

WORLD WAR II ORAL HISTORY SERIES

A Project of the

Burnet County Genealogical Society

In Partnership
with the

Burnet County Library System

Maxine (Lauderdale) Cullison

Volume 12

Interviewed by
Floyd Cox, 2004

Transcribed by Edna Cheatham, 2007

Edited by
JoAnn Myers, January 2012

Burnet County Library System (BCLS)
www.burnetcountylibrary.org
Burnet, Texas

Burnet County Genealogical Society
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Burnet, Texas

1287



Elmer "Cully" and Maxine (Lauderdale) Cullison
1942

Maxine (Lauderdale) Cullison
World War II Homefront Oral History

<p>Tape Counter And Subject 000 Introduction</p>	<p>November 18, 2004, Interview by Floyd Cox, a volunteer for the National Museum of the Pacific War, interviewing Mrs. Maxine Cullison. This interview is taking place at the library in Burnet, Texas, and we are going to talk with Mrs. Cullison about her life on the home front during World War II.</p> <p>Now I know a little bit about the basic background and that is that she was married during World War II during the first part of the war.</p>
<p>Cox</p>	<p>What we will start out with Maxine, if you give me a little bit about your background, where you were born, when you were born, where you went to school, and we will take it from there.</p>
<p>Cullison</p>	<p>I was born in Rusk, Texas, the 25th of May 1927. When I was six months old, my parents moved from Rusk down to Harlingen, Texas, and that is where I lived until my husband and I met in 1942, and got married, and I went to school in Harlingen.</p>
<p>Cox</p>	<p>What did your mother and dad do down there?</p>
<p>Cullison</p>	<p>Well, my dad was a farmer and also he worked in construction.</p>
<p>Cox</p>	<p>Did you have any brothers and sisters?</p>
<p>Cullison</p>	<p>I had 2 brothers and 2 sisters.</p>
<p>Cox</p>	<p>Did any of those serve in World War II?</p>
<p>Cullison</p>	<p>Both my brothers served in World War II.</p>
<p>Cox</p>	<p>When you met your husband, were you in school at the time? Were you in high school?</p>
<p>Cullison</p>	<p>Yes!</p>
<p>Cox</p>	<p>And when you met your husband, what was he doing down in the Valley?</p>
<p>Cullison</p>	<p>Well, he enlisted in the Army/Air Force in 1941, June, and after December 7th, they shipped a bunch of them down to Harlingen. And he was in the Air Force there, and he came in January of 1942.</p>
<p>Cox</p>	<p>So they had an Air Force base in Harlingen, Texas. What type of base was it?</p>

Maxine (Lauderdale) Cullison
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Cullison	It was an air training command.
Cox	And they trained gunners, did they not?
Cullison	They trained gunners and they also trained pilots. And their pilots learned to fly AT6's.
Cox	So you met him. Was this before the war when you got married?
Cullison	No, we got married in September of 1942. We met in January of '42.
Cox	Let me ask you a little bit about...you said you had two brothers that served. Where did they serve?
Cullison	My youngest brother was on the USS Swordfish submarine. They did a lot of sorties and they sunk a lot of Japanese ships. And in 1944-45, they did not hear from them any more, so he was on the USS Swordfish submarine.
Cox	Lost at sea?
Cullison	Lost at sea.
Cox	How about your other brother?
Cullison	My other brother was in the Seabees. He was in Alaska building the Alcan Highway up in there, and he returned, he was only in Alaska all that time.
Cox	Did you correspond with your brothers on a regular basis?
Cullison	No, but my mother did. She kept us informed of all that. My mother was very close to my brother and she raised three children by herself. And he had helped her down through the years to, he contributed to our home life, and she cried every day of her life after he was killed, when didn't return.
Cox	Well, I imagine then that you probably in the window of your home you flew a flag that designated they were in the military did you not?
Cullison	I don't remember that.
Cox	As you know we have one on display here.
Cox	Well, your brother that served in Alaska, then he came home without injury?

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Cullison	Yes, he was not injured in any way.
Cox	Well, tell me about your husband. You were married while he was at Harlingen. Did he ever ship out?
Cullison	Yes, he stayed at Harlingen. We got married in 1942, and in 1944 he went to Seattle, Washington, and went to an aircraft and engine school and came home from Seattle and we went to Montgomery, Alabama. And stayed for about six months.
Cox	Well, let me ask you, the war is on, rationing is on, transportation is somewhat limited, how did you get there?
Cullison	Servicemen had some gasoline ration, and we had an old car, so we drove to Montgomery, Alabama, from Harlingen.
Cox	Do you remember what kind of car it was?
Cullison	I think it was a 37 Plymouth coupe.
Cox	And how fast could you drive during wartime?
Cullison	Not very fast! Took us day and night to get there.
Cox	Well, during this time period, when you were still living in Harlingen, did any of your other immediate family live with you and your husband? Or did you live with your parents?
Cullison	No! I lived with my mother. When we first got married, he was not allowed to live off base. Then when he made staff sergeant, well we moved into an apartment. And then we lived there and when he went to Seattle, then I stayed with my mother.
Cox	During any of this time, once again, rationing was on, did your family have a victory garden?
Cullison	We didn't have a garden, we lived in town. But we had relatives who had farms and they supplied us with whatever we needed -- if we needed any vegetables. And in the Rio Grande Valley you had both fruit and vegetables all year long.
Cox	Meat was rationed at that time as I recall!
Cullison	Meat was rationed, and sugar was rationed, and gasoline was rationed.
Cox	Almost everything was rationed?

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Cullison	Almost everything was rationed!
Cox	Did you have any connections to get your meat wholesale without going through the rationing process?
Cullison	No!
Cox	So you had to have meat stamps then?
Cullison	Yes, had to have meat stamps. Had to have gasoline stamps too!
Cox	Were any of your family members involved in any service organizations, USO, Red Cross, or any thing like that?
Cullison	No.
Cox	What about factory, wartime factories?
Cullison	My mother worked in an airplane factory in Brownsville, which was 28 miles. She never had any experience, but they hired her and she went down there. A lot of the women did that at the time. And they took them on a bus each morning and brought them home each afternoon.
Cox	Do you know what she did?
Cullison	The only thing I remember that she did was that she made a set of dominoes that were aluminum, the whole set of dominoes, and my nephew has those and I have been trying to get them, but I don't have them, but she made those in that airplane factory.
Cox	That would be a nice thing to donate to a museum.
Cullison	Yes it would.
Cox	And I know of one that might take them.
Cullison	Well, I might just do that!
Cox	Were you involved in any service organizations, Red Cross, or were you just a homemaker.
Cullison	No! My mother was a very generous woman. And any of the service people... we had two couples who lived next door to us in a duplex, one was from California and one was from Illinois, and they were

Maxine (Lauderdale) Cullison
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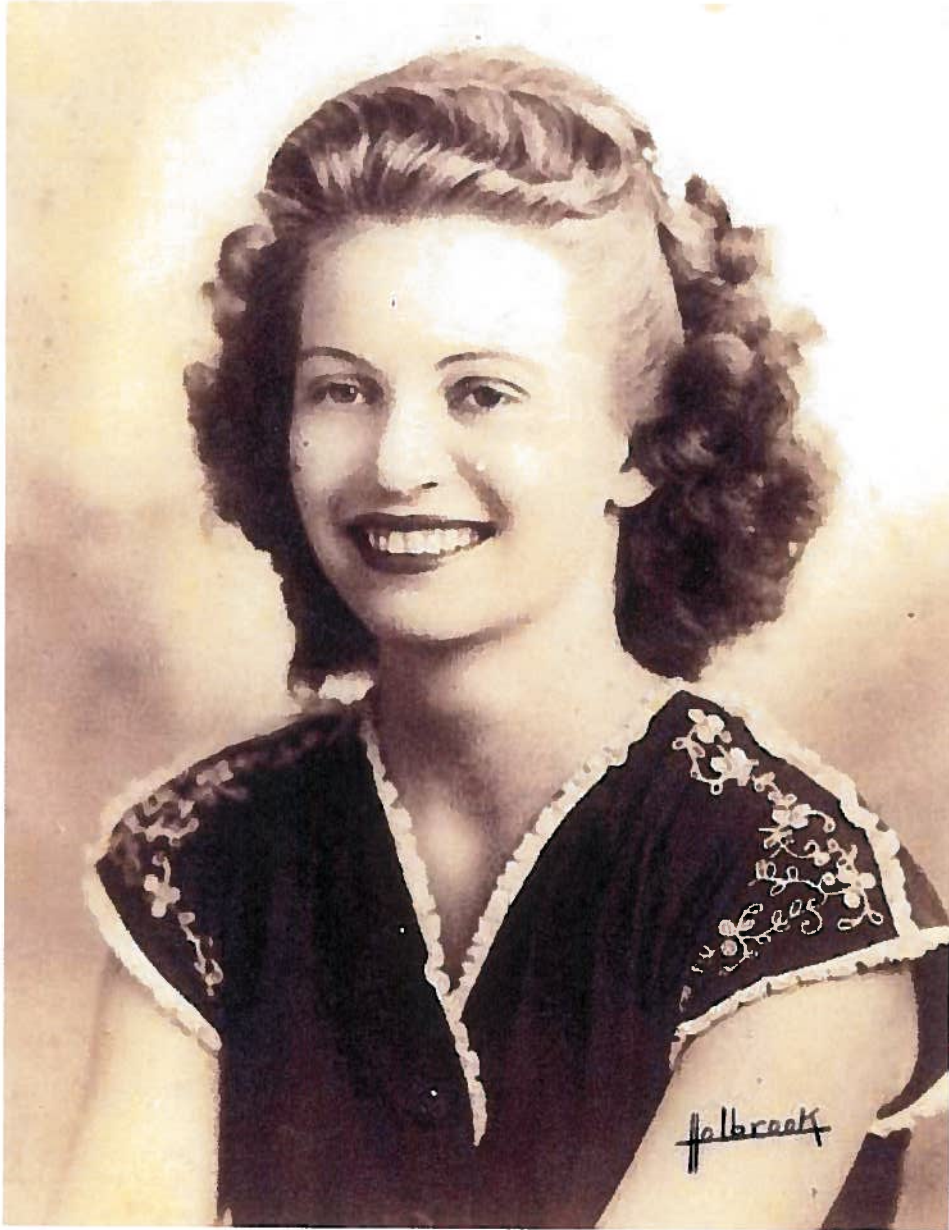
	foreigners to us in Texas. But my mother took those couples in and they just called her mom, and we kept up with them for years. But anybody that was in the military, my mother took them in.
Cox	During this time, did you have any children while your husband was in the service?
Cullison	Yes, our first child was born in 1944. At that time the military doctors came to the house and I was very ill and didn't know what was wrong with me, and my husband called the doctor. He came to our apartment and told me that I needed to go to the hospital. And so they called an ambulance and took me to the hospital, and I had a miscarriage and my appendix out. A year later or so, we had a little girl, and he delivered that little girl.
Cox	A military doctor? At home?
Cullison	No! A military doctor in a civilian hospital. The military doctors came to the homes or to the hospitals and took care of their patients.
Cox	Times have changed.
Cullison	They have changed.
Cox	Was your husband assigned overseas at any time during this time?
Cullison	He went to the Philippines, to Ischemia, and was over there six months during the war. And he told some funny stories about things that happened over there.
Cox	Did you correspond with him while he was there?
Cullison	All the time.
Cox	Did you happen to keep the love letters, if you will?
Cullison	I have some love letters, but I can't find them. Yes I did [have love letters].
Cox	The reason I asked this, this is quite an item to go into the archives. Because this is a part of history.
Cullison	Yes it is!
Cox	What other things do you recall during World War II that had an impact on your life? I know you were faced with rationing every day, figuring meals up; thank goodness you had friends with produce.

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Cullison	No really! I think I was too young to even realize what was going on at that time. But I lived with my mother and my sister lived there with us, she was younger than I. And the only thing that I can remember was that the war was so hard on everybody. My mother was very tender hearted and she had a hard time dealing with all that. I was kind of there to help her get through and take care of her business.
Cox	Let me ask you this? What was your feeling when #1 you heard the atomic bomb was dropped?
Cullison	I was just devastated. It really shocked me.
Cox	That the atomic bomb was dropped? And that of course ultimately resulted in the end of the war. My second questions is how did you feel when they announced VJ day and how did you hear it?
Cullison	I heard it on the radio and I was elated.
Cox	Because you had a loved one over?
Cullison	Yes.
Cox	And how long was it after the end of the war over there that he got to come home?
Cullison	It wasn't very long after that. He was a crew chief on a B24 and he flew back, and when the planes came back they brought the crew chiefs with them, and landed in Davis Monthon, Arizona. And was discharged out there.
Cox	Did you go to meet him out there?
Cullison	No! I met him in Tulsa.
Cox	I guess that was quiet a home coming.
Cullison	It was. His parents lived in Tulsa, and I was there. I went there and stayed with them whenever I knew he was coming home.
Cox	Once again, Maxine, thank you very much for taking the time to tell us a little bit about your story.
141 Ending Counter	

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Note from Burnet County WWII Oral History Project: This interview was an abbreviated version done for the Burnet County Genealogical Society as a demonstration of the program underway at the Nimitz Museum in Fredericksburg. The society later decided to take on the task of identifying and interviewing WWII veterans living in Burnet County. Maxine had a lot more to tell about life during and after the war. She and her husband and children went to Germany in 1951 and her stories of post-war Germany showed how difficult that period of time was for both the civilian German population as well as the American families posted there. A second interview was planned for her to tell about this time, but never came to pass. Maxine was a busy woman – she was very active in her church activities, in organizations she belonged to, especially the Burnet County Genealogical Society and United Daughters of the Confederacy. She also volunteered at the Burnet library, helping researchers, maintaining the research room files, and recruiting newcomers to join the genealogy group or UDC. She spent her many happy hours visiting with children and grandchildren, volunteering, researching, and helping others. Maxine passed away on 5 Oct 2011, at the age of 84, still planning on giving that second interview -- when she had time. Rest in peace, Maxine. You are greatly missed.



Maxine (Lauderdale) Cullison
About 1942

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565543 AJ

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION



WAR RATION BOOK FOUR

Issued to Elmer L. Cullison
(Print first, middle, and last names)

Complete address 317 W. Washington
Harlingen, Tex.

READ BEFORE SIGNING

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Void if Altered

(Signature)

It is a criminal offense to violate rationing regulations.

OPA Form R-145

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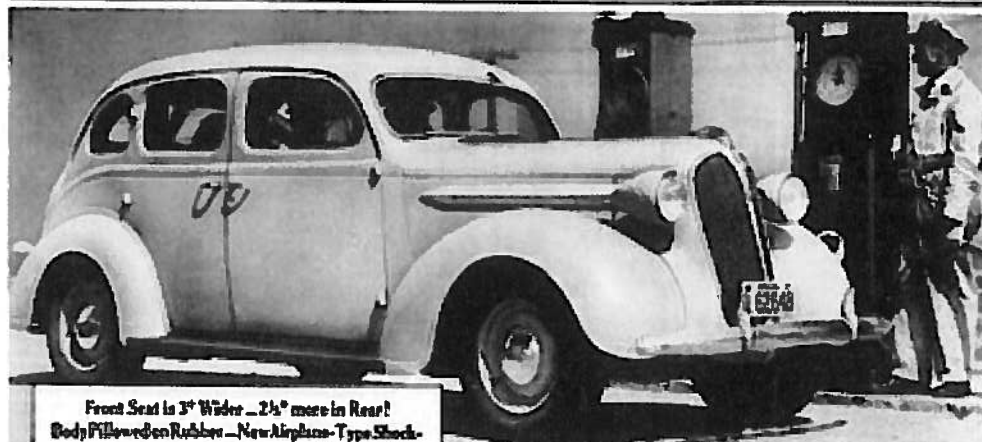


Ration Book issued to Elmer L. Cullison with coupons

SEE HOW PLYMOUTH SAVINGS PILE UP!

COSTS LESS!

General Report 18 to 24 Miles Per Gallon of Gas... You'll Save on Oil Consumption... Tires... Run Far and Save Money... Plymouth Stands Up so well Repairs are Negligible... It Uses Regular Gas... and Plymouth Roadster Value has always been Highest of "All Three"



Front Seat is 3" Wider... 2 1/2" more in Rear!
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proofed Interior shuts out outside; new Airplane Type Shock-Absorbers that you over bumps; new Body Mountings and vibration and road hump. Also a new Hybrid axle axle, formerly in costly cars only... Floating Power engine suspension.

AND RIDE!... Plymouth has always had **HIGHEST RESALE VALUE** of "All Three" low priced cars. See Plymouth before you buy any car! **PLYMOUTH DIVISION OF CHRYSLER CORPORATION**, Detroit, Mich.

The starters, are and completely economical, 1937 Plymouth On Road Four-Door Touring Sedan.



Remember! Followed location you do street power and mileage from the big, 6-cylinder "4-head" engine... an engine great.

SAVE 20 PERCENT! Low down offered by the Commercial Credit Company through Chrysler, the Auto and Daily Dealer.

PRICED WITH THE LOWEST, 1937! (1937 IN EFFECT)... Prices start at \$1000 for the Business Coupe, including front and rear bumpers, spare tire and all Federal taxes. Only local taxes, optional equipment, transportation and license (except in some states), \$100.00 on 1937 Plymouth Plan, are extra. **Model Illustrated**... The Four-Door Touring Sedan... **1937 DELIVERED IN 1937!**



PLYMOUTH

The Best Buy of All Three!

1937 Plymouth Advertisement

Harlingen Air Force Base





HARLINGEN ARMY AIR FIELD AND HARLINGEN AIR FORCE BASE

WITH THE DEPRESSED ECONOMY OF THE 1930s, HARLINGEN LEADERS SOUGHT TO ATTRACT FEDERAL FUNDS TO THE AREA. IN MAY 1941, IN PREPARATION FOR WHAT WOULD BECOME WORLD WAR II, THE U.S. WAR DEPARTMENT ACCEPTED THE CITY'S OFFER OF 960 ACRES FOR A MILITARY AIRFIELD AND FLEXIBLE GUNNERY SCHOOL. THE AREA'S FLAT TOPOGRAPHY, IMPRACTICAL FOR ARTILLERY TRAINING, WAS IDEAL FOR AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS. ADDITIONAL LAND WAS PROCURED ALONG THE COAST TO USE FOR COMBAT MANEUVERS. THE HARLINGEN ARMY GUNNERY SCHOOL RECEIVED ITS FIRST STUDENTS IN AUGUST 1941. BY 1944, THE FACILITY WAS NEARLY 1,600 ACRES IN SIZE, ACCOMMODATING AT PEAK TIMES UP TO 9,000 TRAINEES. AMONG THOSE STATIONED AT THE BASE WERE WOMEN AIRFORCE SERVICE PILOTS (WASP). THE FIELD CLOSED IN 1946; FOLLOWING THE WAR, NUMEROUS BUILDINGS WERE SOLD TO AREA RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES.

IN APRIL 1952, WITH THE U.S. INVOLVED IN KOREA, THE GOVERNMENT REACTIVATED THE FIELD AS HARLINGEN AIR FORCE BASE, WITH THE PRIMARY MISSION OF TRAINING NAVIGATORS. NEW FACILITIES INCLUDED A HOSPITAL, AND BASE AND AREA RESIDENTS FOLLOWED LOCAL AND NATIONAL EVENTS IN THE SUN LINES NEWSPAPER. IN 1961, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED NUMEROUS BASE CLOSURES, INCLUDING THE BASE IN HARLINGEN. BY JUNE 1962, WHEN THE LAST CLASS GRADUATED FROM THE SCHOOL, MORE THAN 13,000 NAVIGATORS HAD COMPLETED THEIR TRAINING IN HARLINGEN. THE BASE CLOSURE, WHICH REMOVED MILLIONS OF DOLLARS FROM THE LOCAL ECONOMY, SEVERELY IMPACTED THE CITY.

BASE FACILITIES EVENTUALLY SERVED AS A REGIONAL AIRPORT, WHICH BECAME THE VALLEY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN 1970. PORTIONS OF THE BASE HAVE ALSO BEEN USED FOR AN INDUSTRIAL AIR PARK, THE TEXAS STATE TECHNICAL INSTITUTE (NOW COLLEGE), THE MARINE MILITARY ACADEMY AND THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY MUSEUM.

1285-11

Harlingen Army Air Field
From Harlingen Historical Preservation Society
<http://cameroncountyhistoricalcommission.org/>

In 2005 a Texas Historical Commission Marker was placed at the site of the Harlingen Army Air Field. The following history is quoted from the Cameron County Historical Commission web page:

With the depressed U. S. economy still lingering into the late 1930s, the city fathers of Harlingen, Texas lead by Mayor Hugh Ramsey sought to attract federal funds to the area in 1938.

By 1940, and with war on the horizon in 1941, defense concerns escalated. On May 3, 1941 the War Department then accepted Harlingen's invitation to establish a military airfield on the 960 acres being offered. The following month the lease was approved, and authorization was made for construction of a flexible gunnery school at the field. The initial allocation for the project was \$3,770,295. The facility would reach nearly 1,600 acres in size by 1944. The facility eventually accommodated 6,500 trainees, and at peak operation carried a maximum load of 9,000.

The Harlingen Army Gunnery School received its first assigned cadre in August 1941. Its primary mission, with an initial student load of 600, was that of training aerial gunnery students in a five week (extended to six weeks in 1943) training program. Over 48,000 soldiers were trained until the school, one of three such types in the country, closed in 1945. During its existence, expansion of its facilities, such as barracks and technical installations, regularly continued. Graduates served on B17s, B24s, B25s, and B29s among other aircraft.

Crews on B17 Flying Fortress and B24 Liberator aircraft consisted of ten crewmen. These were pilot, co-pilot, navigator, bombardier, and radio man. From the gunnery schools came tail, nose, ball, waist, and top gunners, some operating in turrets.

The casualty rates sustained by these airmen in the years 1943 until 1945 provide horrendous statistics. One out of three B17s built was lost, 4,750 aircraft all told. In the European Theater of war 340,000 persons were in the 8th Air Force of whom 135,000 were combat crewmen. Of this 135,000, 26,000 were killed and 28,000 became prisoners of war, a loss ratio of 40%. If we extrapolate these figures to the more than 48,000 gunnery school graduates who walked, played and laughed on these very grounds, upwards of 9,200 may have been killed in action and 10,000 could have become POWs.

More information about the Army Air Field after the War can be found at the above web address.

Photograph of bearer



WASHINGTON

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This passport is valid only for use in connection with the bearer's residence abroad as a dependent of a member of the American Military or Naval Forces on active duty outside the continental limits of the United States.

It is valid under the same circumstances for use by a dependent of a civilian employee of the Government residing abroad.

5

Passport for Germany assignment

Visas

AMERICAN CONSULATE General,
Munich, Germany
January 26, 1951
Amended to include minor child
Donald Lee
Edwin H. Wood, Jr.
American Vice Consul



6

Visas



American Consulate General
Munich, Germany
Renewed: January 26, 1951
Expires: September 29, 1951

Edwin H. Wood, Jr.
American Vice Consul
13148

No fee prescribed

This passport is not valid for travel in Hungary or Bulgaria.

7

Amendment to Passport

Deutsche Bundesrepublik
Internationaler Kraftfahrzeugverkehr

Internationaler Führerschein

Internationales Abkommen
vom 24. April 1926

Ausstellung des Scheines

Ort Kaiserslautern

Tag - 6. JULI 1961

Landratsamt Kaiserslautern
T.O.
(Name der Verwaltungsbehörde)

(Unterschrift)

VOGEL-DRUCK Nr. 57 Verlag G. v. S. & Co., München 2, Kronenstr. 39 11/61

Angaben über den Führer



Name _____ (P)

Vorname _____ (P)


Ort der Geburt _____ (P)

Tag der Geburt _____ (P)

Wohnort _____ (P)

Photograph of bearer

Clayton M. Cullison



PHOTOGRAPH ATTACHED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

MIL & NAVAL SERVICE
MC GUIRE APR 14 11
ADMITTED
SEP 25 1961

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*Renewal, extensions, amendments,
limitations, and restrictions*

This passport, properly visaed, is valid for travel in all countries unless OTHERWISE RESTRICTED. It is not valid for travel to or in any foreign state for the purpose of entering or serving in the armed forces of such a state.

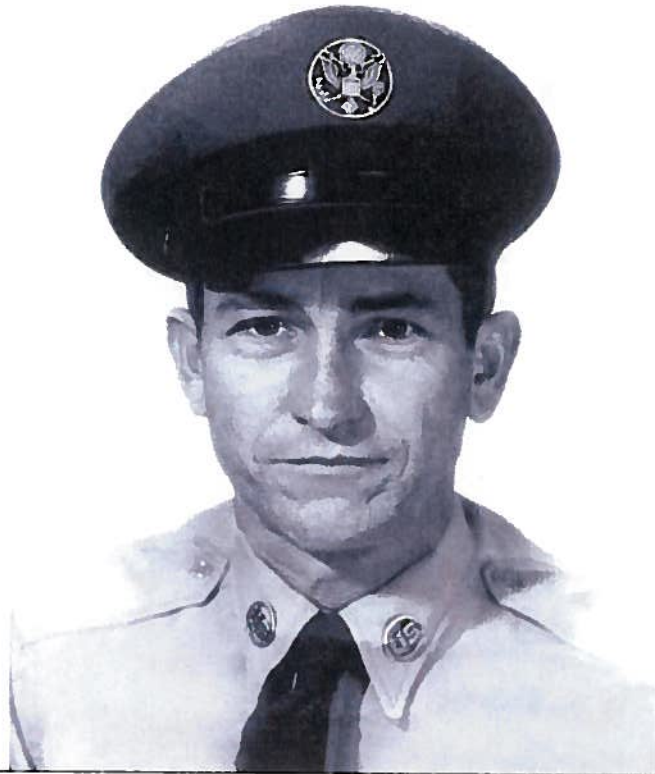
This passport is not valid for travel to the following areas under control of authorities with which the United States does not have diplomatic relations: Albania, Bulgaria, and those portions of China, Korea and Viet-Nam under Communist control.

THIS PASSPORT IS VALID FOR TRAVEL TO AND IN HUNGARY.

THIS PASSPORT IS NOT VALID FOR TRAVEL IN HUNGARY.

THIS PASSPORT IS VALID ONLY FOR USE IN CONNECTION WITH THE BEARERS RESIDENCE ABROAD AS A DEPENDENT OF A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN MILITARY OR NAVAL FORCES OR A DEPENDENT OF A CIVILIAN EMPLOYEE OF THE GOVERNMENT ON ACTIVE DUTY OUTSIDE THE CONTINENTAL LIMITS OF THE UNITED STATES.

THIS PASSPORT IS VALID FOR TRAVEL TO AND IN BULGARIA.



Elmer "Cully" Cullison



Cully with friends during WWII

BUILD AND FIGHT IN THE
NAVY
Seabees



WANTED-CONSTRUCTION WORKERS



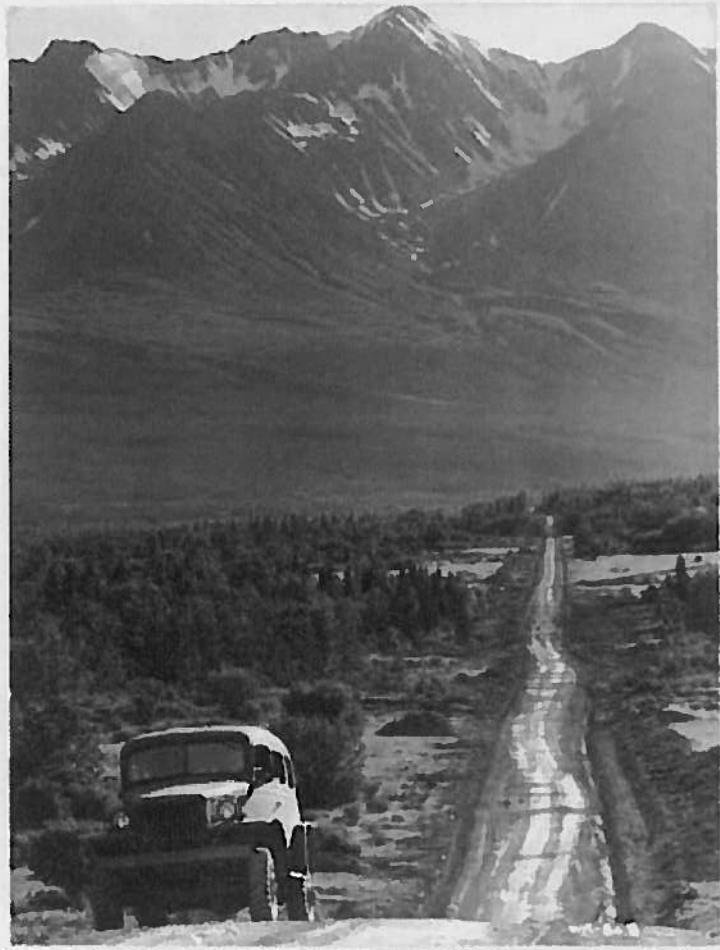
MEN 17 AND 38 TO 50 BY
VOLUNTARY ENLISTMENT

MEN 18 TO 37 BY
VOLUNTARY INDUCTION

APPLY AT ANY NAVY RECRUITING STATION

The Army Engineers Also Need Construction Workers

Seabees Recruiting Poster, WWII



Alcan Alaska Highway Scenes



On Eternal Patrol - Lost Submariners of World War II

Hollis Oyer Lauderdale

Photo Needed



Rank/Rate	Fireman, First Class
Service Number	08417479
Birth Date	March 4, 1924
From	Harlingen, Texas
Decorations	Purple Heart
Submarine	USS Swordfish (SS-193)
Loss Date	January 12, 1945
Location	Near Yaku Island off Kyushu, Japan
Circumstances	Lost at sea, cause unknown
Remarks	Hollis was born in Jacksonville, Texas.

Information courtesy of Paul W. Wittmer.





Maxine Cullison being interviewed by Floyd Cox, from the Nimitz Museum WWII Oral History Project, November 2004, at the Herman Brown Free Library, Burnet, Texas





Maxine standing with BCGS Friends, Mary Ann Stubbs, Edna Cheatham, JoAnn Myers
Seated are Donna Palkowsky and Marcia Neuhaus,
2004



Maxine with friends and members of United Daughters of the Confederacy, 2005
Maxine, Marcia Neuhaus, Betty Van Gorkum, Edna Cheatham, with author Ray Mulesky, Jr,
"Thunder From a Clear Sky: Stovepipe Johnson's Confederate Raid on Newburgh, Indiana"



Maxine, center, with BCGS Friends on a Field Trip, 2005
Marcia Neuhaus, left and Virginia Billig on right



Maxine taking a lunch break with Marcia Neuhaus while attending BCGS seminar, 2006



Maxine on right with BCGS Friday Volunteer Group, 2007
Donna Palkowsky, Marcia Neuhaus, Esther Pogue, Tyler Cluck, grandson of JoAnn Myers



Maxine, 2010

Cherrye Maxine Cullison of Burnet passed away on Oct. 5 in Wichita Falls.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 57 years, SMS (Ret.) Elmer Lee Cullison and her son, CMS (Ret.) Gary Alan Cullison.

She is survived by her daughter, Judy Gould of Kingsland; son, Donald Cullison and wife, Susan, of Waynesville, Mo.; daughter, Betty Carpenter and husband, Jimmy, of Burnet; son, David Cullison of Kingsland; and daughter Lou Binion and husband, Wayne Fowler, of Henrietta, along with 10 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

Maxine was born on May 25, 1927 in Rusk to Ellis Lauderdale and Dellia Fisk. She was married to Elmer Lee Cullison on Sept. 5, 1942 in Harlingen.

After retiring from the Air Force in 1969, Elmer and Maxine moved from San Angelo to Lake Buchanan in 1975. The couple avidly fished Lake Buchanan and also enjoyed traveling and doing genealogy together.

Maxine was a member of Oaks West Church of Christ in Burnet. She enjoyed bowling, crocheting and watching baseball. She will be missed dearly by her family and friends, but will also be happily remembered for her personality and the love she showed.

A memorial service will be held in honor of Maxine at Oaks West Church of Christ in Burnet on Monday, Oct. 17 at 10 a.m. Her ashes will be interred with her late husband's during a ceremony at Ft. Sam Houston at 3 p.m. the same day.

In lieu of flowers, her family requests that donations be made to Hospice Care of Wichita Falls, addressed at 4909 Johnson Rd. Wichita Falls, TX 76310.



Cullison