

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF

THE LEGION OF MERIT

TO

WILLIAM H. THORNTON

First Lieutenant William H. Thornton distinguished himself by exceptionally meritorious service to the United States while assigned to the Air Proving Ground Command, Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, as a Physicist from July 1953 to June 1954. Lieutenant Thornton personally assumed the task of developing a Firing Error Indicator to score rockets during Operational Suitability Testing at the Air Proving Grounds. In the development of the Firing Error Indicator, Lieutenant Thornton was beset with a shortage of supplies, tools and time. Wherever necessary, he purchased the required components from his personal funds, later refusing to accept a claim for reimbursement. He used his own tools where stock equipment would not suffice. Since other duties were pressing, Lieutenant Thornton labored at night and during weekends to draw the plans and schematics and personally fabricate and improve the prototype system. The Firing Error Indicator has been placed in tentative Standard Classification by the United States Air Force. It will immeasurably increase the hit probability of an Air Defense unit by providing a means of "visual bore-sight" of the fighter aircraft. It will also allow secondary training with a small inexpensive low-drag, radar-reflective target at very fast airspeeds and high altitudes, the training area where the threat to the United States is expected. The exceptional skill and devotion to duty displayed by Lieutenant Thornton have profoundly enhanced the security and capability of the nation's air defense forces and reflect the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.