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Our greetings and genuine  
appreciation from all of us  
who shared that delightful  
week-end at The Base —

We all felt your warmth  
and interest and our day was

fact is the Bureau will investigate  
and interesting facts -- and it was  
and from the "Queen for a Day"  
do remember me to Mrs. Hopkins  
and if ever in North Carolina  
please give me a ring -  
Best wishes,  
Mack Williamson

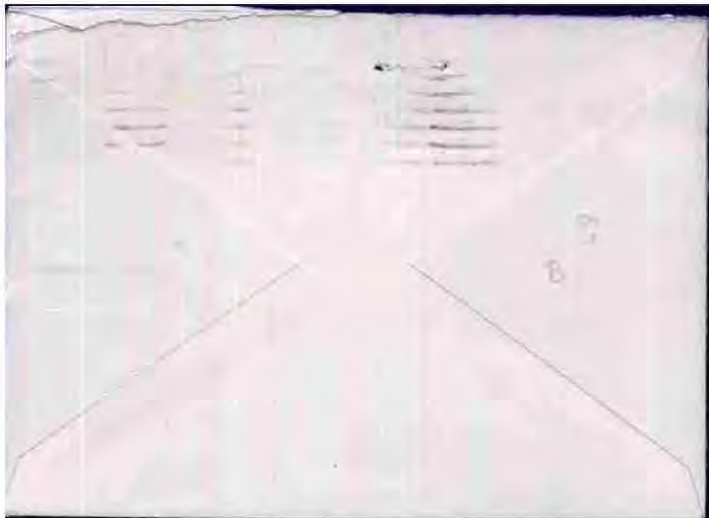


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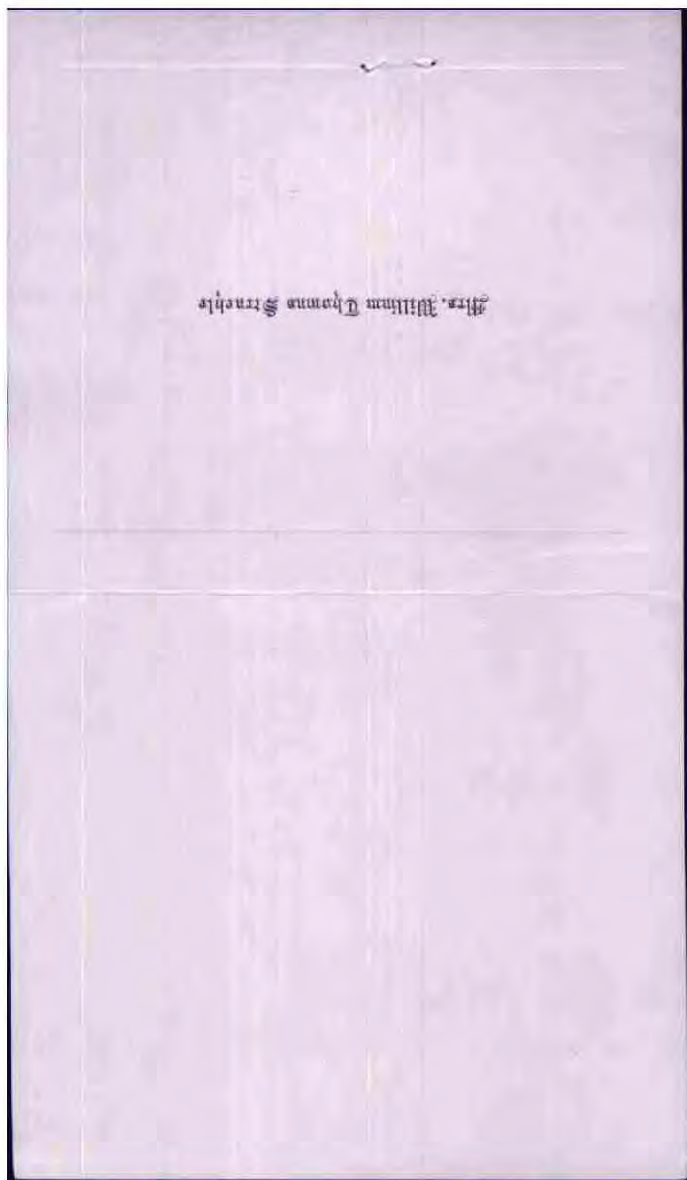
Dear General Custay,

The dedication of the Spirit  
of Kessler Center was most  
impressive. I thank  
you for all you did for  
me and my family.

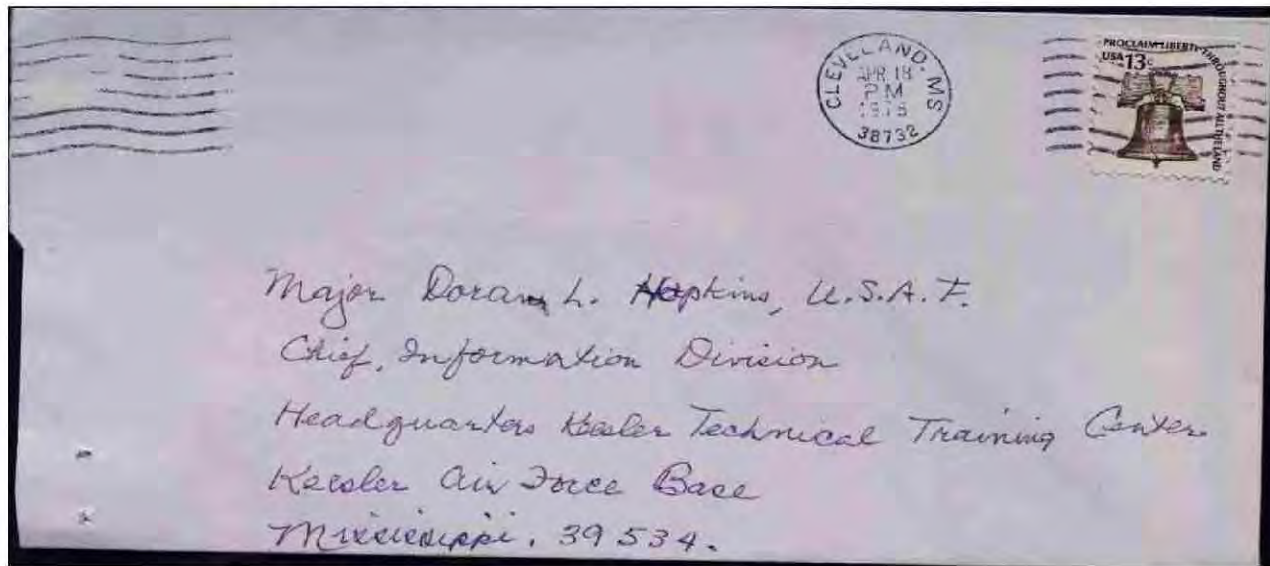
Sincerely,

Betty Kessler Struble

4/12/78



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Cleveland, Miss.,

April 18, 1978.

Major Doran L. Hopkins,

U. S. A. F. Chief Information Division,  
Keesler Air Force Base.

My dear Major Hopkins,

This is to express our deep appreciation for the countless courtesies and attentions shown by you to Mr. Keeler, our daughter, Betty Keeler Struble, and to me as we attended the dedication ceremonies of the Spirit of Keeler Center. It is indeed an honor to have this splendid center dedicated to our brother, Lt. Samuel Reenes Keeler, and his entire family appreciates this honor.

You anticipated and filled our every need while at Keeler Air Force Base, and the memories of this happy occasion will always remain with us. We thank you for your complete care of us.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth & William Keeler

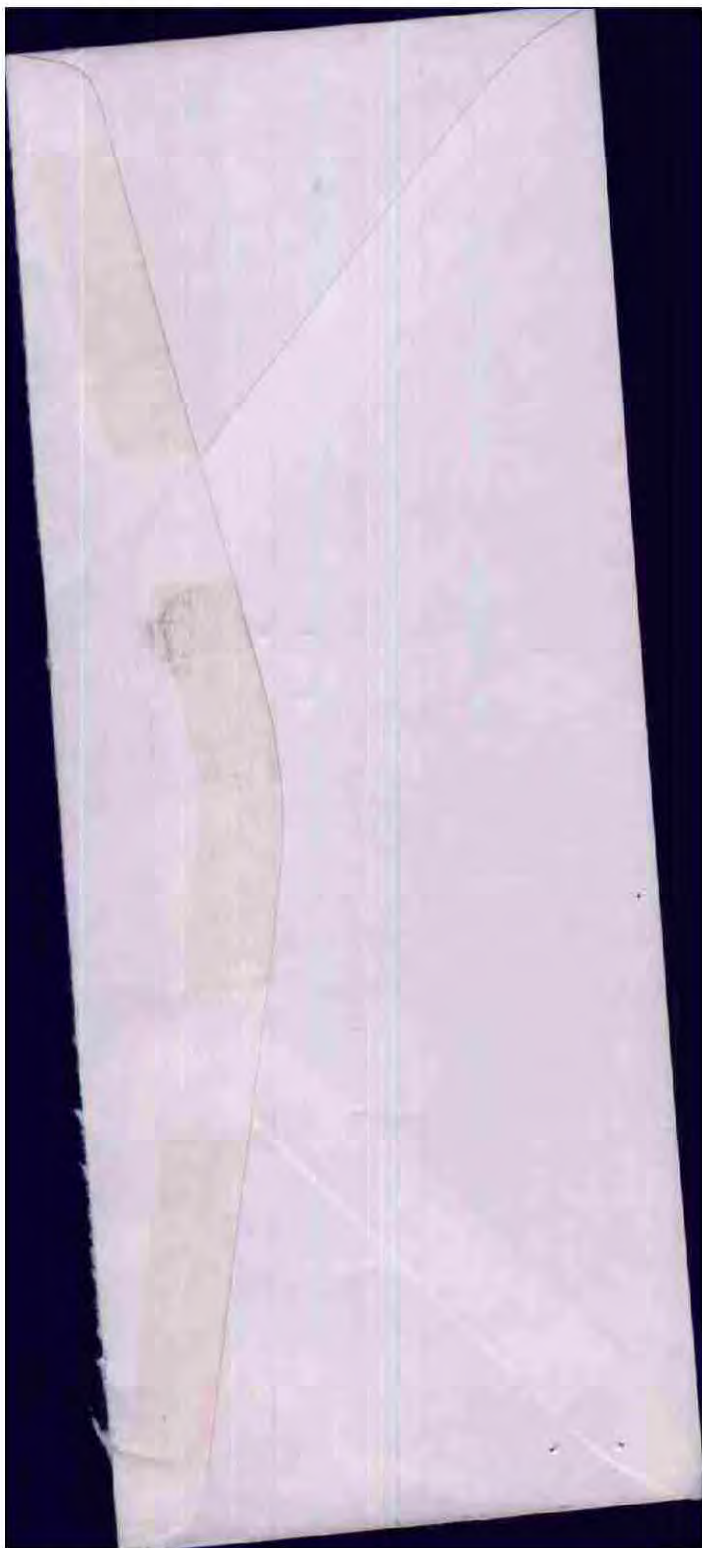
Mr. & Mrs. William Keeler  
507 Sixth Ave.  
Cleveland, Miss. 38932.

Hq ATC/OI  
Randolph AFB, Tx 78148

Major Doran L. Hopkins  
KTTC/OI  
Keesler AFB MS 39534

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS AIR TRAINING COMMAND  
RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, TEXAS 78148



20 APR 1978

Major Doran L. Hopkins  
KTTC/OI  
Keesler AFB MS 39534

Dear Doran

Thank you for the information on the dedication of the "Spirit of Keesler Center." You and your staff are to be congratulated on the outstanding public relations effort for the event.

Your idea to include the members of the Keesler family added an excellent news peg to the event and demonstrated to the relatives of Lt Samuel Keesler that the Air Force still holds him in high esteem.

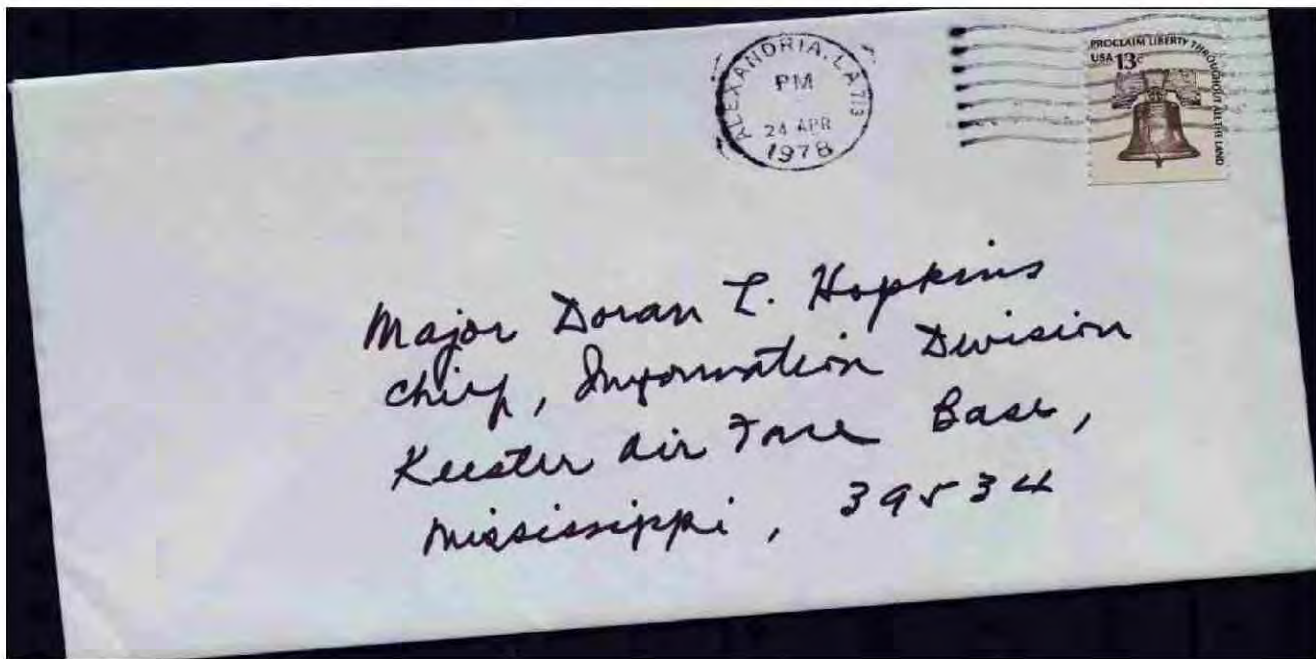
Again, congratulations on a job well done and keep up the good work.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. Ingram", is written over the typed name.

RICHARD A. INGRAM, Colonel, USAF  
Director of Information

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JOHN L. PITTS  
ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA

April 23<sup>rd</sup>

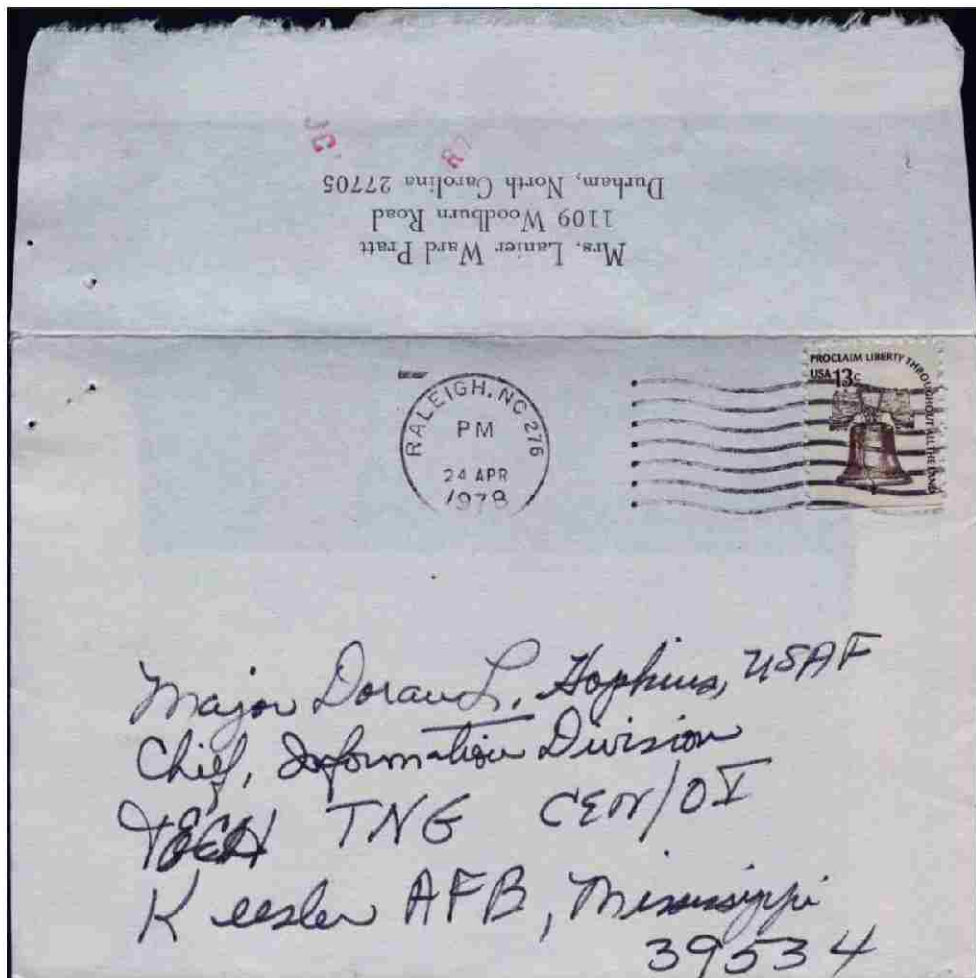
My dear Major,

The pictures were received, and all of us were happy to get them. They will certainly be a remembrance of the dedication, and all the courtesies shown to us. The occasion served doubly, also to get the family together, probably the last chance for some of us. We all think it was such a nice thing to do.

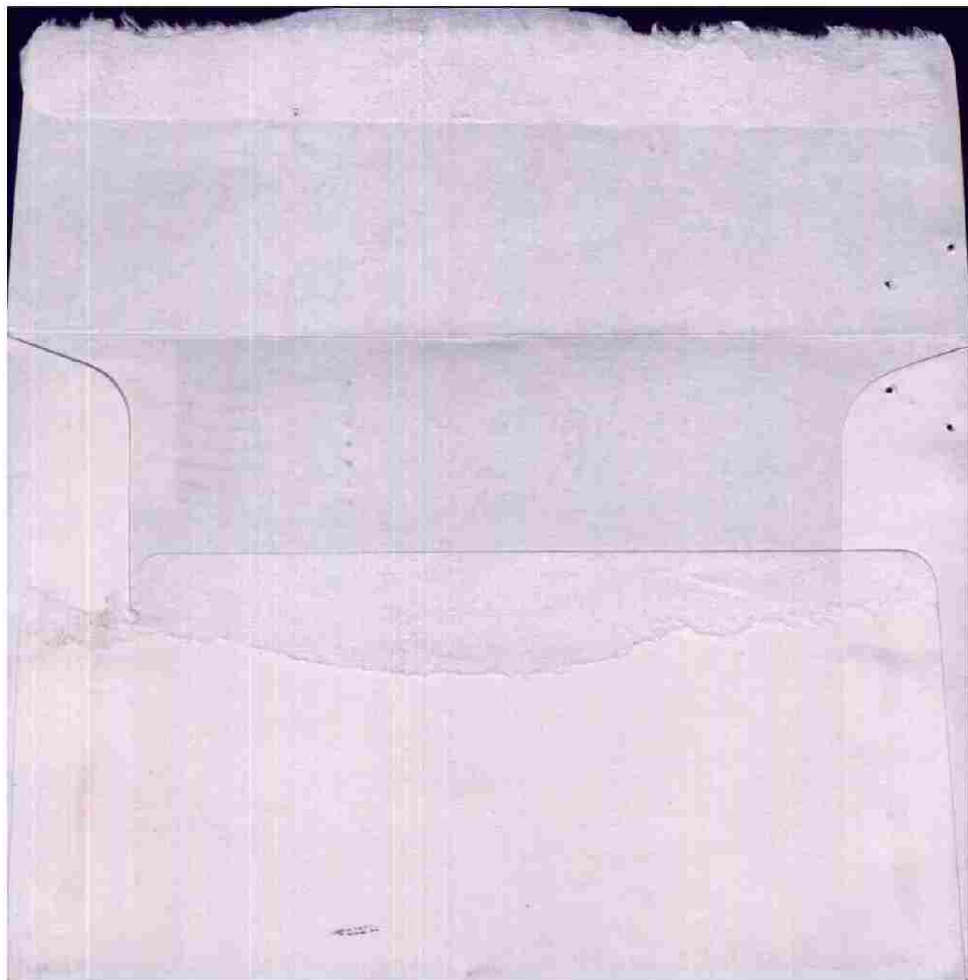
Please remember me to General and Mrs. Quastay.

Cordially,

John Pitts



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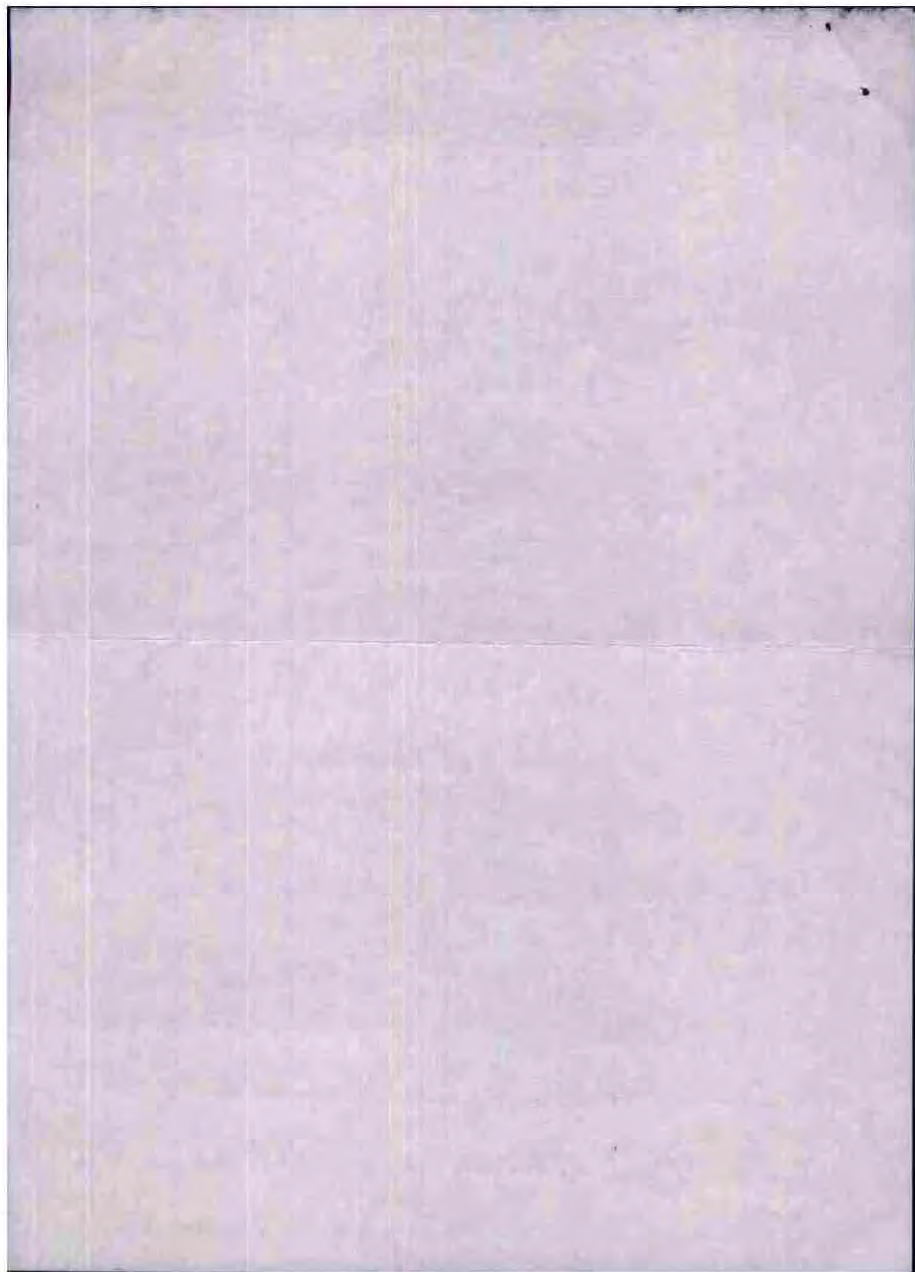
Mrs. Lanier Ward Pratt  
1109 Woodburn Road  
Durham, North Carolina 27705

Major Doran L. Hopkins, USAF  
Chief, Information Division  
Dep. of the Air Force  
Headquarters Keesler Technical Training Center (ATC)  
Keesler Air Force Base, Miss. 39534

Dear Major Hopkins:

Our memorable days at Keesler Field will always be treasured as a very special time for me and the entire family. All of the numerous arrangements you made for our comfort and enjoyment are much appreciated. Your most recent thoughtfulness in sending the photographs and the





Mrs. Lanier Ward Pratt  
1109 Woodburn Road  
Durham, North Carolina 27705

Keesler newspapers are really savings  
on an already delectable cake!  
Thank you for <sup>your</sup> very important  
role in making our visit so  
perfect. It was a pleasure to  
know you and to meet your wife.

My thanks and warm good  
wishes to you both.

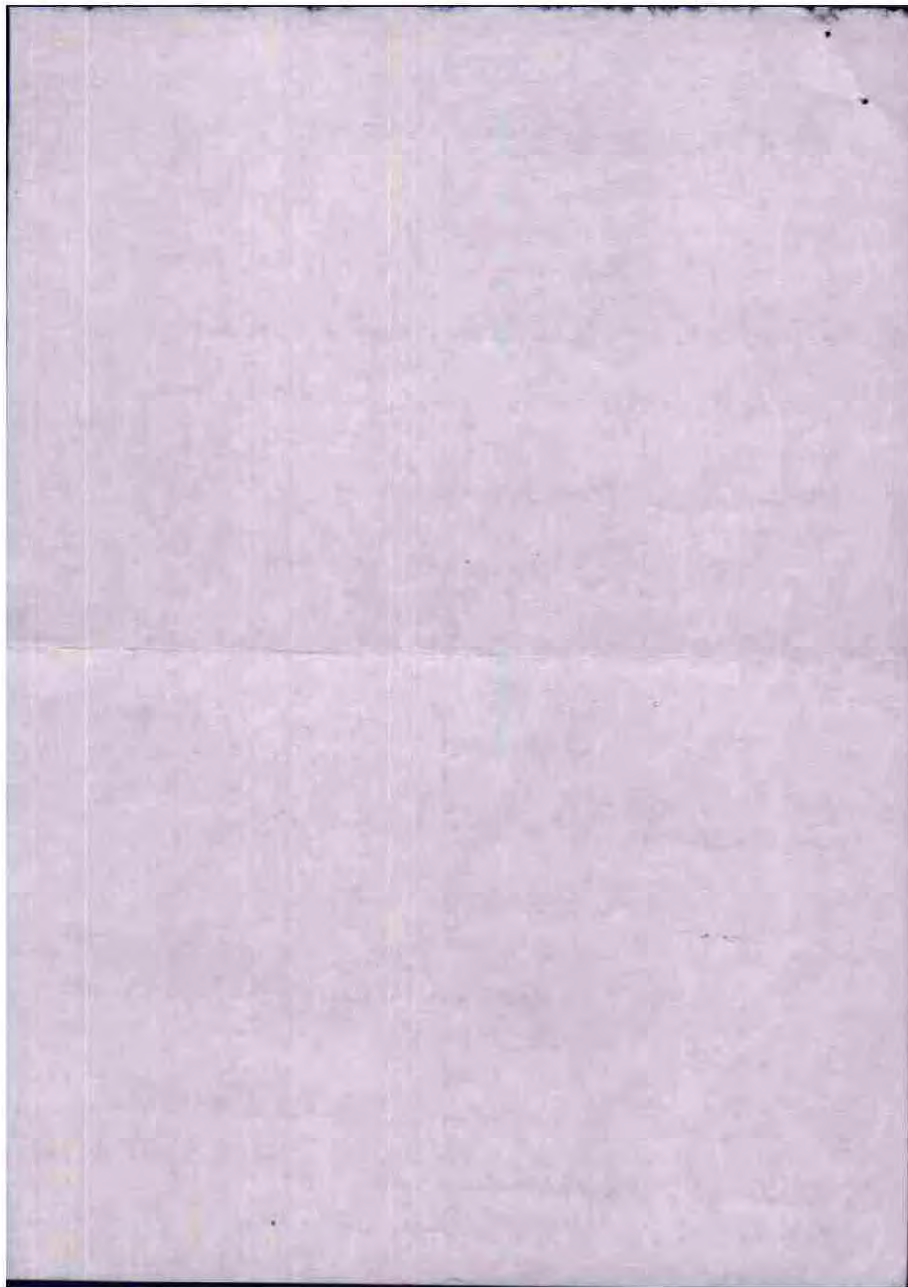
Cordially,

Ella Lountan Keesler Pratt

P.S. Just discovered Sam's medals are in  
"Cottrelaudia", a museum in Greenwood. I've  
asked my niece to secure them for me & send them  
on to Keesler - will keep you posted -



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My greetings once more - my letter to you  
and your pictures to me crossed enroute  
to one another - We are delighted to have  
the pictures reminding us again of our  
memorable week-end at the Base -  
Thank you again for all your many  
kindnesses and the warmth and cordiality  
of all your staff -  
Best wishes to your family - with love

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# Mississippi University for Women

Columbus, Mississippi 39701

328-6195

Alumnae Office

April 27, 1978

Public Information Officer  
Keesler Air Force Base  
Biloxi, MS 39534

Dear Sir:

We wish to prepare a feature article for MUW ALUMNAE NEWS on the Keesler's--for whom Keesler Air Force Base is named. Mrs. Ella Fountain Pratt is an alumna of MUW and we can tell the story of the brave lieutenant through the feature on Mrs. Pratt. I have lived in Mississippi all my life and did not know Keesler Field was named for Ella's brother. I feel that many of our readers would be delighted to know about the distinguished Mississippian honored by the naming of your military installation and that we have a wonderful opportunity to provide a service to our readers in this story.

If we give the United States Air Force credit for the photographs would you be good enough to let us use some of the photographs which appeared Friday, April 14, 1978 in a tabloid from the Biloxi area whose name I cannot determine from the story sent to me. We like especially the picture of Major General John S. Pustay, Mr. John Pitts, Mrs. Ella Pratt, Mr. and Mrs. William Keesler and Mrs. Mary Gilmour viewing the portrait of Lieutenant Keesler. If you have an extra shot of the picture of Lt. Keesler and one of Mrs. Pratt we could probably use two additional photographs if we find it necessary to spread our article to two pages.

We appreciate the fine service the air force has given to us in the past on our alums and hope you will make these photographs available to us for the fall issue.

Sincerely yours,

*Marcie D. Sanders*

Marcie D. Sanders  
Alumnae Director

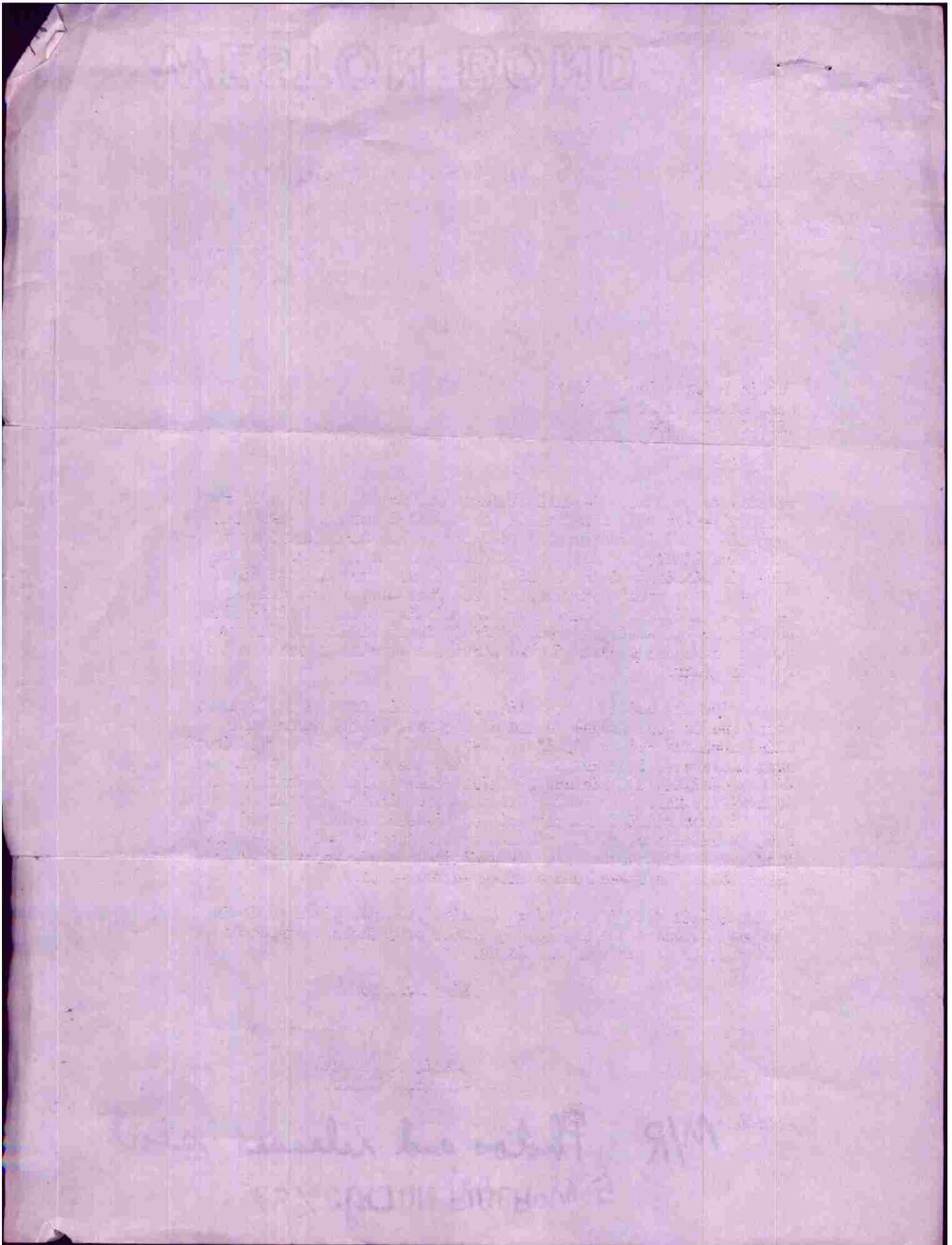
MDS:mn

M/R

Photos and releases sent  
5 May 78. Cij *good!*  
MBP

Keesler Family





MB

May 8, 1978

Dear Major Hopkins,  
Robert and I are so  
pleased to have the nice  
pictures of the Dedication  
that you sent us. We really  
do appreciate your sending  
them.

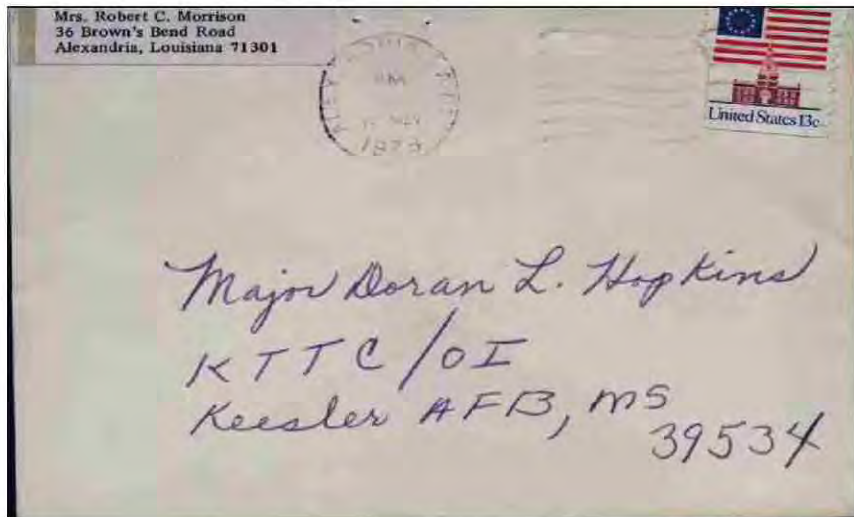
Thanks to you and  
Denise for the many



MS

2. Kindness you extend  
to us during our visit to  
Keele. Of our rich far  
and a very meaningful  
occasion to our family.  
You two are truly  
an asset to the USAF!  
Sincerely,  
Charles P. Merriam

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May 15, 1978

Dear Major Hopkins,

For all you did for us at Keesler, I send my deepest thanks.

Everything - from our suites at Shaw House to the beautiful ceremony at the "Spirit of Keesler Center" was perfect, and we are all so grateful to you.

We will always remember an wonderful weekend, and how we can share it with





all of our "clan" who  
weren't able to be at  
Kessler - Thanks to  
The Marvelous pictures  
you sent and the  
"Kessler News".

Truly, you did a  
superb job of getting  
us all so organized.

Thank you from  
all of us.

Sincerely,  
Gara Wine W. ef



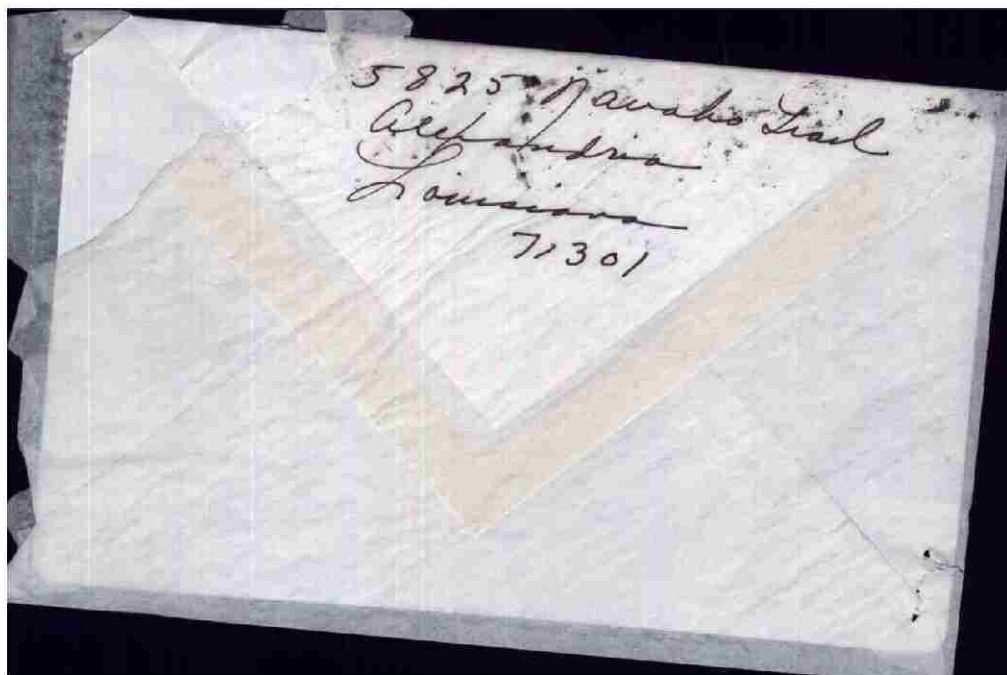
all of our own  
members to be able to  
Xenon - thousands to  
the Government  
upon sent and the  
"Federal Journal"  
Early, you but a  
suggested yet of getting  
was all the way  
Thank you from  
all of us  
Sincerely,  
John W. Hoff

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22 May 1978

Mrs. Monroe Gilmour  
934 Granville Road  
Charlotte, N.C. 28207

Dear Mrs. Gilmour

We are planning to replace the portrait of your brother in the Officers Club. Major Doran Hopkins mentioned to me that you may be able to help the base in this project by providing us with some photos of your brother. The photos would be used by the artist to help him paint a more life-like rendering. Our photos of Lt. Keesler are quite limited.

If you have any photos of your brother that you think may be appropriate and can send us, it would greatly be appreciated.

Sincerely

**SIGNED**

MICHAEL B. PERINI, Captain, USAF  
Deputy Chief, Information Division



26 May 1978

Colonel C. R. Glasebrook (USAF Ret)  
2418 N. Lexington Street  
Arlington, VA 22207

Dear Colonel Glasebrook

I passed your letter on to our Center Historian who was able to complete your data sheet on Lt. Samuel Keesler. Because of the health of the immediate Keesler family, I felt it more appropriate to use our resources to assist you on your project.

This is all that is available regarding Lieutenant Keesler. I have also enclosed several issues of the Keesler News, which include material relating to Lieutenant Keesler and the Spirit of Keesler Center, which may give you more insight on the man and what we here think of him.

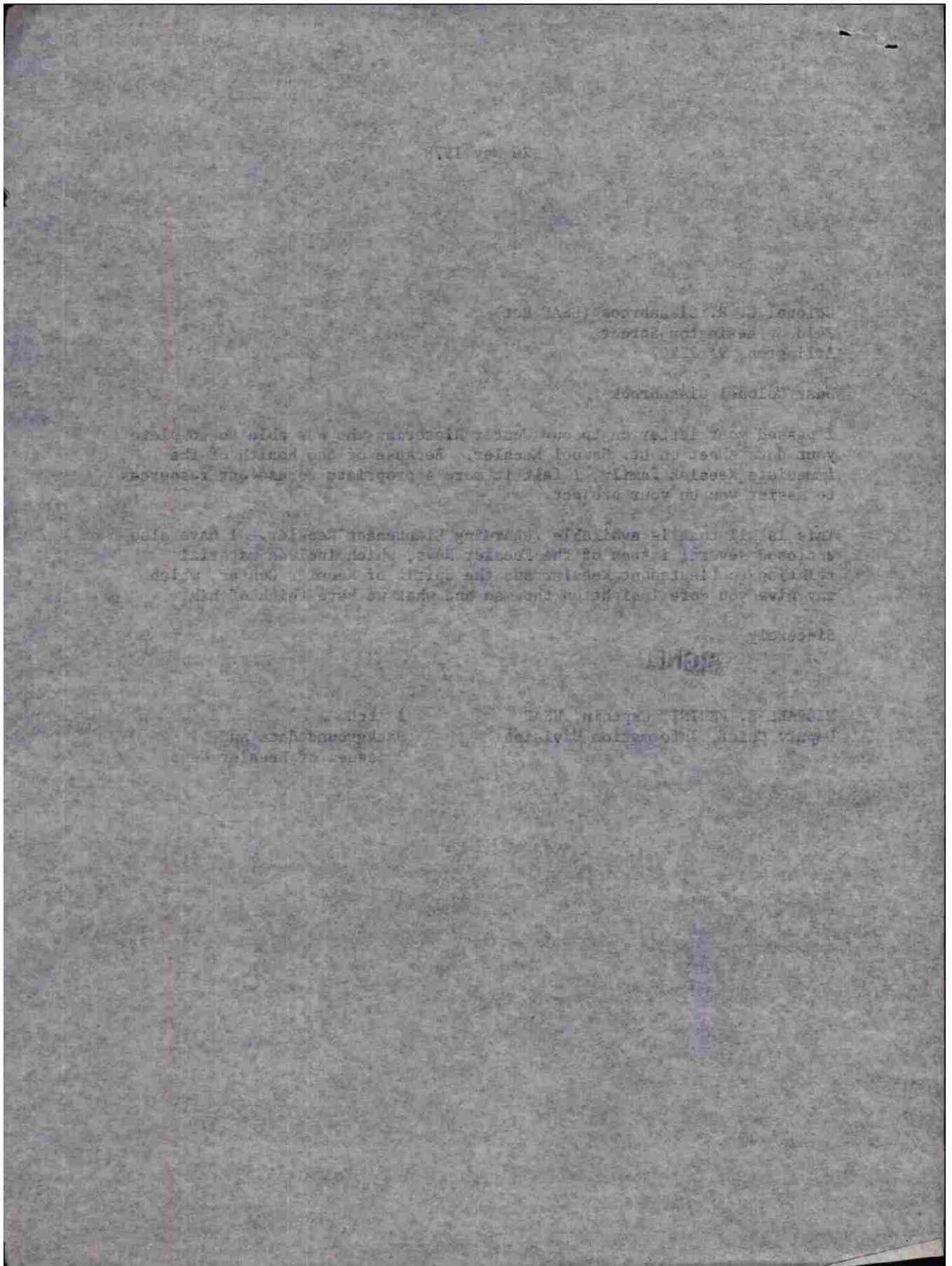
Sincerely

**SIGNED**

MICHAEL B. PERINI, Captain, USAF  
Deputy Chief, Information Division

1 Atch  
Background data and  
2 issues of Keesler News

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7





2418 N. Lexington Street  
Arlington, VA 22207

15 May 1978


Information Officer  
Keesler AFB, MS 39534

I noted in the 15 May 1978 issue of Air Force Times that you recently had a gathering of Lt S. R. Keesler's family at the dedication ceremonies for a new student learning center.

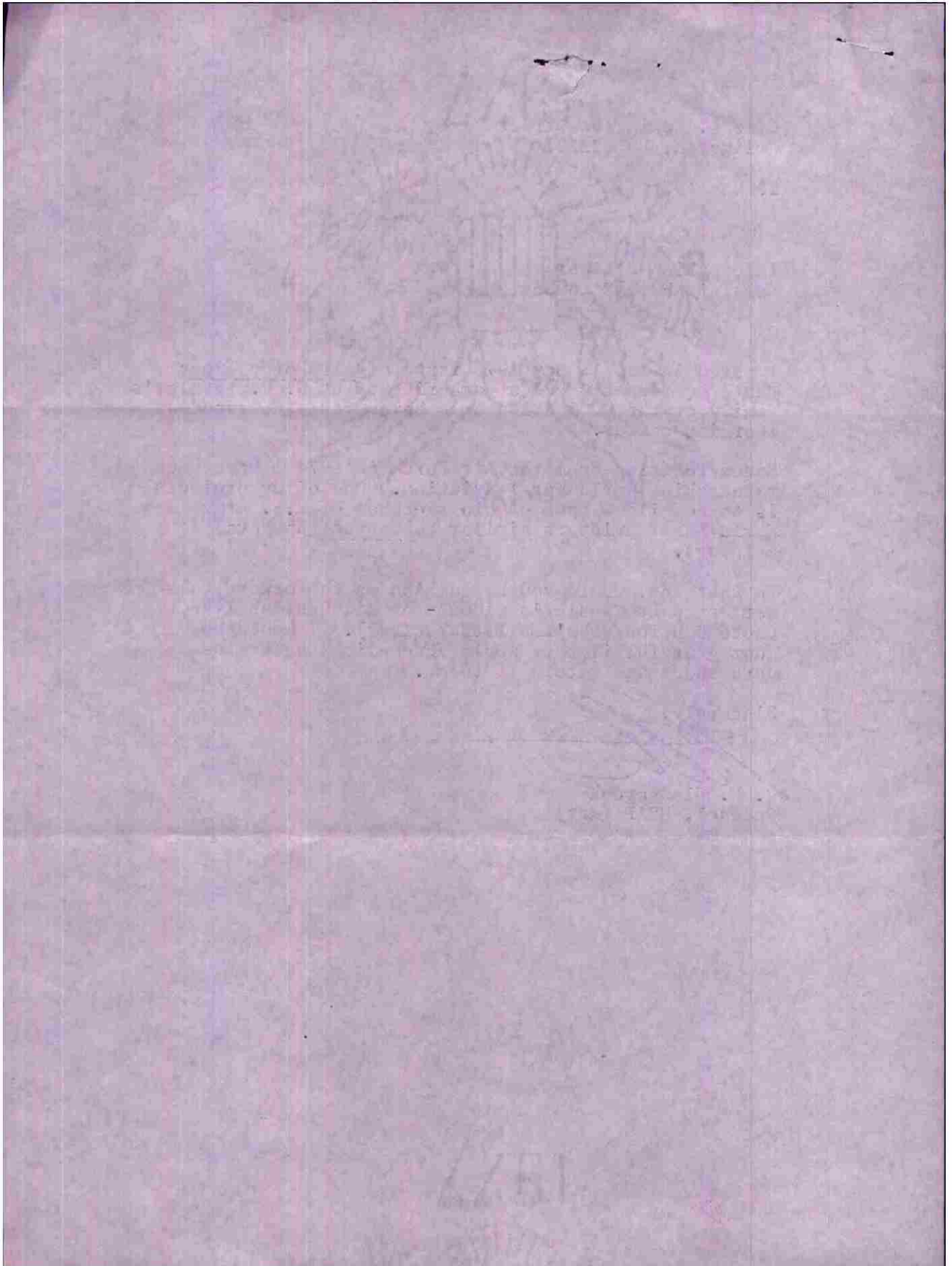
Since retiring from the Air Force in 1974 I have been researching World War I aviation. One of my projects is to compile a book of bio sketches of U.S. Army World War I aviators similar to Contact on Naval aviators.

To that end, would you be so kind as to forward this letter to Lt Keesler's widow - or his brother (the photo caption wasn't all that clear). I would be most grateful if they would accomplish the enclosed data sheet and return it to me.

Sincerely,

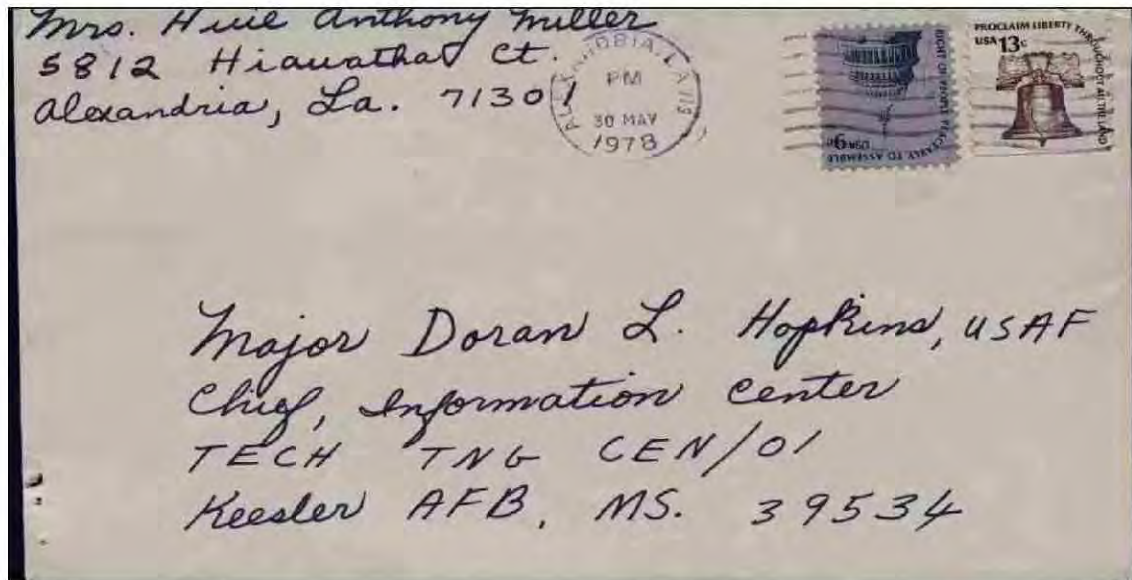


C. R. Glasebrook  
Colonel, USAF (Ret)





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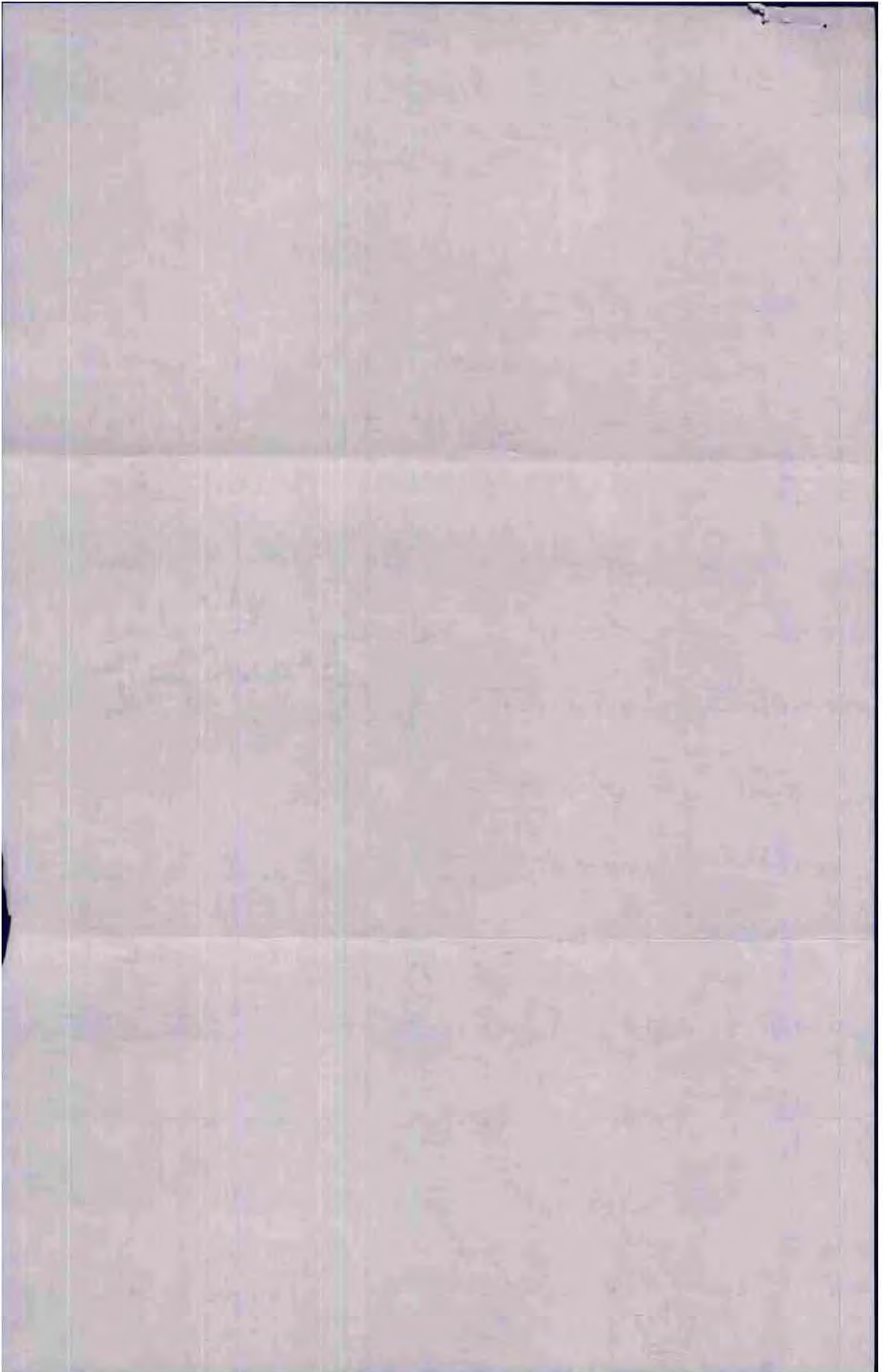
5812 Hiawatha Ct.  
Alexandria, Louisiana 71301  
May 30, 1978

Dear Major Hopkins,

Please accept our deepest appreciation for the many acts of kindness you extended to our family "beyond the call of duty" during our recent visit for the Keesler dedication. We truly were made to feel like visiting royalty, and it was an experience that will be long remembered.

"The Spirit of Keesler Center" is another lovely tribute



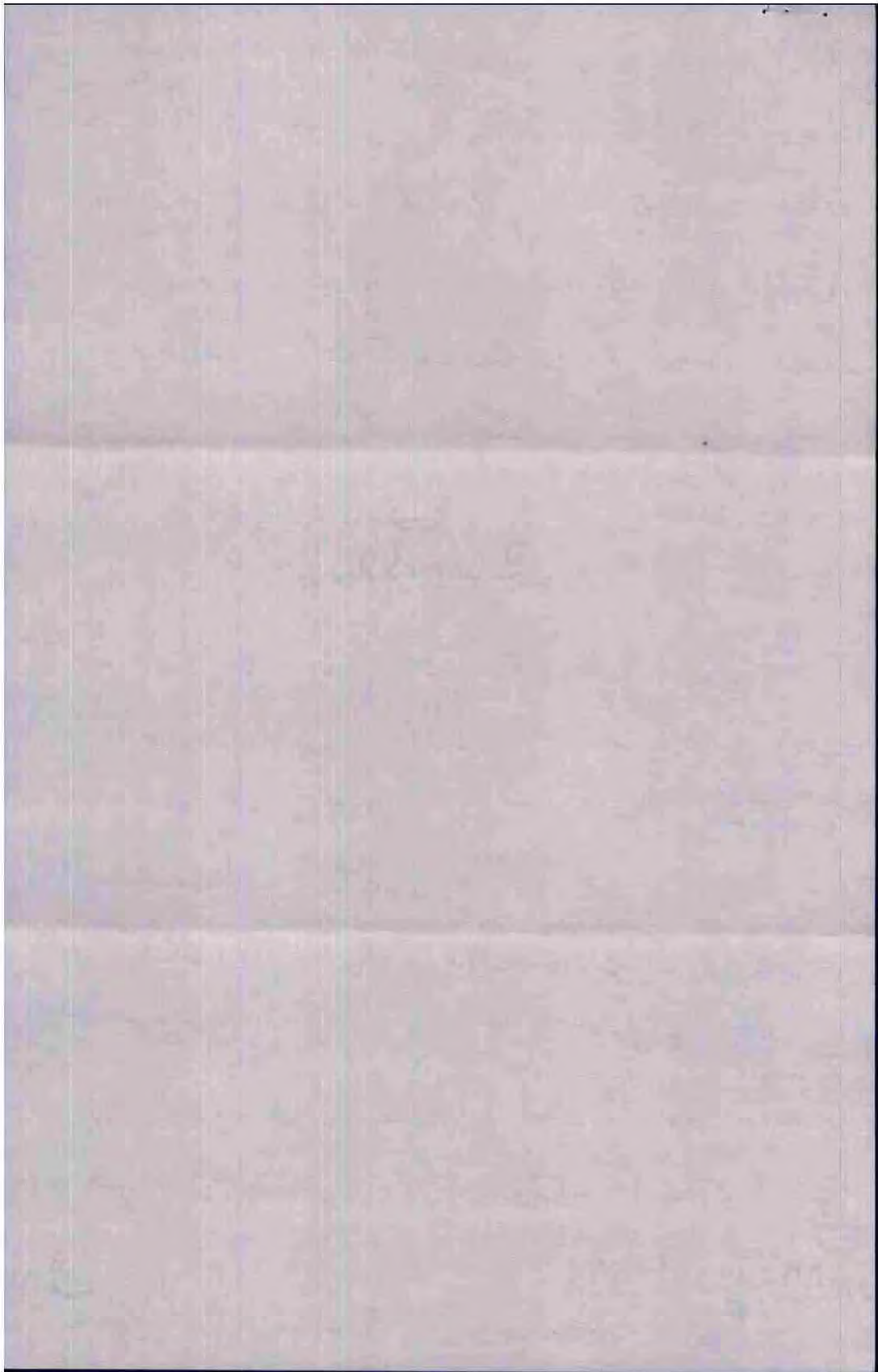




to the memory of my<sup>2</sup>  
mother's brother, Sam Keesler.  
My mother died this past  
January, but as you remember,  
she was represented by  
my father, John Pitts, who  
was given the privilege of  
cutting the ribbon.

The pictures you sent  
all of us are splendid -  
another act of thoughtfulness -  
to send each and every  
family branch a set of  
pictures. I shall put  
them in an album with  
all the other mementos of  
our trip.

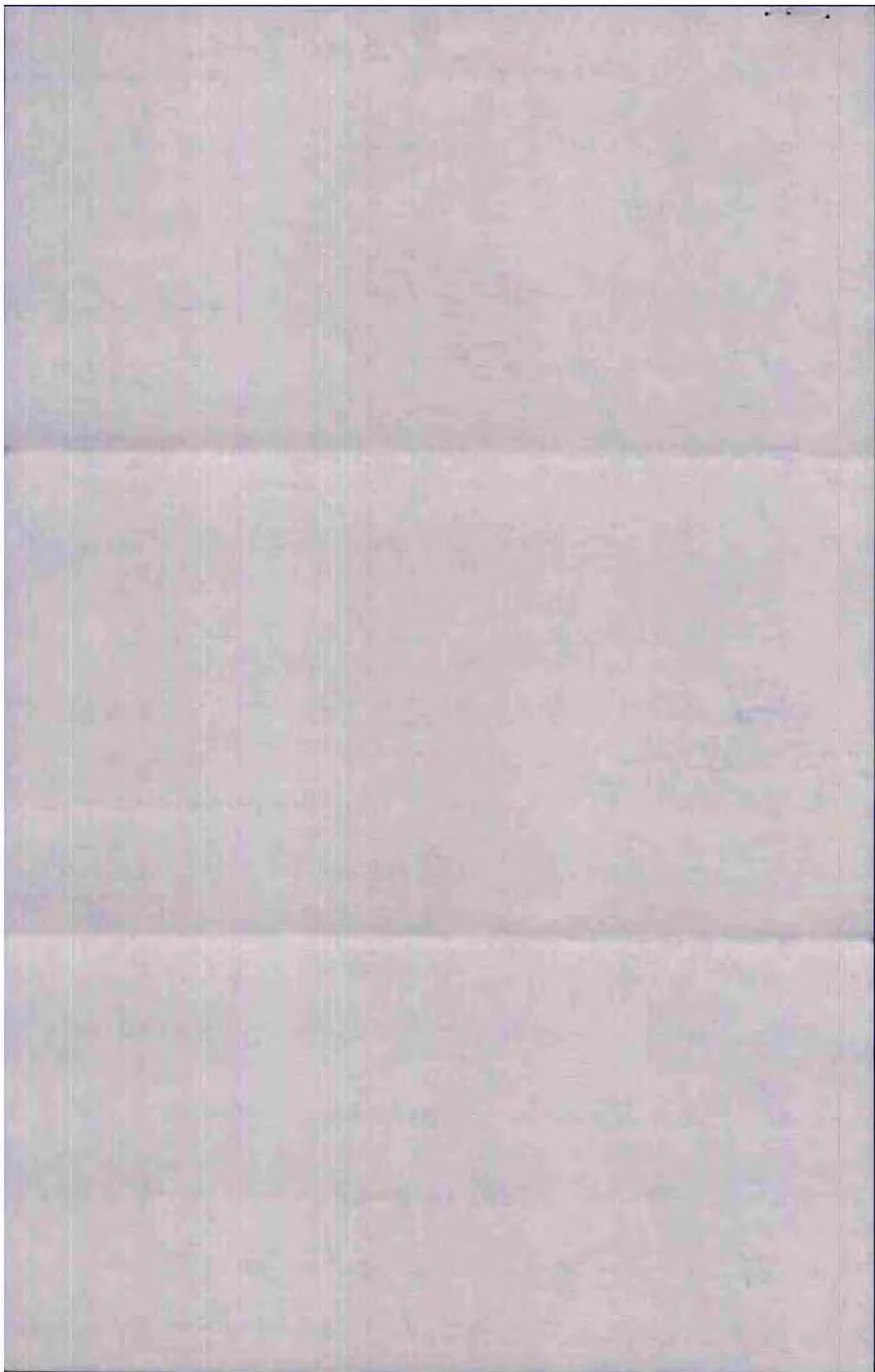
Tell your lovely wife





3  
how much we enjoyed  
our brief visit with  
her at the reception.  
My husband Tony said  
not to forget to thank  
you for helping us  
get gasoline on the base!

I would like for  
you to also extend our  
thanks to your wonderful  
commander, General Pustay,  
for engineering this  
fabulous dedication - and  
we indeed owe him a  
debt of gratitude for  
putting you in charge of us!  
With warmest regards, Isabel Keesler Pitts  
Miller





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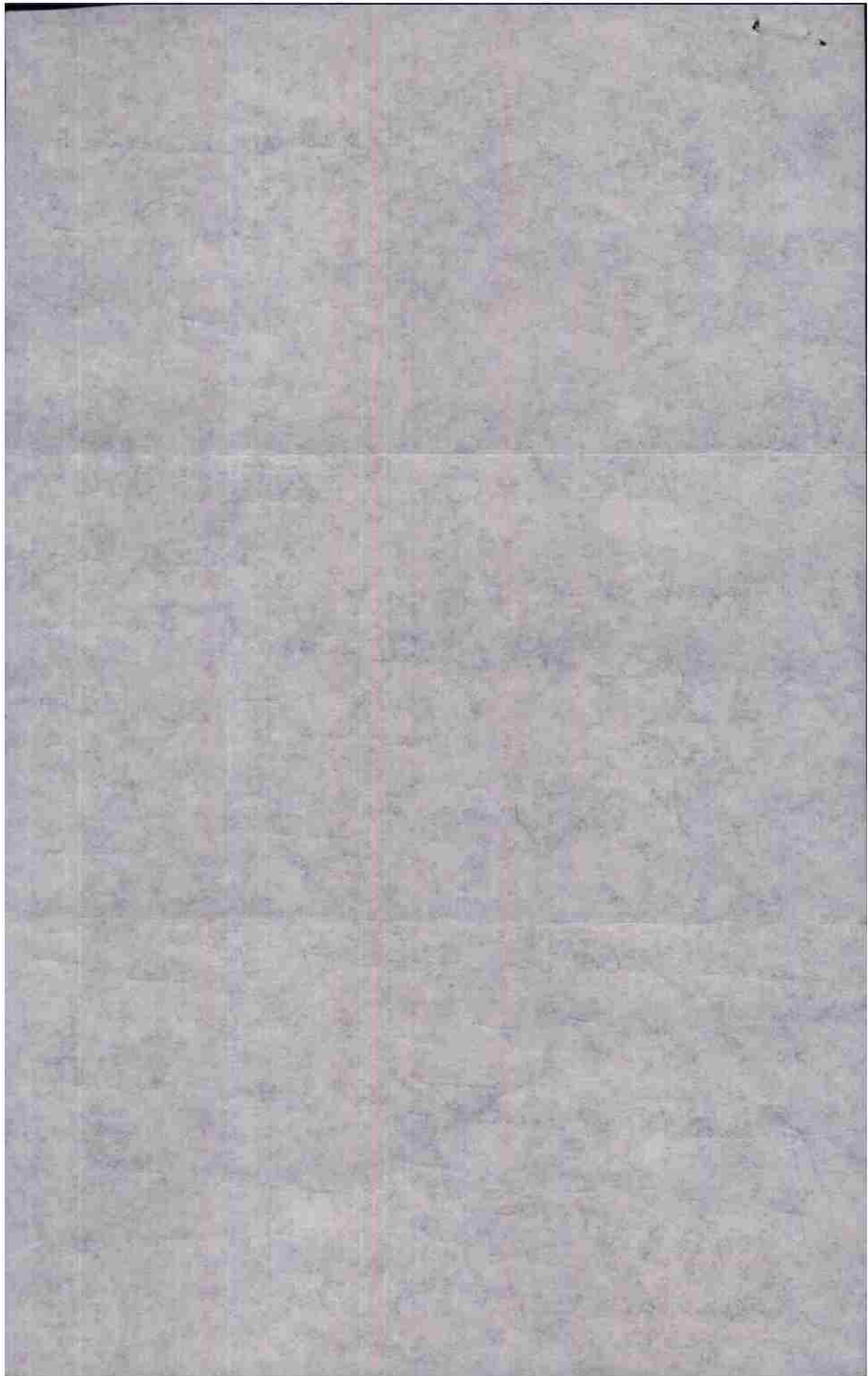
934 Sawville Rd  
Charlotte, NC

June 4, 1978

Dear Capt. Perini,

Your letter of May 22<sup>nd</sup> arrived and I have been delayed in answering as I wished to talk with my sister in Aiken (Mrs. L. Pratt) to see what photographs she had that you could use - She is sending you some and I trust will assist the portrait painter - We are delighted the portrait in the Officers club will be replaced for it was

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not like Sam at all -

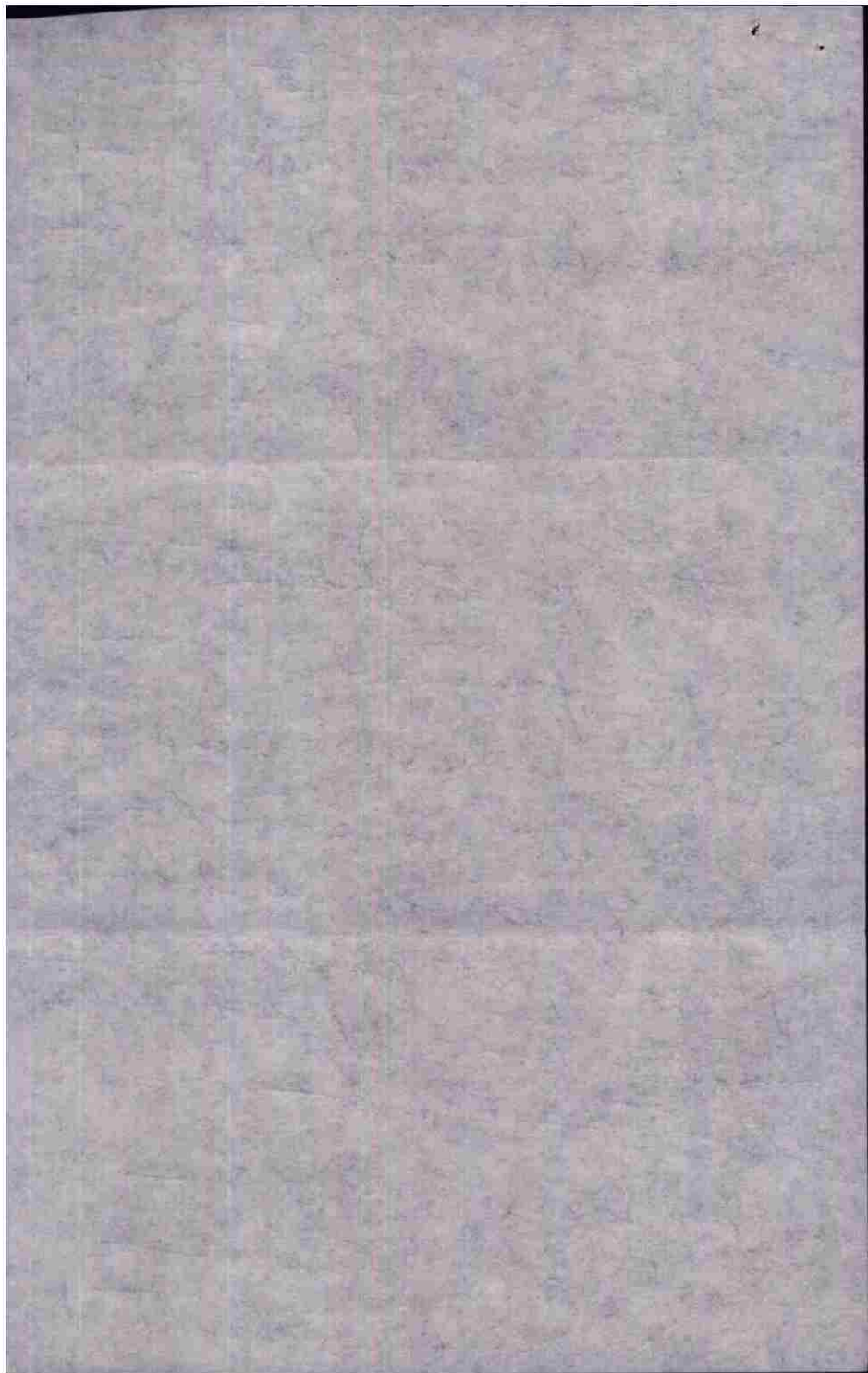
We are still talking about  
the delightful week - and we  
all look at Keeler - a nice  
warm, contented, proud feeling!

I am enclosing a letter I  
wrote to the two artists that  
did the painting in the new  
building we dedicated and as  
you see it was returned - If  
it is at all possible I would  
appreciate if it could be de-  
livered to them - If not destroy  
it - Thank you -

Best wishes to all of you

Nash Dilmour  
(Mrs Mowse I.)

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5 June 1978

Mrs. Ella Keesler Pratt  
1109 Woodburn Road  
Durham, North Carolina 27705

Dear Mrs. Pratt

Thank you for the photographs which arrived today. They are very good and will help the artist produce a fine portrait.

We will return the photographs when the portrait is finished.

Thanks again for your thoughtfulness.

Sincerely

**SIGNED**

MICHAEL B. PERINI, Captain, USAF  
Deputy Chief, Information Division

01





June 1, 1978

Captail Michael B. Perini  
Deputy Chief, Information Division  
Keesler Air Force Base  
Mississippi 39534

Dear Captain Perini:

I am sending you under separate cover three photographs of my brother, Sameul R. Keesler, Jr., for the artist to use in the painting of a new portrait for the Base. Since they are my only copies I will be grateful for their return when no longer needed. There should be quite a collection of Sam's photographs somewhere there at the base as they were gathered together by my sister, Ethel Duncan of Greenwood, and sent to the Base when the first portrait was done. She said she also sent a number of descriptions of Sam from friends, family etc. Since I was only a very small child when he was killed I have no actual memory of him. From all accounts he had very black hair and black eyes with a twinkle in them. The photograph of him in track uniform (taken at the famous Greenwood Spurrier Studio) seems to me to depict this facet of his personality - for he seems to be ready to laugh out loud at the ridiculousness of being photographed in such garb at a studio.

Please tell General Pustay I am still trying to locate Sam's medals to be sent to the Base to be kept with the other memorabilia.

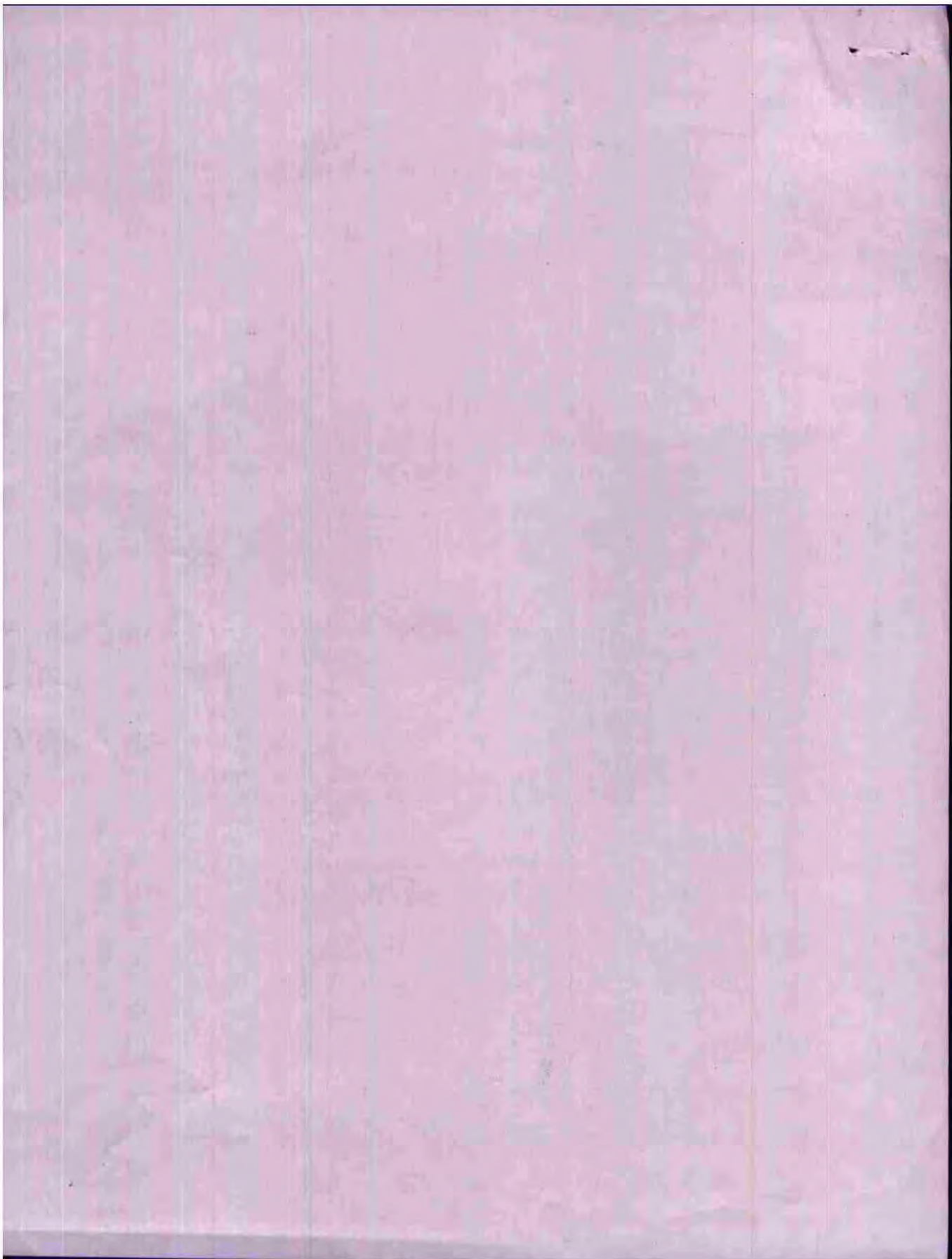
My good wishes to General Pustay and Major Hopkins. We certainly had a wonderful visit with you there.

Cordially,

Ella Fountain Keesler Pratt

.EFP/df





Cleveland, Miss.,

July 11, 1978.

Major General John S. Rustay,  
Keesler Air Force Base,  
Mississippi.

Dear General Rustay,

Mr. Keesler and I wish to express  
our thanks and great appreciation for your  
many thoughtful kindnesses to us at the time of the  
dedication of the Spirit of Keesler Center.

It is indeed an honor that the Keesler family  
appreciates to have this center named for our brother,  
Lt. Sam Keesler, and the memory of that auspicious  
occasion will always remain with us.

We also thank you for the excellent photographs  
which accompanied your letter. They will be a  
constant reminder of a very happy occasion.  
We thank you.

Please express our thanks to Major Doran Hapkins  
for his constant and thoughtful care of our  
well-being while at Keesler Air Force Base. It was  
indeed a pleasure and an honor to be present and



under his care.

Again our thanks to you for your many  
courtesies and attentions, and for the excellent  
photographs.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth and William Keesler.

Mr. & Mrs. William Keesler

507 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Cleveland, Miss. 38732.

HEADQUARTERS  
KEESLER TECHNICAL TRAINING CENTER  
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER

DATE: 12 Jul 78

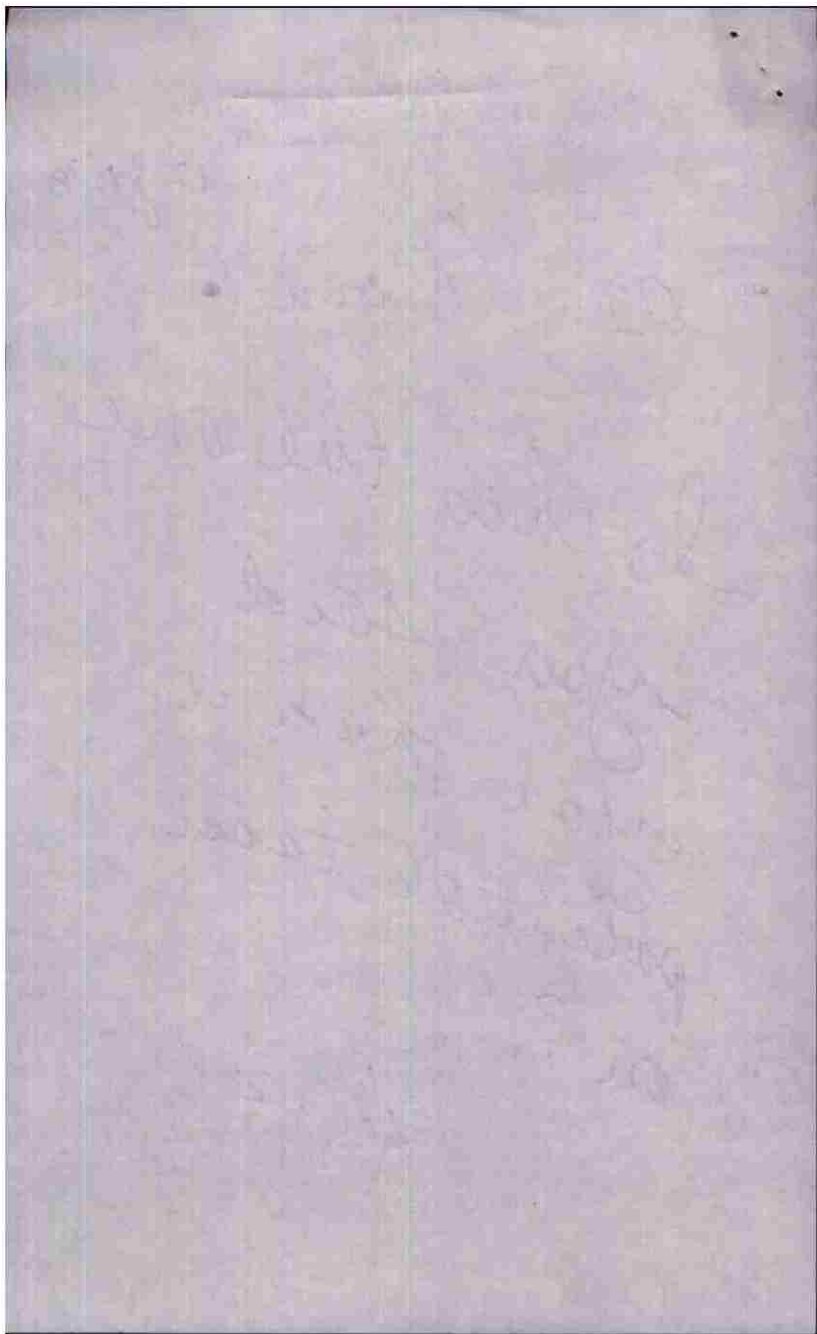
TO:

OI / Down

Is this the one  
you said  
you had a  
potential taper  
on?

Hedger





KEESLER TECHNICAL TRAINING CENTER  
HEADQUARTERS 3380TH AIR BASE GROUP  
OFFICE OF THE BASE COMMANDER

DATE

TO:

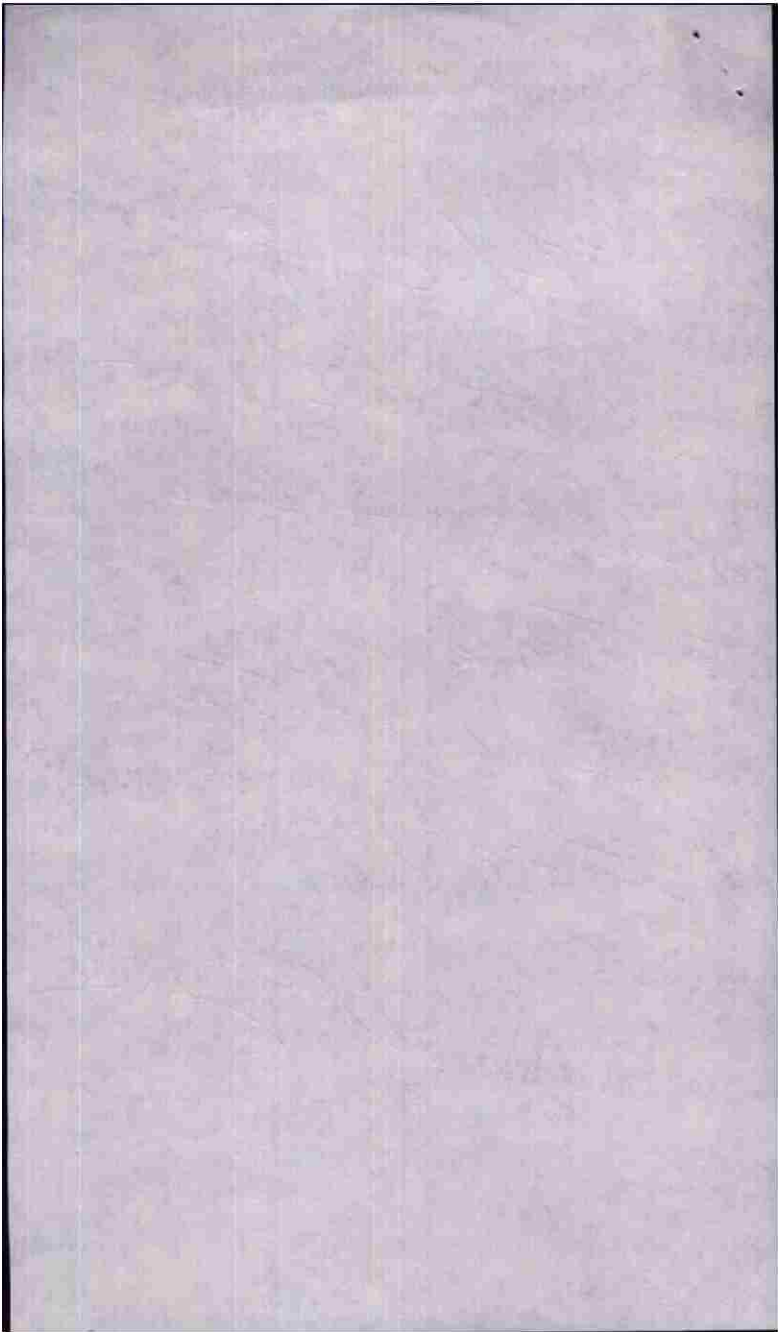
K11c/cc

12 July 78

I struck out  
would you like  
to try?

Should we try  
Retires (maybe KOA)?

Col. LH Jewell



*Officers' Wives' Club*  
*Keesler Air Force Base*  
*Biloxi, Mississippi 39534*

*July 11, 1978*

*Colonel Lester R. Terrell*  
*Commander*  
*3380 Air Base Group*  
*Keesler Air Force Base*  
*Biloxi, Mississippi*

*Dear Col. Terrell:*

*Please refer to your letter of June 16, 1978 concerning  
a new portrait of Sam Keesler for the Officers' Open Mess.*

*The Officers' Wives' Club Board is sorry to report that  
we are financially unable to undertake this project.*

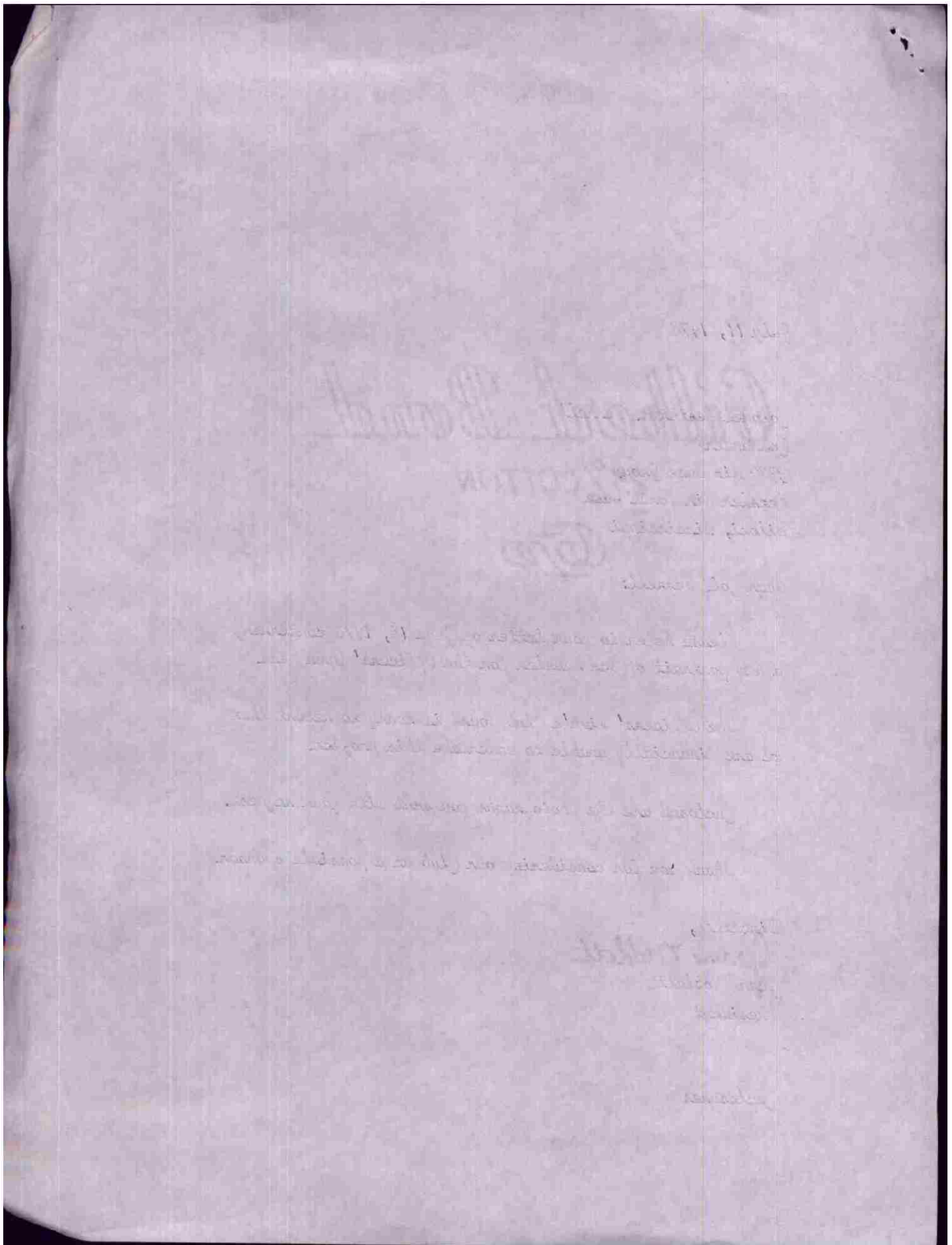
*Enclosed are the photographs you sent with your request.*

*Thank you for considering our Club as a possible sponsor.*

*Sincerely,*  
*Jean Noblett*  
*Jean Noblett*  
*President*

*Enclosures*





JOHN L. PITTS  
ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA

TO: → 05  
Hedges

July 15, 1978

Dear General Pustay,

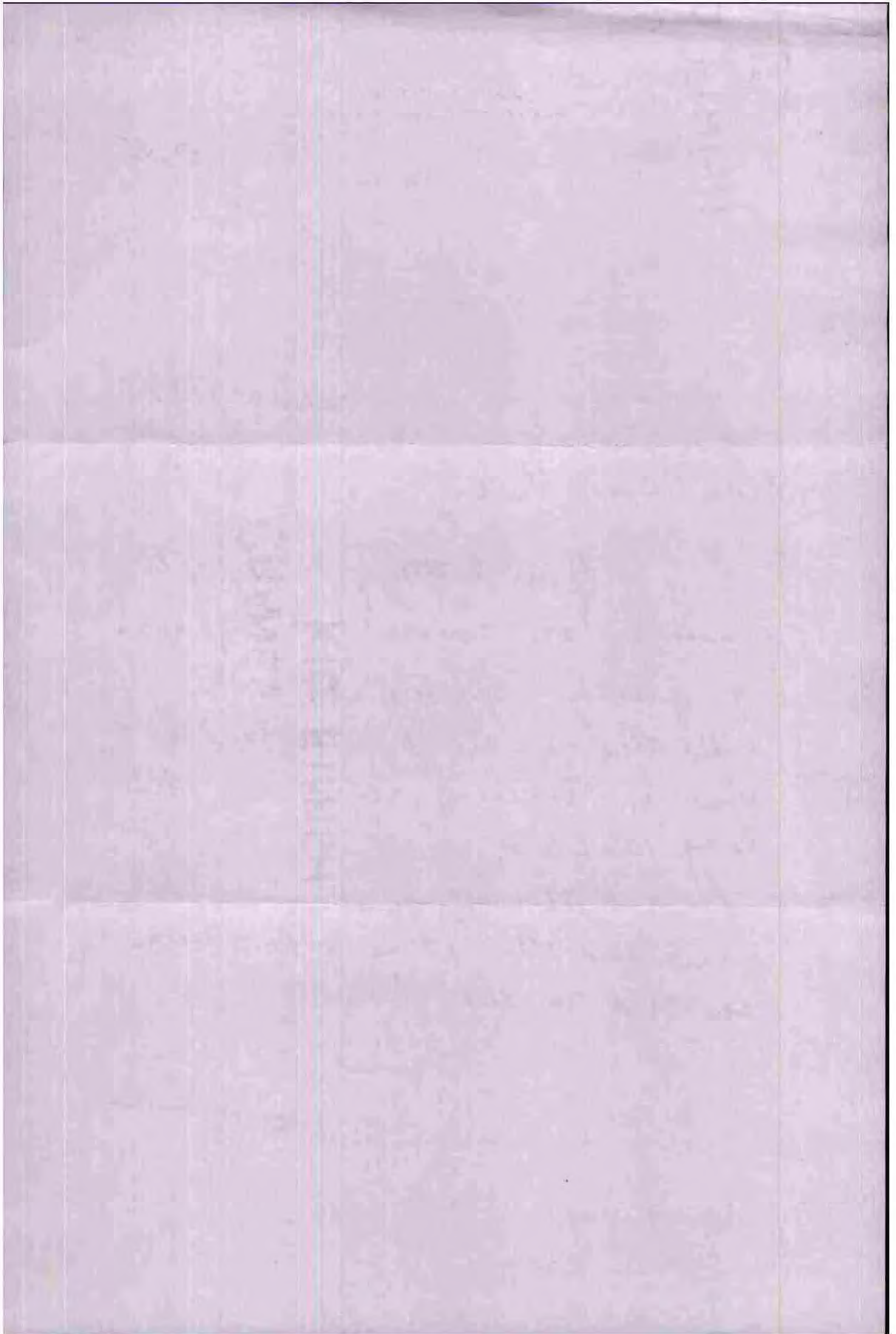
Your letter of July 6<sup>th</sup> enclosing the colored photographs is greatly appreciated. The dedication of the Keeler Center was an occasion all of us will long remember.

With every good wish to you and the others who were so kind to us, I am

Sincerely,

John Pitts

(Brother-in-law of  
Sam Keeler)  
ee





18 July 1979

Dr. Oron Keeslar  
P.O. Box 1315  
Truckee, Calif. 95734

Dear Dr. Keeslar

I am enclosing two articles about the founding of Keesler AFB which appeared in the Keesler News last year. I hope they will aid you in tracing the Keesler family tree.

If you would like to contact a member of the Keesler family, I suggest you write to Mrs. Ella Pratt, 1109 Woodburn Road, Durham, N.C. 27705. She is the sister of Lt. Sam Keesler.

Sincerely

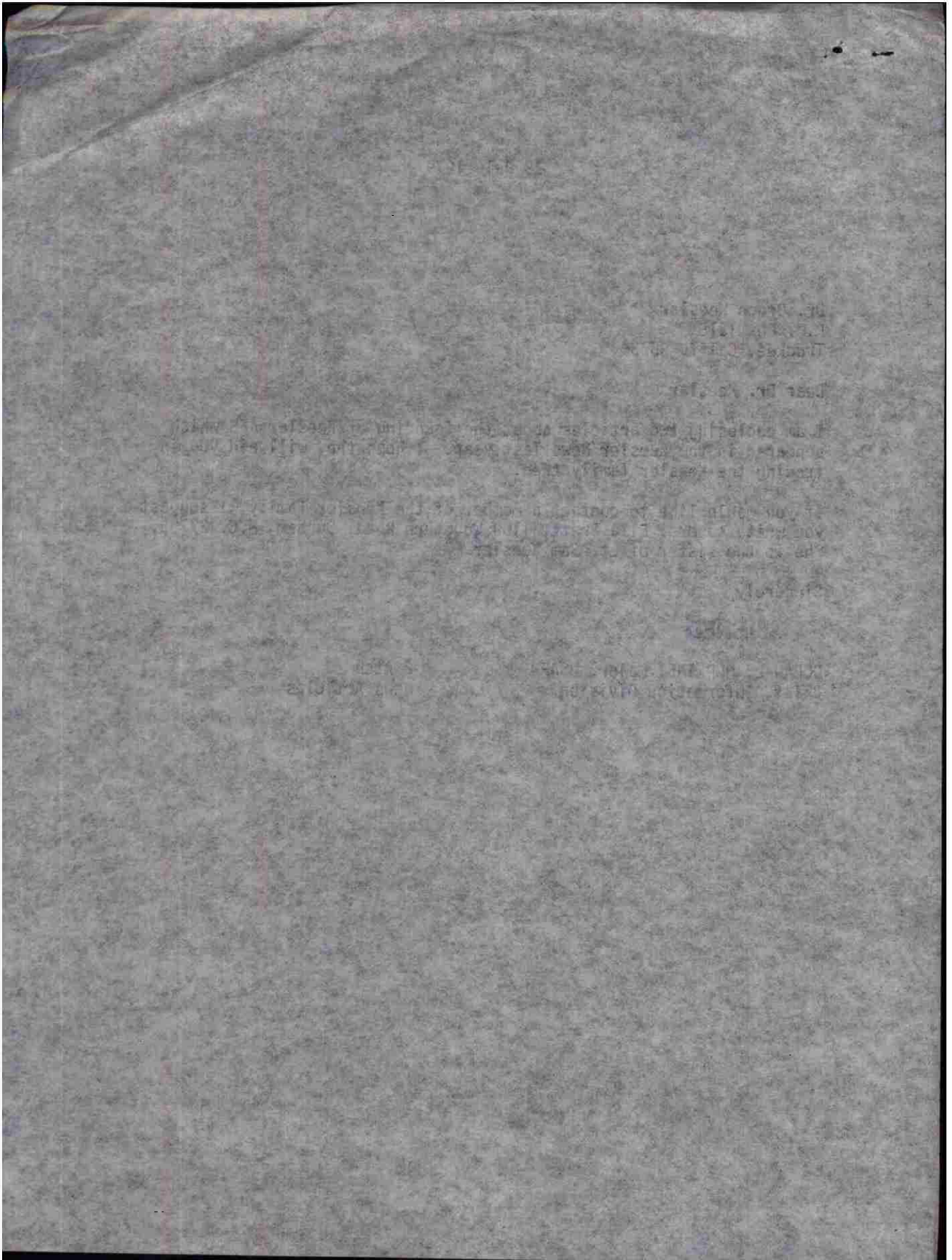
SIGNED

DORAN L. HOPKINS, Major, USAF  
Chief, Information Division

2 Atch  
News Articles

91





12 July 1979

Commanding Officer  
Keesler Air Force Base  
A.F.B. Station  
Biloxi, Mississippi 39534

Dear Sir:

Can you tell me WHO the individual was, after whom KEESLER A.F.B. was named, and also suggest where I can learn something about his military career?

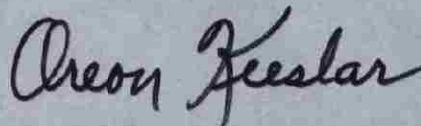
I would greatly appreciate any information you or your staff can provide regarding this man.

You will note the similarity of his name and mine. I am now engaged in tracing various lines of my family tree, and have found that the two names (KEESLAR and KEESLER) have been used interchangeably in the past, even in passing the family surname along from father to son.

Besides, I served during World War II as an officer in the USNR at NAS Pensacola, and ever since have been curious about the origin of the name given to your airfield. I hope you can enlighten me.

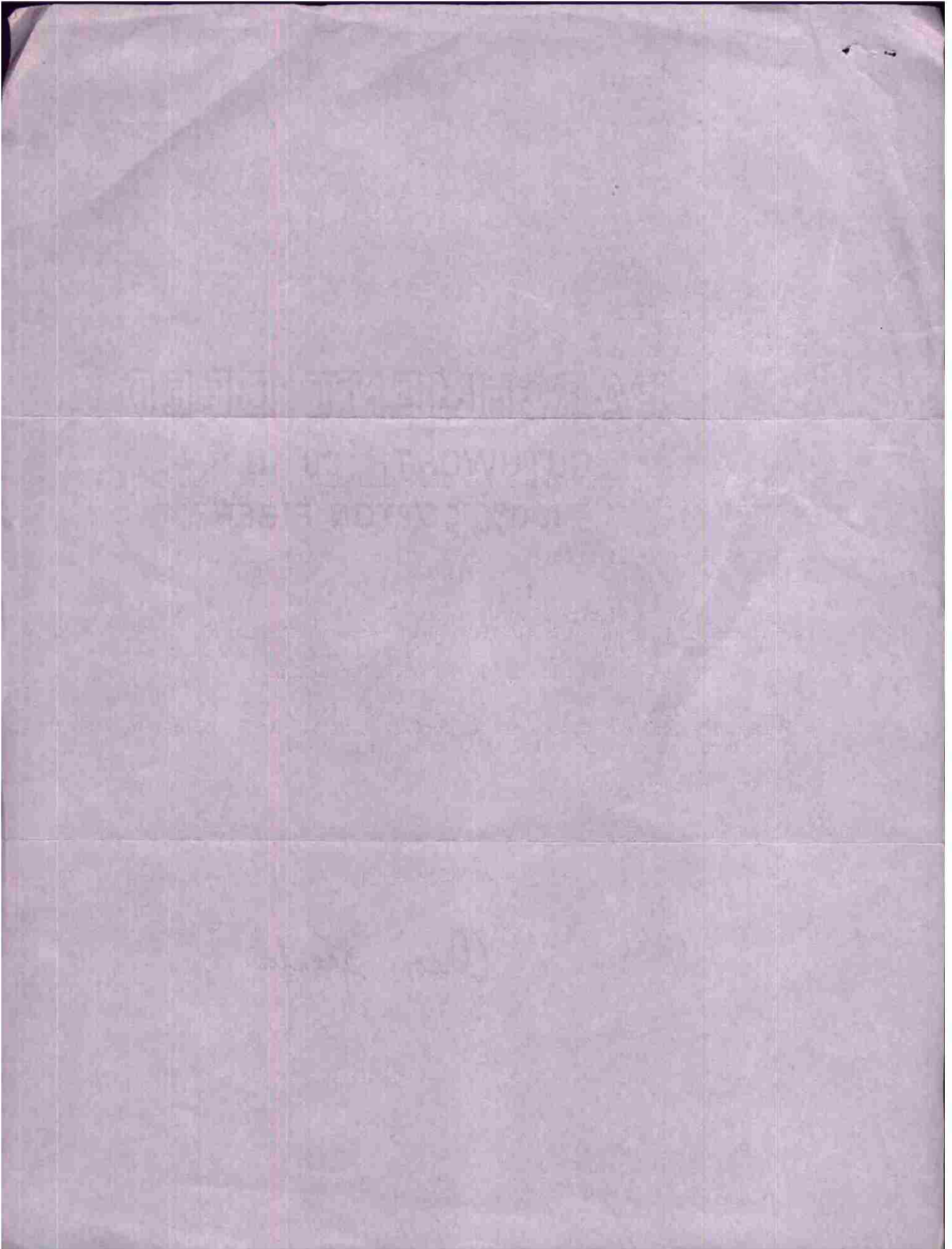
Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Oreon Keeslar". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Oreon Keeslar

Dr. Oreon Keeslar  
P. O. Box 1315  
Truckee, California 95734





OFFICE OF INFORMATION

To: ① CESA

KEESLER AFB, MS

② OI

TO: CEE *Hodge*, 19

19 July 1978

CV

CC

CESA - update suspense *Hodge*  
Reference your attached note.

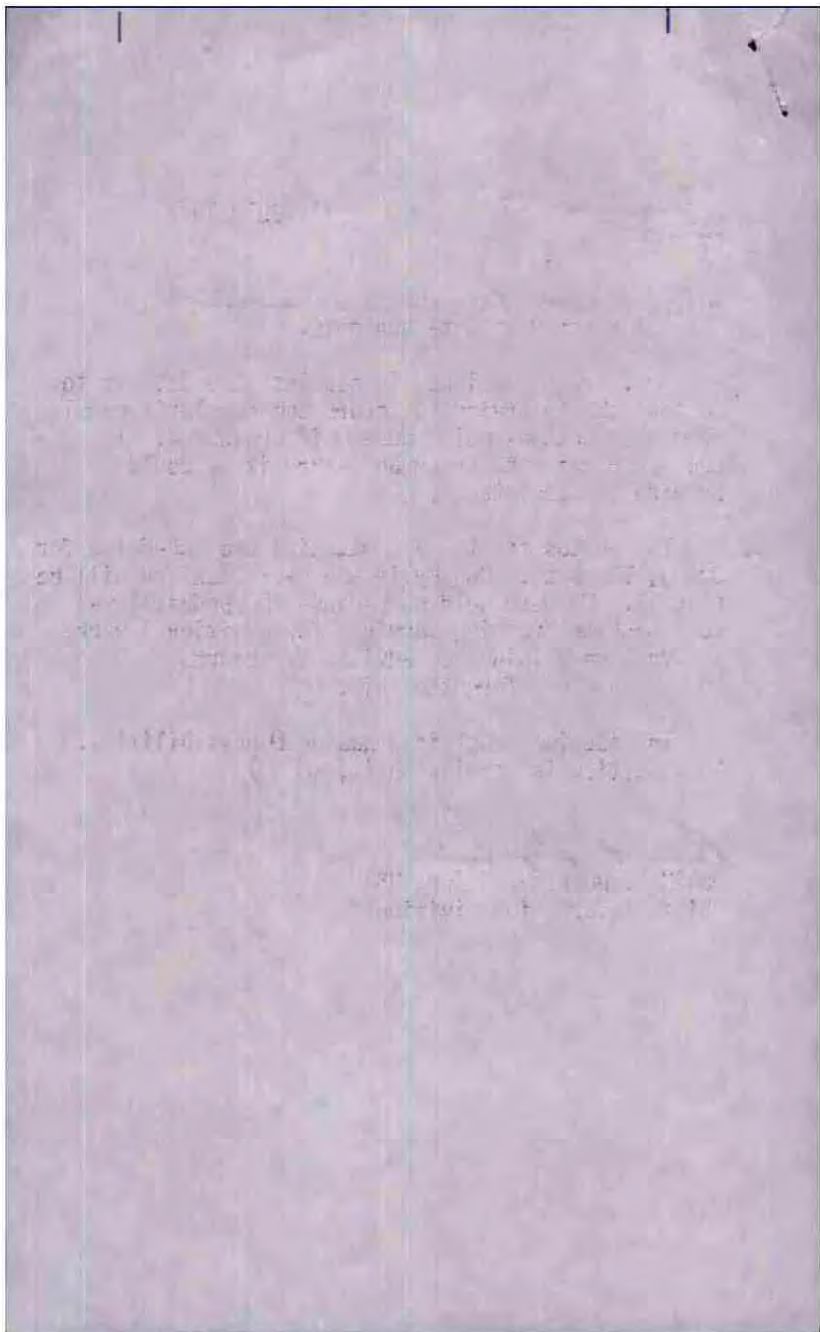
Mrs. Pratt mentioned in her last two letters to me that she is trying to secure Sam Keesler's medals from the "Cottonlandia" museum in Greenwood. I dropped her a note today and asked if we could provide any assistance.

The photos for the AFA magazine are scheduled for 0930, Thursday. Don Wylie and Jack Stanford will be present. We were held up because the pedestal was sent back to Training Services for additional work. I have been keeping Don advised of progress, so he knew we had not forgotten him.

The jogging track idea has good possibilities. Chet Justice is working on it.

*Doran L. Hopkins*  
DORAN L. HOPKINS, Major, USAF  
Chief, Information Division





HEADQUARTERS  
KEESLER TECHNICAL  
TRAINING CENTER

7-17-78

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER

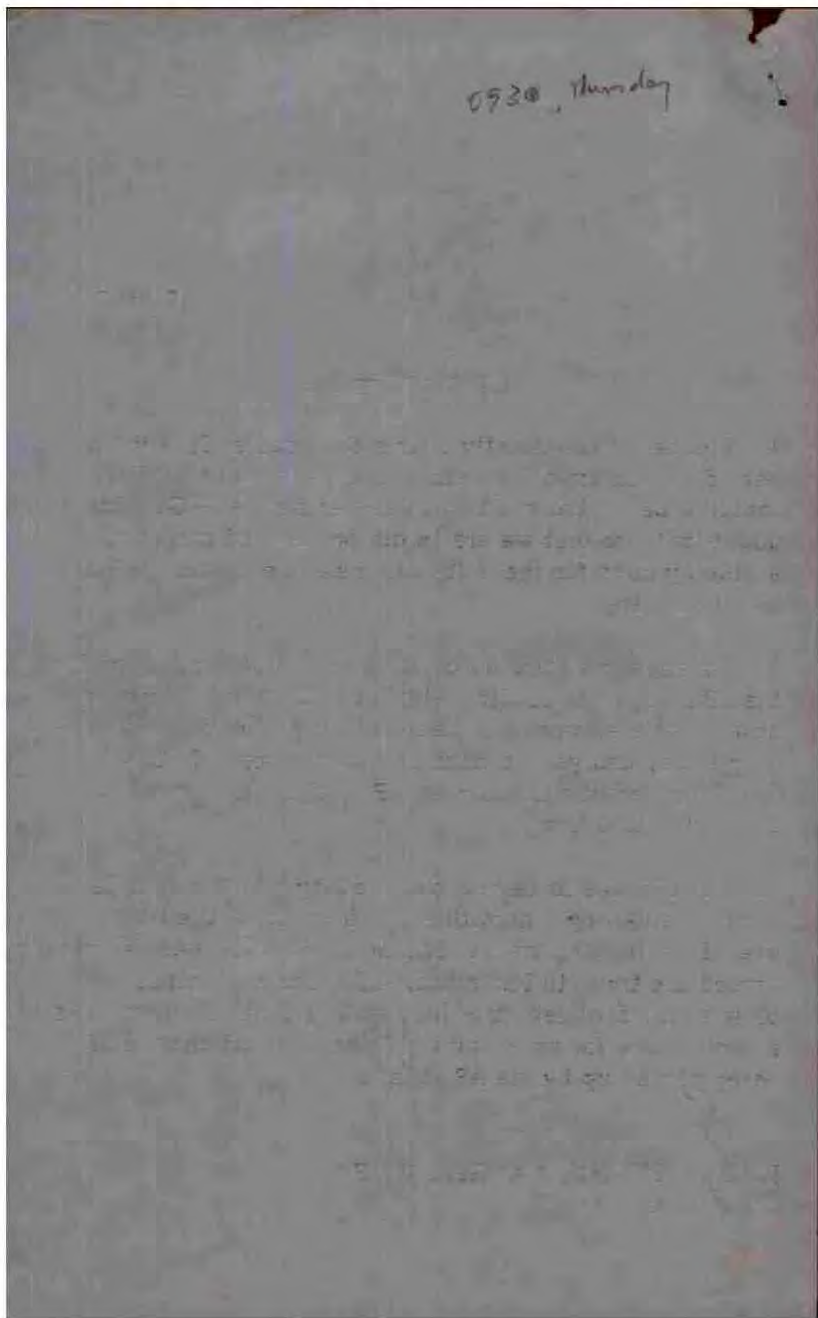


DATE: 17 Jul 78

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** OI (Maj Hopkins)

1. Please diplomatically querie the Keesler family and see if we can expedite getting the medals and uniform insignia belonging to Lt Sam Keesler for the SKC. You might indicate that we are in the process of preparing a display case for these items. Keep me posted on how this is coming.
2. I thought we were going to have a photo and story for the AFA magazine dealing with the SKC award. I understand that the award has been suitably mounted in a display case, and yet we have had no pictures of story developed around this for the AFA magazine. When is this going to occur?
3. I would like to have a photo essay which would be complemented by a narrative piece covering the wide use of our jogging track. Photos could show people running around the track in formation, individuals running, bicyclists, families strolling, etc. I think it might make a good theme for an essay which has a good chance of being picked up by the AF Times.

JOHN S. PUSTAY, Maj Gen, USAF  
Commander





19 July 1978

Mrs. Ella Keesler Pratt  
1109 Woodburn Road  
Durham, North Carolina 27705

Dear Mrs. Pratt

You mentioned in one of your letters that you thought you had located your brother's medals at "Cottonlandia" in Greenwood and that you might be able to secure them for us.

We are making plans to display them in the Spirit of Keesler Center. If at all possible, we would like to have them as soon as possible so that we may complete our current plans for the center.

If there is any assistance that I can provide in helping you secure the medals and any other pertinent memorabilia, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Please give my best wishes to all your family. I enjoyed meeting them.

Sincerely

  
DORAN L. HOPKINS, Major, USAF  
Chief, Information Division

OFFICE OF INFORMATION

KEESLER AFB, MS

TO: CCE *low*  
~~CV~~  
 CC

8 June 1978

UPDATE: Lt. Keesler's Portrait - Officers' Club

Sir,

I received a letter (Atch 1) from Mrs. Ella Fountain Keesler Pratt today. I have forwarded to Col Ferguson the photographs Mrs. Pratt sent us and a copy of this letter to assist the artist in the painting of a new portrait.

Please note the second paragraph.

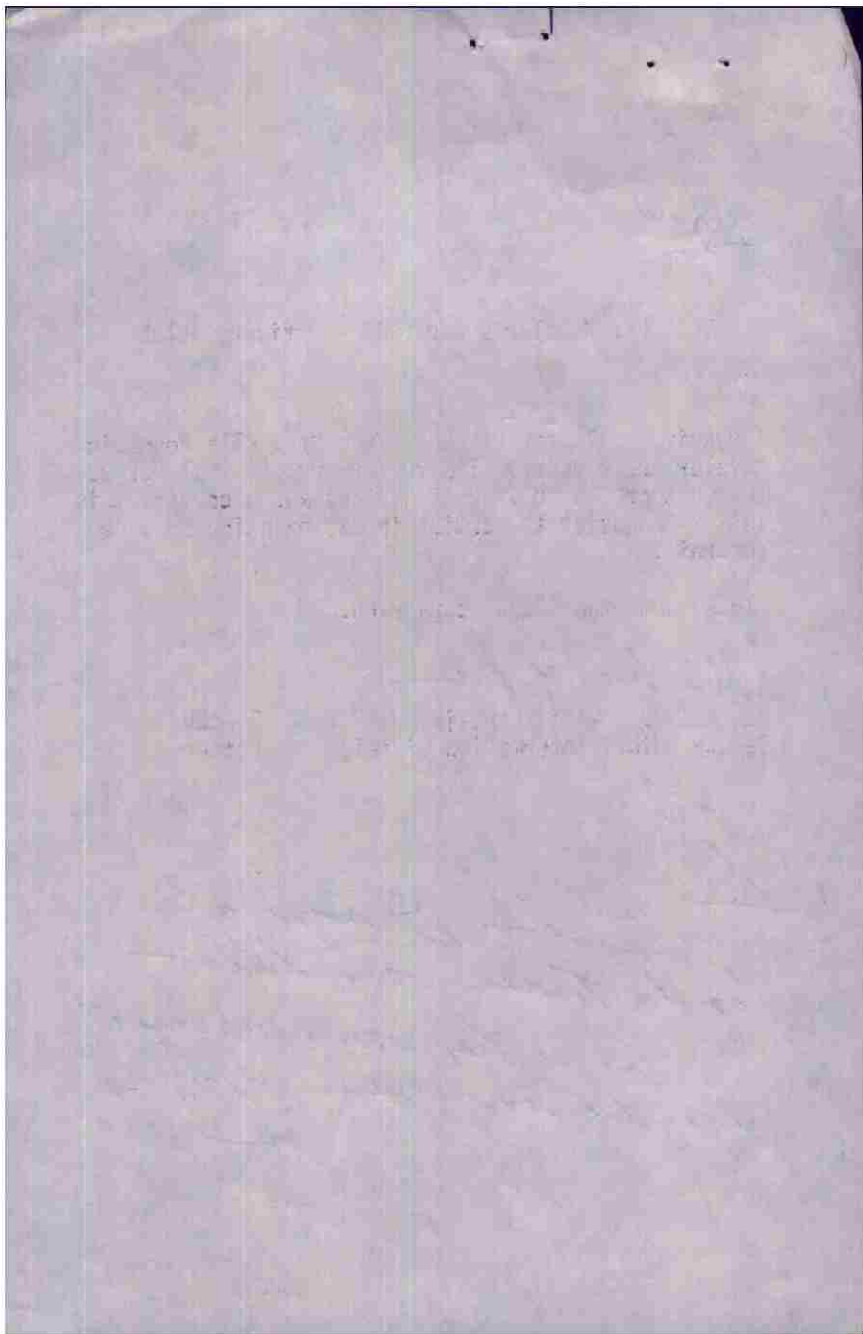
*Michael B. Perini*

MICHAEL B. PERINI, Captain, USAF  
 Deputy Chief, Information Division

1 Atch  
 Letter

*Good - I hope she  
 finds those medals -  
 Give her my warmest  
 regards in your reply.*

*Att: to the 55th  
 when letter portraits  
 send no receipt  
 MAB*







June 1, 1978

Captain Michael B. Perini  
Deputy Chief, Information Division  
Keesler Air Force Base  
Mississippi 39534

Dear Captain Perini:

I am sending you under separate cover three photographs of my brother, Sameul R. Keesler, Jr., for the artist to use in the painting of a new portrait for the Base. Since they are my only copies I will be grateful for their return when no longer needed. There should be quite a collection of Sam's photographs somewhere there at the base as they were gathered together by my sister, Ethel Duncan of Greenwood, and sent to the Base when the first portrait was done. She said she also sent a number of descriptions of Sam from friends, family etc. Since I was only a very small child when he was killed I have no actual memory of him. From all accounts he had very black hair and black eyes with a twinkle in them. The photograph of him in track uniform (taken at the famous Greenwood Spurrier Studio) seems to me to depict this facet of his personality - for he seems to be ready to laugh out loud at the ridiculousness of being photographed in such garb at a studio.

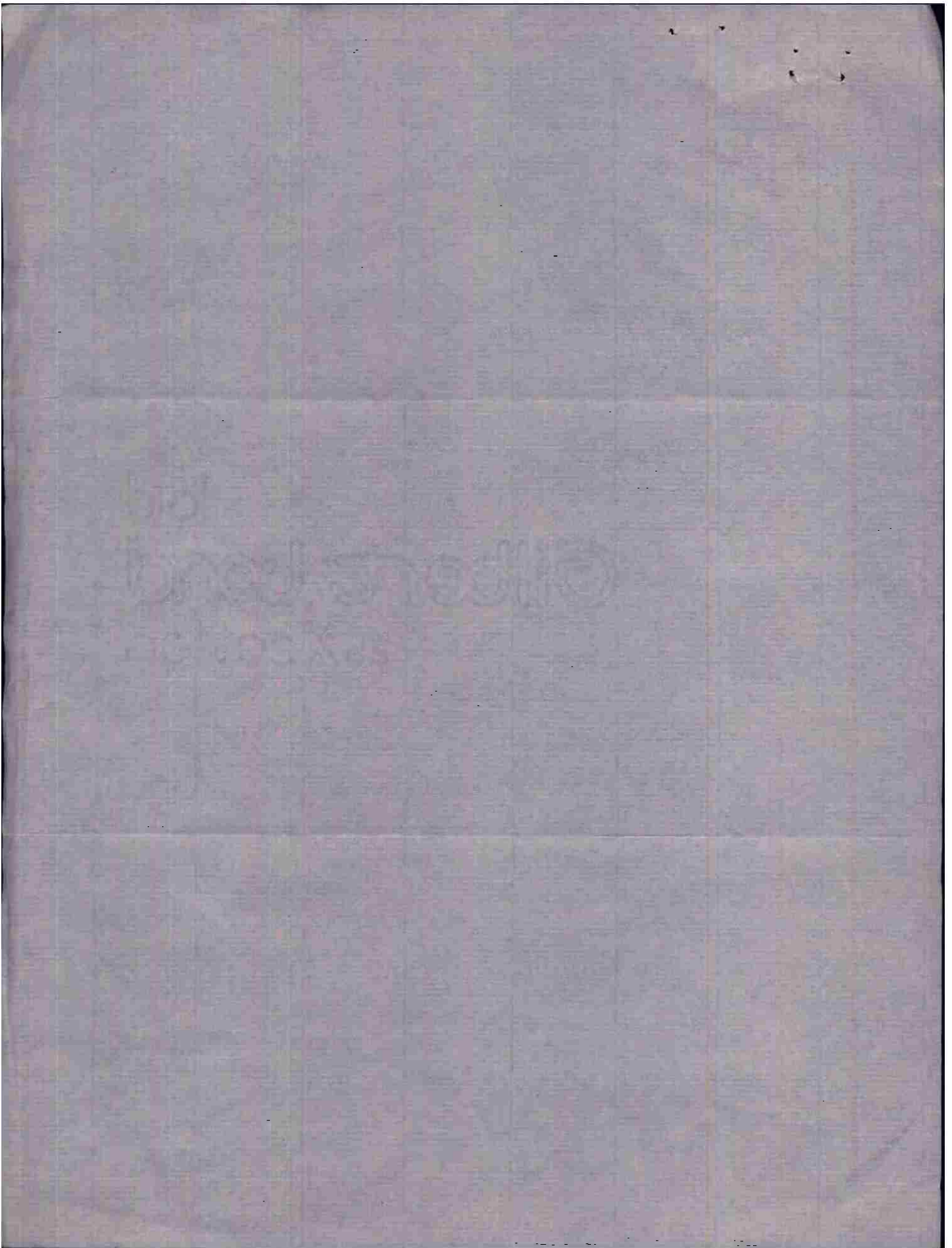
Please tell General Pustay I am still trying to locate Sam's medals to be sent to the Base to be kept with the other memorabilia.

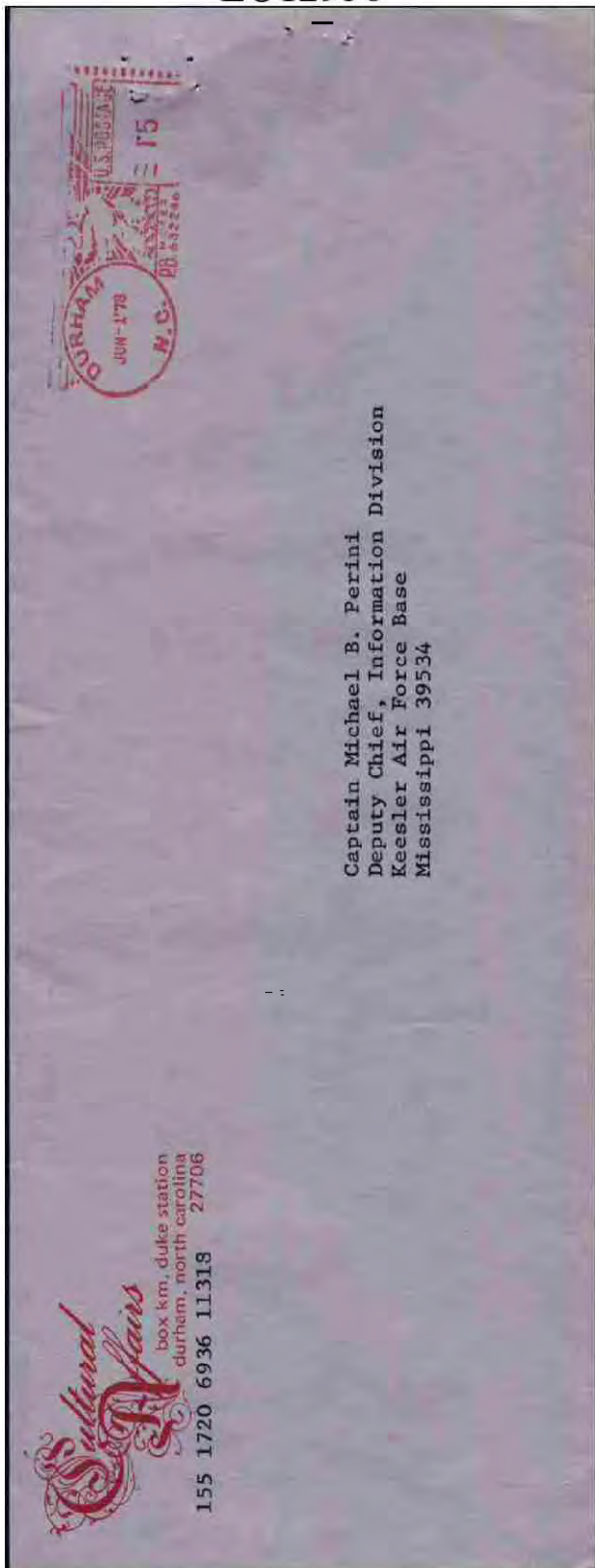
My good wishes to General Pustay and Major Hopkins. We certainly had a wonderful visit with you there.

Cordially,

Ella Fountain Keesler Pratt

EFP/df







THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW  
EO12958



THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW  
EO12958

CCE  
CV  
CC

8 June 1978

UPDATE: Lt. Keesler's Portrait - Officers' Club

Sir,

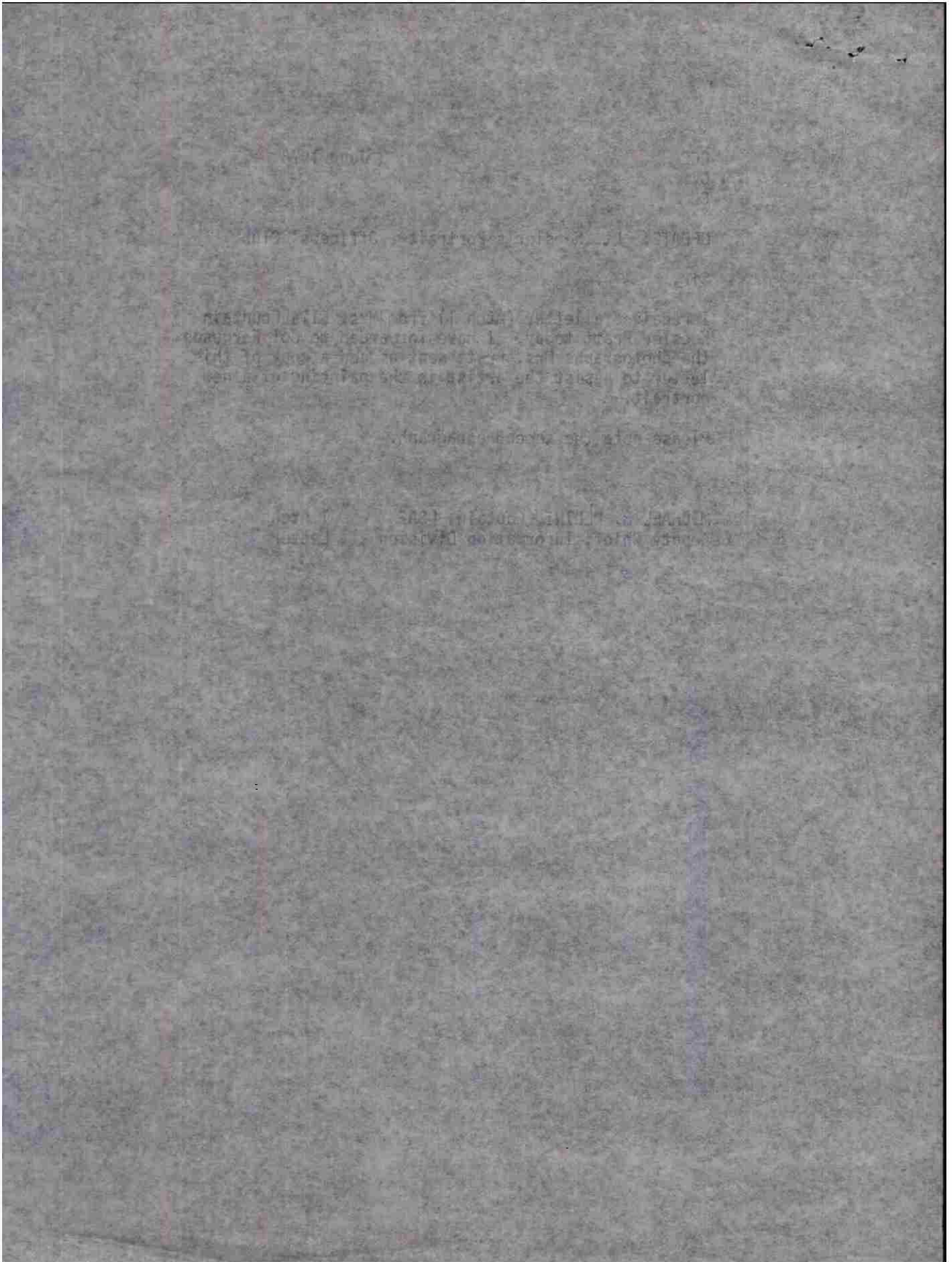
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Please note the second paragraph.

MICHAEL B. PERINI, Captain, USAF  
Deputy Chief, Information Division

1 Atch  
Letter

10







June 1, 1978

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Deputy Chief, Information Division  
Keesler Air Force Base  
Mississippi 39534

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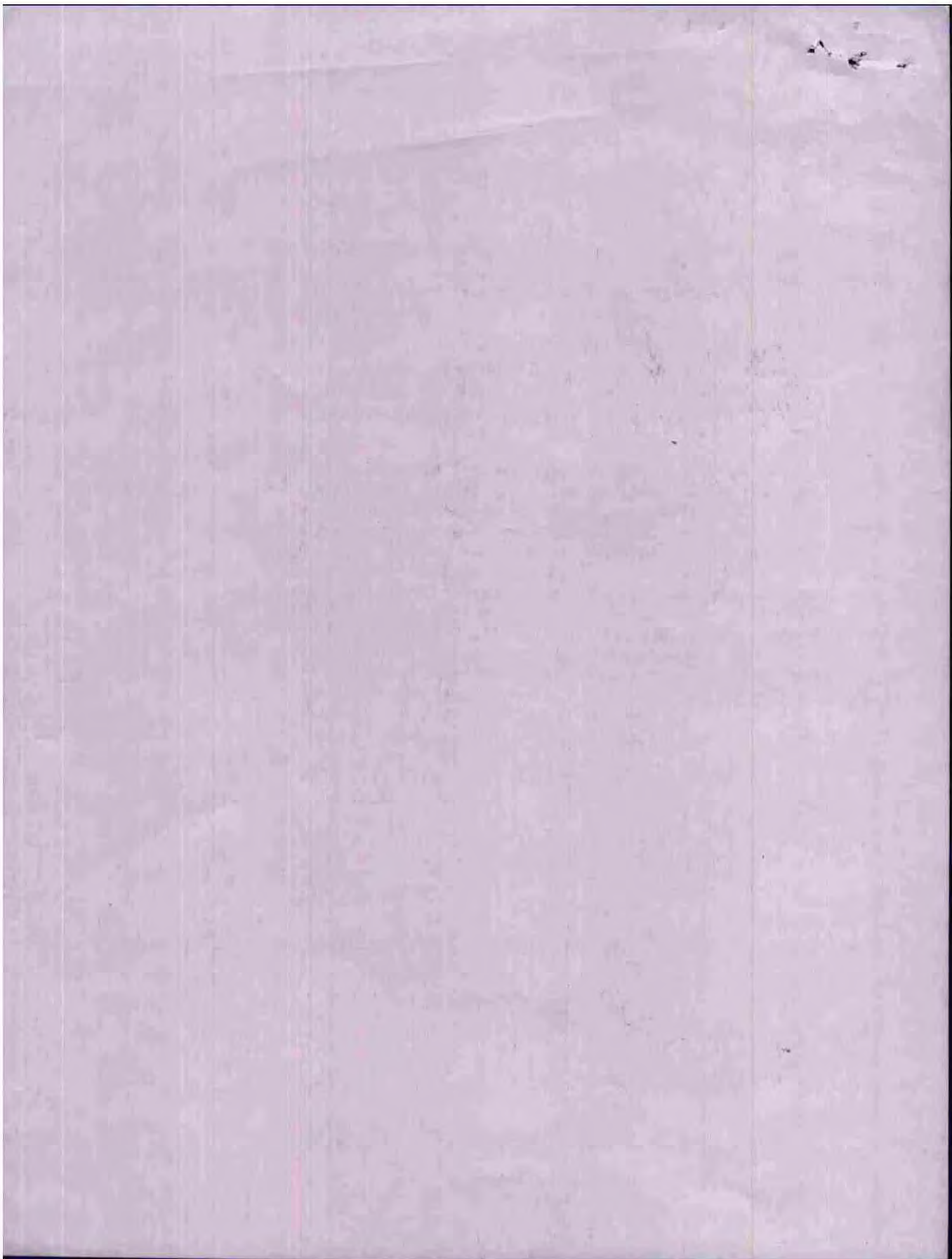
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My good wishes to General Pustay and Major Hopkins. We certainly had a wonderful visit with you there.

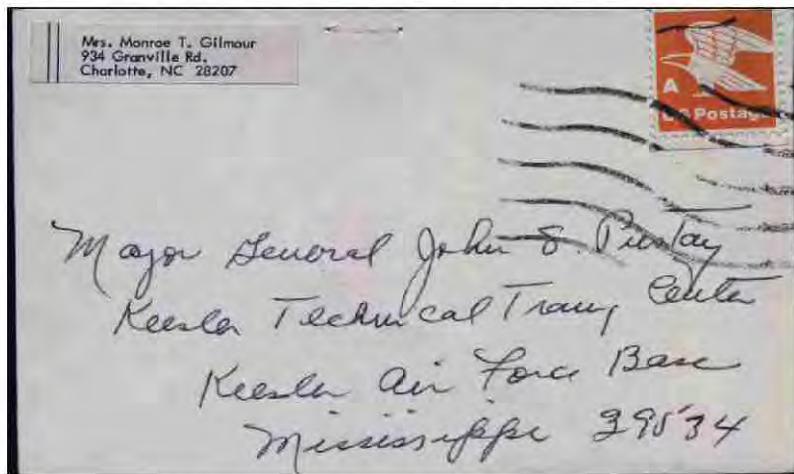
Cordially,

Ella Fountain Keesler Pratt

EFP/df



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THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958



**THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958**



**THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958**

Keays July 21/51  
ee Has been  
OI -  
Dear General Pershing,  
How proud  
and happy we are to re-  
ceive the wonderful photographs  
you sent - They are splendid

and give in such a  
 fine memorials of our  
 memorable week. and  
 at the Boat -  
 we are most affectionate  
 of the fine way you regard  
 our brother's life and of  
 our celebrating his spirit into  
 the spirit of the Boat -  
 But remember to all of  
 you particularly you know  
 wife under our supper  
meeting - Always + will gladly  
 Mark Trimmer



2 August 1978

Mrs. Ella Keesler Pratt  
1109 Woodburn Road  
Durham, North Carolina 27705

Dear Mrs. Pratt

I want to return these photos to you before something happens to them.  
We have photo reproductions of them for the artist's use.

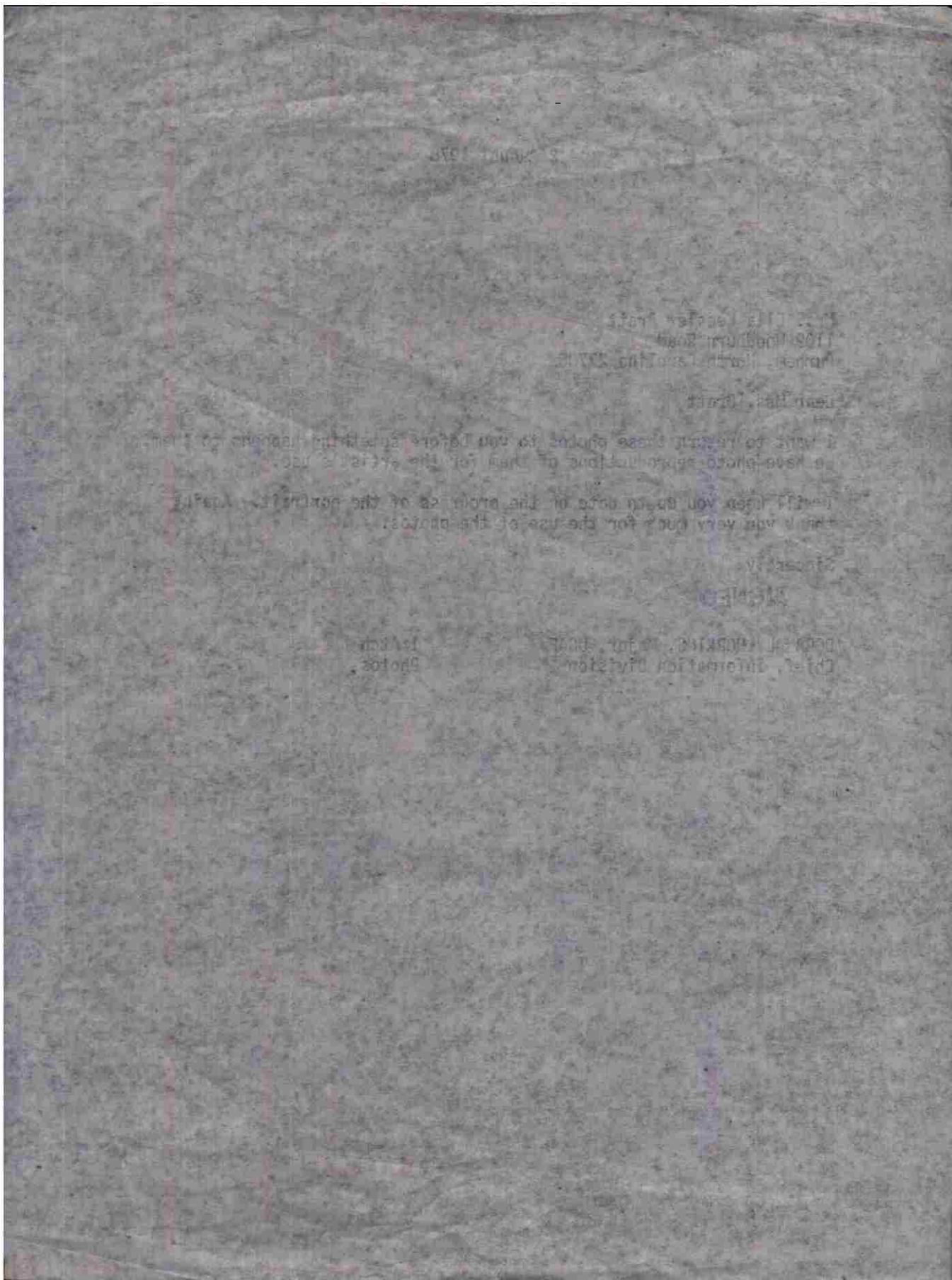
I will keep you up to date on the progress of the portrait. Again,  
thank you very much for the use of the photos.

Sincerely

SIGNED

DORAN L. HOPKINS, Major, USAF  
Chief, Information Division

1 Atch  
Photos





CCE  
CV  
CC

15 Aug 1978

The following is an update on two related Sam Keesler items.

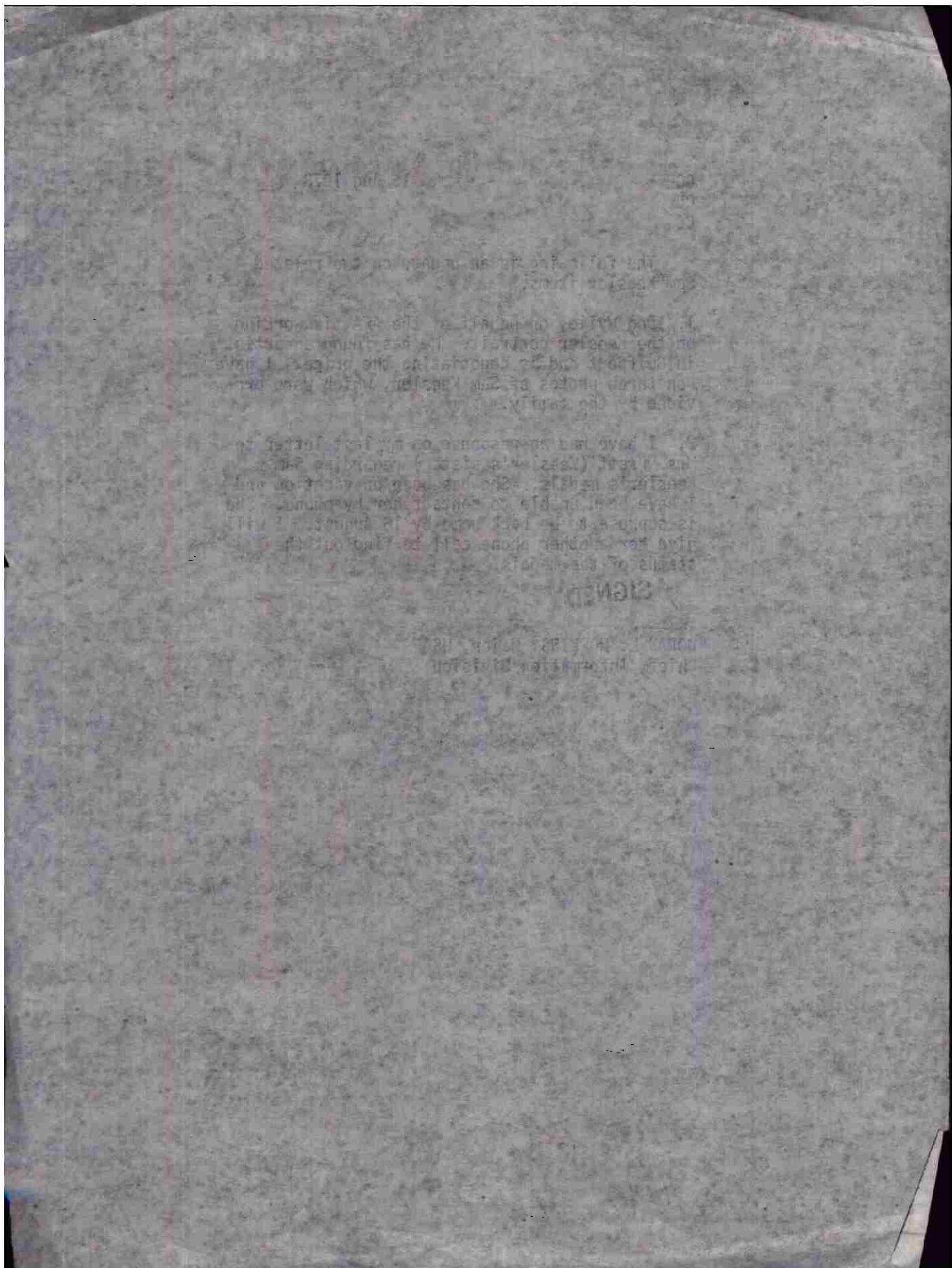
1. Don Wylie, on behalf of the AFA, is working on the Keesler portrait. He has found an artist in Gulfport and is negotiating the price. I gave Don three photos of Sam Keesler, which were provided by the family.

2. I have had no response on my last letter to Mrs. Pratt (Keesler's sister) regarding Sam Keesler's medals. She has been on vacation and I have been unable to contact her by phone. She is suppose to be back home by 16 August. I will give her another phone call to find out the status of the medals.

SIGNED

DORAN L. HOPKINS, Major, USAF  
Chief, Information Division





18 August 1978

Mrs. Ella Keesler Pratt  
1109 Woodburn Rd.  
Durham, N.C. 27705

Dear Mrs. Pratt

It was nice to talk to you again on the phone the other day.

I am enclosing a couple of issues of today's Keesler News, which has an article about the dedication of Garrard Hall. I am also enclosing a transcript of General Pustay's remarks.

Sincerely

SIGNED

DORAN L. HOPKINS, Major, USAF  
Chief, Information Division

2 Atch  
1. Base Newspaper  
2. Transcript

07



*OT file  
DP info  
P*

LAW OFFICES  
WHITTINGTON, BROCK, SWAYZE, DALE & CALHOUN  
P. O. BOX 941  
GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI 38930

WILL M. WHITTINGTON (1878-1962)  
W. M. WHITTINGTON, JR.  
H. DONALD BROCK  
CHARLES J. SWAYZE, JR.  
JAMES Y. DALE  
TOM P. CALHOUN III

August 22, 1978

SUITE 207  
AVEN BUILDING  
TELEPHONE  
(601) 453-7325

Major General John S. Pustay  
Keesler Technical Training Center  
Keesler Air Force Base  
Biloxi, Mississippi 39534

Dear General Pustay:

Mrs. Whittington has already written to you, but I wanted to add just a word of my own, in appreciation for the Air Force naming the new building at your Base in honor of my late brother-in-law, James M. Garrard, and for the manner in which the very impressive dedicatory ceremonies were handled by you and your staff.

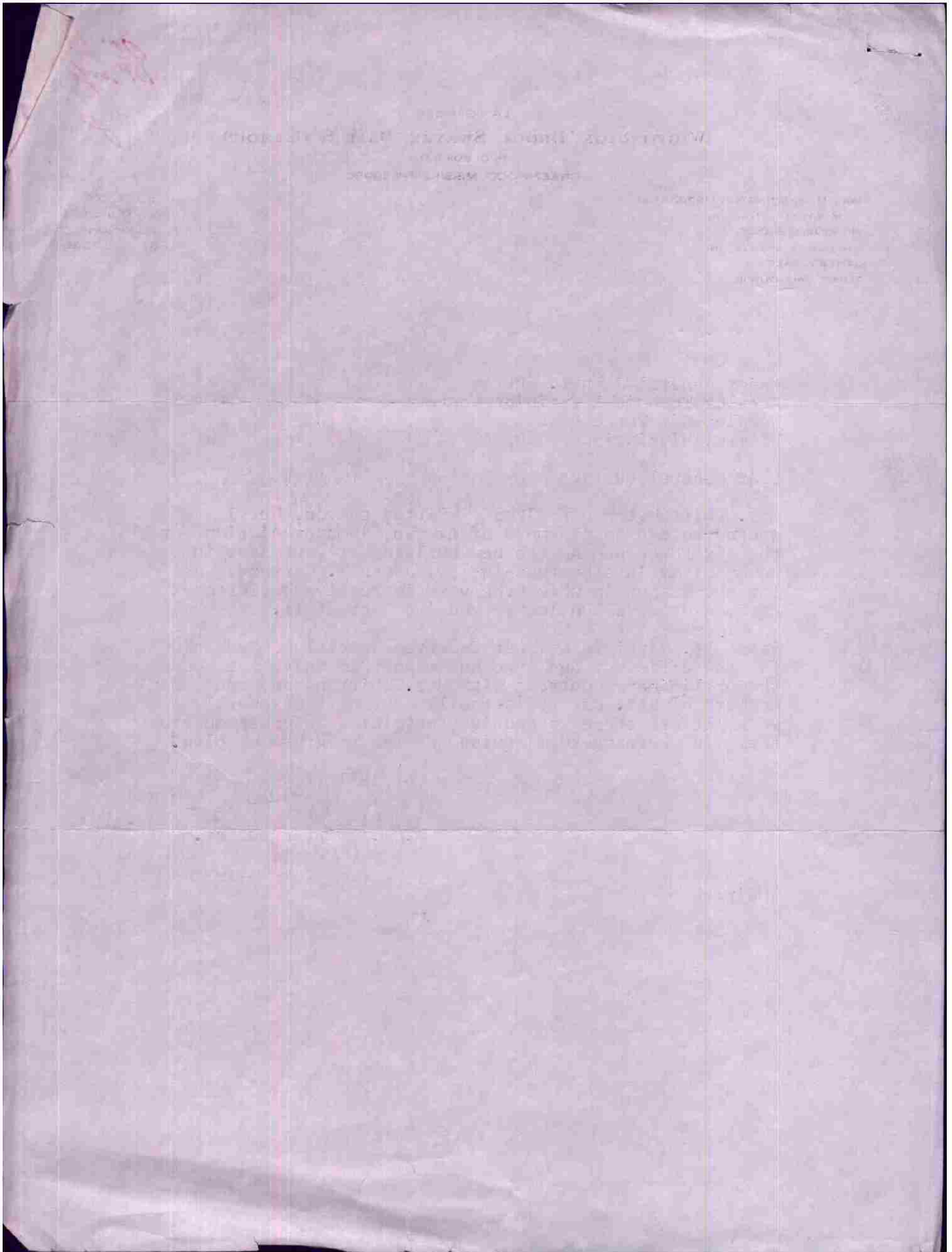
First Lt. Virginia Swisher deserves special commendation for the efficient and gracious manner in which she handled the preliminary contacts with Mrs. Whittington, and other members of Sgt. Garrard's family, during the several weeks before these ceremonies, obtaining information from them, and keeping them advised of the progress of plans.

Cordially,

*W. M. Whittington Jr.*  
W. M. Whittington Jr.

WMWjr:hb





31 August 1978

CCE  
CV  
CC

Ref the Keesler portrait for the Officers Club.

Don Wylie told me last night that the painting will cost \$800.00.

The AFA will pay \$100 of this. The AFA is in the process of trying to raise the remaining \$700 from eight military related associations on the Gulf Coast.

**SIGNED**

DORAN L. HOPKINS, Major, USAF  
Chief, Information Division

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8  
ID

Dear General Pustay:

Once again there being so many Whittingtons with the same name is responsible for an error. The beautiful album, which I have no doubt was intended for me, Sgt Garrard's sister, was sent to my son W.M. Whittington III.

It arrived while I was out of town and it was not until yesterday that I saw WMW III and his wife long enough to catch up on their news. When they told be about having received the album, I'd already seen the Steele's copy and had heard from my sister in Gulfport exclaiming over hers. It was certainly wonderful of you to provide us each with a volume.

Bill's mother also lives in Greenwood and my grandson is WMW IV. Aven Whittington Jr.'s wife and I share the same first, as well as last, name. So the odds are about 4 to 1 for identity confusion.

Please accept heartfelt, though belated,

thanks for this marvelous memento of an extraordinary time.

We're still hoping to get you and Mrs. Pustay up to Jackson for a ballet performance there. Two soloist from ABT were guests for the program last Saturday evening, but Bill and I were away and barely skidded in town in time for the curtain.

Meantime, best wishes to you both and, again, thanks.

Sincerely,

*Mary Margaret White*

Greenwood  
27 Oct



GCE  
CV  
CC

6 Nov 1978

RE: Keesler's Medals

Mrs. Pratt (Keesler's sister) originally volunteered to obtain the medals for us. Although I have initiated frequent contact with her, I haven't been able to ascertain why she has been unable to get the medals. She continues to tell me that she is working on it. She may be finding resistance within the family or from the museum.

However, I have now decided to contact other members of the family to try to get the medals. If I have no luck with them, I will make a direct inquiry to the museum.

SIGNED

DORAN L. HOPKINS, Major, USAF  
Chief, Information Division

INFORMATION OFFICE

KEESLER AFB, MS

11 December 1978

TO:

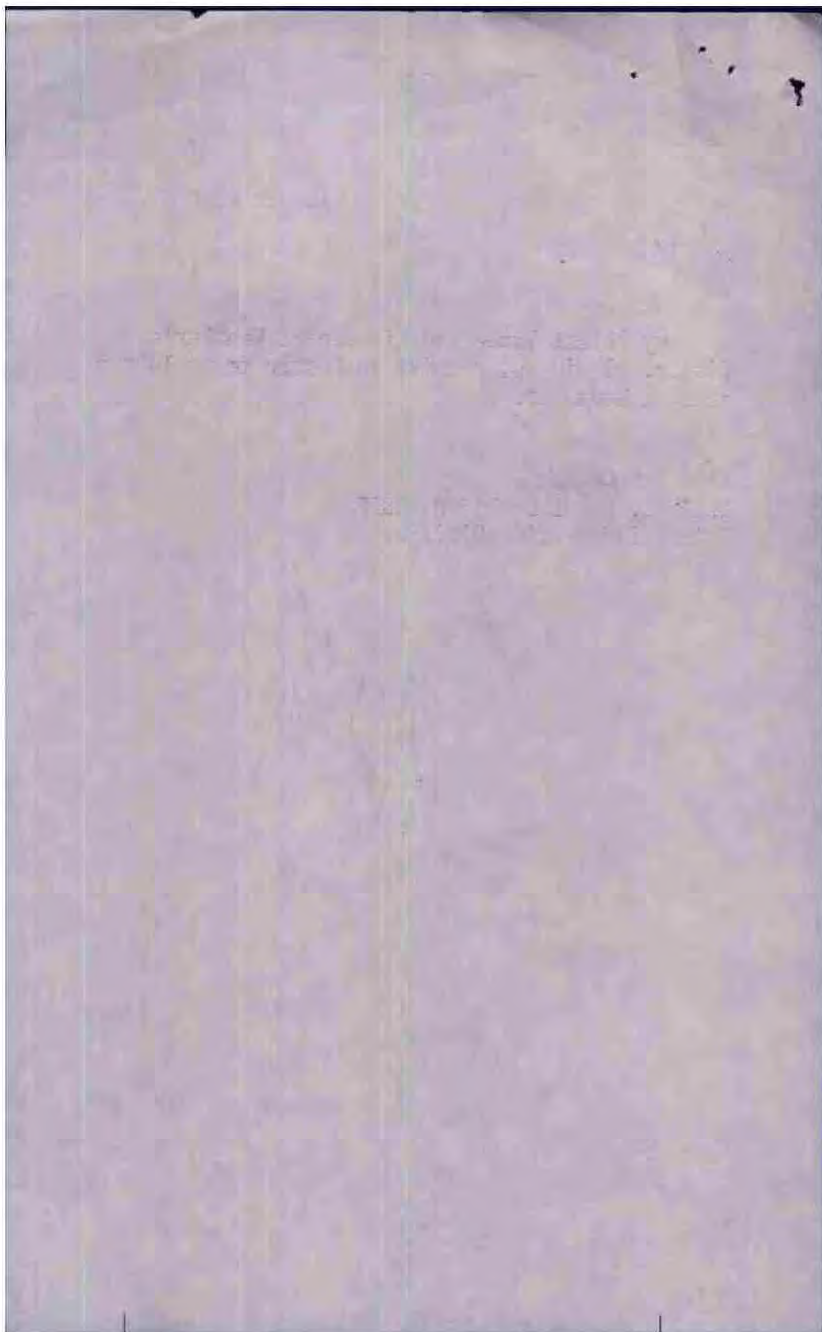
cc: *[Signature]*  
CV  
CC

My latest letter to Lieutenant Keesler's Sister. I did not receive an answer to my letter dated 8 November.

*[Signature]*

DORAN L. HOPKINS, Major, USAF  
Chief, Information Division

*Thank you.*  
*[Signature]*





DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS KEESLER TECHNICAL TRAINING CENTER (ATC)  
KEESLER AIR FORCE BASE, MISSISSIPPI 39534



11 December 1978

Mrs. Ethel Keesler Duncan  
301 East Cleveland  
Greenwood, MS 38930

Dear Mrs. Duncan

I just wanted to drop you a line and check to see if you have had any luck in locating some momentos of your brother for display here in the Spirit of Keesler Center. As I mentioned in my letter of November 8, we would be honored to have medals, uniforms and letters belonging to Lieutenant Keesler.

If there is any way in which we can assist you, please write or call me at (601) 377-3901.

*H*  
DORAN L. HOPKINS, Major, USAF  
Chief, Information Division

AIR FORCE — A GREAT WAY OF LIFE

INFORMATION OFFICE

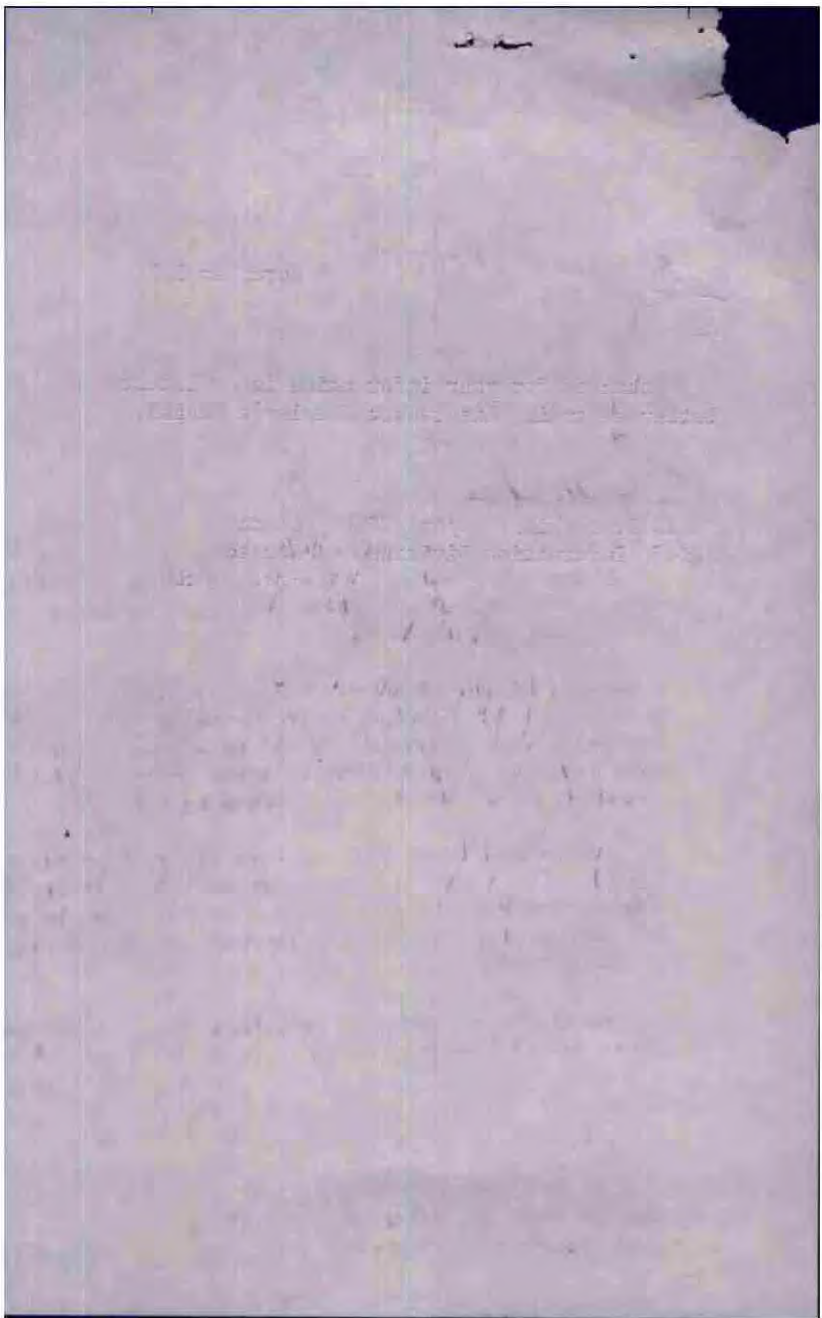
KEESLER AFB, MS

TO: *ACE, Judge, 9 Nov 78* 8 November 1978  
CV  
CC

Attached for your information is my latest letter regarding Lieutenant Keesler's medals.

*Doran L. Hopkins*  
DORAN L. HOPKINS, Major, USAF 1 Atch  
Chief, Information Division Ltr to  
Mrs. Duncan

*OK - Keep me informed please*





8 November 1978

Mrs. Ethel Keesler Duncan  
301 East Cleveland  
Greenwood, MS 38930

Dear Mrs. Duncan

Last Spring, when we dedicated the Spirit of Keesler Center as a learning center and museum, your sister, Mrs. Ella Pratt, mentioned that perhaps we could obtain from "Cottonlandia" some mementos of your brother for display here.

In subsequent telephone conversations with Mrs. Pratt, she mentioned to me that Cottonlandia may have some of Lieutenant Keesler's medals, uniforms and letters. If at all possible, we would be honored to have these items on display here to serve as an inspiration for the many thousands of airmen who are trained here yearly.

Last week, Mrs. Pratt told me that you or your daughter, Mrs. Steele, might help in obtaining these mementos for display in the Spirit of Keesler Center. Any assistance that you might be able to provide in this matter would be greatly appreciated by the men and women of Keesler AFB.

I am anxiously awaiting to hear from you. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to write or call me at (601) 377-3901.

Sincerely

SIGNED

DORAN L. HOPKINS, Major, USAF  
Chief, Information Division

## INFORMATION OFFICE

KEESLER AFB, MS

TO: *cc: [Signature], 7 Nov 78*  
 CV  
 CC

6 Nov 1978

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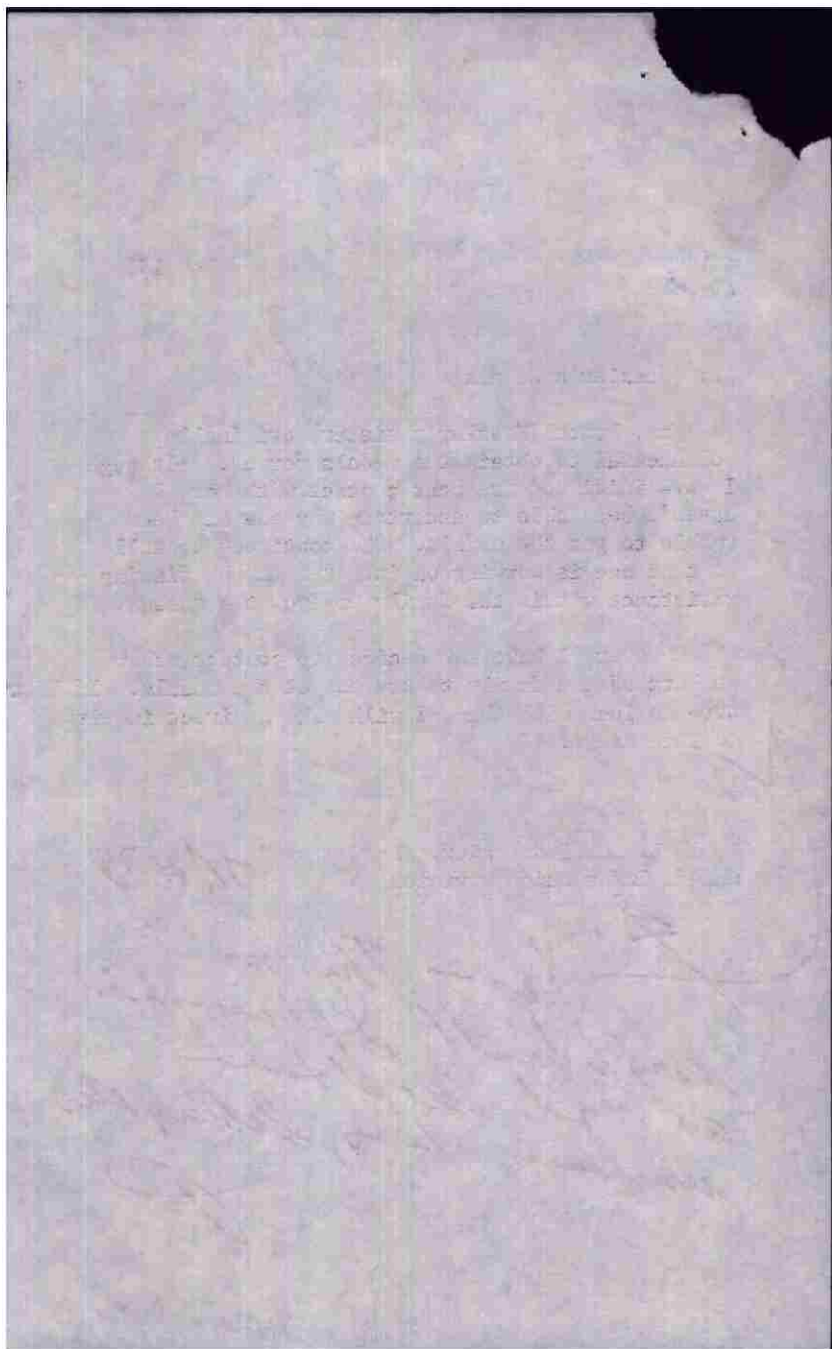
However, I have now decided to contact other members of the family to try to get the medals. If I have no luck with them, I will make a direct inquiry to the museum.

*[Signature]*  
 DORAN L. HOPKINS, Major, USAF  
 Chief, Information Division

*7 Nov 78*

*Yes - This is important! I'll weigh in as reqd. Will take uniform, temp, letters, etc.*

*Interim Reply*





10-26-3

HEADQUARTERS  
KEESLER TECHNICAL  
TRAINING CENTER

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER



DATE: 20 Oct 34

MEMORANDUM FOR:

To Lt Col Wilson TT  
THRU: DCT  
OS

I'm still anxious  
to get some of the  
Lt's insignia, etc. What  
is status? (OS for action)

The letter is for TT  
action - file - display -  
J



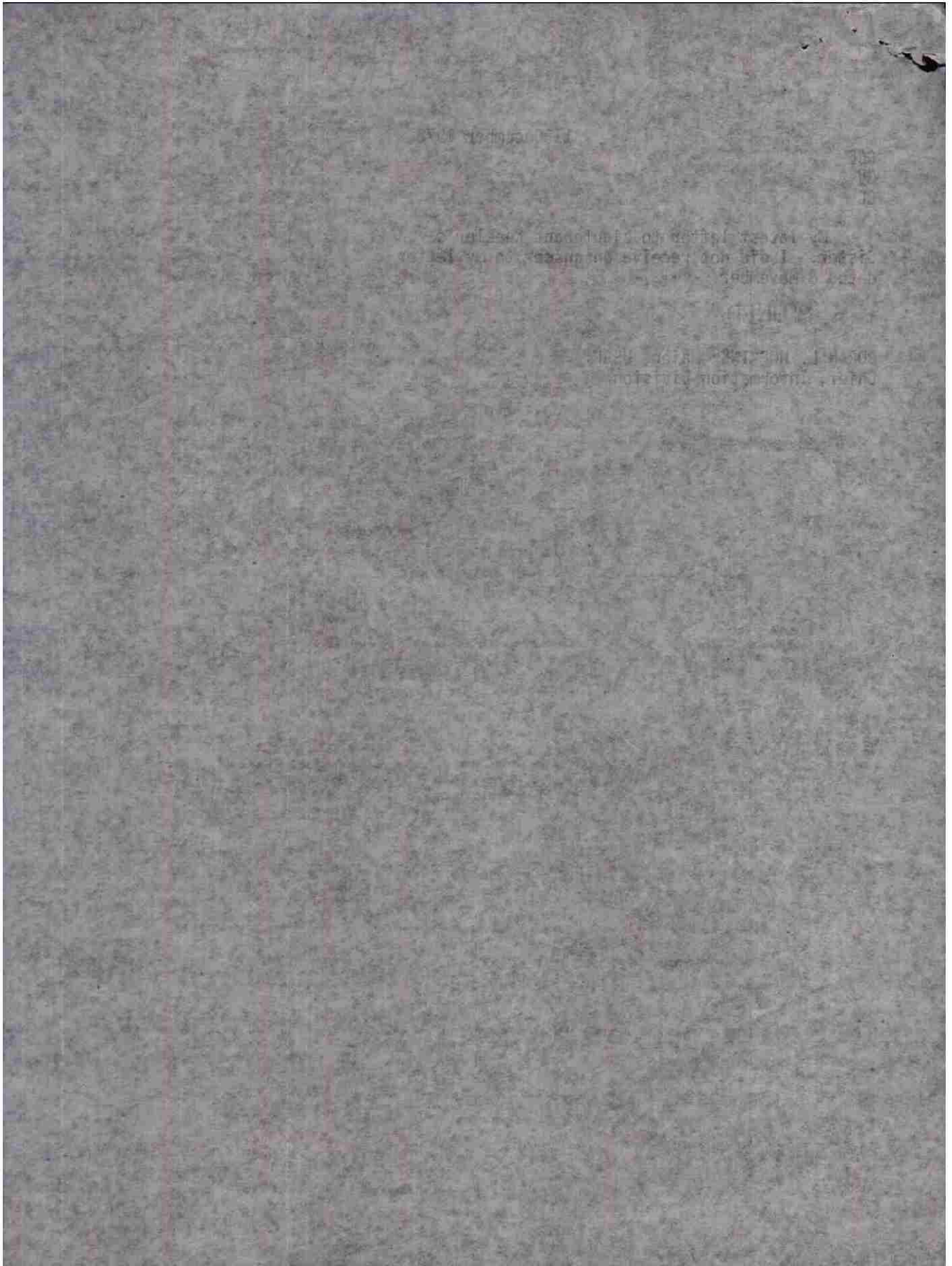
11 December 1978

CCE  
CV  
CC

My latest letter to Lieutenant Keesler's  
Sister. I did not receive an answer to my letter  
dated 8 November.

SIGNED

DORAN L. HOPKINS, Major, USAF  
Chief, Information Division





families, and sister-in-law Lieneka Snellen Gilmour of Southern Pines and daughter Lillas Pies and family, as well as sixteen great-grandchildren, many cousins, nieces, nephews and dear friends, among them, Shelley Welton, Bob White, and Iraetta Cornwell.

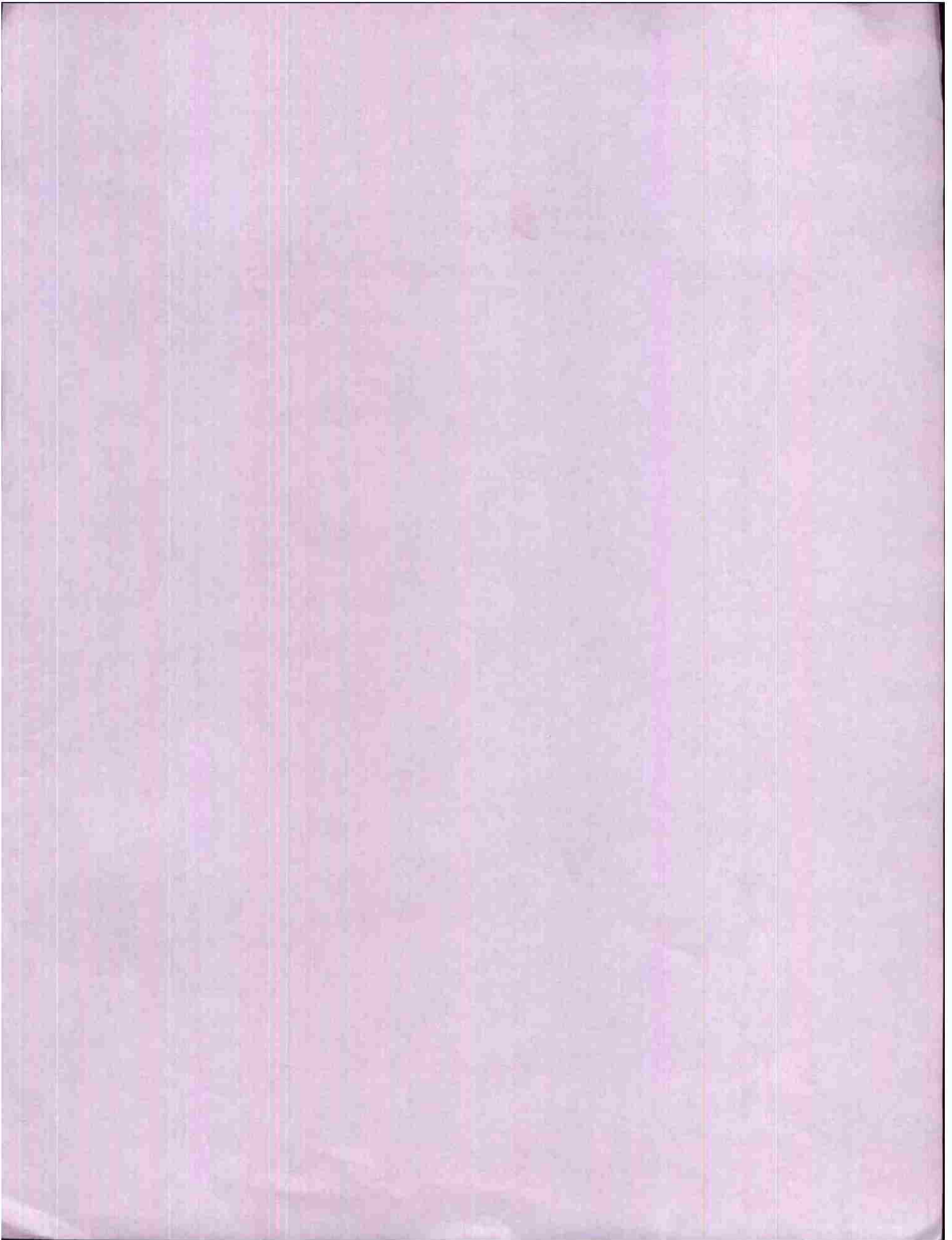
A private service for the family will be held at 2 pm on Tuesday, March 16, in the backyard of her home 934 Granville Road, Charlotte, NC. Friends are invited to come celebrate her life at a reception at the home between 3 pm and 5 pm on Tuesday. Internment of her ashes will take place at a later time at Evergreen Memorial Park in Charlotte.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be sent to The Shepherd Center of Charlotte, 1931 Selwyn Ave., Charlotte, NC 28207; the Central Carolinas YWCA, 3420 Park Rd., Charlotte, NC 28209; HOSPICE AT CHARLOTTE, 1420 East 7<sup>th</sup> St., Charlotte, NC 28204; and the Metrolina AIDS Project, PO Box 32662, Charlotte, NC 28232.

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**Yahoo! Mail** - More reliable, more storage, less spam

3/19/2004





DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS KEESLER TECHNICAL TRAINING CENTER (ATC)  
KEESLER AIR FORCE BASE, MISSISSIPPI 39534



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Chief, Information Division

AIR FORCE — A GREAT WAY OF LIFE



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Sincerely

SIGNED

DORAN L. HOPKINS, Major, USAF  
Chief, Information Division

Interiors, Guest Lists, and Speeches

169-7567-3844

FOLDER 5

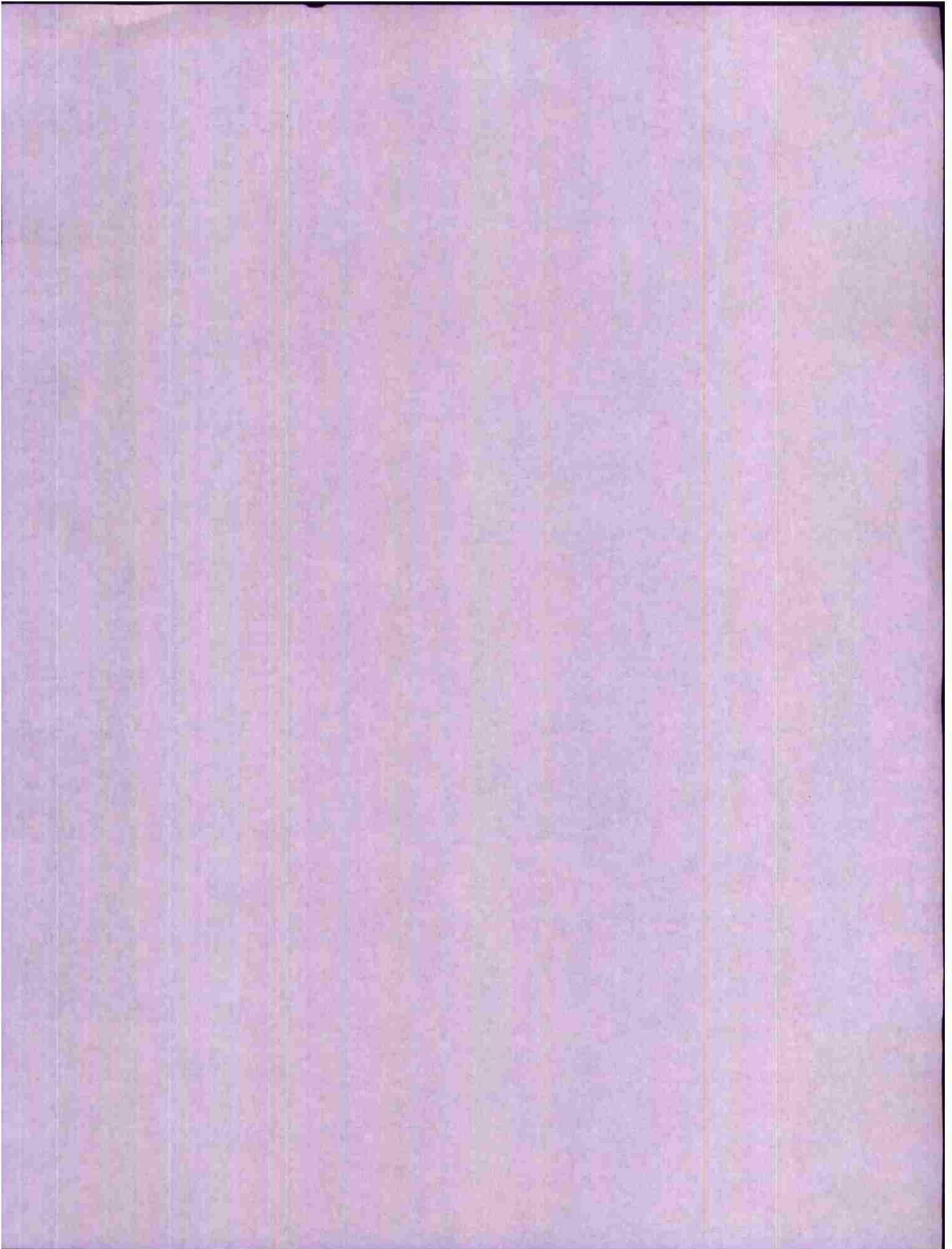
RETURN TO  
AIR FORCE  
Historical Research Agency  
Maxwell AFB AL 36111

SCANNED BY ACT

2007

0115662







(8 APR 1978)

"SPIRIT OF KEESLER CENTER"

DEDICATION SPEECH

MAJ. GEN. JOHN S. PUSTAY  
COMMANDER, KEESLER TECHNICAL TRAINING CENTER

FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF LT KEESLER -- DISTINGUISHED GUESTS --  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

I AM BOTH HONORED AND PLEASED TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY  
THIS AFTERNOON TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DEDICATION OF OUR NEWEST  
TRAINING FACILITY -- "THE SPIRIT OF KEESLER CENTER."

BOTH THE BASE AND THIS BEAUTIFUL FACILITY HONOR THE MEMORY  
OF LT SAMUEL REEVES KEESLER, JR., AN AERIAL OBSERVER FROM  
GREENWOOD, MISS.

THIS BUILDING IS DESIGNED TO BE A STUDY AND TRAINING CENTER  
FOR THE THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS WHO NOW AND WILL IN THE YEARS  
AHEAD RECEIVE TECHNICAL TRAINING HERE. IT IS THE ONLY FACILITY  
OF ITS KIND IN THE COMMAND.

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE OR EVEN PICTURE THAT JUST A SHORT  
PERIOD OF TIME AGO, WHERE WE ARE STANDING/SITTING WAS THE  
KITCHEN PORTION OF A DINING FACILITY.



"SPIRIT OF KEESLER CENTER" -- DEDICATION SPEECH  
(DRAFTED BY CAPT MIKE PERINI)

- INTRO -

FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF LT KEESLER -- DISTINGUISHED GUESTS -  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

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IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE OR EVEN PICTURE THAT JUST A SHORT  
PERIOD OF TIME AGO, WHERE WE ARE STANDING/SITTING WAS THE  
KITCHEN PORTION OF A DINING FACILITY.

BUT, AS A RESULT OF HUNDREDS OF HOURS OF DEDICATED WORK  
BY MEMBERS OF OUR CIVIL ENGINEERING SQUADRON, TECHNICAL  
TRAINING SCHOOL TRAINING SERVICES DIVISION, AND THE STUDENT  
AFFAIRS DIVISION, USING INNOVATIVE IDEAS, FILLED WITH  
PERSONAL PRIDE, AND HELD TOGETHER BY A VISION, THIS STUDY AND  
LEARNING CENTER WHICH IS THE VERY ESSENCE OF KEESLER WAS CREATED.

WHAT SURROUNDS YOU IS THE FRUIT OF THEIR LABOR AND THEIR DREAMS. I MIGHT ADD AT THIS POINT, THAT THEIR EFFORTS HAVE NOT GONE UNNOTICED. RECENTLY WE WERE HONORED WITH THE VISIT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE, JOHN C. STETSON, WHO WAS THOROUGHLY IMPRESSED WITH THE APPEARANCE AND WORKMANSHIP OF THE FACILITY WE ARE DEDICATING THIS AFTERNOON.

THE SPIRIT OF KEESLER CENTER NOT ONLY CONTAINS MEMORABILIA AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF ACTIVITIES AT THE BASE DURING THE RICH AND COLORFUL PAST, BUT IT ALSO INCLUDES MATERIALS WHICH STUDENTS CAN USE TO LEARN ABOUT THEIR CAREER FIELDS, ASSIGNMENTS AND BASES TO WHICH THEY WILL BE SENT. ALSO, THE FACILITY CONTAINS MAPS, ROAD ATLASES AND INFORMATION BROCHURES SO STUDENTS CAN PLAN WEEKEND OR VACATION TRIPS ALONG THE GULF COAST AND OTHER AREAS.

A GOOD QUESTION AT THIS POINT MAY BE WHY NAME THE RESOURCE CENTER AFTER LT KEESLER. THE ANSWER TO THAT IS A SIMPLE ONE -- THIS STUDY AND LEARNING FACILITY PORTRAYS THE SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE WHICH HAS ALWAYS EXISTED HERE -- THE SAME SPIRIT THAT DOMINATED SAM KEESLER'S LIFE.

THE FOLLOWING IS AN EXTRACT OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY 1ST LT. STUART GILCHRIST WHO KNEW KEESLER IN FRANCE, WHICH EXEMPLIFIES THAT SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE I'M TALKING ABOUT.

"I NEVER SAW A FELLOW WHO WAS MORE ANXIOUS TO DO HIS WORK WELL. A HALF-DONE OR POORLY DONE MISSION DIDN'T SATISFY SAM. HE WANTED RESULTS, AND WASN'T CONTENT TO



BE EXCUSED BECAUSE A PILOT HAD MISMANAGED THE MISSION OR A CAMERA HAD GONE BAD... PERHAPS SAM MIGHT HAVE COME BACK FROM THE LAST MISSION IF HE HAD NOT WANTED TO DO HIS BEST."

THE COMMENTS IN THIS LETTER CERTAINLY PORTRAY OUR CONCEPT OF THE "SPIRIT OF KEESLER" AND THIS FAMILY -- EXCELLENCE.

BUT LET'S GO A LITTLE DEEPER INTO THE MAN HIMSELF TO FURTHER UNDERSTAND WHY WE HONOR HIM AGAIN TODAY.

BORN IN 1896 IN GREENWOOD, MISS., HE WAS THE SON OF MAJ. GEN. SAMUEL R. KEESLER, COMMANDER OF THE MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL GUARD FOR 8 YEARS PRIOR TO WORLD WAR I, AND LATER MAYOR OF GREENWOOD, MISS.

HE HAD A BROTHER AND 5 SISTERS. *HIS BROTHER & TWO OF HIS SISTERS ARE* THERE ARE THREE OF THEM HERE TODAY: MR. WILLIAM KEESLER, MRS. MARY GILMOUR AND MRS. ELLA PRATT.

SAM ENTERED THE SERVICE IN MAY OF 1917 AND RECEIVED HIS COMMISSION AT FORT OGLETHORPE, GA. HE WAS ASSIGNED AS AN AERIAL OBSERVER WITH THE 24TH AERO SQUADRON IN FRANCE. ON OCTOBER 8, 1918 HE JOINED PILOT 1ST LT. HAROLD W. RILEY ON A SPECIAL MISSION, IN AN ARMY COMMAND PLANE, A TWO-PLACE "CAMEL," OPERATING OUT OF SONILLY, FRANCE.

LT. RILEY, IN A LETTER WRITTEN THREE MONTHS LATER, TELLS WHAT HAPPENED ON THAT EVENTFUL DAY:

"IN THE LATE AFTERNOON OF THE 8TH OF OCT. 1918, LT KEESLER AND MYSELF WERE ON A MISSION EAST OF VERDUN. SHORTLY AFTER WE CROSSED THE LINE AND JUST BEFORE WE HAD COVERED THE ASSIGNED TERRITORY, FOUR FOKKERS CAME FROM THE FRENCH SIDE OF THE LINE AND ATTACKED US. I AM CERTAIN LT KEESLER SHOT DOWN THE LEADER AS HE ATTACKED FIRST, AND I SAW HIM GO DOWN IN A STEEP NOSE DIVE. THE OTHER THREE OPENED FIRE IMMEDIATELY AND SHOT AWAY MY RUDDER CONTROLS, A PART OF MY ELEVATORS AND <sup>crippled</sup> CRIPPED ONE AILERON. WE WENT DOWN OUT OF CONTROL AND CRASHED. LT KEESLER FIRED ALL THE WAY DOWN AND AFTER WE CRASHED. ALTHOUGH KEESLER WAS WOUNDED SIX TIMES IN THE CHEST AND ABDOMEN. HE SHOWED A WONDERFUL DEGREE OF SELF-CONTROL AND WON THE ADMIRATION OF ALL THE GERMAN SOLDIERS WHO CAME TO LOOK AT HIM."

LT KEESLER DIED THE NEXT DAY AS A POW IN A GERMAN FIELD HOSPITAL. IN RECOGNITION OF LIEUTENANT KEESLER'S GALLANTRY, CERTAIN ORDERS WERE <sup>CITATION</sup> <sup>AWARDED</sup> MARCH 27, 1919 BY GEN. JOHN J. PERSHING, <sup>1st Army Frontline Force</sup> AEF COMMANDER. LATER LT KEESLER WAS POSTHUMOUSLY AWARDED THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS.

AND AS YOU KNOW, KEESLER AIR FORCE BASE BEARS HIS NAME AND NOW, TODAY, THIS STUDY CENTER -- IN TRIBUTE TO ONE OF AMERICA'S EARLY AIR HEROS.

AGAIN, I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO YOU DURING THIS VERY HISTORIC OCCASION. THE MANY AMERICAN AND FOREIGN STUDENTS WHO WILL COME HERE IN THE YEARS AHEAD WILL USE THIS EXCELLENT FACILITY AND WILL COME TO KNOW -- TO SEE THE OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE ADDED TO KEESLER'S RICH TRADITION AND HISTORY BEFORE THEM.

LET ME CLOSE BY READING TO YOU A PORTION OF A LETTER I RECEIVED FROM CHARLOTTE, KEESLER'S SISTER, WHO COULDN'T BE WITH US TODAY BECAUSE OF HER FRAIL HEALTH.

HER COMMENTS, AS A SISTER, ABOUT HER BROTHER'S SPIRIT AND COMPETITIVE NATURE TRULY REFLECT THE VALUES THAT WE ARE TRYING TO INSTILL IN THE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN HERE AT KEESLER.

"I REMEMBER SAM SO VIVIDLY AND I FEEL THIS NEW CENTER IS A GLOWING TRIBUTE TO HIS MEMORY. HE WAS GENTLE, KIND, PATIENT AND WISE FOR ONE SO YOUNG, BUT A FIERCE COMPETITOR AND A GREAT FIGHTER. HE HAD PLANNED TO DEVOTE HIS LIFE TO THE TEACHING OF YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN SO HIS SPIRIT WILL ALWAYS HOVER OVER THE 'SPIRIT OF KEESLER CENTER' AND BLESS IT--"

WHAT A COMFORTING THOUGHT.

THANK YOU.



2904  
2901

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the opening of the Spirit of Keesler Center. I want to welcome the members of the Keesler family who are with us and I'll ask them to stand at the time that I introduce them.

First, Mr and Mrs William Keesler, William's brother (that's Samuel). (applause) Mr John Fish and family, John. (applause) Mrs Enrae Gilmore, the sister of Sam. (applause) Mrs. Pratt, still another sister and the Tiel family. (applause) I'm also happy to note that Mayor Pat Connor and his lovely lady Ethelyn are with us from Ocean Springs. We have many distinguished guests and we also have with us now our own Mayor from Biloxi, and we're very happy to have him with us.

I want to open my remarks by simply describing first the facility that you're in. At one time this was a mess hall. As you saw some of the pictures of this facility just a few months ago, it resembled what you have seen in World War II movies or movies from the Korean War period, of a typical open mess facility. It has been transformed through an awful lot of work - self help projects for the most part - and assistance from the Civil Engineers, into what we call a Learning Center. It's a combination facility; it's a library and a museum, and in the sense, perhaps a student union, as you will remember one from your college days. Now while it's a library, it is not loaded with book shelves. It's a new type of library.

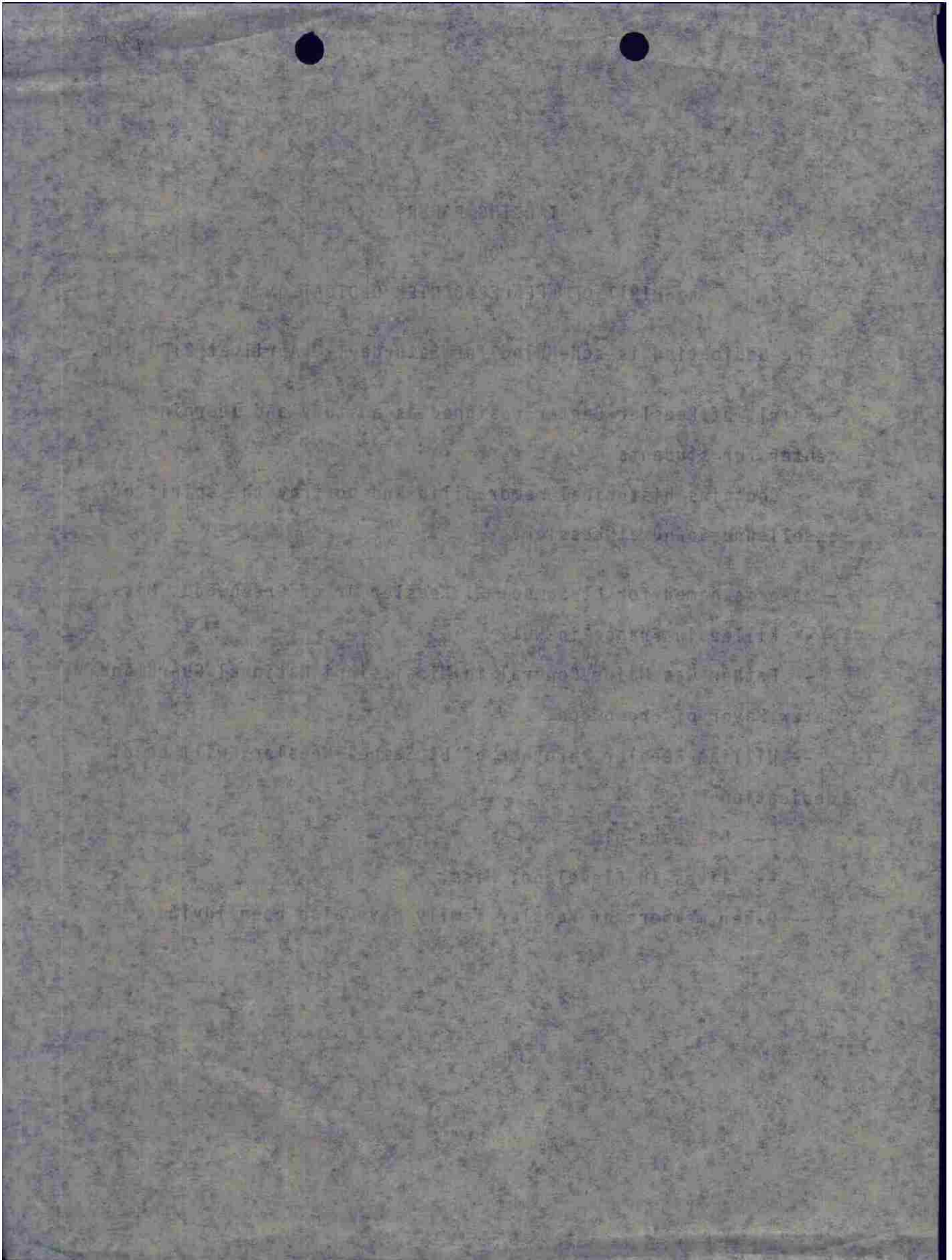
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TALKING PAPER  
ON  
SPIRIT OF KEESLER CENTER DEDICATION

- The dedication is scheduled for Saturday, 8 April at 2:00 p.m.
- Spirit of Keesler Center designed as a study and learning center for students
  - Contains historical memorabilia and portray the spirit of excellence found at Keesler.
- Base is named for Lt Samuel R. Keesler Jr of Greenwood, Miss.
  - Killed in France in WWI
  - Father was Major General in Mississippi National Guard and later Mayor of Greenwood.
  - William Keesler, brother of Lt Samuel Keesler, will be at dedication
    - 83 years old
    - lives in Cleveland, Miss.
  - Other members of Keesler family have also been invited.







CAPT PeriniKEESLER FAMILY ATTENDING DEDICATION

	<u>Relationship to Lt Keesler</u>
Mr. and Mrs. William Keesler 507 Sixth Avenue Cleveland, MS 38732	Brother
Mr. John Pitts, Jr. 2300 Horseshoe Drive Alexandria, LA 71301	Brother-in-Law
Mrs. Monroe Gilmour (Mary) 934 Granville Rd. Charlotte, NC 28207	Sister
Mrs. Lanier Pratt (Ella) 1109 Woodburn Road Durham, NC 27705	Sister
Dr. and Mrs. Robert C. Morrison (Charlot) and daughter Isabel 36 Brown's Bend Road Alexandria, LA 71301	Niece
Mr. and Mrs. H.A. Miller (Isabel) and son Tony 5812 Hiawatha Court Alexandria, LA 71301	Niece
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wolf (Clara) 5825 Navaho Trail Alexandria, LA 71301	Niece
The Rev. and Mrs. Hal Hyde (Elizabeth) 126 Longleaf Road Southern Pines, NC 28367	Niece
Mr. and Mrs. E. Hunter Steele (Charlotte) and sons Jimmy and Hunter 1440 Grand Blvd. Greenwood, MS 38930	Niece
-----	
Major Lawton K. Owens (ROA Escort Officer) and Wife USAR, Ret. 507 Canel Avenue Cleveland, MS 38732	



*Introductions sent to:**file 13  
mk*

✓ Mr. and Mrs. William Keesler  
 ✓ 507 Sixth Avenue  
 Cleveland, MS 38732

Dr. and Mrs. W. Straehle  
 ✓ 4034 Crescent Road  
 ✓ Ellicott City, Md. 21043

Mr. and Mrs. John N. Boulware  
 ✓ 4307 Newport Drive  
 ✓ Richmond, Va. 23227

Mr. and Mrs. J. Legrand Everett IV  
 ✓ 743 Mancil Road  
 ✓ Strafford-Wayne, Pa. 19087

Mr. John L. Pitts, Jr.  
 ✓ 2300 Horseshoe Drive  
 Alexandria, La. 71301

✓ Mr. and Mrs. H.A. Miller  
 ✓ 5812 Hiawatha Court  
 Alexandria, La. 71301

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wolf  
 ✓ 5825 Navaho Trail  
 Alexandria, La. 71301

Dr. and Mrs. Robert C. Morrison  
 ✓ 36 Brown's Bend Rd.  
 Alexandria, La. 71301

Dr. and Mrs. Monroe Gilmour + (704) 332-3269  
 ✓ 934 Granville Rd.  
 Charlotte, N.C. 28207

The Rev. and Mrs. Hal Hyde +  
 ✓ 126 Longleaf Road  
 Southern Pines, N.C. 28187

Dr. and Mrs. David P. Gilmour  
 ✓ 126 Depot Road  
 Hollis, N.J. 03047

Mrs. David Duncan  
 ✓ 201 E. Cleveland St.  
 Greenwood, MS 38930

Mr. and Mrs. E. Hunter Steele  
 ✓ 1440 Grand Blvd.  
 Greenwood, MS 38930

Mr. and Mrs. James Seawright  
 ✓ 157 Wooster St.  
 New York, N.Y. 10012

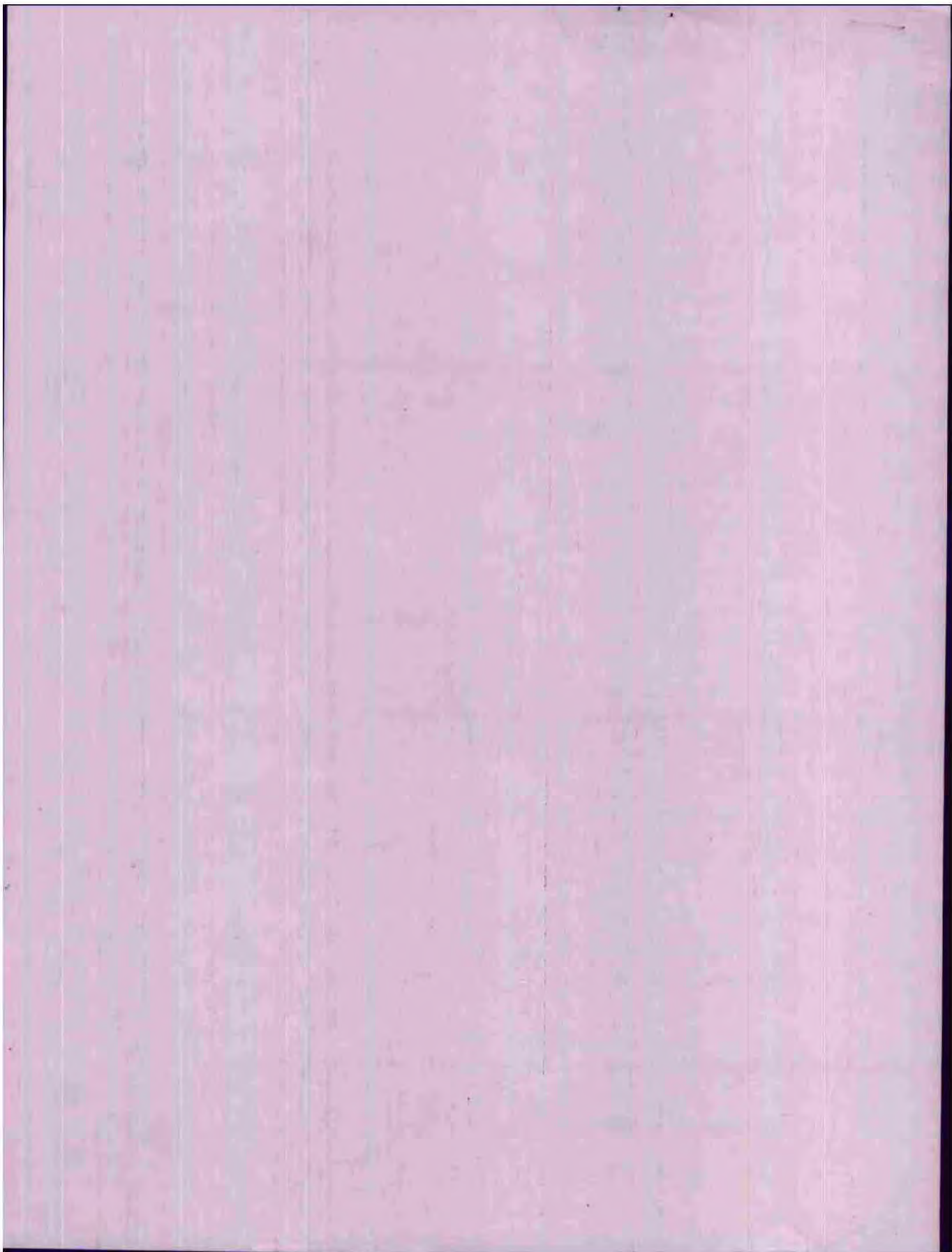
Mr. and Mrs. Lanier W. Pratt +  
 ✓ 1109 Woodburn Road  
 Durham, N.C. 27705

Mr. and Mrs. L.W. Pratt, Jr.  
 ✓ Apt. 105  
 727 Dixmyth Avenue  
 Cincinnati, Ohio 45220

KEESLER FAMILY ATTENDING DEDICATION

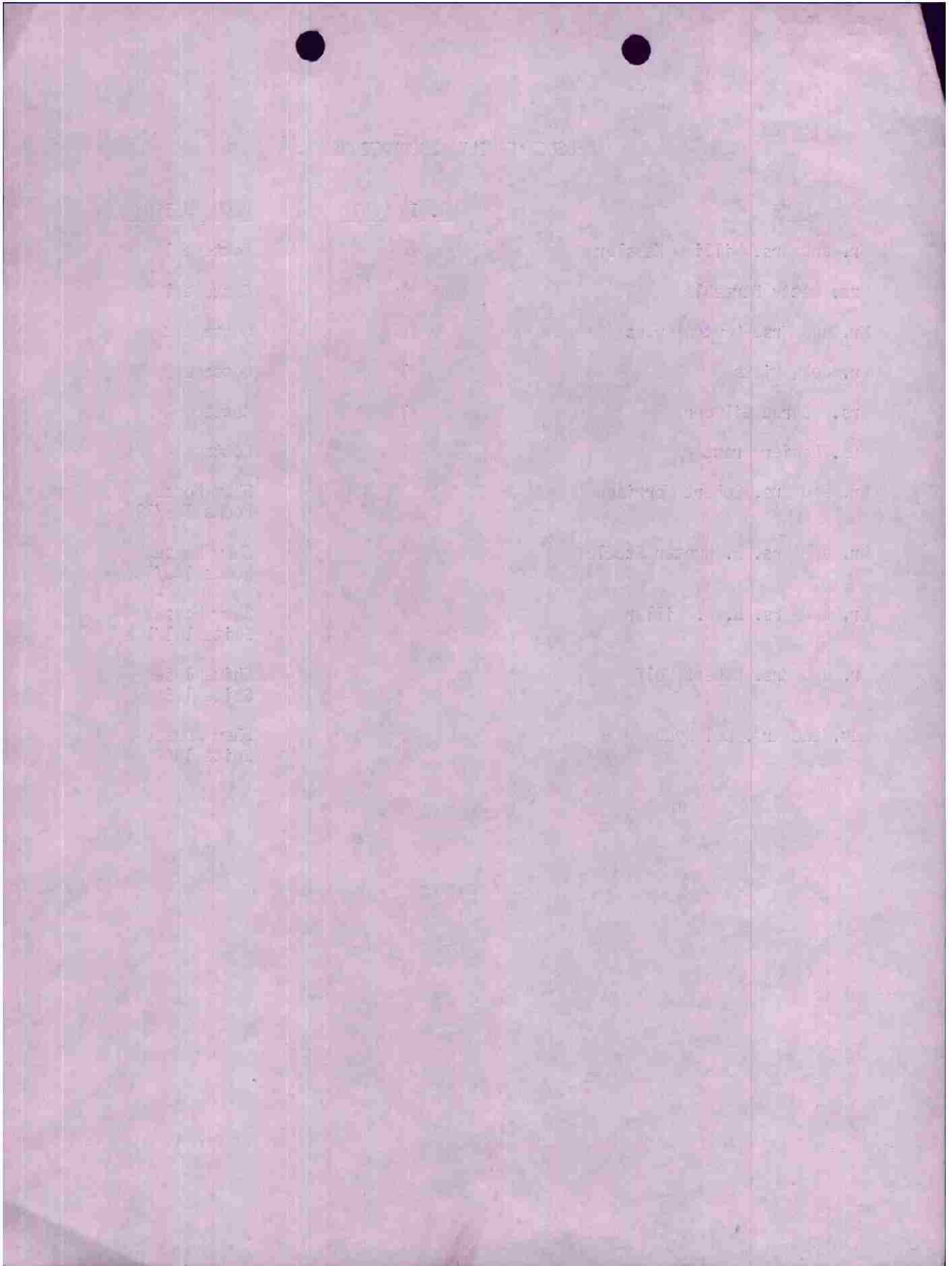
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✓ Mr. John Pitts, Jr. 2300 Horseshoe Drive Alexandria, LA 71301	Brother-in-Law
✓ Mrs. Monroe Gilmour (Mary) 934 Granville Rd. Charlotte, NC 28207	Sister
✓ Mrs. Lanier Pratt (Ella) 1109 Woodburn Road Dunham, NC 27705	Sister
✓ Dr. and Mrs. Robert C. Morrison (Charlot) and daughter Isabel 36 Brown's Bend Road Alexandria, LA 71301	Niece
✓ Mr. and Mrs. H.A. Miller (Isabel) and son Tony 5812 Hiawatha Court Alexandria, LA 71301	Niece
✓ Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wolf (Clara) 5825 Navaho Trail Alexandria, LA 71301	Niece
✓ The Rev. and Mrs. Hal Hyde (Elizabeth) 126 Longleaf Road Southern Pines, NC 28367	Niece
✓ Mr. and Mrs. E. Hunter Steele (Charlotte) and sons Jimmy and Hunter 1440 Grand Blvd. Greenwood, MS 38930	Niece
-----	
✓ Major, Lawton K. Owens (ROA Escort Officer) and Wife USAR, Ret. 507 Canel Avenue Cleveland, MS 38732	
✓ Mrs Betty Straehle 4034 Crescent Road Ellicott City, Md 21043	Niece





## KEESLER FAMILY RESERVATIONS

<u>NAME</u>	<u>NO. IN PARTY</u>	<u>ROOM ASSIGNED</u>
Mr. and Mrs. William Keesler	2	Cottage 1
Mrs. Betty Straehle	1	Cottage 1
Mr. and Mrs. Lawton Owens	2	Cottage 2
Mr. John Pitts	1	Cottage 3
Mrs. Monroe Gilmour	1	Cottage 4
Mrs. Lanier Pratt	1	Cottage 4
Dr. and Mrs. Robert Morrison	3	Shaw House, Rooms 109/110
Mr. and Mrs. E. Hunter Steele	4	Shaw House, Rooms 105/106
Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Miller	3	Shaw House, Suite 101/102
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wolf	2	Shaw House, Suite 103
Rev. and Mrs. Hal Hyde	2	Shaw House, Suite 104





- local  
citizens  
to be  
invited  
to Spirit  
center  
16 Nov

Honorable and Mrs. Jerry J. O'Keefe  
Mayor of Biloxi  
P.O. Box 429  
Biloxi, MS 39533

(Arnette)

Honorable and Mrs. Jack Barnett  
Mayor of Gulfport  
P.O. Box 1780  
Gulfport, MS 39501

(Linda)

Honorable and Mrs. Pat Connor  
Mayor of Ocean Springs  
1018 Porter Avenue  
Ocean Springs, MS 39564

(Ethelyn)

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Simms  
President, Biloxi Chamber of Commerce  
P.O. Box CC  
Biloxi, MS 39533

(Anne)

(Rebecca)

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Thompson  
President, Gulfport Chamber of Commerce  
P.O. Box 250  
Gulfport, MS 39501

Col and Mrs. Clint Kinard, USAF, Ret.  
P.O. Box 248  
Biloxi, MS 39533

(Maureen)

(Annie Jane)

Mr. and Mrs. Lenwood Sawyer  
2408 14th Street  
Gulfport, MS 39501

The Most Reverend Joseph Howze  
Bishop of Biloxi  
P.O. Box 1189  
Biloxi, MS 39530

Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy G. Goodwin  
P.O. Box 167  
Biloxi, MS 39533

(Betty)

(Rose)

Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Kyle  
P.O. Box 10  
Biloxi, MS 39533

~~Mr. and Mrs. William Pittman  
P.O. Box 70  
Biloxi, MS 39533~~

Mr. and Mrs. Don Wylie  
P.O. Box 70  
Biloxi, MS 39533

(June)

Mr. and Mrs. Bill McManus  
P.O. Box 508  
Biloxi, MS 39533

(Johnnie)

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Halat  
P.O. Box 1079  
Biloxi, MS 39533

(Sandy)

~~Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Page~~  
~~P.O. Drawer 280~~  
Biloxi, MS 39533

Bob  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Mahoney  
130 Magnolia  
Biloxi, MS 39530

(Mary)

~~Mr. and Mrs. Mike Chance~~  
P.O. Box CC  
Biloxi, MS 39533

Bill  
Mr. and Mrs. William Bailey  
2501 Gulf Avenue  
Gulfport, MS 39501

(Sylvia)

Judy  
Honorable and Mrs. Danny L. Guice  
P.O. Box 153  
Biloxi, MS 39533

(Margaret)

Louie  
Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Langlinais  
P.O. Box 1227  
Biloxi, MS 39533

(Donna)

Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Swetland  
Drawer Y  
Biloxi, MS 39533

(Elaine)

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Hermetz  
Edgewater Plaza  
Manager, Gayfer's  
Biloxi, MS 39531

(Virginia)

Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Lawson  
117 W. Beach Blvd  
Biloxi, MS 39531

~~Barbara~~ (Barbara)



~~Col. and Mrs. Matthew Thompson, USAF (Ret.)~~  
~~Edgewater Garden Apartments~~  
~~Biloxi, MS~~

~~Joe Peters~~

SMSgt and Mrs. Joseph Peters, USAF, (Ret.)  
2503 Demaret Drive  
Gulfport, MS 39501

(Esther)

~~Cecil Grant~~  
CMSgt and Mrs. Cecil Grant, USAF (Ret.)  
3020 William Harrison Drive  
Biloxi, MS 39531

(Helen)

---

Maj. Gen and Mrs. Eubank, USAF, Ret  
B Gen and Mrs. Dorris, USAF, Ret.

<sup>no card</sup>  
Col Westleigh Carlseen, USAF, Ret. (no card)  
Wife - Eve - card



Samuel R. Keeler Jr. - an outstanding  
 student at D'Wood High School  
 pres. of the student body, served on  
 the student Council, Y.M.C.A. cabinet  
 played Varsity chess, ball & football  
 was commencement marshal of his  
 class & had a reputation of getting  
 things done - Entered military service  
 at age 21 from Davidson College  
 on May 13, 1917 & was commissioned  
 a 2<sup>d</sup> Lieut. Aug. 15, 1917 received air  
 training at Ft. Sill, Okla. - & sailed for France  
 Mar. 1918 where he rec. training at the  
 Artillery observation school & Aerial Gunner  
 school. He was assigned to the 110<sup>th</sup> F  
 Squadron, Aviation section of the Signal Corps  
 as a aerial observer in Aug. - & participated  
 actively in combat until the time of his death

Oct 9 1918, a month before  
the armistice was signed Nov 11 1918

1977

Keesler Air Force Base -

Data on Samuel Reever Keesler Jr.Born - April 11, 1896 - D'Wood, Miss.  
WT. 150 lb. HT - 5'7"Father - Born - Rock Hill, S.C.  
Nov. 17, 1866

He came resident of D'Wood 1890

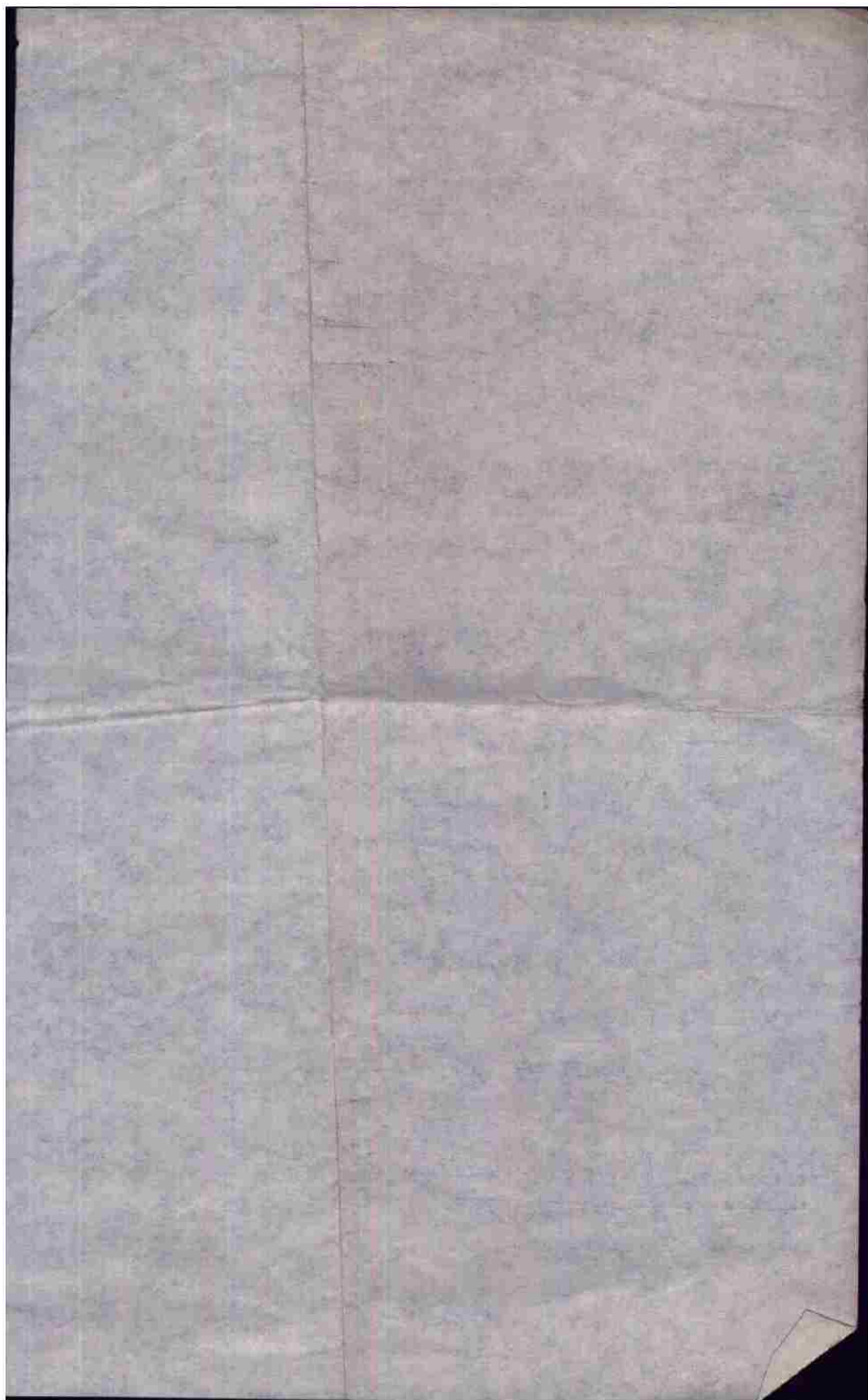
Mother - Born Shellmound Miss.  
(Leflore Co.)  
Oct 8 - 1871

Married June 4, 1894

Mrs. - Keesler's favorite anecdote about  
himself "I never graduated from  
anything except raising my 7 children"William Parist Keesler - Born Feb - 17 1895 -



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News Release and Newspaper Clippings

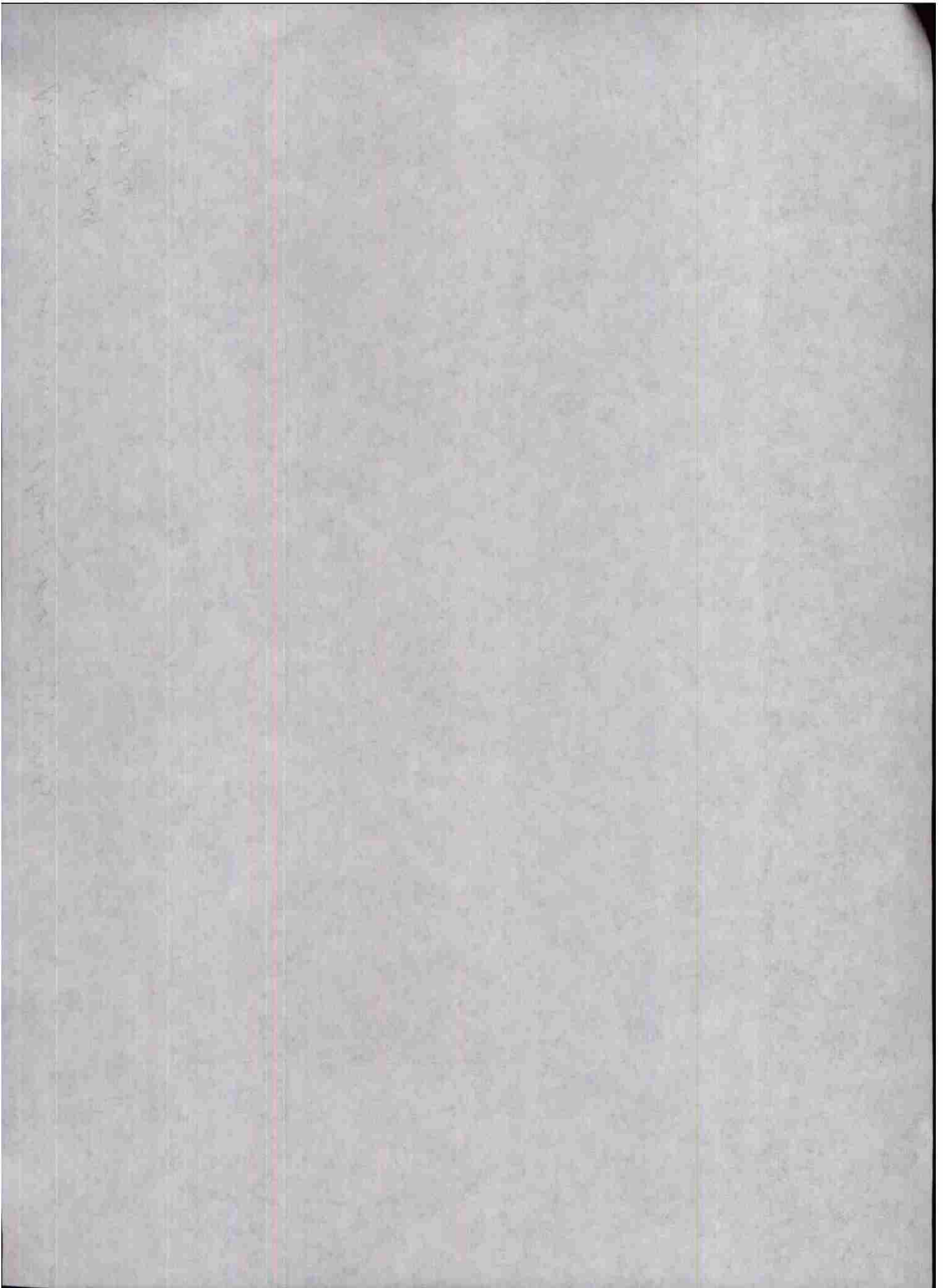
104-7507 Box 4

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SCANNED BY ACD  
2007

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# NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

Office of Information, Keesler AFB, Ms. (Air Training Command) - Ph. (601) 377-3901

*By Chet Justice  
and Capt. Michael Reine*

KEESLER AFB, Miss. -- "Today is a great day for Keesler and for the Keeslers."

These words, spoken at a recent dedication ceremony by Mrs. Ella Pratt, expressed the feelings of the 18 relatives of Mississippian Samuel Reeves Keesler Jr., who gathered here to observe the meaningful dedication ceremony of the "Spirit of Keesler Center" -- a new learning center for Keesler AFB students.

"We are impressed," said Mrs. Pratt, one of the sisters of the man for whom this base is named, "not only with the growth and size of this installation, but in the quality of training and the creative learning provided for our nation's youth in this wonderful place."

"We, collectively and individually, extend our thanks to you for this latest memorial to our brother. We feel truly blessed to have our names associated with this fine base and the remarkable men and women under your leadership," said Mrs. Pratt. "Ladies and gentlemen, we, the Keeslers, salute you."

(more)

Second add -- Keesler Cen Dedication

in 1918. "He wanted results, and he wasn't content with excuses..... Perhaps Sam might have come back from the last mission if he had not wanted to do his best."

General Pustay, in his dedication speech, said that Sam Keesler's "spirit and competitive nature truly reflect the values we want this learning center to represent. His notion of excellence, professionalism, dedication, and his commitment to serve -- these are the qualities we are trying to imbue in the young men and women who train here."

In the last several years, about 30,000 students have been trained annually at this base, which is well known throughout the Air Force for its electronics training. The center also provides training in personnel, administration, and other specialties.

The new Spirit of Keesler learning center is not only a video cassette library with thousands of tapes, but is also an area containing photographs and other artifacts depicting the rich tradition and history of Keesler AFB.

"It is a combination facility; it is a library, a historical exhibit area, and in a sense a student union," the general said. It is believed to be the only facility of its kind in the Air Force.

After the ribbon-cutting ceremony, which opened the historical exhibit area, Sam Keesler's family helped to unveil a portrait of the young aerial observer in all his flight gear with his aircraft in the background. Also, the general presented the Keesler family an American flag which flew over Keesler the morning of the dedication.

According to General Pustay, the new Spirit of Keesler Center will help to achieve the "whole concept in which we attempt to develop students.

(more)

Third add -- Keesler Cen Dedication

in the academic, military, moral, and physical areas. "While the students are furthering themselves in this academic center they will be surrounded literally by the richness of this fine installation," he said.

"We produce exceptional airmen," said the general, "and we will train and produce fine citizens for this country, and we will do it because the spirit of Keesler -- excellence, pride, involvement, innovation -- moves everything that we do."

--30--





# NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

OFFICE OF INFORMATION, KTTTC/OIC, KEESLER AFB, MS 39534, AC 601-377-2254

NEWS RELEASE NUMBER 78-2-24

FEB 16 1978

## KEESLER GETS NEW SPIRIT

KEESLER AFB, Miss. -- Keesler's Career Information Center will soon be known as the Spirit of Keesler Center.

The center provides a warm, comfortable atmosphere for new airmen to study, or check into the particulars of bases world-wide via brochures, maps, and video cassettes.

A new study and historical display room, named the Spirit of Keesler Room, is nearing completion, according to Major J. Leon Wilson, chief of the student affairs division here. The study area will be surrounded by aircraft replicas and historical artifacts pertaining to Keesler's mission -- yesterday and today.

The Spirit of Keesler Room was converted from a student dining hall by base civil engineers and the base's training services office and should be completed in early March.

Keesler afb, miss.----"We feel truly blessed to have our names associated with this fine base and the remarkable men and women under whose leadership you have continued to grow."

These words of Mrs. Ella Pratt expressed the feelings of the 18 relatives of Samuel Reeves Keesler Jr. who gathered <sup>here</sup> recently to observe the dedication of the "Spirit of Keesler Center."

"We are impressed," said Mrs. Pratt, the sister of the man for whom this base is named, "not only with the growth and size of this installation, but in the quality of training and the <sup>e</sup> crative learning provided for our nation's youth in this wonderful place."

"We, collectively and individually, extend our thanks to you for this latest memorial to our brother, Samuel Reeves Keesler. This is indeed a great day for Keesler and for Keeslers," said Mrs. Pratt. "Ladies and gentlemen, we, the Keeslers, salute you."

The 18 Keesler relatives present were only a small portion of the present-day clan of 62, but they were visibly proud and happy to be part of this dedication ceremony.

*insert* The idea behind creating the Spirit of Keesler Center came from Maj. Gen. John S. Pustay, commander of the Keesler Technical Training Center here. The general, in delving into the history of the base, was impressed with ~~the attributes of~~ young Keesler ~~for his~~ courage and fortitude during battle in World War I.

"I never saw a fellow who was more anxious to do his work well," said Lt. Stuard Gilchrist, a fellow officer, in a letter written shortly after Keesler's death. "He wanted results, and he wasn't content with excuses....Perhaps Sam might have come back from the last mission if he had not wanted to do his best."

-30-

HURRICANE HUNTERS HOST ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
 JAN 23 1978  
 Keesler AFB, Miss. -- The 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron  
 will host the 32nd annual Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference  
 tomorrow through Thursday, at the Officers Club.  
 At the conference, representatives from several government  
 agencies whose areas of responsibility are directly affected by hurri-  
 canes will meet to update plans and programs dealing with the storms.  
 Among the agencies to be represented are the Departments of  
 Transportation and Commerce, the Air Force, Navy, Army, Coast Guard,  
 and the National Aerospace Administration.  
 Items on the agenda include the naming of hurricanes, air traffic  
 control priorities and clearances, satellite reconnaissance, and air  
 reconnaissance, to name only a few.

NEWS RELEASE NUMBER 78-1-69

OFFICE OF INFORMATION, KEESLER AFB, MS 39534, AC 601-377-3604

**NEWS RELEASE**  
 UNITED STATES AIR FORCE





insert A

Mrs. Pratt, of Durham, N.C., was joined at the ceremony by her brother, 83-year-old William Keesler of Cleveland, Miss., and her sister, Mrs. Mary Nash Gilmour of Charlotte, N.C. Other Keesler relatives came from Maryland and Louisiana.

The last time this many members of the Keesler clan were together celebration of the was at the ~~30th~~ anniversary of the base in 1971. The only other ~~time~~ "family reunion" was at the dedication of the base in 1941.

~~It was a happy and emotional~~

This year's get-together was a happy and emotional occasion for ~~those Keeslers~~ dedication the 18 members able to attend. The ceremonies, ~~and~~ the hospitality of base people, and the reunion of the Keeslers were "unexpected pleasures and made us very proud," said one of the clan.

-30-

ing Group and he is a resident of Gulfport.  
Durst's last employment was with the 3395th Technical Train-  
recently retired after 37 years of military and civil service.  
KEESLER AFB, Miss. -- Paul R. Durst, a training specialist,

DURST RETIRES

JAN 26 1978

OFFICE OF INFORMATION, KEESLER AFB, MS 39534, AC 601-377-3604  
NEWS RELEASE NUMBER 78-1-72

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

**NEWS RELEASE**



General Pustay, in his dedication speech, said that Sam Keesler's "spirit and competitive nature truly reflect the values that we are trying to instill in the ~~xx~~ young men and women who train here. His notion of excellence, professionalism, dedication, and his commitment to serve--- these are the qualities we are trying to imbue in every student."

In recent years, more than 30,000 students have been trained annually at this base, which is popularly referred to as the "Electronics Training Center of the Air Force." *The center also ~~provides~~ provides training in personnel, administration, and other specialties.*  
 The new <sup>Spirit of Keesler</sup> learning center is not only a library with thousands of video cassette tapes, but is also ~~XXXXXX~~ an area containing photographs and

*insert B* > other artifacts depicting the rich tradition and history of the base.

The combination library-history collection-student meeting place is believed to be the only facility of the kind in the U.S. Air Force.

According to ~~the~~ General Pustay, the new ~~Spirit~~ of Keesler Center will help achieve the "whole person concept which we pursue in the academic, military, moral, and physical areas.

"We will produce exceptional airmen," he said, "and we will produce exceptional citizens for this country, and we will do it because the spirit of Keesler moves everything that we do."



# NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE



OFFICE OF INFORMATION, KEESLER AFB, MS 39534, AC 601-377-3604  
NEWS RELEASE NUMBER 78-1-71

JAN 26 1978

DICKSON WINS SERVICE AWARD

KEESLER AFB, Miss. -- Mrs. Willie D. Dickson of Biloxi recent-

ly received a 20-year service award.

Mrs. Dickson, who is employed at the Civilian Personnel Office,

is a personnel management specialist.

-30-

After the ribbon-cutting ceremony which opened the historical exhibit area, Keesler's relatives helped to unveil a ~~xxx~~ portrait of the young officer in all his flight gear with his Sopwith Camel aircraft in the background.

-30-

DEROCHA WINS RECOGNITION  
KEESLER AFB, Miss. -- Thomas E. Derocha of Biloxi recently won  
a quality step increase for his outstanding job performance.  
Derocha supervises technical and administrative data in the  
management section of Keesler's comptroller division.

JAN 26 1978

NEWS RELEASE NUMBER 78-1-73

OFFICE OF INFORMATION, KEESLER AFB, MS 39534, AC 601-377-3604

**NEWS RELEASE**  
**UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**







# NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

OFFICE OF INFORMATION, KTTTC/OIC, KEESLER AFB, MS 39534, AC 601-377-2254

NEWS RELEASE NUMBER 78-3-43

MAR 17 1978

*my file*

## "SPIRIT OF KEESLER CENTER"

KEESLER AFB, Miss. -- Relatives of the man for whom this base is named have been invited to attend special dedication ceremonies April 8 of the "Spirit of Keesler Center."

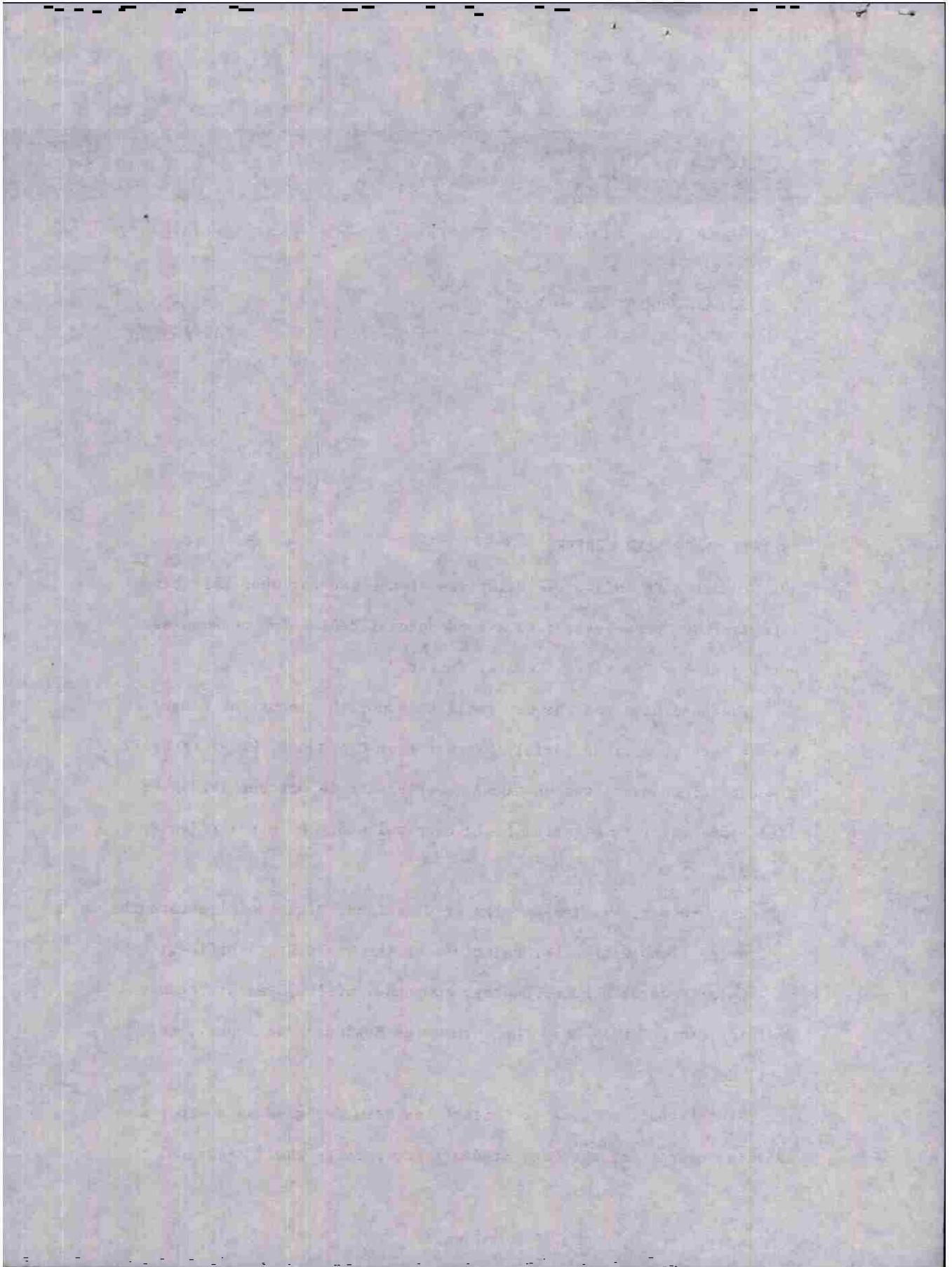
The base name and the new facility honor the memory of Samuel Reeves Keesler Jr., an aerial observer from Greenwood, Miss. Keesler, a second lieutenant, was shot down over France in October 1918. He died a day later in a German field hospital where he was a prisoner of war.

His brother, William Keesler of Cleveland, Miss., will attend the dedication along with other relatives of the World War I officer.

Major General John S. Pustay, commander of the Keesler Technical Training Center, will head the ceremonies beginning at 2 p.m., Saturday, April 8.

"The 'Spirit of Keesler Center' has been designed as a study and learning center for the many students who receive their technical

(more)



FIRST ADD REL - "SPIRIT OF KEESLER CENTER"

training here," said General Pustay. "The study area will contain memorabilia and will portray the spirit of excellence that has always existed at Keesler--the same spirit that dominated Sam Keesler's life."

Many photographs of activities at the base during the 1940s and 1950s will be displayed in the new center. In addition to the study area, there will be videotape facilities where students can learn about their career fields, assignments, and new bases.

Another section of the center will contain maps, road atlases, and informational brochures about each state's attractions. Students may plan weekend trips or vacations with this recreational information.

The base's drum and bugle corps will also perform at the dedication ceremonies. A reception will follow in the new center.



