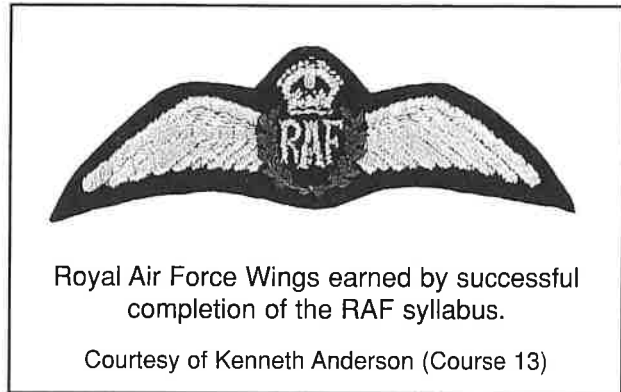


## The First Graduation

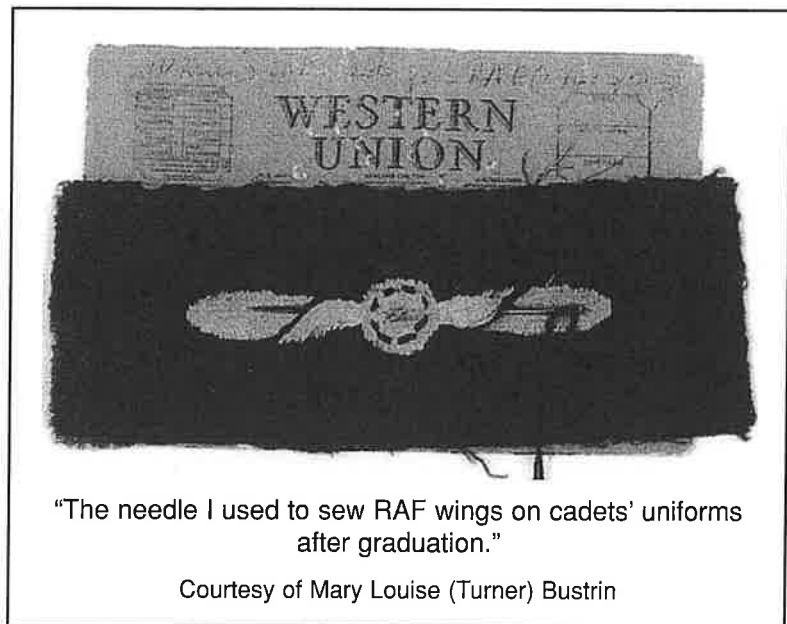
The early graduations were informal with the commanding officer making a few remarks and presenting the wings. At the Course 3 graduation, Squadron Leader Holloway handed the graduates their wings and said words to the effect, "Well done lads, now on your bikes and back to U.K. Try not to get killed."<sup>10</sup> In a November 1942 address to the commanding officers of the British flying training schools, Group Captain H. A. V. Hogan, Carnegie's replacement as director of U.K. training for the Royal Air Force delegation to Washington, D.C. (Rafdel), stated that he hoped to arrange for certain senior officers and civilian dignitaries to visit the British flying training schools "on the occasion of their graduation ceremonies to present wings and other prizes." Good to his word, Group Captain Hogan delivered to Falcon graduations an American brigadier general and British officers in the ranks of air marshal, air vice marshal, and air commodore, and on two occasions a group captain named Hogan.<sup>11</sup>



Cadets who received RAF wings had successfully completed the British Training Syllabus. That syllabus included a ground school curriculum considered to be tougher than the curriculum at U.S. Army pilot training schools and flying instruction in the three types of training aircraft.

Royal Air Force wings were made of heavy gold braid on a felt backing and had to be sewn on the uniform tunic. In the absence of girlfriends and mothers who were far away in England, this sewing job fell to the office girls.

"We girls kept needles and thread in our desks for just this occasion. It became sort of a status symbol how long a line of cadets there was in front of your desk, waiting for wings to be sewn on. You've never had a compliment until a Scot cadet says thank you and then calls you a bonnie lassie."<sup>12</sup>



Mary Lou Turner

<sup>10</sup> "Hours Flown During Training at Falcon," *Falcon Field Association of Great Britain Newsletter*, ed. W. McCash AFM, 1998 No. 1, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Group Captain Harry Hogan, "British Flying Training Schools, Minutes of Conference Held on 3rd, 4th, November/42, Entry of U.S. Cadets to BFTS's," Rafdel document number A.23,559/42 dated November 12, 1942. The dignitaries present at each graduation are listed with the course rosters in the Appendices.

<sup>12</sup> Bustrin, p. 25.

The cadets of Course 1 graduated on October 31, 1941, and held their graduation party that same night in the recently completed east hangar. The *Mesa Journal-Tribune* reported that the Course 1 graduation party was a gala event.<sup>13</sup> Mary Lou Turner almost missed the party.

“All sorts of dignitaries — civilian, military, the socially prominent and their daughters from around the valley were invited. Oh, what excitement and we in the office were right in the thick of all the planning and preparation. We addressed the invitations and recorded the RSVP’s. The closer the date for the dinner dance came, the more aware we girls were that we had not received an invitation. The day of the dance arrived, and we were really down-hearted, still no invitation. Clyde [Gilman], our boss, knowing exactly what the trouble was, rose at his desk and clear across that large office, asked Mr. Coulter, ‘The office girls were wondering if they had been invited to the dance.’

“Silence. Mr. ‘Red’ Coulter, a rough and ready pilot of the barnstorming era of aviation, rubbed his chin, ‘Well,’ he said, ‘I guess they wouldn’t do anything the company would be ashamed of.’ OH, OH, OH.



Mary Lou Turner, flight accounting office secretary. Now Mary Louise (Turner) Bustrin, she fondly remembers her time at Falcon as “the job you couldn’t wait to get to every Monday morning!”

Photograph by David Thiele, courtesy of Mary Louise (Turner) Bustrin

<sup>13</sup> “Happy Days Are Here Again!” *Mesa Journal-Tribune*, November 7, 1941. Course 1 would be the only course to hold their graduation party at Falcon. All future graduation parties were held at the Hotel Westward Ho in Phoenix.

"There was really gloom in the office after that. I was on the switchboard and answered a call from a gushing mother. She inquired if I thought it would be proper for the girls to wear formal dresses since they looked so pretty and sweet in formals. 'Wear anything,' I growled.

"Time to go home. We were walking toward the main gate of the field to the parking lot, dejectedly. We had to pass # 1 hangar where the party was to be held. We might as well see what it looked like. The hangar had been swept and hosed down. In the center were a PT-17, BT-13 and an AT-6, scrubbed and polished until they gleamed. Potted palms and plants had been interspersed among them. Along the north side of the hangar was a long buffet table decorated with flowers. An orchestra was setting up nearby. Slowly we turned and walked away. Just then briskly walking toward the office, Mr. Coulter called, 'Well, I guess I'll be seeing all you girls at the party tonight.' Hearts stopped. My lips were frozen. Fran was the one with gumption. 'We didn't know we were invited,' she called. 'Of course, you are!' roared back Mr. Coulter. Not ten steps farther, four cadets stopped us. Spit and polish from boot to cap badge, they anxiously inquired, 'We would like to invite you to the dance, if you'll come.' Needless to say we flew home in Ruth's silver-gray cadillac convertible to change and return.

"Our young men met us at the gate. . . . I selected Harry Hannah [Course] 4, a Scotsman from Edinburgh. We had a wonderful time. We ate and danced right along with John Swope [Southwest Airways executive] and Dorothy McGuire, the movie star, who had been married that day and were celebrating, too. I remember she wore a red suit and danced in her stocking feet.

"At the end of the evening Harry turned to me and said in his Scot brogue, 'I donna think you'va understud all I'va bin sayin' t'night.' He was right. Dear Harry Hannah — I hope all went well with him during the war."<sup>14</sup>



**Control tower in late 1941**

The east hangar, pictured behind the control tower, was the site of the Course 1 graduation party. The shadow of the west hangar can be seen in the foreground.

Photograph courtesy of Tom Austin (Course 5)

<sup>14</sup> Bustrin, pp. 14-16. Robert Brown, registrar of the Falcon Field Association of Great Britain, believes that Sergeant Hannah survived the war, but the Association has been unable to locate him.

After the graduation party, the same train that brought them to Falcon, the Rock Island Line, carried the thirty-nine newly graduated pilots of Course 1, No. 4 British Flying Training School, Falcon Field, Mesa, Arizona, back to Canada. Surely, they were the world's finest pilots, and fresh from their graduation party they approached Chicago, Illinois, all "full of piss and vinegar" with brand new RAF wings emblazoned on their chests.

Two of their number wanted to see more of Chicago than the train station. According to a *Chicago Tribune* story picked up by the *Mesa Journal-Tribune*, they missed the train to Canada. Caught before they could properly begin their tour, the errant pilots, bedecked in RAF blue, were ushered into Chicago Mayor Kelly's office for a press conference. The two wisely withheld their names, believing themselves to be in "a mess of trouble anyway;" nevertheless, they did ask Mayor Kelly for his autograph. A bemused Kelly presented each with an autographed picture before directing Police Detective John Sullivan to take them into custody — in order to "show them the city."<sup>15</sup>

## Hollywood

Despite the attraction of Chicago, Hollywood was the all-time favorite for cadets stationed at Falcon. On seven-day furloughs, cadets hit the road for Route 66 and on to Hollywood, that make-believe wonderland packed with music, excitement, friendship, laughter, and good times. They were in the middle of a world war, yet they were far removed.

"Once in town we found that, in 1943, wearing a uniform was exactly the same as waving a magic wand. Doors opened all over the place, invitations came easily, and we had to fight really hard to pay for our own drink in a bar. Get back into bed on the same day in which you got up and you were labelled a dead-beat.

"There we were, swimming in private pools, visiting film studios, watching live radio broadcasts at NBC, accepting rides, here, there, or wherever. To dance the night and morning away to the music of the Tommy Dorsey Big Band at some dance palace on Sunset Boulevard was no great deal. The one never to be missed, of course, was the Hollywood Canteen, a place that was, by the time we reached it, rapidly becoming a legend. The facility was provided by the studios to cater especially to service personnel, dozens of film's big names turning up there every day and night. For them, I suppose, it was a sort of war work.

"It was 10 p.m. on the first night I managed to reach the Hollywood Canteen, and it was booming along like a Roman orgy. Stars such as Spencer Tracy and Gail Patrick, appeared both on the stage and serving behind the food bar. Jeanette MacDonald helped entertain for one solid hour with songs she herself made famous. Following right behind her act came Harry James and his Big Band, the music really setting the place on fire. Lena Horne and Loretta Young served Jimmy Large and me with coke, chatting away all the time.

<sup>15</sup> "RAF Cadets Miss Train for Fun in Windy City," *Mesa Journal-Tribune*, November 28, 1941.

"Next day, I watched Harry James and his orchestra and singers do a live broadcast for NBC, picking up the autographs of Deanna Durbin and Shirley Temple at the Hollywood Canteen later in the day. Shirley could really get stuck into the jitterbugging routine, though it was difficult for her to get wound up. Servicemen kept cutting in every few steps. On the way 'home,' George Forsyth and I got a lift from Red Skelton and his current date."<sup>16</sup>

Philip Gray (Course16)



**Cadet Tom Austin on leave at Earl Carroll's Theater in Hollywood, California, January 1942**

Photograph courtesy of Tom Austin (Course 5)

<sup>16</sup> Philip Gray, private manuscript detailing his life and experiences at Falcon Field. Philip Gray is also the author of *Ghosts of Targets Past*, which includes additional stories about his life at Falcon.

Because Southwest Airways was owned by Hollywood luminaries, Hollywood celebrities made frequent visits to Falcon. Falcon Mechanic L. P. Overstreet was working under the wing of a North American Texan when he noticed a man in an American Army uniform examining the engine. Later, while returning his tools to the work bench, Overstreet commented to another mechanic, "Boy, that fellow looked mighty familiar." "He should," came the reply, "that was Jimmy Stewart."<sup>17</sup>

Actress Joan Fontaine was married to a Falcon flight instructor; actress Lorraine Day, to a Falcon ground school instructor. Henry C. "Hank" Potter, Hollywood movie director, and Floyd Hendrickson on leave from Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer Studios each spent time as field manager for Falcon.

Falcon bustled with film-making activities on several occasions. *Thunder Birds*, *Soldiers of the Air* starring, Gene Tierney, Preston Foster, and John Sutton was released by Twentieth Century-Fox in 1942. *Journey Together* starring Edward G. Robinson and Royal Air Force personnel was released by the Royal Air Force Film Production Unit in 1945. In addition, aerial scenes for the Royal Air Force films *Desert Victory* and *Tunisian Victory* were shot at Falcon.<sup>18</sup>



Course 6 cadets with Gene Tierney, star of *Thunder Birds*, *Soldiers of the Air*. Left to right they are Neill Cox, an unidentified cadet, and Frank Olford. After filming *Thunder Birds*, Tierney joined her soldier husband at Fort Riley, Kansas.

Photograph courtesy of Neill Cox



"One of too many marching scenes shot," said George Peter Alexandra of Course 7 about his "volunteer" service as an extra for the filming of *Thunder Birds*, *Soldiers of the Air*.

Photograph courtesy of Tom Austin (Course 5)

<sup>17</sup> L. P. Overstreet, interview with the author.

<sup>18</sup> Information about *Thunder Birds*, *Soldiers of the Air* and *Journey Together* was obtained from the actual films. Information about *Desert Victory* and *Tunisian Victory* was obtained from the *History of 15th Army Air Forces Flying Training Detachment (Primary-Basic-Advanced) Falcon Field, Mesa, Arizona (March and April 1944)*, p. 4.





**Course 6 cadets pose with Gary Cooper on a Hollywood sound stage.**

Front row sitting, left to right: Steve Gould, Andy Shields, and an unidentified cadet.

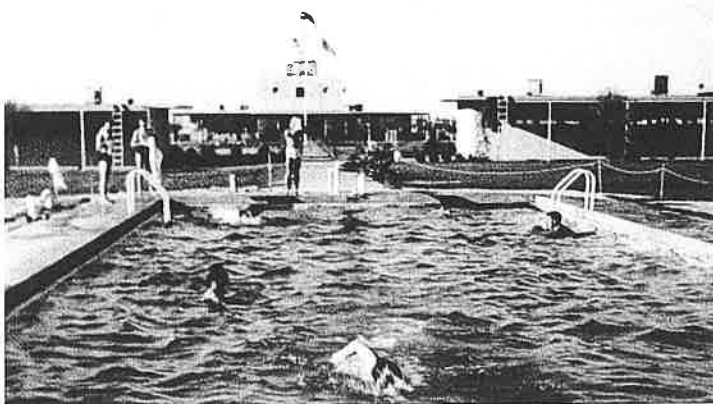
Middle row kneeling, left to right: Tom Curtis, Peter Arkell, "Egg" Lacey, "Effie" Archer, Peter Dunning, "Foxy" Page, unidentified (in civilian attire).

Top row standing, left to right: Ray Howgill, John Witney, "Bas" Taylor, unidentified cadet, Neill Cox, Cooper, Hollywood director Sam Wood, John Newton, Johnny Johnson, and an unidentified cadet.

Photograph courtesy of Neill Cox

In appreciation for Falcon's assistance in the production of *Thunder Birds*, Twentieth Century-Fox donated a swimming pool to Falcon. During the days when Falcon trained WWII pilots, the pool served as the place for initiating cadets into the fraternity of flyers. After a cadet first soloed, he received a dunking in the pool. The pool is still in use today.

Photograph courtesy of Val Boucher, formerly Mrs. Harry Vassie



## Pearl Harbor — the United States Enters the War

Course 2 graduated on Saturday, December 6, 1941. RAF cadet Jim Swaby of Course 2, lamented that “. . .not only was there NO GRADUATION PARADE but there were NO WINGS to issue as [British supply] had forgotten to lay in a stock of these. . . .”<sup>19</sup> The absence of the parade and the wings was forgotten the next day as radios blasted the news that Japanese planes had attacked the American fleet anchored at Pearl Harbor, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Honolulu resident Robert Cameron “Bob” Hammond knew instantly that something was wrong. His wife Hazel probably did not share his sense of alarm, but Bob was worried. If he were not already outside, he would have been running when he hit the screen door. The Army just did not fly on Sunday mornings, certainly not this low. Once outside, the thirty-four-year-old flyer saw a sky filled with airplanes that he did not recognize. What Hammond did recognize was the red insignia painted on the fuselage of each airplane that passed overhead — the red rising sun of Imperial Japan. He screamed over and over again, “Where are our airplanes?” and in utter frustration, emptied his pistol at the next Japanese airplane to fly over. He swore that he would get back at the Japanese.<sup>20</sup>

Bob Hammond returned to the mainland and became a flight instructor at Falcon Field. He would live one year, one month, and eleven days more. On January 18, 1943, Hammond was flying North American Texan AT-6A number BP215 with his student Leading Aircraftman (LAC) Robert Lawther of Course 11 when their aircraft was involved in a mid-air collision with North American Texan AT-6A number BP241 piloted by Sergeant N. I. Ballance, also of Course 11. Hammond, age thirty-five, and Lawther, age twenty, were killed instantly. Injured, Ballance parachuted to safety.<sup>21</sup> Bob Hammond was survived by his wife Hazel Hammond and their eight-month-old daughter Susanna.<sup>22</sup> Robert Lawther was the son of Mr. and Mrs. John Lawther, of Lurgan Co. Armagh, Northern Ireland, and husband of Muriel Jean Lawther of Armagh.<sup>23</sup>

As tragic as this accident was, Bob Hammond’s flying instruction at Falcon did ultimately help defeat the Japanese and end the war. He had fulfilled the promise he made to himself that fateful day in December 1941.

On December 8, one day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the flight accounting office bustled with activity. Mary Lou Turner said in her memoirs, “Mr. Lamoreaux was then the Southwest Field Manager. He immediately rescheduled our working hours to start at eight in the morning instead of nine as support of the war effort. And first thing I remember him saying that morning was, ‘Clyde, get some fly swatters and kill these flies.’ We swatted flies as though we were swatting Japanese.”<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Jim Swaby, “Course 2 — Graduation & Course Photograph,” *Falcon Field Assoc. Newsletter*, 1996-1, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> Sid Wood, letter to the author dated January 18, 1999.

<sup>21</sup> Flight Dispatcher’s Report for January 18, 1943.

<sup>22</sup> Wood.

<sup>23</sup> “Roll of Honour,” *The Falcon* (a Reunion booklet of the Falcon Field Association of Great Britain) 1988, p. 28.

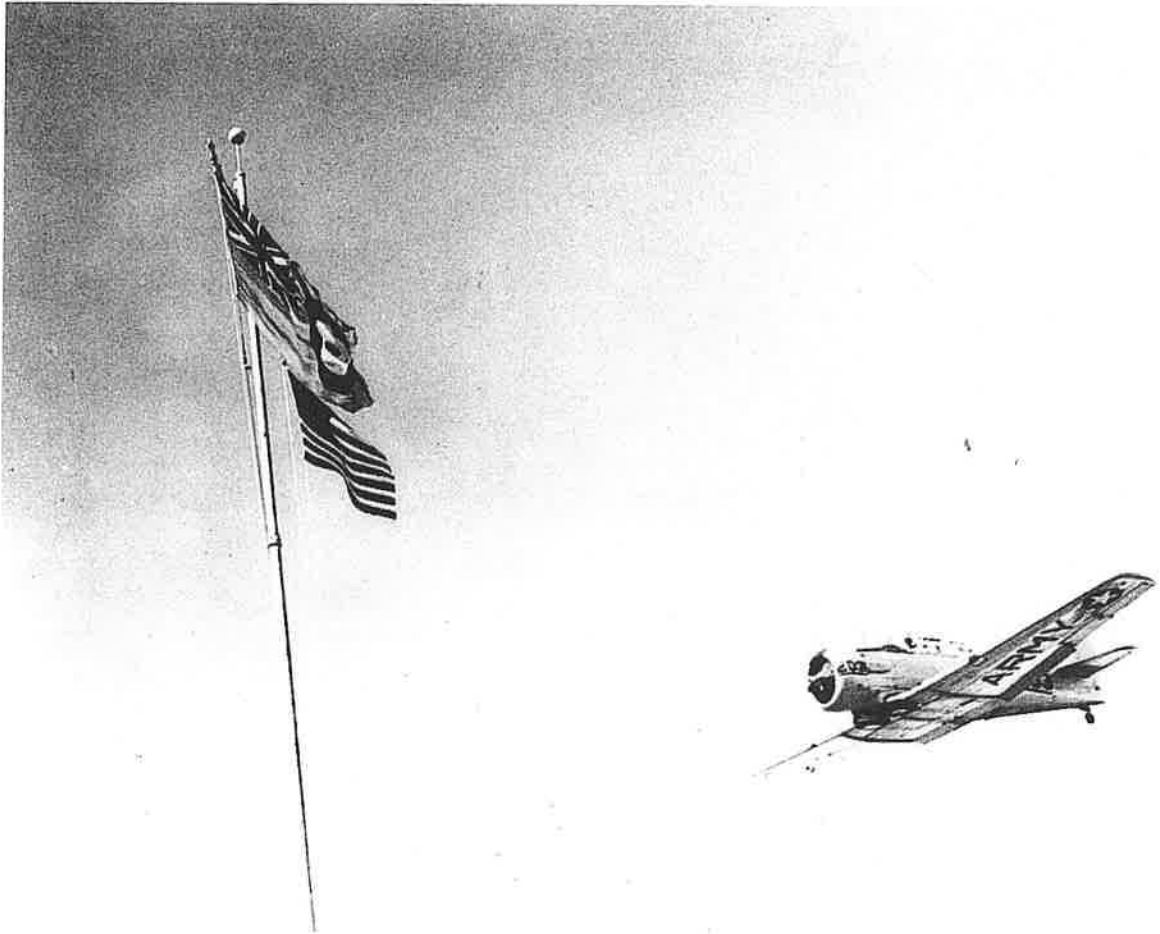
<sup>24</sup> Bustrin, pp. 16-17. The “Clyde” in this quote is Clyde Gilman, office manager for the flight accounting office. Gilman later transferred to the ground school as an instructor.





**Flight Instructor Bob Hammond surrounded by admiring British cadets**

Photograph by Flight Instructor David Thiele,  
courtesy of Flight Instructors Jimmy Grooms and Sid Wood



The flags of the RAF and the United States of America and a North American Aviation Texan in what appears to be a composite photograph. The date of the photograph is not known, but the flag arrangement is known to be an early-war configuration. In that configuration, the RAF flag and the American flag are displayed at equal heights from yardarm halyards. Later, the American flag was flown from the highest position on the flagstaff.

Photograph courtesy of Betty (Storrs) Downing

## CHAPTER FIVE

# THE AMERICANS

*The British Empire and the United States will have to be somewhat mixed up together in some of their affairs for mutual and general advantage. For my part, looking out upon the future, I do not view the process with any misgivings.*

Winston Churchill

On June 20, 1941, the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) was created to coordinate the activities of the Air Corps and Combat Command, two independent entities. Major General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, formerly Chief of the Army Air Corps, was named commanding general of the Army Air Forces. On March 9, 1942, Army aviation activities were further consolidated when the functions of the Commanding General, Combat Command and Chief of the Air Corps were vested in Hap Arnold, now a Lieutenant General.<sup>1, 2</sup> The United States Air Force (USAF), a branch of the armed services separate from the Army, would not be created until 1947.

Before November 1942, Army activity at Falcon was minimal. Records indicate that an American officer, a Lieutenant Parberry, was present in 1941 or 1942, presumably as custodian of the Army airplanes.<sup>3</sup> Falcon's civilian medical department became an Army unit in September 1942 when the contract surgeon Dr. Bayard L. Neff was commissioned a captain in the U.S. Army. In the next few months, another medical officer and three enlisted medics were assigned.<sup>4</sup>

### American Cadets Are Assigned to Falcon

Army involvement at Falcon Field escalated dramatically in November 1942 when seventeen American aviation cadets arrived to train side by side with the British as members of Falcon Course 13.<sup>5</sup> American administrators — two sergeants and one captain — came with them.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Official Guide to the Army Air Forces*, (New York: The Army Air Forces Aid Society, 1944), pp. 330 & 357.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold's date of rank for lieutenant general was December 1941.

<sup>3</sup> Lieutenant Parberry's exact responsibilities are not known, but the *History of 15th Army Air Forces Flying Training Detachment* for March and April 1944, p. 9, refers to his presence in 1941 or 1942. At that time, Falcon Electrician Don Cross submitted proposed plans for alteration to an aircraft starter switch assembly to a Lieutenant Parberry, "the American officer on this Post." Most of what is known about the Army at Falcon comes from histories prepared at the direction of Headquarters, Army Air Forces Western Flying Training Command, Santa Ana, California. Although the histories were not authorized until July 1943 and although the first history officially covered only January 1, 1943, to March 1, 1944, some histories do include historical background dating back to 1941.

<sup>4</sup> Lieutenant Marvin R. A. Grant, *History of 15th Army Air Forces Flying Training Detachment (January 1, 1943 to March 1, 1944)*, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> The grade of aviation cadet had been established on June 3, 1941. The Aviation Cadet Recruiting Program was the principal source of flying officers (pilots, bombardiers, and navigators) and ground officer specialists (armament, communications, engineering, meteorology, and photography). The program was open to civilians and enlisted men able to meet entrance requirements. Successful completion of aviation cadet training qualified men to be commissioned second lieutenants or appointed flight officers. The aviation cadet program was suspended in March 1944, a victim of its own success: the United States had produced a surplus of trained aviation personnel. Later in the war, the Program admitted a few Army Air Forces officers and enlisted men to fill needed specialties. [*The Official Guide to the Army Air Forces*, (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1944), pp. 40, 41, & 357.]

<sup>6</sup> The captain was assigned under Special Order #290, Western Flying Training Command dated November 5, 1942; the sergeants were assigned under Special Order #51, 12th Army Air Forces Flying Training Detachment, and Special Order #298, Luke Field, Phoenix, Arizona dated November 12, 1942; and the cadets were assigned under Special Order #55, 12th Army Air Forces Flying Training Detachment dated November 16, 1942.

The assignment of American aviation cadets set in motion a chain of events that would lead to the activation of Falcon's 15th Army Air Forces Flying Training Detachment (15th AAFSTD) on March 25, 1943. Later, on May 1, 1944, the 15th would be redesignated the 3044th Army Air Forces Base Unit (3044th AAFBU), Falcon Field, Mesa, Arizona.<sup>7</sup>

Between November 1942 and the commissioning of the 15th AAFSTD in March 1943 the Army delegation at Falcon was called an "Army Air Forces Installation," and the captain, Lawrence E. "Larry" Holmes, was called the "commanding officer of the installation."<sup>8</sup> From November 1942 until the end of the war, Falcon had two commanding officers: the British commanding officer of No. 4 British Flying Training School (No. 4 BFTS) and the American commanding officer of the Army Air Forces Installation, later the 15th AAFSTD, and later still the 3044th AAFBU. The same pattern was followed at the other British flying training schools: seventeen American aviation cadets joined the November classes, and American commands were established.

A quick succession of officers headed Falcon's Army Air Forces Installation and the 15th AAFSTD in late 1942 and 1943. Captain Holmes was followed by Captain Glen G. Swan in January 1943 and he, by First Lieutenant (later Captain) Hadley B. Eliker in March 1943. First Lieutenant Marvin R. A. Grant assumed command of the 15th AAFSTD in September 1943; was promoted to captain on April 24, 1944; and, with the exception of one month in 1944, remained commanding officer until the base closed at the end of the war.<sup>9</sup>



Second Lieutenant Floyd William Borneman (Course 19) poses with his wife Lillian and his mother Florence on graduation day. Because he trained under the British syllabus, Lieutenant Borneman earned RAF and AAF wings. Assigned to the China-Burma-India theater of operations, he flew "The Hump" in C-87 transports. "The Hump" refers to the world's highest mountain range, the Himalayas. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) and the Air Medal (AM) with one oak leaf cluster (a second award).

Photograph courtesy of  
Lillian E. Borneman

<sup>7</sup> The redesignation was directed under General Order 24, Headquarters Western Flying Training Command dated April 22, 1944.

<sup>8</sup> Grant, *History (January 1, 1943 to March 1, 1944)*, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> Capt. Marvin R. A. Grant, *History of 3044th Army Air Forces Base Unit (Primary — Advanced) and Falcon Field, Mesa, Arizona (July 1, 1945 to September 11, 1945)*, appendix. The 3044th AAFBU was discontinued on June 30, 1944. (The last class to include American cadets, Course 19, had graduated on June 17, 1944.) Captain Grant was transferred to Thunderbird Field. Most other Army personnel, while officially transferred to Williams Field, remained at Falcon on detached service where Captain Cletus J. Oster, department head of the U.S. Army's Technical Inspection Department at Falcon, served as liaison officer. Captain Grant was ordered back on July 26, 1944, at which time he assumed duties as liaison officer. His command was restored on November 1, 1944, when the 3044th AAFBU was reestablished "in order to fulfill the provisions of and to supervise the compliance with the contract between the AAF and Southwest Airways Co. at Falcon Field."

American cadets trained with the British cadets under the British training syllabus. At Falcon, one hundred sixteen Americans from Course 13 through Course 19 were awarded Royal Air Force and U.S. Army Air Forces wings. They were (and in retirement, still are) entitled to wear both sets of wings — the RAF wings over their right pocket, the AAF wings over the left pocket.

Why were Americans cadets sent to train with the British? Historical records and personal recollections combine to tell the story. In his capacity as director of flight training for the Royal Air Force Delegation to Washington, D.C. (Rafdel), Group Captain Hogan supervised the infusion of American cadets into the British flight program. In a 1942 address to the commanding officers of the British flying training schools, he told those in attendance that the decision to include Americans would be valuable to both services and both countries concerned.<sup>10</sup> In an interview in the 1980s with Falcon Field Association Chairman Bill McCash AFM, then Air Vice Marshal Harry Hogan CB, DFC, Royal Air Force retired described the decision making process.

“In typical RAF style the courses were kept to around fifty men, and the Army Air Corps did not think that the schools were being used to their full capacity, as they were accustomed to much larger courses. . .so they began to talk of reducing the number of schools. This was unacceptable, of course, so from our Course 13. . .our numbers were built up to about 100 men. Also at this time, to encourage the Americans not to close any of the schools, they were invited to send some of their cadets to joint and train to our syllabus. This they did and took up fifteen to twenty percent of the places.”<sup>11</sup>

The British invitation notwithstanding, there may have been another reason why American cadets were sent to the British flying training schools. One of the first Americans to train at Falcon was Aviation Cadet Richard Appling of Course 13. In a 1998 letter to the author, Appling said, “Several years ago I had dinner with Al Storrs, who was Chief Pilot for the [Southwest Airways] Corporation at Falcon Field. He related a story that may shed light on why Americans were sent to train at Falcon. It seems that General Arnold visited Falcon not long after it opened and Storrs took the opportunity to tell him, with some glee, perhaps, that the RAF had more experience in air war than the U.S. Army and that they did a better job of training pilots than did the Army Air Corps. As Storrs told the story, Arnold decided to assign U.S. cadets to RAF training to see if they turned out as well as or better than the Army trained cadets.”<sup>12</sup>

The factors that motivated General Arnold to send American cadets to the British flying training schools may never be fully revealed, but his decision to do so is well documented. He sent a series of directives to Headquarters, Army Air Forces Training Command (AAFTC), Fort Worth, Texas, ordering the establishment of American cadet contingents and U.S. Army administrative support. In turn, Major General Barton K. Yount, commanding general of the AAFTC, sent the following teletype to the subordinate commanders who had jurisdiction over Army activities at the British flying training schools.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Group Captain Harry Hogan, “British Flying Training Schools, Minutes of Conference Held on 3rd, 4th, November/42, Entry of U.S. Cadets to BFTS’s,” Rafdel document number A.23,559/42 dated November 12, 1942.

<sup>11</sup> “American Cadets at Falcon,” *Falcon Field Association of Great Britain Newsletter*, ed. W. McCash AFM, 1998 No. 3, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Appling, letter to the author dated August 20, 1998.

<sup>13</sup> The document on the following page is a recreation of an original located at the United States Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. The original was so lightly printed that it could not have been copied electronically for inclusion in this book.



TELETYPE

A3-5/JEP:jed

FT WH 551 HQ AAFTC FT WORTH TEX 31 Oct.  
TO CG SEAFTC MAXWELL FLD ALA.  
CG GCAFTC RANDOLPH FLD TEX.  
CG WCAFTC 1104 W 8TH ST SANTA ANA CALIF.

TE. ....

1. IN COMPLIANCE WITH DIRECTIVES FROM CG, AAF, 17 U.S. STUDENTS WILL BE ENTERED IN EACH OF THE 5 BRITISH FLYING TRAINING SCHOOLS NOV. 12, 1942, AND EACH 9 WEEKS SUBSEQUENT THERETO.

2. THESE STUDENTS WILL RECEIVE THE ALL-THROUGH COURSE OF INSTRUCTION GIVEN AT THESE SCHOOLS CONSISTING OF 70 HOURS ON PRIMARY TRAINERS IN 9 WEEKS AND 130 HOURS ON AT-6A AIRPLANES IN 18 WEEKS FOR A TOTAL OF 200 HOURS IN 27 WEEKS.

3. IT IS DESIRED, THAT, INSOFAR AS IS POSSIBLE, STUDENTS ASSIGNED THIS TRAINING BE SELECTED FROM PREFLIGHT SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO HAVE HAD CPT OR OTHER FLYING EXPERIENCE AND WHO VOLUNTEER.

4. IT IS CONTEMPLATED THAT GRADUATES OF THIS COURSE WILL BE ASSIGNED TO THE AIR TRANSPORT COMMAND.

5. GRADUATES OF THIS COURSE OF TRAINING WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR COMMISSION OR FLIGHT OFFICER RATING IN EXACTLY THE SAME MANNER AS GRADUATES OF U.S. SCHOOLS.

6. AUTHORITY IS BEING REQUESTED FROM HQ, AAF TO ACTIVATE AN AIR FORCES FLYING TRAINING DETACHMENT AT EACH OF THESE SCHOOLS TO HANDLE THE AIR FORCES ADMINISTRATION NECESSARY THERETO. HQ AAF DIRECTS THAT A MINIMUM OF ONE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER BE ASSIGNED EACH DETACHMENT.

7. ONE PILOT OFFICER WILL BE ASSIGNED EACH SCHOOL AS COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE AAFTD AND AS ASSISTANT FLIGHT SUPERVISOR TO WORK WITH THE U.K. CHIEF FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR. FURTHER INFORMATION CONCERNING THE SENDING OF THESE PILOT OFFICERS TO THE R.C.A.F. CENTRAL INSTRUCTOR SCHOOL WILL BE FURNISHED AS SOON AS ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE BY HQ, AAF.

8. EACH TRAINING CENTER WILL FURNISH STUDENTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL FOR THESE SCHOOLS WITHIN ITS AREA AS FOLLOWS:  
SEAFTC — CLEWISTON, FLORIDA  
GCAFTC — TERRELL, TEXAS; MIAMI, OKLAHOMA; PONCA CITY, OKLA.  
WCAFTC — MESA, ARIZONA.

9. INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING THE TRANSFER OF AIRPLANES NECESSARY FOR THIS TRAINING WILL BE ISSUED AT AN EARLY DATE.

CG, AAFTC

END

(this document was recreated from an original)

The historic significance of this teletype can not be overstated. Among other things, the teletype establishes November 12, 1942, as the target date for the arrival of the American cadets at each of the five British flying training schools then in operation (teletype paragraph 1).<sup>14</sup> Once at a school, the American cadets were to participate in the "all-through" training unique to the British program (teletype paragraph 2). In contrast, each phase of United States Army Air Forces training was conducted at a different school.

Cadets were to be selected from preflight school graduates who had "CPT or other flying experience" (teletype paragraph 3). CPT is an abbreviated acronym for Civil Pilot Training Program (CPTP). The CPTP was a United States government Civil Aeronautics Authority (CAA) program established on June 27, 1939. The objective of that program was to provide as many trained pilots as possible before America could be drawn into the war. General Arnold clearly wanted the American cadets to be successful in the British schools, and how better to ensure success than to send experienced pilots — the more experience the better. General Arnold was betting on the American cadets, and he hedged on his bet. British cadet Robert "Trigger" Brown of Course 20 put it this way, "It was a case where Uncle Sam was not going to lose face vis-a-vis those smart ass Brits."

Seventeen Americans trained as members of British Course 13. Richard Appling observed, "I think Course 13 Yanks were all college men, and probably all CPTP trained. I had two years of college and a private license."<sup>15</sup> Other American cadets had similar flying backgrounds. Paul Giraudin, Jr., of Course 15 held an associate in arts degree and a CPTP private pilot's license from Gainesville Junior College in Gainesville, Texas; furthermore, he had a commercial license earned through a secondary CPTP taught at Les Bowman's Flying School, Meacham Field, Fort Worth, Texas. Near the completion of his USAAF pre-flight school in Santa Ana, California, he was directed by his squadron CO, without explanation, to report to Group Headquarters the next day. Giraudin remembers the incident this way:

"One day, near conclusion of pre-flight training at Santa Ana, my squadron CO called me to his office. Without any qualification whatever, he instructed me to report to GHQ at 3:00 p.m. the following day; although he knew nothing of the nature of the call, he implored me to represent the squadron in impeccable military manner: shined shoes, polished buckle, the whole nine yards. He told me, also, to forget about my squadron schedules and duties until the urgency had been resolved.

"Nearing base headquarters the following day, I saw a small assembly of cadets milling about near the front entry, evincing a state of curiosity similar to mine. A couple of officers interviewed us individually, the main thrust relating to what we thought of our ability to get along with men from another country, yet to be identified, on a daily basis, in close association, such as would be the case in an 'experimental' joint flight training program. We were told that if accepted into the program, our assignments upon graduation, likely would be to the Ferrying Command.

<sup>14</sup> No. 1 BFTS, Terrell, Texas; No. 3 BFTS, Miami, Oklahoma; No. 4 BFTS, Mesa, Arizona; No. 5 BFTS, Clewiston, Florida; and No. 6 BFTS, Ponca City, Oklahoma. No. 2 BFTS, Lancaster, California, closed on December 31, 1942, after the graduation of Course 10. Subsequent to that date, the facilities were used for U.S. Army Air Forces training. No. 7 BFTS, Sweetwater, Texas, was in operation for ten weeks only in June, July, and August of 1942 (one course of primary), before their facilities were reassigned to the Army Air Forces for use as a Women's Airforce Service Pilot (WASP) training base. WASP pilots ferried aircraft from factories to operational terminals and shipping ports.

<sup>15</sup> Appling.

"Before and after our interview, we cadets sought to find reason for our having been selected from such a large base population. We determined quickly, that each of us had one thing in common: We were licensed pilots.

"Our assignments came a few days later; we were to report to No. 4 BFTS, Falcon Field, Mesa, Arizona. We were identified as Course 15 at Falcon. . . . It was then that we learned we were to receive cadet training at a British flying school using their particular curriculum, both on the ground and in the air. At successful completion, we would receive RAF wings, as well as those of the USAAF."<sup>16</sup>

Paul Giraudin, Jr.



Second Lieutenant Paul Giraudin, Jr., proudly wears the British Royal Air Force wings and the United States Army Air Forces wings he earned at Falcon. He flew C-46 transports in the China-Burma-India Theater. His flight log book documents seventy-five round trip missions over "The Hump" delivering gasoline, bombs, and personnel to various bases in China. On one occasion he had to land for fuel at Myitkyina, Burma, where American fighters "were flying sorties without leaving the traffic pattern. One end of the runway belonged to the Americans; the other end to the Japanese. I got my gas and left in a hurry." He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with one oak leaf cluster and the Air Medal with one oak leaf cluster.

Photograph courtesy of  
Paul Giraudin, Jr. (Course 15)

By late 1943 the Army was no longer conducting surreptitious interviews with cadets. Perry Baycroft recalls a notice on the bulletin board at the Santa Ana, California, military pre-flight school detailing an opportunity for twenty cadets to take their flight training at No. 4 BFTS. The notice contained a list of desired qualifications, not-the-least of which was a four-year college degree. He did not have the desired four-year degree, but he did have a two-year associate degree with his coursework directed toward aeronautical engineering, and, most importantly, he held a commercial pilot's license. With nineteen other American cadets, he joined the British of Course 19.<sup>17</sup> (American classes had been increased from seventeen cadets to twenty beginning with Course 18.) American resolve to send only trained pilots to the British flying training schools may have diminished for the later courses. While many American cadets in the later courses did have significant prior flying experience, some had pre-flight training only.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Paul Giraudin, Jr., letter to the author dated May 21, 1998.

<sup>17</sup> "American Cadets At Falcon," *Falcon Field Association of Great Britain Newsletter*, ed. W. McCash AFM, 1998 No. 4, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> James S. Calvert, letter to the author dated June 15, 1998.



**Course 19 cadets and their instructors fly North American Texans over the Arizona desert.**

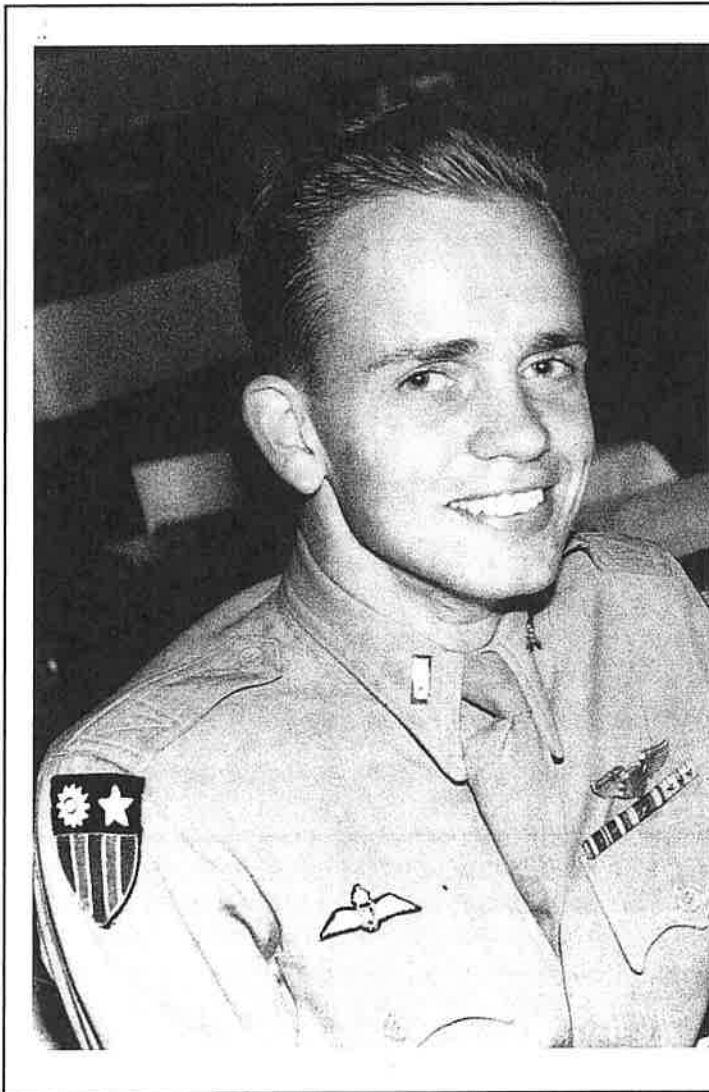
The aircraft uppermost in the formation (possibly BP212), an AT-6A manufactured in Dallas, Texas, is piloted by British cadet John Roy Frederick Teague (front seat) and Instructor Jack Robinson (rear seat); BP224, another Dallas AT-6A, is piloted by American cadet Francis Martin Radditz, Jr.; BP260, an AT-6A manufactured in Inglewood, California, is piloted by American cadet Virgil Spitze Schoeppel; BP261, an AT-6C manufactured in Dallas, is piloted by American cadet Whitney McCormack; and BP243, a Dallas AT-6A, is piloted by American cadet William Elvin Southwick (front seat) and Instructor Don Walker (rear seat). The unnumbered cowl on the uppermost aircraft may be a replacement. The tail numbers are North American Aviation, Inc., contract numbers and can be used to identify the aircraft. AT-6As, AT-6Cs, and AT-6Ds were used at Falcon.

Two of these young men did not survive the war. Pilot Officer John Roy Frederick Teague was killed on November 7, 1944, in England. Later that same month, Flight Instructor Don Walker was killed in a crash near Falcon Field.

Photograph by Sergeant Cy Cartwright, courtesy of Flight Dispatcher Keith Hansen  
 Identifications by Keith Hansen

## Graduation of American Cadets

Paragraph 4 of the teletype concerns the assignments that the Americans could expect upon graduation. Paragraph 4 states that "it is contemplated" that graduates be assigned to the Air Transport Command (ATC). Some of the Americans did eventually fly for other commands, but with the exception of one cadet who was hospitalized at Williams Field after graduation, all were initially assigned to the ATC, and a majority for whom information is available served with the ATC for the duration.<sup>19</sup> Many served with the ATC in the China-Burma-India (CBI) theater of operations flying "The Hump" from India to China delivering supplies to bases in China. "The Hump" refers to the world's highest mountain range, the treacherous Himalayas.



First Lieutenant Jim Calvert of Course 19 flashes a grin on his first night back from China. In a forgivable breach of uniform regulations, he proudly wears the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) wings that his father earned during World War I. (The RFC became the RAF in 1918.) His shoulder patch is the China-Burma-India (CBI) theater insignia.

After graduating from No. 4 BFTS, he flew Russian marked C-47s to Alaska where Russian pilots took custody. Transferred to the CBI theater, he flew ten missions over "The Hump" and later flew harrowing missions into mountainous Liuchow, China, to evacuate the 14th AAF. Calvert's command received a commendation from Major General Claire L. Chennault, commanding general of the 14th AAF, who also relayed the praise of Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek, president of the Republic of China and commander-in-chief of the Chinese armed forces.

Jim Calvert flew 112 combat missions, one more than his father flew for the Royal Flying Corps in WWI. His awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with one oak leaf cluster.

Photograph courtesy of Jim Calvert

<sup>19</sup> The initial assignments were as follows: Class 43-B-1 (British Course 13) — ATC, Alpena, Michigan; Class 43-B-2 (British Course 14) — ATC, Billy Mitchell Field, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Class 43-B-3 (British Course 15) — ATC, Billy Mitchell Field, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Class 43-B-4 (British Course 16) — ATC, 20th Ferrying Group, Municipal Airport, Nashville, Tennessee; Class 44-B-1 (British Course 17) — ATC, 20th Ferrying Group, Municipal Airport, Nashville Tennessee; Class 44-B-2 (British Course 18) — ATC, Long Beach AAF, Long Beach, California; Class 44-B-3 (British Course 19) — ATC, 557th AAF Base Unit, 7th Ferrying Group, Gore Field, Great Falls, Montana. The hospitalized graduate was Albert C. Ricks, Jr., of Course 18.



Paragraph 5 of the teletype states that graduates would be eligible for commission as second lieutenants or appointment as flight officers.<sup>20</sup> The term "eligible" as used in the teletype may be misleading. U.S. policy directed that all who sat in the front of the aircraft (pilots, co-pilots, navigators, and bombardiers) would be officers. The British had no such policy and often flew with sergeants as pilots and officers in other aircrew positions. A notable case-in-point involves RAF cadet Edward Francis Hicks of Course 4. As a sergeant, he received the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal for his actions as a bomber pilot during a mission to the Ruhr Valley. Two of his crew members were officers: Pilot Officer R. J. Hopkins, the bomb aimer, and Flying Officer R. F. Clayton, the navigator. Another sergeant, F. C. Blair, was the wireless operator.<sup>21</sup>

Of the 125 American cadets who reported to Falcon for training, 117 graduated and 116 were promoted to officer rank. (The graduate who was hospitalized at Williams was commissioned later.) Of the 116 promoted to officer rank at the time of graduation, 114 were commissioned second lieutenants in the Army of the United States, and two were appointed flight officers.<sup>22</sup>



Wing Commander John Fergus McKenna AFC (far left), CO of No. 4 BFTS, and Brigadier Gen. Alvin C. Kincaid, Commanding General of the AAF's 37th Flying Training Wing, conduct an inspection prior to the presentation of wings to Course 13, the first class to include Americans.

Front rank cadets are (from the right) Elmer Julius Altnow, Army of the United States (AUS); Charles Brainard Findley, AUS; James Brannan Asbridge, RAF; and Albert Lee Floyd, AUS.

Photograph courtesy of Flight Dispatcher Keith Hansen  
 Identifications by Lieutenant Colonel Charles B. Findley

<sup>20</sup> The grade of flight officer was established on July 8, 1942. (This American grade, or rank, should not be confused with the British rank of flying officer.) *The Official Guide to the Army Air Forces*, a 1944 publication of the Army Air Forces Aid Society (p. 52) states that upon graduation from an aviation flight training program, "aviation cadets who have not qualified for commissions as 2nd lieutenants may be appointed flight officers with a status equivalent to that of warrant officer, junior grade. Promotion from flight officer to 2nd lieutenant is permitted."

<sup>21</sup> "DFC His Second Award," *London Daily Herald*, November 16, 1943. An attack by a German fighter killed the rear gunner and wounded Hopkins, Clayton, and Blair. With hydraulics shot away, the bomb doors opened and the wheels dropped down; nevertheless, the crew decided to continue to the target which they bombed "heartily and true." On return, Hicks landed the heavily damaged bomber without the aid of flaps. All surviving crew were decorated.

<sup>22</sup> From the academic reports filed by Capt. Hadley B. Eliker for Courses 13 & 14 (American designations 43-B-1 & 43-B-2) and First Lieutenant, later Captain, Marvin R. A. Grant for Courses 15, 16, 17, 18, & 19 (American designations 43-B-3, 43-B-4, 44-B-1, 44-B-2, and 44-B-3). Of the cadets who graduated, 113 graduated with their original classes, and four had been held over from previous classes for medical reasons. Of the cadets who did not graduate, four failed to meet the "prescribed standards of Pilot Training," one was transferred to Williams Field for "violation of flying regulations," one was killed in the crash of his AT-6A, one died of natural causes, and one was held over for medical reasons and did not recover in time to graduate with the last class, 44-B-3.

With the exception of the Course 15 graduation held on October 1, 1943, at Williams Field, all graduations for Falcon cadets were held at Falcon. The Williams graduation was billed as the international graduation because it included American and Chinese cadets from Thunderbird, American and British cadets from Falcon, and American cadets from Williams and Thunderbird II. In attendance were Major General Ralph P. Cousins, commanding general of the Western Flying Training Command; Major General P. T. Mow, China's Vice-Commissioner of Aeronautical Affairs; and Group Captain H. A. V. Hogan, director of flight training for the Royal Air Force delegation to Washington, D.C. (Rafdel).<sup>23</sup>



Cadets from three nations "Parade the Colors" at the International Graduation.

Photograph from *The Thunderbird*, Vol. 1 No. 8, 1943



Second Lieutenant Dean Robert White addresses Course 18's graduation party. White made the most of his leave time while at Falcon. American Carroll Goyne says that during a break in the training, White flew home to Columbus, Ohio, where his father owned an automobile dealership. While there, White picked up a slightly used Buick convertible and drove it back to Falcon, stopping on the way to pick up Goyne in Texarkana, a town that, as its name implies, straddles the Texas-Arkansas border. Later, White decided to have Christmas dinner at the Grand Canyon, and he invited Goyne and two British cadets to join him for the trip.

Leaving after duty on December 24, the adventurers approached Ash Fork, Arizona, late at night. In a canyon south of Ash Fork, the Buick hit some rocks in the road. According to Goyne, "the motor would run, but made a terrible noise." The cadets parked the Buick at a repair garage in Ash Fork, spent the night at a hotel in Williams, Arizona, and took the bus to the Grand Canyon, arriving in time for Christmas dinner at the hotel there. Following dinner, the cadets spent a pleasant afternoon with the park superintendent and his family. Heading "home" by bus, the cadets stopped again at Williams where White knew a college girl who was home for the holidays. She took the cadets to a dance where everyone had a great time. The next day, the cadets returned to Ash Fork to check on the car. The mechanic said that the transmission pan had been caved in by the collision with the rocks and that the car would have to be left in his care. White would return for the Buick the next weekend. Carroll Goyne cannot remember the names of the British cadets on the Christmas trip, but he will never forget that "sadly, Dean White was killed on June 6, 1944, in the crash of a B-17 [Flying Fortress] in New Mexico, USA."

[*Falcon Field Association of Great Britain Newsletter*, ed. W. McCash AFM, 1998 No. 4, p. 1.]

Photograph Flight Instructor David Thiele

<sup>23</sup> "Pilots of Three Nations Graduate," *The Thunderbird*, Vol. 1 No. 8 (October 1943), p. 8.