A detailed illustration of a ship's mast and rigging, rendered in a light blue or white color, positioned behind the main title. The mast is a complex structure of wooden beams and ropes, typical of a multi-masted sailing vessel.

*Bombs
Away!*

CLASS

432







HEADQUARTERS
CADET DETACHMENT
VAFS
VICTORVILLE, CALIFORNIA

January 23, 1943.

SUBJECT: SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE

TO : CLASS OF 43-2.

1. It is desired, herewith to reproduce a letter that the members of the class of 43-2 have been working hard to get together these past few months. Its contents have been gathered painstakingly in the classroom, on the drill field, at the trainer hangar, and here, there, and everywhere—"off in the wild blue yonder." It isn't an ordinary letter, for it symbolizes months of careful preparation. Preparation representing our country's faith in our ability to help answer the Axis boasts. Now that America has put us up there, we won't let Her down. In writing our answer here, we strive only to show that at last we are ready to do our part. We'll have a more concrete answer when we get a chance to deliver it in person.

2. Since this letter was composed at Victorville, it is desired to sketch in some of the outstanding officers who censured and praised us, but most important of all, guided our first faltering ascent into the air. Commanding Officer of the field is . . .

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Man behind the "64" is LIEUTENANT COLONEL D. D. TODOROVIC. Responsible for keeping every airman on the post in top flying condition, Col. Todorovic is a flight surgeon with many hours of flying time to his credit.



Col. Todorovic's assistant, and the man who presides directly over the physical well-being of Cadets is—MAJOR ROYAL C. PAYNE. Many is the brush between Cadets and Major as he rules them "grounded" until that cold clears up. But it is the Major who gets them back up there and saves them many an unhappy hour. When we took to the air at Victorville we were ready for anything.



General steering committee of one for Col. Butler is CAPTAIN PAUL F. KIRKPATRICK. Last link in the chain of command between personnel and Colonel, Capt. Kirkpatrick is Post Adjutant.



Commandant of Cadets, CAPTAIN HAROLD M. SKAGGS, Jr., is the last word on every problem. He writes the regulations and stands behind them as the last court of justice. Next to Captain Skaggs and acting Commandant when he is away is . . .



CAPTAIN LOUIS H. GARRETT, deputy Commandant of Cadets. He, too, administers Cadet affairs. His most popular job comes around pay day, when he hands out our cash.

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Tactical Officer of 43-2 is LIEUTENANT WILLIAM M. BERRY. Strict disciplinarian, he was still a friend who found no problem too small to merit his attention.



The long hours of ground school were guided by LIEUTENANT JAMES H. MURPHY. Those tests seemed impossible, but in the end everyone always managed to get by.



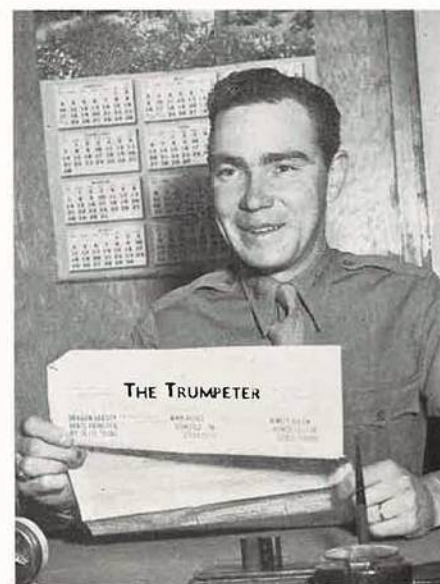
Some thought athletics were over after Santa Ana, but there was LIEUTENANT BENJAMIN K. LEWIS to be reckoned with. Cadet Detachment Athletic Officer, he put us through our paces daily. (Ed. note: Oh, my back!).



Senior Bombardier Instructor of Training Squadron 10, LIEUTENANT HYMAN FREEDMAN is always busy plotting some way to get those CE's down within reason.



Most popular officer on the post is the Cadet Mess Officer, LIEUTENANT BERT G. GALINDO. It's a mystery how he did it, but the food in his mess hall couldn't be beat. (Ed. note: "What, Steak Again!").



Custodian of Flying Equipment, clean sheets and everything else needed in the way of Equipment is LIEUTENANT HARRY L. PROBASCIO. He's never too busy to sit down and throw it for awhile.

Looking back there was another officer who did much to help 43-2. He was responsible for getting Squadrons 88 and 89 out of Santa Ana and up to Victorville. MAJOR MAURICE CONDON, Commandant of the Bombardier-Navigator School at Santa Ana is a West Pointer, and has guided many on their way to ADVANCED.



3. It is further desired to especially commend Officer Candidate Stanley Eichler for sending us his cartoons from Minter Field; Private Joseph Darr Smith for tedious hours of work in getting us to press, photographers Corporal Fred Chandler and Pfc. Norman Walters, and to Captain Louis H. Garrett for his invaluable cooperation. Credit is gratefully given to Lieut. Cal Godshall for his superb desert scenics, to Public Relations Officer Lt. Lynn Poole and Photographic Officer Lt. Jack Cooper for the cooperation of their departments and lastly to Sergeant Major Norman Paasche for our cover design.

FOR THE CLASS OF 43-2

ROBERT C. DURHAM
EDWARD A. KLOCH
WILLIAM H. VINEY
CHARLES A. WEAKLAND
JOSEPH H. STIGORA
WILBUR S. DARBY

CLASS 43-2
VAFS
VICTORVILLE, CALIFORNIA

January 23, 1943

Dear Hirohito:

We've been kind of slow about replying to that invitation you sent us back on December 7th, 1941, but to tell you the truth, we've been pretty busy making certain that we'd be able to give you just the kind of an answer you deserve. They say it's the guys who drop the bombs who are going to win this war and Mister, we wanted to be able to say one thing. Now we can. THAT'S US.

Let's see. It was in August when most of us got together back in sandy Santa Ana. We were a raunchy lot, hailing from here, there and everywhere, but we all had the same idea. Some of us were from the regular army, some green from civilian life, while still others hadn't fared so well at primary and were back to try again, more determined than ever to contribute what we could to help make certain that our freedoms shall not perish from the earth.

Most of us went into Squadrons 88 and 89, and soon we were busy at the pre-flight routine of Naval Identification, Physics, Math., Meteorology (where Greentree ran in every test), Maps and Charts and sundry other brain twisters. Then there was drill, and Yogi, and Sunday Parades, and beyond us one goal, "ADVANCED."

Suddenly what had stretched ahead of us as an endless eternity was gone. Almost sadly we realized that we were in our last week. But we were somehow different. Tougher now, many of the loose ends had been tied together. Santa Ana had done its work well. We were ready . . . and then from everywhere the rumors started to come. We were going tomorrow, we were being held back. It was Williams, it was Roswell, it was Albuquerque, it was Midland . . . IT WAS VICTORVILLE.



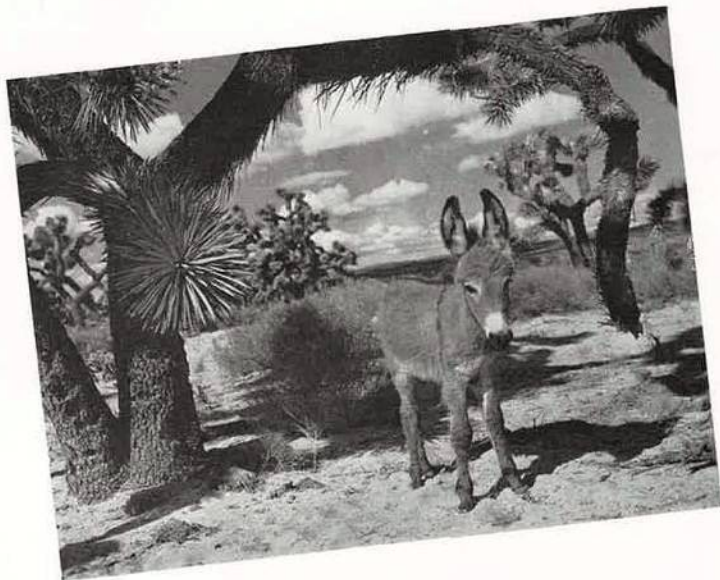
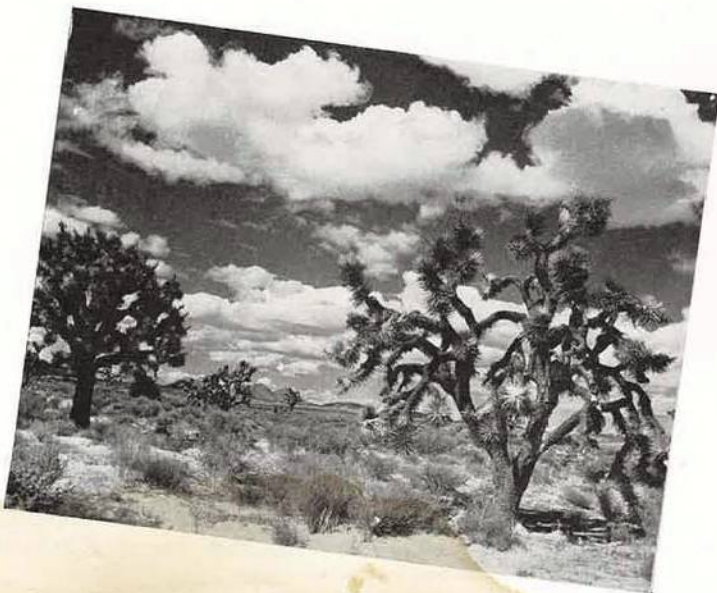


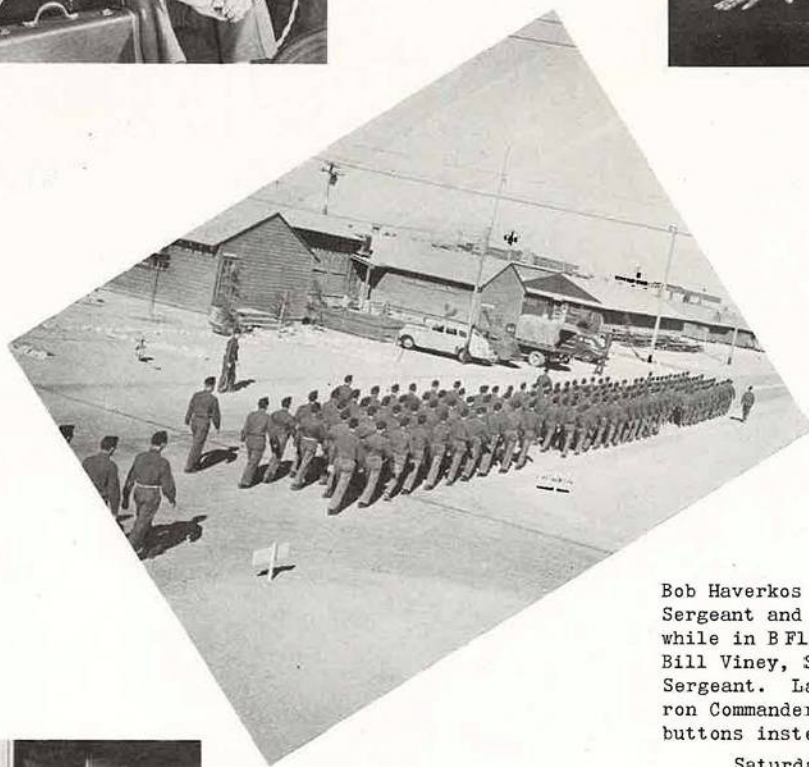
Victorville. The word was like magic. A thriving metropolis. An oasis in the desert. Conversation raced as the train labored in lethargic GI style and then suddenly alongside was the station. But it couldn't be. Where was the town? But it was. All of it. Minutes later Bob Haverkos, train commander, had us loaded into trucks and we were off for the post.

The truck ride seemed endless. We passed the cement factory that later was to become a familiar landmark from the air, climbing higher and higher till finally the road leveled out and we were stopped at the main gate while the MP's tried to locate the Officer in Charge.

Eventually he arrived and the convoy again moved along the road from the gate to the Cadet area. A road we were later to travel often on foot. In front of Cadet Headquarters the trucks jerked to a stop and we climbed stiffly out and formed into one body. Cadets from more advanced classes clustered about, greeting friends and giving advice. Most persistent admonition: "Stay on the ball. Don't let them mark you as a raunchy outfit."

It wasn't long before we were to discover that our days of "rest and relaxation" were gone forever. We were lined up and split in our alphabetical middle, forming A and B flights. Cadet officers were chosen. For A Flight it was





Bob Haverkos as Lieutenant, Frank Johnson as Sergeant and Harry Hawes as Supply Sergeant, while in B Flight, Dick Stiles was Lieutenant, Bill Viney, Sergeant, and Roger Poland, Supply Sergeant. Later Bob Durham was appointed Squadron Commander. Cadet Officers wore shoulder buttons instead of the Santa Ana Stripes.

Saturday was a jumble of formations, meetings, lectures, orientaticn, drawing supplies and filling out the same old forms. There was one new one, however, a very important one marked "Application for Commission." Sergeant Paasche, the Sergeant Major, helped us over the rough spots and answered the most asked question, "When do we get our mail?" with an encouraging "Tomorrow."

Supplies were drawn from Lt. Probasco's department and in less time than you could count the Cadet area was filled with Hot Bombardiers, all trying on their new flying suits. Barracks bags and civilian luggage were reclaimed, keys were found to fit our desks and by dinner time we were smoothly organized and ready to start learning our new trade.





We had hoped against hope that perhaps there might be an open post our first Sunday, but it was not to be, and so we spent the day getting acquainted with our barracks, since we were restricted to the area till the flight surgeon made certain we hadn't brought any strange germs with us. Barracks were the same two-story affairs, but in place of Santa Ana's 60 man private rooms, we were placed in comfortable four and five man rooms. Each barracks housed a flight and the only discomfort was the lack of lockers.

Sunday we found that here at least an effort had been made to get our immunization records straight and for once we didn't have to take those shots all over again. The hospital, however, was still "army" and it wasn't safe to roll up your sleeve over there. There was always someone waiting with a frustrated needle. Later we visited the dentist and when our appointments came up found to our delight that the dentists were as good as the ones we had in civilian life.

But best of all was the mess hall. We'd heard all sorts of reports about the Victorville food. We soon found out that Lieutenant Galindo's department was managed to perfection and no one could ever complain about the "eating." The mess hall even stayed open all night so that night flyers could drop in for a snack at any hour. What was better yet, there was no MM!

Discipline at VAFS was rigid, as we were



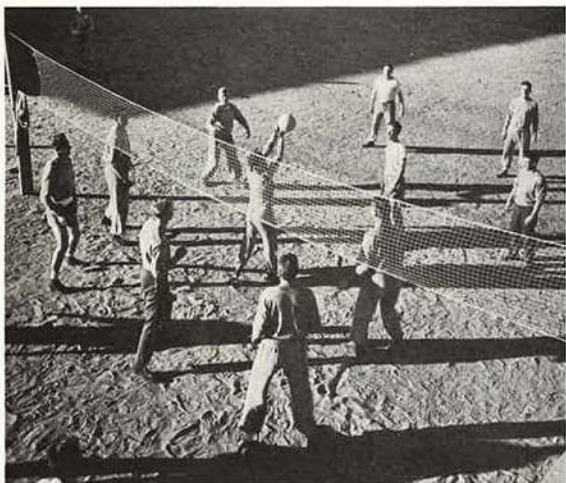
soon to learn. "Shorty" Marean was first to find out. Going to mess hall he chanced to button a pocket in formation and we learned that Lt. William M. Berry was to be our tactical officer as he introduced himself to "Shorty" with a curt, "Take five, Mister."

The same old gig system was in effect. Three for wrinkles in bed, and five for talking in formation made it kind of tough making Los Angeles on the week ends. Mrs. Hoch, Mrs. Hobbs, and Private Cavanagh (it's now Officer Candidate Cavanagh) handled all the details of administration in the tactical office where Lieutenants Berry and A. H. Miller took care of the woes of the entire Cadet Corps.

Colored flags run up on a pole outside of the building denoted the correct uniform for the day, and woe be to the Mister who didn't wear his short coat when the brown flag was flying.

Formations were excellent and it was a common occurrence to fall out from ground school, open ranks and have a nice friendly inspection. (Look at those shoes. Take five, Mister).





Returning from
Calisthenics

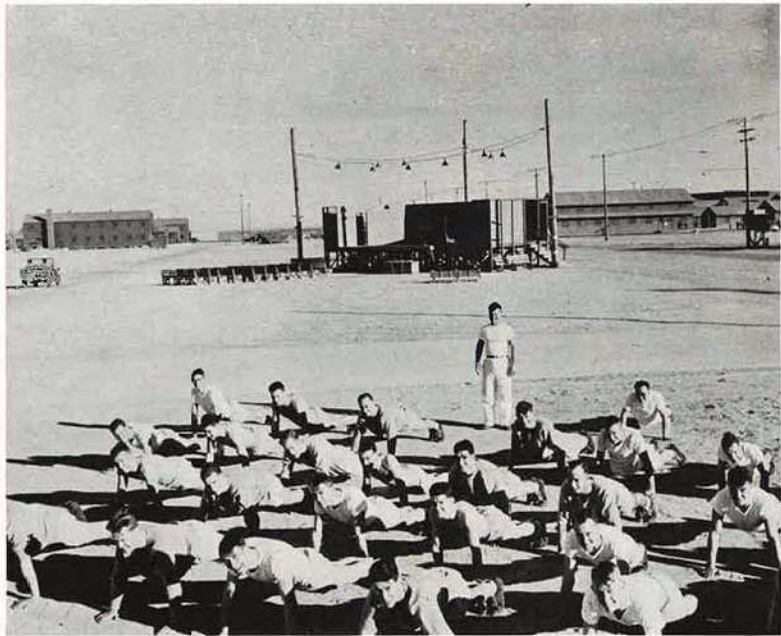


Athletics played an important part in the army life at Victorville. Not only the Cadet Corps, but every officer and enlisted man as well was required to keep in good physical shape.

During the first week we were put through our paces, push-ups, chins, broad jumps and burpees. Later we were timed in the 75 and 150 yard dashes and the results noted on our athletic records. These figures were compared with what we were able to do the week of graduation and the comparison fortunately was favorable.

Our daily musts included alternating between road work, about a mile of jogging in formation and twenty minutes of mass calisthenics. Later a new type of mass calisthenics was initiated with the whole class giving commands and counting cadence.

All of which was fine until one day Lieutenant Lewis appeared with a diabolical look



on his face. For days workmen had been mysteriously digging trenches and building walls away over at one end of the area. Then the horrible news came out. They had completed an obstacle course—and what an obstacle course! Starting with hurdles and parallel bars it dipped to a low screen affair that a snake couldn't get under (Evert made it standing up), soared to a twenty-foot affair with a climbing rope on one side and a scaling descent on the other and finally wound up with a hurdle and broadjumping moat at the end.

This super Commando course took the place of road work, which was small comfort. Last half of the athletic period was left open for games. The "touch" football players always wound up with a candidate for the hospital. When it wasn't Krezo it was Gebhardt. Leading boxing candidates were Cantrell and Weber, but there were numerous rumors about Haverkos' past. Other games included a basketball game featuring some fast scrimmages with Blum holding the ball; volleyball melees that were being fought out hours later in the showers, and a new paddleball game that moved swiftly. Besides all this there was archery, horseshoes, and plain old-fashioned sun bathing whenever it was warm enough to take off a sweat shirt. All in all the athletic period furnished a great deal of relaxation and





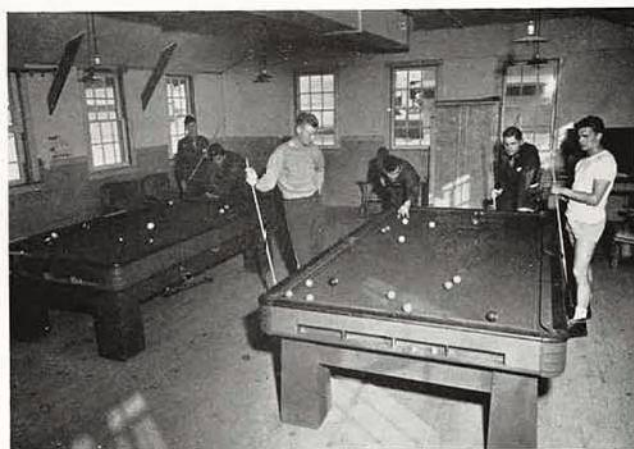
plain good fun and, what was more important, kept us in shape to carry on our work in the air. And on the subject of relaxation there were many pleasant hours spent improving our coordination "working" on the skeet range. Trucks picked up two elements at a time and transported them out to the range. There was the matter of fussing with passes and getting things together, but somehow we all managed to put in our hundred and fifty rounds and somehow we found ourselves wishing we had a hundred and fifty more.

Most admired man of the outfit was Martin until we found out he'd been shooting skeet for years.

First day of skeet shooting came when the whole Cadet Corps was rounded up from everywhere on the field. A Flight was down at the photo lab. and B Flight was in the ground school when the order came to double time up to headquarters for a special meeting. It turned out to be a highly instructive trip to the skeet range for some general shooting tips and to witness trick shooting that included splitting washers in mid-air and chopping up vegetables with everything from a 30-30 to a twelve gauge shotgun. Trooping back we realized that while the afternoon had been entertaining, we had learned a great deal . . .



We soon learned that all was not work at Victorville and that in addition to skeet shooting and athletics there were many recreational facilities. First and foremost, of course, came the week-end passes and the trips to Los Angeles, capped by our graduation dance at the West Side Country Club with Matty Mallneck's band and every picture star we'd ever read about.



On the post there were the bowling alleys, and the movies with the latest films. The PX, too, offered its enticements with PX Romeo Mareno still in his top form. (Ed. note: Back where we come from they call them wolves.) Besides this there were the day rooms with pool tables and cards. Bridge became a popular game to while away the time between 12c forms on the flight line, and we even noted Frank Johnson trying his hand at chess. There were also checkers and even a swimming pool that Krezo and Jané tried one day with disastrous results. They didn't thaw out for a week.

Snatching what moments we could to relax was quite a task for THAT SCHEDULE kept us jumping from one night's sleep to the next and a great deal of our time, particularly the first few weeks, was spent scratching our collective heads in ground school . . .



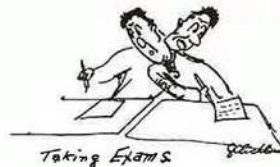


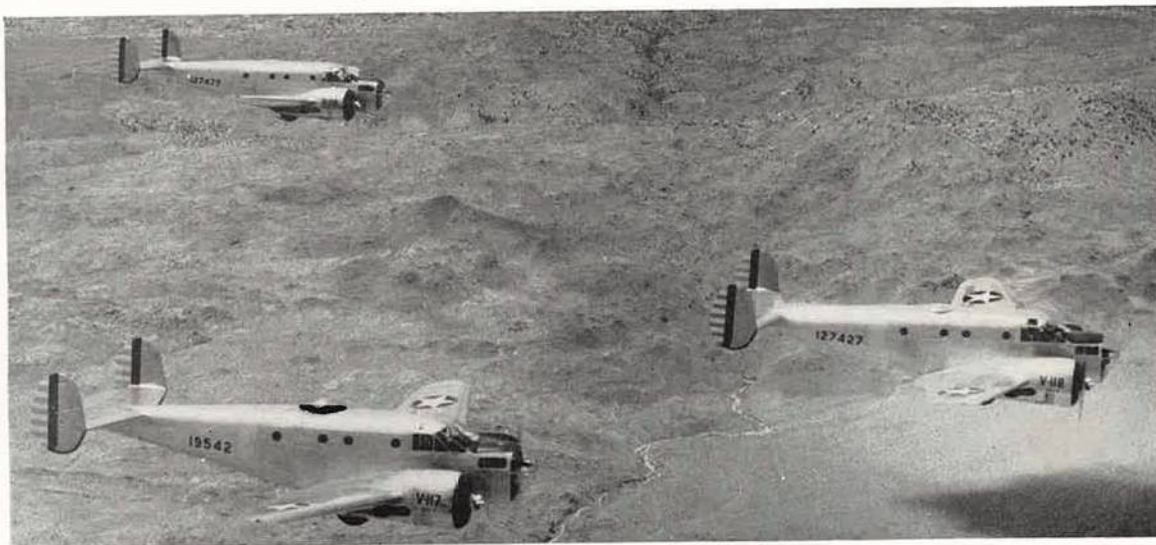
There was bombsight and racks and fuses, where Lt. Martin showed us that "amazin' deeevice." Then there was bombsight and computers and bombsight and navigation and when we were all through we still had Causes of Errors to contend with and we still didn't know what made a bomb hit short or if you were flying too high and the air speed was too fast and the disk was slipping . . . How did we ever hit that target anyway?



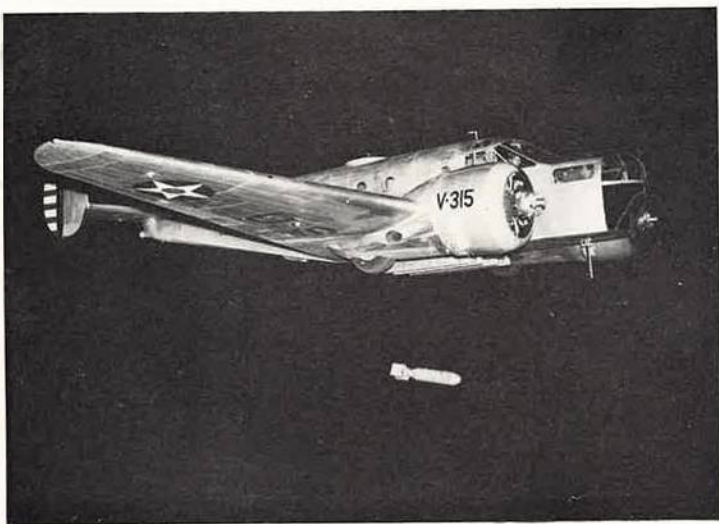
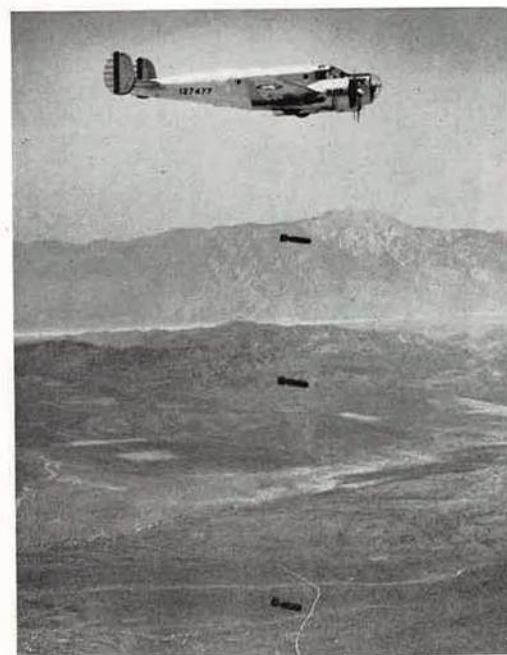
Navigation proved to be very interesting with Lieutenant Sherman always threatening to gig us in but never quite carrying out his threat. The course was capped with a navigation flight to Blythe and somehow we all managed to find our way back. So we must have learned something.

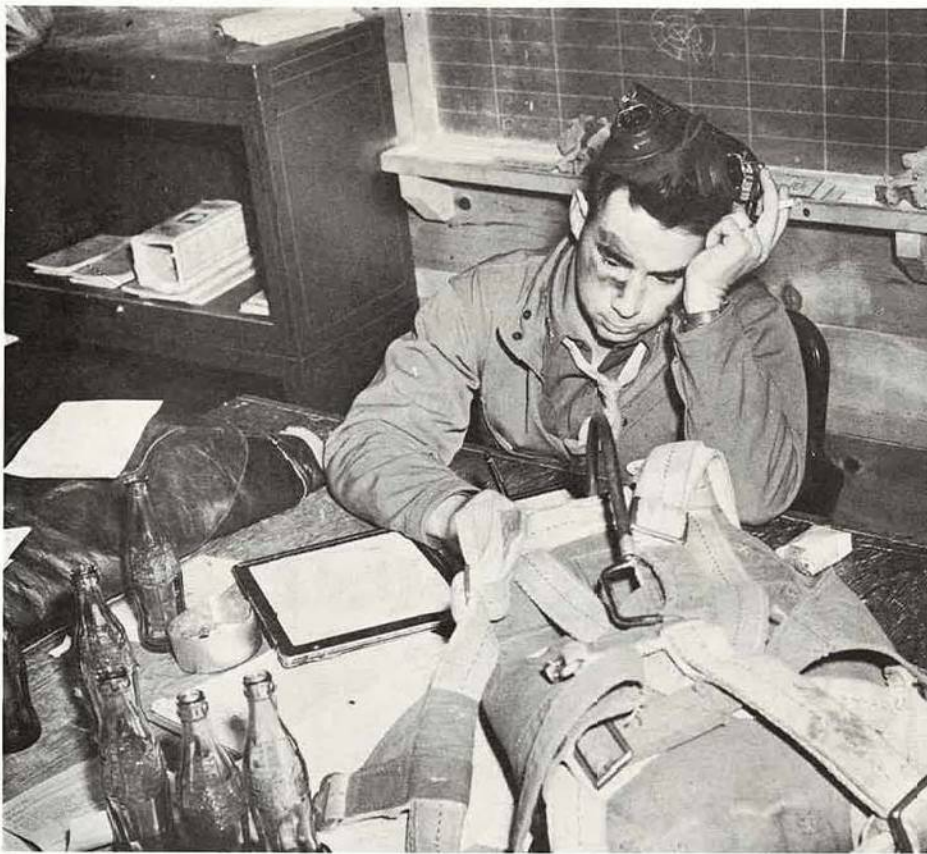
Finally there was Maintenance with Lieutenant Galbraith, and we learned that there was more to a bombsight than just sitting and turning the knobs. Some day we may have to take care of our own sights and when we do we'll all be thinking about him and what he taught us.





The first three weeks of our training was devoted exclusively to the trainer and the bug, and then came the great day when we finally were introduced to a very rugged guy. Mr. At-11 was to be our second home for nine weeks and we soon learned to respect and love him. There were days when we wondered how we'd ever get through. There were days when the gremlins guided our bombs out to help paint the desert. But we managed to get our shacks, too, and it all averaged out. There was Hot Bombardier Kimbrough, who threatened to break all records, and Littleton, Laco and Maas, who lost their forty-five out the bombay doors. Then there was Schutz, who invented the ASE or automatic shack erector that builds a shack wherever the bomb hits before the picture is taken. Joe Altemus talks a good game, be it golf or bombing, but you can't fool that camera. Bloom and Cooper joined the squadron late, and it looked like they'd never get started dropping 'em, but they finally did . . .



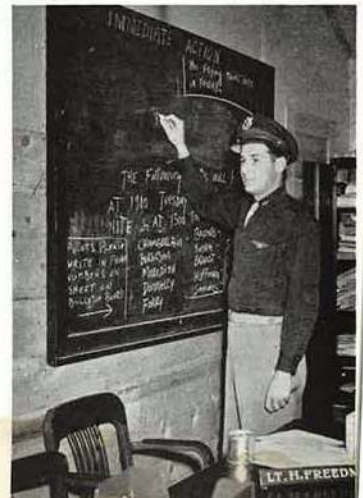
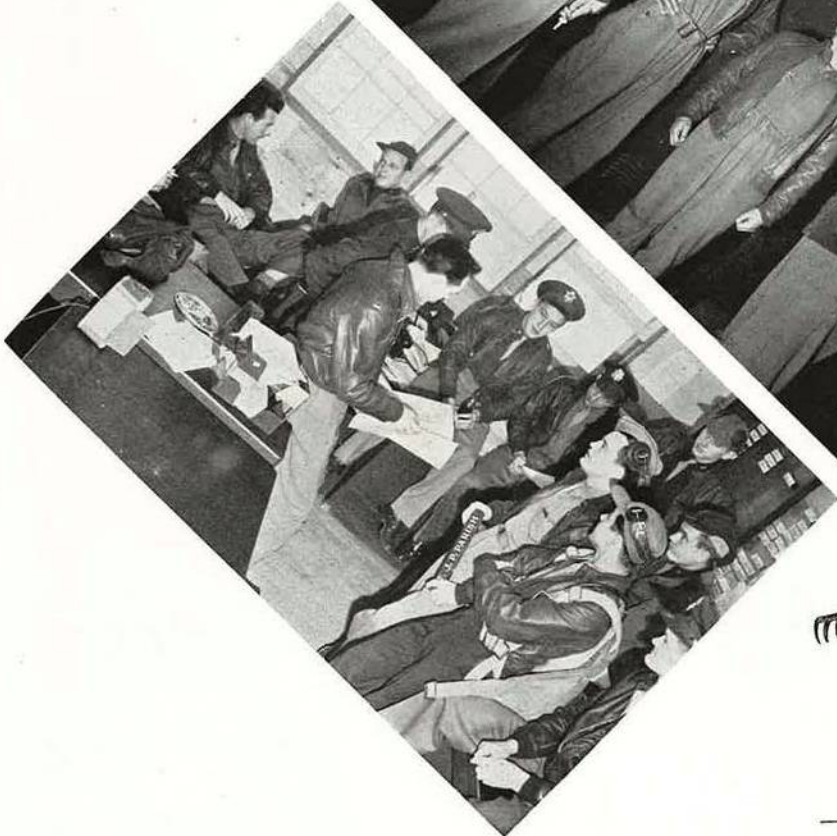
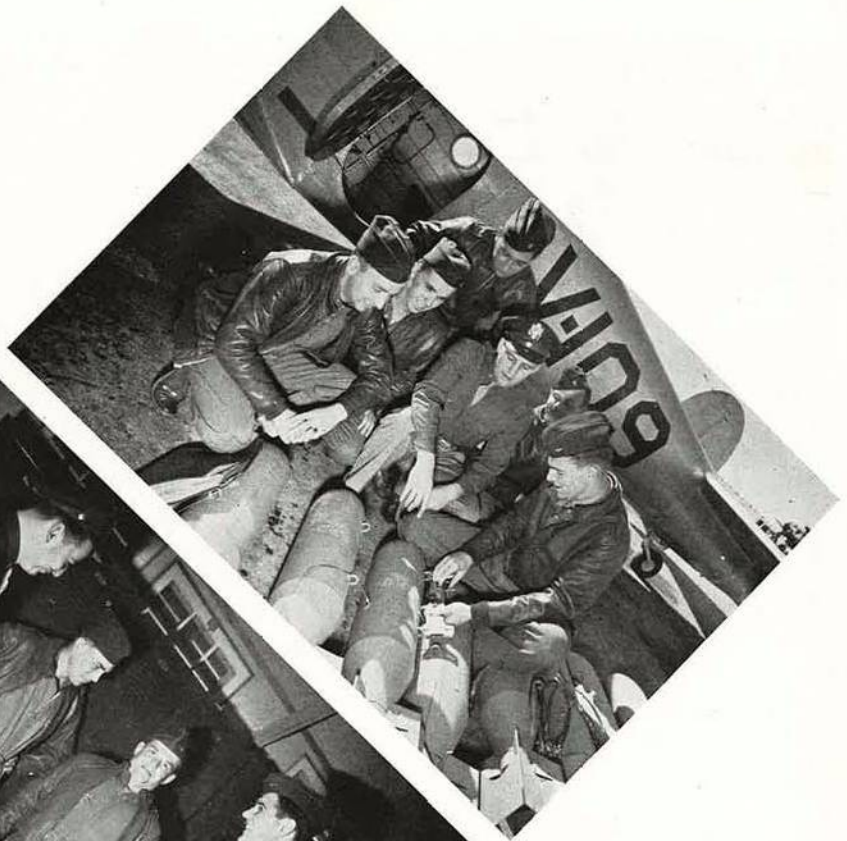


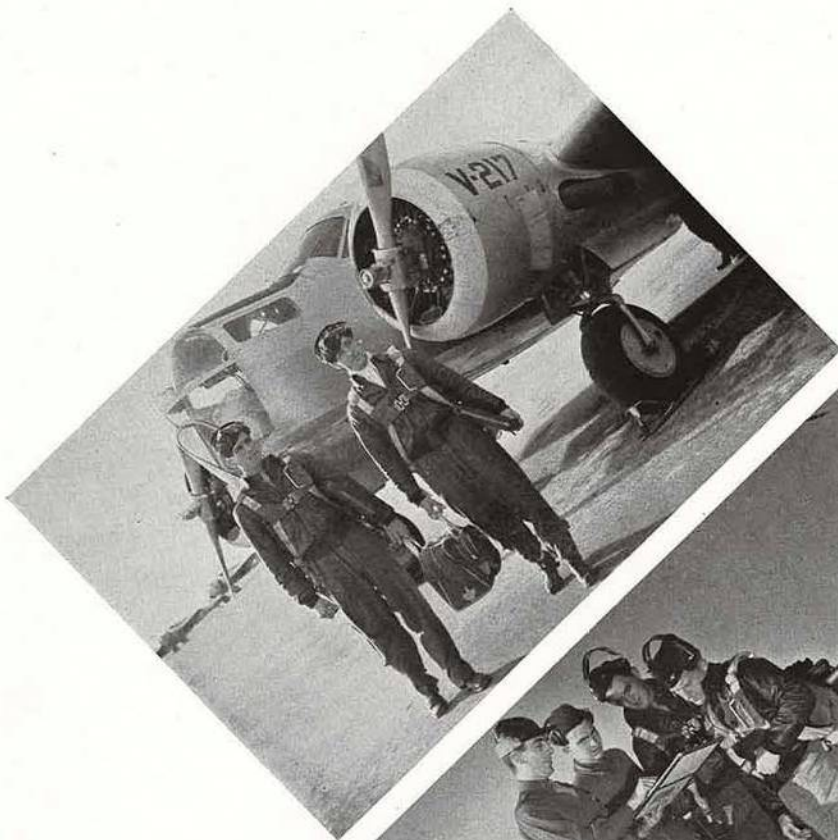
On the flight line, our ready room never seemed to be quite ready, what with the piles of forms and coke bottles and never enough room for everyone to sit down. There was the crowded parachute room and the long hike to the bomb-sight vault and cancelled missions and calibration hops. Worst of all there were the endless forms to be made out with stars for every mistake. Darby never could master the l2c and could be found most any afternoon or evening still sitting and sweating it out, with Lieutenant Whipple somewhere in the background. There was Chilmonczyk and Ciprian arguing over a malfunction, and Hawes and Groh worrying about those bombs that got away. Kloch with his camera and Henry still wanting his Santa Ana Stripes back. Dave Green trying to finish his forms while everyone kidded him about his grandmother (the one he dated Saturday night), Herbert and Bob Johnson and their good CE's. Becker spending a rousing Saturday night in the barracks and Borrell doing the same . . . in L.A. John Gill riding Gerhard about his girl (why doesn't he get married and end the suspense). Married club already includes Viney, O'Connor, R. E. Moore (his wife is still trying to find out which Robert Moore she married), Krezo, Littleton, Ladig, Osterman and Waterson, Darby, Henry, Durham, and Locker and Bjork soon to go.



Instructors and pilots congregated in their own inner sanctum, strictly forbidden ground for a lowly Cadet. Lieutenants Freedman and Speight worked hard on the schedules and kept us flying, whenever they could beg, borrow or steal some bombs and planes. Always the instructors were ready with advice and extra tips. Everywhere there was the atmosphere that they were trying their best to get us through. There was much friendly kidding and an occasional good-natured brace.

Kelley finally nosed out "Many Stars" Haverkos on the star board, but it was a close race. Nordeen accepted a commission instead of a furlough and Miller retained his title as tour king of the squadron. Damrcn made a concerted drive to catch him, but he stumbled in the stretch. Rogers journeyed to Victorville and made a big hit with the high school students when he gave his address on the "Life of an Aviation Cadet." Phil Vockerath finally hit the straight and narrow when all of his "One and Only's" started to catch up with him. Well-beloved kept us glamored up with his girl in the Ice Follies and "Five-by-five" Stiles kept





threatening to start passing out gigs (it's too late now). Witten retained his title as Dunce of the skeet range. Couldn't get the idea of breaking 'em up through his head. Weldon finally confessed he did play football before . . . first string tackle at the University of Cincinnati . . . and Ramsey used to play golf for Yale and Pomeroy hit the semi-finals in the Golden Gloves.

We'll never forget our first night flight. Waiting in the moonlight on the line, loaded down with equipment and shivering in the clear cold. Then the thrill as the silver plane roared out of nowhere, taxied up and stopped. From nowhere came a company of mechanics, clambering all over the plane. A huge red gas truck lumbered to a stop and behind it a low trailer truck loaded with new blue bombs. Everywhere there was noise and confusion as the gas poured into the plane.

Oil cans were tossed up, and bombs passed the chain of hands. Then as abruptly as they had come the men were gone. There was again silence and stillness and then the step of the



pilot. The sight was ready. We were inside in the inky blackness of the cabin. "Clear on the left." One motor roared then the other. "Take off runway right, Roger." And we were off, climbing,—then forward into the nose. Everywhere there was moonlight. Only the motors ruptured the silence about us and there off in the distance, pin pricked against the blackness of the ground, beckoned the target . . . It was a thrill such as we had never known.

Day by day our time shortened. Anxiously we plotted our CE's and hoped for another good mission. We were learning much and gradually we were improving. We were beginning to look like Bombardiers. We now knew what to do when the sight didn't function. Knew what to look for. Mistakes became fewer. Still the banter in the ready room went on. The same good natured kidding prevailed. Lott was worried about a date for Saturday. Ladd was just plain worried. Maata had his head up again. Mayfield had to get to Long Beach, and so it went. Sanders was driving to Los Angeles. Who wanted to go? Sometimes we wondered how we'd ever finish that last mission and sometimes we wondered if we'd ever get another mission. We were happy and sad. We'd have a good mission and the gig list would catch us. We'd get by with no gigs for the week and we'd flunk a test and have to take a make-up. We'd get by everything and have to fly on Sunday. But looking back it was a happy time. We lived well and we learned much, and more important we became toughened and readied for what lies ahead . . .





Once again the rumors are flying. We are no longer a raunchy outfit with nothing but an idea, a pledge to ourselves to do what we can. We are trained fighting men, ready soon to unleash our load of destruction. We have asked but a chance and we have had that chance. Listen, Hirohito. Listen, Hitler. You have taken us from our accustomed way of life. You have thrown us a challenge and as we turned to accept it, knifed us quickly in the back. We are slow to get aroused, slow to take advantage of anyone. But you have asked for it and this is our pledge. So far as it is within our power You Are Going To Get It.

So in answer to your invitation, we are ready to visit you. Wherever we are sent we will be waiting for that one precious minute when the indices meet over Tokyo.

Signed _____





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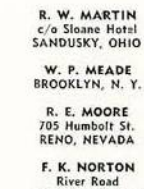
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