment in case of a blaze. On one occasion, Fogleman recalls, the water tower burned down depriving the fire fighters not only of the wherewithal to battle the flames, but also their drinking water for several days.

In 1937 a maneuver was held here in which the entire Air Corps of that time participated. Every ranking officer with the exception of General Arnold was present, as Fogleman remembers, and every type of flying craft owned by the government arrived more or less on schedule. There were some 200 planes in all, which represented the United States Air Corps at that time.

Among the trainees of that period was Elliot Roosevelt, who presented his office chair to Sgt. Fogleman as a token of his appreciation of the Fogleman capabilities.



G. L. ARBOGOST
Captain
Commanding



FOY O. COOK
First Lieutenant



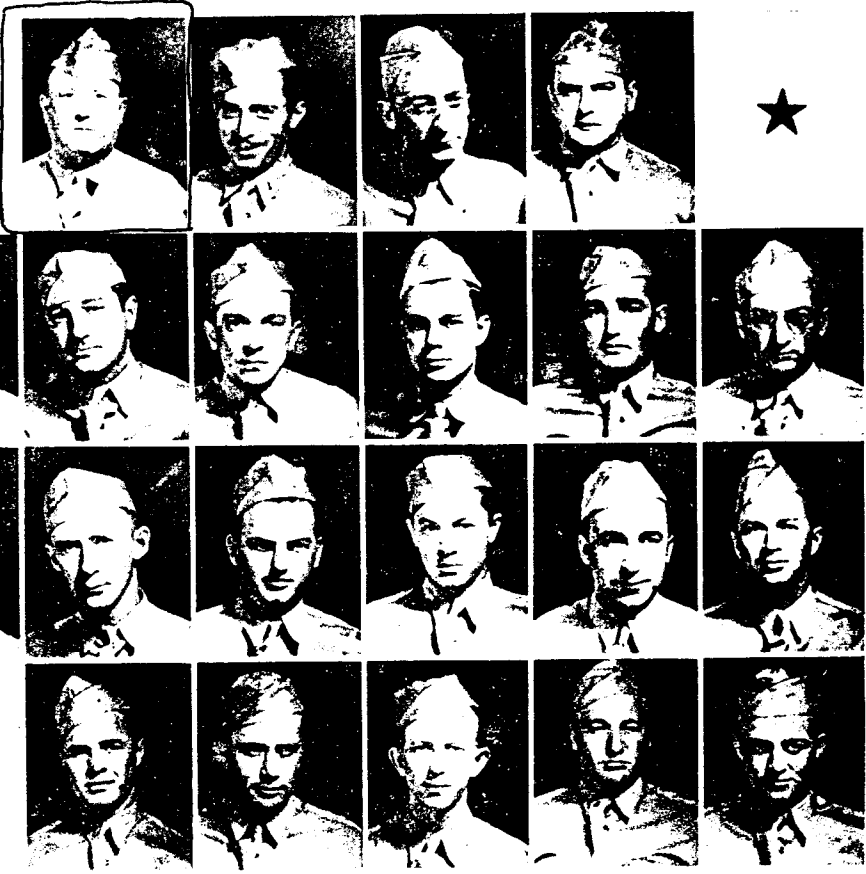
GEORGE W. COOPER
Second Lieutenant



IRVIN M. HUNCILMAN
Captain

BOMBING AND GUNNERY RANGE DETACHMENT

MARCH FIELD, 1941



(Reading from Left to Right)

First Row: Master Sergeant Fogleman, Harley J.; First Sergeant Knott, Charles S.; Technical Sergeant Collins, Robert M.; Staff Sergeant Barnes, John R.

Second Row: Staff Sergeants Bebout, Leroy, Jr.; Brewer, Jimmie E.; Sergeants Cramer, Charles E.; Glaser, Clifford H.; James, Keith G.; Klarman, Vernon A.

Third Row: Sergeants Lilley, Herman L.; Parsons, Walter K.; Corporals Bush, Clinton A.; Damrill, Chester; Ezell, Kenneth H.; Goldammer, Elmer F.

Fourth Row: Corporals Hinds, Durward L.; Massingill, Joseph D.; McKay, J. S.; Owens, Gaston E.; Sweeney, Walter L.