

Bombs Away

43-14





V-206

Poesche
'93

Class
43-14



VICTORVILLE ARMY AIR FIELD



A Message from the **COMMANDING OFFICER**

October 2, 1943

To the Class 43-14:

Pressed within twelve short weeks, you have had the equivalent of many months of intensive training. Teaching you to bomb and at the same time training you to be competent Officers, has been a great undertaking.

But you have proved your ability to grasp knowledge quickly. The record of your class has been outstanding.

Remember the things you have learned. . . . In combat, your bombing will improve constantly, because your targets will be important. . . . Your practice missions are over. Bombing will soon have a very real meaning to you.

In combat, your responsibility as an Officer will be equally as great. Remember always: Be as good an Officer as you are a bombardier!

EARL C. ROBBINS,
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commandant.





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Director of Training

LT. COL. ADOLPHUS L. RING
Post Executive Officer

MAJ. PAUL F. KIRKPATRICK
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Director of Ground School

FIELD ADMINISTRATION



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CAPT. JAMES D. WATKINS
Commanding Officer, Sec. 1

CAPT. VERNON E. WAELDIN
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Stuck out in the Desert!

It was chilly and damp that morning at Santa Ana—an ironic contrast some thought as they visualized their new home in the middle of the Mojave—for the caravan of busses that had just pulled up to the disbursal area had sealed our fate. We gasped for breath as we were sentenced to Victorville—scourge of the West—the dreaded Bombardier's Death Valley.

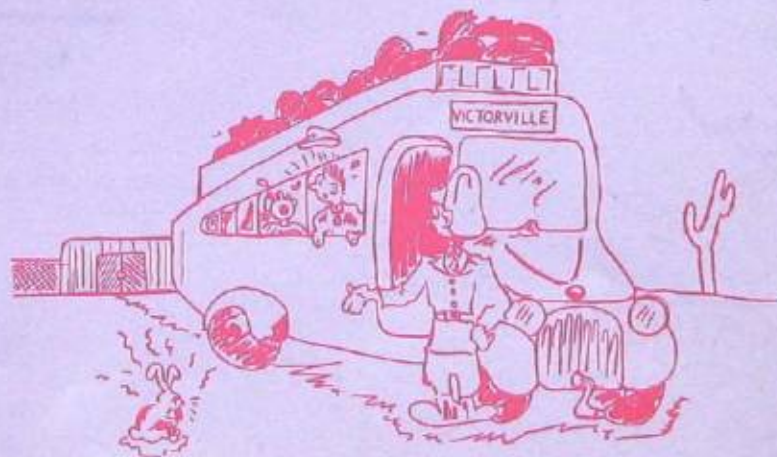
After an uninspiring trip through sections of California that baffled description even in the pages of "Grapes of Wrath," we arrived at our new Post, nervous, apprehensive, and ravenously hungry.

Reluctantly we piled out of our busses, to us the last remaining symbol of the civilized world, and lined up.

Somehow the warm congeniality of the officers that welcomed us seemed to soothe our melancholia. We were at once ushered into an air-conditioned mess hall and banqueted royally—"Fattening us up for the kill," a quipster volunteered . . . but we relaxed for the first time that day, to the soft music and air-conditioned atmosphere of the mess hall.

From there we were introduced to our air-conditioned barracks and our clean, cool, and cheerful, semi-private rooms.

By now even the most hardened skeptics among us—the doubting Thomases—realized that we had somehow fallen into good hands.



... We Fell Into



MAJOR HAROLD M. SKAGGS, Jr.
Commandant of Cadets



CAPTAIN LOUIS H. GARRETT
Deputy Commandant of Cadets

5/SGT. NORMAN E. PAASCHE
Sergeant Major



Good Hands!

CAPTAIN A. H. MILLER
Chief Tactical Officer



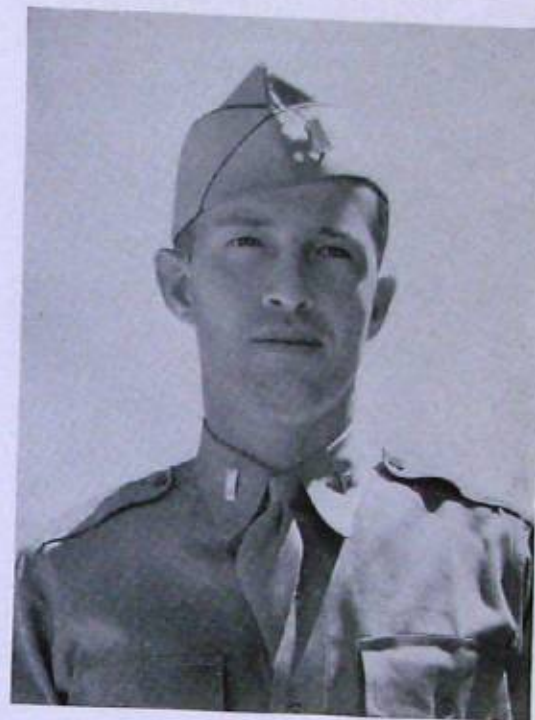
Officers like Major Skaggs and Captain Garrett set a fast pace, but they made us like it. . . . This proved conclusively to us that they were good officers. . . . We were willing to work like the devil for good officers, and we did.

It was a hectic chase packed with headaches, tours, drilling, inspections, reviews and interviews. . . . But we made the grade and we can't help feeling proud of ourselves.

Our officers made an indelible impression on our minds. . . . The Major and the Captain put their foot down occasionally and kept us in line. Sometimes they made us feel foolish when they picked us apart, caught us with a button unfastened, or our hands in our pockets. But they didn't humiliate us — they merely drew an object lesson that justified the purpose of doing the "little things" right.

Staff Sgt. Norman E. Paasche, our Sergeant Major, was a real pal and all for the Cadets. His patience was as boundless as his good nature. We asked him thousands of questions—questions that many preceding classes had plagued him with—but he always gave us the right answer, and cheerfully.

Captain A. H. Miller, Chief Tactical Officer, displayed a fondness for 43-14 that the boys recognized and appreciated. His inspections were efficient, though—we really had to keep our toes. He expected a lot of us, but he set the example himself. His military bearing was an inspiration.



LT. RUSSELL H. HARBAUGH
Tactical Officer

Lt. Russell H. Harbaugh, our Tactical Officer, became our friend from the start. We owe him a lot more than printed words could ever express, for his good advice, for his wholehearted interest in each of us, for his guidance in shaping us into potential officers. Lt. Harbaugh was our idea of a top-notch officer and a gentleman. We were fortunate to have him as our Tactical Officer, and—he's one swell person we'll never forget.

Yes, 43-14 fell into good hands, and to these officers and non-coms, we say . . .

"Thanks—for all you did for us!"





Mighty Good Food . . .



If the way to a man's heart is through his stomach, then our hearts belong to Victorville. Some of our most pleasant memories of this field revolve around the hours at Cadet Mess.

For this, credit goes to Lt. Bert Galindo and his staff, the finest group of culinary experts that ever transformed a pot of leftovers into a savory batch of real Mulligan stew. What magic must have gone on in that kitchen! A dip of this, a dash of that, a shake of something, and even the lowly G.I. bean was changed into a steaming dish of palatal delight.

Day by day, night by night, we were fattened on steak, and ham, and roast, and chops; on cutlets, bacon, fish and fowl. The meals ended as deliciously as they began, with cake and cookies, pies and puddings, ice cream and jello.

No time in Victorville was more pleasantly spent than that in the mess hall. To us, one good meal was worth half a dozen pep talks in keeping our morale high.

So we, the Class of 43-14, hail thee, Lt. Galindo, and give you belated thanks for your struggles with recipe and ration books, mess allotments and food shortages.



*Gotta
Make*



*Chow
Formation!*

WE WERE DIVIDED



LT. WILLIAM G. BARMORE

THE newly formed and bewildered Squadron 5 of Class 43-14 seated itself for the first time in a Victorville classroom. Each man carefully regarded his surroundings with a wondering gaze, not knowing what to expect. The equipment and diagrams entranced us.

Our spell of bewilderment was broken as we were snapped to attention. Lt. W. G. Barmore entered and made his debut. During the weeks that followed, he led us through the tangled problem that was Bombardiering.

No man among us will forget those hot, but interesting afternoons and nights in the classroom. The problems that were soon to be so real and so near were presented there. Many times we chased gear trains and rate ends and gyros and figures to what seemed a dead-end. But each time, our instructor led us back to the necessary solution.



SQUADRON 5

To Lt. Barmore, and to other instructors who helped us, Squadron 5 dedicates this page of appreciation. It took such men to make Bombardiers of us.

Ralph J. Bradbury.



INTO TWO SQUADRONS



LT. RICHARD D. BENNETT

A FINE officer and a swell guy . . . Lt. R. D. Bennett, Ground School Instructor for Squadron 6. Through those twelve hard weeks, we really tried to stay on the ball for him.

From bombing theory to navigation, along the hard road of gear trains and toppling gyros, through "overs and shorts," and around the bend on E-6-B's and C-2's, we always had the feeling of a good driver in Lt. Bennett.

Little did we realize then, but now how well we know, that you can't hit shacks by just turning a knob. Lt. Bennett taught us what moved when we turned those darn knobs, and the few shacks we did get, we owe to him.

We, of Squadron 6, remember how Lt. Bennett went to bat for some of our classmates. Always

ready to say a good word for a cadet in difficulty, he endeared himself to us by his actions at elimination board meetings.

We'll remember Lt. Bennett for his untiring effort and patience, his good job of teaching, and his example as an officer.

Frederick A. Brown.



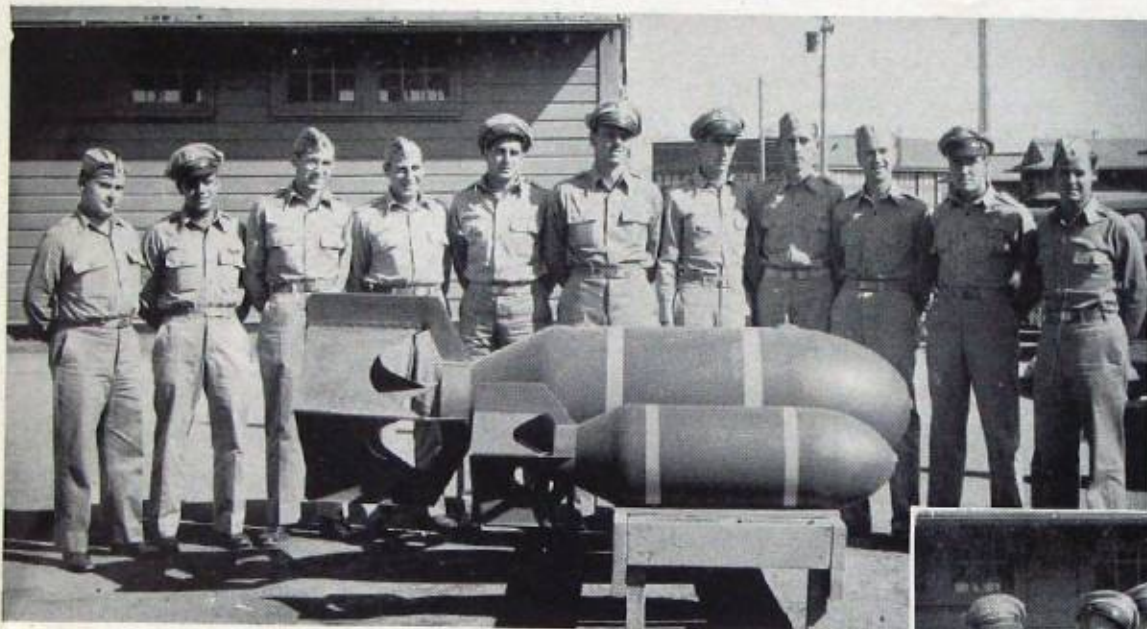
Hawkins gets
a Picture!



SCENERY



Then started the fun

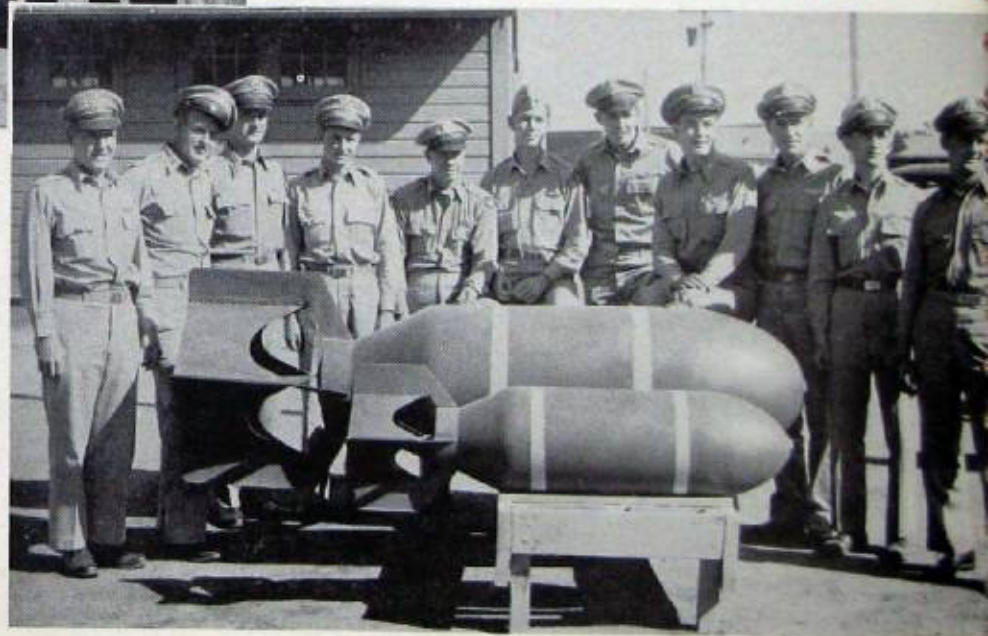


Instructor... bad mission...

WE can't help feeling that our instructors are the real heroes of this war—the men who by virtue of their assignments are denied the greater glory of actual combat. These are the men who soothed and consoled, and fretted over us—who slowly but definitely made us expert in the secret craft of precision bombing.

During those first trying hours as we went praying down the bombing run on the way to the target—it was our instructors who shared the ecstasy of the "shack" with us—or who saw us through those black moments that periodically cast a shadow over every fledgling Bombardier.

It is our collective hope that their reward will be in the reflected glory of our achievements.



Flying and Bombing



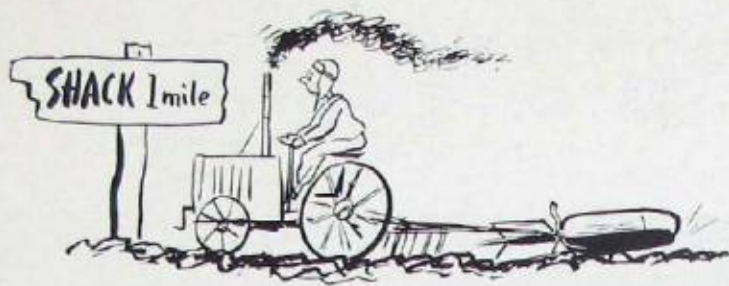
THOSE first few agonizing hours we spent perched up on the students' seats in the trainers found us taking a frantic inventory of our aptitudes and powers of manual coordination. . . . "Could we synchronize?" we asked ourselves.

When we had "licked" the trainer, we were straining at the leash to test all of the theory we had absorbed on the ground. We wanted to know for ourselves if the damned thing would really work! . . . We finally got a chance to spread our newly issued wings one dawn at 4 A.M. Starry-eyed with anticipation and lack of sleep, we staggered into the ready room.

"Give me a parachute, medium please, clipboard, stop watch, oxygen mask, camera." . . . All this in a single breath, blurted out to a sleepy G.I. supply clerk, who has long since ceased to be amazed at the ebullience of cadets.

From here we held our breath and walked over to the blackboards where our missions were scheduled. . . . We plagued our nearby instructors with thousands of questions, questions that every bombardier cadet has asked:—"Nothing to worry about today," the instructor would say, "Going up with Von Ins, one of the best pilots on the field." Or, "Just remember the procedure you learned on the trainer and nothing will go wrong."





IN wild excitement, we dashed out to our ships, ten or fifteen minutes late in meeting the pilots. But they didn't mind; they had had a lot of sleep—at least three hours.

When our missions were over, we returned for a post-mortem at the ready room, where we turned in all of our equipment—that is, all the equipment that didn't fall out of the camera hatch. . . . And how did our first missions go that morning? Let's not talk about that!

Learning to bomb is like being bombed, an alchemy of tears, strife, disappointment and sacrifice. Sometimes it's fun, but it's always rough. When the weather's calm, your gyros strong and the pilot's happy—you'd like to fly for hours. . . . But then there are nights when you hate the shadow of the plane silhouetted against the Mojave—hate the bombsight, hate the bombs, the whole damned business. Those are the nights when things go wrong and bombardiers are made or broken.

Five hundred foot combat missions . . . toppling gyros, but sorry, no malfunctions . . . nine hits and but five bombs to drop. Those are the miserable days and the sleepless nights you can't forget. . . . Day record—night record—night record combat—day record combat, . . . and then, if the Gods have smiled—Graduation!

You lose a lot of sleep, you never have time to call your own, there's a lump in your throat as big and bitter as a California lemon, but still you sing on your way to class and you joke on your way to bomb. . . . You do all this, and they call you . . . **BOMBARDIER!**





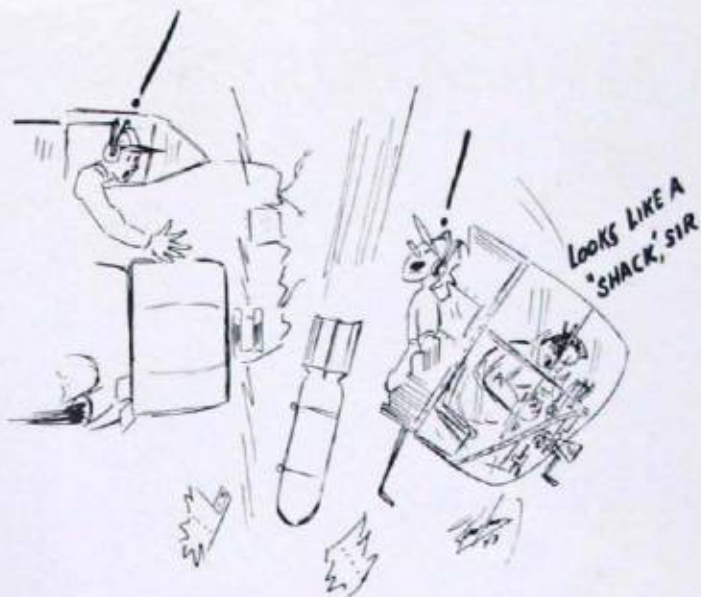
night mission musings



"Get Your Head Out"

Synchronization perfect,
Bubbles level and true,
Air speed at '120'
Nothing much to do.
But alas, I hear a clatter,
And now I must report,
I forgot my "extended vision"
The bomb hit three miles short.





For when I die, bury me deep,
With an E-6-B at my feet.
Place a 12-C form upon my chest,
And tell my instructor I did my best.





*I think you'd better
turn, now, sir!*

Winter at Minter . . .

"Bombs Away!" cried the Bombardier
When he heard the click as the bomb went clear.
Down and down it sped through space,
As he sat and watched with an ashen face.
He was keeping his eyes on the target below,
When far to the left came that dreaded glow.
He faced the instructor whose face was quite red,
With a half-hearted, "Must be the ship up ahead."
Now he's all finished bombing and he's looking much thinner,
'Cause the steaks aren't as thick or as frequent at Minter!



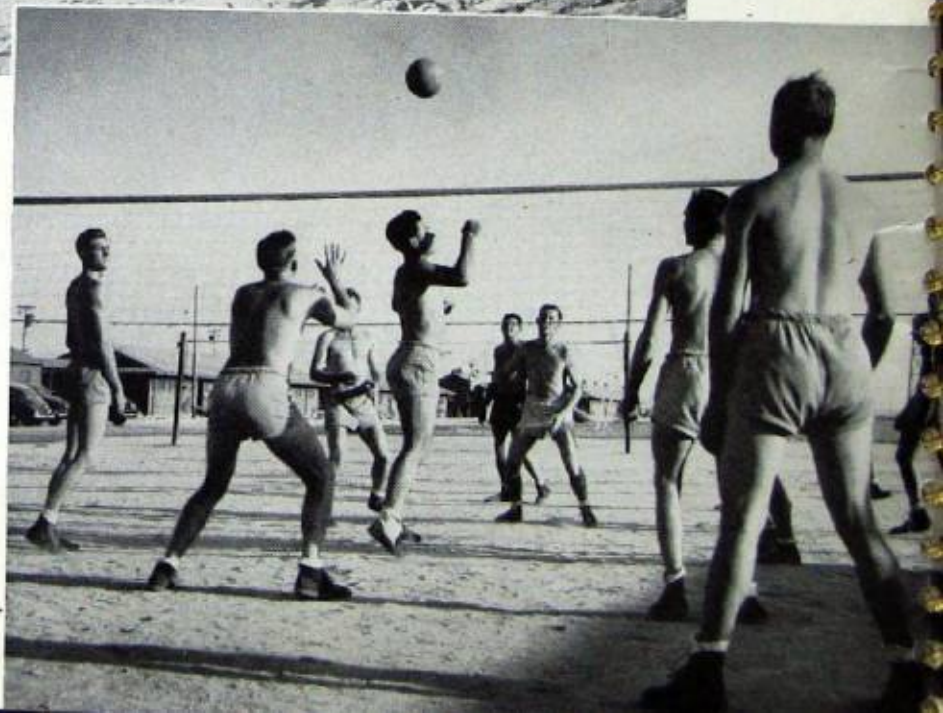
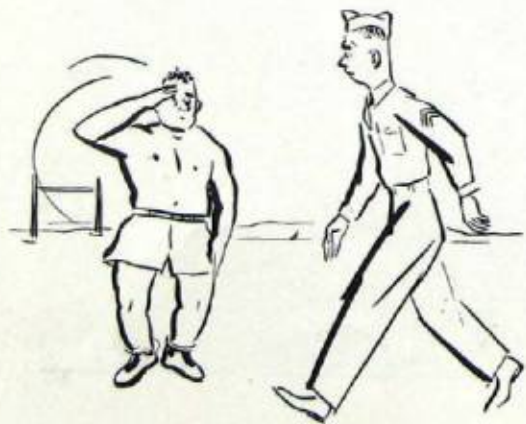
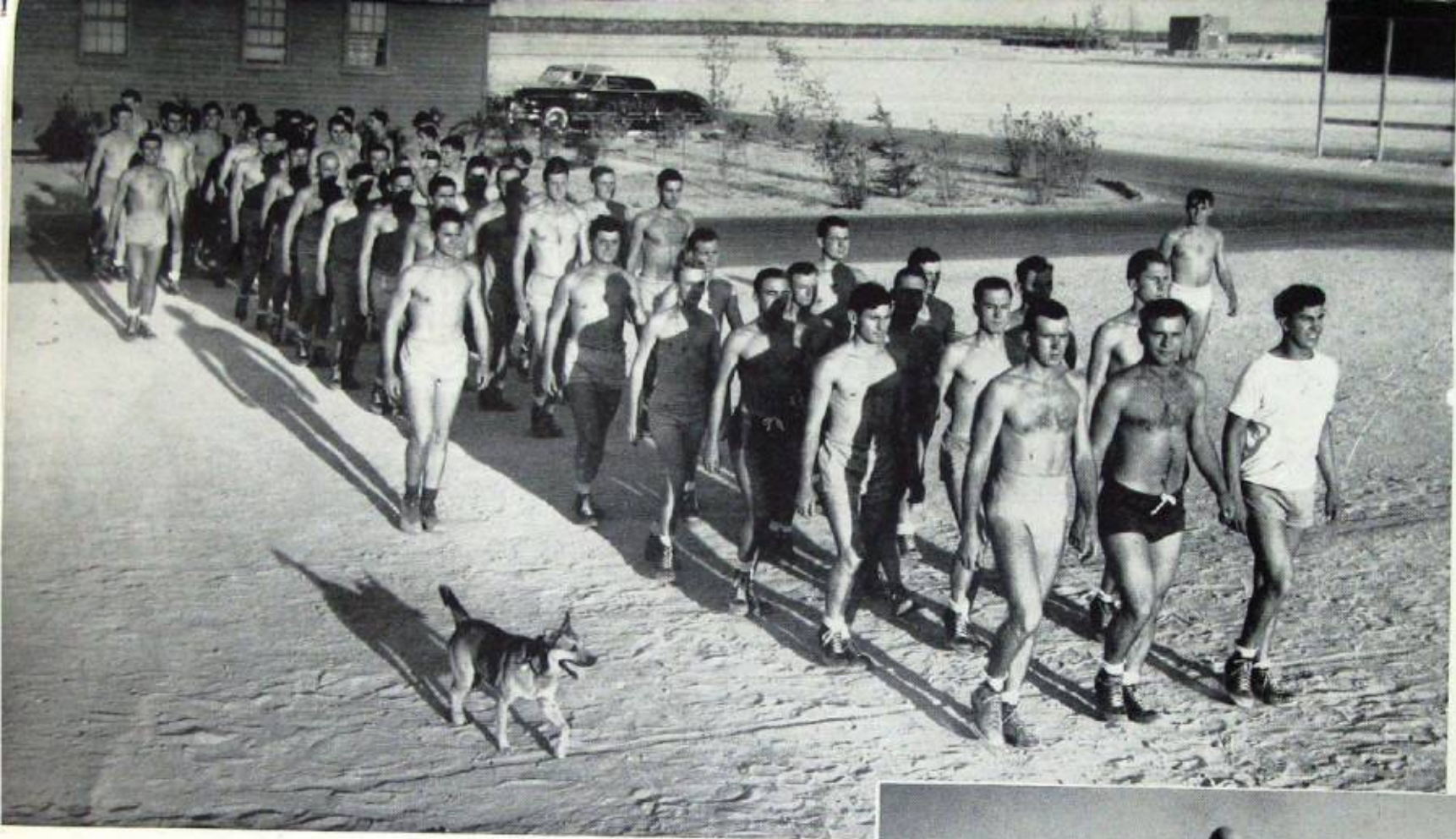


THE CARE OF EQUIPMENT (or) A GOOD C. E.

A little luck, a little skill,
A little prayer, a little will,
A C-2 computer, an E-6-B,
A darn good pilot, and pencils three!
An M-4 camera and NO MISTAKES.
Eliminates the use of . . .

(A lot of film to track the
impact back to the target.)





Wow... My aching back!

AND athletics. Dee-uble time, MARCH—extend to the left—to a sitting position—keep those knees straight—in eight counts—three pace interval—hup, two, three, four—assemble to the right.

Memories, just memories. Of double time in the half-dark of dawn, wind sprints in the glow of the sunset, the obstacle course on hot Wednesday noons, push-ups before breakfast, burpys in mid-morning. Of basketball on melting asphalt courts, softball on a desert field, football on a sandy stretch, volleyball in a dust storm, and bloody struggles over a water ball in the pool.

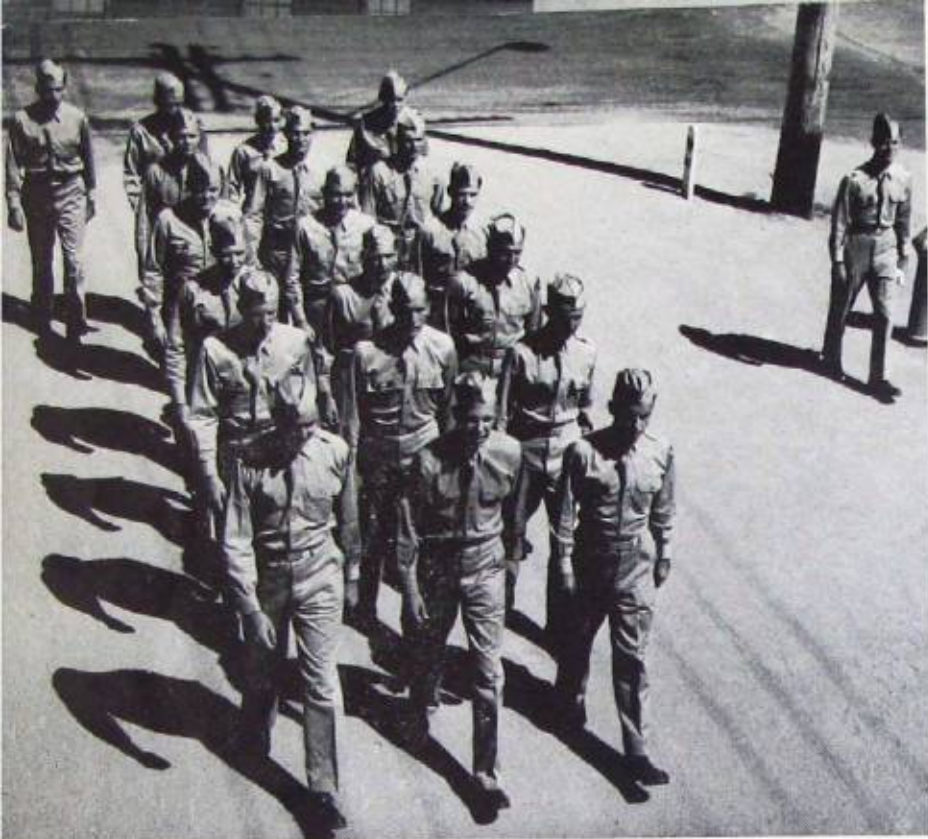
The days followed a pattern, designed to build muscles and bodies for war time. First the run to the field, then extend, count off, even numbers to the right, "Un-cover!" Hup, two, three, four. . . . Next, to the flag and back, sometimes around headquarters, and occasionally—(dreaded words)—to the gate at 190 cadence. Then:

"Flight lieutenants, front and center. E Flight, swimming—lucky E; F plays volleyball—collective groan; G, basketball. Weight-lifters fall out, those muscular few who strain with barbells and dumbbells.

It was rough; it was tough. But 14 loved it. The harder it got, the more the smiles. An ideal outlet for impotent anger at a high C. E., for muscles cramped by hours in the greenhouse and classroom. And we became fit; our skin browned under the hot sun, our bodies hardened slowly. The double times seemed shorter. We had stamina.

Some day, when we need that last ounce of strength to make it "Mission Complete"—and we have it—Lts. Lewis and Anderson can relax a moment and contemplate a job well done. Then, back to the stand they'll go. . . . AND—hup, two, three, four. . . .





Part of each day

... Officer Training

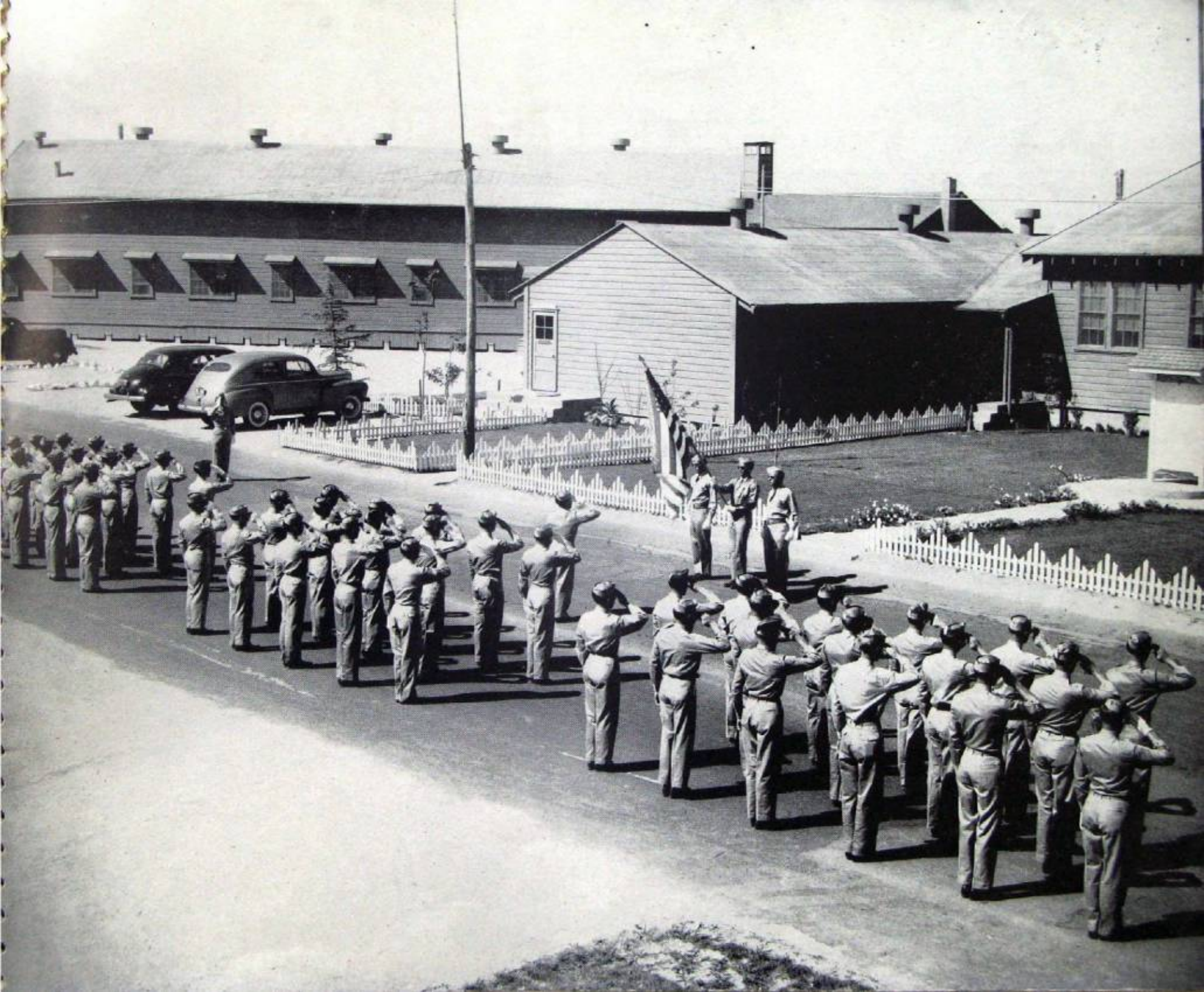
INGENUOUSLY jigsawed somewhere between our trainer, bombing, ground school, and athletic schedules were those all important activities which gave background to the production of an officer.

Saturday morning reviews and inspections gave us a feeling of unit pride which made us realize and appreciate the efficiency of our military training. . . . We swelled with pardonable pride when our squadron took the spotlight at Review and when our barracks were scoured into a semi-gigproof condition. . . . We felt this influence individually, too, when in contact with our officers, wondering in the back of our minds what kind of an impression we were making—for as Aviation Cadets, we realized we were on the spot and under constant surveillance as potential officers.

There were many in our group who at first resented the Spartan Rigors of Cadet Military Training. . . . They will admit now that they were not sufficiently familiar with the long range purpose of the system.

We now realize that it was only logical to have learned first to obey and then to command.





Saturday . . . Hubba, Hubba

BETWEEN the dark and the daylight, when the night was beginning to low'r, sometimes there came a pause in the day's occupation known as a free time hour. More often it was fifteen minutes, or ten, or five, but it was spare time. It meant, to us, a dash to the cleaners, a run to the barber shop, a walk to the cadet supply. But when our hair was strictly G. I. cut, our clothes freshly pressed, and our clean sheets drawn for the week, it meant other things. Perhaps a movie—maybe a coke at the day room—sometimes a malt at the fountain or a sandwich at the restaurant. A swim in the pool, a few games of bowling or ping-pong or snooker. Or usually it meant just plain sack time.

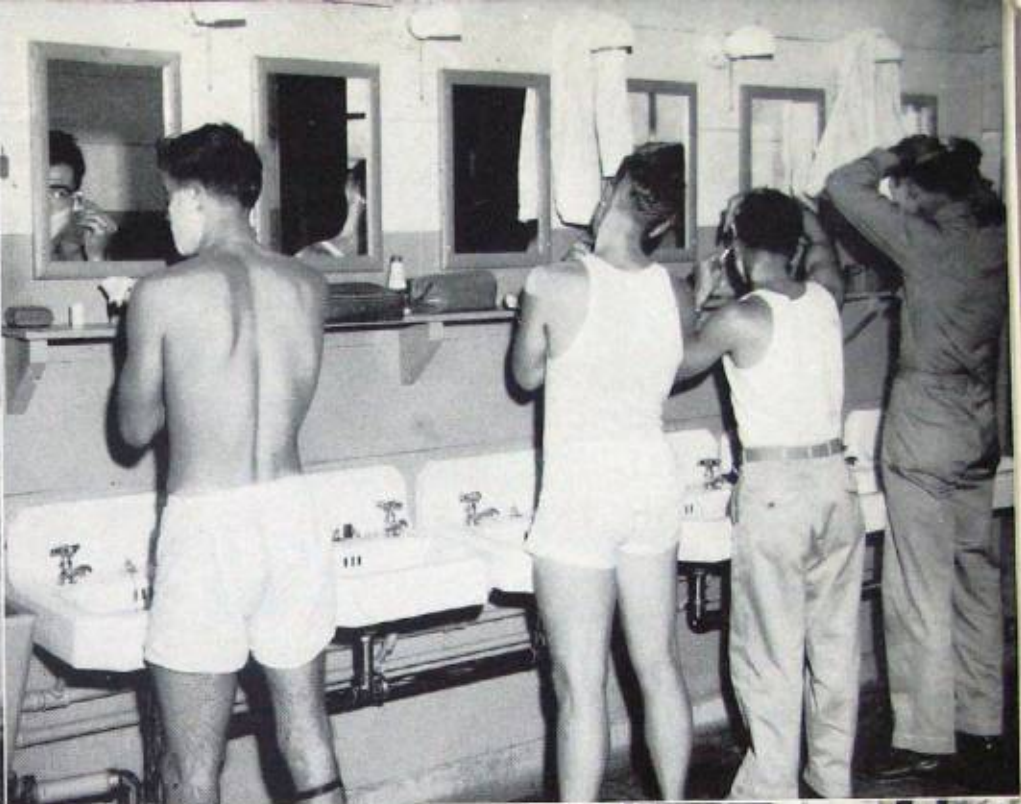
And then, once a week, we forgot our C. E.'s, our hits, our shacks, our worries. Saturday meant passes, release from the sands of the desert to the streets of a town

and the gaiety of civilian fun. That is, Saturday meant passes unless we focused our cameras on the mountains instead of the target. Or unless we forgot to dust the top of the locker. Or unless we read an E-6-B wrong on that ground school test. Winning the parade meant an extra two hours on Open Post, but we wouldn't know about that.

There was Victorville and whiskey sours, or San Berdoo with a salute from every G.I., or Los Angeles with a bit of everything, or Arrowhead and Big Bear with a dozen girls for every cadet. A depleted bankroll, an aching head, a last minute dash to sign in, a Monday morning depression—that was a week-end to us.

But whether week-end or an off hour, it was spare time for 43-14. We squeezed it in somewhere on our schedule; a lot of work, a little play—a bombardier.







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Galveston, Texas



OWEN W. WOMACK
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Victoria, Texas

Student Officers

Class 43-14 was cosmopolitan. With us were men back from the fighting front, and officers seasoned in the art of war. . . . Among our Student Officers were two Captains, six First Lieutenants, four Second Lieutenants . . . and two swell Marine Sergeants. . . . Three of this group were Pilot Officers—Capt. Knox Parker, Lt. A. L. Biberstein and Lt. P. E. Gordon, who now add Bombardier Wings to their collection. . . . The United States Marine Corps had solid representation in Captain E. D. Farris, Sgt. J. F. Burnett and Sgt. J. W. Kirchhoff. . . . Class 43-14 had great respect for its Student Officers. They had the same tough schedules we had, and they came through with flying colors.



1st LT. W. G. BURT, Jr.
Bolingbroke, Georgia



1st LT. L. D. DEANER
307 Cannel Drive
Somerset, Pennsylvania



1st LT. E. K. DUNCAN
1015 W. Appling Street
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1st LT. E. M. MULLIN
701 Ash Avenue
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LT. T. F. BIGELOW
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Grand Rapids, Michigan



LT. W. J. FELTON
122 Wesley Avenue
Oak Park, Illinois



LT. W. T. GARLAND
107 Mistletoe
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LT. W. E. GRAY, III
44 Lenox Place
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LT. N. J. VINCENT
c/o South Side Pharmacy
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1st LT. A. L. BIBERSTEIN
Attica, Kansas



1st LT. P. E. GORDON
4205 Market Street
Riverside, California

United
States
Marine
Corps
Students



CAPT. E. D. FARRIS
USMC
Overland Park, Kansas



Sgt. J. F. BURNETT
USMC
1346 19th Street, South
Birmingham, Alabama



Sgt. J. W. KIRCHHOFF
USMC
2327 N. 53rd Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

They Wore Bars Early



THEY had the toughest jobs of them all—First up and outside for those pre-dawn reveilles while others could snatch 40 extra seconds of precious "sack-time"—First out for school and flight line formations, while others digested those magnificent mess-hall treats. . . . Not to mention the wear and tear on the larynx what with, "E Flight, fall in." . . . "All right, you guys, cut the talking in ranks." . . . "Come on, get in step, will ya." . . . "Straighten it up, here comes an officer" . . . and all the other little by-words that became so much a part of these Cadet Officers.

Trouble? Yes, plenty of it; but it was well worth it. The pride of wearing the bars of a Cadet Officer, the satisfaction of successfully assuming responsibility—the realization that the training and experience in leadership would someday be priceless—all these helped make the tough jobs easier. Much credit is due to these lads who, in addition to other duties, found time somehow to be Cadet Officers.

Wing Commander.....	Foster, Paul Easley
Wing Adjutant.....	Brown, Frederick Anson III
Wing Sergeant Major.....	Bradbury, Ralph Jean
Group Major.....	Baker, Lowell Dean
Captain, Squadron 5.....	Hinson, Eddie Franklin, Jr.
Captain, Squadron 6.....	Stevens, Darrell Lee
Adjutant, Squadron 5.....	Anas, Thomas George
Adjutant, Squadron 6.....	Struewing, Edward Joseph, Jr.
Color Bearer.....	Barbiers, Arthur R., Jr.

A FLIGHT

Flight Lt.....	Adams, G. W.
Flight Sgt.....	Boren, J. W.
Supply Sgt.....	Breazeale, V. O.

B FLIGHT

Flight Lt.....	Gerloff, H. E.
Flight Sgt.....	Dennis, C. W. L.
Supply Sgt.....	Chance, J. H.

C FLIGHT

Flight Lt.....	Hawkins, H. V.
Flight Sgt.....	Kellogg, A. G.
Supply Sgt.....	Grimes, E. J.

E FLIGHT

Flight Lt.....	O'Brien, C. J.
Flight Sgt.....	Philhower, P. G.
Supply Sgt.....	Peters, L. S.

F FLIGHT

Flight Lt.....	Scott, W. C.
Flight Sgt.....	Rives, J. D.
Supply Sgt.....	Scherr, H. M.

G FLIGHT

Flight Lt.....	Whitaker, H. H., Jr.
Flight Sgt.....	Womack, O. W.
Supply Sgt.....	Walton, D. A.



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The staff makes grateful acknowledgement for the invaluable aid and assistance of Pvt. Robert S. Funk, Producer of Bombs Away, and to Corporal E. H. Goldberger, who made the pictures included in this book. Thanks also go to the staff of the Post Photo Laboratory for their fine portraits.





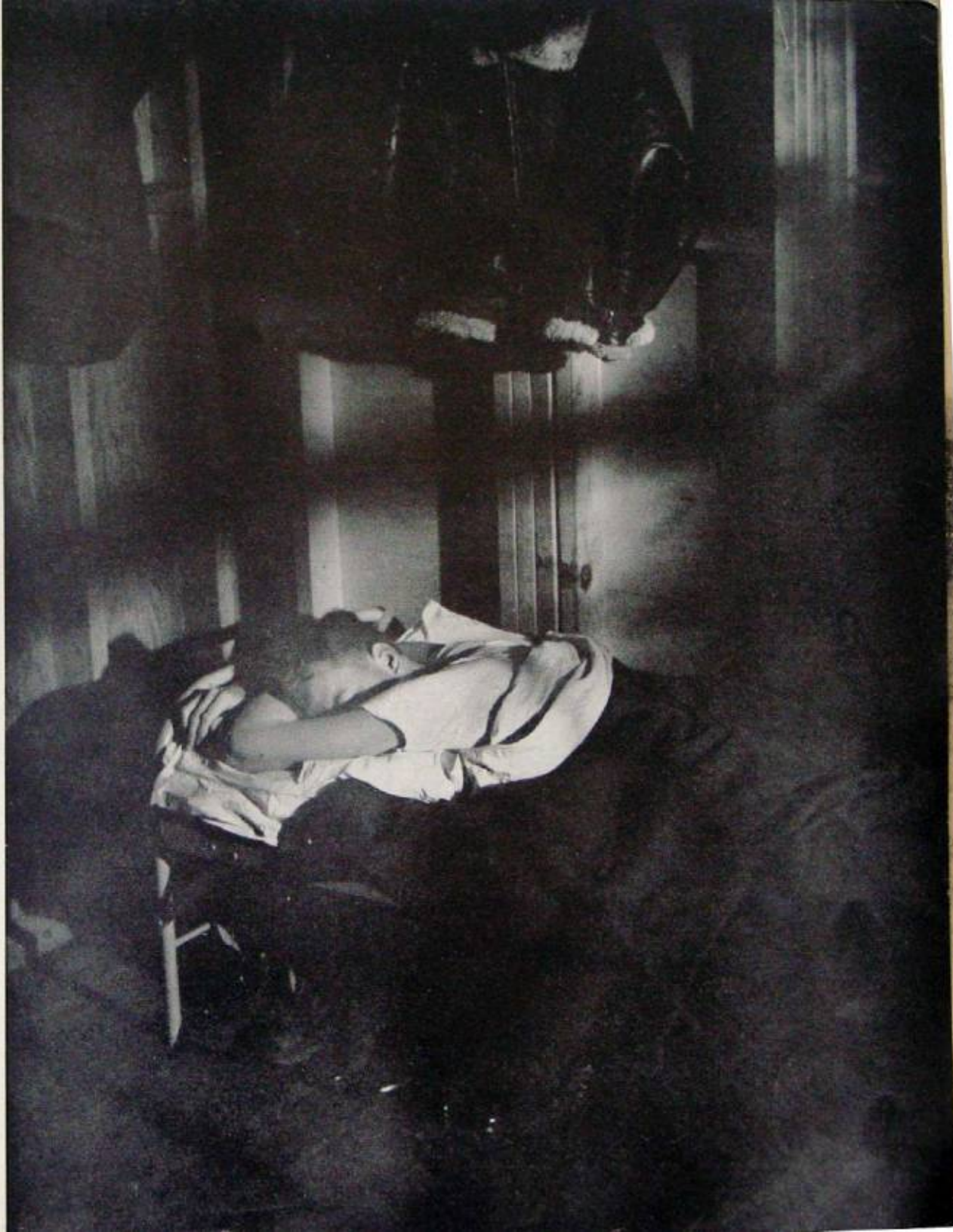
THE VEGA VENTURA BOMBER

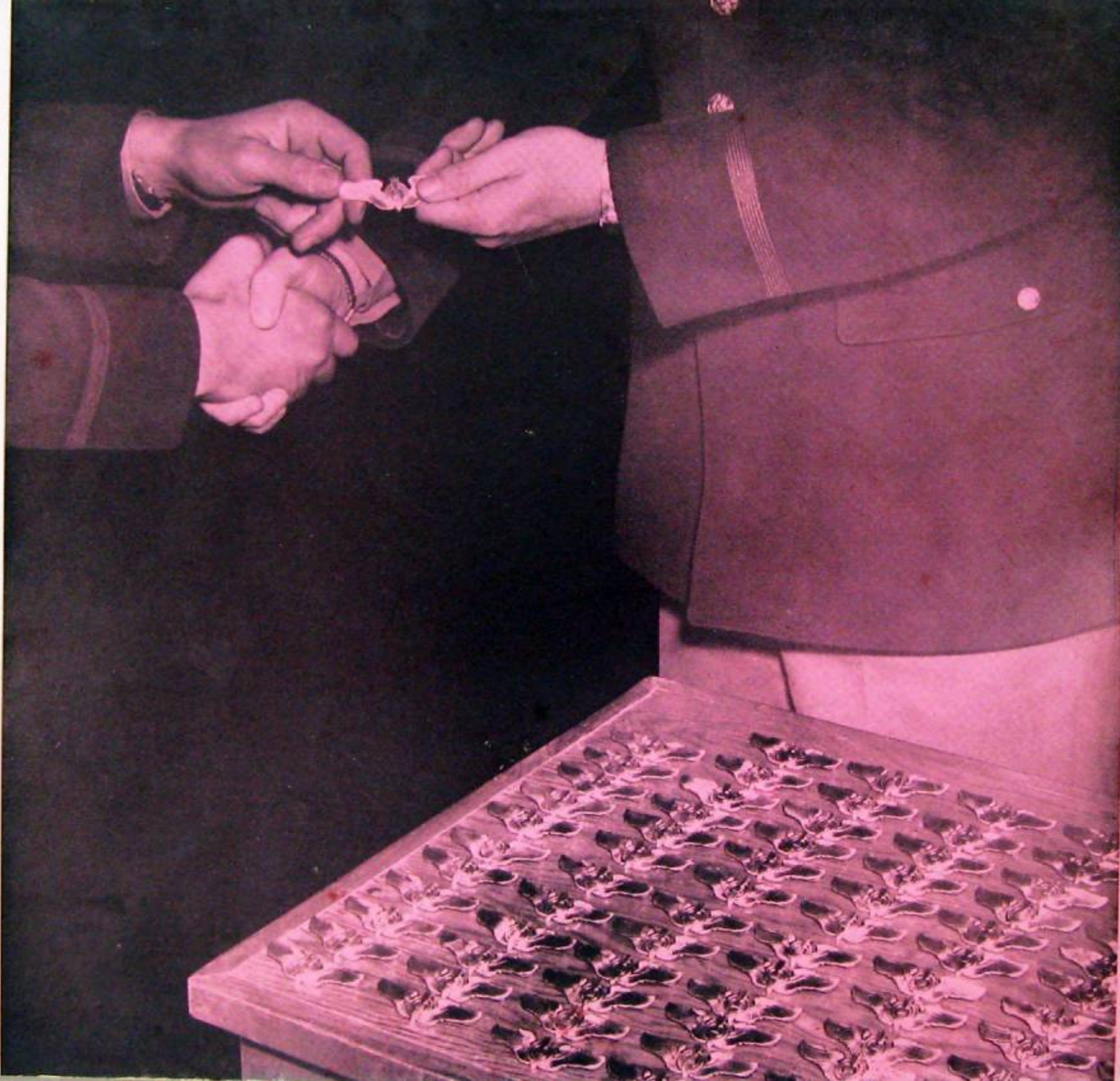
THE night before graduation . . . the one night when our minds were free of worry and confusion. The one night when sleep was deep and restful.

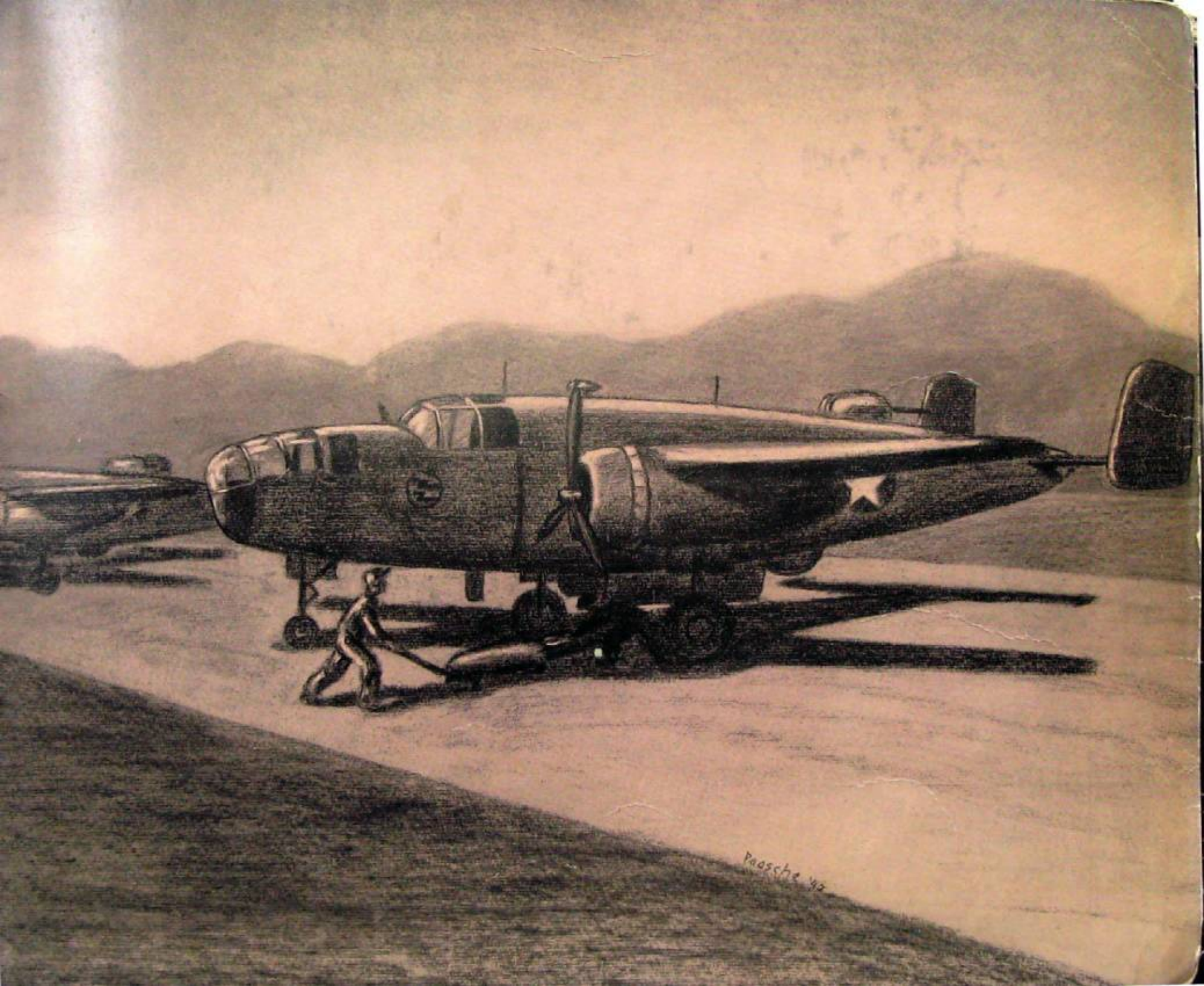
The one night when toppling gyros didn't haunt us. Double releases, extended vision, rack malfunctions, check rides—all that was over. . . . Tomorrow was the day.

Memories of our training passed through our minds as if it all had happened in one busy day. . . . It was a dream of flying—night bombing missions—record combat missions—of sunrise on the mountains and sweltering desert heat—of cactus and Joshua trees and endless sand—of walking tours, and Open Post—of bombsights and ground school exams—of warm friendships—of shacks and 700 footers—of hours of drill and minutes of bunk fatigue—of fun in the swimming pool and misery on the obstacle course.

These pages are pictorial memories of Victorville and our struggle to be bombardiers and officers. . . . Our story in print is not complete, but it will serve to capture the highlights and recall to mind many other incidents of an exciting three months.







Paosche 42

