

78-37-1
H78-05-01/03

JOHN CROSS, Kotzebue

Ind. record:
1150-62860

John Cross, Box 23, Kotzebue, Alaska.

Born March 1, 1895 on his parents' farm near the town of Goddard, Kansas. He came to Kotzebue in 1936 from Cordova where he had been flying for Cordova Airlines. He got to Kotzebue via Nome...flying a plane to Nome for Noel Wien. Wien hired him.

He got to Cordova with an aircraft that he brought up from Chicago. He had intended to help M.D. Kirkpatrick, founder of Cordova Air Service, put the Bellanca together. That was in 1934. Cross had flown the Bellanca from Chicago to Seattle and then took the wings off for shipment to Cordova by ocean vessel. He accompanied the plane to Cordova. Kirkpatrick managed to get Cross to stay in Cordova and work for him. Kirkpatrick was killed near Cordova in a crash... believed he went down in the water, Cross said.

Cross went through grade school near his home; then he went to high school and eventually to Ottawa University in Ottawa Kansas. He left the university in 1918 and went into the Army Air Corps as a cadet and learned to fly. He was assigned for overseas duty but the armistice was signed as he and his squadron waited at Long Island for transportation to Europe.

Returned to university and got degree. Also married his school sweetheart that year.

Cross didn't do any commercial flying until 1925 after his mother's death. She was afraid of flying. He kept up his reserve status with Air Corps and went to summer training sessions, however.

Cross is a "founder" member of the Order of Daedalians, a group of pilots and their decedents who had flying ratings before 1918. Daedalians were formed at Maxwell Field on March 26, 1934. Cross' son Gordon (captain for Wien) is also a member. The Alaska chapter is called Polar Flight No. 10.

Lindberg? Cross met him several times but did not know him too well.

In November, 1941 Cross was called back to active duty with the Air Corps and was stationed at Fairbanks first with Gen. Gaffney in the cold weather testing and flying out of Ladd Field. He was assigned to the 11th Air Force Service Command in Anchorage later and worked out of Elmendorf and occasionally in the Aleutian Chain. He held rank of major then. He later was assigned as commander of the Naknek Air Base near King Salmon and was promoted as Lt. Colonel. Went on inactive status as Lt. Colonel in 1945.

Reel 1 ends with Cross discussing Russians who flew aircraft from United States to Russia during war...through Canada and Alaska.

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