

U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet
2ND LT. GEORGE A. WHITEMAN

George Allison Whiteman, the eldest of ten children of John and Earlie Whiteman, was born Oct. 12, 1919, at the Wilkerson farm near Longwood, Mo., in Pettis County. He graduated from Smith-Cotton High School in Sedalia and attended the Rolla School of Mines in Rolla, Mo., prior to enlisting in the service in 1939.

In the spring of 1940, Whiteman received orders to report to Randolph Field, Texas, for training as an aviator. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army Air Corps Nov. 15, 1940, and volunteered for duty in Hawaii early the following year.

As the sun rose over Oahu on the morning of Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor began. Lieutenant Whiteman got to his P-40B aircraft at Bellows Field and had just lifted off the runway when a burst of enemy gunfire hit his cockpit, wounding him and throwing the plane out of control. The plane crashed and burned just off the end of the runway.

The news of Lieutenant Whiteman's death reached his family at 10:13 p.m. Dec. 7. In an interview with the Sedalia Democrat that evening, his mother, Earlie Whiteman, said: "It's hard to believe. It might have happened anytime, anywhere. We've got to sacrifice loved ones if we want to win this war." She gave the reporter a photograph of her son sitting in an aircraft with the inscription "Lucky, lucky me."

Lieutenant Whiteman is believed to be one of the first Airmen killed during the assault which marked the United States' entry into World War II. For his gallantry that day, he was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, the Purple Heart, the American Defense Medal with a Foreign Service clasp, the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign medal with one bronze star, and the World War II Victory Medal.

Another honor was bestowed on Lieutenant Whiteman 14 years after his death. Gen. Nathan F. Twining, Air Force Chief of Staff, informed Mrs. Whiteman on Aug. 24, 1955, that the recently reopened Sedalia Air Force Base would be renamed Whiteman Air Force Base in tribute to her son. The dedication and renaming ceremony took place on Dec. 3, 1955.