FLYING TRAINING AT WEST POINT

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July 1970

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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

July 1970

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FOREWORD

During World War II the United States Military Academy operated a three-year program of instruction. Superimposed on this abbreviated curriculum was a full-scale pilot training program. The emphasis of this study is on the problems that arose as a result. Included is a summary of responses to a questionnaire on the value of the flying training which was sent to all living Military Academy graduates of the war years.

The emergence of Air Power as a major factor in the victories of World War II and the defense of the nation in the postwar years strengthened the conviction that only a separate air academy would enable the Air Force to fulfill the obligations placed upon it by the Nation. The West Point experience furnished telling arguments in favor of the proposal. It was also invaluable to Air Force planners in determining the organization and curriculum of the Air Force Academy.

Only through an unbiased study of the past can one understand the present and forecast the future. I commend this study to the attention of all who are concerned with the Academy mission. I believe that it will be of particular interest to current planners of the Air Force Academy curriculum and to the members of the Cadet Wing as a means of acquainting them with a significant aspect of their Air Force heritage.

A. P. CLARK, Lt General, USAF
Superintendent

Gen Henry H. Arnold, Commanding General,

Army Air Forces

Chapter I

In the Beginning

A significant chapter in the history of the twentieth century deals with the birth and rise of military Air Power.

> It is the story of Air Power's ascension to rank with the other great forces of land and sea. It is a story of the coming of age of one of the most flexible and most terrifying power forces in the history of civilization—and one with the greatest implications for peace. Yet Air Power stands not at the end of a long and tortuous path but at the beginning. Its future lies in the progress of mankind. It is bound only by the imagination of those who guide its destinies. Its force—for good or evil, for progress or retrogression—must be directed and controlled by the mind of man, and in significant measure by the officers and men who are in the USAF.[1]

The United States Air Force and its predecessors have always been conscious of the challenge implied in the growth of military Air Power. They have recognized the need for obtaining and training outstanding young men to provide a hard core of officer personnel skilled in the art of military aviation—men of character, imbued with the proper ideals and motivation to guide the United States Air Force through the years, in periods of prosperity and austerity.[2]

The strong belief of Air Force officers in the worth and greatness of their service can be said to be the unifying theme of the history of the United States Air Force. From the beginning it was the fervent desire of these officers to transmit their concept of duty, honor, and service to country to the young officers who in the future would command the Nation's military air service. Also, there was an imperative need for a core of Regular air officers with a solid foundation in military, scientific, and social studies, and in the fundamentals of airmanship. A balanced curriculum in these subjects was not obtainable at any existing service academy or civilian institution. Furthermore, air officers felt that none of these schools could properly motivate a young man to desire a lifetime career of service in the Air Force.[3]

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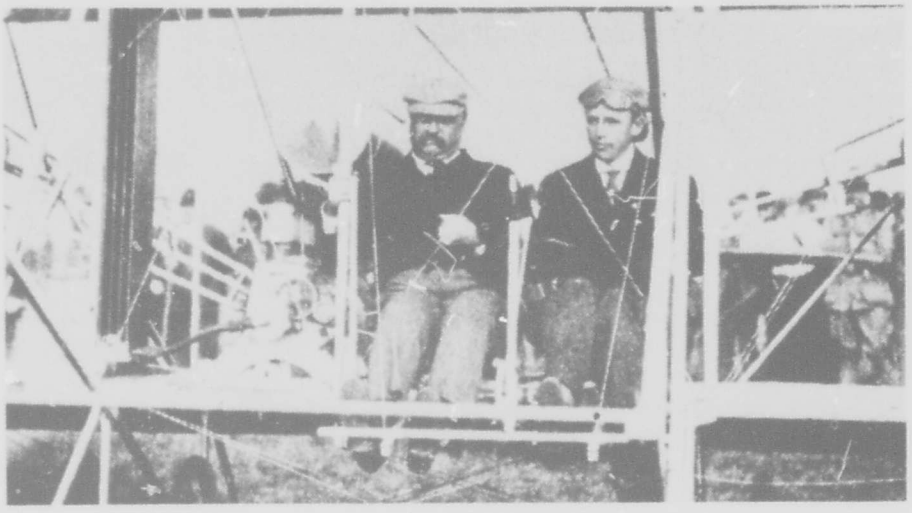
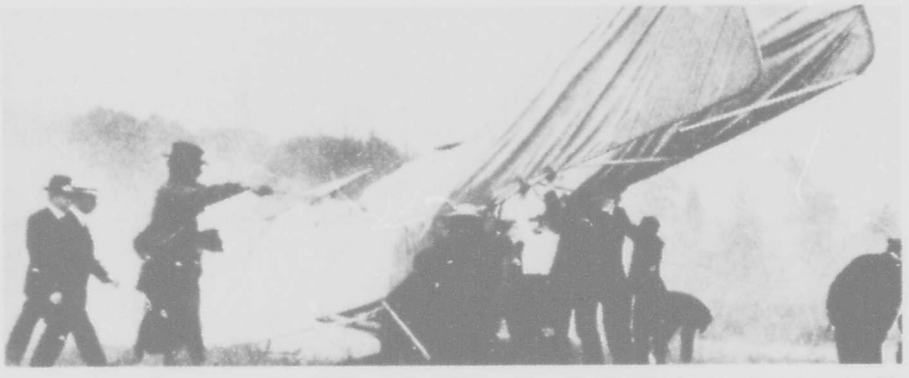
[1] Lt Col Arthur E. Boudreau, "Foreword," n.d. This document, which is in the Special Collections Library of the USAFA, is apparently an earlier version of the "Editor's Preface" to the Air Force Academy Planning Board Study, A Plan for an Air Force Academy, 3 vols., I, Air University, Jan 49.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Lt Col Edgar A. Holt, Dr. M. Hamlin Cannon, and Dr. Carlos R. Allen, Jr., "History of the United States Air Force Academy, 27 Jul 54 - 12 Jun 56," 2 vols., I, p. 368.



President Theodore Roosevelt took an early interest in military flying, backed the purchase of the first Army plane. Above, in the Wright airplane, St. Louis, 1910.



In a crash on September 17, 1908, at Fort Myer, Va., Orville Wright barely escaped with his life, while his passenger, Lt Thomas E. Selfridge, was fatally injured.

"On December 17, 1903, Wilbur Wright rose into the air for the first time that man had ever flown in a mechanically driven, heavier-than-air machine. Four short flights were made; the first was barely skips, but the last covered 850 feet in a time of 50 seconds."

The beginnings of the United States Air Force were humble. On 1 August 1907 the Secretary of War established an Aeronautical Division in the Office of the Chief Signal Officer; it consisted of one officer and two enlisted men. Capt Charles De F. Chandler, the officer-in-charge of the division, was responsible for all matters pertaining to military ballooning, air machines, and all affiliated subjects. Shortly afterwards one of the enlisted men went "over the hill," thereby reducing the enlisted strength of the Army's air arm by 50 percent. It was not until the following year that the Army acquired its first airplane, which was built by the Wright Brothers.[4]

On 26 October 1909, after slightly more than three hours of instruction, Lts Frank P. Lahm and Frederick E. Humphreys soloed at a field in College Park, Maryland, a suburb of Washington, D. C., and became the Army's first pilots. In 1910 Lt Benjamin D. Foulois was instructed by mail by Orville and Wilbur Wright and became the first correspondence school pilot.[5]

Brig Gen James Allen, the Chief Signal Officer, realized that military airmen needed different and more specialized training than that afforded civilian pilots. The military aviator, he said, "must possess to the highest degree the qualities of a soldier and in addition must be carefully trained in making observations in flight." In 1911 General Allen established a flying school at College Park, Maryland to provide special training for officers in the military use of aircraft and related equipment.[6] During the winter months the school operated in Augusta, Georgia.

Accidents were common. Since some of the casualties were officers, the question arose in 1913 as to the advisability of having civilians rather than officers do the actual flying. Capt William Mitchell stoutly defended the employment of officers. "Their education is such," he said, "that they not only more readily learn the technical matters connected with the machines themselves but also are able to report from a military standpoint the result of their observations." In other words, the officers possessed special training which civilians did not have.[7]

Since General Allen recognized that military aviation was a "vital necessity" to the Army, he considered it imperative that permanent flying schools be established. Such schools should be located in the southern states, he thought, since "it is seldom that even the most skillful aviator can risk a flight in the northern winter when exposure to the cold causes hands and muscles to become benumbed and incapable of the delicate manipulation of the machine." Each training center should be located on an Army base in

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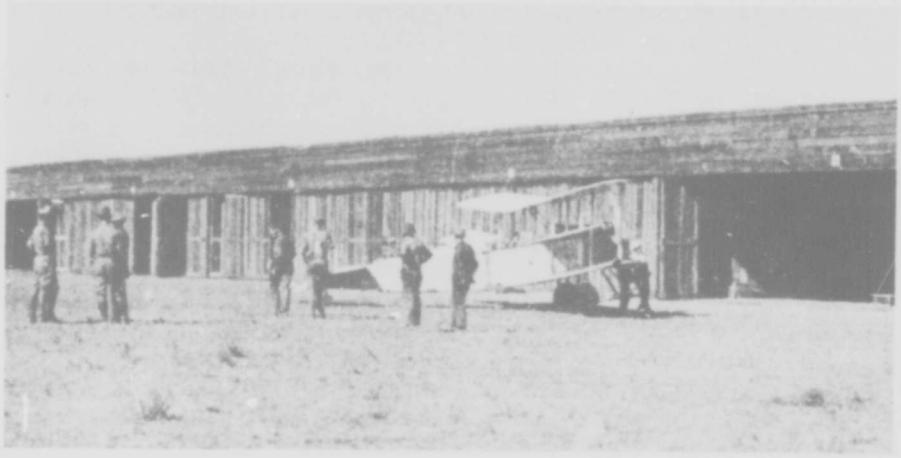
[4] Alfred Goldberg, ed., *A History of the United States Air Force, 1907 - 1957* (New York, 1957), p. 3.

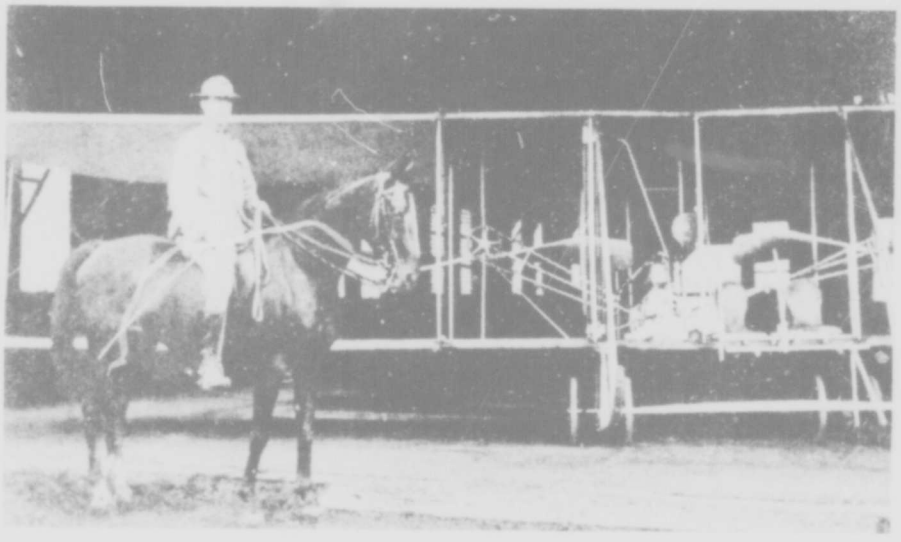
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[6] Extract from *Report of the Chief Signal Officer, U. S. Army to the Secretary of War*, 1911.

[7] Memo, Capt William Mitchell, War Dept General Staff, to Chief of War College Division, 23 Jul 12.



San Diego, Calif., became the site of the Army's first permanent aviation school. This is what the hangar line looked like in 1914, as war was breaking out in Europe.



Frank Lahm, with one Wright Type B airplane, opened a flying school in the Philippines, near Manila, in 1912.

order that "aeronautical personnel" might "constantly have the advantage of serving with other troops."[8]

According to General Allen, the "science of the air" required that the administrative officers be highly trained in aerial engineering, strength of materials, construction, composition, and testing of engines, and uses of radio telegraphy, and that they have knowledge of reconnaissance, meteorology, and photography; "in short, trained and experienced men in or beyond middle life." The pilot of the aircraft was "the fighting man of the machine," and because of the "nature of things, he must be a young, venturesome officer, generally without the knowledge of administrative and technical matters which can only come with years of experience and study and then can come only to men with a certain type of mentality."[9]

Nearly all high-ranking officials of the War Department, both military and civilian, believed that adequate instruction in military aviation could be obtained only through the Army. The quality of the Army aircraft steadily improved, making it necessary to improve the proficiency of the Army aviators. On 17 January 1911, Glenn H. Curtiss established an experimental aviation school in San Diego at which some Army officers received flying training. The Signal Corps Aviation School, which became the Army's first permanent aviation school, was established at the Curtiss site on 8 December 1912, and the Army paid Curtiss $25.00 a month for the use of the school facility.[10]

Effective 1 January 1914 new and more difficult tests were required to qualify for the Military Aviator rating. A cross-country flight of at least 100 miles, with two intermediate landings, had to be accomplished within 48 hours, and a dead-stick landing (a landing without engine power) from an altitude of 1,500 feet had to be made. No tests were to be made with passengers aboard. Importantly, the candidate would be examined "theoretically and practically" on his map-reading ability and knowledge of airplane construction, ordinary repairs, motors, navigation, meteorology, topography, and the theory of operation of aircraft.[11]

In July of 1914 Congress established an Aviation Section in the Signal Corps, with an authorized strength of 60 officers and 260 enlisted men. Army officers were to be detailed to the Aviation Section for a period of four years, with the classification of "Military Aviators" or "Junior Military Aviators." The latter would "have the rank, pay, and allowances of a grade above that they held in the line, provided they did not hold rank above that

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[8] Extract from *Rpt of the Chief Signal Officer, U. S. Army, to the Secretary of War*, 1913.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] USAF Historical Study No. 98, The United States Army Air Arm, Apr 1861 - Apr 1917, May 58, p. 86. This excellent study covers in detail the establishment and operation of the early military aviation schools.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

of first lieutenant." The Military Aviators would have all of the foregoing plus a 75 percent increase in pay.[12]

In August 1914 the nations of Europe went to war, a conflict which was eventually to involve all of the principal world powers. "Yet in 1914 the suspicion hardly dawned on the average American that his country might be drawn into the war, and there was an almost universal determination to stay out. A century had passed since the Treaty of Ghent . . . a hundred years for the sentiment of isolation from the 'broils of Europe' to deepen; a century of unparalleled growth in the power to maintain isolation."[13]

The use of aircraft in war was an equally remote possibility in the eyes of the War Department. The Chief Signal Officer conceded that aircraft had altered to some degree the concept of tactics but not the principles of strategy which, he said, were "immutable." He believed that if aerial attacks were proven possible, they would be outlawed by civilized nations because of their barbarity and would be "forbidden at least by paper agreements."[14]

Responsible military officers in the United States considered the airplane as a vehicle suitable only for limited aerial reconnaissance. In 1915 General Maxwell Van Zandt Woodhull, the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy, recommended that "a complete outfit of aeroplanes and hydroplanes" be attached to West Point. The "cadets should be required to make two or three ascensions a year and to prepare and submit reports of their observations while in the air as a part of their study of reconnoitering."[15]

The Chief Signal Officer also believed that the "most important work of aircraft" was "reconnaissance and the collection and transmission of information in the theater of operations." He therefore considered aviation to be "a vastly important branch of the Signal Corps." The efficiency of the Aviation Section was seriously handicapped, however, by the fact that the officers were only detailed to the section. As soon as an officer was promoted to the rank of captain, he had to return to the line of the Army.[16]

The Signal Corps Aviation School at San Diego was organized into two departments during this period—the training department and the experimental and repair department. The former taught student officers and enlisted men "the art of flying." The officers, in training for the Junior Military Aviator rating, were given "theoretical and practical courses in the

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[12] Rpt, Office of the Inspector General USAF, Subj: Status of Officer Selection, Training, and Development, 1 Apr 57, pp. 5-6.

[13] Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager, *The Growth of the American Republic* (New York, 1950), 2 vols., II, p. 446.

[14] *Rpt of the Director of Military Aeronautics for FY 18.*

[15] Sidney Forman, *West Point, A History of the United States Military Academy* (New York, 1950), p. 203, citing Maxwell Van Zandt Woodhull, *West Point in Our Next War* (New York, 1915), p. 71.

[16] *Rpt of the Chief Signal Officer, USA*, 10 Sep 15.

art of flying, in the construction, operation, and repair of aeroplanes and aeronautical motors, and in the navigation of the air."[17]

Candidates for flying training and a Reserve commission in the new Signal Reserve Corps provided for in the National Defense Act of 3 June 1916 had to meet certain minimum standards: be between 21 and 27 years of age; possess the equivalent of a college education; and pass the physical test required of air officers in the Regular Army. Initial training would be taken at a civilian school, to be followed by training at one of the flying schools recently established at Chicago and Mineola. Succcessful completion of the latter program would entitle the candidate to the rating of Reserve Military Aviator.[18]

The United States entered the World War with an insignificant air force. "There was practically no aviation technique here comparable to Europe's, almost negligible manufacturing facilities, not a hundred trained flyers, and only the most rudimentary facilities for training. Moreover, no one had any adequate appreciation of the intricacy and skill required in the making of either an airplane or the training of a pilot."[19]

The United States had few aircraft, and none of these was by European standards a combat model. At two flying fields maintained by the Army there were 55 trainers. Of these, General Pershing later observed,"51 were obsolete and the other 4 obsolescent."[20] According to an Army flyer, "Not a single air officer in Washington had even seen a fighting plane."[21]

It was obvious that military aviation in the United States was completely inadequate for the demands to be placed upon it. Missions from Great Britain and France emphasized that the United States could best help the Allies by sending a powerful air force to the Western Front. They were reinforced by a cable from the Premier of France on 24 May 1917 urgently requesting 4,500 planes, 5,000 pilots, and 50,000 mechanics. Brig Gen George O. Squier, Chief Signal Officer, appealed to his country "to get the Yankee punch in the war by building an army in the air, regiments and brigades of winged cavalry on gas-driven flying horses."[22] In order to give more effective support to the war effort of the United States and its allies, the Aviation Section was taken out of the Signal Corps on 20 May 1918 and became the Division of Military Aeronautics under Brig Gen (later Maj Gen) William L. Kenly.

The educational and training responsibilities confronting General Kenly were almost overwhelming. He had to develop almost from scratch "an educational system on a scale infinitely larger and more diverse than anyone had anticipated." In General Kenly's own words,

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[17] *Ibid.*

[18] USAF Historical Study, No. 98, p. 161.

[19] *Rpt of the Director of Military Aeronautics*, 3 Nov 18.

[20] Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, editors, *The Army Air Force in World War II*, 7 vols., I, *Plans and Early Operations* (Chicago, 1948), pp. 6-7.

[21] Goldberg, *History of the USAF*, p. 13.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Issoudun, main American training center in France. Instruction for observation and pursuit pilots progressed through 10 fields.

Glenn Martin's Model T, early Army training airplane, comes in, dead stick, for a landing at North Island flying field. From early 1913 Army flyers trained at North Island, San Diego. Center was named Rockwell Field during World War I.

> Teaching men to fly, to send messages by wireless, to operate machine guns in the air, to know artillery fire by its bursts, and to travel hundreds of miles by compass, teaching other men to read the enemy's strategy from aerial photographs, and still others to repair instruments, ignition systems, propellers, airplane wings, and motors, has required a network of flying fields and schools, a large instructional force, and a maze of equipment and curricula.[23]

Complicating the selection of men for training as flyers were the rigid physical requirements. Medical examining boards were established all over the country, and by 2 June 1917 a total of 38,777 men had been examined. Of these, nearly half, or 18,004, were disqualified. This pruning of candidates resulted in "a high grade of personnel" and made the later training "more rapid and more efficient."[24]

The initial step in the instruction was the establishment of "ground" schools, most of which were located on university campuses.[25] The students, under military discipline, received eight weeks' instruction in the elements of aviation. By 30 June 1918 a total of 11,539 men had been graduated to the flying fields and 3,129 candidates discharged for various reasons.[26] A total of almost 23,000 cadets received ground training in World War I, and more than 17,500 of them graduated.

Actual flying instruction was organized into two phases—primary and advanced. Primary instruction, which averaged about eight weeks in duration, "included ability to execute the simpler evolutions and cross-country flights, and led to an officer's commission and the right to wear the Reserve Military Aviator's Wings." By 30 June 1918, 4,980 men had successfully completed this program and about 400 had been eliminated.[27] By the war's end nearly 15,000 cadets had entered the program and 8,688 had been commissioned.[28]

Advanced training was infinitely more difficult. It was far from simple "to teach the more complex stunts, formation flying, aerial machine gunnery, bombing, and night flying." Furthermore, it took considerably more time to manufacture the necessary highly specialized equipment.[29] Many of the cadets took their advanced training in Europe where it was hampered "by the lack of facilities, late arrival of cadets, and the urgent needs of the Allied

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[23] *Ibid.*

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] Memo, Executive Officer, Training Section, to Operations Section, Ofc of the Director of Military Aeronautics, War Dept, Subj: Training Centers, 26 Jul 18.

[26] *Rpt of the Director of Military Aeronautics*, 3 Nov 18.

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] Goldberg, *History of the USAF*, p. 19.

[29] *Rpt of the Director of Military Aeronautics*, 1918.

air services." The latter obviously had the first claim on planes and pilots. In 1917 over 1,000 air cadets arrived in France. Training facilities were not available to them, and consequently they had to spend a weary month at Issoudun, Tours, or St. Maizent doing construction work, cooking, guard duty, and other jobs before they had a chance to start training. Since the French schools could not accommodate the new arrivals, the Division of Military Aeronautics undertook to build its own schools to train American flyers. In all, 16 fields were built, of which Issoudun was the largest and best known.

By November 1918 the American schools were turning out about 2,000 pilots a month for their final or "refresher" training. In sum, over 8,000 pilots and observers received some form of flying training in France. Of these, 1,700 fully-trained pilots and 850 observers were products of American schools in France. In addition, approximately 500 Americans were given flying training in Great Britain and a few hundred more at two schools in Italy. "The greatest contribution of these foreign schools was to give American pilots the feel of the planes they would fly in combat–planes that were not available in the United States."[30]

In addition to flying schools, the Division of Military Aeronautics found it necessary to establish schools for special training of engineer, supply, gunnery, radio, and navigation officers. Numerous enlisted men's schools were established."Aerial photography, which had developed during the war into an exact science, required . . . triple instruction–that for observers to operate the cameras in the air, intelligence officers on the ground to interpret them, and enlisted men to aid in the developing, printing, and enlarging, and to keep the equipment in condition."[31]

General Kenly tersely summarized the progress of American military aviation during the war in this manner: "The Fiscal Year 1917–18 saw aviation develop from a wholly subsidiary branch of the Army as the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps to a position of extreme and decisive importance as the Air Service directly under the Chief of Staff. From the most insignificant beginnings it came within the year to be one of America's major efforts in the war."[32] On 27 August 1918 Mr. John D. Ryan was named Director of Air Service and Second Assistant Secretary of War.

During the war comparatively few pilots were graduates of the United States Military Academy and for that reason the graduates felt discriminated against. One flying officer testified, "There was great dissatisfaction among the Air Service personnel with the treatment they had received particularly by Army Officers, and I am a graduate of West Point and I found that graduates of West Point were anything but popular among

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[30] Goldberg, *History of the USAF*, pp. 19-20.

[31] *Rpt of the Director of Military Aeronautics*, 1918.

[32] *Ibid.* On 24 May 1918, the War Department "officially recognized the Division of Military Aeronautics and the Bureau of Aircraft Production, as constituting the Air Service. . . .", Goldberg, *History of the USAF*, p. 15.

the personnel which came in from civilian life."[33] Some officers also felt discriminated against because they were not graduates of the Military Academy. Be that as it may, almost without exception, all flying officers agreed that it would be necessary to establish an air academy. Said Lt Col A. J. Hanlon, "As the Military and Naval Academies are the backbone of the Army and Navy, so must the Aeronautical Academy be the backbone of the Air Service." He believed that no service could flourish if it did not have an institution "to inculcate into its embryonic officers love of country, proper conception of duty, and the highest regard for honor." Consequently, he felt, an Air Service academy should be created to accomplish the following objectives: (1) to assure adequate and efficient initial training for all new officers; (2) to inculcate proper ideas of discipline; and (3) to foster high ideals of honor.[34]

At a dinner of the Manufacturers Aircraft Association in January 1919, Mr. Ryan proposed that the Government establish an academy of aeronautics. This academy would be similar to West Point and Annapolis and be devoted to the training of aviators and mechanics. Secretary Ryan believed that if his proposal were adopted, within five years aeronautics in the United States would be developed to the point where it would be impossible for a hostile fleet to come within 400 miles of American shores without being detected and destroyed.[35]

In December 1918 Robert E. Vinson, President of the University of Texas, offered Camp Mabry, Austin, Texas, to the United States Government as a site for an Air Service academy which would bear the same relationship to the Air Service that West Point did to the Army.[36] Camp Mabry had been established by the University of Texas during the war "for the purpose of educating automobile mechanics and was simply one of the war training machines." The Director of Military Aeronautics sent Lt Col H. A. Dargue[37] to Texas to investigate the camp as a possible site for an academy. Following an investigation of Camp Mabry and comparing it with others that might possibly be used, Colonel Dargue recommended that the Government acquire title to Camp Mabry but that no promises be made as to final use of the site. He recommended that a Board of Officers be convened to consider Camp Mabry along with other sites to determine the most suitable location for an Air Service academy.[38]

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[33] Craven and Cate, *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, I, p. 19.

[34] Ltr, Lt Col A. J. Hanlon to Chief of Training, Subj: United States Aeronautical Academy, 26 Nov 18.

[35] *New York Times*, 8 Jan 19.

[36] Ltr, President Vinson to Lt Col Barton K. Yount, Division of Military Aeronautics, 24 Dec 18.

[37] In World War II, Maj Gen Dargue was Commanding General of the First Air Force.

[38] Ltr, Col Dargue to Director of Military Aeronautics, Subj: Rpt on Site for Air Service Academy, 6 Mar 19.

Camp Mabry was never accepted as a site for an Air Service academy; however, responsible air officers continued to press for a separate academy, although they could not agree as to its proper functions. In April 1919 Col Townsend F. Dodd proposed the establishment of a Department of Aeronautics with an officer of cabinet rank as its head. Among the functions he would assign to the new department was the establishment of an air academy for the education and training of cadets. It would be similar in scope to the Military and Naval Academies.[39]

On 21 January 1919 Lt Col Barton K. Yount submitted a proposal for an Air Service academy to the Director of Military Aeronautics. The objectives of the school would be:

> (a) To instill discipline, esprit de corps, and high ideals of honor within the hearts of young men who are to become officers of the Air Service of the United States Army, and to fit them mentally, morally, and physically to perform the duties of flying officers.
>
> (b) To thoroughly train them, through practical work and classroom instruction, in drill regulations and other military subjects necessary to the proper handling of troops and a thorough understanding of the duties and obligations of an officer.
>
> (c) To thoroughly instruct them in all practical and theoretical work possible of accomplishment on the ground and necessary to a thorough knowledge of the subject of aviation. In other words, to so thoroughly train our flying cadets that they will be able upon graduation to immediately begin their flying instruction without undergoing any further ground work.[40]

In order to accomplish these objectives, it would be necessary to have a curriculum sufficiently long and detailed that the end result would be to have "trained all around flying officers" and not merely "aerial chauffeurs." Experience had shown that the flying instructors and active flyers in a squadron should be young men whose average age was slightly under 25 years. Their duties would necessitate a thorough foundation in such technical subjects as mechanical engineering, astronomy, meteorology, wireless telegraphy and telephony, gunnery, and other subjects which could only be learned through careful, diligent study. Colonel Yount believed that a ground school or Air Service academy should be established for the training of Air Service officers; its curriculum should include the foregoing and both general and technical subjects as well as subjects peculiar to aviation, and should be sufficiently thorough to enable a graduate to immediately assume the duties of an Air Service

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[39] Col Townsend F. Dodd, AS, "General Notes of Functions of Dept of Aeronautics," 8 Apr 19.

[40] Quoted in Lt Col Arthur Boudreau's, "The Growth of an Idea," 1948.

officer. These results, he believed, could not be accomplished "in less than 11 months of intensive training."[41]

Colonel Yount's plan called for an Air Service numbering about 24,000, of whom about 2,000 would be officers. Approximately 800 of these officers would be older men and in higher grades. The remaining 1,200 officers would be the instructors and the younger officers who would be required to do a considerable amount of flying. Since Colonel Yount believed the flying officers should be young men, he felt that the majority of these officers should be returned to the Reserve after three years of active duty. Also, as it was essential that the Air Service have available in time of war a large number of men for duty as pilots, observers, bombers, and other flying officers, Colonel Yount proposed that 2,000 men receive the following training:

11 months	ground school (Air Service academy)
1 month	furlough
2 months	primary flying school
2 months	advanced flying school

Following this training 1,600 men would be furloughed to the Reserve and retained for a period of two years.[42] The remaining 400 men would be detailed to the Regular service for three years, after which they would be placed in the Reserve for two years. "Thus, we will continually have in the Regular service 1,200 young flying officers, none of whom will be too old to instruct and engage in the most active flying. In addition, it will return to the Reserve each year 2,000 flying officers, each of whom will remain for two years, thus maintaining a Reserve of 4,000 active young pilots, observers, bombers, etc."[43]

The defects in Colonel Yount's plan are obvious. The period of training was all too short; no provision was made for career Air Service officers; and just as soon as a junior officer was prepared to assume more responsibilities and make real contributions to the Air Service, he would be placed in the Reserve.

The Training and Operations Group of Air Service, under Brig Gen William "Billy" Mitchell, also had prepared a training plan for an air academy that would be neither a technical school nor another West Point. The school was designed to train young men in the exercise of command in order that they might "properly fill higher positions later on." Lt Col William C. Sherman, Chief, Air Service Training, prepared a position paper on the proposed school for General Mitchell. Its student body would be drawn from men who had served a year in a service squadron and wanted to remain in the Regular service. Colonel Sherman described the proposed plan of instruction:

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[41] *Ibid.*
[42] *Ibid.*
[43] *Ibid.*

Administrative instruction will be given great consideration. In this, the aim will be to turn out graduates who are competent to administer a squadron.

Tactical instruction will also be an important feature. Effort will be made to thoroughly ground the young officers in Tactics, not alone Aerial Tactics, . . . but also the Tactics of Ground Troops, and in particular the Tactics of Combined Ground and Air Fighting.

Technical instruction will be carried on also, but will be perhaps the least important feature of the work done at the academy.[44]

Colonel Sherman believed it essential that the proposed academy be located at a site where troops of all branches of the Army were located and an airfield was nearby. The location of a technical school in the vicinity was of secondary importance.[45] General Mitchell agreed with the outline of instruction proposed by Colonel Sherman. He also believed that while it would be desirable to have an airfield in the vicinity, it was not essential to have the students fly during their course of instruction.[46]

By the end of 1919 it had become apparent that an Air Service academy similar to the Military and Naval Academies would not be established in the foreseeable future. Responsible Air Service officers, therefore, while still desiring the establishment of their own academy, endeavored to have instruction on aviation subjects incorporated in the West Point curriculum. As early as the spring of 1919 the Superintendent of the U. S. Military Academy had been consulted on the matter of including instruction in aviation. He had stated, however, that although he would welcome such instruction, the opportunities were extremely limited because of lack of time.[47] Maj Gen Charles I. Menoher, Chief, Air Service, later noted that the Military Academy had been requested to include a course in aerodynamics in the curriculum, but after consideration by the Superintendent "we were informed that owing to the reduction in the length of time of the course (curriculum) and the fact that it is already crowding the cadets, nothing could be done toward instruction along those lines." General Menoher felt that West Point was dragging its feet and was unwilling to give instruction on aeronautical matters.[48]

By November 1919, the Director of Air Service had become convinced that there was no way of training officers for the Air Service "except in the

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[44] Memo, Lt Col William C. Sherman to Brig Gen Mitchell, 15 Apr 19.

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] Memo, Brig Gen Mitchell, Chief, Training and Operations Group to Director of Air Service, 16 Apr 19.

[47] Synopsis of communication from Office, Director of Air Service, to Supt, USMA.

[48] Index Sheet, Ltr, O.D.A.S. to Supt, USMA, Subj: Course in Aerodynamics at Military Academy, File 352.9. Mil Academy (2).

Air Service itself." He believed the best way to secure these officers would be "by graduating them from an Air Service Academy where they will be given training, especially fitted to their duty as Air Service officers and Aeronautical Engineers. . . ."[49]

In June 1920 the Air Service was given statutory recognition. Under the Army Reorganization Act, it was established as a combatant arm of the Army. General Menoher, its Chief, opposed an independent Air Service as he felt that it was not yet ready for that status. However, his Assistant Chief, General Mitchell, who also later served under Maj Gen Mason M. Patrick, fought vigorously year after year for a separate air service. In its training, the Air Service placed the greatest emphasis on observation aviation, artillery missions, general reconnaissance, and aerial photography. Other facets of military aviation were subordinated to observation. They included pursuit aviation, designed to destroy enemy planes, troops, and other objectives; attack aviation, whose mission was to harass the enemy's ground forces; and bombardment aviation, which was assigned the mission of destroying military objectives in the combat theater and in the enemy's zone of interior. Unfortunately, aviation was placed "under the command of ground officers at division, corps, army, and GHQ levels."[50]

Notwithstanding the subordinate role played by the Air Service between 1920 and 1938, little difficulty was experienced in obtaining highly qualified personnel for flying training. "The quotas for classes were small and the supply of manpower abundant." The problem was one of selecting from the numerous applicants those who were most qualified for flying training and had the proper academic background for future air commanders.[51]

As a result of the strong antimilitary attitude which prevailed in the United States during the 1920's and 1930's, the War Department's personnel requirements in all areas, including pilot training, were very modest. The Military Appropriations Act of Fiscal Year 1920 created the grade of flying cadet and authorized the training of 1,300 flying cadets a year, a figure later raised to 2,500. In actual practice, however, the number graduated annually fell far short of these figures. In the five years preceding the enlarged class which entered in 1938, only about 350 students a year entered flying school.[52]

The small size of these entering classes made it possible for the Air Corps to establish high qualification standards. In sum, the candidate had to be an unmarried male citizen between the ages of 20 and 27 who had satisfactorily finished two years of college at an accredited academic institution. A

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[49] War Dept, O.D.A.S. Pamphlet No. 12, "Comments on Strength, Organization and Training of the Air Service," 26 Nov 19.

[50] Maurer Maurer, ed., *Air Force Combat Units of World War II* (Washington, 1961), pp. 4-5.

[51] Army Air Forces, Historical Study No. 15, "Procurement of Aircrew Trainees," August, 1944, p. 1.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

candidate lacking the necessary formal education was required to pass a "comprehensive examination," given four times a year, in the following subjects: United States history, English grammar and composition, general history, geography, arithmetic, higher algebra, plane and solid geometry, trigonometry, and physics. Very few candidates without some college education were able to pass this examination. A candidate who qualified educationally still had to pass a rigid physical examination before he was eligible for appointment as a flying cadet.

In spite of these stiff requirements, the number of eligible candidates far exceeded the number of vacancies.[53] It therefore became necessary to establish a priority list for the assignment of the candidates to the classes. In 1926, after the Air Service became the Army Air Corps, the priority list was as follows:

> (1) Graduates of the United States Military Academy, the United States Naval Academy, and the United States Coast Guard Academy who apply for appointment as flying cadets within one year from date of graduation, who fail to receive commissions because of lack of vacancies and are recommended for appointment as flying cadets by the respective Superintendents of these academies.
>
> (2) Enlisted men of the Air Corps of the Regular Army who at time of appointment have served at least 11 months
>
> (3) Other enlisted men of the Regular Army who at time of appointment have served at least 11 months.
>
> (4) Officers and enlisted men of the National Guard who at time of appointment have been assigned to Air Corps units for at least 11 months and who are favorably recommended by their commanding officers.
>
> (5) College graduates who are graduates of the Air Corps Reserve Officers' Training Corps units.
>
> (6) College graduates who are graduates of Reserve Officers' Training Corps units of other arms or services.
>
> (7) Graduates of recognized colleges and universities.
>
> (8) Other officers and enlisted men of the National Guard who at time of appointment have had at least 11 months' service.
>
> (9) Students in Air Corps Reserve Officers' Training Corps units who have completed their junior year.
>
> (10) Reserve officers and members of the Enlisted Reserve Corps who at time of appointment have served at least 11 months.
>
> (11) Students in good standing of recognized universities who have completed their sophomore year.
>
> (12) Others.[54]

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[53] Arthur R. Kooker, "Broadening the Basis of Procurement," Craven and Cate, editors, *The Army Air Forces in World War II, VI, Men and Planes* (Chicago, 1955), p. 438, note.

[54] *Ibid.*

Gen Douglas MacArthur, Superintendent,

United States Military Academy,

11 June 1919–30 June 1922

The Army Air Corps was overwhelmed by the number of applicants and told candidates in the low-priority group that under existing conditions their enlistment was doubtful.[55]

Many of the future leaders of the Air Force were cadets in the flying schools, not the least of which was Randolph Field, the "West Point of the Air." At the United States Military Academy, however, successive superintendents were unwilling to recognize the importance of military Air Power in the defense of the nation.

In August 1920 General Menoher, despite his earlier rebuff, again addressed the Military Academy Superintendent: "It is desired to renew at this time most urgently, that special consideration to be given to the inclusion of Air Service training and special subjects pertaining thereto in the curriculum at the U. S. Military Academy."[56]

As a result, a study was prepared by West Point in which outlines prepared by the Air Service, the Engineering Division at Dayton, Ohio, and the Training and Operations Division were carefully analyzed. The planners concuded that the curriculum pertinent to the Air Service should roughly parallel instruction given in the other line branches of the Army, together with additional time for lectures on the more important problems of organization and control that confronted the Air Service. Close liaison with the Air Service was also recommended.[57]

The plan included a "schedule of Air Service Instruction at the United States Military Academy." This schedule was not considered as a complete listing of courses dealing with subjects of interest to the Air Service but more as a "preface to the request" that West Point make a complete survey of its course of instruction.[58]

On 29 April 1921 Brig Gen Douglas MacArthur, Superintendent of the Military Academy, who was destined to become one of the immortals in American military history, outlined to the Director of Air Service "the general instruction relative to the Air Service" which West Point offered its cadets. This instruction, scattered through many courses, was as follows:

Fourth Class (Freshmen)

None

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[55] *Ibid.*

[56] Index Sheet, Ltr, C.A.S. to Supt, USMA, Subj: A.S. Instruction, 30 Aug 20, File 351-9, West Point Cadets.

[57] Memo, Lt Col A. L. Fuller to The Acting Executive, Subj: Air Service Course of Instruction of the United States Military Academy, 25 Mar 21, File 352-11, 3rd Ind. 3/23/21.

[58] Schedule of Air Service Instruction at the United States Military Academy, 23 Mar 21, File 350.00 West Point.

Third Class (Sophomores)

Department of Practical Military Engineering

Eighteen hours of instruction in:

Pyrotechnics used for communication from air to ground such as:

Very pistol cartridges and hand bombs.

Sending and receiving radio-telegraph signals.

Assignment of aircraft to Division, Corps, and Army.

Department of Drawing

Maps, map reading and map making.

One lecture on Aerial Photography.

Department of Tactics

Eighteen hours practical instruction on gas engines and accessories.

Two hours of Air Instruction daily from 28 June to 15 August.

Flights in airplanes and balloons.

Second Class (Juniors)

Department of Military Engineering and Military Art

Twenty recitations on Aerodynamics.

Department of Chemistry

Although not limited to Air Service, included information on "gaseous fuels . . . simpler forms of engines, valve mechanisms, carburetors, ignition, and timing."

Sixteen periods in Radio-telegraphy.

First Class (Seniors)

Department of Military Engineering and Military Art

"The organization, supply, and administration of the Air Service will be taught in the same manner and to the same extent as similar subjects relating to other branches of the Army are taught."

Department of Ordnance and Gunnery

Instruction in Air Service Ordnance and Armament.

Department of Tactics

Approximately four general lectures by Air Service experts.

From 26 June to 15 August about 2 hours daily of Air Service instruction to 10 or 15 cadets.

Department of Practical Military Engineering

In the summer months, "24 hours instruction in the various means of communication."

General MacArthur, in summarizing Air Service instruction at West Point, said, "The object of the Air Service instruction is to instruct every cadet in the fundamentals only of that branch of the service in the same manner and to the same degree as is done with other combatant arms. Much of the fundamental general instruction is essential preparation for Air Service instruction although it is not specifically referred to. . . ." [59]

During the 1921–1922 Academic Year, the Chief of Air Service assisted in the instruction of the West Point cadets by providing lectures and demonstrations to the Second Classmen in connection with their course in Aerodynamics; demonstration of Air Service material to the First and Third Classmen during their summer encampment; and three lectures to the First Classmen in September. In addition, 1st Lt C. C. Moseley flew up to West Point in a Sopwith experimental plane. He spent several days instructing the cadets on flying matters He repeated this instruction in 1922. He also wanted an Air Service officer to deliver to the Second Classmen a one-hour lecture on "Types of Airplanes and Lighter-than-Air Craft for Military Use." [60]

A series of lectures was given to the Second Classmen on the following subjects: propeller theory, climbing and gliding, airplane performance at different altitudes, longitudinal stability, general care for longitudinal stability, lateral stability, and directional stability. The foregoing list of subjects completely covered the course in aerodynamics at West Point. Since the course was entirely theoretical, Lieutenant Moseley outlined to the cadets the training an Air Service officer received and what his duties would be in times of peace and war. [61]

Vacancies in the higher grades in the Air Service were being filled by transferees from the other arms of the Army. This had an adverse effect on the morale of the junior officers. Lieutenant Moseley believed "that since junior officers are required to do practically all service flying and since casualties run very high and . . . the only source of supply of these officers is the U. S. Military Academy," a step should be taken to obtain a larger quota each year from the Academy. [62] He also thought that the Tactical Department at West Point should include the Air Service in its course of instruction and that the Department of Ordnance and Gunnery "should be supplied aerial machine guns, bombs, and bomb racks, gun controls, etc.," as well as "two or three of the latest aeronautical engines." [63]

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[59] *Ibid.*, 5th Ind. USMA, 29 Apr 21 to the Director of Air Service.

[60] Ltr, Supt, USMA to Chief of Air Service, 8 Apr 22.

[61] Rpt, Lt Moseley to Chief of Air Service (thru Channels), Subj: Rpt of trip to USMA, West Point, New York, 16 May 22.

[62] *Ibid.*

[63] *Ibid.*

Lieutenant Moseley's recommendations bore little fruit, as few changes were made in the curriculum of the United States Military Academy. The movement for a separate air academy, meanwhile, was continuing. On 3 April 1922 the United States Senate passed a resolution directing the Secretaries of War and Navy:

> To report to Congress (1) whether or not it is feasible and advisable to establish a school of aeronautics to be known as the United States Academy for Aeronautics with buildings, grounds and equipment necessary for the instruction and training of cadets; (2) whether or not it is practicable to use a part of the buildings and grounds of the United States Military Academy and of the United States Naval Academy for separate schools in aeronautics to the end that young men desirous of qualifying for commissions in the United States Air Service may be appointed as cadets to such aeronautical schools in the same manner as cadets are now appointed to qualify for commissions in the United States Army and the United States Navy. . . .[64]

Maj Gen Mason M. Patrick, who had become Chief of the Air Service, prepared a report in response to this Congressional inquiry. He considered the establishment of an Academy for Aeronautics to be desirable. The students, he said, "should receive the very highest type of training in order that they may be imbued with that sense of duty and high morale necessary to the successful accomplishment of important missions to which they may be assigned." General Patrick regarded the existing methods of obtaining commissioned personnel for the Air Service as unsatisfactory, since considerable additional training was needed before they could become competent Air Service officers. They should have received much of this training before being commissioned. Furthermore, the junior Air Service officers, who, because of their wartime training and experience, were best qualified to hold positions of responsibility in the Air Service, were junior in rank to those officers who were being transferred into the Air Service from the other arms. This condition was not only detrimental to the morale of the junior officers but also impaired the general efficiency of the Air Service.[65] Said General Patrick:

> The officers transferred into the service must spend considerable time in obtaining their aeronautical training, and it is several years at least before they can be as efficient as the officers junior to them who instruct them in their duties, while the latter, although more competent than the officers coming in from other Arms, have

[64] Senate Resolution No. 266, 3 Apr 22, AFAPE Files, HQ TAU.

[65] Rpt, Chief of Air Service to the Adjutant General of the Army, Subj: Rpt from the Chief of Air Service on Senate Resolution No. 266, 1 May 22.

> no future in view as long as such transfers continue and while they are outranked by junior officers of all other Arms. The time required to alleviate this condition by proper training is sacrificed from the younger years of an officer's life when he should be most efficiently performing duties of a combatant flying officer rather than learning the fundamental requirements of a flying officer.[66]

General Patrick believed that the inclusion of courses in aeronautics in the curricula of the existing service academies could do "little more than scratch the surface" of the vast fund of fundamental knowledge which junior officers had to have in order to obtain commissions in the Air Service. As the military aeronautics art developed, more and more attention would have to be given to it at the Military and Naval Academies. As a result there would be a duplication of aeronautical technical courses at the two academies. Furthermore, proper attention to aeronautical subjects "would cause a crowding of fundamental instruction in military and naval courses" which would be detrimental to the efficiency of those students who were to become Army and Navy officers.

General Patrick observed that if the existing programs of instruction at these service academies were expanded to include aeronautical subjects, the time expended on these subjects of necessity would be brief. It would be natural to place the emphasis on air "service," the auxiliary portion of aviation, "whereas the greatest future of military aeronautics lay in the study and development of the Air Force, the offensive branch of aviation, consisting of pursuit, bombardment, and attack." He recognized that the Air Force, with its independent mission, opened up "an entirely new field for the study of strategy and tactics which is entirely an air problem." [67]

General Patrick departed from past programs when he suggested that the proposed academy be used as an educational and training school for officers who wanted a lifetime career in the Air Service.

> The curriculum should be devised to give a general education such as would be received in any of the well-known American universities or in either the Military or Naval Academies during the first two years, with such modifications as are necessary in the training of candidates for commission in the Air 'Service' and the Air Force. During the last two years, students should specialize in aeronautical subjects in a manner similar to that which the Military and Naval Academies now specialize for the Army and Navy. This would actually save the two years which a West Point graduate must now spend in learning fundamentals not applicable to military aeronautics. These two years are taken from the most valuable time of his career as a flying officer. Graduates of an

[66] *Ibid.*
[67] *Ibid.*

> academy of aeronautics would not only be the very best material to establish a permanent nucleus of highly-trained flying personnel as a solid basis of war expansion, but would turn some of these men, trained as aeronautical engineers and experts, into commercial life and would thus assist in the development and progress of commercial aeronautics.[68]

General Patrick considered "highly desirable" the establishment of a separate academy for aeronautics similar to those in which West Point and Annapolis trained their students for commission as officers. He did not believe that the buildings and grounds of the Military and Naval Academies were suitable for schools of aeronautics. As envisaged by General Patrick, the proposed Aeronautics Academy would train Air officers for both the Army and Navy. "The concentration of military and naval aeronautics into one training school of this nature would eliminate much duplication and would assure future officers of the Air 'Service' and the Air Force having a fundamental knowledge of aeronautics which would greatly increase the efficiency of combined operations between the Army and Navy and the Air, or between any two of these three."[69] This information was forwarded to Congress, but nothing further was heard on the matter.

General Patrick was of the opinion that the Military Academy cadets should be provided "an opportunity to learn something of airplanes and their equipment." He therefore asked the Academy Superintendent for permission to send one or two airplanes to West Point with a small detachment of enlisted men to care for them, provided the necessary facilities could be supplied.[70] The Military Academy Superintendent, however, decided "that it would be in the interest of economy and much better in every respect" if the plane was sent from Long Island and returned there each day, as West Point was hard pressed for space, material, and personnel.[71]

The General Staff allocated to the Air Service over 50 members of the Class of 1923 from the Military Academy. The Chief of the Air Service directed Maj Charles C. Benedict to initiate "a campaign and a certain amount of propaganda" to ensure that the Air Service got its full quota from the 1923 graduating class. Although the Office of the Chief of Air Service was "entirely uninformed" on the attitudes of the cadets, it believed that "a little effort" on the part of Major Benedict, backed up by some assistance from the Office of the Chief of Air Service, might enhance the Air Service's chances of obtaining "a large number of desirable candidates." Maj Hubert R. Harmon[72] told Major

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[68] *Ibid.*

[69] *Ibid.*

[70] Ltr, Gen Patrick to Gen Sladen, 25 Sep 22.

[71] Supt, USMA to Chief of Air Service, 27 Sep 22.

[72] In 1954, Harmon, then a lieutenant general, became the first Superintendent of the United States Air Force Academy.

Lt Gen Hubert R. Harmon, First Superintendent,

United States Air Force Academy

Benedict about the activities of Moseley at West Point the previous year (1922). Moseley had "spread the gospel of aviation among the cadets, did some good flying for them, and in every way served to build up an interest in our branch of the service." Major Harmon believed it might be advantageous to follow Moseley's procedures.[73]

It was felt that the quota of 50 members for the Class of 1923 could not be met "for physical and temperamental reasons." Although the Air Service was in serious need of West Point graduates, it did not want any officers who had been assigned against their will. The Chief of the Air Service attributed "this apathy towards the Air Service" to the fact that none of the cadets had ever visited an Air Service base or seen Air Service organizations in operation. He therefore recommended that a trip to Mitchell Field by the First Classmen during the month of May be authorized.[74] Following "very careful consideration and consultation with the Academic Board," the Military Academy Superintendent came to the conclusion that no date could be fixed for the trip by the First Classmen. The Second Class, however, would make such a trip in June.[75]

By 1924 Air Service had established a firm program for the processing and training of West Point graduates who elected to go into the Air Service. The flying training of an officer who had just entered the Air Service required about one year of theoretical and practical training, divided into two parts—primary training and advanced training.[76]

Upon expiration of their graduate leave, the new second lieutenants entered the Primary Flying School at Brooks Field, Texas. The course had the objective of turning out pilots who were proficient with the simpler types of airplanes and who could safely continue "their training on larger, faster, and more complicated machines." In addition to flying, the students took courses in motors, navigation, meteorology, and other subjects.[77]

Upon successful completion of this primary course, the students were transferred to the Advanced School at Kelly Field, where they continued their training. Here the work was on service-type airplanes, and the students studied the fundamentals of Air Service tactics and doctrine as well as principles of the four main divisions of military aviation: observation, attack, pursuit, and bombardment. These were put into practice by participation in actual maneuvers and operations in the air by all members of the class. During the first part of the advanced training, the instructors carefully studied each student with a view to assigning him special training in one of the four divisions named above.[78]

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[73] Ltr, Maj Harmon to Maj C. C. Benedict, 1 Feb 23.

[74] Ltr, Chief of Air Service to the Adjutant General of the Army, Subj: Trip to Mitchell Field by West Point Cadets, 19 Apr 23.

[75] *Ibid.*, 1st Indorsement, Supt, USMA, to Adjt. Gen. of the Army, 25 May 23.

[76] Air Service Plan for the Initial Assignment of West Point Graduates for the Year 1924, n.d.

[77] *Ibid.*

[78] *Ibid.*

After completion of Advanced School, every effort was made to assign officers to combat units in the United States whose operations were in line with their qualifications. A limited number of graduates might be retained as instructors. It was not considered desirable to provide any further specialization along technical lines until the student had at least a year's flying experience. Graduates of the Military Academy who did not elect Air Service immediately upon graduation could not then elect the Air Service within one year of the date of their original commissions. Student officers who could not qualify as pilots could transfer to some other branch of the Army.[79]

By this time the patterns for the training of Air Service officers had been established. As noted previously, students received primary training at Brooks Field and advanced training at Kelly Field, both at San Antonio, Texas. Balloon training was offered at Scott Field, Illinois; technical schools for both officers and enlisted men were maintained at Chanute Field, Illinois; and an engineering school was in operation at McCook Field, Ohio.[80] Noteworthy was the Air Service Tactical School at Langley Field, Virginia, which, after 1925, was to be "the breeding ground" for the development of Air doctrine.[81]

On 31 January 1925 General "Billy" Mitchell told a special committee of the House of Representatives that it was "most essential . . . to have an air academy to form a basis for the permanent backbone of your air service and to attend to the . . . organizational parts of it, very much in the same way that West Point does for the Army, or the Naval Academy for the Navy."[82]

A careful examination of the available documents for the first half of the 1920's indicates that even the most avid advocate for a separate academy considered the school as simply one that would train pilots. The concept of a school to train future air commanders barely existed, if at all. As late as May 1925 General Patrick, Chief of the Air Service, stated that "with certain minor changes and additions" the course given at West Point was sufficient. He was opposed to making it compulsory for all Military Academy cadets to take flying training or even a two-month course to become a "general observer." Said he, "to injure a man's record by stating that he refused to go into the air or that he was, for physical reasons, unable to go into the air, I believe to be manifestly unjust."[83] General Patrick, however, was "thoroughly in harmony" with those who would "give the Air Service a larger place in the curriculum at the Academy."[84]

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[79] *Ibid.*

[80] Goldberg, *History of the USAF*, p. 34.

[81] USAF Historical Studies. No. 89, "The Development of Air Doctrine in the Army Air Arm, 1917-1941," Sep 1955, p. 30.

[82] Hearing Before The Select Committee of Inquiry Into Operations of The United States Air Services, House of Representatives, Sixty-Eighth Congress, Part 3, p. 1598.

[83] Memo, Chief of the Air Service to the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Subj: Air Service Training in Special Service Schools, 21 May 25.

[84] *Ibid.*, 1st Ind., C.G.A.S. to TAG, 29 May 25.

In May 1925 Senator Hiram Bingham queried Brig Gen Fred W. Sladen, the Military Academy Superintendent, concerning Air Service instruction at West Point. General Sladen told him that the cadets received approximately 60 hours of instruction at West Point as well as about 30 hours at Mitchell Field. The Superintendent considered this amount of time to be "more than ample for a young man at the cadet stage of his military career and at an institution that does not permit . . . specialization but requires every student to take every subject."[85]

Air Service officers noted that although "observation" represented only 20 percent of an air officer's training, all training plans were centered around it. Nearly everyone in the Air Service believed that "observation" would play only a minor role in any future war. They despaired of getting more flying training into the Military Academy curriculum. An Air Service officer told Senator Bingham, "To simmer the question down, we believe that cadets at West Point should receive as much training in Air Service as in other branches. This is about all that we can ask for."[86] Furthermore, Air Service officers believed that West Point was not the proper place for Air Service training and wanted a separate academy. In his comments to Senator Bingham, the Air Service officer added:

> Most of us in the Air Service feel that the whole Military Academy is ill adapted for the Air Service officer. We feel strongly that there should be an Air Academy which should be much more technical than West Point and which would turn out youth who could be easily specialized in the whole technical phases of the Air Service. . . . I do not think this idea is at all unreasonable, inasmuch as we now have quite as many specialties and differences as the Army has on the ground and the Navy has on the water. In order to really prepare cadets for their careers such an Academy should exist. . . .[87]

In September 1925 General Patrick was asked whether the establishment of a separate Air Corps would likewise involve the establishment of a separate school system similar to the Military Academy. General Patrick replied that all air officers required "certain basic training." Consequently, he would "like to have them go to West Point and, of course, to Annapolis, and at the end of two years, when they had acquired a certain amount of military training, they should go to an aeronautical training school to get a certain amount of aeronautical training. . . . I do not think the time put in at West Point would be wasted, however."[88]

In July 1926 the Army Air Corps came into being, replacing the Army Air Service. The change in name, however, did not bring any more status to the

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[85] *Ibid.*

[86] Ltr, A. S. officer to Senator Hiram Bingham, 28 May 25.

[87] *Ibid.*

[88] Hearings Before the President's Aircraft Board, 1925, Vol. I, p. 86.

air arm; it still had "less prestige than the Infantry." Although a new Assistant Secretary of War for Air was to be named to assist in "fostering military aeronautics," his specific duties would be determined by the attitude of the Secretary. There was to be an air section in each division of the General Staff. The new Air Corps had an authorized strength of 1,518 officers, 2,500 flying cadets, 16,000 enlisted men, and 1,800 serviceable aircraft, but no funds were made available for this expansion.[89]

The Air Corps Act of 1926 failed to still the criticisms of those who wanted a separate air arm, although establishment of an Assistant Secretary of War for Air meant that the air arm would play a more significant role in any future war than it did in World War I. It was to take another World War to convince military men of all persuasions that a separate air force was a necessity. A corollary was that the movement for a separate air academy was stymied until a separate air force could come into being.

In August 1926 the Air Corps Training Center, consisting of the primary and advanced flying schools and the School of Aviation Medicine, was established at San Antonio, Texas. In the following year the primary and advanced training phases, each six months in duration, were redistributed into three phases–primary, basic, and advanced–each phase consisting of four months of training. Following the advanced training, the new pilots received specialized training in attack, bombardment, observation, and pursuit tactics.[90]

A proposal was made in the first part of 1928 that "Air Corps Cadets" receive special training at West Point, extended over "20 weeks of summer camp." However, since all cadets then took identical courses designed to fit them for any branch of the service, the cadets failing the Air Corps course would not have the same military training as those who did not take the Air Corps program. Maj Edgar B. Lyan, Chief of the Schools Section of the Air Corps, believed the chiefs of the other branches of the Army would be unwilling to accept these less well-trained graduates.[91]

In 1928 the Office of the Chief of the Air Corps furnished the members of the Class of 1928 a brochure concerning the flying schools of the Air Corps which described in glowing terms the towns in which they were situated.[92]

Before entering the Balloon and Airship School at Scott Field, Illinois, an officer had to pass the heavier-than-air course. The course of instruction at Scott Field was nine months in duration and consisted of instruction in balloon observation, free-balloon training, and airship piloting. Upon

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[89] Craven and Cate,, *AAF in W.W. II*, 1, *Plans and Early Operations*, p. 29.

[90] Robert E. Hays, "Military Aviation Activities in Texas, World Wars I and II," MA thesis, University of Texas, Jan 63, p. 48.

[91] Memo, Chief, Schools Section, AC to Chief, Training and Operations Division, Subj: Additional West Point Cadets for Assignment to Air Corps, 16 Jan 28.

[92] Brochure, Ofc of the Chief of the Air Corps, Info for the Class of 1928, USMA.

completion of the course, the student was detailed to a lighter-than-air unit of the Air Corps.[93]

The Air Corps Technical School at Chanute Field was a special school for the instruction of commissioned and enlisted specialists. The courses for officers, which averaged nine months in length, comprised maintenance engineering, communications, photography, and armament.[94]

The Air Corps Tactical School, located at Langley Field, Virginia, had the mission of instructing "Air Corps officers in command and staff duties pertaining to the Air Corps." Its student body was usually selected from field-grade officers or captains.[95]

In 1929 Congressman Lewis W. Douglas became concerned about whether the Military Academy was giving sufficient "aviation training" for a cadet to make a sound decision concerning an aviation career in the Army. He was assured that this training was "an important part" of the West Point curriculum. A theoretical course in "Aerodynamics and the Military Airplane" was augmented by courses in "Theoretical Tactics" involving aviation. Furthermore, all First Classmen received practical experience in "Techniques and Tactics" at an Air Corps flying field. Existing plans did not call for the establishment of a flying school at the Military Academy. Flying training involved many special requirements such as suitable terrain, climatic conditions, and physical standards which were "essential to aviation but not to the military education of the cadet." Consequently, it was "obviously inadvisable to disturb the . . . excellent educational organizations at the United States Military Academy and at the Air Corps Training Center." Furthermore, since the existing curriculum at West Point took up all available time, any extension of the aviation training at West Point would result in the curtailment of some other essential instruction.[96]

The West Point curriculum included six lectures on military aviation presented to the First Classmen by Maj Hubert R. Harmon, the only Air Corps officer on duty in the Tactical Department. Believing that "six lectures in a row by one and the same man would bore the cadets beyond endurance and turn them forever against the Air Corps," Major Harmon requested the Chief of the Air Corps to provide qualified experts to give some of the lectures. The request was approved, and one-hour lectures were given on development and organization, materiel, technique, air tactics (two lectures), and the U. S. Army Air Corps.[97]

The Army Air Corps did not receive as many graduates from the West Point Class of 1930 as it had hoped. Major Harmon listed the following reasons for the decline of applicants: (1) "Disinclination to get bumped off

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[93] *Ibid.*

[94] *Ibid.*

[95] *Ibid.*

[96] Ltr, The Adjutant General, War Dept to Hon. L. W. Douglas, 19 Jun 29.

[97] Ltr, Maj Harmon to Maj C. W. McIntosh, 7 Jan 30.

within a year or two after graduation"; (2) in every class there was a certain percentage of men who just weren't interested in the Air Corps; (3) another special group was the "engineers," men who stood at the top or near the top, "who for generations" had, "as a matter of course," gone into the Corps of Engineers; (4) men who were turned off by the lack of "discipline and general efficiency of the Air Corps"; (5) and the final group consisting of those men who, through "lack of confidence," felt they could not make it through flying school.[98]

Major Harmon also believed that the small number of cadets passing the physical examination might be attributed to the fact that this examination was given at a period when the cadets were subject "to great mental and nervous strain" and consequently were below par. He believed that if the physical examination were given in the summer or when the cadets were not under strain, "a much higher percentage would pass."[99]

The Acting Chief of the Medical Division, however, disagreed with Major Harmon's conclusions. Very few West Point cadets, he said, were disqualified for psychological reasons. Also, he did not believe that if the physical examination were given at any other time more men would be able to qualify. Furthermore, the high physical standards established for flying training were in essential agreement with those in other countries, had stood the test of experience, and were believed to be a safeguard against an aircraft accident resulting from a physical defect in the pilot.[100]

In the meantime, advances of lasting importance in the training of airmen had been made. The Air Corps Training Center had been established at San Antonio, Texas, and placed under the command of Brig Gen Frank P. Lahm. The Center included the flying schools and the School of Aviation Medicine. Concentrating the training under a single commander made possible closer coordination and control of flying activities which worked to the advantage of the whole program. In a few years funds were made available for a larger training center. On 20 June 1930 Randolph Field, the "West Point of the Air," was dedicated. It became the headquarters of the Air Corps Training Center and the site of the primary flying school. Close by, at Kelly Field, was the advanced training school.

Scarcely had the new field been made ready when the Depression with its attendant economies forced a reduction in the training program to only 150 graduate flyers a year. However, the quality of these graduates was unsurpassed. Among the World War II leaders who graduated from these schools were Curtis E. LeMay, Edwin W. Rawlings, Joseph H. Atkinson, Elwood R. Quesada, Thomas S. Power, and Donald L. Putt.[101] Graduates of these schools also played important roles in the postwar Air Force. They included Arthur C. Agan, William H. Blanchard, George S. Boyland, Jr.,

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[98] Ltr, Maj Harmon to Maj McDonnell, 21 Jul 30.

[99] *Ibid.*

[100] Memo, Maj Longacre to Maj McDonnell, 14 Aug 30.

[101] Goldberg, *A History of the USAF*, p. 37.

David A. Burchinal, Albert P. Clark, Leighton I. Davis, Gabriel P. Disosway, John R. McConnell, Thomas S. Moorman, Joseph J. Nazzaro, Raymond J. Reeves, John D. Ryan, Jacob E. Smart, Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Henry Viccellio, Horace M. Wade, and Robert H. Warren.

On 21 February 1931 the Chief of the Air Corps forwarded to the Commanding Officer of the Air Corps Tactical School at Langley Field, a program of instruction to be given to the First Classmen at West Point during June and July 1931. [102]The class, numbering approximately 293 cadets, was divided into three battalions of about 88 cadets each. Each battalion was at Langley Field for five days (exclusive of Sundays) and each received the same instruction. The general purpose of the West Point and Tactical School instruction was "to give the cadets, in the time available, the broadest possible knowledge of the equipment, training, organization, and tactical employment of the Air Corps." At that time the instruction at the Military Academy in aeronautical subjects was limited to a course of approximately two months in aerodynamics in the Second Class Year, and a series of six to ten lectures in such subjects as history, organization, and tactics during the First Class Year.[103]

Since the facilities at West Point permitted only theoretical instruction, the Tactical School instruction was of a practical nature and covered all available types of equipment including actual flights in aircraft. Since "instruction of cadets in aircraft pilotage" was contrary to War Department policy, the flights were designed "to let the cadet learn how it feels to be in the air, to familiarize him with the various types of aircraft, to give him some idea of the conditions under which the crew of an airplane works, and to provide him with a background as to the performance of a few of the military missions required of aircraft." As far as possible each cadet received at least one flight in each type of military aircraft available.[104]

Suggested lectures, demonstrations, and flying missions included introductory lecture, lecture on machine guns, lecture on bombs and bombing, armament demonstration, demonstration of types of aircraft, lecture on aerial photography, lecture on night flying equipment, demonstration of night flying, lecture on radio equipment, lecture on oxygen equipment, lecture on navigation, lecture on meteorology, lecture and demonstration—lighter-than-air, visit to the National Advisory Council on Aeronautics Laboratories, initial flight, message-dropping mission, lecture on artillery adjustment, lecture on road sketching mission, road sketching mission, navigation flight, and general demonstration. The latter included smoke screen, bomb dropping, formation flying by pursuit, attack, and bombardment planes, and acrobatic flying in pursuit planes.[105]

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[102] Ltr, Chief of Air Corps to Commanding Officer, Langley Fld, Hampton, Va., Subj: Program of Instruction for First Class, U. S. Corps of Cadets, 21 Feb 31.

[103] *Ibid.*

[104] *Ibid.*

[105] *Ibid.*

In October 1931 the Commandant of the Air Corps Tactical School, disregarding channels, strongly urged that a Department of Aeronautics be established at the Military Academy with Capt George Churchill Kenney as Professor.[106] The Acting Chief of the Air Corps tartly observed that "this officer should be informed in regard to the proper channels established for handling official communications."[107] The Office of the Secretary of War closed the matter by telling the Commandant of the Tactical School, "The subject matter contained in this letter previously had been considered by the War Department."[108]

The aviation training given to the cadets at Langley Field in the summer of 1932 was "similar in every respect" to that given the previous summer.[109] However, the number of hours allocated at West Point to the instruction of Air Corps tactics and techniques was increased from six to ten. The following subjects were allocated one hour each: History of Military Aviation, Organization of the Air Corps, Characteristics of Military Aviation, Principles of Air Warfare, Observation Aviation, Attack Aviation, Bombardment Aviation, Pursuit Aviation, The Air Force, and Air Corps Flying Training.[110]

The 1930's did not have a basic training program for air officers as it is understood in 1970. A regulation which came out in January 1932 provided the only means available for the basic instruction of officers of the Air Corps. In large measure, specialized training of Air Corps officers was restricted to Army extension courses.[111]

In May 1934 a War Department Board under the chairmanship of Newton D. Baker, former Secretary of War, made a study of the Air Corps and its relation to civilian aviation. One of the Board's recommendations was that the cadets receive a minimum of 20 hours aerial instruction. The Chief of the Air Corps was requested to develop, after consultation with the Superintendent of the Military Academy, a plan for implementing this recommendation.[112]

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[106] Ltr, Commandant of the Air Corps Tactical School to The Adjutant General, Subj: Dept of Aeronautics, USMA, 19 Oct 31. In World War II, General Kenney was Commanding General, Far East Air Forces.

[107] *Ibid.*, 2d Ind, Ofc, Chief of the Air Corps to The Adjutant General, 29 Oct 31.

[108] *Ibid.*, 3rd Ind., AGO to Commandant, Air Corps Tactical School thru Chief of Air Corps, 6 Nov 31.

[109] Ltr, Comdr., Langley Fld to Chief of Air Corps thru GS 3rd Corps Area, Subj: Training of West Point Cadets, 26 Apr 32.

[110] Ltr, 1st Lt John M. Weikert of Ofc, Chief of the Air Corps, Subj: Course in Air Corps Tactics and Techniques, 25 Nov 32. Colonel Weikert became the first commandant of the West Point flying school at Stewart Field.

[111] Memo, Assistant Chief of Staff to Chief of Staff (WDGS), Subj: Troop Schools, 25 Jan 32.

[112] G-3, WDGS to Chief of Air Corps, Subj: Approved recommendations of the Baker Board, 10 Aug 34.

Major Carl Spaatz, Chief of the Training and Operations Division, Office of the Chief of the Air Corps,[113] and a representative of the War Department General Staff agreed on the following tentative plan to carry out the recommendation:

> (a) No actual pilot training to be given.
>
> (b) Course to include familiarization flights, flights in various combat positions in the airplane, including observer, aerial gunner, bomber, and navigator.
>
> (c) Instruction to be given during the 1st class summer, preferably at Langley Field, Virginia, but with Mitchell Field, Long Island, New York, as an alternative location.
>
> (d) On account of shortage of airplanes, class to be divided into two sections.
>
> (e) Time required for training each section two weeks.
>
> (f) Course to include only such ground instruction as is necessary to insure that the cadets receive the maximum benefit from their aerial missions.[114]

The foregoing plan was submitted to Maj Gen William D. Connor, the Military Academy Superintendent, and Maj Gen Benjamin Foulois, the Chief of the Air Corps, for comment. The Superintendent concurred with the recommendations and suggested that the flights be made in bombers and transport planes. The Chief of the Air Corps decided to give the training in bombardment-type planes only, in order to familiarize the cadets with the various phases of combat missions. General Connor recommended and General Foulois concurred that the training be conducted at Mitchell Field in order to avoid excessive transportation costs.[115]

The Superintendent recommended that the cadets be flown at least five hours a day for a period of one week. The Chief of the Air Corps dissented as he believed that five hours a day would cause the cadet undue physical and mental strain. In order for the cadet to receive the maximum benefit of this training, General Foulois advocated short flights not exceeding one-half hour the first day. Thereafter, the flights could be gradually lengthened as the cadet adapted to the unfamiliar conditions of flying. In addition, General Foulois recommended a minimum of 10 flying days in which "aerial experience" would be given. Approximately two weeks would be required for the training, including two days' travel time and Sundays.[116]

General Connor did not want any ground instruction to be given at Mitchell Field, but General Foulois felt this training was necessary if the

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[113] General Spaatz became the first Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force on 26 Sep 47.

[114] Memo, G-3, WDGS to Chief of Staff, Subj: Recommendation of the Baker Board relative to air experience for the cadets, USMA, 7 Sep 34.

[115] *Ibid.*

[116] *Ibid.*

cadets were to receive maximum benefit from their flight missions. However, instruction on flight missions would not duplicate any instruction given at the Military Academy and would be limited to instruction "in the use of aerial maps, bombsights, bomb releases, camera obscura, preparation of observers' reports, manipulation of machine guns in airplanes and the solution of elementary problems in aviation."[117]

The Superintendent also suggested that any flights made by the cadets while on observation missions or at West Point be credited to the 20 hours recommended by the Baker Board. The Chief of the Air Corps disagreed, as he wanted to have all flights made at one field under proper control and supervision in order that a definite objective might be attained in each flight.[118]

By 11 November 1934 plans for the flying training of the West Point cadets in the summer of 1935 had been completed. The Class of 1936, numbering 280 cadets, would be organized into three groups with each group receiving five days of instruction and two days of travel time.[119] Apparently the Baker Board recommendation of 20 hours of flying training was not too well received at the Military Academy. Lt Lawrence J. Carr[120] told Maj Gen Oscar Westover, Chief, Army Air Corps, "Frankly, in my opinion, the officials at West Point look upon this training as an interference with their more or less staid summer training procedure, and seem loathe to break this down and allow us enough consecutive time to complete the aerial experience course. . . . I see their side of the question. They have a progressive summer training course for the four years a cadet is at the Academy. Suddenly they are required to give this 20 hours Air Corps training. It means reducing the training in the other military phases and naturally brings objections from those sources and also tends to make those other branches have a smouldering ill feeling toward us that is not warranted nor desirable."[121]

Under the Military Academy's Mobilization Plan, approved 1 February 1935, except for the early graduation of the First Class, no changes would be made in the curriculum. The tentative assignments to the various branches of the Army would be made at the beginning of First Class Year. During that year the emphasis in tactical training would be placed upon the preparation of each cadet for the duties and responsibilities of second lieutenant of the arm or service to which he was to be assigned.[122]

In March 1935, at the request of Col C. C. Carter,[123] Professor of Natural Experimental Philosophy at the Military Academy, the Superintendent

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[117] *Ibid.*

[118] *Ibid.*

[119] Ltr, Chief of Air Corps to The Adjutant General, Subj: Aerial Experience for West Point Cadets, 11 Nov 34.

[120] In WW II, Brig Gen Carr was Commanding General, 7th Bombardment Command.

[121] Memo, Lt Carr to General Westover, 14 Dec 34.

[122] _____, "The United States Military Academy in World War II," p. 5.

[123] In 1948, Professor Carter retired as a brigadier general.

secured the services of four Air Corps officers to deliver a one-hour lecture each to the Second Classmen.[124]

Although the Academy Superintendent, in August 1935, urged the establishment of an airfield in the vicinity of West Point from which the cadets could receive their required flying training,[125] it was obvious that their flying training as cadets would not qualify them as pilots. Normally, interested Academy graduates were sent to the Air Corps Training Center where they started their training about the middle of October. This training lasted for one year and consisted of three phases of approximately four months each in the primary, basic, and advanced stages.[126] As of 23 March 1937, the status of West Point graduates (Classes of 1932 through 1936) assigned to the Air Corps Training Center was as follows:[127]

Class	Applied	Qualified	Started Training	Graduated
1932	140	84	70	42
1933	140	88	88	45
1934	193	99	60	32
1935	135	74	47	29
1936	174	70	64	48

The attrition of commissioned officers (Air Corps and officers of other branches assigned to the Air Corps) for Fiscal Years 1932 through 1936 totaled 163 officers. The various attrition categories were:[128]

Fiscal Year 1932		Fiscal Year 1933		Fiscal Year 1934	
Deaths	16	Deaths	11	Deaths	16
Resigned	5	Resigned	2	Resigned	2
Retired	6	Retired	5	Retired	13
Dismissed	1	Dismissed	1	Discharged	1
Discharged	2			Transferred	1
	30		19		33

Fiscal Year 1935		Fiscal Year 1936	
Deaths	18	Deaths	23
Resigned	1	Resigned	1
Retired	24	Retired	9
Dismissed	1	Transferred	1
Transferred	3		
	47		34

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[124] Ltr, Prof of N.E. Philosophy, USMA to Supt, USMA, Subj: Visiting Lecturers, 14 Mar 35.

[125] *Annual Rpt of the Supt, USMA* 1 Aug 35.

[126] 2d Ind. Ltr, Chief of the Air Corps to Ltr, War Dept. AGC, 9 Oct 37, To the Chief of the Air Corps, AG 210-1, Air (10-5-35).

[127] Memo, Maj G. L. Usher, Chief, Personnel Division, Air Corps to General Arnold, 25 Mar 37.

[128] *Ibid.*

In the summer of 1936 the new First Classmen started their flying training. Unlike earlier classes, they received 25 hours of instruction. Approximately one-third of the class at a time was sent to Mitchell Field for a week. The instruction, which was given by Air Corps officers, consisted of 10½ hours of ground instruction and 14½ hours in the air. The latter consisted of familiarization flights–2 hours; "avigation" flights–3½ hours; aerial gunnery–4½ hours; and cross-country–2½ hours.[129] In the following year, however, the aerial instruction was reduced to nine hours and consisted of familiarization flights, "avigation" flights, observation flights, pursuit missions, and a bombardment mission. The rest of the week was devoted to ground instruction which included "conferences on armaments, parachutes, aviation, bomb sights, photography, radio, and maintenance."[130]

In April 1938 a conference was held at the Military Academy concerning the advisability of incorporating instruction in aviation subjects in the curriculum. The Superintendent, then Brig Gen Jay L. Benedict, suggested that the Air Corps draw up a tentative schedule that would include 10 hours of flying and 20 hours of ground instruction. This course would be primarily for those cadets who would not ultimately enter the Air Corps.[131] At the request of the Chief of the Air Corps, the Commandant of the Air Corps Tactical School drew up the following "Proposed Program of Aviation Instruction, U. S. Military Academy."[132]

Flying	**Hours**
Orientation and Elementary Training	4
Navigation and Reconnaissance	4
Familiarization Flights	2
	10

Ground Training	
Mission and Function of an Air Corps	1
Characteristics of Modern Type Service	3
Communications	2
Air Photography	1
Tactical Employment of Attack, Bombardment, Pursuit, and Observation Aviation	8
Navigation	1
Observation Aviation Missions (Artillery)	2
Observation Aviation Missions (Infantry)	2
	20

[129] *Annual Rpt of the Supt*, USMA, 1 Aug 35.

[130] *Annual Rpt of the Supt*, USMA, 1 Aug 35.

[131] Ltr, Chief of the Air Corps to Commandant, Air Corps Tactical School, Subj: Flying Instruction at the USMA, 16 Apr 38.

[132] *Ibid.*, Inc. 1, Proposed Program of Aviation Instruction, USMA, n. d.

By 1938 the Medical Division had in being a well-established doctrine of pilot selection which was based on precepts established by the Air Service Medical Research Laboratory in 1918–19 and refined through the years at the School of Aviation Medicine.[133] "In brief, the ideal pilot was preferably a graduate of the Military or Naval Academy who wanted to become a flyer, was a well-nigh perfect specimen of superior intelligence, and had scored in the upper deciles on tests of physical efficiency, attitude classification, coordination, and the like."[134]

In August 1938 Brig Gen Barton K. Yount, the Commander of the Air Corps Training School, recommended that all qualified graduates of the Military Academy who wanted flying training should be able to take it without any obligation to transfer to the Air Corps upon completion. They should be permitted to make a free and independent decision regarding this transfer at the appropriate time during the course. To rule otherwise, said General Yount, "would considerably reduce the percentage of graduates of the Military Academy who volunteer for flying training and therefore would materially reduce the number of such officers entering the Air Corps as a whole."[135]

In the meantime, efforts had been made to provide both an airfield and additional flying training at the United States Military Academy. The development of flying training at West Point was tied in with the development of an airfield for the city of Newburgh in the vicinity of the Military Academy. In 1927 Samuel L. Stewart offered the city 170 acres of land for the construction of an airfield. The proffer was accepted. For the next six years men on Newburgh's relief rolls cleared the brush and prepared the land for the airfield.

In October 1935 the Newburgh airfield was officially named Stewart Field in honor of Lachlan Stewart, the father of the donor of the original tract of land. On the 28th of the same month the city of Newburgh deeded the site to the United States Government, reserving five acres for use as a municipal airport. In the following May the President signed into law an Act of Congress authorizing the acceptance of the airfield. With the acceptance of title to the property by the War Department on 9 September 1936, construction work on the airfield was accelerated. By May 1938 a permanent drainage system and grading of half of the acreage had been completed.[136]

In March 1938 Brig Gen Henry H. Arnold, Acting Chief of the Air Corps, had asked the Chief of Plans to furnish him information on certain matters concerning Stewart Field. Two of his questions are pertinent:

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[133] Dr. George V. Leroy, "The Medical Service of the AAF," Craven and Cate, *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, VII, *Services Around the World*, p. 381.

[134] *Ibid.*

[135] Ltr, Commanding General, The Air Corps Training Center to Chief of the Air Corps, Subj: Continuation of Flying Training, 9 Aug 38.

[136] Lt John J. Dillon and S/Sgt Charles Frier, "History of Stewart Field, Army Air Forces Basic-Advanced Flying School," Installments One and Two, Activation to 7 Dec 41 and 7 Dec 41 to 31 Dec 42, pp. 1-2. File 788.85.2, 1940, 31 Dec 1942. AU.

Considering the small amount of Air Corps instruction given at West Point now, would the Air Corps be warranted in maintaining such a field?

What representations can be made to the Superintendent of the Military Academy and the Commandant of Cadets for a change in the Air Corps instruction policy of West Point?[137]

The Chief of Plans observed that when the needs for Air Corps personnel were calculated, an increase of instructional personnel had not been contemplated. He believed "that it would be better to take each 1st class to some large Air Corps station" where the cadets could receive their instruction in a short period of time and thus make "the rest of the summer available to the Academy for other purposes." Aircraft brought to Stewart Field could not be operated as efficiently as at their home stations, and in addition there were no gunnery or bombing ranges in the vicinity.[138] The Chief of Plans felt that any increase in the cadets' workload would be excessive, but proposed that the course of instruction should be changed so as to include additional instruction on navigation, meteorology, aeronautical engines, and code practice, sufficient to enable the cadet to pass the examination for a Second Class license. A like number of hours of instruction in other subjects should be eliminated.[139]

He believed that the 20 hours of "air experience" recommended by the Baker Board would be of greater value to the Air Corps and to the prospective officer if "put in on a Link Trainer rather than as a passenger on an air experience course." The training could be readily given at the Military Academy and was comparatively inexpensive. If it was decided to enlarge Stewart Field, the Chief of Plans thought that it should be made a subpost of West Point which should be charged with the construction. He stated further that "the Air Corps should be responsible for the additional personnel required and the maintenance of equipment for the additional personnel."[140]

In February 1938 the Newburgh City Council transferred to the United States Government the five acres that had been retained for a municipal airport. On 1 July 1938 all work on the airfield was suspended indefinitely because of lack of WPA funds. Late in April 1939, after 10 months' delay, work on the airfield was resumed. It was not until 22 March 1940 that the New York legislature approved the transfer of the land. The war in Europe gave new emphasis to the need for an expanded airfield at West Point. Early in 1941 the War Department obtained approval to acquire 1,100 more acres in the towns of Newburgh and

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[137] Memo, Acting Chief of the Air Corps to Chief, Plans Division, 5 Mar 38.

[138] *Ibid.*, Comment 3, Chief, Plans Division, 29 Apr 38.

[139] *Ibid.*

[140] *Ibid.*

New Windsor. The State of New York cooperated, and the Army successfully negotiated for the purchase of 19 parcels of farmland from the different owners.[141]

The 1930's witnessed the rise of the totalitarian powers of Japan, Italy, and Germany, who had determinedly started to take over by military conquest the nonmilitaristic nations of the world. "Ruthlessness, treachery, and violence had proved stronger than the armor of a righteous cause. Ethiopia, Spain, China, Austria, Czechoslovakia, each in turn had been sacrificed by the democracies to the principle of appeasement, until it was clear that the principle was bankrupt."[142] By the fall of 1938 the German Luftwaffe "demonstrated that Air Power had become a powerful factor in international relations–if only as an instrument of blackmail."[143] However, France and Great Britain vowed that any further aggressive acts by Germany would be met by opposition on their part. On 1 September 1938 Adolph Hitler's tanks and planes crossed the border into Poland. Two days later France and Great Britain, true to their pledge, declared war on Germany. World War II had begun.

Fortunately, the United States was not immediately drawn into the conflict. It had two precious years to arm itself and serve as the "arsenal of democracy." President Roosevelt early had seen the threat posed by the totalitarian powers. In 1938, under the strong urging of the President, Congress had authorized more men and material for the defense effort and to modernize the Air Corps. By 1939 it had become apparent that the airplane had introduced a significant if not a decisive factor in the strategy of the United States. "The primary emphasis in 1939 was, therefore, on increasing the striking power of the Army Air Corps."[144] A corollary was the necessity of training additional officers and enlisted men for the Air Corps.

In February 1941 Brig Gen Rush B. Lincoln, who was to become Commanding General of the Technical Training Command, discussed the curriculum at West Point with some junior officers from the Air Corps and other branches of the Army, as well as with the Academy Superintendent, Brig Gen Robert L. Eichelberger. As a result, General Lincoln, believing that some changes in the flying program at West Point would receive "favorable consideration" from the Academy Superintendent, recommended the adoption of the following program. During the summer of First Class year, the cadets should receive eight or ten hours of practical training, which "could include puff target missions, reconnaissance, photographic command, and liaison work." This training could be tied in with other branch instruction that might be in progress during the period. The cadets would

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141 Dillon and Frier, "History of Stewart Field to 31 Dec 42."

142 Morison and Commager, *The Growth of the American Republic*, II, p. 640.

143 Goldberg, *History of the USAF*, p. 43.

144 Maurice Matloff, editor, *American Military History* (Washington, D.C., 1969), p. 418.

take during their Second Class Year six or eight hours of lecture orientation in preparation for practical training. In the First Class academic year each cadet should receive at least five hours of Link training and from 15 to 20 hours of Air Corps conferences and map problems. Since the Military Academy Superintendent had wanted more branch training to be given in the spring, General Lincoln believed that flight-qualified cadets who had elected the Air Corps should be given 10 hours of dual instruction and flight training.[145]

On 21 April 1941 General Eichelberger requested the Chief of the Air Corps to give a short program of instruction and demonstration to the entire First Class. The program would include the dropping of bombs of all sizes available; the firing of aerial machine guns on ground targets from airplanes in element formation using tracer ammunition; the flying of tactical formations; inspection of available types of tactical and training airplanes; inspection of hangars and service activities; at least one flight in an airplane; and inspection of N.A.C.A. Laboratory.[146] The Secretary of War concurred in the request and directed Maj Gen Delos C. Emmons, the Commanding General, GHQ Air Force, to provide the instruction and demonstration.[147]

In the middle of October General Eichelberger requested the assignment of primary training airplanes and 20 pilots to Stewart Field for a three-month period in the spring of 1942 to provide flying training to cadet volunteers who had requested detail to the Air Corps. This "would put the Air Corps branch instruction at the Military Academy on the same basis as that of other arms." With the primary trainers, it would be possible to provide cadets sufficient dual training and to pick out those who lacked inherent flying ability. Under the existing system, Academy graduates who lacked this ability were not eliminated until after they had received instruction at an Air Corps school. However, the latter arrangement had several disadvantages: the Government would incur extra expense; the graduate would suffer natural embarrassment on being returned to his basic branch after washing out of flying training; and the unsuccessful student would be several months behind his classmates who had originally reported for duty with the basic branch. Consequently, if most of the elimination was accomplished at Stewart Field prior to graduation, the number of students subsequently returned to another branch of the Army would be reduced "to an absolute minimum."[148]

General Arnold naturally was pleased to have additional flying training given at the Military Academy. He believed all cadets should be given their

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[145] Ltr, Gen Lincoln to Gen Arnold, 11 Feb 41.

[146] Ltr, Supt, USMA to Chief of the Air Corps, Subj: Demonstration for Cadets, USMA, 21 Apr 41. During World War II, Lt Gen Eichelberger was Commanding General, United States Eighth Army.

[147] *Ibid.*, 2d Ind. AGWD to CG GHQ, Air Force, 21 May 41. Lt Gen Emmons was later Commanding General, Air Force Combat Command.

[148] Ltr, Supt, USMA to Chief, Army Air Corps, Subj: Air Corps Branch Instruction for the First Class Cadets, 14 Oct 41.

examination for flying training in their Yearling (Third Class, or Sophomore) Year. Those who successfully passed the physical examination would receive primary flying during their Yearling summer and the final academic year. At the end of their Yearling year they would relinquish two weeks of their summer furlough in order to take additional flying training so that by the time they became First Classmen, the cadets would have advanced to the stage where they would be able to take cross-country flights in basic and advanced training. Under this concept, a cadet would have accumulated approximately 400 flying hours. General Arnold, believing it would be possible to give the cadets flying instruction three times a week as well as on Sunday,[149] proposed the following plan:

> My thought is that it is possible, if the Academic Board and the Infantry and Cavalry instructors don't put too many obstacles in our path, to give the yearling by the time he is through yearling camp approximately 60 hours, which would have him soloing in PTs (Primary Trainers). By the end of his yearling year, assuming that he can take flying instruction after Academics or by having a study period at the end of the day, instead of earlier in the day, which he could use for this purpose, he should be able to get a total of 100 hours during that year which would give him 160 hours by the time he goes on furlough. Then by concentrating on the cadet two weeks before he goes on furlough or two weeks after, he would have it ground in enough so that his instruction during his second class year should give him around 200 or 300 hours at the end of his second class year.
>
> This may be just a day dream but it would seem to me that by that time he would have enough time on the BT (Basic Trainer) or AT (Advanced Trainer) so that as a reward for giving up part of his furlough we would, some time in the first class year, be able to give him weekend privileges with an AT or BT. By the time he graduates he should have a total of about 400 flying hours.[150]

On 3 December 1941 approval was received to initiate a a short course of elementary flying training at Stewart Field. All First Classmen who desired this training and could qualify for it would receive from 10 to 12 hours of dual instruction. The training was designed to eliminate students unable to successfully complete the regular course of flying training as well as to awaken cadet interest in the Air Corps. Those eliminated for lack of flying proficiency would not be eligible for any future flying training. The flying training would be given five afternoons a week. Saturdays and Sundays would be available to make up time lost because of bad weather.[151]

On 7 December the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. The period of prewar planning was over. War had come to the United States.

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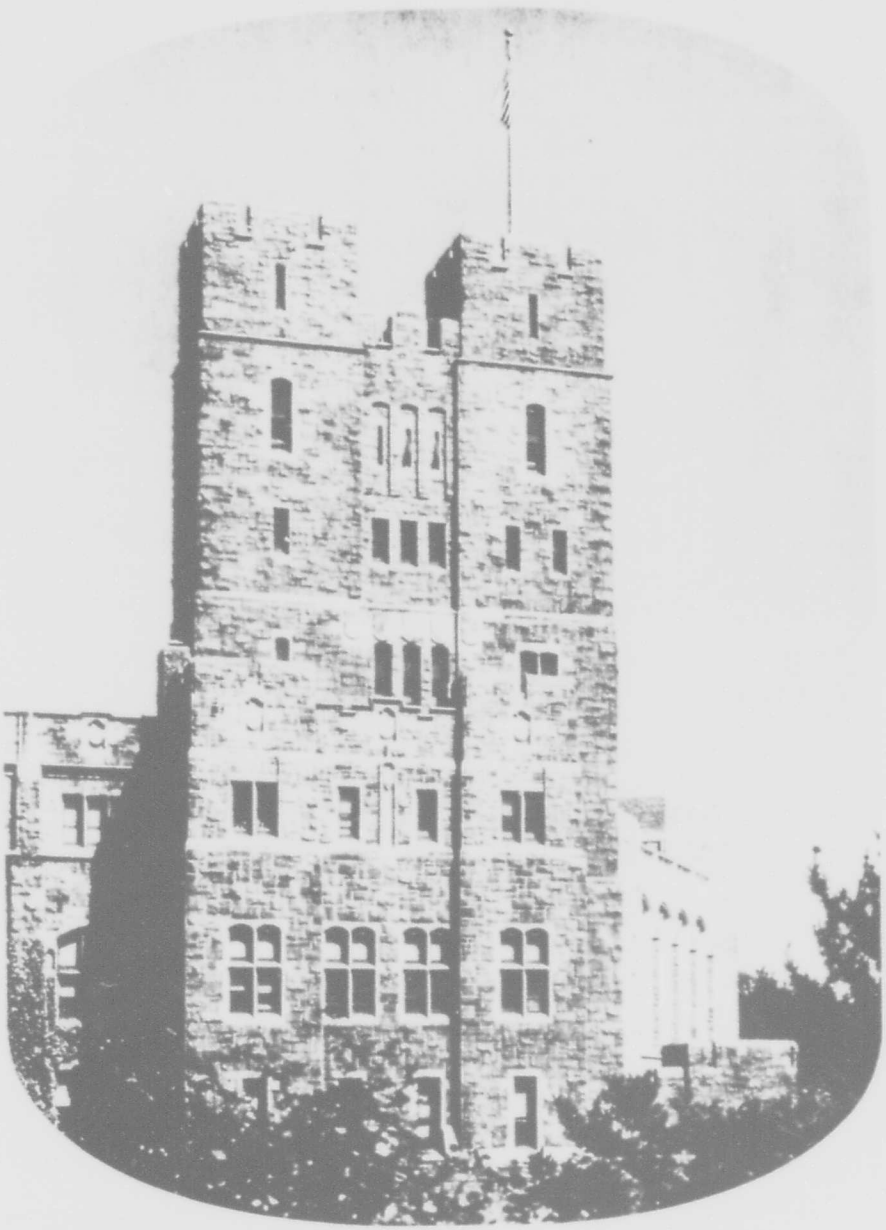
[149] Chief, Army Air Corps to Supt, USMA, 24 Oct 41.

[150] *Ibid.*

[151] Ltr, Chief of Army Air Corps to Commanding General, Southeast Air Corps Training Center, Maxwell Field, Alabama, Subj: Flying Instructors for West Point, 3 Dec 41.



Home of the Academic Board – "Headquarters, United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, –" The Administration Building (*Howitzer*, 1944, p. 17)

Chapter II

"Wings of West Point"

Under instructions of Brig Gen Robert L. Eichelberger, Maj John M. Weikert, Senior Air Corps Instructor at the Military Academy, prepared a plan for a flying program at the Academy that would cover the four years the cadets were at West Point. The plan was revised in December 1941 by a Board of Officers consisting of Major Weikert, Maj Richard G. Prather (Infantry),[1] and Maj Robert W. Harper (Air Corps);[2] and was further revised by a committee of West Point's Academic Board, consisting of Col O. J. Gatchell,[3] Professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy; Lt Col G. A. Counts,[4] Professor of Physics; and Lt Col T. D. Stamps,[5] Professor of Civil Engineering. Under the final revision of the plan, Third Classmen (Class of 1944) would take both the Elementary and Basic Flying Training phase and as much of the Advanced Flying Training (two-engine) phase as future experience might determine to be feasible. Those First Classmen (Class of 1942) who had passed the Air Corps physical examination and wanted pilot training would be given elementary flying instruction from 10 March to 5 June 1942. All Second Classmen (Class of 1943) who desired pilot training would be given the Air Corps physical examination during the spring of 1942. Members of this class would make final choice of their branch of service at the beginning of their First Class Year. Physically qualified cadets who had chosen to be commissioned in the Air Corps would receive elementary flying training daily during the summer training period and on alternate days from 1 September to graduation.[6] The program also called for "complete ground school work." No basic changes in the academic program were contemplated. Air cadets received the same instruction as other cadets, although flying training replaced certain parts of the tactical instruction. Every effort was made to give the air cadets as much basic instruction as possible in the other branches.[7]

This program was approved by the Superintendent; the Assistant Secretary of War for Air, Robert A. Lovett; Chief of the Air Corps, General

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[1] In 1961, Maj Gen Prather retired as Commanding General, Counter Intelligence Corps.

[2] Lt Gen Harper was Commander, Air University, following World War II.

[3] Professor Gatchell retired as a brigadier general in 1952.

[4] Following World War II, Brig Gen Counts was Dean of the Academic Board at the United States Military Academy.

[5] Brig Gen Stamps retired as Dean of the Academic Board in 1951.

[6] Memo, Special Committee to Supt, USMA, Subj: Increased Air Instruction for Cadets, 20 Dec 41.

[7] *Ibid.* (During World War II West Point flying cadets were called "air cadets"; non-Academy flying students were called "aviation cadets.")

Maj Gen Francis B. Wilby, Superintendent,
United States Military Academy,
19 January 1942–4 September 1945

Arnold; and the Army Chief of Staff, Gen George C. Marshall. The Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, approved the program subject to the following limitations: (1) not more than 50 percent, later changed to 60 percent, of the current First Class could be commissioned in the Air Corps upon graduation; (2) the War Department would announce annually the percentage of each subsequent graduating class to be commissioned in the Air Corps; and (3) only those cadets who had demonstrated their capability for pilot training would be commissioned in the Air Corps.[8]

To coordinate flying training at West Point with that of the flying schools under control of the Chief of the Air Corps and to insure uniform pilot training, Brig Gen Carl Spaatz, Chief of the Air Staff, recommended that the Chief of the Air Corps be given authority to establish qualifications, the scope of training, and standards of proficiency for air cadets at the Military Academy.[9] The Superintendent recommended that the officer in charge of aviation be made a member of the Academic Board.[10]

On 5 February 1942 the Secretary of War granted this authority.[11] Eight days later the Academy Superintendent and the Commanding General, Flying Training Command, Maj Gen B. K. Yount, were authorized to communicate directly with each other concerning flying training matters at West Point.[12]

The decision to provide pilot training to Military Academy cadets made it necessary to amend existing legislation "to cover the procurement of the special aviation and clothing needed, to provide the necessary adjustments in pay and allowances, and to authorize insurance which would place the West Point cadets on an equal footing with aviation cadets." This legislation was passed by Congress on 5 June 1942, and was signed into law as Public Law No. 5.[13]

An Army Air Forces Basic-Advanced Flying School was formally established at Stewart Field on 22 May 1942 and placed under the administrative control and responsibility of the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy, and under the Commanding General, Air Forces Flying Training Command, for technical control of flying training.[14]

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[8] Memo, Assistant Chief of Staff to The Adjutant General (through Office, Chief of Staff), Subj: Institution of Air Corps Branch Instruction at the USMA, 5 Jan 42.

[9] Memo, Chief of Air Staff to Chief of Staff, Subj: Air Corps Branch Instruction at the United States Military Academy, 26 Jan 42.

[10] Ltr, Supt, USMA to The Adjutant General, Subj: Officer in Charge of Aviation to be Member of the Academic Board, 30 Jan 42.

[11] Ltr, Secretary of War to Chief, Army Air Corps, Subj: Air Corps Branch Instruction at the USMA, 5 Feb 42.

[12] Ltr, Secretary of War to Chief, Army Air Corps, Institution of Flying Training at West Point, 13 Feb 42.

[13] Army Air Force Historical Study No. 16, "Legislation Relating to the AAF Personnel Program, 1939-1945."

[14] Ltr Order, Secretary of War to Supt, USMA, Subj: Establishment of an Air Force Basic-Advanced Flying School, 22 May 42. File AG-352 (8-20-42).

Col John M. Weikert, Air Corps, in addition to his duties as Officer-in-Charge of aviation activities at the Academy, was designated Commandant of the School and Commanding Officer of Stewart Field,[15] which had increased to approximately 1,200 acres during Fiscal Year 1942. It was, however, not yet in condition for flying training. The War Department, on 23 February 1942, had approved an accelerated construction program for Stewart Field which included "an over-all landing area of 690 acres with four runways and three auxiliary fields that added approximately 1,000 acres of landing areas."[16] On 3 June 1942 approximately 60 percent of the First and Second Classes, all volunteers, gave up most of their traditional summer furlough and flying training at civilian elementary flying schools throughout the country. Successful completion of pilot training enabled cadets to receive their pilot ratings at graduation, be commissioned directly into the Air Corps, and be assigned to combat organizations in the Army Air Forces immediately after graduation.[17]

Stewart Field was formally dedicated on 25 August 1942, when 245 cadets from the Class of 1944 started their flying training.[18]

In the meantime, on 19 January 1942, Maj Gen Francis B. Wilby, shortly after taking over as the Military Academy Superintendent, appointed a committee of three members of the Academy Board to prepare a tentative plan for shortening the program of instruction if that should become necessary.[19] On 24 January the committee submitted its report recommending a three-year curriculum in such a case.[20]

On 24 March the Director of Training, Services of Supply, requested the Superintendent's views on reducing West Point's curriculum to either a three-year or a two-year program of instruction. General Wilby referred the request to the General Committee of the Academic Board, which then outlined programs for each period but recommended that the four-year program be retained. Thereupon, the Superintendent appointed a special committee of three professors to make a study of the two-year program. In its report, dated 12 May 1942, the committee voiced strong opposition to such a program.[21]

In his reply, addressed to the Commanding General, Services of Supply, General Wilby noted that under its existing four-year program, the Military Academy was compressing a five-year college program into four years by utilizing the summers. Consequently, he felt that any reduction to less than four years would seriously impair the effectiveness of the West Point curriculum.[22]

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[15] Hq USMA, G.O. No. 31, 13 Jul 42.

[16] *Annual Rpt of the Supt, USMA*, 30 Jun 42.

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] Lt John J. Dillon and S/Sgt Charles Frier, "History of Stewart Field."

[19] Ltr, Supt, USMA to TAG, Subj: Three-Year Course at the USMA, 30 Jan 42.

[20] _____, "History of the United States Military Academy in World War II," p. 7.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[22] Rpt of the Supt on the Course of Instruction of the USMA, 29 Jun 42.

The Superintendent pointed out that cadets would take the same amount of "aviation training" in either the four-year or the three-year program. Under the three-year program, flying training would be given during the cadet's second and third summers rather than the third and fourth summers as then contemplated. Obviously, in order to complete the flying instruction under a three-year program, a student would lose a greater part of the nonflying instruction than under the four-year program. For example, besides losing most of the tactical instruction in other branches of the Army, the flying students would be unable to take one-half of the afternoon academic work of the second and third years.[23]

This loss, said the Superintendent, would be most strongly felt by the classes of 1943 and 1944 during the transition period. The members of the Class of 1943 would be unable to complete their flying training before graduation unless they remained at the civilian fields until graduation in January. In this case, "60 percent of this class (less washouts in flying) would not receive any of the tactical or academic training of the First Class year—the most important year in a cadet's life." Also, under the three-year program, the flying cadets of the Class of 1944, scheduled to graduate in June 1943, would not receive approximately three-fourths of the training then given during the First and Second Class years. In sum, General Wilby believed that the disadvantages of a three-year program far outweighed the advantages, and he strongly recommended retention of the four-year program.[24] The Chief of Staff approved this recommendation on 22 July 1942.

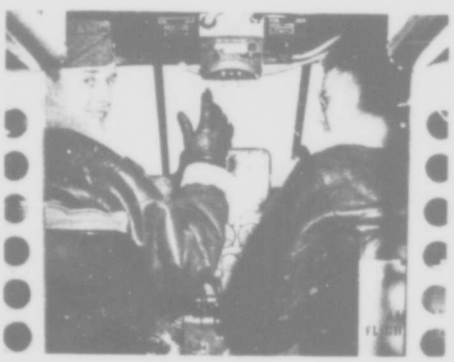
On 31 August 1942, however, the War Department recommended to Congress the passage of legislation reducing the West Point curriculum to three years for the duration of hostilities. Brig Gen Idwal H. Edwards, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, was the War Department spokesman at the Senate committee hearings on the bill:

> We do not feel that we can justify the normal course at West Point when all the other college institutions are being compelled to condense their curricula and their courses.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> We feel to a large extent that Army and West Point should take a lead in that matter.
>
> The demand for additional officers is, of course, another thing which the War Department considers serious at this particular time, although we do not think that would be a compelling reason in the absence of various other reasons which lead me to recommend this step.
>
> . . . we do not like to have West Point become subject to the criticism of being a place of refuge where boys can go for 4 years

[23] *Ibid.*
[24] *Ibid.*

"Flying high into the sky."

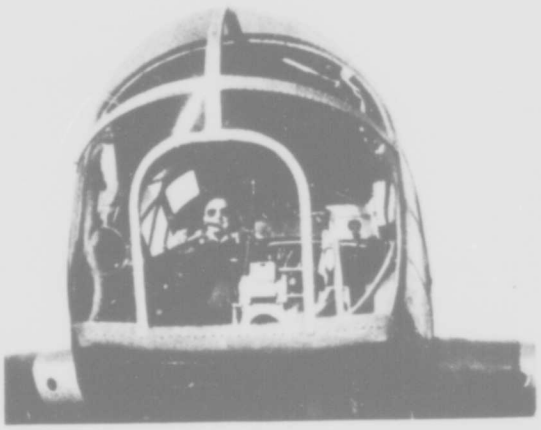
STEWART FIELD



All set?

Gimme my B. T.!

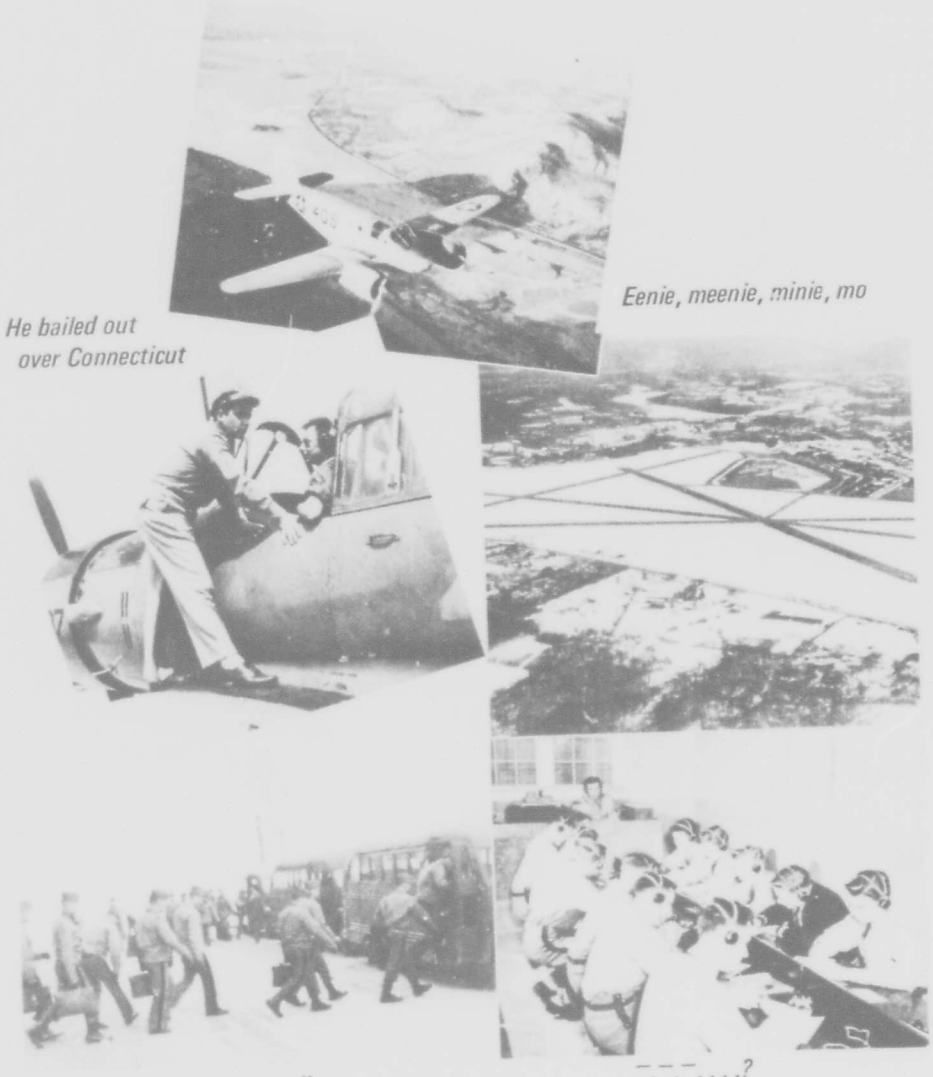
Those of us who were air cadets thought we had worked hard during the preceding summer and fall, but in advanced training we were to be rudely awakened to the terrifying realization that we had not yet begun to work. We were assigned to either single



Man from Mars.
". . . the wild blue yonder."

New form one.
What's that noise?

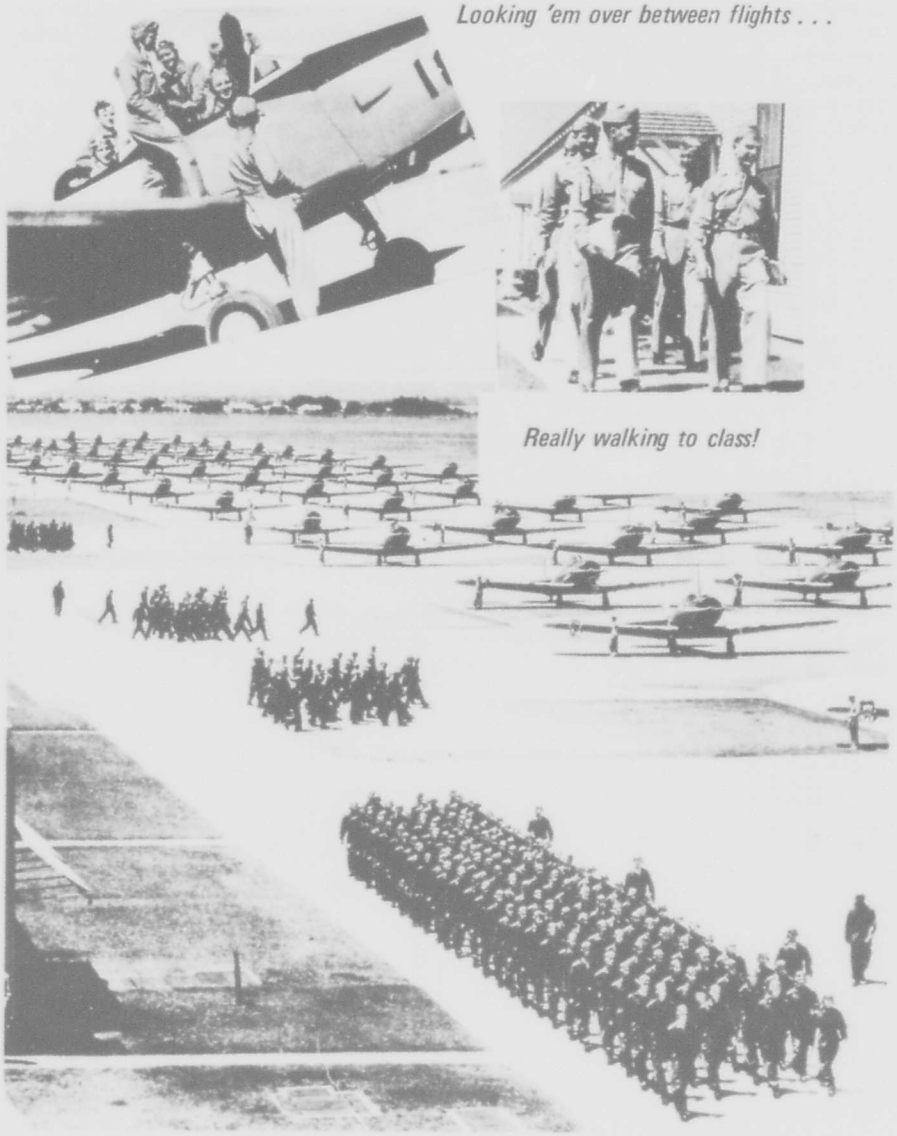
or twin engine squadrons, and we started working for perfection. New ships meant just that much more for us to learn, and with AT 6's, 10's we started out on the last lap of our training. As we progressed in advanced training, we flew formation, practiced combat maneuvers, and even ventured into dog-fights. Some of us carried our arms in slings, the mark of inattentiveness and not just a little misfortune. We had a great deal of flying time to put behind us and flew on weekends, often having our cherished leaves snatched from us at the very last. Sleep became a thing of the past as we flew nights until dawn and made extensive cross-country flights. Another important and final phase of our flight training was the firing for record on the aerial gunnery range in which the problems of aerial combat were brought home to us. (*Howitzer*, 1943, PP. 186, 187)


He bailed out
over Connecticut
Eenie, meenie, minie, mo
"Off we go . . ."
. . . . . ?

Advanced lasted from September to June. We split up into single-engine and twin-engine groups flying AT6's and AT10's respectively on a schedule which brought us to Stewart every other afternoon. Transition took most of September; but by October the cross-countries to Allentown, Wilkes-Barre, Rome, and points distant began. Instruments continued through the winter and spring, and the pea-shooters were given combat flying. During May, P40's were scheduled for the single-engine men, and the twin-engine aspirants were introduced to B25's. Early in the month we once more moved to Stewart. Only a few more weeks—then wings. (*Howitzer*, 1944, pp. 168, 169)

Five shots, five cents

Box car, Model AT10



Looking 'em over between flights . . .

Really walking to class!

The class had been divided in April for the first time when over 200 of the air-minded left for points southwest. Primary was a definite change from the "de rigueur" of West Point, but the air cadets thrived on it. After two weeks, most of us had soloed and were working on chandelles, eights on pylons, lazy eights, and other elementary maneuvers. The last month brought acrobatics with even greater thrills. As June drew to a close, we wound up the two months' course with a feeling of real accomplishment.

On July 3rd we assembled at Stewart Field for nine weeks' Basic Training. From transition we gradually progressed to instruments and formation. Ground School drilled us in meteorology, navigation, code, et al., and the gym crew strengthened our muscles. In the recreational line, afternoons at Beaver Dam Lake and weekend at Popolopen were highlights. The course came to a close in August with cross-countries and the "wing-fling" in the gym. (*Howitzer*, 1944, pp. 163-168)

Checkin' out on cross country . . .

End of a day's grind

Briefing

and not be shot at, particularly when all the young men within that age group in the other colleges are subject to the draft and are going to be sent out after being trained and are going to be shot at.

We do not feel we should have any stigma or any criticism of West Point that a boy can go there and be sheltered and protected for 4 years.[25]

It should be pointed out, however, not every member of the War Department General Staff favored pilot training and the three-year program at West Point. General Edwards, although the Army spokesman on Military Academy matters, found himself in opposition to the views of General Arnold, of Lt Gen Leslie J. McNair, Commanding General, Army Ground Forces, and of Lt Gen Brehon R. Somervell, Commanding General, Army Service Forces. General Edwards believed that on matters concerning the Military Academy, Gen George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, was inclined to accept the opinion of the latter officers.[26] General Edwards later told Maj Edgar A. Holt, "General Marshall was inclined to go along with General Arnold's recommendations when it came to the Service Academy because he was a graduate and Marshall wasn't. He was largely governed in his decisions that had to do with West Point by the recommendations of General Arnold, General Somervell, and General McNair, who were all graduates of the Academy. He put decisions having to do with West Point up to them, particularly when they went from a four-year course to a three-year wartime course. I opposed that, but General Somervell and General Arnold wanted to do it, and he said: 'We'll do it the way they want it.' "[27]

In the middle of September, Secretary Stimson, in a personal letter to General Wilby, confirmed the decision to limit the course of instruction to three years. The Secretary wanted to be assured that the necessary adjustments would be kept to a minimum. He outlined procedures which he hoped would bring "the basic and traditional West Point training into harmony with the revolutionary changes in warfare, in organization, and the methods of instruction in the academic field." Mr. Stimson recognized the difficulties inherent in having to direct heads of departments to survey the entire program and then have to "recommend deletion, transfer, or curtailment of subjects under their control." He thought that it might be advisable to have a disinterested board of eminent educators and Army officers review the program and make recommendations "as to the necessary changes in the course of instruction best suited to the conditions."[28]

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[25] _____, "History of the United States Military Academy in World War II," pp. 8–9.

[26] Record of Interview of Lt Gen Idwal H. Edwards, by Air Force Academy Historian on 26 October 1956, p. 17.

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] Ltr, Secretary of War to the Superintendent, United States Military Academy, 15 September 1940.

On 1, October 1942 the President signed the act reducing the Military Academy's curriculum from four to three years for the duration of hostilities. On the 13th of the month the War Department sent the Superintendent a directive concerning the three-year program, and the Superintendent appointed a special committee to prepare a three-year curriculum. The committee was made up of three academic professors, the Commandant of Cadets, and the Director of Aviation.[29] The committee visited the Signal Corps, Coast Artillery, Antiaircraft, Engineer, Cavalry, Field Artillery, the Armored Schools, and Wright Field. During the course of these visits, they discussed the proposed three-year program with all grades of officers from generals to junior officers who had graduated within the last two or three years. They wanted to obtain "the views of the Army from the highest to the lowest ranking officers regarding the scope and content of the three-year course necessary to meet the needs of the service at this critical time." The committee members also visited and discussed the program with members of the faculties of Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Purdue University, Ohio State University, and other universities and technical schools.[30]

In preparation for the report of this committee, the Air Basic-Advanced Flying School at the Military Academy had prepared and completed on 18 November a "Program of Instruction . . . for the Normal Long-Term Three-Year Course." This program covered observer training, elementary flying training, basic flying training, advanced flying training (single-engine), and advanced flying training (twin-engine).[31]

The objective of observer training was to demonstrate the type of information that could be obtained by observation aviation. It included some academic instruction in preparation for the subsequent program of flying. The flying missions consisted of five observation missions of one and a half hours each. The academic instruction included organization, types of missions, aerial sketching, and communications (radio, blinker lights, and panels).[32]

The objective of elementary flying training was to qualify pilot candidates in flying elementary type Army aircraft. This training consisted of academic instruction in technical subjects in which proficiency was required; instruction in the fundamental principles required to pilot elementary type Army aircraft; and physical training to maintain and improve physical and

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[29] _____, "History of the United States Military Academy in World War II," p. 10.

[30] Rpt, Special Committee to the Superintendent, United States Military Academy, 30 Nov 42.

[31] Rpt, Army-Air Force Basic-Advanced Flying School United States Military Academy, Stewart Field, West Point, NY Subj: Program of Instruction for Cadets, USMA For The Normal Long Term Three-Year Course, 18 Nov 42.

[32] *Ibid*.

mental alertness. The program would be nine weeks in duration, 24 April – 26 June, all day, six days a week. Sundays and holidays would be used to make up time lost because of weather, sickness, etc. Following is an outline of the program of instruction:

1. Flying Training . . . . . 60 hours

	Dual	Solo	Total
Fundamentals of Flying	23	25	48
Night	1	4	5
Instrument.	5		5
(Link Trainer)			(5)
Navigation		2	2
Total	29	31	60

Note: A ratio between dual and solo hours would be determined for each individual student on a proficiency basis.

2. Academic Instruction **85 hours**

Chemical Warfare Defense	1
Aircraft Identification	6
Navigation	21
Weather	12
Aircraft and Engines	45

3. Physical Training . . . . . 45 hours[33]

The objective of the Basic Flying Training was to qualify pilot candidates in flying basic trainer type Army aircraft and transition in advanced trainer type Army aircraft. The program included academic instruction in technical subjects; flight training in basic trainer type Army aircraft to teach and develop technique and judgment required of military pilots and transition in advanced trainer type Army aircraft; and physical training to maintain and improve physical and mental alertness. The program would be nine weeks in duration (30 June – 5 September), the entire day, six days a week. Sundays and holidays would be used to make up time lost due to weather, sickness, etc. Following is an outline of the program of instruction:

1. Flying Training . . . . . 70 hours

Transition (Dual and Solo) Basic Trainer		29
Day	23	
Night	6	
Instrument		12
Without Radio	8	
Radio Beam and Orientation	4	

[33] *Ibid.*

Instrument-Student Team		8
(Link Trainer)		(15)
Formation		7
Day	5	
Night	2	
Navigation		8
Day	6	
Night	2	
Transition (Dual and Solo) Advanced Trainer		6
Total Flying		**70 hours**
Total Link		**15 hours**

2. Academic Instruction . . . . . **95 hours**

Chemical Warfare Defense	1
Aircraft Identification	6
Code	20
Communications	10
Weather	38
Navigation	20

3. Physical Training . . . . . **45 hours**

One hour daily except Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays[34]

The objective of the Advanced Flying Training Single-Engine Program was to develop combat proficiency in single-engine aircraft. The scope of the program included academic instruction in technical subjects; qualification as a pilot of single-engine advanced training type military aircraft; qualification in the basic duties common to junior officers of the Air Force. The program was nine months in duration, from 5 September through 27 May. During 5–19 September and April and May the course was given for half a day for six days a week. For the remainder of the period, the course would be given every other afternoon five days a week. Saturday afternoons, Sundays, and holidays would be used to make up time lost because of weather, sickness, etc. An outline of the Advanced Flying Training (Single-Engine (SE)) course follows:

1. Flying Training		**.75 hours**
Transition–Advanced Trainers (SE) in Basic Course		(6)
Transition–Advanced Trainers (SE) and Combat Type, if Available		16
Day	9	
Night	7	

[34] *Ibid.*

Formation		15
Day	12	
Night	3	
Navigation		14
Day	7	
Night	7	
Instrument (Under Hood)		5
(Link Trainer)		(10)
Gunnery		20
Individual Attacks	4	
Ground and Aerial	16	
Low-Altitude Gunnery	(2)	
Combat		5
Aerobatics	2	
Combat	3	
Above 15,000 feet	(2)	
Total Flying		**75 hours**
Total Link		**10 hours**

2. Academic Instruction . . . . . 77 hours

Chemical Warfare Defense	1
Air Forces	20
Armament and Gunnery	25
Aircraft Identification	9
Photo Interpretation	2
Navigation	15
Identification of Naval Forces	5[35]

The objective of the Advanced Flying Training (Twin-Engine (TE)) was to develop the cadet's proficiency as pilot of twin-engine military aircraft. The course was designed to provide academic instruction in technical subjects; qualify the cadet as a pilot of twin-engine advanced training type military aircraft and as a combat pilot, twin-engine bombardment aircraft, as well as in the basic duties common to junior officers of the Air Force. The course was nine months in duration, running from 5 September to 27 May. During the period 5–19 September and the months of April and May the course was given one half day, six days a week. During the remainder of the period it was held every other afternoon, five days a week. Saturday afternoons, Sundays, and holidays were used to make up time lost due to weather, sickness, etc. Following is an outline of the course of instruction:

[35] *Ibid.*

1. Flying Training	**70 hours**
Transition—Advanced Trainers (TE) in Basic Course	(6)
Transition—Advanced Trainers (TE) and Combat Types, if Available	22
Day	12
Night	10
Formation	18
Day	10
Night	8
Above 15,000 feet	(5)
Navigation	15
Day	6
Night	9
Above 15,000 feet	(5)
Unit Navigation and Search Operations	(4)
Instrument (Under Hood)	10
(Link Trainer)	(10)
Bombing	5
Day	4
Night (at least one mission)	1
Total Flying	**70 hours**
Total Link	**10 hours**
2. Academic Instruction	**77 hours**
Chemical Warfare Defense	1
Air Forces	20
Armament, Gunnery and Bombing	23
Photo Interpretation	4
Navigation	20
Aircraft Identification	4
Identification of Naval Forces	5[36]

On 30 November 1942 the Special Committee appointed by the Superintendent on 15 October to investigate a three-year curriculum accepted the foregoing flying program. It also believed the air cadets should live at Stewart Field when flying took up all their time and they had no academic instruction. While the students were at Stewart Field "the commandant of the flying school should have complete responsibility for their training, discipline, and administration, the same as if the cadets were at some other flying school."[37] The Department of Tactics of the Military

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] "Rpt of a Special Committee Appointed by the Supt, 15 Oct 42 . . ." 30 Nov 42.

Academy had completed a special study on the allocation of time: (1) under the four-year program; (2) one for air cadets under the three-year program; and (3) one for the ground cadets under the three-year program. The committee recommended that the two three-year programs be adopted. Following are outlines of the program prepared by the Department of Tactics:[38]

Four-Year Course:

Time Classification	Number of Hours	Percent of Whole
1. Academic	6,349	18.3
2. Academic Classroom	3,024-1/4	8.7
3. Tactical	1,584-3/8	4.7
4. Ceremonial	189	.5
5. Physical Instruction	238.7	.7
6. Total Tactical	2,011-3/8	5.9
7. Total Duty Time (sum of 1. and 6.)	8,360-3/8	24.2
8. Free	20,361-1/8	58.8
9. Lost	5,886-9/20	17.0
10. All Time, Admission to Graduation	34,608	100.0

Three-Year Course, Ground Cadets

Time Classification	Number of Hours	Percent of Whole	Loss or Gain from Four-Year Course			
			Loss		Gain	
			Hours	Percent	Hours	Percent
1. Academic	4566-3/8	17.9	1,782-5/8	28.1	--	--
2. Academic–Class	2,164-5/12	8.5	859-5/6	28.4	--	--
3. Tactical	1,784-1/2	7.0	--	--	200-1/8	12.3
4. Ceremonial	94-3/4	0.4	94-1/4	49.9	--	--
5. Physical Instruction	344-7/8	1.3	--	--	106-7/8	44.9
6. Total Tactical	2,224-1/8	8.7	--	--	212-3/4	10.3
7. Total Duty Time (sum of 1. & 6.)	6,790-1/2	26.6	1,569-7/8	18.8	--	--
8. Free	14,207	55.6	6,154-1/6	30.3	--	--
9. Lost	4,562-1/2	17.8	1,3[illegible]3-19/20	22.4	--	--
10. All Time Admission to Graduation	25,560	100.0	9,048	26.1		

[38] *Ibid.*

Three-Year Course, Air Cadets

Time Classification	Number of Hours	Percent of Whole	Loss or Gain from Four-Year Course: Loss Hours	Loss Percent	Gain Hours	Gain Percent
1. Academic	4,098-1/8	16.1	2,250-7/8	35.5	--	--
2. Academic Classroom	2,010-5/12	7.9	1,013-5/8	33.5	--	--
3. Tactical	1,056-1/4	4.1	528-1/8	33.6	--	--
4. Ceremonial	63-3/4	0.2	125-1/4	66.3	--	--
5. Physical Instruction	301-5/24	1.2	--	--	63-5/24	26.6
6. Total Tactical	1,421-5/24	5.5	590-1/6	29.6	--	--
7. Air Time	1,130-1/2	4.4	--	--	1,130.1/2	--
8. Total Duty Time, (sum of 1, 6, &7)	6,649-5/6	26.0	1,810-13/24	20.5	--	--
9. Free Time	14,036-2/3	54.9	6,324-1/2	31.9	--	--
10. Lost Time	4,873-1/2	19.1	1,012-19/20	17.2	--	--
11. Total Time	25,560	100.0	9,048	26.1		

In the meantime, the Superintendent, acting upon the suggestion of Secretary Stimson, established a board of Army officers and distinguished civilians "to study and make recommendations to the Superintendent, United States Military Academy, for later consideration of the Secretary of War, regarding any changes considered necessary or desirable in the curriculum of the U. S. Military Academy during the present emergency due to a reduction in the course from four to three years." The board members were Dr. Ernest H. Hopkins, President, Dartmouth College; Dr. Karl T. Compton, President, MIT; Maj Gen Harold R. Bull, Army Ground Forces; Brig Gen Clarence R. Huebner, Services of Supply; Brig Gen Idwal H. Edwards, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, War Department; and Col George F. Schlatter, Army Air Forces.[39]

The board convened at the U. S. Military Academy on 7 December 1942. It visited various academic and tactical training activities and consulted with the Superintendent and his staff. The Superintendent made available to the board the report made by his Special Committee on 30 November 1942. On 9 December 1942 the board reported to the Superintendent. Concerning the Flying Training Program, the board stated:

> The course in Flying Training was designed around the four-year course. As that course was planned the Air Cadet would have lost practically no academic instruction, but would have lost 925 hours of the tactical training in other Arms which Ground Cadets would have received. Under the three-year course, the Air Cadet will lose 1,014 hours of academic instruction as compared with a loss by the Ground Cadet of 763 hours and will lose 986 hours of tactical

[39] Memo, Supt, USMA, 2 Dec 42.

training as compared with the loss of a Ground Cadet of 306 hours. The reduction from the four-year to the three-year course results in a net loss to the Air Cadet of 1,014 hours of academic instruction and 61 hours of tactical training other than Air Force training. The difference between Air and Ground Cadets of 251 hours of academic instruction and 680 hours of tactical training other than Air Force is compensated by 257 hours of Air Force academic instruction and 205 hours of flying instruction which Air Cadets receive. The Flying Training Course is still largely in process of development and the full effect of the curtailed schedule on the training of the Corps is not yet apparent. The Board recommends that this effect be closely followed with a view to a re-examination of the extent to which flying training should be given. [40]

The board unanimously approved for the duration of the hostilities the three-year program previously recommended by the Superintendent's Special Committee. Under this program air cadets would not receive the following instruction given to the other cadets: [41]

	Hours
Statistical Theory	27
Physics	28
Chemistry	18
Political History and Government	23
Foreign Languages	15
Graphics	12
Military History	4
Military Engineering	14
Ordnance	12
English (Public Speaking and Instruction for Instructors)	9
Electricity	25
Fluid Mechanics	17
Thermodynamics	25
Economics and International Relations	11
Law (Elementary, Constitutional, and Military)	11
Total	251

Air cadets were not required to take the following ground training: [42]

[40] Rpt of Board of Officers and Distinguished Civilians . . . , 9 Dec 42.

[41] Memo, Deputy Chief of Staff, to General Arnold, Subj: Difference between Instruction of Air Cadets and Ground Cadets at West Point, 19 Jan

[42] Comment No. 2, Director of Training to Chief of Air Staff, Subj: Program of Instruction and Course of Studies, 19 Jan 43.

	Hours
Dismounted Drill	7
Extended Order	1
Tactics and Technique	94
Maneuvers	70
Field Artillery Training	21
Practical Military Engineering	16
Practical Training Methods Instruction	36
Conducting Training Underclasses	117
Military Intelligence	4
Practical Instruction at Training Centers	117
Duty with Tactical Units	47
Special Operations	6
Movement by Motor	4
Movement by Rail	2
Movement by Water	1
Domestic Disturbances	2
Training Management	6
Orientation-Commissioned Officer	2
Specialized Branch Instruction	128
Inspections	12
Ceremonies	18
Total	711

They would, however, receive instruction in the following subjects:[43]

	Hours
Chemical Warfare Service	3
Aircraft Identification	21
Navigation	56
Weather	50
Aircraft and Engines	45
Code	20
Armament, Gunnery, Bombing	25
Air Force, Tactics and Operations	20
Communications	10
Photo Interpretation	2
Identification of Naval Forces	5
Total	257
Flying	205

[43] *Ibid.*

Flying Cadet Receiving Instructions in Link Trainer (USAF Photo)

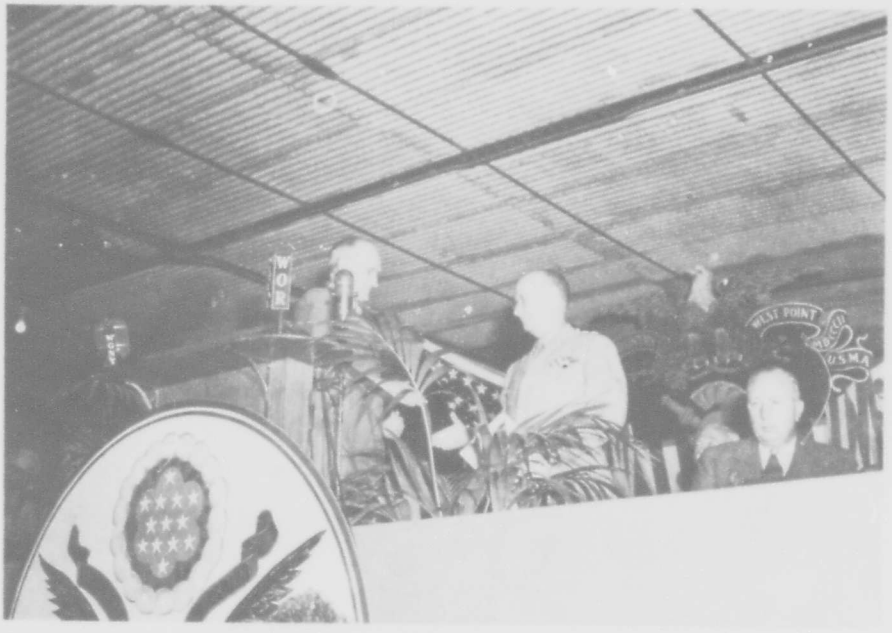
Aviation Cadets Benjamin R. Hicks, Durant, Oklahoma, left, and Patrick M. Armstrong, Jr., Luling, Texas, right, listen intently as Lt Maurice Rosener gives them last-minute advice before take-off on their first cross-country flight from Randolph Field, Texas.

Training – Randolph Field, Texas – Flying Cadets have just reported to Randolph Field, Texas and received last-minute instructions from flight commander. (USAF Photo)

Cadets with Flight Instructors at Stewart Field, 25 August 1942

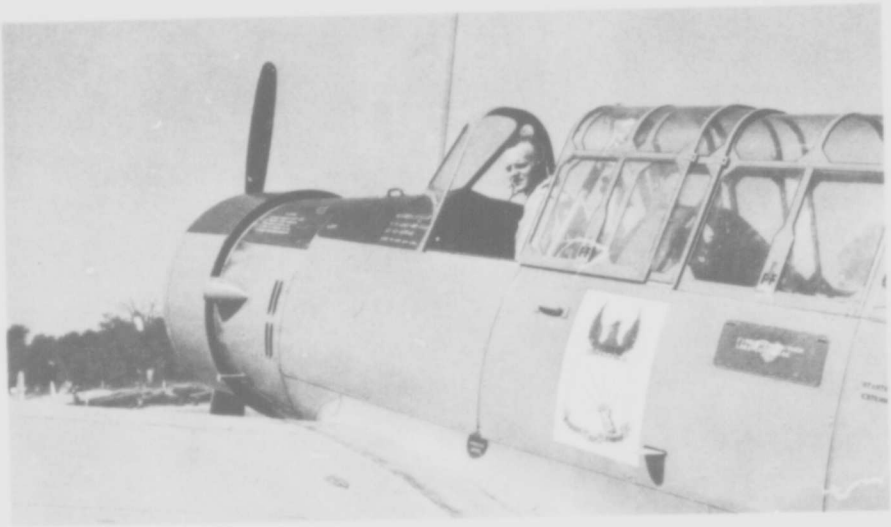
Cadets with Flight Instructors at Stewart Field, 25 August 1942

Cadets Lined Up in Front of Planes at Stewart Field, 25 August 1942



Dedication of Stewart Field, 25 August 1942

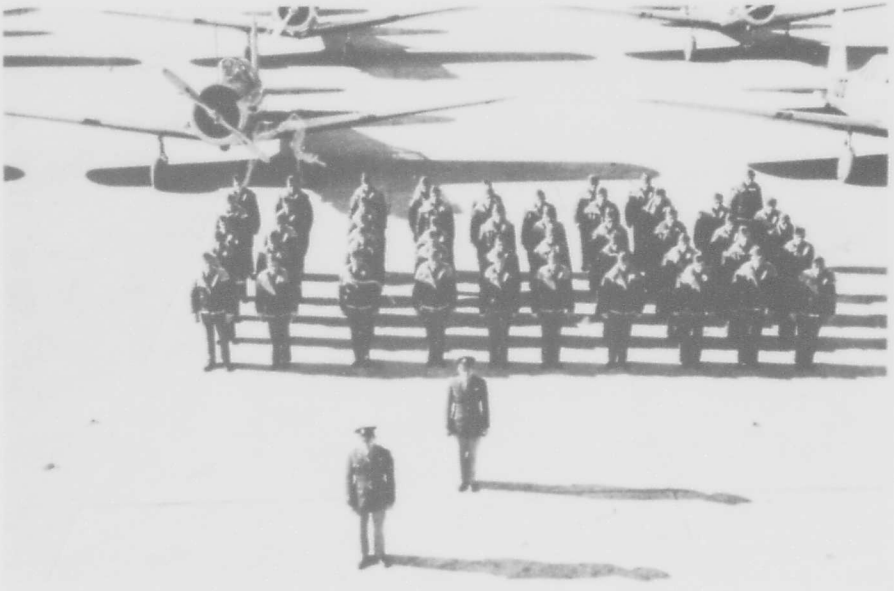
Cadets with Flight Instructors at Stewart Field, 25 August 1942



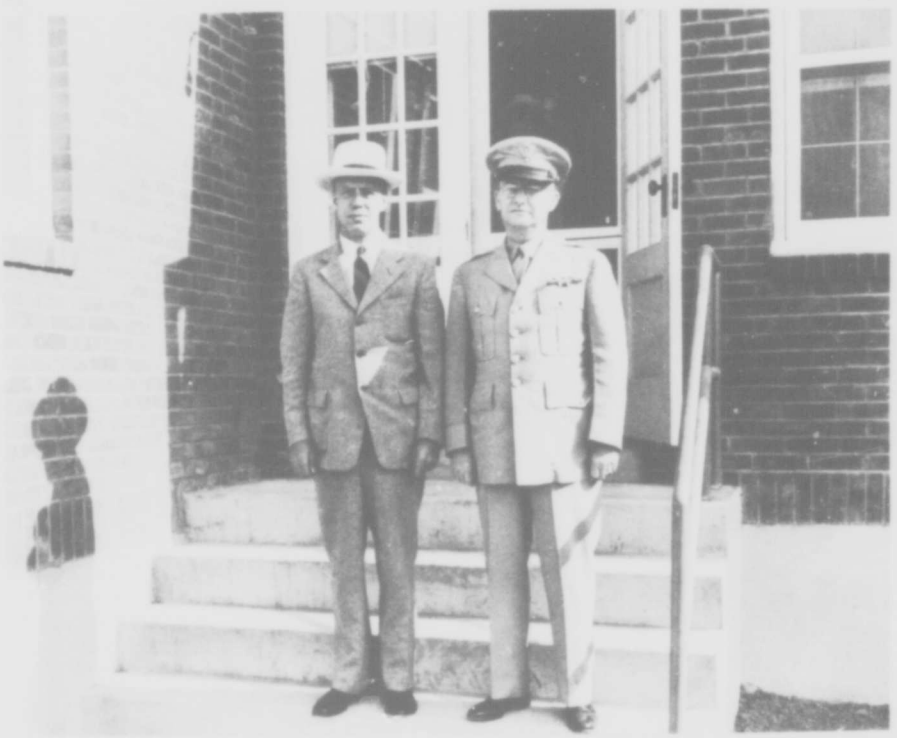
Cadet at Cockpit of Plane at Stewart Field, 2 November 1942

Training – Flying Cadet Receiving Primary Flying Instructions, Randolph Field, Texas
(USAF Photo)

BT–13 Training Plane at Stewart Field, 2 November 1942



Cadets with Parachutes on Concrete Apron, 19 November 1942



Under Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson and Superintendent Wilby at Stewart Field, 6 September 1942

Main Entrance to Stewart Field, 19 October 1942

Cadets Receiving Parachutes at Stewart Field, 22 September 1942

Main Entrance to Stewart Field, 19 October 1942

The difference in academic hours for the two categories of cadets resulted from the fact that during certain portions of the academic year air cadets would take flying training and miss academic course work given during those periods.[44]

In January 1943 the United States Military Academy graduated the Class of 1943, the first class to graduate under the wartime accelerated program. The ground cadets were able to complete approximately one-half of their First Class Year, which was most desirable as important professional subjects were taught during that year. The air cadets remained at civilian airfields until graduation. Of the 410 cadets who received their diplomas and commissions, 164 earned the silver wings of a pilot.[45]

The curriculum of these air cadets included courses in chemistry, modern languages, mathematics, physics, history, military art, military engineering, military history, mechanics (including thermodynamics and fluid dynamics), ordnance, economics, government, military topography and graphics, military administration, theory of flight, weather, and the tactical employment of Air Forces.[46]

Each air cadet spent an average of 150 hours in the air and devoted approximately 93 hours to ground school instruction. The ground courses covered code, navigation, meteorology, aircraft and naval identification, communications, gunnery (single-engine students), bombing (twin-engine students), and pilot's information file. Each student was given about 20 hours of Link trainer instruction. The single-engine cadets also received 15 hours of actual gunnery practice and an average of one hour of transition flying in combat planes.[47]

On 1 June 1943, 206 (66.5 percent) air cadets completed both basic and advanced training courses and graduated with wings. Of the 39 cadets failing to complete the course, 15 were eliminated for flying deficiency; 16 withdrew at their own request; 2 were eliminated for physical deficiencies; 2 were transferred elsewhere after graduation for completion of the flying training; and 4 were fatalities. Some of the cadets, upon realization that flying training obligated them to select the Army Air Forces as their branch of service, voluntarily gave up their flying training. With this group excluded, the percentage finishing the course would have been 71.3 percent.[48]

Certain modifications in the academic instruction for the flying cadets are of interest. In Fiscal Year 1944 there were no changes in the mathematics courses until 12 April 1944 when the air cadets departed for flying training. The air cadets in the upper sections finished calculus but did not have

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[44] Three-Year Course, United States Military Academy Based on Recommendations of Special Committee, n.d.

[45] Dillon and Frier, "History of Stewart Field."

[46] Capt Charles D. Frazer, "Wings of West Point," *Air Force* (Dec 42), p. 22.

[47] *Annual Rpt of the Supt, USMA*, Fiscal Year 1943, p. 23.

[48] *Ibid.*

statistics. The flying cadets in the lower sections had neither instruction in differential equations nor general reviews. Flying cadets "who reverted to ground status and returned individually to West Point before the end of the term were not held responsible for the work which they had missed." [49]

Chemistry was taught to 485 air cadets of the Third Class from 1 September 1943 to 22 December 1943. A Third Classman was not allowed to select air training unless he was proficient in chemistry on 22 December 1943. [50]

The electricity course for the 182 First Classmen taking flying training ran from 1 September 1943 to 12 May 1944. This group was not divided into upper and lower sections and was not given general reviews. The course for the 295 ground cadets ran from 1 September 1943 to 1 June 1944. [51]

In the summer of 1943 the strength of materials course was given to the air cadets of the Class of 1944 and washouts who had missed the course in the spring of 1943 because of their absence on flying training. These cadets were given the course at this time "in order to enable them to start even with the Ground Cadets in September and avoid the necessity for running separate courses for Air and Ground Cadets." The air cadets received their instruction at Stewart Field while the washouts received their instruction at West Point. The air cadets of the Class of 1945 took mechanics from 29 December 1943 to 11 April 1944; the ground cadets of the class took the course from 19 January to 1 June 1944. Following is a comparison of the course content for the two groups of cadets.

Air Cadet
- 21 periods of Analytical Mechanics (Statics)
- 23 periods of Resistance of Materials

Ground Cadets
- 22 periods of Analytical Mechanics (Statics)
- 24 periods of Resistance of Materials
- 12 periods of Analytical Mechanics (Kinematics)

The air cadets received the course in kinematics during the summer of 1944 at Stewart Field while the washouts were given the course at West Point in the evening in the same manner as strength of materials was given to the air cadets and washouts of the Class of 1944. [52]

The departure of the Third Class air cadets for flying training on 12 April necessitated their missing some of the laboratory work in physics as well as all of the general reviews in the spring term. They did, however, complete all of the advanced lessons of the basic course. [53]

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[49] *Annual Rpt of the Supt, USMA*, Fiscal Year 1944, p. 5.
[50] *Ibid*. p. 7.
[51] *Ibid*. pp. 7–8.
[52] *Ibid*, pp. 9--10.
[53] *Ibid*, pp. 11-12.

Both the Third Class air and ground cadets in Fiscal Year 1944 received the following instruction in history:

Modern European History	63 periods
American Government	18 periods
Governments of the Major Foreign Powers	11 periods

The ground cadets also received a course in Far Eastern history consisting of 22 periods. Cadets eliminated from flying training were given a special and supplementary course in Far Eastern history. "This special course was conducted as a seminar discussion and research report group."[54]

The air and ground cadets received substantially the same course of instruction in Law.[55]

During July and the first week of August 1943 the First Class ground cadets (Class of 1944) received three weeks of training as instructors of the Third and Fourth Classmen and "ten days of duty as instructors of enlisted trainees at selected Replacement Training Center."

Upon their return from primary flying schools early in July 1943, the air cadets of the Class of 1944 were given further flying training at Stewart Field until the end of August. During the academic year they received separate courses in unit administration, physical training, and leadership. Of necessity, their course in tactics of the combined arms was limited to only eight periods.

In the summer of 1943 the military training of the air and ground Third Classmen (Class of 1945) was the same. The members of this class who had volunteered and were physically qualified for flying training departed from West Point on 13 April 1944 for primary flying schools in the Gulf Coast Training Center. Cadets who washed out reverted immediately to ground cadet status and returned to West Point.[56]

On 1 July 1943, 222 members of the Class of 1944 started basic flying training at Stewart Field, having previously completed primary training at other airfields. The training was in advanced single-engine and twin-engine planes. On 6 June 1944, 170 (67 percent) graduated from the Military Academy with wings. They averaged approximately 210 hours of ground school instruction in navigation, weather, radio communication, radio code, aircraft recognition, instruments, bombing, naval craft recognition, and pilot's information file. In addition they averaged 30 hours in the Link trainer, fighter students averaged two hours in the Gunairstructor; and bomber students spent three hours in the bomb trainer.[57]

In November 1943 the Military Academy administered a physical examination to the Class of 1945. The report on each cadet was accompanied by a statement on the part of the cadet stating his preference concerning flying training. The following tabulation shows the results of this test.

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[54] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[55] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 16.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

Physically qualified and desiring flying training	528
Physically qualified and not desiring flying training	190
Physically qualified, undecided as to taking flying training	4
P Physically disqualified	159
Not examined (in hospital)	2
Rated pilot prior to admission	1

Not all of the 528 cadets who had expressed a preference for flying training made it their final choice. The decrease was a result of "a more thorough and conscientious consideration of their choice by a number of cadets whose November decisions were based on unsound reasoning." [58]

Ultimately, on 17 April 1944, 467 air cadets of the Class of 1945 left the Military Academy to take their primary flying training at schools run by the Central Flying Command.[59] In addition, two Negro cadets were to take their primary training at Tuskegee Institute. The primary training of the air cadets was identical with that of the aviation cadets, the name given to other flying training students. It included 60 hours of flying training and 96 hours of ground school. The latter instruction included 15 hours of aircraft recognition, 18 hours of principles of flight, 21 hours of navigation, and 42 hours of aero-equipment. Of the 467 cadets entering primary training, 119 washed out and 348 completed the instruction. The elimination rate was 25.9 percent. The cadets returned to Stewart Field on 30 June 1944 for their basic training.[60]

One of the problems encountered in conducting basic training at Stewart Field was the weather. Because of this, the training at West Point was seasonal in nature. The air cadets of both the Classes of 1944 and 1945 started their basic training early in July and were graduated at the end of August. The Class of 1945 started basic training on 3 July 1944 and finished the course on 31 August. Of the 348 men entering the course, 294 completed it and 52 were eliminated. Three of the air cadets were killed in training accidents. The elimination rate of the Class of 1945 air cadets was 15.8 percent.[61]

Since the air cadets of the Class of 1945 would not start the advanced phase of their flying training at Stewart Field until the spring of 1945, provision was made to give them enough flying training to keep them in practice. The schedule for this training provided for a six-months' course in AT-6 type aircraft, with trainees taking one flight per afternoon and averaging one and one-half afternoons per week for a minimum of 30 hours[62] to maintain proficiency.

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[58] "History of the Army Air Forces Training Command, 7 Jul 43 – 31 Dec 44," pp. 1333–1334.

[59] *Annual Rpt of the Supt, USMA*, FY 44.

[60] "History of the Army Air Forces Training Command, 7 Jul 43 – 31 Dec 44," pp. 1320–1322.

[61] *Ibid.*

[62] *Ibid.*

Headquarters Army Air Forces assigned the percentages of West Point cadets going into advanced training at 64 percent for twin-engine training and 36 percent for single-engine training. Many of these cadets could not meet the physical qualifications established by the Training Command and the Army Air Forces for flying training. Of the Class of 1946, 30 could not meet the minimum height and weight requirements for four-engine training; 61 exceeded the maximum height and weight requirements for single-engine fighter training; and 203 could not qualify for training in any type of airplane. Headquarters Army Air Forces refused a suggestion that Stewart Field be granted the authority to make selections for flying training "without reference to the physical considerations." However, the minimum weight qualifications for four-engine training were lowered from 150 pounds to 140 pounds.[63]

Difficulty was experienced in setting up an advanced flying training program at Stewart Field because of a shortage of suitable aircraft. In October 1944 it was decided to utilize AT-6 type aircraft for the training of the Class of 1945. The class was not divided into single- and multi-engine training groups until after the men had graduated with wings. The new program for flying training at Stewart Field covered 11½ weeks and included 87 hours flying time, 20 hours in the Link trainer, and 2 hours in observation training. Following is a summary of the ground school program:[64]

Ground School Subjects	Hours
Aero-Equipment	12
Armament and Gunnery	6
Bombing	8
Code (aural and visual)	10
Flight Planning	3
Instrument Flight	3
Navigation	18
Radio Communication	10
Aircraft Recognition	15
Naval Recognition	15
Weather	18
Total	118

As developed by the middle of 1945, the primary training program for West Point cadets was nine weeks in duration, as compared to a 15-week program for regular aviation cadets. Although the flying instruction was the same for both groups, the West Pointers had a shortened ground school program. They did not have to take the courses in analysis of maneuvers,

[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 1324–1325.
[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 1326–1327.

code, and personal equipment required of aviation cadets. On the other hand, they had a 15-hour course in aircraft identification which was not required of aviation cadets.[65]

Similar differences developed in the basic flying training programs of the West Point air cadets and the regular aviation cadets. Although both groups had the same flying training requirements, there were considerable differences between their ground school programs. Following is a summary of the ground programs of the air cadets and aviation cadets.[66]

	Air Cadets	Aviation Cadets
Weather	32 hours	18 hours
Navigation	24 hours	24 hours
Code	20 hours	14 hours
Radio Communications	10 hours	14 hours
Instrument Flying	13 hours	16 hours
Aircraft Recognition	15 hours	Not required
Aircraft Engineering	Not required	18 hours
Personal Equipment	Not required	1 hour

It will be remembered that a decision had been reached that the air cadets would receive their advanced training in single-engine aircraft. This phase of their training called for a training period of 11 weeks as compared to 15 weeks for the aviation cadets. Their flying training totaled 82 hours as compared with 100 hours for the aviation cadets. The West Pointers' advanced ground training program called for 126 hours of instruction, stressing aero-equipment, navigation, weather, code and radio communication, and recognition, with lesser amounts of time being devoted to gunnery, bombing, flight planning, and instrument flight. The standard pilot training course called for a total of 112 hours in ground school, stressing a composite course in armament, gunnery, dive bombing, and rocket-firing (a total of 36 hours), flight planning, navigation, and code, with smaller amounts of time being given to cruise control, practical maintenance radio equipment, and personal equipment.[67]

Mention has been made of the maintenance of proficiency phase of the training given to the West Point cadets during the winter months. "Distinctive curricula were eventually developed for West Point trainees transition training." As of March 1945 their fighter transition program called for a five-week period of instruction, the same as that of the ordinary

[65] "History of Army Air Forces Training Command, 1 Jan 39 – VJ Day," pp. 1179–1180.

[66] *Ibid.*, pp. 1180–1181.

[67] *Ibid.*, pp. 1181–1182.

aviation trainees. Although the flying instruction was the same for both groups, the ground school program for the Military Academy students was modified in order that they might have additional instruction in recognition of aircraft naval vessels.[68]

As of March 1945 the B-25 transition program for the West Point cadets called for a five-week course as compared with the 10-week course previously given to standard trainees. The students received 50 hours of flying training and the same amount of time in ground school work. The latter included a five-hour course in recognition. Following the successful completion of the B-25 course, the students passed into the regular four-engine transition phase.[69]

The elimination of West Point cadets from the flying training program posed a serious problem in the early days of the program. "The Academy was sensitive concerning this subject." In the summer of 1942, West Point officials visited the Training Centers and obtained "informal concurrence" to a proposal "whereby a cadet considered for elimination from training for flying deficiencies would be ordered away from the school prior to formal review of the Board Proceedings in his case by Training Center Headquarters." The Training Command, however, opposed this policy. The Military Academy rechecked those cadets eliminated at Stewart Field in order to prevent discrimination against cadets who had "attended different elementary flying schools and who may have been washed out at certain schools without being given the same amount of flying time given at other schools." As a result, a number of West Point trainees previously eliminated were reinstated in flying training. Subsequently, however, the Training Command was granted final review authority in all elimination cases.[70]

In September 1944 the Training Command issued a study comparing the elimination record of West Pointers with that of regular aviation cadets. This study showed that in the first two classes the elimination rate of the Military Academy cadets was markedly lower than that of other cadets. "The elimination rate of the West Point cadets because of flying deficiency was only about half as high as that for aviation cadets, but the rate of elimination because of fear or upon the request of the trainees themselves was slightly higher among the West Point cadets." Self-elimination has been attributed to several causes. Since West Point cadets were ranked upon graduation according to class standing, some air cadets might have wanted to improve their class standing. Also, some West Pointers, after taking some flying training, might have found that they preferred a ground branch, knowing that in either case they could still be commissioned. The differences in overall elimination rates for the two groups were too slight to draw any significant conclusions. The overall elimination rates for United States Military Academy cadets as compared

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[68] *Ibid.*, p. 1183.

[69] *Ibid.*

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 1187.

with aviation cadets through October 1945 were 37.3 percent and 38.2 percent respectively.[71]

Although the three-year curriculum and the pilot training program were considered to be wartime necessities, it cannot be said that they were completely satisfactory. A member of the Military Academy faculty discussed their effects on the cadets' education, military and flying training, and such intangibles as Corps spirit, morale, and cadet life.[72] He noted that the three-year program had reduced the cadets' academic work by one-fourth. At the Naval Academy and civilian schools, this lost academic time could be made up by doing academic work during the summer months. At West Point this was impossible as the summers were devoted to military training. The air cadets stopped their academic work about the 10th or 15th of April in their Yearling year in order to attend the primary flying schools. All academic time was lost from then to June. As the program was organized in 1944, they stopped their academic work about 1 March of the First Class Year for a concentrated advanced flying course. This procedure had been adopted as "a former plan of mixing advanced flying with academic work throughout the winter was found to be most unsatisfactory and even dangerous as far as flying was concerned." In the opinion of the faculty member, both the flying and academic work suffered. The air cadets lost one term of the six remaining in the three-year program. Some of the academic departments offered separate courses for the air cadets; in others, the air cadets merely stopped when the time came and missed the rest of the course. The Department of Mechanics offered a special course at Stewart Field during the summer months, but this was not satisfactory while basic training was going on.[73]

The faculty member went on to say that during their First Class academic year, the air cadets flew every fourth afternoon in order "to keep their hands in between the basic training which ends in August and the advanced training which begins in March." This was not good from a flying point of view and further reduced the courses in law and economics.[74]

West Point, the faculty member believed, had devised the "best" military training program ever. However, since this program was given during the summer, it conflicted with the flying program and consequently was denied to the air cadets. In addition, the latter lost all tactical instruction from mid-April to June of their Yearling year and much of the afternoon work of the First Class Year. This work was "invaluable in making a graduate a real West Pointer–grounded in the fundamentals of all branches–fundamentals which are invaluable to a career officer." Furthermore, a serious "difference" was developing between the air cadets and the other students at the Military Academy.[75]

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[71] *Ibid.*

[72] Ltr, "Lin," Dept of Ordance, USMA to "Dear Bill," 25 Oct 44.

[73] *Ibid.*

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] *Ibid.*

The officer proposed the following procedures as the best solution to the problem:

> To my mind, the best solution is to give *all* pilot training after graduation. If this is too drastic for the Air Force to agree to, I would *insist* that advanced training came after graduation and try hard to give nothing but primary training at *Stewart Field* during the three-year course. In a four-year course, all cadets may well be given more *preflight* air training (including as much time in the air as possible); air cadets should get as little more as can be accepted by authorities. I am strong for making cadets West Pointers first and flyers afterwards.
>
> When the Air Force becomes a separate component of our armed forces, I believe they should establish their own academy. I would then try to get a number of graduates of West Point to transfer and become pilots after graduation and a number of Air Academy graduates to transfer to the Army—taking adequate courses in ground school after their graduation. No new academy can have the tradition and background of West Point, but by careful selection of personnel during the early years, a system based on the West Point system should be able to 'instill' Duty, Honor, Country to such an extent that the character and moral fibre of its output will approach the high level we strive to attain here.[76]

On 2 September 1945 envoys from the Japanese Government surrendered to Lt Gen Jonathan Wainwright (a Japanese prisoner for four years) on board the battleship *Missouri*. General Douglas MacArthur was present. The greatest war in history had come to an end. Airmen, soldiers, and sailors of the United States and the other United Nations had written a glorious chapter in the long history of man's never-ending struggle for peace and freedom.

General Edwards continued his opposition to the pilot training program. He told Major Holt:

> Some cadets figured that the boys who were taking flying training were getting a little bit better break. So, after the war, General Arnold also saw that it wasn't working out to the benefit of the Academy as a whole and it was discontinued at West Point. I happened to be back again . . . when it was discontinued in 1945, so that led me to take a rather strong position that there should not be pilot training, although training as a navigator would be very valuable and should be part of the course.
>
> Another thing that led me to that conclusion is that this flying training is pretty much of a mental hazard. The cadet is constantly bothered with such questions as: 'How am I getting along? I'm not

[76] *Ibid*. Italics in original.

doing so well on my flying.' A boy is inclined to worry about it and neglects his other studies. It just does not develop that state of mind that a student should have when he is taking an academic course.[77]

In December 1952 Brig Gen Dale O. Smith evaluated the Military Academy's wartime experience with pilot training. West Point's flying program went into effect following the decision to have the three-year program. This meant that the cadets had only the last 13½ months for additional flying training, which compared unfavorably to the Air Force's 1952 flying program, in which 18 months were devoted to flying training with but few purely academic courses. Also, the cadets received 225 hours of flying as compared to 350 hours in the 1952 program and 270 hours through the basic stage. Since West Point had integrated little or no ground school material into its academic and tactics curriculum, it was necessary to have 212 hours of ground school, making a total of 437 hours in the flying program. In order to accomplish this flying, West Point excused its air cadets from 144 hours of academics and 734 hours of military training in the summer. Bad weather and the 38-mile trip to and from Stewart Field accounted for a large percentage of the 878 hours thus made available. General Smith concluded, "From the built-in handicap, it appears that the West Point experiment was doomed to fail. . . ."[78] He felt that the flying program at West Point had suffered from the factors mentioned and also from the adverse attitude of Military Academy officers toward the program. He believed that the professional training of potential Air Force officers should center on flying training. "I maintain," General Smith said, "that knowledge and skill in the control of weapons of the air is just as essential in the professional training of an Air Force officer as is knowledge and skill in the use of infantry weapons to an infantry officer. . . ."[79]

It must be emphasized that the United States Military Academy furnished only a very small percentage of the rated officers required by the Army Air Forces in World War II. By 30 September 1945, 657 air cadets from West Point had been graduated from pilot training.[80] In the period between July 1939 and August 1945, 193,443 pilots had been graduated from the advanced flying schools and commissioned in the Army Air Forces. Approximately 124,000 students had washed out.[81]

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[77] Record of interview of Lt Gen Idwal H. Edwards by Air Force Academy historian in Washington, D.C., on 26 Oct 56, pp. 7–8.

[78] Memo, General Smith to General Harmon, Subj: Examination of Pilot Training for the US Air Force Academy, 15 Dec 52.

[79] Interview, Maj Edgar A. Holt with Brig Gen Dale O. Smith, Washington, D.C., 18 Apr 56.

[80] "History of Army Air Forces Training Command, 1 Jan 39 – VJ Day," VI, p. 1188.

[81] Wesley F. Craven and James L. Cate, editors, *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, VI, *Men and Planes* (Chicago, 1955), p. XXIV.

Chapter III

The Graduates Speak

Pilot training and the three-year program at the United States Military Academy had been born of wartime necessity. They had been heralded as two more means of furthering the war effort and defeating the Axis Powers. However, as has been seen, by the end of the war serious doubts had arisen as to the long-term value of the pilot training. Of necessity, the air cadets had taken much less academic work and military training than the ground cadets. Consequently, some people questioned whether the pilots would be as fully qualified as their nonflying classmates to make high policy-level decisions in future years. Was it possible that the immediate gain of additional pilots had been offset by the loss of fully qualified air commanders? By 1969, when the present study was undertaken, the Classes of 1941 through 1946 had gained a perspective of their wartime training, and it was believed that they themselves would be the best judges of its value. Accordingly, through the cooperation of Col Horace M. Brown, Alumni Secretary, U. S. Military Academy, a letter and questionnaire were sent to these graduates soliciting their cooperation in an evaluation of their training.[1]

In order to obtain candid and honest answers, the West Point graduates were assured complete anonymity. They cooperated magnificently.[2] The response exceeded all expectations and produced one totally unforeseen result: many respondents mistakenly thought that the Air Force Academy was considering a change in its curriculum. This colored their answers. Also, a considerable number of those questioned provided additional information which could well be of more lasting importance and significance than the replies to the questionnaires.

Of the 3,359 questionnaires sent out, slightly more than 61 percent were returned. Of the responses received, 70 percent were from officers who were either serving or had served in the Army—the rest from Air Force officers. Eighty percent of them had attained the rank of lieutenant colonel or higher. More than eight percent of them had attained general officer rank. Approximately 71 percent served on active duty for at least 20 years, and 45 percent were still on active duty as of 30 January 1970.

Thirty-nine percent of the responses came from those who went into flying training; 50 percent of these took this training as cadets at West Point. Eighty-eight percent considered their flying training valuable to them.

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[1] Ltr, Chief of Staff, USAFA to Graduates, USMA, 14 Nov 69.

[2] Special mention should be made of the assistance of Mrs. Grace Miller, Mr. Terry Sinskey, and Mrs. Frances M. Wigger, under the direction of Mr. George V. Porter, in collecting and correlating the responses to the questionnaire.

However, when asked if flying training should be part of a service academy curriculum, only 41 percent answered in the affirmative and 47 percent in the negative. Less than five percent of those responding to a question about the relationships between flying and nonflying cadets gave any indication that these were anything but good.

Of those responding, 75 percent were involved in the three-year program during World War II. Less than five percent felt that this shortened program had an adverse effect on their career, while more than 12 percent believed that they benefited by getting into action one year earlier.

A detailed analysis of the responses to the questionnaire from those who had taken the shortened program at West Point (Classes of 1943, 1944, and 1945) follows. Since not all returns were complete, the answers do not always total 100 percent. The classes graduating in January and June 1943 are considered as one group except in Table I. Because the comments volunteered by the officers are considered basic to an understanding of the flying training program, their remarks are included.

Table I

Military Academy Graduates

	Class of			
	January 1943	**June 1943**	**1944**	**1945**
Total Graduated	409	514	474	852
Army – Active	93	119	128	207
Air Force – Active	73	88	76	125
Retired	108	148	126	188
Civil Life	40	58	93	244
Deceased	95	99	50	87
Foreign (Living)	-	2	1	1

Table II

Responses by Class and Service

	Class of		
	1943	**1944**	**1945**
Number	429	258	463
Army – Percentage	61.5	65.9	68.9
Air Force – Percentage	39.2	32.9	31.0
Other Services – Percentage	0.4	1.2	0.1

Table III

Number of Years on Active Duty and Current Status

	1943	Class of 1944	1945
Active Duty		**Percentages**	
1 to 5 years	5.1	5.4	11.0
6 to 10 years	4.0	5.8	11.9
11 to 15 years	5.6	3.5	6.0
16 to 20 years	9.6	8.5	6.9
21 to 25 years	23.1	60.1	60.7
26 years and over	22.5	16.3	2.2
Current Status			
Active Duty	45.9	48.4	42.8
Retired	43.1	37.2	31.3
Resigned	8.4	13.2	22.7
Other	2.1	0.4	2.6

Table IV

Highest Rank Held

	1943	Class of 1944	1945
		Percentages	
Lieutenant	0.5	--	4.3
Captain	3.0	5.0	12.1
Major	5.4	7.4	7.8
Lieutenant Colonel	24.0	26.0	25.7
Colonel	51.0	52.3	43.8
Brigadier General	10.5	6.2	2.4
Major General and Above	2.8	1.2	0.6

Table V

Graduation Order of Merit

	1943	Class of 1944	1945
		Percentages	
Upper 20 Percent	25.6	24.4	26.3
Second 20 Percent	24.5	19.4	21.6
Third 20 Percent	25.6	31.4	25.3
Fourth 20 Percent	11.0	14.7	12.3
Bottom 20 Percent	11.2	8.9	12.7

Table VI

Rating Upon Graduation

	Class of 1943	1944	1945
		Percentages	
Pilot	38.0	28.7	29.6
Washed Out	13.3	10.5	13.6
Not a Flying Cadet	34.4	44.5	43.2

Table VII

Value of Flying Training at West Point

	Class of 1943	1944	1945
		Percentages	
Invaluable	9.3	7.8	9.9
Great Value	14.0	15.9	13.6
Valuable	13.1	10.9	17.5
Some Value	10.7	14.7	14.0
No Value	6.1	4.3	5.0
Not Applicable	51.0	48.8	44.3

Most of the former cadets, in their comments, considered the foregoing item, "Value of Flying Training at West Point," and the following one, "Effect of the Three-Year Program on Career," as parts of the same overall question. Consequently, the comments on these questions are considered together following Table VIII.

Table VIII

Effect of Three-Year Program on Career

	Class of 1943	1944	1945
		Percentages	
Favorable Effect	19.8	17.8	14.3
Little Effect	31.0	29.8	31.5
No Effect	26.8	38.8	41.5
Adverse Effect	8.4	4.7	5.6
Not Applicable	8.9	5.0	5.4

Comments

"From an undergraduate's academic standpoint–The 3 year reduced program with 50% of the 3rd year devoted solely to pilot training did hurt me badly in getting and holding a job in civilian life after leaving the service. . . . From a pilot trainee's standpoint–Here the tables were turned. Here I received a better-than-usual training both in ground school and in flying. . . ."

"Your failure to graduate cadets as qualified aviators places them at a disadvantage *vis a vis* the noncollege graduate aviator. If an officer is to spend his lifetime flying he should start ASAP. I can assure you, as a professional combat arms officer my training as a 17 year old infantryman was most helpful when I was commissioned several years later. Flying training, as a prerequisite for graduation, would help you to flush out the draft dodgers."

"I feel that the air cadet training detracted from mission of the military academy. Perhaps the three-year course made this more noticeable. Perhaps it was a personal preference, but I lost interest in the flying proposition and returned to ground cadet status after successfully completing basic training–quite a number of other cadets followed. Maybe there was too much ballyhoo. . . .

"I would argue for more across-the-board training or exposure for all cadets–and leave the flight training until graduation. . . ."

"Under conditions of war–earlier graduation (3 yr.) combined with completion of Flying Training prior to graduation from Academy–permitted me to move right out to a Combat Assignment–result of this prompt move permitted [me] to realize sufficient experience to become a [tactical squadron commander] . . . during World War II. Delay to learn would not have permitted accommodation of sufficient experience to have earned [squadron] . . . Command."

"I believe that the three-year program and the inclusion of pilot training into the WW II West Point program were well justified under the circumstances; and that under the circumstances, early graduation plus wartime experience favorably affected my career. However, I do not advocate a three-year program or the inclusion of flying training as a general practice."

"Being eliminated from flying training for physical reasons (nearsightedness) during advanced and shortly before graduation from USMA, I was initially at a disadvantage, having missed combat arms branch training–however, this was soon overcome and had no long-range impact. I still consider the air cadet training to have been a valuable experience, giving me a greater appreciation for 'the other half.' I do not believe that flight training should *follow* graduation, the undergraduate time, being devoted to academic and basic military subjects."

"I believe a limited flying exposure would be extremely useful, particularly to those cadets who have not fully made up their minds about flying. This perhaps should take the form of a primary program or a modified primary program 40–60 hrs.

"Under no circumstance would I recommend Flying training at the expense of academic training.

"The experience of those of us at West Point during World War II should not be regarded as a *good* indicator of what would be good at the Air Force Academy.

"As it turned out, by graduating early with Flying Training accomplished, we were in a position to get overseas in a hurry and so take advantage of the experience and promotional opportunities available in a combat area. For many of us this has undoubtedly helped our careers. I don't regard this as applicable to today's situation. Further, in today's environment full use of the academic time I believe very important to the future officer in the Air Force."

"My class was January 43. My flying training was not *at* West Point but at the West Coast Training Command bases Victorville, Merced, and Visalia. Our academic program was not three years, it was 3-3/4 years. We became available for crew and staff assignments far enough ahead of the first actual 3 year class, June 43 to provide us with World War II combat experience as squadron commanders and group and higher staff officers. In *my* career this fact had great effect but I cannot determine if it was adverse or favorable. I was one of the first temporary full colonels in my class, served four tours in the Pentagon and did not gain full promotion to permanent full colonel.

"I believe that for Air Force officers early attainment of skills basic to air operations is most important so that a maximum of the individual's experience will be acquired with an aviator's viewpoint. Beyond that I have found the interaction of personalities and opportunities is so far unpredictable and is really the area in which the judgment values of success or failure should be made. For example: if a man rubs senior officers the wrong way he should remain remote until he is one of them. What I am suggesting is that your courses in leadership and psychology seem more useful to me that [than?] the time spacing of flying training."

"The combination of the 3 yr course plus sufficient Flying (Pilot) training to become rated at graduation was too much. However, Flying training during the 4 yr course might be more compatible. The Flying training itself should be part of the overall military tactical training, and should not decrease the Academic training."

"Our basic and advanced flying training were conducted at West Point (Stewart AFB). Basic training was continuous with all our duties concentrated on one thing: flying.

"Advanced training was something else–nine months in duration time, shared with academics and other activities at West Point, long periods of no flying due to schedule and weather (in various combinations). The result was a very poor quality of pilot on the average.

"I would rate the value of flying at [West Point]. . . .

Basic – great value

Advanced – some value."

"I checked 'invaluable' but not because the training was at West Point. Trying to learn to fly and go to school at the same time made it difficult to do a good job at either."

"Even though I washed out, I consider the experience valuable."

"Made professional career as test pilot, hence invaluable."

"Completed Primary Flight Training at Hot Box [?] Field, Muskogee, Okla. in class of '42 June and began training at Stewart Field and summer summer '42 with basic trainers.

"Soon after Basic Flight training began we were notified all cadets who continued flight training must accept their commissions at graduation in the new Air Force instead of the Army. It should be understood that about 19 of our class resigned from flight training at that time because we had come to West Point for Army commissions. Several of us intended to continue flight training in the Army after graduation because we liked it, and several men did go into light aviation."

"Jan 43 training was not given at West Point, but while in cadet status. The achievement of pilot status upon or prior to graduation made no career difference except to effectively advance the date at which you could join an operational organization. In the WW II situation this was highly influential to promotion. In a peace situation this is not the case; there should be little value to early pilot status. Better concentration on academics should be more valuable."

"The extreme value of the flying training at West Point during the 1942–43 era was directly linked with the timing and early expansion of WW II. This training was particularly career valuable to members of the 1943 classes who otherwise would not have gained combat experience. During normal times (?) it is doubtful whether the value of flying training and consequent simultaneous disruption of academic life is justified."

"Value of flying training while at the Academy was in terms of the times–graduating as a pilot in June 43 made it quite certain and possible to gain combat experience during WW II.

"Flying training coupled with the shift to a three-year curriculum was almost disastrous academically in my case. I have never recovered in the scientific engineering areas. Otherwise the three-year program had no noticeable effect on my career.

"Flying is a mechanical skill that can be picked up easily after graduation. It requires concentrated effort and other than indoctrination should not be included in the Academy program."

"Flying training at West Point during World War II allowed early entrance into combat soon after graduation in January 1943. If flying training had come after graduation, then as a regular officer, I might not have been able to get overseas and into combat. Obviously, flying training at a service academy during peacetime would have a different influence or relation."

"I have always resented the fact that during the period of flying training (one year) which was an integral part of my training for combat has *never* been good for *longevity* or *retirement purposes*, yet non-Academy graduate (pilots) have benefited from the same training *throughout* their military careers."

"I'm not sure what the three-year program was, but if it was what prevented me from going overseas to combat on completion of my . . . training (B-17) in July 1943, it sure as hell interfered with my career."

"I found that although I had not gotten beyond 48 hours primary, it was sufficient to give me full appreciation of the flying officers' problem. This appreciation is sorely needed in the concepts of air-ground operations, air-to-air operations, etc., later in the ground officers' career."

"For some time I have been aware of the AFA planning of light training during cadet years. I can recall most vividly at West Point how this program broke across ties of good friends—of roommates and others. It set up also cliques within class groups that did not foster those things that USMA hoped to achieve. If . . . any interest in this I had seriously considered AF as a branch then but finally chose the Corps of Engineers. However, as a general recommendation, I do not recommend such a thing as flight training during the academic years. You might note that the Corps of Engineers has scheduled its professional training for its officers (in engineering that is) at a later time."

"The Air Force Academy has an outstanding academic record which would suffer if flying training was included in a four-year course."

"Give [them] primary but not their wings. . . . Save bulk of flying for post-grad work. I believe the way we train gunners and doughboys is the pattern to follow."

"All cadets should be given a familiarization course in flying small fixed-wing, jet and prop, and rotary wing aircraft."

"During the war flying training at West Point was invaluable to *me* because it enabled me to get into the war as a pilot before the war ended. [Pilot training] . . . after graduation would have delayed things so that I would not have had WW II experience.

"However, except for the light [aircraft] . . . flying which is OK, learning to fly should be a full-time business. As a result of flight training on a *part time* basis, my class had a very high accident and fatality rate and those of us who survived the first five years of active duty flying have to be grateful for a lot of luck.

"Another thought related to the thrust of this questionnaire–in my opinion the importance of being rated to career success in the USAF is diminishing rapidly."

"I firmly believe that a graduate who intends to become rated as a Pilot or Navigator should have his rating at the time of Graduation and Commissioning so that he can start on an equal footing with other Second Lts from established flying schools. This will equalize their Military Rank and Flying capabilities with other Non Academy officers."

"Answer [invaluable] refers to flying training, the fact that it was taken at West Point was insignificant.

"Three-year program was better for me because I had a B.A. degree prior to attending West Point."

"I answered . . . affirmatively mainly because the three-year course and flying training allowed me 'to get into the war.' Academically it would have been much better to have completed four solid years without outside conflict. From a Military Training standpoint, I was highly qualified to do my initial Primary Duty–Fly Airplanes–which I did for eleven years after Graduation by staying at Squadron level. To today's Air Force I would be more handicapped as a thorough Basic Education and Advanced Degrees are needed."

"Value of flying training was very great inasmuch as I needed to pilot an airplane in order to qualify for choice of Air Corps. Fact that this training was given at West Point was of no significance except it was Army's way of hurrying things a little. Net result was a few extra pilots a few months earlier and really was of no value to U. S. war effort. Fact that some of my class got a certain decent amount of combat experience through early graduation was of value to the careers of those individuals. Fact that entire class did not get more combat experience undoubtedly hurt entire class (survivors). Fact that many of my class as new graduates in Air Corps of Army were so poorly treated by grossly incompetent officers of various senior grades was probably just a fortune of war but some of the effects lasted entire career. Fact that I

and two classmates had virtually to beg on our knees for overseas assignment to active combat and that we got in on very end of the action was a terribly wrong way for the Army to permit Academy graduates to be treated.

"I surely might say that the three-year program was better for me and for my career than no program at all. The fact that a four-year program was shortened to three certainly deprived all cadets of a year of value. Yet the war was on and it was costly to one's career also that he spent any of the war years in cadet uniform instead of in combat action. It was distressing in my case too that on numerous occasions it was my ill fortune to be a West Point graduate simply because of the human element. In 22½ years of service I had one superior officer who was an Academy graduate. In all other situations I worked for non-West Pointers. The burden on me was great. There was so much under these circumstances that it fell on me to overcome and I simply got worn down and failed in two or three instances. In just these two or three situations where my rating officer resented or envied the fact that I was a West Pointer and held this against me it was enough to damage an entire career.

"Considering the very, very large-sized dollar investment which the U. S. Government puts into every graduate of one of its academies I think it is extremely wasteful repeat extremely wasteful that it permits such a relatively small return from each of these individuals once the individual is a graduate and that it permits such mis-treatment and mis-use of these men.

"Graduates of all academies upon graduation are ready to give all and more than all. They have every desirable quality. They have love of country and love of their service. They expect their service and their country to ask a lot and they would give, give, for every day and every year of a full career. But if my case is typical the mis-use, the mistreatment, the abuse comes early and comes steadily, and comes abundantly to the extent that I would not now recommend a service career to any young man."

"I flew about 1/2 way thru Primary–about 35 hrs in PT-19's. I was adequate but not good and did not feel at home in the air. So I voluntarily returned to Ground Status joining my classmates at Fort Benning, on June 6, 1944–D-Day.

"The experience of limited flying was very helpful to me. For example I later became a paratrooper and a jumpmaster and felt I could better understand the pilot's problem is putting us over the Drop Zone.

"I would not take anything for my Primary flying days. . . ."

". . . I have indicated that my West Point flying trainig was invaluable, yet I do not recommend pilot training at the service academies. . . . Therefore, some explanation is certainly appropriate. The case of my class must be viewed in the context of the War Years where the most direct route to combat was paramount. Flying training and undergraduate work are each a full time job; to mix them only detracts from both as it did in my case. Those of us in pilot training at West Point carried a minimum academic program, with no electives. In addition, our pilot training extended over fifteen months. We started with Class 43K but graduated with Class 44J."

"The training received must develop in the highest degree a sense of aggressive competitiveness–the single most successful attribute in the service."

"The main problem with my class of 1944 in combining flying training with the regular academic program was that the course had been cut down from four to three years yet no allowances were made for that insofar as reducing the academic requirements were concerned. The flying program thus became an extracurriculum activity. We flew on nights, weekends, and during times when the other cadets participated in athletic activities. The flyers were not relieved of the requirement to take examinations the day following a night's flying activity nor could they sleep in later as a result. Consequently, I lost a lot of sleep and I believe my class standing suffered due to my inability to study in comparison with my non-flying classmates. The flyers were also pretty much barred from the higher cadet military ranks because they could not devote the required time to these duties during their first class year.

"I am also convinced that from the Superintendent on down through his staff there was a determination to prove that flight training as cadets would not work and we were used as guinea pigs. The fact is that it did work. We graduated competent pilots while upholding the academy academic and military standards. Only one man lost his life as the result of a training accident despite the hazards of the program (bad winter weather at Stewart Field etc.)

"If it worked in a three year compressed program, I don't see why it couldn't work in a well-conceived four year program."

"My flying training was concurrent with the academics. There was a gap between basic and advanced due to the academic year. During this time only proficiency flights were accomplished. I do not feel that student pilots are advanced enough for proficiency flying to be effective and that such a plan is detrimental to their training and [morale?]. Thus I think that a full fledged flight training program should be continuous from start to finish and free of other academic programs. My comments are *not* directed towards smaller light plane flight training programs for determining aptitude or whatever the purpose. . . ."

"I certainly agree with a policy which allows *some* graduates from each Service Academy to transfer to another Service upon graduation but would oppose actual flight training at *any* Academy. Competition for time is too demanding if cadets are to be well-grounded in social sciences, humanities as well as science-oriented studies. Further it splits the student body and results in two different orientations. . . .

"I consider the flying training and 3 year course as wartime expedient. I didn't feel the loss of the year until I went to grad school."

"Being a member of the 3 1/2 year class of Jan '43 has perhaps given me an aggravated case view only. We essentially lost our flying cadet classmates for the last 3/4ths year when they concentrated on flying instruction elsewhere. When they returned just before graduation they were quite a bit different from the rest of us; they felt it and we felt it."

"My class at USMA, Class of January 1943, was an unusual one. . . . As the first class to graduate cadets 'with wings' and the first to initiate pilot training systems that undoubtedly improved with time and experience for later classes, it suffered the normal frustrations of most pioneering efforts. There was an almost total separation of flying and non-flying cadets, physically, academically and mentally during the period of flying training (i.e. from its initiation to graduation)."

"The WW II flying training program at West Point left a lot to be desired. The fundamental problem of flying an airplane is teaching and maintaining a degree of proficiency which assures safe flying as a minimum. The desired program then must be continuous. At West Point the Class of 1945 spent the fall and winter of 1944–45 'spinning its wheels' in buses back and forth to Stewart Field with many cancellations and what little flying was done was dual and dull. . . .

"The advantage, if any, to the WW II flying training at West Point was to get a few days in combat about nine months earlier than if they had taken the training after graduation. The three-year course also saved a year."

"Because I labored with joy as a member of the faculty at West Point for four years, my opinions may be considered to be loaded with an academic bias. I strongly favor a solid baccalaureate base, but recognize the many trade-offs which must be made in a military academy. Recognizing the need for early personal identification with the essence of your trade, I would recommend an all-student exposure to flight experience in light aircraft, concurrent with and followed by highly available extra-curricular flying activity in small fixed wing, powered and gliders. The program will surely be limited by money, but much more so by cadet time. The latter should continue to be largely occupied by books and all the other activities which form the–excuse the phrase–well-rounded man. Serious pilot training is a serious business and should be conducted apart (as it was largely in my time) from the academic life. If you intend to maintain the quality of education necessary to compete for the best young men in our nation, you can not afford to adulterate it with intensive pilot training. Leave that for the post-graduate commissioned environment."

"I think the flying training should be taken during the second and third summers at regular established flying centers. Those trained flying cadets then should have an adequate flying center near the academy to *maintain* their proficiency during the last academic year prior to graduation."

"The adverse effect on my career of the flight training was no inherent fault of the program. Simply because I was a wash-out (eardrum rupture), my time could much more profitably have been spent on ground duty training."

"I realize that there were good reasons for the abbreviated wartime course at West Point and for the inclusion of pilot training in the curriculum. But I would assuredly not recommend anything like it for the long peacetime pull. The short course produced a lot of graduates with inferior general education compared to those who went before and came afterwards. Flying instruction conducted at various times during the second and third years took considerable time away from academics and made matters worse. Furthermore, the caliber of training was spotty. It was not concentrated. It did not measure up to the programs of post-graduate training inaugurated after the war. . . .

"Pilot training should be the province of the postgraduate schools which are particularly well set up for the purpose of providing special, concentrated instruction. . . ."

"Pilot indoctrination and other activities associated with flying are appropriate during the service school—but not formal pilot training as such."

"I am against an accelerated course—and one which includes pilot training—even in a national emergency because:

1. I believe the academies are training future military and national *leaders*. It is not an OCS or a pilot training school situation. If the country is in such a hurry to gain the few hundred new officers coming out each year, then we are really in bad shape.
2. Shortened and diluted courses have no effect that is good. Academically, the cadet or midshipman suffers, and this violates number 1, above.

"Let's decide to *train* for the *future*. We can always handle the present with available resources. We need men with this training for 20 plus years after graduation."

"Our W.P. training in 3 years was condensed. The inclusion of the flying program was probably not condensed enough—as a result of trying to integrate air cadets and ground cadets into similar programs to the [greatest] extent possible. My opinion is that the proficiency building in an air cadet program needs to progress slowly and not fluctuate."

"My class, January 1943, was the only class to go through its complete flying training at places other than West Point. That was the best thing that could have happened to us. At the end of our third year at W.P. we were sent to Air Force training schools, and, upon graduating from there, returned to W.P. for two months prior to graduation on 19 January 1943. The six months we spent at flying schools really taxed our ingenuity as well as our ability to fly. As a result, when we graduated from W.P. we were much more able to assume the duties of a 2nd Lt. USAF."

"Although flight training at West Point (Stewart Field) was of great value, it is believed it would have been of even more value if it had been accomplished under normal circumstances at a regular flight school. The real advantage was in graduating with wings and one year earlier in order to join the opportunities for training and combat available during WW II."

"Recommend basic training only."

"Believe, if possible, that a certain amount of flight training be conducted at the Academy provided such training could be conducted during the summer months in lieu of such training as liaison with Army units, 3d lieutenant training and other training considered not so essential. My finest cadet days were in flight training with my classmates."

"As usual no questionnaire can tell the whole story–

1. I was selected for multi-engine U.S. fighter pilot. I wanted fighters[.]
2. I disliked multi-engine flying–like driving a bus or a truck. Dead!
3. The record may show I washed–I just didn't care to fly from the point of entering into multi-engine. Yes–I like *sports* cars today.
4. Seriously, the training was valuable–if nothing more than to indicate the highly technical disciplines that one must employ. I'm not sure it makes any better General officer out of you than does Engineering, Chemical Warfare, or other technical training. Only Command and managerial experiences and Schooling can do that."

"Flying [training] . . . and a rigid academy schedule just do not mix. This routine . . . killed 5 or 6 of my classmates. If cadets are given option to enter [flight training] 'off-campus,' check motivation carefully. They may be thinking of simply escaping the iron discipline of the Academy. These two points are, in my opinion, vital to any deliberation on flight [training] . . . during Academy tenure."

"Does not make much sense because the flying program was directed at award of a rating–not orientation."

"I believe every officer who has the physical and mental skills necessary should learn to fly a light fixed-wing aircraft and a light helicopter as well. Branch and service are immaterial; we should all learn. For tomorrow's military services, this skill should be as valuable as knowing how to drive, knowing how to swim, or knowing how to fire a rifle.

"I don't imply that each officer should follow a pilot's career; simply that he acquire a basic skill in flying if he can."

"Flying training put an extra discipline on the individual. It proved to be an excellent assistance to me in that I was able to participate and contribute in WW II as a trained professional officer and pilot."

"I'll never understand how my classmates and I survived the flying training at Stewart. Our accident rate was astronomic, but the fatality count was in the other direction.... I feel that it is fine to give the cadet some grounding in flying, i.e., navigation, weather, etc., but actual flying must be concentrated and not complicated by other academic or military demands."

"As one who washed out after 20 hours and 2 solo flights, I can't tell you what it does for my morale, some 25 years later, to be queried as a 'gray-haired wonder.'

"My impression at the time, observing classmates who completed flight training, was that flight and academic programs were not entirely compatible. Both are undoubtedly more demanding now than they were then and, I think, should remain separate."

"Flight training would be best in summer schedule–or better after graduation– Pressure too great for academic achievement and flying proficiency–

"Our class, class '45, for heavy bombers and what seemed to many of us the worst training–B-25's, B-24's, B-17's–all a few hours and no instrument or weight loading experience. A few of those who had to transfer to P-47's with little fighter time flipped over on landing turns–Lost a few classmates at Munich this way."

"To me the flight training was invaluable as well as a great disappointment. I am a service aviation brat and my 'wash out' in primary was quite a blow. The finality of it kicked any future thoughts of flight out of my skull and allowed me to concentrate on the ground combat arm. I feel that the greatest benefit of the short stint at flight was the appreciation for the feelings of the man in the sky and the knowledge that the flyer faces stresses much the same as his mud-kicking counterpart on the ground.

"The three year Training program cannot be measured in terms of career to me–rather in terms of education. I do not feel that mine was a competent degree in engineering. For the most part, the 1943 graduation did accrue some significant career benefit in experience and grades achieved in combat which is now manifested by the relative percentage of general officers currently filled by class June 43...."

"Do *NOT* think full fledged flying training and the Academy academic course mix–unless flying is de-emphasized to an extra curricular activity–such as gliding or brief T-41 training, i.e., 30 hours.

"I favor graduation from an Academy [and], *then* [followed by] full professional flying training."

"I observed that many of my friends (as cadets and later on as officers in the Army aviation program) look upon flying as an end in itself. When they reach the level where they are expected to do more than just fly–or little or

no flying, they were lost and not able to compete professionally. I recognize the Air Force's problem of qualification, motivation and proficiency. A cadet will put flying ahead of academics–and I think this is a mistake."

"I was concerned upon graduation that my skill as a pilot might not be up to that of graduates of the 'flying cadet' program. Our class had slightly more flying time than did 'flying cadets' upon their graduation, but it was spread over more than twice the calendar time. When I went through B-24 transition, however, I found that I was at *least* as skillful as the others. I suspect that 200 hours of flying training, whether spread over 18 months-or six months-is of equal value."

"My 3 years as a cadet gave me a fine academic background and a firm dedication to a life in the service. The reduced academic program required to make room for flying training produced a void not experienced by the ground force officers. In addition the lack of opportunity to serve as a 'Third Lieutenant' made transition to officer status difficult at my first duty station. Since most pilots today spend their first years in the cockpit rather than behind both a desk and a control cabin the way I and my classmates did, this factor may no longer apply. I believe primary flying should be given all cadets for many find they can't or don't want to fly. This will aid their job selection following graduation. I believe all cadets should be trained to be good *lieutenants*, not aspiring generals, and should get a good factual picture of a *lieutenant's* life in the Air Force. . . ."

"I believe that flight training is a full time job which can best be accomplished without other considerations. It should be given continuously without any academic breaks such as the seven-month period when we went back to school."

"In today's environment and that of the future, flying should be confined to after graduation.

"As the tank versus the horse, battleship versus the aircraft, the future is the satellite versus the aircraft.

"Flying should be relegated to that of extra curricular activity.

"Time in today's technology simply does not allow time for flying as a cadet."

"I was 'washed out' in the very first group of cadets who had elected flying training when they re-tested twenty of us for color perception. I was the first one tested–rejected. Never left USMA for primary."

"Flight training–very few of our instructors at Stewart AFB were USMA grads. Most of the instructors were self-conscious around cadets. A poor learning situation. In advanced training we should have had gunnery and bombing, aerial photography, or something more useful. The repetition was

too great and by the end of basic we were already good pilots. At present I am owner and operator of a fairly large flight school. I find that the military training system was much more efficient, except for the fact that too many good men were eliminated for poorly defined faults such as air sickness, or fear of flying. I now think that I can make anybody airsick; further that anybody who is not to some extent afraid of flying is psychotic. Something was wrong with our training safety-wise inasmuch as about 20% of our class was killed in aircraft accidents five years after graduation without having had any combat. Partially I attribute it to the fact that at West Point a very low score is given to individuality and solo behaviour. After graduation these pilots were given a plane and told to go fly it, leaving to the young graduate all decisions regarding weather, plane condition, in-flight terrain, etc. We may be going too far the other way now, especially in MAC and SAC with crew standardization *ad nauseam*. I would say that I could make a strong case for all service academy graduates having had flight training. Flight is as fundamental as riding a horse was in the last centuries or driving a car now. This includes Navy troops as well. The professional man and business man of the next decades will be a pilot if our governmental agencies ever get over the attitude that flying is for nuts who have no other way to kill themselves on weekends.

"Three year course–I was a goat, not because I'm not bright (IQ is 145 at last measurement) but because I had a very meager high school education with a year break before entering USMA. Compare that with my roommates who had 3.5 and 2.0 years of engineering in good civilian schools before entry. What a waste! They should have started at the outset on a curriculum leading to a master's degree in something. I should have been given some kind of screening tests and brought up to speed in whatever courses the service thinks it needs or courses where I had the highest aptitude. Setting entry requirements so high that a boy has to have two years of college so he can be comfortable and not disgrace his family by being dismissed for academic deficiency is a waste of national manpower. If discipline and honor are the major objectives of the academies, then forget some of the academics. I don't think that the academies change basic behaviour."

"I strongly agree with the shift, since my time, of the USMA emphasis to liberal arts. There is no question but that we received a superb education–but my additional post-graduate studies in psychology filled a definite void of the then current program.

"I would require every cadet (all thru academics) to get some light aircraft or glider training while still a cadet. Air Force pilot training, however, I feel should be post-grad (just as it must be for ROTC AF cadets). I feel artillery for the Army and ship handling for the Navy to fall into the same frame of reference. The Academies should expose cadets to these areas but train them in the humanities and engineering."

"General observation: Cadets should be able to take up gliding and light-plane flying *on their own*, as a hobby, if they so desire.

"MAKE IT FUN! The *last* thing some yearling needs is a gruff voiced 'military type' instructor 'teaching' him to fly a Cessna 'properly.' Keep him safe, but keep the fun angle in it too.

"Graduated as a 2d Lt Infantry (Armored Force). Entered pilot training in grade as a 1st Lt.

"In retrospect I wouldn't have done it any other way for the following reasons:

a. I got to command troops and had 3 years of responsibility for men and machines that I haven't had yet as a colonel in the USAF. An aircraft commander of a B-50, B-47, and B-52 may carry awesome responsibilities (along with those nuclear weapons) but it's a poor excuse for the satisfaction of command and responsibility for men at an early age.

b. By the time I entered flying training, it had become a deliberate choice, well thought thru, and not a spur-of-the-moment commitment.

c. I didn't have to divide my loyalties, attention, or physical resources between studying and flying—I could concentrate completely on flying. At West Point both of my roommates were Air Cadets and the toll this took on them was profound, even though they may not have admitted to frustration."

"The AAC (pre-USAF) officers assigned to the Military Academy in 1944–45 were singularly unsuited for that duty. Reflected badly on judgment of senior AAC officers who selected them for that assignment."

"While graduating in 3 yrs *with wings* was great (got into war, fast promotions, etc.), my Academic training suffered and the pressure of the last year was really tremendous.

"I think AFA grads will benefit in the long haul by having received a complete 4 yr. academic course.

"Flying training today is too sophisticated to allow concurrency with the normal academic regime. In addition, AFA cadets would miss the competition they now face in taking UPT with AFROTC grads. Also, command assignments on graduation from exclusive UPT would prove to be administratively difficult and no matter how fairly directed the AFA grad and the ROTC contemporary would be forever suspicious of one another."

"Flying training as conducted at West Point (Stewart AFB) for the six wartime classes placed a rather severe strain on the average air cadet, although few Air Cadets would have wanted to alter the approach taken.

"The training:

1. Shortened the Third Class year and diluted the academic program, in order to permit Cadet to depart for Primary Training in April of the year preceding graduation from USMA.

2. Placed the Air Cadet generally at a disadvantage with ground cadet classmates in the areas of study time, athletics, sleep, free time, extracurricular activities, and class standing (General Order of Merit). During my final year at West Point, while in pilot training, I dropped 36 places in the cumulative order of merit.

3. Diluted somewhat the academic value of the First Class year, by excusals from recitation (but not class preparation) and by reduced classroom performance and motivation due to fatigue (usually occasioned by illegal after-hours study in the halls).

4. Was welcome, in that it obviated the necessity for spending the first year of active duty going through pilot training.

5. Allowed the prospective pilot to determine, while still a cadet, whether he could 'make the grade' in pilot training. This eliminated in large measure the trauma usually associated with washing out of pilot training during the first few months of active duty and its effect on motivation and career selection for the 30% of my class who washed out (the alternate career field selection is usually made after 'wash out,' somewhat passively, in dispirited fashion and under duress as to time).

"Based on the above observations, I would not recommend the inclusion of pilot training in the AFA curriculum at any time in the future. However, a flying program (such as is now conducted) is of great value for motivational, psychological and screening purposes."

"Flying training (at least for me) required close attention concentrated over a relatively short period—

"Therefore, it cannot be integrated into the normal curriculum--For example–the 'maintenance of proficiency' during the winter of 1944-45 was useless to me and to most of my fellow cadets. We went backwards instead of holding our own.

"Only after acquiring a great deal of flying experience can one maintain proficiency over a long 'lay off' period."

"... Filled in with some reluctance. Careers of flying officers were advanced due to expanding requirements of WW II. On the other hand I feel that the loss of fourth year college academic training resulted in a deficiency in preparation for the long haul. Training in business and personnel management, business and military law, etc. is a must for competence in these areas during the span of a career.

"Other than familiarization with flying, I feel the specialized training required for flying should follow the building of a good educational foundation.

"The writer has been Director of Personnel Planning for the Air Force and has given the subject considerable thought."

"I believe efforts cannot be divided between academics and flying. The worst part of cadet flying was the long winter between basic and advanced–the once-a-week flying.

"My three year course was a detriment because the class of '46 was way ahead of me in SAC when I returned from overseas, and the class of '45 never caught up."

". . . Flying Training was invaluable because of the great raise in my morale when I found that I was going to be trained in my specialty while still there.

"I am not completely sure that the Three Year Program adversely affected my career except for the timing that was involved. Members of the Three and Three and one-half year classes immediately preceding my class of '45 are now General officers in large numbers in the Air Force whereas my class has only managed one General officer in this period. I feel that senior officers and people in positions of authority tend to look down on a short course class and feel that we are not as capable as people in the long classes."

"I still feel that the Military Academies should train Military Officers first."

"I attended flying training during my senior year and was 'washed out' in advance [training]. Upon my return to the Academy I chose Army (Signal Corps) and transferred to the Army Air Forces in 1947."

"Every Regular Air Force officer must be rated—even if he never serves with a flying unit. Since this qualification appears conspicuously on the uniform, it is the first thing you look for whenever you meet an Air Force Officer. Is it not the basic skill of the Air Force?"

"The flying training at West Point made for a difficult life indeed. The result was reduced effectiveness of: (1) flying training, (2) academic training at the Academy and (3) military, athletic, social aspects of Academy life. In brief, it added to the load on the cadet to the detriment of all activities in which he was involved. I strongly recommend against such a program unless it is accomplished during the summer months or is carried out for familiarization only. Either basis would be very valuable."

"I understand and agree that the compressed course and simultaneous flying training as a Cadet was necessary at the time and I was appreciative as it shortened my training period. I can now realize that a generalized officer training program with flying training at a later time would give an officer a better background. However, within the Air Force, the fact that some officers have a compressed course seems to have no bearing on their careers, as it is not considered as a pertinent factor."

"Value of Flight Training—invaluable to pilot. At West Point—the only option we had—therefore invaluable."

"I think the flight training I received at USMA was of value to me. Obviously, it would have been of greater value if I had gone on into the Air

Force which then would raise the question . . . Should the pilot training take place during your service academy time or after graduation therefrom . . . I believe some pilot training in some basic and small type aircraft should be offered at USMA if it was monetarily feasible. I am not thinking of a great pilot program but something along the lines of light aircraft training so as to give most graduates a better feel towards the use of fixed wing aircraft. This might have to be limited to those interested, or those headed for the combat arms, might include, also, some basic course in helicopter pilot training for others. . . ."

"Flying training for class of Jan '43, with one exception, was not conducted at West Point (Stewart Field). The exception was that 'A' Squad football players returned early and, therefore, received advanced pilot training at the Academy. . . .

"The value (or effect on my career) of having obtained a pilot's rating, *per se*, the answer is 'Invaluable.'

"The value of having received pilot training *while* still a cadet, as opposed to after graduation; the net effect was a six month head start in operational flying (at the sacrifice of not receiving more than a brief introduction, at most, to all 1st class academic subjects). From a total career viewpoint, this dubious advantage could be assessed as having 'some value,' at best."

"Pilot training is a concentrated course. One must fly often and continuously to gain from instruction received and to avoid accidents.

"If this is not possible during years at USAFA, then flying training should be limited to introduction or navigation only."

"Flying training provided a much-needed diversion but interfered somewhat with the high pressure academic program. I learned a great deal at West Point but did not use a lot of the information. Many Air Force officers in 1943–45 were 'wash-outs' from a Service Academy and seemed to resent those who were fortunate enough to complete the course. They made it rough by assigning additional duties and made it very hard on us in their effectiveness ratings. There is probably too much emphasis on 'spit and polish' at the expense of elective courses of instruction to broaden and enrich these dedicated future officers."

"The flying program as conducted in many contract schools was lacking in standardization and close supervision. Status of USMA cadets varied widely. Some were treated as 'dodos,' others as 'junior' officers. In some schools, honor codes were well supervised, in others completely lacking. USMA cadet reaction to flight training was strongly influenced by these individual experiences. In my case, I wanted out although I enjoyed flying, *per se*."

"Although my replies to some of the questions appear 'middle of the road,' I feel very strongly that a man should get on with his career at the

earliest possible date. The fact that flight training while a cadet had little effect on my own career, I attribute to my wartime situation and the post war drawing back which adversely affected the promotion system for a number of years. . . ."

"Sure, training was valuable because it was all I had—compared to training after graduation, it was less desirable.

"3 year program affected career by putting me in the swim 1 year earlier—a wartime situation.

"Assume you mean complete program ending as rated pilot—I *strongly* support T-41 training as now programmed.

"As a general comment under normal peacetime conditions, I do not think other than flying indoctrination should be given. UPT should come later—separate from academics—away from the academy—for flyers only."

"As a rated pilot my flying training regardless of where attained was valuable. As a commissioned officer the training did not influence my capability in any way at all.

"I have answered [that the three-year program] had no effect although my subsequent work in graduate school (MSEE Electronics) was more difficult because of the shortened course. It must be remembered that my class was the first three-year class and that our last two years of planned academics were condensed into one year in addition to receiving flying training. I do not believe that a planned three-year academic course eliminating some nonessential summer activities should be deterimental to an officer's career."

". . . The quality of the flight training was probably better than in other comparable schools. Particularly the exposure to winter flying and bad weather was good. However, other AF schools would have been adequate. The greatest advantage of the W.P. flight training was the fact that a long period after graduation was eliminated and we were able to quickly join tactical units and compete for advancement."

"I believe that flying training should be conducted after graduation. The Basic Training program mixed with academic training was particularly poor at West Point.

"The high accident rate in my class during the 12 month period after graduation can be attributed partly to the low flying proficiency attained during the flying training at West Point."

"My flying training was of very short duration at a contract flying school in California. I did not solo; however, the experience was worthwhile."

"The flying training program conducted at the Military Academy during 1942–43 was certainly beneficial as is most any learning situation in which

one makes an effort to make the maximum of the opportunity. However, I feel very strongly that those of us who were in the flying program at the Point were deprived of much more than we gained. Instead of having four great years of exposure to the great lessons to be learned and to have the opportunity take full measure of the traditions, the heritage of a great institution, it was our unfortunate lot to have had only two years and even that was cut short by flying training during the summer of 1942. Our last year at the Academy was some sort of nightmare with our classes cut short, some practically eliminated, and no opportunity to do much other than to go to classes and ride a bus to Stewart Field, fly, rush to ground school, return to the Academy, only to repeat the same over and over again. I am certain that the situation had a much more adverse affect on some of the others who were much younger than I and had not had the advantage of as much college level work as I had had prior to entering the Academy."

"I consider the WW II Flying Training program at West Point to have been a mistake; and, given the opportunity I will oppose the inclusion of any such programs planned for any of the service academies. In the first place, this training at West Point tended to separate the flying cadets from the non-flying cadets and the non-rated members of the staff and faculty; and later, this training outside of the AAF ATC schools worked against an easy integration with the contemporary non-Academy AAF pilots. In the second place, the demand upon the time and physical endurance of the flying cadets was unreasonable under any circumstances and quite inequitable in that flying cadets were not excused from any of the non-flying routines for time spent in the flying program. Finally, the flying training itself became diffuse, sporadic, and discontinuous under pressure of the New York winter and the demands of the academic program (this is of course, a specific comment on the winter of 1943–44, but is applicable to any winter season at USMA and USAFA). I learned the specifics of military training after I survived the West Point flying training program.

"Political expediency–which is what every shortening of a class normal four year program at West Point has proven to be–never produces the best long-run results."

"Training was valuable to me because I could immediately particpate with a tactical unit. Remember we had a war going."

"(1) While I was still a cadet at West Point, my flying training was a liability.

(2) The fact that I was a rated pilot (regardless of where I received flying training) was of great value.

(3) While great effort went into the flying training program at West Point, 1943–45, the off-again on-again nature of the program detracted from the value of the flight training. There was, however, a war on."

"During WW II there was a visible need to have officers in the Army Air Corps with West Point training. The three year program coupled with flying training within that three years was invaluable in reaching that objective. . . . "

"I strongly recommend against flying training at the Academy other than 30–40 hours of light planes. Flying needs full time effort, nonetheless it is a specialty–it is not education."

"Flight training could be optional at the U. S. Military Academy but do not feel that it should be mandatory for cadets."

* * * * *

The responses to the question concerning the relations between flying and nonflying cadets varied greatly ranging from excellent to poor. However, fewer graduates commented on the relations between the two groups. The following table summarizes the responses to the question.

Table IX

Relations Between Flying and Nonflying Cadets

	Class of 1943	1944	1945
		Percentage	
Excellent	20.0	24.8	27.9
Good	34.3	28.7	36.9
No Difference	36.0	39.1	29.6
Poor	7.7	5.4	4.5

The comments are illuminating as well as interesting.

"I considered the hazing approach of my flight instructor as an indignity, and I washed myself out."

"I do not feel that flight training as a part of the curricula causes any problems relations-wise within the cadet body. In our case at USMA, the decision was made to keep us integrated as much as possible. This is key to the relations issue. We learned each others problems by living them in all

ects of our daily life, and, I believe, we helped each other. Even today–26 rs later–June '43 is quite a close group and we in the Washington area, er the field from LTC to LTG. . . ."

'There was a 'difference' between flying and non-flying cadets, but not as d as 'good.' I would say it was 'mildly not so good.' "

'The corps of cadets . . . was definitely split, flyers and 'ground pounders' World War II era, for we as flyers wanted to get into combat as soon as sible while the non-flyers still had archaic ideas of air power employment illed by the army teachings and influence at West Point."

'Cadets should be together, study basically same courses, delve heavily humanities and specialize elsewhere–other institutions or in the field; but ommon background at the Academy provides similar base and broad ndation."

'. . . I had two roommates, one who made the flying program and now is Air Force officer (colonel) and one who for physical reasons, had to e the program (did not receive a commission upon graduation). In the years time as roommates, I saw essentially no difference other than ht training and differences in class scheduling. I think we learned to reciate each other a great deal more than three 'ground pounders' in the e room."

'I believe my West Point training was mostly oriented to a career in the ny. Cadet pilot training interfered with academic training and was too wn out to be most effective. Considerable friction between non-flying flying cadets."

'My answer [poor] may be a bit harsh–perhaps it should be 'poor to d'–there was some professional jealousy (or maybe just disappointment), ny case."

'. . . There was almost total separation of flying and non-flying cadets, sically, academically, and mentally during the period of flying training ., from its initiation to graduation)."

'Those cadets who marched off to flight training left their classes forever. *this day* (11-29-69), they are a separate group unto themselves. This is ortunate; and perhaps it might suggest that such separatism be couraged in the future."

I thought the relations between the Flying Cadets and the Non-Flying lets were good. However, we tended to look down on the Non-Flying lets. . . "

"Contact with non-flying cadets was limited due to extended TDY to flying schools in California."

"Air cadets who washed out and returned to the Academy were neither fish nor fowl. They had missed valuable [training] . . . as ground cadets and had had a taste of freedom that the rest of us had not yet experienced."

"My association with the ground cadets was very valuable in later years."

"I would strongly recommend that some extended form of joint training of all three service academies be initiated."

". . . Both the reduced course length and the division into flyers and non-flyers deprived my class of the opportunity to know one another well. With only 475 graduates, many of us don't know other classmates even by sight, we were there too short a time, too busy and too regimented. The losses have been more than social."

"There was a definite gulf between flying cadets and non-flying cadets that was never bridged, after the summer flying training when they went away. This was disappointing to both factions because we had all been so close previously. Over the years this difference has blurred but never vanished. It is regrettable."

"An inclusive answer is not possible, except that there was always a noticeable difference between the flying and the non-flying cadets; differences ranged from good-natured bickering to down-right hostility on the part of the moles, or non-flying cadets, with appropriate response and provocation on the part of the flying cadets."

"Class of January 1943 returned from flying school in December to graduate in January. No time for ill-will."

"I marked 'good' but if the choice of 'fair' had been there, that was it."

* * * * *

The observations of the graduates on the curriculum of service academies are of interest. One of the questions caused considerable confusion. The former cadets were queried whether the students should graduate as "generalists" or "specialists." Many of those answering thought in terms of broad general specialties such as Air Force, artillery, or infantry. Others answered in terms of an academic major. However, even with this difference in mind, it is significant to note that the great majority of those responding favored "generalization" as opposed to "specialization."

TABLE X

Observation on Curriculum at Service Academies

		1943	Class of 1944 Percentage	1945
A.	Should Flying Training be included?			
	Yes	37.1	37.6	41.5
	No	50.1	53.9	42.1
B.	Should cadets graduate as generalists?			
	Yes	92.5	93.4	92.2
	No	5.6	4.7	5.2
C.	Should cadets graduate as specialists?			
	Yes	10.3	6.6	12.1
	No	85.5	89.2	83.6

Chapter IV

The End of the Beginning

The United States has always depended upon its service academies to provide the hard core of its officer corps—men who will dedicate themselves to lifetime careers in the service of the nation. One of the most dedicated supporters of the service academies was Maj Gen Francis B. Wilby who was Superintendent of the United States Military Academy from 13 January 1942 to 4 September 1945. Reluctantly accepting the the three-year program as a wartime necessity, he wanted to see the prewar four-year program of instruction restored as soon as possible. As early as December 1943, General Wilby began making plans for a return to the four-year program. With the concurrence of the Academic Board of West Point, he appointed a "Four-Year Course Committee" (later called the "Post-War Curriculum Committee") to prepare plans for the transition.[1]

The committee's first report, dated 8 January 1944, recommended that the then Fourth Class (Class of 1946) be designed as the first to resume a four-year program. It also recommended that one vacancy for each Member of Congress having one or more vacancies in 1945 should not be filled until 1946, "so that, even although the Class of 1946 did not graduate, a new class could enter." On the basis of this report, General Wilby recommended to the Army Chief of Staff, Gen George C. Marshall, a return to the four-year program starting with the Fourth Class. The War Department concurred in all of the recommendations except for an effective date for initiating a return to the four-year program, concerning which General Wilby might submit appropriate recommendations on or about 1 November 1944.[2]

On 24 October 1944 the Military Academy Superintendent again pressed for a return to the four-year program, citing, among others, the following reasons:

> Experience with the Three Year Course convinced me that it should be continued only so long as it will contribute to the war effort.
>
> * * * * * * * *
>
> The class to be the first Four Year class should be designated at as early date as possible so as to permit of proper advance planning of courses and of suitable arrangements for obtaining and training instructors, thereby insuring a smooth transition from the Three Year to the Four Year course.[3]

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[1] _____, "The United States Military Academy in World War II."

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Ltr, Supt, USMA to Chief of Staff (Attn: Asst Chief of Staff, G-3), Subj: Return to the Four-Year Course, 24 Oct 44.

The Superintendent recommended that the following actions be taken. The existing First and Third Classes should be graduated at the end of three years in 1945 and 1946, respectively, as planned. Also, the current Fourth Class should be graduated in 1948 as the first post-war four-year class. Beginning in September 1945 this class would start with the regular four-year program, modified by further study by the Academic Board and subject to approval by the War Department of any major changes. The Superintendent concluded by stating that if these recommendations were approved, he would later submit proposals for effecting the transition to the four-year program.[4]

The War Department, on 31 October 1944, concurred with General Wilby's recommendation for initiating action for a return to the four-year program but believed that consideration should be given to starting the program with the class entering in 1945 for the following reasons. (1) There was nothing to indicate that a need would not exist for a class graduating in 1947. (2) If the cadets who entered in 1944 were required to take the four-year program, they might feel that an implied breach of faith, if not of contract, existed. (3) Morale might be seriously impaired, since the date of termination of hostilities could not be predicted, and, undoubtedly, the members of this class were looking forward to graduation in time to participate in the war. (4) If the Superintendent's recommendation that the Class of 1944 pursue the four-year program were approved, it would be necessary because of the precedent established following World War I to allow the cadets "to elect graduation either at the end of the third year, or at the end of the fourth year." Past experience had proved that this procedure was undesirable.[5]

General Wilby felt so strongly about the advantages of returning to the four-year program at the earliest possible date that he wanted to be sure that no adverse actions were taken without first consulting with him. On 17 November 1944 he told Maj Gen Ray E. Porter, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, that he and members of his staff would be in Washington, D. C., soon and would "be glad to go over any details in regard to the matter with anyone you designate, in order to be sure that the situation here at West Point is clearly understood." The Superintendent added:

> In this connection, I want to emphasize that if my proposal is approved, no publicity need be given to the decision at any time in the immediate future. In fact, I would recommend that it not be announced before next summer, at which time the world war situation might be considerably clarified. It is also important to remember that a decision made at this time in accordance with my recommendation does not show any practical result in the number

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Ltr, Secretary of War (ACS-G3) to Supt, USMA, Subj: Return to the Four-Year Course, 31 Oct 44.

> of graduates available from West Point for over 2 1/2 years. It is realized that many things may happen in that time which might call for a change. If such change is necessary, I am confident that it can be made at that time with less disadvantage than postponing the decision at this time.[6]

At the same time the Superintendent submitted a detailed answer to the War Department's letter of 31 October 1944 and repeated his request that the four-year program be restored. He recognized that a need might exist for a class to graduate in 1947; on the other hand, there was "at least a very fair chance" that the war in Europe would be concluded and there would be no pressing need for new officers. General Wilby noted that in terms of quantity, a West Point graduating class was very small in comparison with the number of officers then in the army. The quality, however, was "highly important and should be guarded jealously." The three-year program, although it had met wartime needs, did not provide "the complete rounded out education and training" which a peacetime officer needed. In the Superintendent's opinion, it would be "most unfortunate indeed" for West Point to graduate any more three-year classes than "absolutely necessary."[7]

The general restated his conviction that "the best plan" would be to designate the current Fourth Class as the first to resume the four-year program, with provision for an early graduation if necessary. In case of early graduation, "the result would not be quite as good as it would be under the regularly prescribed three-year wartime course, but it would be nearly as good."[8] A decision to wait and start with the class entering in July 1945 would postpone the return to the four-year program for another year, and "quite possibly" the current Fourth Class would be kept on the three-year program needlessly. If a start were not made, classes might be graduated with the abbreviated program long after the termination of hostilities.[9]

General Wilby did not agree that there would be "even an implicit breach of faith" if the current Fourth Class were kept at the Military Academy for four years. Each cadet, upon entrance, had signed a statement that he would serve in the Army for eight years. There was no stipulation as to how and where or under what conditions he would serve. The Superintendent said that the cadets themselves were speculating as to when the four-year program would be restored. He had no fears of lowering the morale of the existing Fourth Class, as he doubted there was a single cadet in the class who did not realize this might happen. Furthermore, even though this class were designed as the first four-year class, the President still retained the authority to graduate them in 1947, after three years, if the war continued and conditions rendered such action necessary.[10]

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[6] Ltr, Supt USMA to Asst C of S, G-3, WDGS, 17 Nov 44.

[7] Memo, Supt USMA to Asst C of S, WDGS, Subj: Return to the Four-Year Course, 17 Nov 44.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Ibid.*

General Wilby went on to say that if his proposal were approved, there was "no necessity whatsoever" of giving the cadets the discretion of graduating at the end of the third or fourth year. He did not consider the plan adopted after World War I for returning to a four-year program to be either "efficient or in the best interests of the service and should therefore not be accepted as establishing a precedent."[11]

The Superintendent noted that following World War I the Naval Academy had reverted to a four-year program by graduating in three years the midshipmen who ranked in the upper half of the class in the general order of merit. The lower half became the first four-year class. It was General Wilby's understanding that Annapolis proposed to follow the same procedure after World War II. This meant that the Naval Academy could revert to a four-year program with four-year classes at the end of any academic year without any lag whatever. General Wilby and his staff had considered the Annapolis plan but did not favor it as conditions were different at the two academies. The Naval Academy had changed to a three-year program simply by dropping the summer cruises and giving academic instruction during the summer months. As a result, there was only four percent less academic work at Annapolis. On the other hand, when West Point had changed to the three-year program, a reduction of about 25 percent in academics resulted since the summers continued to be used for tactical training.[12]

General Wilby concluded:

> I earnestly repeat my recommendation that return be made to the four-year course effective with the class which entered 1 July 1944, because it would make certain that the three-year course would end when there is no longer any necessity for it and that the four-year course would be promptly established; because I believe the chances are that the need for the reduction of that class will not be great in 1947; and because, in the event the need is great, it can still be graduated at that time with little loss in education and training compared with what it would receive in the war-time three-year course.[13]

The War Department told General Wilby in reply, "The War Department deems it inadvisable at this time to consider favorably your recommendation to change the length of the curriculum of the United States Military Academy. It is desirable that this matter be held in abeyance until such time

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[11] *Ibid.*
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] *Ibid.*

as future war developments warrant reconsideration." The Superintendent was requested to resubmit his recommendations upon the defeat of Germany or when the new class entered West Point, whichever date was the earlier.[14]

Meanwhile, the Post War Curriculum Committee at West Point had been continuously studying the problem of a four-year program versus a three-year program. After numerous meetings and consultations with the Superintendent, department heads, and outside sources, both military and civilian, the committee, on 9 May 1945, submitted to the Academic Board a tentative outline which, after minor modifications, was approved.[15]

Col Joe W. Kelly, Commander of the Flying School at Stewart Field, was also the Air Force representative on the Post War Curriculum Committee. In a memorandum to the Academic Board, dated 11 May, he attempted to evaluate the place of aviation in the four-year curriculum at the Military Academy. He stated that the Post War Curriculum Committee, after careful consideration, had become convinced that the current policy of giving full pilot training at West Point under the three-year program was both "impractical and undesirable." Early in the training phases, he said, West Point had established class distinctions between the air and the ground cadets that eventually led "to branch jealousies and claims of discrimination." The committee consequently thought it "more advisable that all cadets at the Military Academy receive the same basic course and that there be no attempt made by the Military Academy to graduate pilots in the Four-Year Curriculum." Unless the air cadets were completely withdrawn from academic studies at West Point for approximately nine months, their pilot training suffered because of lack of continuity of training. Also, their academic education was limited because of the abbreviated courses they were required to take.[16]

The Post War Curriculum Committee, said Colonel Kelly, recognized the importance of retaining aviation subjects with a certain amount of flying training in the curriculum required of all cadets. It proposed, therefore, that all cadets, regardless of their desire or intent to become Air Force officers, be required to take a screening course in flying. The course, which would last one month and be given during Second Class summer, would provide approximately 25 hours of actual flight instruction, including solo flight, providing the cadet possessed the physical requirements and aptitude necessary to accomplish solo flying. In the event the student did not meet the physical requirements or possess the necessary aptitude, the total period of instruction would of necessity be dual instruction without solo flying.[17]

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[14] Ltr, Secretary of War (G-3 WDGS) to Supt, USMA, Subj: Return to the Four-Year Course, 8 Dec 44.

[15] ———, "The United States Military Academy in World War II."

[16] Memo, Commanding Officer, Army Air Forces Basic-Advanced Flying School, USMA to Academic Board, USMA, Subj: Four-Year Curriculum, West Point, 11 May 45.

[17] *Ibid.*

This flight instruction would provide every West Point graduate with "a knowledge of flight and its practical application" as well as "a first-hand knowledge of the capabilities and limitations of the basic airplane." Furthermore, from this screening test, the Army Air Forces would be able to obtain significant and worthwhile information as to the aptitude and interest of potential Air Force officers. The period of instruction would be of sufficient duration to enable a cadet to determine his own aptitude and desire for future flight training upon graduation from the Academy. It would also "present the Air Forces with a guide as to each cadet's ability and chances of completing the flight training course" after graduation. Colonel Kelly felt that this month of flying indoctrination would provide each Military Academy graduate the necessary background for either Air Force duty or close cooperation with the Air Forces in combined operations.[18]

In addition to this month of training in Second Class summer, Colonel Kelly recommended that two weeks in First Class summer be allotted to more advanced Air Force training. All First Classmen would be sent to an Air Forces Tactical Training Center for two weeks for a course in applied Air Force tactics and combined operations. After the cadet had had a period of flight indoctrination and understood the rudiments of flying, he would be able "to absorb and appreciate problems of tactics of combined arms involving the Air Forces."[19]

In summary, the Commanding Officer of the Military Academy Flying School was convinced that it was

> . . . essential that all cadets, as future Army officers, should be fully indoctrinated in Air Force problems, possibilities and limitations. For this reason, it is felt that all cadets should be given the above training and it shou'd not be limited solely to those cadets who select the Air Forces as a permanent branch. With the above course as a background, every graduate of the Military Academy would be conversant with the practical side of some of the basic principles of aviation and should, in their future work in the Army, be more readily able to work in close harmony in combined operations, should they, at a later time, become either Air Force or Ground Force officers.[20]

The Superintendent visited the War Department on 22 and 23 May 1945 and strongly urged an immediate return to the four-year program. The Fourth Class (1947), he said, should be held until 1948, and legislation should be obtained "to restrict appointments for the class entering in 1946 so that there would be an entering class in 1947" in spite of the fact that there would be no graduation. All of those in the War Department concerned

[18] *Ibid.*
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.*

with the matter agreed that legislation should be secured regulating the size of a class rather than splitting a class. Following two days' conference, it was decided that there was insufficient time to obtain the necessary legislation. At this point it was contemplated that the members of the class entering on 1 July 1945 would be the first four-year cadets in the post-war program. If by Christmas the legislation still could not be obtained, the division of the three-year Class of 1947 would be recommended, with one-half graduating in 1947 and the other half in 1948.[21]

In the middle of August the Superintendent again visited the War Department and urged the immediate adoption of the four-year program. This time he recommended splitting the First Class, one half to graduate in 1946 and the other half in 1947, since this was so large a class that its splitting would produce a better balance in succeeding classes. The War Department opposed this recommendation as many Congressmen had already committed themselves to appointments for July 1946. A decision was therefore reached to return to the four-year program by splitting the three-year Class of 1947.[22]

The program which implemented the foregoing decision and returned the Military Academy to a four-year curriculum may be summarized as follows. The current First Class, which had entered in 1943, continued the three-year program and graduated in June 1946. The next class, which had entered the Academy in 1944 as the three-year Class of 1947, was divided; approximately half graduated in June 1947 and the other half graduated in June 1948 as the first post-war four-year class. The following class, which had entered in the summer of 1945, was designated the Class of 1949. The academic curriculum for 1945–1946 remained unchanged except that the current Third Class had no flying training.[23]

On 25 August 1945 the Post War Curriculum Committee made its final report to the Military Academy Superintendent. The committee's comments on future flying training at West Point are of interest:

> The Committee has given very careful consideration to the nature of aviation training at the Military Academy and believes that experience has shown that the length of time and the continuity of instruction required to qualify cadets as pilots not only deprives Air Cadets of valuable academic instruction but seriously interferes with the whole academic curriculum. Furthermore, the Committee believes that pilot training is so specialized that it is inconsistent with the mission of the Military Academy. Therefore,

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[21] "The United States Military Academy in World War II."

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] Rpt, Post War Curriculum Committee, USMA to Supt, USMA, Subj: Summary of Plan for Returning to Four-Year Course, 17 Aug 45; West Point Alumni Foundation, *1967 Register of Graduates and Former Cadets, 1802-1967* (Chicago, 1967), *passim.*

aviation training should be limited to that desirable for all cadets regardless of the branch of the service to which they are assigned.[24]

On 4 September 1945 Maj Gen Maxwell D. Taylor succeeded General Wilby as Superintendent. On the same day General Taylor told the cadets that the Military Academy was returning to the four-year program of instruction.[25]

In the immediate post-war period the Army Air Forces, with a few dissenting voices, continued to prepare plans and recommendations for the establishment of a separate air academy. All serious attempts at securing legislation, however, were deferred until after the United States Air Force became an independent agency in the Department of Defense on 18 September 1947. "Thus ended an association with the U. S. Army that had endured for forty years."[26] With the creation of an independent Air Force, the Superintendent of the Military Academy and his staff ceased planning for the inclusion of any flying training in the curriculum of West Point.

By this time Air Force planners had developed a clear concept of the mission and purposes of an air academy. It should be "established and developed with the U. S. Military Academy as the principal model," although the curriculum would be devised to meet the needs of the Air Force of the future.[27] When the United States Air Force Academy finally came into being on 1 April 1954, it adopted the ideals of the United States Military Academy. The obligations of "Duty–Honor–Country" must always guide those who are charged with the defense and security of the United States and the Free World.

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[24] Rpt, Post War Curriculum Committee to Supt, USMA, Subj: Post War Curriculum, 25 Aug 45.

[25] _____, "The United States Military Academy in World War II."

[26] Goldberg, *History of the USAF, 1907–1957*, p. 99.

[27] Special Considerations for Planning the Curriculum of the Air Academy, 9 Jan 53.

Bibliographical Note

The main depositories of original documents on flying training at the United States Military Academy are the Military Academy Library at West Point; War Department records in the National Archives; and the records gathered by the Archives Department, Historical Division, Aerospace Research Institute of the Air University. Between 1956 and 1961 Lt Col Edgar A. Holt, then Chief of the Historical Division, United States Air Force Academy, collected copies of many significant documents dealing with the early quest for an air academy. In addition, Colonel Holt interviewed most of the Air Force greats who were instrumental in the establishment of the Air Force Academy. These copies and interviews are filed in the Special Collections of the Air Force Academy Library. It is almost impossible to overestimate their importance for a study of the Air Force Academy movement.

Through personal visits and interlibrary loan, the writer gathered materials on the West Point phase of flying training. These materials complement and supplement Colonel Holt's collection, and copies are on file in the Air Force Academy Library.

The photographs for this study were obtained from the photographic archives of the Air Force and the United States Military Academy.

Historians of the Air Force and the Military Academy during World War II prepared current histories. Although the quality of these studies varies considerably from volume to volume, they are an indispensable source for any serious study of the United States Air Force. At the end of World War II, the Air Force published a seven-volume history, *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, and a nonannotated volume, *A History of the United States Air Force, 1907–1957*. Both have been used with profit in this study.

Chapter III of the study deals with the responses to a questionnaire on West Point flying training sent by the Air Force Academy, with the assistance of Col Horace M. Brown, Alumni Secretary, U. S. Military Academy, to the graduates of the World War II classes at West Point. The questionnaires that were returned and the cards on the responses prepared by the Division of Examinations, Cadet Registrar, U. S. Air Force Academy are on file in Special Collections, Air Force Academy Library.

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