

HEADQUARTERS
LEMOORE ARMY AIR FIELD
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER
LEMOORE, CALIFORNIA

HA
SAP-AR-14

3/27/34
SUBJECT: Historical report.

TO: Commanding General, Fourth Air Force, 180 New Montgomery Street,
San Francisco 6, California. ATTN: Historical Officer.

1. Submitted herewith is the Historical report for the Fourth Air Force
Replacement Depot, Hammer Field, Fresno, California, covering period 5 Feb-
ruary 1943 to 31 December 1943.

For the Commanding Officer:

1 Incl.
Incl 1 - His. Rep. (dup)

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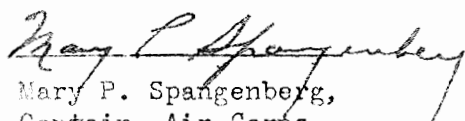
R E S T R I C T E D

HISTORY OF
THE FOURTH AIR FORCE REPLACEMENT DEPOT
(Not activated until 5 February 1943.)


16 August 1942 to 5 February 1943

Prepared in October 1944 in compliance with AR 345-105, AAF
Regulation 20-8, and Directives of the Fourth Air Force.

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CHRONOLOGY

<u>DATE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION OF EVENT</u>	<u>REFERENCE IN NARRATIVE</u>
1942		
17 August	Constitution of FAFRD at Hammer Field.	Page 1
24 August	Capt. Herbert D. Ivey, Jr., arrives to supervise Depot Classification.	Page 2
31 August	First 75 men arrive in Replacement Depot.	Page 2
10 September	Hq AAF agrees to ship all 4th AF replacements to and to activate all new 4th AF units at Hammer Field.	Page 2
13 September	First provisional squadrons are activated.	Page 3
18 September	Capt. Gillette Hill becomes first acting CO.	Page 4
29 September	Publication of 4th AF Memo 35-8 on Replacement Depot.	Page 4
5 October	Capt. Eugene E. Wilson is appointed CO of Depot.	Page 6
7 October	Assignment of first officers to Hammer Field for duty with FAFRD.	Page 6
15 October	Medical Section is set up under direction of Capt. O. C. Jones.	Pages 7, 9
19 October	Lt. Col. Harold E. Wentsch arrives.	Page 6
26 October	T/O submitted to CG, AAF.	Page 7
7 November	Lt. Louis J. Fuller is appointed CO of all squadrons at Squaw Valley.	Page 17
9 November	Squaw Valley is acquired by lease for a firing range.	Page 7
20 November	Capt. Clark M. Avery is appointed S-3.	Page 14

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CHRONOLOGY

<u>DATE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION OF EVENT</u>	<u>REFERENCE IN NARRATIVE</u>
1942		
3 December	First SOP is published.	Page 7
4 December	Armament School opens.	Page 15
17 December	Lt. Col. Wentsch assumes command.	Page 6
18 December	Administrative-Clerical School opens.	Page 16
20 December	Special Development School opens.	Page 15
1943		
12 January	Lt. J. B. Weatherred becomes Depot S-3 vice Capt. Avery.	Page 19
27 January	NCO School opens.	Page 17

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P R E F A C E

History in the making is rarely spectacular. Its record is frequently studded with decisions and actions which are called blunders in retrospect, but which seemed brilliant enough when viewed in the exigencies of the original circumstances. There were many such false starts, many such apparent blunders, as the Provisional Squadrons constituting the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot slowly evolved toward their ultimate shape.

Whenever any newly organized Army unit begins to function, there is inevitably some confusion--tangled records, too many or too few supplies, often a poverty of even a reasonable number of men to staff the offices. The duties of various personnel, which cannot be accurately defined, frequently overlap; some affairs may be for the moment neglected; and whatever is accomplished during the first hectic months of operation often seems miraculous.

To the enlisted man (or officer) received at the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot today, so swiftly and efficiently absorbed into the routine of processing, training, and eventual shipping, no picture of block-long chow lines is visible. He is not plunged into a training program constantly modulated to the necessities of the moment. He does not move from barrack to barrack--or tent to tent--four or five times during his residence here. As a matter of fact, he is more likely to complain that affairs are in too good order--that even in the constantly fluid group of more than 5,000 men, his upper left molar is remembered and attended to, his statement of charges properly signed, and his details inevitably endured.

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But a smooth-running organization is not achieved without some toil and tears; and in the early days of the Depot's unactivated existence, it was unavoidable that the men who passed through as casuals had to share the struggle toward efficiency which was taking the labor and tasking the spirit of the Depot staff. The wonder is not that so many difficulties--mistakes, if you like--were present, but that anything at all was accomplished. The historical record of the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot completely vindicates any isolated instances of error. The facts of accomplishment are indisputable.

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C H A P T E R I

ADMINISTRATION

From the beginning of the war in December 1941, officers at stations throughout the Fourth Air Force complained that men assigned to them were improperly--or not at all--classified and that the functional training of their units was being disorganized by the necessity for completing the basic training of men assigned for other duties. Capt. C. R. Mathis, Jr., Classification Officer at Headquarters, Fourth Air Force, determined to relieve the tactical units of these burdens by centralizing both classification and basic training in a Replacement Depot, so that "It should be unnecessary for Bases to detail officers and enlisted men to conduct basic training or to classify replacements coming from the Depot."¹ To accomplish this mission, the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot was constituted at Hammer Field, Fresno, California, on 17 August 1942, with provision for overflow of personnel at Camp Pinedale.²

Notification of the constitution of the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot³ was sent to the Commanding General, Army Air Forces, requesting that filler replacements for all Fourth Air Force units be sent to the Depot, that the Depot be specified as activating station for all new units, and that all enlisted graduates from Technical Training Schools be sent directly to the Depot for assignment to Fourth Air Force installations. Although the

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1. Ltr 320.2/1, par 4, Hq FAF, 17 Aug 42, Subj: "Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot" (App. C, Doc. 1).
 2. Ibid., par 1.
 3. Ltr 320.2/W/1, Hq FAF, 16 Aug 42, Subj: "Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot" (App. C, Doc. 2).

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War Department had no record of authorization for such a unit, it was agreed that these Fourth Air Force requests would be granted.¹

Meanwhile, on 31 August 1942, S/Sgt. Gene M. Tarr and Sgt. Charles R. Hoover, two non-coms of the 50th Base Hq and AB Squadron at Hammer Field, were welcoming the first 75 men² sent in accordance with the request. These men were attached to the 50th Squadron but were housed near the present Base Mess and Chapel in tents which they pitched themselves.

Early next morning they reported to Capt. Herbert D. Ivey, Jr., who had come on 24 August from Portland Army Air Base to be Classification Officer for the Depot, Lt. Alton W. Cheney from March Field, ably assisted by Cpl. Arthur L. Buck, also from Portland. These three men were the whole Depot, which was set up in simple modesty in a tar-paper shack with little furniture and none too much space. Casuals continued to arrive at an average rate of 150 a day. Additional office space was hastily acquired--frequently in tents or a corner of a base office--and personnel was snatched from casual status to staff the offices. There was no planned schedule for classification, but men were all interviewed somehow, classified, and proper reports made to Headquarters, Fourth Air Force. No training program had been set up, but men were kept busy, mostly moving from one tent to another and preparing more tent quarters for incoming transients.

As the number of casuals increased, the Classification Office became a shipping as well as a receiving section, with personnel records being handled

1. Ibid., 1st Ind. by W.D., Hq AAF (no date) (App. C, Doc. 2).

2. SO No. 227, par 5, Hq AAB, Hammer Fld, 31 Aug 42 (App. C, Doc. 3).

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by Lt. Morris C. Montgomery in Capt. Willie K. Palmer's office, and training handled, when time permitted, by Capt. Ivey and Lt. Cheney on a vacant area near the swimming pool. A sort of detachment of the 50th Squadron was organized with Capt. Ivey as Commanding Officer and Lts. George J. Pallister and George W. Wallace in charge. Although completely unactivated, this detachment issued orders through the Base or simply moved men without orders.

Supplies had to be furnished, men fed and housed, medical services rendered; but the detachment had no supply room or authority for securing supplies, no mess halls even in the tent area, no medical officer or dispensary. On 13 September, a system of 10 numbered provisional squadrons was devised in an effort to regulate matters to some extent. But the rapid influx of casualties wrecked the system before it could get started. Postal delivery was confused to the point of non-existence; mess lines beyond the Base mess-hall seating capacity spread out for blocks and required 20 hours a day to feed the men; constant moving from tent to tent enabled men to go AWOL for days before their absence was noticed; casualties without any experience were pulled from processing lines, trained on the job in clerical duties, and then shipped out just when most needed. Only by a miracle were eight hand-picked classification specialists assigned direct to the 50th Squadron, thereby escaping the bogey of shipping orders.

Since it was the responsibility of the Commanding Officer of Hammer Field to run the Depot,¹ officers were "loaned" on a part-time basis from

1. Ltr 320.2/1, par 2, Hq FAF, 17 Aug 42 (App. C, Doc. 1).

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the 50th. Among these was Capt. Gillette Hill,¹ who might justly be considered first Commanding Officer of the Detachment, who is credited with the classic, "You've got to keep these men from coming in here!"

But the men continued to pour in, were processed somehow, and shipped out--with their training often incomplete, because time, personnel, and a planned program were still lacking for that phase of the Depot's mission. On 29 September 1942, Fourth Air Force Memorandum 35-8² defined the purpose, objectives, and procedures for the Replacement Depot:

1. Purpose -- The Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot has been organized at Hammer Field, Fresno, California. All personnel replacements for this command, except rated Air Corps Officers, will be received at the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot, processed, and reassigned to units according to priorities established at this headquarters.

2. Specific Objectives -- To accomplish the purpose of the Replacement Depot, the following specific objectives are to be followed:

a. To receive personnel assigned to the Fourth Air Force from Reception Centers, AAF Replacement Training Centers, Arms and Services Replacement Training Centers, Branch Immaterial Replacement Training Centers, Air Corps Technical Schools, Schools of other Arms or Services, personnel returning to duty from overseas service or after hospitalization, and other sources.

b. To equip or complete equipping of all personnel with clothing and equipment, and complete the immunization program as prescribed so that the burden of basic processing is taken from the shoulders of unit commanders.

c. To re-interview, test, and classify all personnel so that correct assignment will be made.

1. SO No. 245, par 4, Hq AAF, Hammer Fld, 18 Sept 42 (App. C, Doc. 4).

2. Memo 35-8, Hq FAF, 29 Sept 42 (App. C, Doc. 5).

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d. To give or complete recruit training to all personnel in order to eliminate the necessity of recruit training within the tactical units.

e. To carry out an intensive physical training program during the individual's stay at the Replacement Depot.

f. To classify personnel and report them to Headquarters Fourth Air Force for assignment, in accordance with established priorities.

There were 75 enlisted men in the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot on 1 September 1942. A month later, the strength had skyrocketed to 1466. In another fortnight it more than doubled. Meanwhile, long rows of tents had been erected in two tent areas, a tentative training program had begun under the direction of Lt. Earl L. Waterman, and the staff was beginning to understand its specific duties. The 10 provisional squadrons started on 13 September were functioning with entire cadres made up of casualties from Squadron 10, consisting of fully processed men ready for assignment to other stations. Other squadrons were organized so as to segregate men into various stages of training depending on previous military background. A special squadron was set up to receive, train, and assign Negro personnel. It had its own organization, including white Physical Training, Mess, Supply, and Personnel officers and enlisted men; and in January 1943 it had as many as 1100 transients at one time. Presently, the "Recruit and Casual Detachment" was replaced by Squadron 11, Receiving Squadron; and the 10-squadron system was further disorganized by the activation of Squadron 13,¹ a disciplinary squadron for AWOL's and chronic "goof-offs." The first Fourth Air Force Replacement

1. "Activation of Squadron No. 13," Hq FAFRD, Hammer Fld, 6 Nov 42 (App. C, Doc. 6).

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Depot Morning Report, demanded by a confused Unit Personnel Officer on 23 September, was more entertaining than enlightening, with frequent "dy to missing" remarks more truth than clerical inexperience.

One month was sufficient to prove to Headquarters, Fourth Air Force, that a small part-time staff was woefully inadequate, and on 5 October began a series of assignments that soon had the Depot well staffed. On that day, Capt. Eugene E. Wilson arrived on the post, was assigned as Depot Commanding Officer, and set up his staff: S-1, Capt. Ivey, Lt. Cheney, and Lt. Joseph W. Whittaker (Personnel); S-3, Lt. Waterman and Lt. Simon J. Molnar; S-4, Lt. Francis P. Coyne¹ for liaison with Lt. Louis W. Beck of the base; with S-2 left for the base to handle. Lt. Clifford A. Swanson was Shipping Officer, and Lt. Wayne M. Bundy was Receiving Officer, two vital jobs for the Depot. On 7 October, the first officers were assigned to the 50th Squadron for duty with the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot.² On 9 October, Capt. Thomas J. White³ transferred from base S-3 to help in reorganization of the squadrons. 19 October saw the arrival of Lt. Col. Harold E. Wentsch, who acted as Commanding Officer of the Depot for two months before 17 December,⁴ when he formally assumed command of the unit, which was still non-existent in the eyes of The Adjutant General. Col. Wentsch's first Executive Officer was Capt. Wilson; on 29 November, Capt. White became Executive Officer and Capt. Ivey Adjutant.

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1. SO No. 259, par 11, Hq AAB, Hammer Fld, 3 Oct 42 (App. C, Doc. 7).
 2. SO No. 263, par 26, Hq AAB, Hammer Fld, 7 Oct 42 (App. C, Doc. 8).
 3. SO No. 161, par 57, Hq MBS, 1st Dist AAFTTC, Miami Beach, Fla, 1 Oct 42 (App. C, Doc. 9).
 4. Interview with Maj. Thomas J. White, 13 Sept 44.

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On 26 October, the squadron set-up was again changed. Squadrons A, B, and C were activated as receiving squadrons, Squadron G as Headquarters Squadron for permanent party, and F, K, and so on for personnel available for assignment to other stations. In between were the T (for Training) squadrons, with a separate series of numbers at Hammer Field and at Squaw Valley, a plot of land some 35 miles northeast of the field, acquired by lease from Mr. A. B. Overholser on 9 November 1942 for a firing range. These transient squadrons were dissolved as soon as the group's training had been completed, so that by the end of 1942 T-43 was in existence.

Through October and November the Depot spread out, raising new tents, taking over additional office space and then consolidating all offices in a single building; increasing its assigned personnel; setting up in an old warehouse a medical section under Capt. Orion C. Jones to handle the medical reclassification board work as well as a naturally large sick call; and reporting available personnel as soon as their training was completed. But through the many changes, men were being processed in spite of almost appalling difficulties. Indeed, a simple unified system was being formed.

So considerable was the progress in organization that on 3 December 1942 the first SOP¹ was published, for guidance of personnel still new to the Depot or still confused as to duties and responsibilities.

A tentative Table of Organization had been submitted to the Commanding General, Army Air Forces, late in October on the basis of the anticipated

1. SOP, Hq FAFRD, Hammer Fld, 3 Dec 42 (App. C, Doc. 10).

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needs of the rapidly expanding Depot, which then had more than 3,500 casualties. On 1 December, the T/O was returned with the request that it be resubmitted after a 20 per cent reduction in personnel had been effected. All possible adjustments were made, and the T/O resubmitted.

There was, however, no reduction in the number of men sent to the Depot for processing. Strength continued to rise through January until it reached the unprecedented peak of 5,171 just before the end of the month.¹ But in spite of the confusion resultant upon constant activation and reactivation, transients were all handled smoothly through the squadron system, administered at last by full-time officers and enlisted personnel who had been specifically trained for their jobs in the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot's NCO and Administration schools. The Depot--still unactivated, inadequately staffed, constantly faced with apparently insoluble problems, working against time and an ever-increasing tide of casualties--was somehow managing to process, train, and ship out the personnel needed in Fourth Air Force installations.

1. Chart showing strength of Receiving, Training, and Shipping squadrons at FAFRD, 31 Oct 42 - 31 Jan 43 (App. C, Doc. 11).

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C H A P T E R II

OPERATIONS AND TRAINING

As outlined in Fourth Air Force Memorandum 35-8, 29 September 1942,¹ the real mission of the Depot was threefold: to process medically and administratively; to interview, test, and classify all replacements; and to complete the necessary basic training program.

Processing of personnel records had from the beginning been subject to two great difficulties--lack of space in which to interview men and lack of trained personnel to handle the records. As the Depot grew and its offices became more spacious, this first difficulty was automatically disposed of. For several months, however, there appeared to be no solution to the second problem. Casuals were used to staff the Personnel Section, under supervision of a minimum of assigned men who also were subject to shipment. But in January a clerical school was begun, to train essential men for more efficient operation.

On 15 October 1942, under the direction of Capt. O. C. Jones, the first sick call was held for 120 patients in an infirmary improvised from a warehouse and equipped with spare benches and handmade tables. Medical supplies were "borrowed" from the Station Hospital, as there was no authority for obtaining anything through usual channels. Two privates and two medical officers formed the staff, which slowly grew with the increase of Depot personnel. However, qualified medical personnel was always conspicuous by absence, and

1. See App. C, Doc. 5.

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in December and January as many as 1,800 men were examined daily by 4 medical officers and 6 enlisted men, under a system of physical examination popularly known to the Depot as "Shortarm by the numbers." The enlisted men came into the building and removed all clothing. At the count of one, they stood on their toes with their arms extended above their heads and were given a thorough examination for any physical defects on their extremities. At the count of two, the usual short-army examination was performed, and at the counts of three and four, a pediculi examination. At the count of five, the enlisted men bent over and were examined from the rear. This was a rather brutal system; but with the lack of medics and with the great number of men to be processed, there was no alternative. Dental examination and treatment, as well as the immunization program, were handled by the Station Hospital.

As the Replacement Depot had originally been the brain-child of the Classification Section in Headquarters, Fourth Air Force, one of its most important functions has always been the testing of recruits and the checking of previous classification. With the Army Air Forces' training program still reaching toward its full height in 1942, men who were qualified mentally or by aptitude for specialized training had to be selected, as well as proper uses found for men of limited physical and mental ability. For the first six weeks of the Replacement Depot's life, both the men to be tested and the Classification Section labored under heavy difficulties. It was not unusual for a man to be taking one of the standard AG mental or aptitude tests at a table where another man was being interviewed and a third

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having a record checked. Late in October, however, more space was acquired so that interviews and tests could be given in semi-privacy and reasonable quiet. Lt. Evan R. Stevens, Jr., a psychologist in civilian life, arrived from Officers Candidate School in October 1942 to set up a clinic for determining degree of mental deficiency and suitability for service of emotionally disturbed men. By agreement with Headquarters, Fourth Air Force, the Classification Section chose for its own office the best qualified men who came through as recruits; by mid-November, it had acquired an unsurpassed staff.

Classification Section also assumed the duties of Assignment or at least of preparing Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot Forms 1 and 2, on which men were reported available for shipment. Orders transferring the men were cut by the Commanding Officer, Hammer Field, although actual stencilling of orders was done by Depot personnel, who frequently ran off copies long after midnight to meet an early morning shipment.

Supply of additional items to complete or replace initial issue authorized on T/BA 21 was only a small part of the S-4's job, although lack of authorization made it difficult to obtain sufficient clothing and Hammer Field lacked warehousing facilities in which to store and issue such tremendous quantities of stock. Most serious supply problem, however, was the procurement of office furniture and supplies, tents, bedding, and other necessary items for continuance of processing and for housing and training the casuals. Here again, lack of authorization was the bugaboo that resulted in

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furniture made by casual carpenters from scraps left around base buildings, in acquisition of supplies by begging from base Quartermaster, Engineer, and friends at Hammer Field, and--in desperate straits--in personal procurement of materiel from sources best unquestioned by means best unexplained. Constant moving of offices and personnel resulted in loss of equipment, individual clothing, bedding, and a variety of small but irreplaceable items. An entirely separate supply set-up existed at Squaw Valley under Lt. William L. Oliver II, who had the problem of securing provisions for units under field conditions added to an already onerous burden.

A hundred other problems beset the operation of the Depot, each one complicated by the standing needs of personnel, equipment, and--above all--an authorization by which to obtain them.

The Shipping Section had its difficulties, too, chief of which was a lack of transportation. As Hammer Field is seven miles from the railhead and as the Depot, being unactivated, had no trucks of its own, vehicles were borrowed from the base and from Camp Pinedale. For large shipments these were inadequate, and shuttle runs had to be made. This resulted in a part of the group reaching the station three or four hours before train time, while trains had to be held for the last truckloads. Use of open trucks during early winter months often meant that the troop trains were crowded with dripping men and thoroughly soaked baggage.

Long waits at the station added to the difficulty of keeping track of large numbers of shipping men, which was already a problem. Due to frequent

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changes of living quarters, even after the organization of the shipping squadrons, and to inadequacy of Depot locator file, it was often necessary to use the Base Public-Address system to find men listed on shipment, while the Shipping Section sleuthed around tracking enlisted men down in mess halls, post exchanges, library, or doing bunk fatigue. Nonetheless, shipments increased from 1,361 in October 1942 to 3,970 in January 1943.

Transportation to bring trainees to Squaw Valley was also a constant problem. The Hammer Field Motor Pool, Camp Pinedale, and Basic Training Center No. 8 at the Fair Grounds in Fresno had only a limited number of vehicles to spare to the Depot. All movements of trainees took place on Sunday; and if a large receipt or shipment of men was expected on that day, a critical shortage ensued. All transportation was carefully co-ordinated through Lt. William L. Oliver II, so that best use was made of equipment. Even so, transportation of casuals to and from railheads--plus 1,500 trainees and supplies to and from Squaw Valley--meant shuttle runs from 0001 to 2400 on Sundays every week, with officers at Squaw Valley frequently loading their own personal cars literally to the running boards in Squaw Valley mud.

Other problems harassed the New Depot. One of the really insoluble ones was a method of paying casual personnel. It was always arranged that permanent party men would report to the 50th Squadron for payment, even if the office in which they worked had to be closed. But casuals were spread out and on the move to such an extent that it was impossible to notify everyone when to appear to sign the payroll and to receive pay. The setting up of the Shipping Squadrons pretty well assured that the men would be paid

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before they left the base, but no satisfactory solution to payment for trainees was ever found.

The third, and necessarily the most hectic, of the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot's missions was to complete the necessary training of men who were to be assigned to Fourth Air Force installations where time and facilities for further training were not available or were inconsistent with the mission of a tactical unit. Originally, Capt. Ivey and Lt. Cheney themselves had given physical training and drill to casualties on an open space given them by the base. There was no organized program, the main idea being to keep the men busy and out of trouble. During September 1942, a staff was slowly chosen by the Classification Section from among casualties who seemed best qualified for teaching the Manual of Arms, Infantry Drill Regulations, and various Basic Training subjects. By the end of the month, Lt. Earl L. Waterman, Plans and Training Officer, and Lt. Simon J. Molnar, Physical Training Officer, had selected 55 men--all unrated--who were later divided between the two training areas at Hammer Field and Squaw Valley. Training in use of arms was impossible at Hammer Field, since there were no facilities on the base for firing. The range at Squaw Valley was 35 miles distant, and it was necessary to hire buses to carry up and back each day those men for whom this phase of the training was the only deficiency. Presently, the number of men to be qualified at arms became so large that the transportation problem made this system impracticable.

Late in November, Capt. Clark M. Avery¹ arrived from Officers Training

1. SO No. 305, par 10, Hq AAB, Hammer Fld, 20 Nov 42 (App. C, Doc. 12).

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School at Miami Beach to observe every phase of the training function and to become S-3 for the Depot. A regular Training Program was set up--and revised and reorganized constantly over the next few months. But by the end of November a workable system of 14 days of classroom work at Hammer Field and 14 days of field training at Squaw Valley had been put into effect, with Classification checking the amount of training received at previous stations and noting on the Processing Card the additional type and amount of training necessary. Those to take training were consolidated into Training Squadrons of approximately 100 enlisted men, with a Squadron Commander and an Adjutant, if available, and acting NCO's for administrative and training purposes. These officers and NCO's remained with their Training Squadron until the trainees had completed training and were transferred to the Shipping Section for assignment.

Besides courses in defense against air and chemical attack, military courtesy and discipline, map reading, and other required basic school subjects, special courses were established by Lt. Harold T. Harper, head of Schools Section, to meet specific needs within Fourth Air Force. The first of these was the Armament School, opened on 4 December 1942, to provide semi-skilled armorers. As usual, instructors were obtained from among qualified men already assigned to the 50th Squadron or from casuals with suitable civilian training or experience.

The Special Development School,¹ organized to teach reading and writing

1. "Soldiers Learn the Three Rs," The Fresno Bee Magazine, 16 May 1943, p. 4 (App. C, Doc. 13).

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of English to non-literates, most of whom were Spanish speaking only, was the first school to be set up in co-operation with the Adult Education Department of the Fresno Public School System. Eight civilian teachers and all the facilities of the Fresno schools were placed at the disposal of the base, which used two 4-hour shifts to take care of a maximum strength of 30 enlisted men. These men were transported by truck into town for the half day of classes, the rest of the day being spent in drill, calisthenics, and details. Later, when space for classrooms became available, the eight teachers were transported to the base, as trucks were vitally needed elsewhere.

The splendid co-operation of the Fresno schools was also received in the case of the Administrative-Clerical School. Although strictly military subjects were given on the base, instruction in shorthand and typing was provided in Fresno, where students were transported by truck. For additional practice in typewriting, 25 machines were loaned for a typing room on the base. The course was originally 8 weeks in length but, as the need for clerical help became greater, was reduced to 4 weeks by increasing the number of hours of class and typing practice per day.

As the regular training program and the enrollment in these special courses increased in scope, the need for well-qualified and trained NCO's became urgent. Early in January 1943, several thousand records were sifted to find men with a suitable AGCT score who had not been trained at an AAF Technical School, because AAF Regulations prohibited the use of technically trained personnel in any other field than that in which they had received such training. Approximately 100 enlisted men were found qualified and were

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placed in Provisional Squadron 105 under command of Lt. Kenneth G. Stitt. Two special training sections were set up--one for instructors, first sergeants, and duty NCO's, the other for orderly-room clerks. Rigid discipline was enforced and a grading system was used: men who failed were released from the school and placed back in their casual squadrons; those who qualified were transferred to Headquarters Squadron for duty with training squadrons.

An essential part of the Basic Training Program was that which required men to live under conditions approximating those they would encounter in the field. Early in November, Lt. Louis J. Fuller from base S-3 was made Commanding Officer of the squadrons at Squaw Valley,¹ and he and Lt. Molnar of the 50th's Physical Training department set up a camp, levelling the ground, setting out basketball courts, and supervising erection of a tent area. The site of the camp had only two advantages--five old rifle targets once used by members of the American Legion, and the fact that the distance from Fresno obviated the problem of passes for men in this phase of training. These rather dubious advantages were scarcely noticed during the first week, however, when Capt. Whitney Newton brought up the first squadron of 234 men to begin training. Nothing was ready for their reception, but there they were--and they were taken care of.

The first days were inevitably hectic. The camp site was among mountains of a small range. There was no natural supply of water, no area in which

1. SO No. 292, par 25, Hq AAB. Hammer Fld. 7 Nov 42 (App. C. Doc. 1a).

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proper latrines might be constructed. Cooking was done on three field ranges, with an ice-box, sunk into the earth, serving as refrigerator for the whole camp. Until enough tents had been erected over the high grassy slope, men slept in the open with one eye watchful for the numerous small snakes and scorpions on the ground.

Officer personnel was rapidly assembled. Lt. I. W. Haberle was assigned as Executive Officer on 9 November. Lt. Molnar was confirmed in his position as Physical Training Officer and immediately began planning a program for the men, leading calisthenics, hikes, and other field activities. Lt. H. M. Hudson, who had come to the Valley with Lt. Haberle, became S-3; and, soon after, Lt. J. G. Vincent replaced Lt. Oliver as Mess Officer and Capt. White became Property Officer.

The training program at Squaw Valley developed in a haphazard manner, largely because no one could anticipate how much might be accomplished with the facilities available and one unforeseen circumstance after another intervened so that not until April could any master plan for a scheduled routine be organized. Emphasis, of course, was placed upon the rifle, this weapon being given to the men for qualification firing on the range; its construction, uses, and the manner in which it had to be cared for were carefully explained. Long hikes became part of the daily routine, and extended order drill was practiced among the foothills.

Meanwhile, the shortcomings of Squaw Valley as a field training area were becoming apparent. Water, which everyone had assumed could be found somewhere in the vicinity, had to be trucked in daily; latrine facilities

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could not be improved, partly because of the water shortage and partly by the topography of the site on which the camp had been erected; and the winter rains whipped the earth up into an almost constant froth of gummy, clinging mud. No one was willing, however, to abandon the camp until another could be found to take its place. On 12 January 1943, Capt. Avery was replaced by Lt. J. B. Weatherred as S-3, with Lt. Kenneth G. Stitt as Adjutant; and under them the search for a new camp continued. Meanwhile, Squaw Valley mushroomed to a size inevitably resulting in confusion and hardship for all hands. But the alternative to Squaw Valley was no field training at all; so the two-phase schedule continued.

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C H A P T E R III

LIFE AND MORALE

Under normal conditions a Replacement Depot faces a stiff morale problem, because men in any transient state are ill at ease in new surroundings, not fully occupied, and insecure as to the future. In the hectic days of organization of a Depot, among men new to military service and situations, morale might well be expected to hit an all-time low.

In the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot, biggest cloud looming on the horizon of permanent party personnel was the lack of ratings. The Depot, being unactivated, was without a Table of Organization; and Hammer Field was naturally unwilling to give any of its own few precious ratings to its mushrooming offspring. Added was the constant worry of officers and NCOIC's that key personnel would be shipped out just as their departments were beginning to function smoothly.

For permanent party there were some morale-lowering conditions shared with the transients. Through September and October, the mail distributing function of the Depot post office was practically at a standstill. Men moved from one squadron to another so rapidly that locator cards were a week behind; there was one clerk in the post office to sort mail and to keep records, and he was originally a volunteer; there were no squadron mail orderlies to pinch-hit or share the burden. But the assignment of a Postal Officer and half a dozen post-office clerks, plus the eventual designation of orderlies in each squadron, resulted in a fairly smooth-flowing organization so that Christmas found the mail service functioning adequately.

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Less easy to solve was the problem of messing for personnel. Base facilities simply were not adequate; and personnel, equipment, and space for additional mess halls were not available. The result was long lines of hungry men waiting sometimes two hours for food, outdoors in all kinds of weather, and receiving insufficient or poorly cooked field rations toward the end of the service lines. In this matter, the men at Squaw Valley had some advantage, since their mess personnel and tents were adequate for cooking nourishing if rough meals; but lack of space to eat in meant many a mess kit spilled and much good food cooled on the way back to living quarters to eat out of the rain and mud.

With the onset of winter, this rain and mud became desperate problems to the Depot, both at Hammer Field and at Squaw Valley. In sunny September, men who arrived unexpectedly could leave their barracks bags on the spot and erect a tent. Or the casuals could be held on the drill field until quarters were cleaned for them. Came late November, and the housing situation was desperately acute. Barracks at Hammer Field originally intended for the 50th Squadron had been used in October; in December the Receiving Squadrons used any space they could find. Non-coms wandered the field in bitter cold rains, looking for an unoccupied barrack to serve as a shelter for a group of miserable men already drenched from waiting in lines for bedding which was soaked through. In really pitiful situations, men slept in day rooms or were shunted off by twos and threes to any squadron on the field that had a few vacant beds that night.

That the situation was intolerable was admitted in December, when AWOL's

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reached a high of 236 and other disciplinary problems rose in proportion. But greater still was the need to attack broad problems of morale that threatened to undermine the efficiency of the training program. Most of the casualties received at the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot had at the most a few weeks' military training behind them; hundreds of men of foreign extraction neither spoke nor understood English; lack of a schedule usable in inclement weather left men too much time to get into trouble or at least to realize how uncomfortable they were being made by mud, rain, cold, and military discipline.

To combat these difficulties, there was no organized Special Services set-up. Morale building was definitely the personal problem of the squadron Commanding Officer. Day rooms were improvised out of tents and salvage; men like Lt. George J. Pallister entertained with highly colored stories of life in India; intramural contests kept men trudging through deep mud to basketball games in the rec hall. But it was uphill work.

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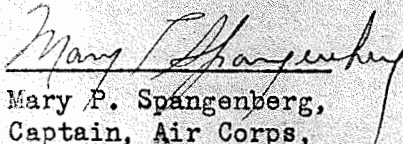
Hammer Field

HISTORY OF
THE FOURTH AIR FORCE REPLACEMENT DEPOT

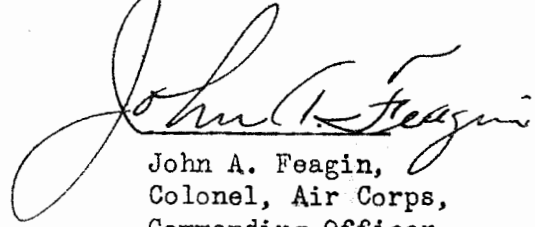
5 February 1943 to 31 December 1943

Prepared in November 1944 in compliance with AR 345-105, AAF
Regulation 20-8, and Directives of the Fourth Air Force.

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CHRONOLOGY

<u>DATE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION OF EVENT</u>	<u>REFERENCE IN NARRATIVE</u>
5 February	AG Letter of authorization for constitution and activation of FAFRD.	Page 1
10 February	New CWS training program is begun by Maj. Albert J. Sutcliffe.	Page 9
12 February	GO No. 32, Hq FAF, activates FAFRD. FAFRD medics are assigned to Depot.	Page 1 Page 1
15 February	Lt. Col. Harold E. Wentsch assumes command. Depot personnel is relieved from 50th Base Hq & AB Sq and assigned to FAFRD.	Page 1 Page 1
19 February	GO No. 37, Hq FAF, establishes equipment priority for FAFRD.	Page 1
22 February	Table of Organization is approved.	Page 2
24 February	Capt. Peter Mollerstrom is appointed CO of Hq Sq.	Page 1
3 March	Lt. Col. Earl L. House sets up Inspector's Office.	Page 3
17 March	Capt. O. C. Jones prepares 23-point medical check list.	Page 7
1 April	Command of and operational control over FAFRD is removed from Hammer Field.	Page 3
6 April	Eleven vehicles are assigned to start Depot Motor Pool.	Page 13
18 April	Detachments of FAFRD are established at Hammer Field and Camp Rinedale.	Page 3

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CHRONOLOGY

<u>DATE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION OF EVENT</u>	<u>REFERENCE IN NARRATIVE</u>
25 April	Lt. Lester I. Snyder reports as chaplain.	Page 16
3 May	Shipping and Receiving Squadrons are consolidated under Lt. Clifford A. Swanson.	Page 6
16 May	Statistical Office is set up by Lt. Robert W. Haines.	Page 3
17 May	Squaw Valley is officially closed.	Page 10
19 May	Maj. Herbert D. Ivey, Jr., is replaced as Classification Officer by Capt. Joseph C. Healy.	Page 4, 6
31 May	Col. Richard A. Warner becomes CO.	Page 4
7 June	Maj. O. C. Jones is replaced as Surgeon by Maj. L. H. Prewitt.	Page 4
15 June	Squadron picnics begin.	Page 16
1 July	Publication of FAFRD Memo 35-8.	Page 7
	Mount Owens Rifle Range is opened.	Page 10
20 July	Maj. M. F. Conway becomes Hq Sq CO.	Page 4
23 October	Col. Louis L. Roberts becomes CO.	Page 5
15 December	Depot Motor Pool is completed.	Page 14

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C H A P T E R I

ADMINISTRATION

The fifth of February 1943 was a great day for the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot. A letter from The Adjutant General authorized the constitution and activation of the Depot¹ at Hammer Field, Fresno, California, and provided a Personnel Allotment Table for 74 officers, 2 warrant officers, and 472 enlisted men (all but 13 officers and 41 enlisted men were Air Corps) to handle from 3,500 to 6,000 casualties. General Order Number 32,² Headquarters Fourth Air Force, formally activated the unit, and General Order Number 37³ established the priority for equipment. On 15 February 1943, Lt. Col. Harold E. Wentsch assumed command⁴ with 1st Lt. Donald S. Dundas as Adjutant. On that same date, Hammer Field Special Order Number 46⁵ released all Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot men from assignment to the 50th Hq & AB Squadron and assigned them to the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot. The Depot's first Special Order⁶ assigned to Headquarters Squadron 315 enlisted men, under command of Lt. Frank W. Hancock until 24 February when Capt. Peter Mollerstrom was appointed Headquarters Squadron Commanding Officer with Lt. Hancock as Adjutant.

On 12 February, all Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot medics, both officers and enlisted men, were assigned to the Depot; and the Medical Section,

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1. Ltr AG 320.2 (2-4-43) 5 Feb 43, Subj: "Constitution and Activation of the 4th Air Force Replacement Depot" (App. C, Doc. 1).
 2. GO No. 32, Hq FAF, 12 Feb 43 (App. C, Doc. 2).
 3. GO No. 37, Hq FAF, 19 Feb 43 (App. C, Doc. 3).
 4. GO No. 1, Hq FAFRD, Hammer Fld, 15 Feb 43 (App. C, Doc. 4).
 5. SO No. 46, Hq AAB, Hammer Fld, 15 Feb 43 (App. C, Doc. 5).
 6. SO No. 1, Hq FAFRD, 16 Feb 43 (App. C, Doc. 6).

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organized by Capt. Orion C. Jones (promoted on 21 April to the rank of Major), secured Capt. T. Weiman as Executive Officer on 1 May.

Having struggled along without authorization or official recognition for so long, the newly activated Depot believed that its troubles were over. But almost immediately the question of personnel became acute. The originally assigned 315 enlisted men increased quickly to 450 but could not keep up with the unprecedented increase in casualties. Set up to handle up to 6,000 men, the Depot on 15 February had 5,557, a month later had 7,000, and continued daily to soar, reaching its all-time high of 14,195 in mid-April¹ shortly after the closing of the Basic Training Center at St. Petersburg, Florida, released 1,000 men to Fourth Air Force. Ignoring its personnel allotment, Headquarters Squadron increased to 650 and everyone worked twice as hard and twice as long in an effort to keep the outgoing tide of men up to commitments and requirements. Men who had faced much the same situation in September 1942 now weathered it again on a larger scale, this time unhampered by lack of official recognition and buoyed up by a sudden flood of promotions, long overdue, for late in February a Table of Organization² was approved and the first promotions made. Unauthorized increases in permanent party personnel meant unauthorized increases in promotions, too, especially for the 70 men assigned to Squaw Valley and the larger number needed when Mount Owens Rifle Range opened in mid-July. After the peak of 14,000 casualties in April, the transient population in the Depot slowly decreased to around 5,000 men

1. Strength Chart of EM at FAFRD, 31 Aug 42 - 31 Dec 43 (App. C, Doc. 7).
2. See Appendix C, Document 7a.

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in November; and it is not expected that it will again increase beyond the 6,000 which the Depot was set up to handle.

Effective 1 April 1943, all command of and operational control over Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot was removed from the Hammer Field Commanding Officer, placing the Depot on the same basis as a tactical unit.¹ This allowed the Depot command function and still gave the use of base facilities such as Supply, Special Service Office, Chapel, Post Exchange, and so forth. On 18 April, detachments of the Depot were established at Hammer Field and at Camp Pinedale for holding men available for assignment,² and later similar detachments appeared on all bases; they were not, however, under Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot jurisdiction but under Headquarters Fourth Air Force.

Changes in key officer personnel were frequent, as men of experience were ordered to combat duty or as new sections were added to Headquarters. On 3 March, Lt. Col. Earl L. House set up an Air Inspector's office to examine service records of men being shipped from the Depot; later, Lt. William K. Goeglin was sent to Inspectors School at Fort Logan. On 16 May, a Statistical Office was set up under Lt. Robert W. Haines, who with a small office force maintained for Fourth Air Force reports on men available for shipment and the progress of trainees currently assigned.

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1. Ltr 680.2 (3-20-43), Hq FAF, 20 Mar 43, Subj: "Change in Command and Operational Jurisdiction of the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot" (App. C, Doc. 8).
 2. Ltr 320.2, Hq FAF, 18 Apr 43, Subj: "Establishment of Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot Detachments" (App. C, Doc. 9).

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Headquarters Squadron was commanded by Capt. William W. Wilson¹ from March until 20 July, when he was ordered to Intelligence School. He was replaced by Maj. M. F. Conway who, less than three months later, received an overseas assignment and Lt. James B. McCallum became Commanding Officer. The lettered system of squadrons² for casuals continued, with Squadron K newly set up for CDD's and men to be discharged as over age and Squadron B for limited-service casuals. Numbered squadrons were used for men in training, but the separate numbering system used at Squaw Valley was discontinued when Camp Mount Owens opened, as the two weeks at the range were now an integral part of the training program begun at Hammer Field.

On 19 May, Maj. Ivey was relieved for duty at Headquarters Fourth Air Force, and Capt. Joseph C. Healy became Classification Officer.³ On 31 May, Col. Wentsch was relieved by Col. Richard A. Warner,⁴ who chose as his Executive Officer Maj. Franz J. Schulte,⁵ newly assigned, on 2 June, to the Depot. Maj. Donald G. Herring was relieved as Base S-3⁶ and assigned to the Depot as S-3, with Lt. Kenneth G. Stitt as his assistant. Maj. White became S-1; Capt. Dundas continued as Adjutant; and Capt. Oliver, S-4. On 7 June, Maj. O. C. Jones was transferred to Camp Pinedale, and Maj. Leland H. Prewitt became Surgeon and head of the Medical Section. The tiny section set up by Lt. Max Miller at Squaw Valley blossomed into a fair-sized dispensary at Mount Owens where, on 13 November, Capt. R. M. Rosse took over.

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1. SO No. 15, par 7, Hq FAFRD, 3 Mar 43 (App. C, Doc. 10).
 2. See History of FAFRD, 16 Aug 42 - 5 Feb 43, p. 7.
 3. SO No. 92, par 5, Hq FAFRD, 19 May 43 (App. C, Doc. 11).
 4. GO No. 2, Hq FAFRD, 31 May 43 (App. C, Doc. 12).
 5. Promoted to Lt. Col., 22 June 43.
 6. SO No. 145, par 3, Hq AAB, Hammer Fld, 3 June 43 (App. C, Doc. 13).

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On 23 October 1943, Col. Louis L. Roberts arrived from 7AAFTTC at Atlantic City to become Commanding Officer.¹ Col. Warner became first Commanding Officer of Distribution Center Number 3 at Santa Monica, California, and took as a cadre Lt. Col. Schulte as Executive Officer, Maj. Mollerstrom as S-1, Maj. Prewitt as Surgeon, Capt. Dundas as Adjutant, Lt. Wilman as Mess Officer, Lt. Haines as Statistical Officer, and 50 key non-coms. At the Depot, Lt. Roy O. Carter became Adjutant and Maj. White again became Executive Officer.

1. GO No. 5, Hq FAFRD, 23 Oct 43 (App. C, Doc. 14).

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C H A P T E R II

OPERATIONS AND TRAINING

From the activation of the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot until 3 May, the Shipping group continued in the old way, with a separate section for receiving and one for shipping. In May, 20 new squadrons were activated to handle men in processing, and Shipping and Receiving were consolidated under Lt. Clifford A. Swanson. This section also operated as a control function to schedule processing.

On 19 May, Capt. Joseph C. Healy took over the Classification and Assignment Section and held that position until he became S-1 on 2 December and was replaced by Capt. Robert W. Welch. There was increased need for classifying and assigning more men in less time, so that time would be available for training, and constant adjustments were made to gain efficiency and speed. In May, Classification also instituted a program to determine the amount of on-the-line training that would be needed by graduates of AAF Technical Schools after assignment to a permanent base, in order that some of that training might be supplied at Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot. Considerable equipment and trained personnel were required for this Performance Laboratory, and there was no way to standardize testing methods. Late in November, all men with Signal Corps classifications--radio operators, repair men, interceptor observers--were sent directly to Camp Pinedale (the Signal Corps Training Center); and since most of the men tested had been in those specialties, it was decided to disband the Laboratory early in December, shortly after the number of technicians tested had reached 8,000.

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On 1 July 1943, Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot Memorandum 35-8¹ was published, containing the newest and most complete Standard Operating Procedure for a 3-day processing. It provided 6 distinct steps: Orientation, Medical Processing, Records Processing, Classification, Supply and Equipment, and Training. It had been found that most of the men received had been through an induction center, reception center, basic training, and specialist schools where they were told that their essential processing would be completed at their "next station." The Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot was that next station.

The first step in the processing line for the new arrivals was the Orientation lecture. This was a carefully planned summary of the objectives of the Depot and the mission of the Fourth Air Force. It reviewed the opportunities for insurance, allotments, purchase of war bonds, as well as the chances for advancement in grade and classification within the Air Force. It emphasized the fact that, while at the Depot, they would be paid up to date, all records would be brought up to date, identification tags would be completed, all equipment and clothing which had been worn out or lost would be replaced, and applications for Army Service Schools would be taken. Further, the lecture gave a short résumé of basic training required by the Fourth Air Force and important information regarding camp hygiene.

The next step was the Medical Section, where a corps of competent medics carefully examined each man, working from a comprehensive 23-point exercise and examination check list² prepared by Capt. O. C. Jones on 17 March

1. See Appendix C, Document 15.

2. Ibid., pp. 6-7.

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and further developed by his successor, Maj. Leland H. Prewitt, in June. The Medical Section was on the alert to find any physical defects and to correct them before the man was shipped out. An extra effort was made to insure that all men leaving the Depot had properly fitting dentures and spectacles, if needed. Immunizations averaged as high as 5,000 per month.

Following the processing line outlined by red arrows in the corridors of the processing center, the men reached one of the most important steps in the line--the Personnel Section. There each man was interviewed as to back pay due him and was given an opportunity to make additional allotments for dependents, insurance, and war bonds. If identification tags had been lost or if information on them was inaccurate, new tags were completed as he followed the bright red arrows. Each man was interviewed by a representative of the S-3 Section as to the amount of basic training he had received and the last date on which he fired the M-1917, 30 calibre rifle. Entry of this information was made on his service record.

The next step in the processing line was the Classification Section.¹ There each soldier met a trained classification specialist in a private conference designed to bring out all the man's civilian and military experience so that his aptitude for any of the many specialties needed in Fourth Air Force units could be determined. To further insure correct classification, the section administered written aptitude tests and Army General Classification Tests² and rated the performance on tests. After all interviews and

1. Chart of the Classification Department, FAFRD, Hammer Fld, 7 June 43 (App. C, Doc. 16).

2. Table I, "Tests Administered by Classification during 1943" (App. C, Doc. 17).

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tests, each man presented his papers personally to a Chief Classifier, who checked qualifications and recommendations for assignment. The soldier then proceeded to the check-out station, where all the forms in his processing envelope were checked again for completeness.

The first day of processing also featured a show-down inspection of all clothing and equipment, held in the Squadron Area. A shortage form was made out for all items lacking, and replacements were issued the same day with or without a signed statement of charges. Final and most time-consuming step was the determination and correction of training deficiencies. On the basis of information contained on the service record, each man was assigned to the training flight made up of men nearest his level in military training. The S-3 clerk marked each man for either the 18- or 36-day training schedule,¹ the first two weeks at Hammer Field and the last 18 days at Squaw Valley or, later, at the Mount Owens Rifle Range. On the fourth day, training began.

Classes at Hammer Field continued as before, with some additional courses in Basic Training, such as the Chemical Warfare class set up by the new section organized 10 February under Maj. Albert J. Sutcliffe. Specialist schools continued until the early summer, when there was no longer any need that the Depot should offer such training. Important changes, however, were evident in the field-training portion of the program.²

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1. "Basic Training Control Board," Hq FAFRD, 25 Aug 43 (App. C, Doc. 18).
 2. "4-Week Training Program," Hq FAFRD, 9 Mar 43 (App. C, Doc. 19); also Appendix C, Document 15, FAFRD Memo 35-8, Annex A, "36-Day Training Program," 22 June 43.

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On 24 March 1943, Squaw Valley reached a strength of 1,487, about double the number it could conveniently handle. Mud, snow, and spring rain made it almost uninhabitable, and complaints from parents of soldiers in training there were frequent. In March, a site was found for a new camp on a plain lying beneath the foothills of the Mount Owens Range, about 12 miles from Hammer Field. It offered plenty of broad flat surface for drill and calisthenics; there were indications that fresh water could be found; and it was within easy marching distance of the home base. In June, the firing range was completed with 50 dual targets in reinforced concrete pits, with field phone service for 100-, 200-, 300-, and 500-yard firing distances. Tent areas were laid out, mess facilities set up, latrines dug, and training areas marked off by the middle of summer.

On 17 May, Squaw Valley made its last appearance on a Morning Report; on 1 July, Mount Owens Rifle Range was officially opened with firing by Col. Warner and his staff before a group of representative civilians. Toward the end of October, in order to escape any possible flooding from the anticipated heavy winter rains, the tent area was moved to higher ground a hundred yards farther from the base of the mountain, new streets were laid out, the Headquarters area defined, and officers' quarters added. Living conditions, especially after the construction of six new latrines complete with hot-water system and adequate shower facilities, were much better than they had been at Squaw Valley. Tents were even winterized by the addition of wooden frames and floors, and coal stoves were installed-- a great luxury compared to the previous winter's accommodations.

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Under the command of Lt. Irving W. Haberle, who had been Commanding Officer at Squaw Valley since February, the first group of men for field training marched out from Hammer Field on 5 July, and by 10 August there were 1,960 men ready at the range for their training. Although intended to give men training under simulated combat conditions--the purpose formerly filled by Squaw Valley--the program followed at Mount Owens was much different in form. After speaking with men who had returned from combat zones, Plans and Training Officers began to emphasize extended-order drill and physical training, with an even greater accent on accuracy in firing. Though training had always been given in the use of the carbine and the sub-machine gun, the rifle now received extra attention, three days being spent with it on the range in practice and record firing, after many days of preparation in sighting and aiming, field stripping, and handling the piece.

Also included in the course of training was work in map reading, cover and concealment, camouflage, bivouacking, marching procedures, and anything else that would help the soldier defend himself and act aggressively on the battlefield.

Integrating the entire program was the combat training course--a 500-yard infiltration course, directed by the Chemical Warfare Section since it contained 200 yards of chemical obstacles. Here waves of troops were sent through smoke and gas barrages, across land mined with dynamite and crossed with barbed wire, beneath a sheet of live ammunition fired from fixed machine guns, finally to advance around the flank of a low hill to an attack on an

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organized position with subsequent reduction of a secondary defense line. Occasionally the running of this course was co-ordinated with practice of B-25's stationed at Hammer Field, which spread gas from the air and simulated strafing attacks for greater reality. Lessons learned in this course later proved invaluable to men in actual combat.

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C H A P T E R III

SUPPLY

When the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot was activated in February 1943, Capt. William L. Oliver II became S-4. He had previously held a supply job at Squaw Valley, where an acute shortage of all facilities and lack of authorization for obtaining supplies had made a hectic job. Now, however, it was possible to obtain supplies through normal channels, with only the customary red tape and "moonlight requisition." The Clothing Department was set up to complete initial issue of clothing and equipment authorized by T/BA 21. Procurement of ordnance and of school supplies and training aids was also co-ordinated through S-4. Early in September, Lt. Max Willemin took over and was replaced, two months later, by Lt. Alton J. Hedges.

Biggest daily recurring headache to S-4 was the transportation problem. Vehicles were borrowed from the Base and from Camp Pinedale until 6 April, when eleven vehicles were assigned to the Depot Motor Pool set up in a shack down on the line. There was no telephone connection in the shack until May, when a field phone was installed. This required two calls--one to get a vehicle and one to notify the user of its availability--until an ingenious chart system was set up to keep track of the commitments and requirements for all vehicles. Assignment of 22 more vehicles on 4 May enabled the Depot to maintain scheduled runs to trains and to Mount Owens easily and to build up a safety record of 3,000 men transported and 60,000 miles per month run with only one major accident. Capt. Oliver was replaced as Transportation Officer in September by Lt. Hedges, who supervised the

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construction of the new Motor Pool, which was equipped with a steam rack, two concrete work pits, and a paint shop by 15 December.

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C H A P T E R IV

LIFE AND MORALE

The activation of the Depot as a regular unit and the allotment of a Table of Organization to it resulted in February 1943 in the first promotions ever granted to Depot enlisted men. Men who had worked seven days a week, 24 hours a day, for six months without any possible hope of reward now received at one jump the ratings which they should have been acquiring slowly over the entire period. Naturally, morale took an upward leap in direct proportion, and another wholesale awarding of additional ratings on 1 May convinced the permanent party that life was still worth while and that satisfaction in a job well done would no longer be the only reward.

As the number of men available for use in the Depot increased, more of the permanent party had an opportunity to attend Officers Candidate School, Aviation Cadet Training, and Army Student Training Program schools. Lt. Chester W. Harper, commander of a School Squadron Group, was recorder of a board headed by Maj. White to choose for these various schools candidates from among permanent party as well as from the hundreds of well-qualified men who came through the Replacement Depot.

In April, Lt. Harold McCloud became the first Depot Special Service Officer, being charged with the establishment and furnishing of squadron day rooms. As Special Service was still a function of the Physical Training program, basketball and boxing were an important part of the Special Service work. Intramural tournaments were begun in May, and boxing matches with soldiers from neighboring camps became a regular weekly event. These

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special events were part of the morale-building program at Camp Mount Owens, which formed its own teams and backed its own favorites against Hammer Field personnel. Besides athletic events, Mount Owens also specialized in GI talent shows, which, while definitely on the amateur side, provided excellent entertainment for both participants and audience. In June, Col. Warner decided that a squadron party should be given each class on the completion of its training and just before it was assigned to a Fourth Air Force installation. Motion-picture actor Victor McLaglen offered the use of his near-by ranch, and on 15 June the first of dozens of picnics was given for a casual squadron. Later, permanent party men made use of the ranch and also spread out into parties at various public halls in Fresno. In October, Capt. King G. Stacy from Ninth Service Command taught a fascinated group the intricacies of ocarina playing and of leading group singing.

Naturally, so large a number of transients had a proportionately large number of troubles; and, in keeping with Army tradition, they told them to the chaplains. As Hammer Field had a numerous population of its own, the Depot chaplain's office was set up on 25 April 1943, with Lt. Lester I. Snyder as chaplain. A month later, a Catholic chaplain, Lt. Philip J. Kearney, was assigned. In July, Lt. Snyder was transferred and Capt. David H. Peeples arrived late in the month to replace Lt. Thomas R. Brown, temporarily assigned. Field services were held at Mount Owens each Friday by the Depot chaplain, until Chaplain Huntley Lewis was assigned there shortly before the end of the year.

Slowly the Depot acquired additional departments, particularly in March

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and April when Hammer Field, unable to handle the alarming increases in casual personnel, gave up some of its former services to the Depot. First of these was the services of the Legal Department. On 1 January 1943, Captain Oliver was appointed first Depot Legal Officer, to give legal aid to enlisted men both of permanent party and of transient squadrons and to collect evidence and file charge sheets for Squadron Commanding Officers. He held this position until 5 September when Captain Donald S. Dundas, Adjutant, took it over as additional duty; on 23 October, Lt. Alfred R. Hunter replaced Capt. Dundas as Legal Officer. In June, Lt. Max H. Willemin and Lt. Robert B. Biggin took over the management of Depot mess halls on Hammer Field; messing facilities at Squaw Valley and Mount Owens had always been under the supervision of Depot personnel.

Strangely enough, morale at Mount Owens was always higher than among the men at Hammer Field, in spite of rough living conditions and comparative isolation. This was undoubtedly due to the personality of the officers in charge of the Range and to the spirit of camaraderie which their leadership fostered among the men.

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GENERAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 32)

HEADQUARTERS FOURTH AIR FORCE,
San Francisco, California,
February 12, 1943.

ACTIVATION OF THE FOURTH AIR FORCE REPLACEMENT DEPOT

1. Pursuant to letter AG 320.2 (2-4-43) OB-I-AF-M, W.D., A.G.O., February 5, 1943, subject: "Constitution and Activation of the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot", the Fourth Air Force Replacement Depot having been constituted and assigned to the Fourth Air Force, is activated at Hammer Field, Fresno, California, effective February 12, 1943 in accordance with Personnel Allotment Table being furnished to unit concerned under separate cover.

2. Specific authorization of enlisted grades will be published in a separate communication.

3. Cadre personnel for the activation of this unit will be furnished from the 50th Base Headquarters and Air Base Squadron, Hammer Field, California.

4. Fillers and replacements will be furnished from sources under control of this Air Force. Personnel replacement will be accomplished in the usual manner by submission of the AAF Form 127, December 12, 1942 (Personnel Status Report).

5. Four (4) copies only of T.B.A. will be prepared by the Commanding Officer, Hammer Field, California and submitted to this headquarters prior to March 6, 1943.

6. The provisions of letter AAF 220.2, Headquarters of the Army Air Forces, dated September 21, 1942, subject: "Promotion of Enlisted Men Based on Authorized Grades and Strengths", will be adhered to in bringing unit to full authorized strength.

7. Reports will be submitted, without delay, by the Commanding Officer, Hammer Field, Fresno, California, to The Adjutant General (10 copies), and the Commanding General, Army Air Forces (Attention: AFWAG - Publications Section - 20 copies), by letter, through this headquarters, giving the necessary information, submitted in the following form:

- a. Unit activated.
- b. Units furnishing cadres.
- c. Size of cadre.
- d. Date of activation.

8. The Commanding Officer, Hammer Field, Fresno, California will notify the Commanding General, Ninth Service Command, Fort Douglas, Utah of the date of activation of this unit.

9. Army Air Forces Regulations 15-107 Part I, December 12, 1942, 15-108, December 15, 1942, 15-127, September 15, 1942, and 15-128, May 8, 1942 will be complied with immediately.

10. The procurement allotment cited below will be obligated to the extent necessary: (See Section VI, Circular No. 261, W.D., 1942, as amended by Section II, Circular No. 279, W.D., 1942, and Section IV, Circular No. 314, W.D., 1942.)

G.O. #32. Hq 4th AF, 2-12-43 - (Continued)

10. (Continued)

Finance Service, Army

FD 33 P 433-01, 433-02, 433-03, 433-04, 433-05, 433-07, 433-08 A 0425-23

(For travel of personnel, including dependents; for packing, crating, unpacking and shipping equipment, impedimenta and household goods; tolls and ferriages en route; gasoline, oil and repairs to motor vehicles en route; communication service; rental of camp sites and procurement of utility service.)

By command of Major General GILES:

t/ EMIL C. KIEL,
Colonel, General Staff Corps,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

s/ I. B. Summers
t/ I. B. SUMMERS,
Colonel, Adjutant General's Department,
Adjutant General.

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

Mary P. Spangenberg
MARY P. SPANGENBERG,
Captain, Air Corps,
Base Historical Officer.