



**FINDING AID TO  
THE TOTSYE HARPER WINSLOW  
COLLECTION ON THE CURTIS-WRIGHT  
CADETTES, 1943-1997**

**Purdue University Libraries  
Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections  
Research Center  
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West Lafayette, Indiana 47907-2058  
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## Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator Information</b>	Totsye Harper Winslow
<b>Title</b>	Totsye Harper Winslow collection on the Curtis-Wright Cadettes
<b>Collection Identifier</b>	MSA 195
<b>Date Span</b>	1943-1997
<b>Abstract</b>	The collection includes photographs, programs, newsletters, and papers documenting the role and history of the Curtis-Wright Cadettes at Purdue and in the Curtis-Wright Corporation during World War II.
<b>Extent</b>	0.25 cubic feet, 1 mss. box
<b>Finding Aid Author</b>	Virginia Pleasant, 2015
<b>Languages</b>	English
<b>Repository</b>	Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections Research Center, Purdue University Libraries

## Administrative Information

<b>Location Information:</b>	ASC Vault
<b>Access Restrictions:</b>	Collection is open for research.
<b>Acquisition Information:</b>	Donated by Robert and Totsye Winslow, April 11, 2008.
<b>Accession Number:</b>	20080411
<b>Preferred Citation:</b>	MSA 195, Totsye Harper Winslow Collection on the Curtis-Wright Cadettes, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries
<b>Copyright Notice:</b>	Purdue University per deed of gift
<b>Related Materials Information:</b>	Grandt, AF, Jr. et al. <i>One Small Step: The History of Aerospace Engineering at Purdue University</i> . West Lafayette: School of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Purdue University (2010).

Lenthe, Jean-Vi. *Flying into Yesterday: My Search for the Curtiss-Wright Aeronautical Engineering Cadettes*. El Prado: Wild Hare Press (2011).

Iowa State University Department of Military Science  
Curtiss-Wright Engineering Cadettes Program  
Records, RS 13/16/4, Archives of Women in Science  
and Engineering, Iowa State University Library.

Curtiss-Wright Cadettes Records, RS 13/16/1, Iowa  
State University Library.

Jean Nickerson Patterson Curtis-Wright Engineering  
Cadette Records, RS 21/7/148, Iowa State University.

## **Subjects and Genres**

### **Persons**

Curtiss-Wright Cadettes

### **Organizations**

Curtiss-Wright Corporation.

Purdue University. School of Aeronautics and Astronautics.

### **Topics**

Women engineers

World War, 1939-1945-Participation, Female

Women's Archives at Purdue University

Women in Science

### **Form and Genre Types**

Black-and-white photographs

Newsletters

Programs

### **Occupations**

Aerospace engineering.

## History of the Curtis-Wright Cadettes

After the entry of the United States into World War II, the Curtis-Wright Corporation, a leading producer of planes for the war effort, experienced extreme labor shortages as increasing numbers of men were recruited for military efforts. In an effort to alleviate these shortages and keep up with production demands, the aeronautics corporation proposed the creation of a training program for women who were mathematically inclined or whom had previously demonstrated proficiency in science. The program was to be an extremely abbreviated introduction to aeronautical engineering that would prepare the women for entry level positions with Curtiss-Wright so that men currently employed by the company could be promoted to more advanced positions. The Cadette program was similar to, but much less known than, the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP), the United States Coast Guard Reserve (SPARS), and the Rosie the Riveter/ Wanda the Welder campaigns.

The Engineering Cadette Program was started in 1943 at seven universities: Purdue University, Cornell, Pennsylvania State University, University of Minnesota, Iowa State University, Rensselaer University, and University of Texas. During their time in the program, the women's educational and lodging costs were covered by Curtiss-Wright, and they received a \$10 per week stipend. Classes were rigorous, with the women expected to dedicate a minimum of 50 hours per week to classes and study. The graduates of 1943 completed two and a half years of engineering curriculum in ten months, with subsequent graduating classes completing the work in even less time. Upon completion of the program, the women were assigned positions in one of five Curtiss-Wright facilities in the country, with varying roles and responsibilities. Once the war was over, the majority of the women were replaced by returning male soldiers, and it does not appear that the Curtiss-Wright Corporation kept its promise of additional funding for them to complete their engineering degrees. Many women did, however, subsequently complete degrees at universities nationwide and went on to various careers and roles within their respective communities.

### Sources:

MSA 195, Totsye Harper Winslow collection on the Curtiss-Wright Cadettes

Grandt, AF, Jr. et al. *One Small Step: The History of Aerospace Engineering at Purdue University*. West Lafayette: School of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Purdue University (2010).

Lenthe, Jean-Vi. *Flying into Yesterday: My Search for the Curtiss-Wright Aeronautical Engineering Cadettes*. El Prado: Wild Hare Press (2011).

<http://blog.nasm.si.edu/aviation/meet-the-curtiss-wright-aeronautical-engineering-cadettes>

## **Collection Description**

### **Scope**

The Totsye Harper Winslow collection on the Curtis-Wright Cadettes (1943-1997; 0.25 cubic feet) documents role and history of the Curtis-Wright Cadettes at Purdue and in the Curtis-Wright Corporation during World War II. Photographs, newsletters, and clippings document their time at Purdue as well as the Engineering Cadette Program. The materials in the collection also document local and national reunions of the Cadettes, as well as their history. Also included is information on the individual members of the Purdue Cadette classes. The collection is mostly representative of the Purdue Cadettes, with very little information on the women who graduated from Curtiss-Wright Programs at other Universities. This collection would be useful for researchers interested in women in science, the Curtiss-Wright Corporation, World War II production, and the role of women in the war effort.

### **Descriptive Rules**

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

### **Processing Information**

Whenever possible, original order of the materials has been retained. All materials have been placed in archival housing.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

### **1 Box**

#### Folder

1. Photographs, 1943
2. Purdue periodical clippings on the Cadettes, 1943
3. Curtis-Wright Cadettes program information, undated
4. Cadette alumnae bulletin, 1947
5. Papers written on the Curtis-Wright Cadettes, 1993-1997
6. Purdue Class of 1943 Reunion Gala Week program, 1993
7. Curtis-Wright Cadettes National Reunion Materials, 1994
8. Post National Reunion Newsletters, 1994-1995