IN MEMORIAM

ROBERT HAMILTON CUYLER

Captain Robert Hamilton Cuyler, Assistant Director of the Army Air Forces, Ground Training Technical Advisory Unit, Central Instructors School, Randolph Field, Texas, was killed in an airplane accident near Blanco, Texas, on March 13, 1944, while on a training mission. Captain Cuyler was Associate Professor of Geology at The University of Texas, having been a member of the faculty of the Department of Geology for the past 17 years, and was on leave of absence while serving with the Army Air Corps.

Captain Cuyler was born in Austin, Texas on May 28, 1908, the son of Robert Henry Cuyler and Sarah McBride Cuyler. In 1911 the Cuyler family moved to North Carolina where they lived for six years. In 1917 they returned to Austin, and at the age of nine years young Cuyler enrolled in the Austin Public Schools. He graduated from High School at the age of fifteen and entered The University of Texas, completing the course for the B.A. Degree in three years, and was graduated in June, 1926. He continued in the graduate school at The University of Texas and received the degree of Master of Arts in 1927. (Thesis: "Georgetown Formation of Central Texas and its North Texas Equivalents," see Bibliography), and the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1931, at the age of twenty-three. His dissertation for the doctorate was "Travis Peak Formation of Central Texas," (see Bibliography).

Cuyler was appointed to an instructorship in the Department of Geology in 1927, after having served as a student assistant during his undergraduate days. He was continuously a member of the faculty from that time until his death. In 1935 he was advanced to the rank of Assistant Professor and in 1939 was promoted to an Associate Professorship.

Captain Cuyler's chief interest was in micropaleontology and subsurface geology, and he developed outstanding courses in these branches of geology. With an unusual capacity for organization, he scheduled the subject matter for his courses in minute detail, usually passing out a mimeographed outline for the full semester's work on the first day of class. Setting a high standard
for his own work, he was not content to do anything in a makeshift fashion. Everything was done thoroughly and completely, even to the smallest detail. He instilled the same feeling in his students and insisted that everything that they turned in should represent their best effort. He would frequently inquire of a student who was handing in an assignment if he were willing "for me to show this to a prospective employer as a sample of your work"? His enthusiasm, a rare quality in a teacher, was infectious and his students worked willingly and eagerly on his courses. His success and popularity as a teacher is attested by the large enrollment in his classes and the number of successful geologists whose interest in the science was due to his inspiration. With an outstanding memory for names and faces, he could recall the full name, hometown, and other details of hundreds of students years after they had graduated. He frequently astonished his classes by calling each member by their full name on the second meeting of the class. Many of his students became personal friends, and he followed their work closely after they left school. In the supervision of graduate work, he gave unsparingly of his time, and not infrequently he spent Sundays, holidays, and late into the night working with students. Always punctual, to the second in appointments, he liked to schedule his workweeks ahead and frequently would make appointments with students for eleven or twelve o'clock at night, after both had attended some function earlier in the evening.

Captain Cuyler's work required a close knowledge of the oil industry, and he kept informed to a remarkable degree on the activities in the various parts of the country. He spent a number of vacations actively working in the oil Industry, a field in which he was unusually successful. In his most recent work in the Oil Industry he was associated with Mr. John F. Camp, of San Antonio. His association with Mr. Camp was most enjoyable and resulted in one of the closest friendships of his life.

He was also interested in fieldwork and for many years assisted 'in teaching the Summer Field Course in Geology offered by The University of Texas. In the field he displayed the same energy and capacity for work, which he had in the laboratory and set an example, which inspired
the students to put forth their best efforts. In addition to his interest in geology, Cuyler was well informed in Botany, especially Field Botany, which he used to advantage in his field studies.

For some years Captain Cuyler had supervised thesis problems for the Master's Degree and dissertations for the Doctor's Degree. Students working on subsurface problems were frequently faced with the task of spending months assembling the essential information from widely scattered sources.

Early in 1940, Cuyler submitted through the University of Texas, a proposal to the Works Progress Administration for a project to make copies of all logs and other subsurface data on wells drilled in Texas. This material was to be used as a source of information for subsurface studies and as a permanent reference collection. The "Well Logging Project" was approved, and under the direct supervision of Cuyler, work was started on September 25, 1940, at Houston, Texas. The Project ran for two years and employed an average of about 125 persons per day. The project included the preparation of a card for each well drilled in Texas, giving all pertinent data available on the well. In addition, a collection of sample and paleontologic logs, a collection of plotted driller logs, and a collection of electrical logs were assembled. A total of 120,000 plotted driller's logs, 10,500 electrical logs, and several thousand sample logs are in the collection. These are filed in a permanent collection at the University of Texas. This collection, together with several million well samples, many of which Cuyler was instrumental in obtaining, represent an accumulation of subsurface data invaluable in teaching and research. Although Cuyler left The University to enter the Army before the final completion of this project, the collection will forever be a monument to his farsighted wisdom and tireless energy in working out the details and carrying on the project in addition to a full teaching schedule.

Captain Cuyler was married to Esther Arsinoé Solcher, a college classmate, of San Antonio, Texas, on November 9, 1927. Mrs. Cuyler received the Ph.D. Degree in Botany and taught in the Department of Botany for several years after their marriage. "Bob" and "Esther", as they were affectionately known by their host of friends, were ideally happy, and Esther proved an
invaluable helpmate for her husband -- working by his side and with equal efficiency. Their only child, a son, was born just one month before his father's death.

Captain Cuyler entered the Army Air Forces in July, 1942, as a First Lieutenant and was promoted to Captain on October, 18, 1943. After he had completed training at the Officers' Training School at San Antonio Aviation Cadet Center, on August 15, 1942, he was placed in charge of the Maps, Charts and Aerial Photographs course in the Supervision Section of the Pre-Flight school at San Antonio Aviation Cadet-Center. On February 1, 1943, when the Central Instructors School, Randolph Field, Texas was set, up, Captain Cuyler was transferred to the Ground School Instructors Course unit, in charge of the Maps, Charts and Aerial Photographs Department. He was made Assistant Director of the Ground School Instructors Course, October 5, 1943. When Ground School Instructors Course was merged into the newly organized Ground Training Technical Advisory Unit, Captain Cuyler was appointed Assistant Director. His handbook and workbook on "Maps, Charts and Aerial Photographs" has been acclaimed an outstanding contribution to the training of pilots.

Although Cuyler was relatively young in years, he had already distinguished himself in the field of science, as is attested by his election to membership in various learned societies and to positions of trust in these organizations. He was a member of Sigma Gamma Epsilon (honorary geologic fraternity) and a past president of the local Chapter. He became a member of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists in 1929 and was elected a Fellow of the Geological Society of America in 1939. He was also a member of Sigma Xi (President of the Texas Chapter, 1936), the Paleontological Society of America, Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists, Southwestern Geological Society (President, 1928), University Science Club (President, 1933), and the Texas Academy of Science. He was listed in the 1938 edition of American Men of Science. He belonged to the Presbyterian Church and was a Mason.
He I a survived by his wife, Dr. Esther S. Cuyler, and an infant son, Robert Hamilton Cuyler, Jr., by his mother, Mrs. Sarah Cuyler, one sister, Dr. Iona Hamlet of Ft. Wayne, Indiana, and one brother, Dr. William Kenneth Cuyler, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

To his many friends who loved him, Cuyler was an outstanding example of a man with high ideals, gracious, generous, and considerate to the extreme. To his colleagues on the University faculty his untimely death, in the prime of his career, was a staggering blow. His death is not only a great lose to his wife, son, and relatives, but to all who knew him and to the science of geology. Captain Cuyler's chief monument is his students. Those who studied under him have gone out to oil companies throughout Texas, as well as many other parts of the world. In them, and in the hearts of his friends, he still lives.

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