

Martin William Hiller & Margaret Elizabeth Lauer Biography

Martin William Hiller was born on 30 Mar 1913 near Oakville, Louisa Co., Iowa to LaVerne "Verne" Martin Curtis Hiller (1885-1976) and Lydia "Lillie" Frederica Korn (1886-1990). He was raised on a farm, the oldest of 4 siblings, 2 boys and 2 girls. His birth name was Martin Marion Hiller. Martin didn't like his "Marion" middle name. When he was a teenager, his parents gave him the choice of keeping his "Marion" middle name or taking the same middle name as his grandfather Martin William Hiller (1843-1917), and he chose to take William as his middle name.

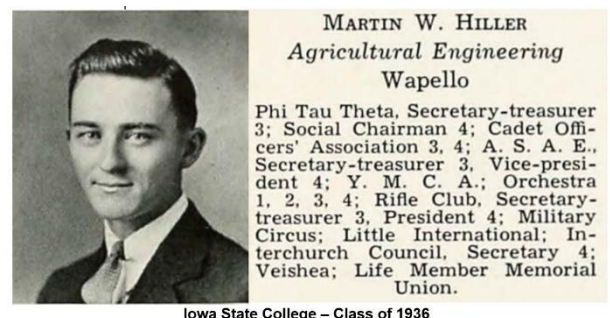
As a high school teenager, having "farm tractor" driving experience (and his father being active on the local school board), Martin was offered and accepted the job of driving the school bus for his Wapello School district. When he graduated from Wapello High School, Wapello, Louisa Co., Iowa in May 1931, the school bus driving job passed to his youngest sister Kathryn. Kathryn drove the school bus until she graduated from Wapello High School in May 1935. The photo to the right is Kathryn with the school bus when she is a Senior.



After High School Martin enrolled at Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts in Ames, Story Co., Iowa and began classes in Sep 1931. During his five years course of studies at Iowa State College, he worked part time jobs and earned the money to pay for all his college expenses.

Martin met his future wife, Margaret Elizabeth Lauer, when both were students at Iowa State College during the 1931/1932 school year. Margaret was born on 8 Aug 1914 at Zion, Adair Co., Iowa to Joseph Clarence Lauer (1866-1945) and Ida May Davenport (1872-1937). She graduated from High School in Adair Co., Iowa in May 1931 and started college at Iowa State College in Sep 1931. While attending Iowa State College, she lived with her brother Alvah Ray Lauer for 2 quarters. Alvah was employed as a Professor of Psychology at Iowa State College in 1925 and later in his career he was the Director of the Driving Research Laboratory at Iowa State College. Margaret went back home after the 2nd quarter, about March 1932, and didn't want to go back to Ames and stay with her brother since Alvah made her "eat soft eggs" because he thought they were better for her than hard cooked eggs! Margaret continued her college education at Iowa State Teachers College in Cedar Falls, Iowa where she obtained her Bachelor's degree in Education in May 1935. Following her graduation, she moved to rural Hamilton Co., Iowa (just North of Ames, Iowa) and taught school until she and Martin married.

Martin graduated on 15 Jun 1936 from Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts with an Agricultural Engineering degree. He had the highest scholastic average in his class of Agricultural Engineers. In addition to class studies, Martin was active in Phi Tau Theta (a national religious fraternity for Methodist men) and several Iowa State College groups and organizations during his college career. (References: Quad-City Times, 10 Jun 1936, page 8; The Muscatine Journal and News-Tribune, 11 Jun 1936, page 6; and Iowa State College 1936 Bomb Yearbook, page 65)



Iowa State College – Class of 1936

On 10 Jun 1936, five days before his college graduation, Martin began his military service when he was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Regular Army Engineer ORC (Organized Reserve Corps) at Ames, Story Co., Iowa. Martin was selected as one of three Senior Engineers from Iowa State College to receive one year of Active Duty special training in the Regular Army. He left on 1 Jul 1936 to travel to his Active Duty post assignment at Fort Lewis, Pierce Co., Washington, where he was with the Regular Army 6th Engineers from 8 Jul 1936 to 30 Jun 1937.

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After Martin's Fort Lewis, WA tour of duty, he was reassigned to the Regular Army ORC. Martin moved back to Ames, Iowa and took a teaching position for the 1938/1939 school year.

Martin William Hiller and Margaret Elizabeth Lauer were married on 4 Jun 1939 at the Collegiate M. E. Church in Ames, Story Co., Iowa, with the Rev. G. S. Nichols officiating. During the following years, Martin and Margaret had 3 children: Marlys "Lisa" Lillian Hiller born on 26 Jun 1940 at Marshalltown, Marshall Co., Iowa; Marlene LaVerne Hiller, M.D. born on 7 Mar 1942 at Urbana, Champaign Co., Illinois; and Marlin William Hiller born on 10 Apr 1945 at Muscatine, Muscatine Co., Iowa. All 3 children were baptized by Rev. G. S. Nichols at the Collegiate M. E. Church in Ames, Iowa during times when they returned to Ames for family visits. Son Marlin recalls that he was the last of the 3 siblings to be baptized by Rev. Nichols when he was about 12 years of age.



Martin was promoted to 1st Lt Engineer ORC on 30 Jul 1939. In Sep 1939 he took a position teaching Vocational Agriculture in the Conrad, Grundy Co., Iowa schools where he started the Vocational Agriculture department. On 14 Sep 1940, Martin resumed his Regular Army military career when he was called from the Reserves into the Army Air Corps for one year of Active Duty stationed at Chanute Field in Rantoul, Champaign Co., Illinois. He would not return to a teaching career until after his retirement from the US Air Force.

Martin had a life long interest in photography and family genealogy. As Martin & Margaret's family grew, he was always active in taking pictures and movies of family and the places they lived and visited in their travels. He was also active in researching his family genealogical history and capturing information about ancestors and cousins. Martin actively corresponded with family members and cousins to obtain new information about births, marriages, divorces, deaths, graduations, occupations, addresses and family stories.

Martin's pictures and movies were catalogued and often documented as to time, place and people, and "filed" in cabinets and drawers. The family genealogical history information and family stories were typed with a manual typewriter and compiled into descendant genealogies for the main family ancestral surnames that included: Hiller, Lauer, Korn, Davenport, Kirkland, Brendel, Borton, Russell, Farley, and Schmitt (Schmidt). Over a period of 40 plus years, these compiled and typed descendant genealogies filled 13 three ring notebooks and consisted of some 3,000 to 4,000 pages of family genealogical history.

Over this same 40 plus years period, Martin's photographic effort likewise resulted in thousands of photographs, 35 mm slides, 8 mm and 16 mm films documenting the family's life and travel with visual images to go along with the written descendant genealogies documenting the family's ancestors and cousins! The photographs, movies and genealogies were shared with extended family members as Martin, Margaret, Marlys, Marlene, and Marlin moved to different military base assignments around the United States and overseas to India, China and the Philippine Islands during Martin's Army & Air Force career and Martin & Margaret's teaching careers.

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As Martin's Military career continued following his Chanute Field assignment (Sep 1940 – Sep 1941) he was next assigned in Oct 1941 to the AAFTTC (Army Air Force Technical Training Command) in Grand Rapids, MI. The next assignment for Lt Martin Hiller was to Hendrix Army Airfield near Sebring, FL where he was involved with air supplies allocations. He was promoted to Captain on 1 Feb 1942 while at Hendrix Army Airfield. Martin's wife Margaret and daughters Marlys and Marlene joined him in Florida for his Hendrix Army Airfield assignment.

As WW II victories in the European and Mediterranean Theaters of Operations headed towards the defeat of German and Italian military forces, the US Army Air Corp training, logistic and supply operations began to shift its focus to the task of returning some overseas personnel, equipment and supplies from the European and Mediterranean Theaters of Operations to the US while sending other personnel, equipment and supplies to the Pacific Theater of Operations to enter and support combat against the Japanese Empire. It was as a part of this reassignment of personnel, equipment and supply resources that Capt Martin Hiller was reassigned in Feb 1945 from Hendrix Army Airfield to the Army Air Force Base in Greensboro, NC in charge of air supplies. His assignment to the Army Air Force Base in Greensboro, NC was short lived and in Mar 1945 he was again reassigned, this time to overseas operations.

Martin's wife Margaret (now pregnant with son Marlin) and daughters Marlys and Marlene moved from the Hendrix Army Airfield in Florida to Grandview, Louisa Co., Iowa to live with Martin's parents. Martin departed for his overseas assignment from the United States on 23 Mar 1945. His first overseas assignment was to the 80th ADG (Air Depot Group) in Agra, India. Next, he was assigned to Peiping (Beijing), China; Chungking (Chongqing), China; and finally, to Shanghai, China.

During the time of Martin's overseas assignments, the Nazi Concentration Camps were liberated in Apr 1945; Mussolini was executed on 25 Apr 1945; Hitler committed suicide on 30 Apr 1945; German forces surrendered during April and May 1945; Hiroshima, Japan was bombed on 6 Aug 1945; Nagasaki, Japan was bombed on 9 Aug 1945; the surrender of Imperial Japan was announced on 15 Aug 1945, and formally surrendered unconditionally on 2 Sep 1945 aboard the USS Missouri anchored in Tokyo Bay. Martin's collection of photos and 35 mm slides indicate that during the time he was stationed in China, he also had the opportunity to visit Japan.

With Martin's assignment to Shanghai, China, his family could again join him. In Sep 1946, Margaret with her 3 children left Martin's parents in Grandview, Louisa Co., Iowa where they had been living, to travel via Seattle, WA to join Capt Hiller in Shanghai, China. (ref: Muscatine Journal, Muscatine, Iowa, Sep 1946). Margaret taught school part of the time she was in Shanghai, then took a hiatus from teaching until after she received her Master of Education degree from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh.

Martin was promoted to Major Air - Reserve (inactive) on 1 Jul 1947 while stationed in Shanghai. Also, while he was stationed in Shanghai, the US Air Force was founded on 18 Sep 1947 with the passing of the National Security Act of 1947. Martin was one of 106 Iowans nominated on 10 Oct 1947 by President Harry Truman for a recess appointment as a Commissioned Officer. He was confirmed as a Commissioned Officer by Act of Congress on 30 Oct 1947, with a rank of 1st Lieutenant from 30 Mar 1941. Major Hiller and his family returned to the United States on 18 Jul 1948.

*Hiller Family Enroute To China
To Join Capt. Hiller In Shanghai*



Grandview—Mrs. Martin Hiller and her children were busy with last-minute packing when The Journal photographer visited their home in Grandview Saturday. The group left later in the day for Seattle, Wash., where they will embark for China to join Capt. Hiller, stationed in Shanghai. The three Hiller children, shown with their mother above, are Marlys, aged six years, Marlene who is four years old and Martin, 17 months old. The family has been living at the L. M. Hiller home in Grandview since Capt. Hiller has been overseas.

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Now a United States Air Force Commissioned Officer, Martin's subsequent base assignments were:

- McChord AFB, Pierce Co., WA (1949 - 1950)
- Kirtland AFB, Albuquerque, NM (1951 - 1952)
- Davis Monthan AFB, Tucson, AZ (1953 - 1954)
- Plattsburgh AFB, Plattsburgh, Clinton Co., NY (1955 - May 1958)
- Clark AB, Philippine Islands (Jun 1958 – Jul 1960)
- Mitchell AFB, Long Island, NY (Aug 1960 – Aug 1961)

While living in Plattsburgh, Clinton Co., NY, Margaret decided to return to college and get a master's degree in Education. She attended the State University of New York (SUNY) at Plattsburgh from 1956 to 1957 graduating with a Master of Education degree with a Special Education major. She was inducted as a member of Kappa Delta Pi, Theta Kappa Chapter, International Honor Society in Education. Following graduation, she taught the 1957/1958 school year in Dannemora, Clinton Co., NY. Margaret was a pioneer in Special Education for high-needs children, a new discipline which she helped establish in most of the schools where she taught after receiving her Master of Education degree.

Lt Col Martin Hiller's Military Service ended with his retirement on 31 Aug 1961 at Mitchell AFB, NY, having served for 25 years. Following his US Air Force Retirement, Martin and Margaret moved to Huntington, NY where they both taught for 10 years in the Huntington public school system, both retiring from teaching about 1973. Margaret taught Special Education while in the Huntington, NY school system. She was a teacher for a total of 21 years in addition to her being a mother and a homemaker.



Martin and Margaret's first retirement home after leaving Huntington, NY was in rural Higden, AR from about 1974 to 1980. In retirement they travelled extensively to visit family, sightseeing places, and places for genealogical research. Martin continued with his photographic and genealogy interests. When they moved to Higden, they began the "Hiller Print Shop" as a small home business specializing in Genealogical Records publishing. The Hiller Print Shop provided the means to publish and make copies available of Martin's multiple family descendant genealogies to their extended family and interested cousins. Martin also published and sent copies of many of the genealogies to Genealogical Libraries across the country, including The Family History Library in Salt Lake City, UT, and the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

When Martin's health began to worsen, he and Margaret sold their Higden, AR home and moved to a new home in Council Bluffs, Iowa, to be closer to Margaret's sister and other Lauer family members. Martin died on 27 Jan 1983 at Council Bluffs, Iowa, at age 69 from Colon Cancer. He was buried on 30 Jan 1983 at Parsons Cemetery, near Toolesboro, Louisa Co., Iowa.

After Martin died, Margaret sold their home in Council Bluffs, IA and went to live from 1983 to 1986 with daughter Marlene Jorris & family in Long Beach, CA. In 1986 Margaret went to live with her son Marlin Hiller & family in New Franklin, MO. When her health worsened, she moved to the Golden Hour Retirement Home in New Franklin, MO and lived there from 2002 until her death. Margaret died on 17 Feb 2004 at Cooper County Memorial Hospital, Booneville, Cooper Co., MO, at age 89. She was buried with her husband Martin about 20 Feb 2004 at Parsons Cemetery, near Toolesboro, Louisa Co., Iowa.

Compiled by: Norman Ray Sanford