



MAPS AND CHARTS, LIKE ALL OTHER CLASSES AT PRE-FLIGHT, FORM THE BASIS FOR ADVANCED COURSES IN LATER TRAINING STAGES

# A C A D E M I C S

IT WAS just an ordinary school room, the kind we all know from the past. But there was something different about it, something intangible and yet very definite in the air. For here men had passed before, who today were writing new pages to history, who were blazing their names in distant skies to the roar of engines and the staccato of bullets.

We took our seats at the command of the tall, rangy officer who was an instructor. The faces of the cadets displayed enthusiasm and expectation. And it was easy to realize that here were men who were destined to follow in the footsteps of the Kellys and the Rickenbackers. The work began immediately, for a cadet's day is carefully scheduled and months of college work had to be covered in nine short weeks. Yes, time was precious and both student and instructor knew it. America needed these young men to pilot the planes in the greatest air-force the world has ever known.

## Subjects Are New

As 'zombies' we had many things on our minds besides the upper-classman. To pass Academics, a grade of at least 70%, in subjects of which we had little or no knowledge, had to be maintained. One of these

was Code. Since this and radio-telephone are the primary means of communication in the Air Force, we devoted the greatest number of hours to it. When first we clasped the earphones on our heads and listened to the procession of dahs and dits, it didn't seem probable that we would ever reach the proficiency required to graduate. But in nine weeks we were able to receive eight words per minute over the wires and six words per minute visual.

### Aircraft Recognition is Important

In aerial combat one seldom gets the chance to take a second look. The first is usually nothing more than a glance. When you stop to think that military planes today travel in excess of four hundred miles per hour, it is not hard to understand. It was just such a thing that caused an Italian airman to torpedo one of his country's cruisers in a naval engagement with the British.

To insure against making the same mistake, we were required to study models and photographs of friendly and enemy aircraft and naval vessels. The course demanded intensive study of the smallest details so that enemy craft would be easily recognized and not confused with our own.

### Maps and Charts

When a pilot is flying a P-47 he can't very well pull over to a curb and ask a policeman the direction to Tokyo. He must solve his own navigation drift problems and understand all the symbols and navigational data he finds on the charts he will use. There is the story of a pilot (German naturally) who was supporting ground units by strafing enemy positions in a valley. Suddenly the valley came to an abrupt end and so did the pilot. He should have studied Maps and Charts at Maxwell.

We also learned about gas in Chemical Warfare. Training in this course was practical as well as theoretical. Who can forget the tear gas in the "Castle of Smells" out on

the green. The theme that day could have been "Cry Baby Cry" as we emerged from the gas chamber. We learned other gases. We also learned the deadly effect these gases possess. To be successful, a man must know his profession from the ground up. By taking courses in Ground and Air Forces we did just that. As future officers we would have to be more than familiar with the composition and tactics of the Air Force. Since ground and Air Forces often coordinate their efforts, it is important to study both branches. We studied powers and limitations of our weapons, the units and functions of individual arms.

### Physics is Feared

Most feared course by upperclassmen is Physics. For four weeks as an underclassman, every 'zombie' has chilled into him the terrors of heat, pressure, theory of flight, hydrostatics, thermometry by the upper class. The fear of physics has almost become a tradition at Maxwell. It is not unfounded nor is it merely another upperclass whim designed to plague the underclass.

Most of the courses at Pre-Flight have been designed to give cadets the fundamental basis for the problems they will meet in flying schools. Others were orientation courses in Army life and methods.

There was Signal Communications; War Department Publications; Military Customs and Courtesies; and Safeguarding Military Information. They were drummed into us as fast as we could assimilate them. We learned the meaning of discipline, the mechanics of Cryptography, the science of communication, and the training manuals to use for reference.

Academically, Maxwell Field accomplished its mission. It did it the hard way but did it well. It is seldom possible to achieve any military success without careful preparation. We have been prepared for greater things to come.

—A/C Roy Schmidt.

CADETS TASTE THE REAL THING IN GAS DRILL 

