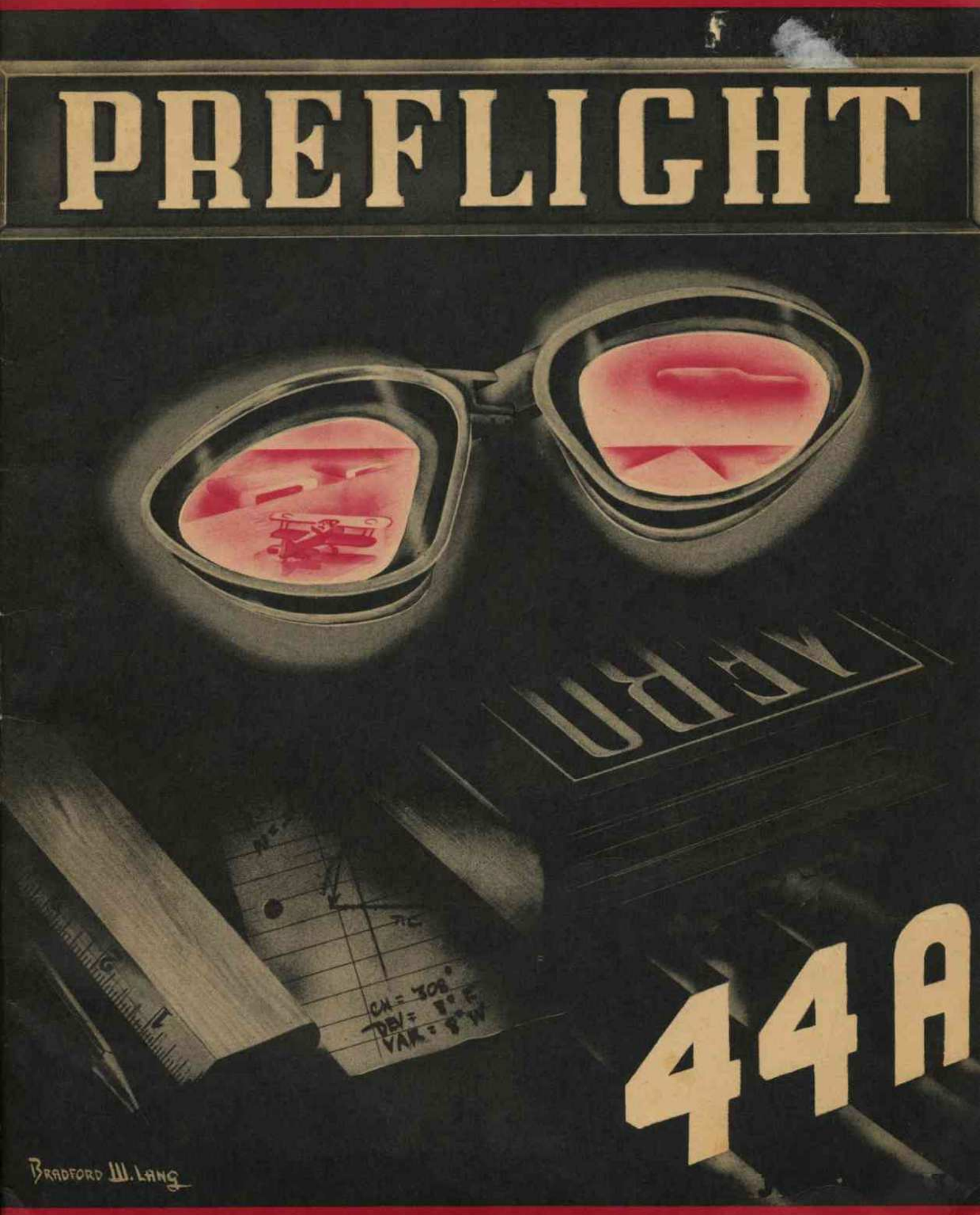
PREFLIGHT



44A

BRADFORD W. LANG


44A
PRESENTS

PREFLIGHT

CLASS OF 44-A
U.S. ARMY AIR FORCES

Corps of Aviation Cadets
Pre-flight School for Pilots

MAXWELL FIELD, ALABAMA

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DEDICATION

That we might cite our gratitude for all his efforts to prepare us for what is to come, we, the Class of 44-A, do dedicate this record of our days here to Major Irvin H. Smith, commanding officer of the First Wing, Corps of Aviation Cadets.

A Virginian, and an outstanding graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, Major Smith came to Maxwell Field as a first lieutenant in 1941. His present command is no more than indicative of the ability he demonstrated upon us.

Foreword . . .

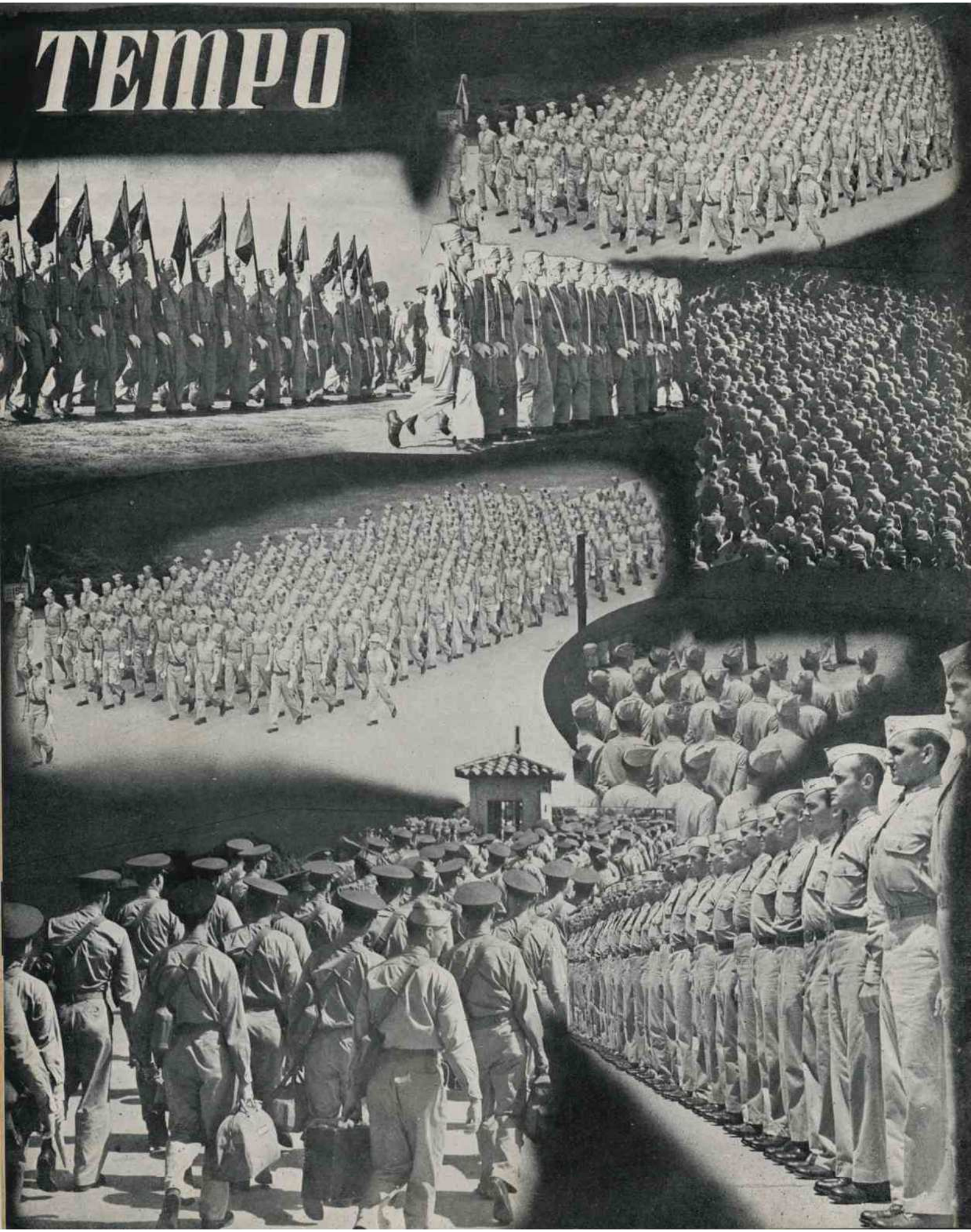
Our lives were still in their beginning when we were called to war. There was strength in our young years, strength needed on the line, on any line, that we would hold. We chose to hold the sky.

We came from everywhere that is America to perform the task unprecedented in world history. With us has been placed the trust of Freedom,—not only for ourselves but for all the peoples of the world. In accepting that trust we fully realize what must come with it. We know that faith and spirit remains with our countrymen only as long as it remains with us. We know that there will be times when everything that served to make us what we are will be tried and tested in the final sense; we know too, that we are not immortal; we know all these things as we ready ourselves for battle.

Each to the other and all of us to our countrymen, we do promise with our lives and our honor that our way of life shall be preserved and the right of all peoples to choose their own will be returned and maintained.

Prepare for Combat

TEMPO



THE 60 DAYS . .

In a little while the sixty days will be over. The evening will come when we will assemble to march our last parade and stand our last review. At exactly 1730 the cannon will thunder, and when it sounds we will be graduated from Pre-Flight School. In leaving, we will follow the track of so many preceding classes, moving out from here through Southgate, there to board the trains that will take us to our next station on the road that leads to combat.

When we leave Maxwell, we will be leaving a part of ourselves here. That is said because so many vast changes have come over us in these brief sixty days, as to make it difficult for us to clearly remember what we were before we came here. That those who knew us before may understand, this is an account of the days and things through which these changes came to pass.

The first day: Today we arrived at Maxwell! All last night we were in troop trains, riding the 400 odd miles, from the Nashville Army Air Center, coming to be made into military pilots. None of us will ever forget the greeting we were tendered.

A group of ram-rod figures, carrying white gloves and sabers, stormed into our cars, stormed into our tiredness and sleepiness, demanding in thunderous voices that we, "Look proud, Misters, you're at Maxwell!"

Quickly we hurried from the cars and formed in wavering ranks that stiffened at the next commands. And then by dawn light we were marched with our gas masks and luggage through the gates of the field.

The fourth day: We are underclassmen. We are impressed with that fact always. "An underclassman is at attention twenty-five hours a day and eight days a week," they tell us. One thing we all realize is that the discipline is strict and we must adjust ourselves to it. There is no relaxing. We shine our shoes, we polish our brass and clean our fingernails before every formation. We say, "Sir" to cadets sometimes seven or eight years our junior. We have committed to memory seemingly unimportant pages of text and we must pronounce them before anyone who asks. It is difficult. But everything worthwhile is difficult.

The eighth day: A week has passed. We find ourselves fitting more easily into the routine. Speed—that is the important thing. Speed in learning, speed in doing. Even our walking pace is set to the quick time of 140 steps per minute. We live every day so full that when it becomes time to sleep, we tumble into our beds and remember nothing until it is morning again.

We would have thought it impossible to race through periods of calisthenics as we do. We run until it seems that each step will be the last or the next to the last. But we continue. We run and run until the run is over. The instructor says, "A man has got to have heart to do it." We must have more than we realized.

The fifteenth day: This evening we paraded at retreat. Though it came after a succession of fatigue filled hours, we marched proudly and well. We knew that because we felt it becoming a memory: the kind that strikes in that special place reserved for remembrances of things that came before all this: the flag being lowered, the massed squadrons, the ripple in the rear ranks as the cannon went off—and the itchy nose that couldn't be touched, the burning feet that must not be moved, the drums and the bugles pounding and blaring.

Yes, we marched one of our many parades today.

The twenty-third day: Honor. That is the strongest word here at Maxwell. All that we have to say or write or do, anywhere and everywhere is signed with our honor. It is our code.

There were times in our past, in all our pasts, when honor seemed an intangible thing. But not here. We have come to live by it so closely, that ever to revert would seem impossible. It is something new to most of us to accept the word of a man without question. But we do. Where else in all the world can it be said that the word of a man—any man—is really his bond? It can be said in the Corps of Cadets.

Perhaps that is one of the reasons they told us when we came here: "Look proud, Mister. Look proud!"

The thirty-first day: Today the old class graduated and departed. Today we entered a new life. No longer must we refer to ourselves as **new** aviation cadets. Today we became upperclassmen.

Now we have new duties. A new class is coming in, and we must set the example. In four weeks we must teach them everything that we have been taught, things beyond the academics' classroom and the drill ground. We must teach them all the things that make us to think of Maxwell as we do.

The thirty-ninth day: It is surprising to note how uniform we have become. Even away from the field, there is a singularity about us that we never realize until we give it thought. When we leave a town restaurant we veritably leave our signatures by the way we leave the table. Every plate is arranged in the same manner and in every detail. When we walk, we walk always in step. Our conversations are colored by the same idioms. And when we dream our dreams of flight, we are again in company. Thus as the days go on it becomes obvious that Maxwell Field is accomplishing one of its many missions.

The fifty-second day: As we approach the climax of our Pre-Flight training we come more and more to realize how it has come to shape us. Now, whatever we are, we must compare favorably with what was called for when we began. On the very first page of our little cadet manual, the demands were set forth:

". . Specifically, you must, from the first day of your training, realize that there will be two major requirements made of you, from which you yourselves brook no deviations: **A high sense of duty, and an unalterable sense of honor** . . . you will strive with every ounce of energy to make these two qualities irrevocable in your individual characters . . . The price of neglect of duty, or dishonor, in wartime is paid in human life, which cannot be retrieved. Therefore, you will find both of these qualities dominantly characteristic among the officers of the Army. Accordingly, these same qualities of character will be expected of you."

And now that the days of learning are ending, we review ourselves. Who will say the days have not marked themselves upon us?

The sixtieth day: It is graduation time and all that goes with it: the dance, parade, shipping orders. We are busy now, too busy to pause for reflection. But we do. No one can make the march to Southgate and the trains without reflecting.

We, the Class of 44-A, marched in our share of parades, sang our share of songs, and spent our allotted evenings in the Recreation Hall and out on Open Post. We walked our punishment tours, attended Church Call and fell in for sick call. We were not too different from any other class who has or will traverse the sixty days. Mistakes were made, but victories were achieved. We are a link in the great chain of Maxwell graduates. We are proud.

Our barracks bags are packed and stenciled. The sixty days have passed once more.

ACADEMICS

. . . from the ground up

By A/C W. C. Berry

There is a legend here about the aviation cadet who dropped his pencil in a math class and missed an entire school year of a subject. Legend it may be, but it is a summation of how accelerated is the course of study we follow. Still, the pace of war is swift, and we must learn in pace.

In twenty class periods we are covering a series of physics. The same amount of time in Mathematics is equivalent of a two year course in algebra. They're necessary. Our pilot training requires knowledge in the substituting of formulae, reading graphs, working problems in vectors, velocity and air pressure. We have to understand not only "how" but "why". One may be able to keep an aircraft in the air without knowing a drift correction from a subtrahend, but that one will never get back.

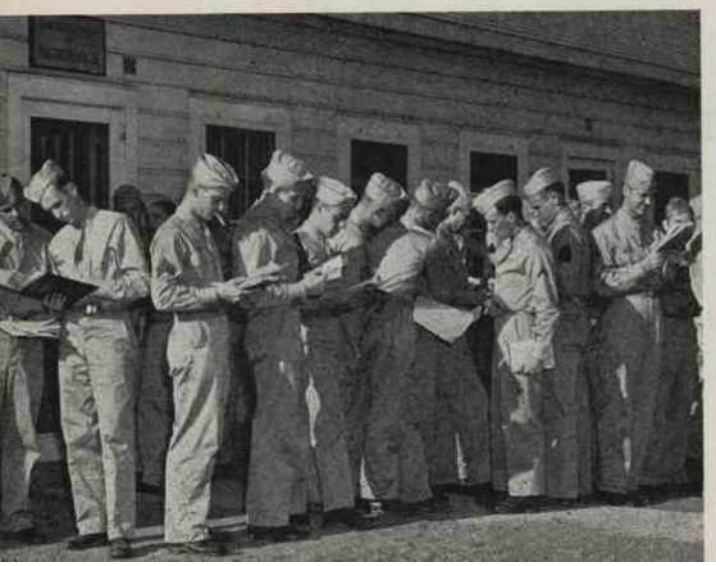
Cadets must develop a photographic memory. Sometimes in combat, a plane can be seen only a few seconds at most. The pilot must be able to rely on his judgment whether it is a friend or an enemy. That is why we study Aircraft Recognition.

Naval Forces is a similar study of surface craft. Every type of ship has definite characteristics, and each nation has peculiarities of manufacture that distinguish her ships from those of other countries. We are not Navy pilots, but the Army sees the sea, too. It is good to know that the vessel you are dive bombing is an enemy.

Maps and Charts is an orientation course in map reading and aerial navigation. Cadets learn to interpret symbols on terrain maps and aerial charts. We wade through the mazes of equal non-concentric arcs of circles and parallel equidistant meridians, discovering that every type of map has a special use, has advantages that no other type of map affords, and may be unsuitable for other purposes. Next time you fly to Tokyo, mister, you will know that you will plot your course on a Gnomic projection, but you will fly this course by transferring it onto a Mercator projection by the use of rhumb lines. If you go by way of the Aleutians, be sure to take along a Lambert projection. If you walk, nothing is better than the military grid system superimposed upon a Polyconic.

By now we are able to carry on a learned bank fatigue discourse concerning representative fractions. Aeronautical Planning Charts, flying with the beam, and taking a back azimuth from Poughkeep-

"It's not such a long flight to Tokyo—not if you go by carrier. If you do . . . "

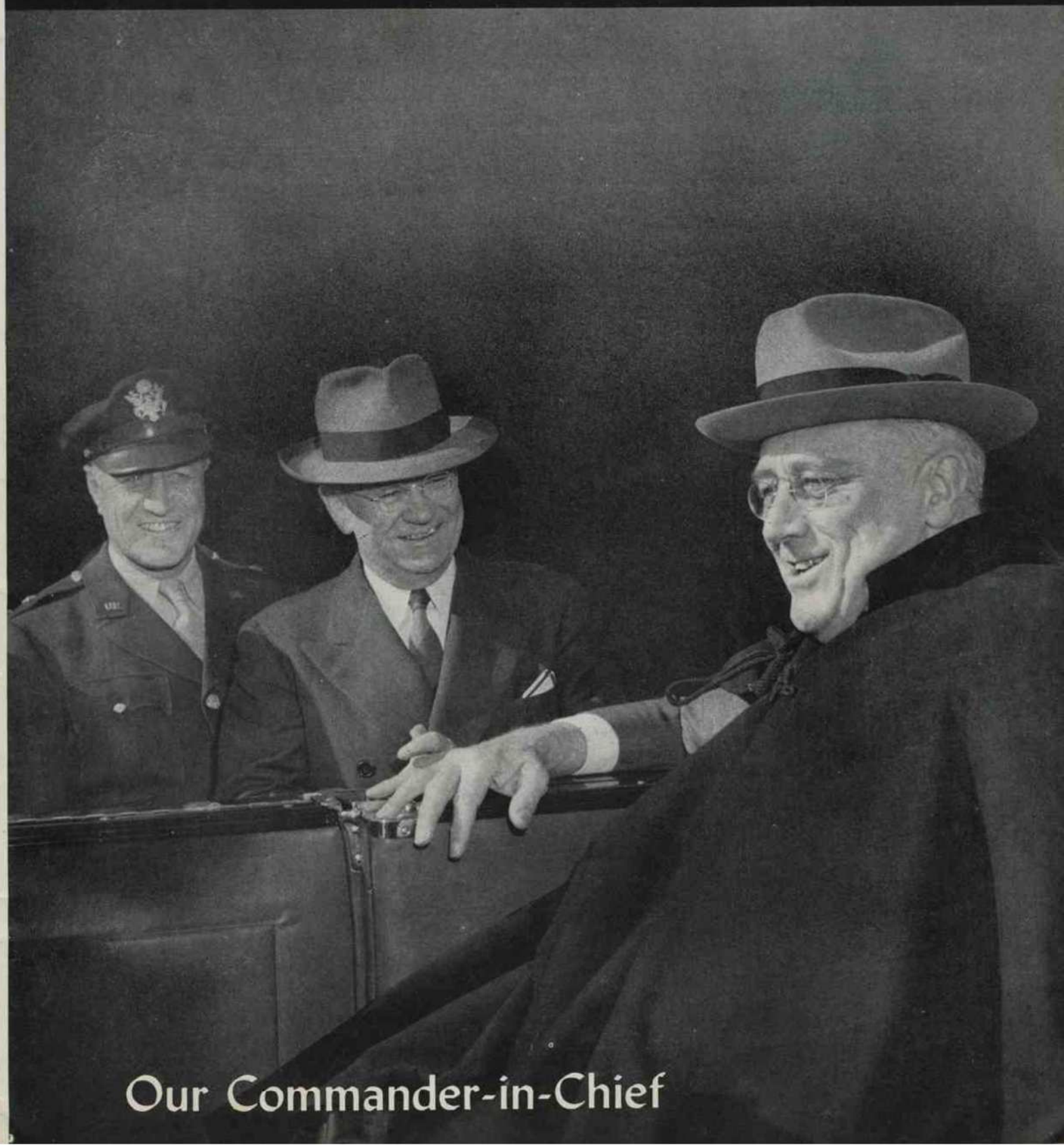


sie to Walla Walla. We'll be getting a more complete understanding later. An airman's Bible is his packet of maps.

The weather is getting warmer at Maxwell. We notice it particularly when the too familiar dits and dahs fade into a rhythmic monotone, and headsets begin to nod and weave. There are fifty-nine hours of code, more than double the time spent on any other subject. For the first few days it is a piercing garble of unfamiliar sounds searing the eardrums. You've got to stay on the alert in a class where the instructor never can be expected to snap you out of your lassitude with a questionable joke, even in code, and when the temperature gets higher than usual, and you are not prepared for it, an F does sound like a Q sometimes.

Teachers are intermediaries between the text book and the student. Here, with limited time, and much to cover, the instructors must understand their subjects and the men they are working with. All commissioned officers, they have had intensive work in their respective fields. They have to be brief and concise, yet explain their material as fully as possible. There is little time for much questioning on the part of the cadets. We have a big job to do and we'll do it. They give us the ground work. We take off from there.

We were honored this spring when the President of the United States visited Maxwell Field. The President reviewed us on the parade ground, inspected our buildings, toured academic and athletic areas to watch us prepare for the job of safeguarding the future of his country and ours.



Our Commander-in-Chief

ATHLETICS

"Out for P. T.! On the **double!**"

The pre-flight cadet tightens his shoelaces and huries down the barrack stoop amid a chorus of slamming doors.

Comes the command, "Fall in!"

He bends for a hasty pull at his sweatsocks and steps into a row of sunburnt faces, with T shirts and G. I. trunks.

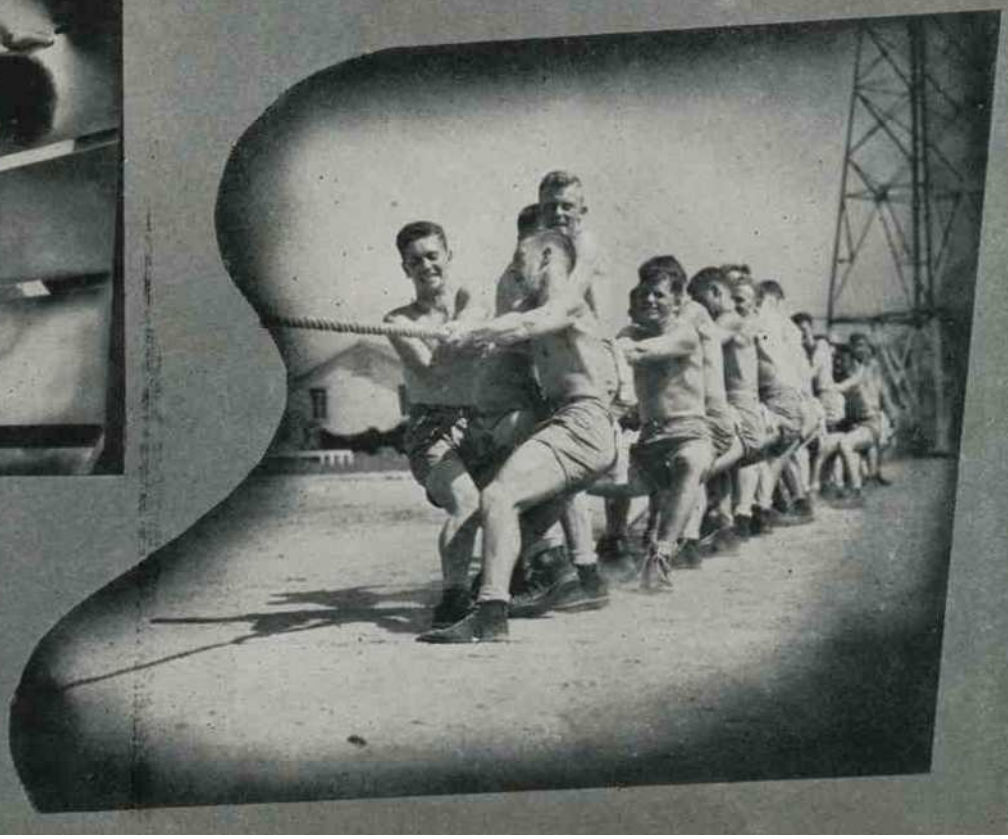
"Ri-i-ight--**face!** For-wa-a-ard--**harch! Hut,** two, three, four! **Hut,** two, three four!"

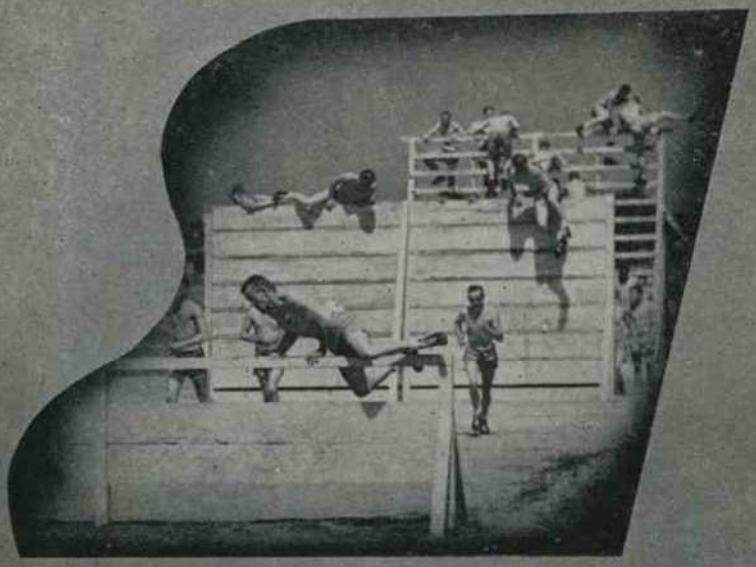
The squadron moves off, every ear painfully alert for the familiar command which soon follows:

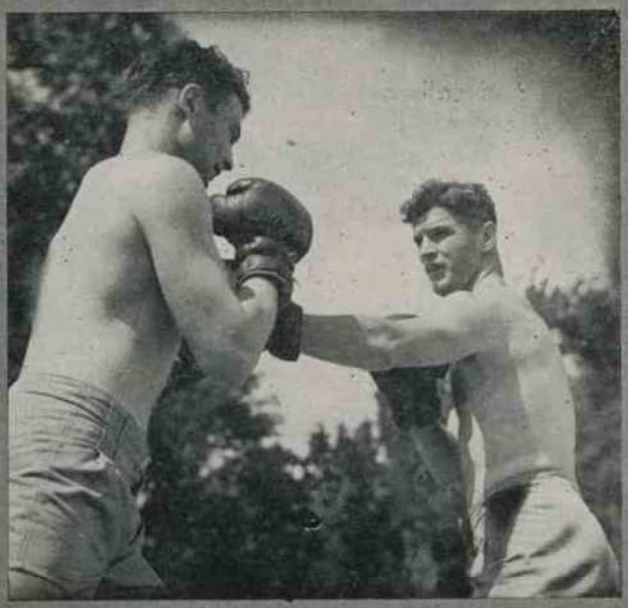
"Dou-ble ti-i-ime--**harch!**"

The cadet kicks into a jog which is amplified by four hundred rubber soles into a rhythmic **plot-plot** against the concrete street.

"Hup, hup, hup, **ho!** Hup, hup, hup, **ho!**"







Four hundred knees bend as one. Bare calves flash in the sun light. Cocked elbows swing in unison as the squadron turns toward the scene of the day's conditioning—the athletic field, the airport, the golf course or that infamous trail of torture labeled the "Burma Road."

"Calijumpics"

If the usual P. T. area is on the schedule, the cadet dashes up the steps of the overpass spanning the highway, shedding his shirt en route, and bounds down the ramp onto the packed red clay.

"Pla-toon--**halt!**"

He freezes in front of the instructor's low wooden platform, silently admiring the lithe muscles of the coffee-brown officer on the stand.

"The **first** exercise--!"

The instructor goes through the motions, illustrating each move by the numbers. His glance rakes over two hundred close-cropped heads as he roars:

"In ca-dence-**ex-er-cise!**"

The cadet's arms flash out—in—up—down—out—in—Again, again, again—The instructor sets a brisk pace, barking the cadence over and over in a seemingly endless chain of numbers.

"Hut-two-heap-ho! Hut-two-heap-ho!"

Finally comes the command, "Ree-**cover!**" and four hundred arms relax in one movement—for three seconds. The instructor outlines the next exercise, which may be any one of Maxwell's time-proven conditioning rituals, and two hundred men go back to work in bristling rhythm.

The cadet snaps his head down, back, left and right in quick movements designed to mold a powerful neck that may have to withstand a 9G dive in a P-47. He stands stiff-legged and bends backward and forward until his stomach muscles throb and his knuckles are raw from beating the gritty clay.

He hits the ground with his trunks and elbows, and exercises his extended legs until his feet become a pair of anchors and the muscles in his stomach twist in a vicious tug-o'-war. But the cadet's aching legs are in the air until the instructor relaxes his own

and calls out the long-awaited command to recover.

The cadet stands poised on his toes and inhales great draughts of Southern air. He clenches and reclenches his fingers until his wrists scream silently for relief. He does push-ups long after his straining torso has begun its inevitable weakening, and with a mighty effort drained from nowhere lifts his grimy, sweat-soaked chest on the final count.

The Wailing Walls

On Maxwell's rugged obstacle run he hurdles low barriers and swings along, Tarzan-fashion, by his hands. He ducks into the orange dust, scrambles under a low-slung arbor of chicken wire and comes up running.

He hurls himself at the top of an eight-foot wooden wall, pulls his body across the edge and tumbles into a pit of soft sand. He bounces to his feet to avoid being smothered by the cadets behind him, takes a dozen steps and leaps at another wall two feet higher than the first. A third vertical barrier is the grandaddy of them all, and it is a gleaming, panting cadet who rolls over the top and plunges into the pit.

He forces his legs to churn up enough momentum to clear a wide ditch full of muddy water, and his jaws feel the impact as his soles flatten against the sun-baked ground on the other side.

On the home stretch he pours fresh spirit into his effort. He clambers over a towering lattice of two-by-fours, hand-walks down a set of horizontal bars and trots gingerly down a narrow, zig-zag fence without losing his balance.

The cadet's lungs are ablaze as he charges up the final ramp and swings down to the sand. His lips taste a mixture of salt, dust and cotton. His legs are numb and his arms are sashweights. But he grins at his exhausted buddies and hops into formation for the double-time return trip to the barracks.

The Brutal Burma

The most natural test on the P. T. program is the pretzel-shaped jungle jaunt which has permanently earned the respect of the Cadet Corps as well as the descriptive title of "Burma Road."

The cadet is halted at the edge of the woods, where the start of the lung-bursting lane is an innocent footpath, and is left to gaze in agony at the tempting blue waters of the officers' swimming pool—but not for long.

"Column of files from the right—**hit it!**"

The cadet follows the line in front of him down the crowded trail, carefully choosing his footing as the rocky terrain slopes downward.

Upward sweeps the road, and after a few strides the sap has begun to seep out of his thighs. At the top, a painted white marker points to the left, and the cadet swings with the trail and sprints to regain his lost yardage. The path breaks back to the left and down, and he hurtles down the incline.

The chase continues up hills and down dales, around trees, through bushes and over jagged rocks. With every steep grade and sudden hairpin turn, the cadet breathes harder. He races up a stairway hewed out of rock and crosses a ditch on rubbery legs, but if he eases up for a second there is a flurry of footsteps and half a dozen glistening, half-naked bodies rush past him. He bites down on his teeth and lengthens his stride.

Finally, the road wanders out of the woods and blinding Alabama sun hammers at the cadet's tingling neck and shoulders. Dust clouds swirl over him and sharp grains of clay wriggle into his socks with every burning step.

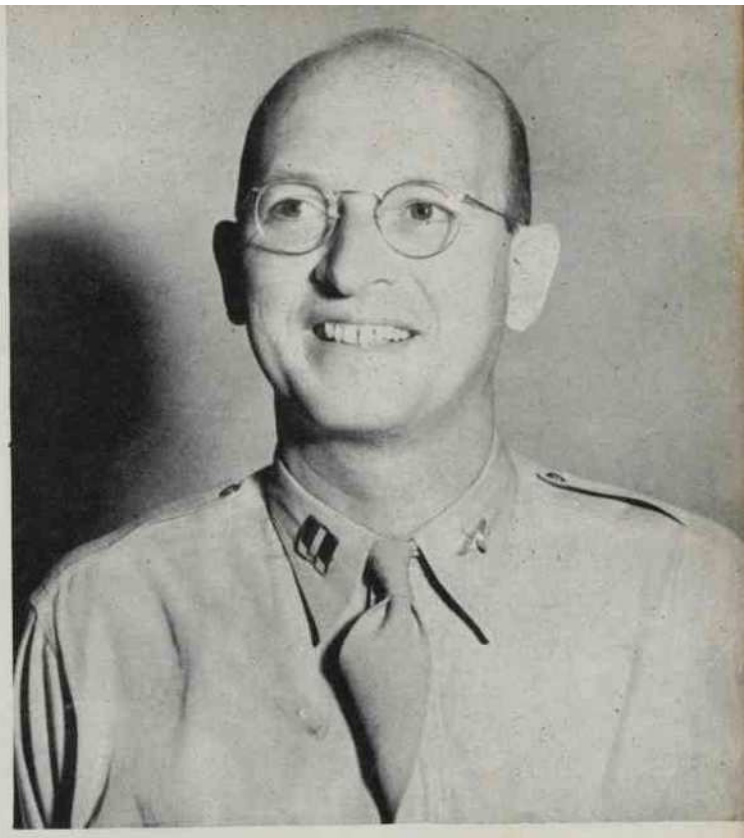
He squints far down the hazy orange strip at the hill which curves upward to the finish. His heart drives hot rivets into his chest but his brain knows that this two-mile grind is a preview of the real test to come—that this beautiful, bending, bruising Burma is the Tokyo Trail, the Boulevard to Berlin. More directly, it is the cadet's stairway to the sky, and he climbs it until a final thrust brings him over the top.

When the last man finishes, the squadron forms and jogs back to the squadron area for dismissal. But a new period is about to begin and, accordingly, he is usually granted all of ten minutes in which to strip off his soggy P. T. clothes, race six roommates for the shower and fall out again in full uniform. Nonetheless, when the time comes, he'll be ready, whether the destination is the Maxwell Field parade ground or the Imperial Palace in Tokyo.

A/C Robert C. Pattillo.

Meet Captain Parker

A/C E. Ralph Emmett



Little more than a year ago the recreation program for the Corps of Cadets here at Maxwell Field amounted to little more than the Cadet Club in Montgomery. Just that. There was no Recreation Building, no Standard Country Club, no lower classmen's dances, no hostesses, no theater parties. There was, however, a sheaf of papers in a worn manila envelope. The manila envelope contained a detailed program conceived by Colonel Louis A. Guenther, then Commandant of Cadets, for the establishment of all the things that have since materialized, things that today are so apparent whenever recreational privileges appear on the orders of the day. At that time, however, someone was needed to open the envelope and actually produce what had been so carefully planned. For this, an unusual man was necessary. So, for an unusual man, the plans waited. And the cadets waited. And then Captain Bruce Parker came to Maxwell. Colonel Guenther chose to entrust the brown manila envelope to him.

Captain Parker went to work. Because there was not so much as an office available from which he could operate, the very beginning of our recreational program went under way from wherever he happened to hang his cap. But this did not continue for long. A new building was being constructed that Colonel Guenther had been eyeing as a possibility for other plans. When the smoke cleared Captain Parker not only had an office but the cadets had a brand new Recreation Building as well.

That was the first step; from there Captain Parker went on. He furnished the building with everything a cadet could want. From Life magazine to Beethoven new departments were set up. The Standard Country Club was leased for use on week-ends. An Information Bureau for the cadets and their families was added to the Club already available at the Jefferson Davis Hotel. Ice cream was sent to the barracks of lower classmen. Parties were arranged. And a thousand other things were done for us that we have since forgotten or never realized.

It is one of the duties of a Special Service Officer to maintain and improve morale. But our morale is so good it needs little, if any, improvement. Nevertheless, because of what Captain Parker has brought to pass, it is certain that our letters home have been cheerier, and this, in turn, must have made our families happier. So, on their behalf, as well as our own, we say to Captain Parker:

"Sir, our mothers thank you, our fathers thank you, our sisters thank you, our brothers thank you, and we thank you!"

TODAY or

Mister, what's
your seventh
General Orde
... Your eighth
Mister, what's
your name

They just never seem
to stop drilling me

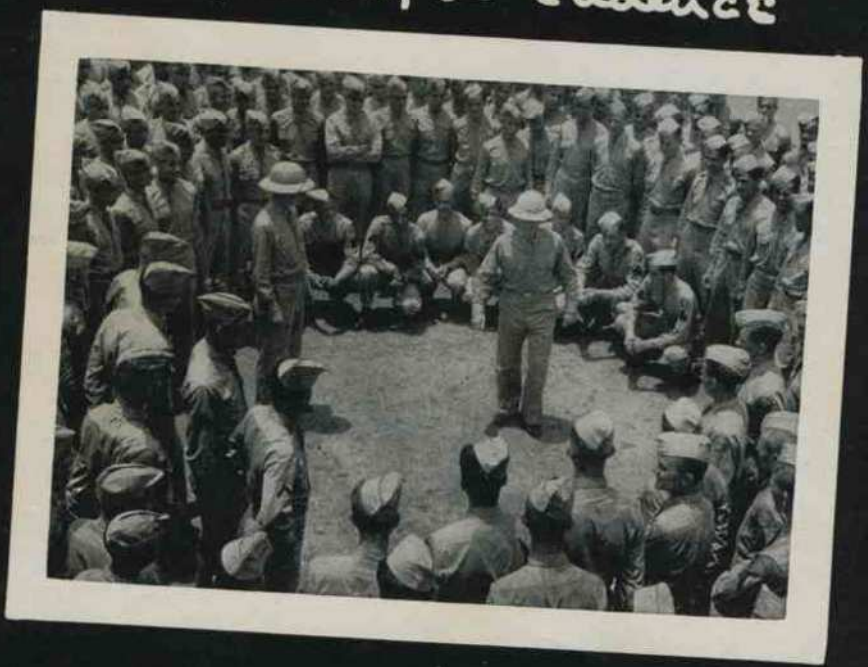
a letter from
from pour, and
fellow named

r ANY DAY

Officers front and center. The sabres wouldn't cut butter in the middle of a hot July

er ?
h ?
e !

Now when you get out in that competition, I don't want anyone to lose their hat, head, or cadence



Now, a letter
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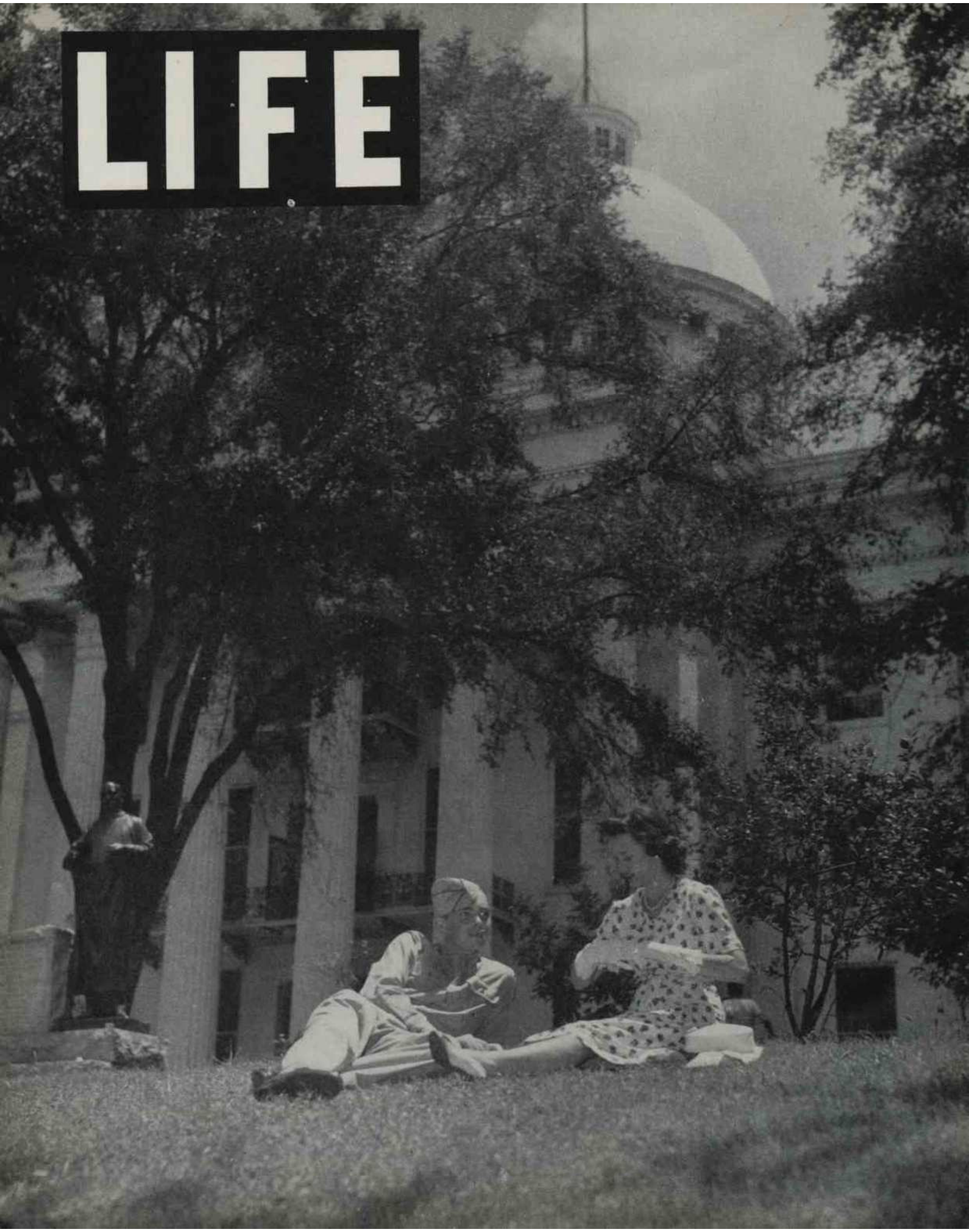

LIFE

. . . Comes to Maxwell Field

AND GOES ON OPEN POST

Open Post is the small sheet of mimeographed paper that permits a cadet to stroll through the gates of the field that lead to town. That paper is a pass. Never for longer than 27 hours in duration, it is granted only to those who through the week have maintained a satisfactory standing in conduct and academics.

To some, 27 hours' leave must seem a short time after such a work-filled week. Perhaps it is. But to the cadets who walk through the gates with pass in hand, it is a challenge that they intend to win. The 27 hours are important hours. They must be well filled.

Recently, we accompanied Aviation Cadet Jack Leary, a native of Massachusetts, and Miss Ann Speight of Montgomery on his Open Post. They made the hours count. They had fun. And when Jack returned to the field he had another pleasant memory to add to the collection he keeps of Maxwell. This is what it was like.

Jack appears a little awkward as he calls for Ann. Their date is one of the very many arranged by the Special Service Office, and, here at her door, they meet for the first time.

Before they start on their date, Jack, the Massachusetts Yankee, meets Ann's mother, and the graciousness of their Southern hospitality, puts him quickly at ease,

They began the evening with a visit to Montgomery's Paramount Theatre. The picture was good and will provide something to talk about later.

The next stop is the Cadet Club at the Jefferson Davis Hotel. Here, amid a lively, luxurious background, they come to know each other better.

Enroute to the Standard Country Club, Jack and Ann make use of the shuttle service provided by the Special Service Office for cadets and their dates.

Dancing under a star studded sky and touched by a whispering breeze, Jack and Ann enjoy the music of the cadet orchestra as they plan events for tomorrow.

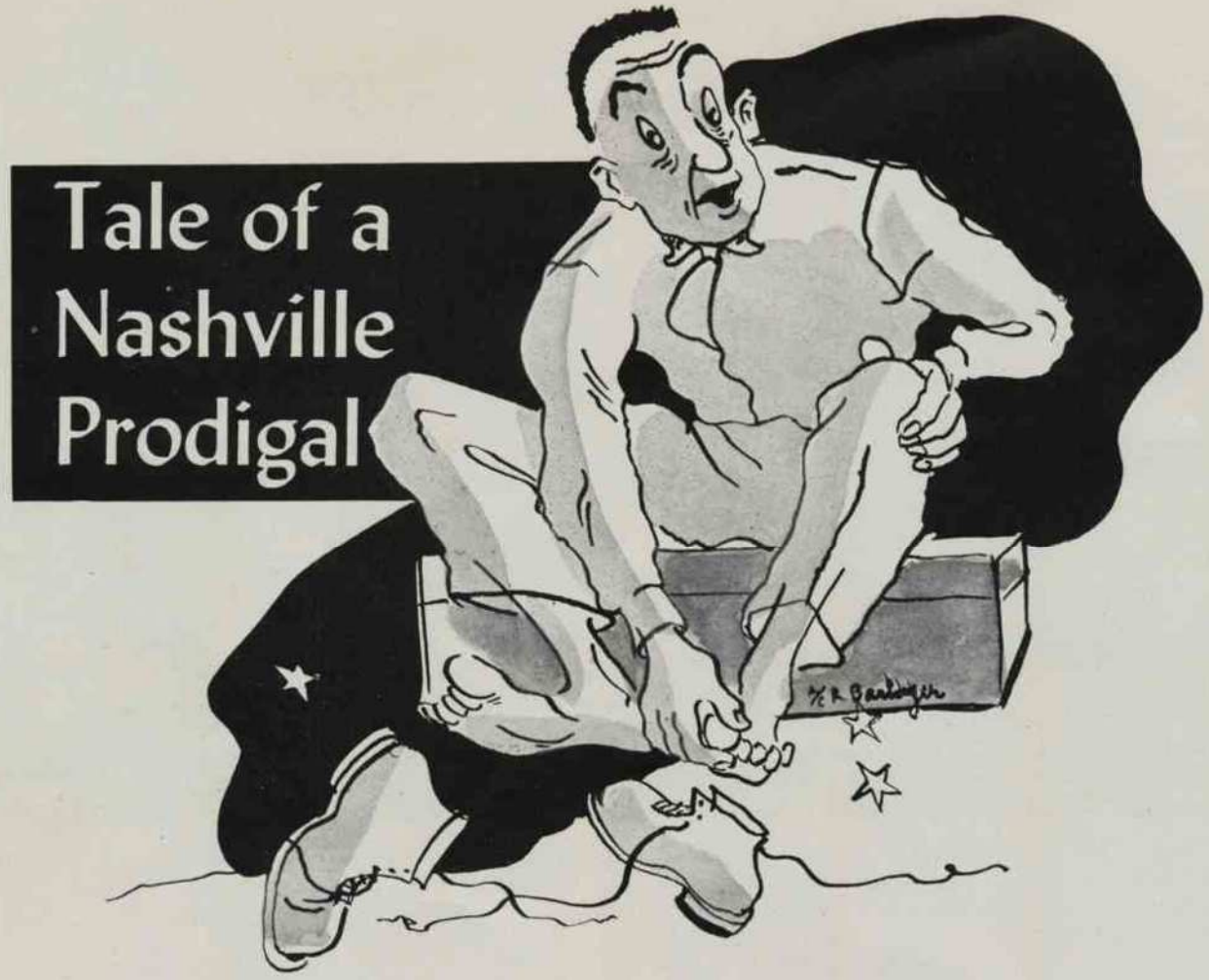
It is Sunday morning and here we see Jack and Ann leaving one of Montgomery's beautiful churches after attending a morning service.

Back to the country club for a spirited game of golf. One of the many activities offered the cadets through the Special Service Office and the country club, the course would more than satisfy even the most particular. Golf equipment, caddy service, and green are set well within the Open Post budget.

It gets hot in Alabama and there is nothing more cooling and refreshing after a rigorous game than a swim. Here, Jack and Ann are seen at the Narrow Lane Inn pool.

The twenty-seven hours are over. Back at the Aviation Cadet Recreation Building, Jack and Ann enjoy a soda. Maybe she'll say yes for next week. We hope so.

Tale of a Nashville Prodigal



Yes, we came from Nashville—and who didn't? The train ride was not quite as I had pictured it. Instead of restful slumber in a downy berth, I got a joyful little ride on a coach, vintage '03. I still carry with me several small but tender bruises, a few old minor lacerations and several varied and assorted horrible memories of that trek.

The weather was lovely when I arrived—calm, peaceful and cool, cool like Death Valley, and I was so excited and thrilled about getting to Maxwell at last that I hardly noticed the welcoming committee. I will swear to this day that those upperclassmen who greeted us had fangs, long yellow fangs. From the time the first command was given, I knew who was boss, and who would make us toe the line for the next four weeks. The march to the barracks was rather brisk, in fact when they finally stopped us I thought I'd just lost two perfectly good legs. At first I rather enjoyed the antics of the upperclassmen and found them quite amusing and clever. Ah, the naivete of it all—they dubbed me "Laughing Boy" and all H broke loose. Even now, I go into a series of nervous convulsions when I think of those awful hours.

At the drop of a hat, and that was gigable, we were right in the old routine. Routine H! Whoever whipped up our daily chores was a sadist. We braced, we shined our shoes, we memorized lengthy "to do's and not to do's", we shined our shoes, we walked the "Rat Line", we shined our shoes, we shined our shoes, we stood at attention, we drilled, we shined our shoes. "Boots, boots—", whoever wrote that poem ought to de decapitated with a dull spoon! We shined our shoes—oops, sorry. Need I be more explicit?

Right off the bat we got our hair cut. They cut hair in cadence around here—one, two, three, four, next? One, two, three, four, next? It took me weeks to get over that awful naked feeling. I felt like a victory garden that just couldn't seem to get started. Whoever heard of one quarter of an inch of hair? Well, if you haven't stick around.

Calisthenics and athletics were fun, that is

if you like mass murder. All the P. T. (physical torture) instructors were disgustingly healthy and made me feel like I was in the advance stages of an obscure disease and had a brace of club feet. We did exercise until I thought I'd lose my mind, or lunch, or something and at length I found myself popping out of bed in the morning and tearing madly into a series of push-ups. The "Burma Road" would be interesting to a nature lover, but who, after one jaunt through the woods could love anything, much less nature. Need I mention the Airport sprint? I'm sure it must be seared into the memories of all who have dashed, like things possessed, around that awful course.

Perhaps, and there's no perhaps about it, the major (I failed to salute one once and walked tours) part of our training was in academics. Physics, Maps and Charts (now I can tell where one state ends and another begins—that is if it's a Mercator projection), Aircraft Recognition ("Worry, worry, toil and trubble—"), Math, Naval Forces, Cadet et cetera. That last little number was the one that got me. I'd never heard grown men sound so silly—dit dit da, dit dit da. But in nothing flat I found myself chatting away in dit dit da's. In my letters to my friends (4 F's, aged maiden aunts and mongolian idiots) I amazed them with indiscreet little post scripts all in dit dit da's. Dit dit da—what a medium for expression. I should have written this all in dit dit da's and managed to confuse everyone.

No story of la vie Maxwell would be complete (trite isn't it?) without some small mention of those gay and breezy little "once-overs" more commonly known as inspections. "Aye, there's the rub" and rub like H we did.

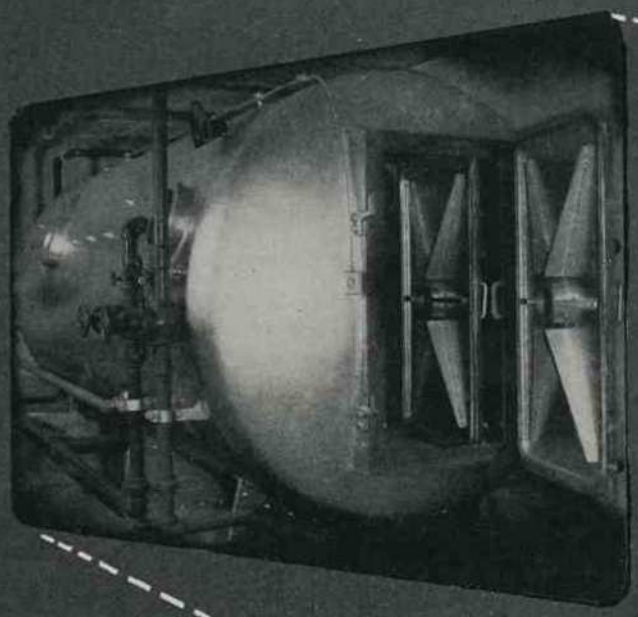
I never thought for even one fleeting moment that I'd ever be a victim of Housemaids Knee, Dishpan Hands and those nauseous little ailments that come from too much elbow grease.

This sounds like an anatomy class, doesn't it? Perhaps the most amazing thing about inspection was the arrangement of the footlocker. For the information of those not numbered among the intelligentia, the footlocker is a very large trunk-like container, rectangular in shape and containing one tray with an enormous expanse beneath. Into this gruesome receptacle we tossed all personal belongings until that fateful Saturday inspection reared its ugly head. At that time, all clothing, etc., was stuffed willy nilly into our radiators leaving only one razor, one razor blade, two pairs of socks, two pairs of under shirts and under—. How we ever got rid of those great mounds of clothing I will never know.

I trust that I haven't painted too dark a picture of life at Maxwell Field, because, to coin a phrase "But all kidding aside", I've loved every agonizing second (I've counted each and every one of the little rascals) of it. It's been fun and I wouldn't take a thousand dollars for it. Sorry, but I can't accept a check. Cash on the line always.

By **New** A/C C. G. Caffery, C-1.

Take 'er up to "38"



By A/C Robert C. Pattillo

I have just walked into the decompression chamber.

I am sitting, stripped to the waist, on my two-foot section of bench, feeling the anxious thrill which always comes with any physical challenge. My squadron mates are seated on both sides of me and along the bench at the opposite wall of the chamber. We are wearing wan smiles, exchanging wisecracks, inspecting the details of the oxygen masks in our hands. For two preceding hours we sat in a classroom learning everything we must do on this trip.

The technician who will make the run with us enters the chamber, helps lock the thick metal door, and walks to a special seat at the other end of our cylindrical cell.

I look at the hairy-chested cadet directly across from me and we trade foolish smiles. He has volunteered to occupy Seat No. 13, which means that he will "go up" without a mask as an experimental demonstration.

"I've always wanted to see Maxwell Field from the air," cracks the kid from Pennsylvania in Seat No. 3. It's a weak effort but it gets a few laughs.

"Now, men," the non-com tells us, "we're going to take all of you up to 18,000 feet without your masks."

The Pennsylvanian in No. 3 whistles loudly.

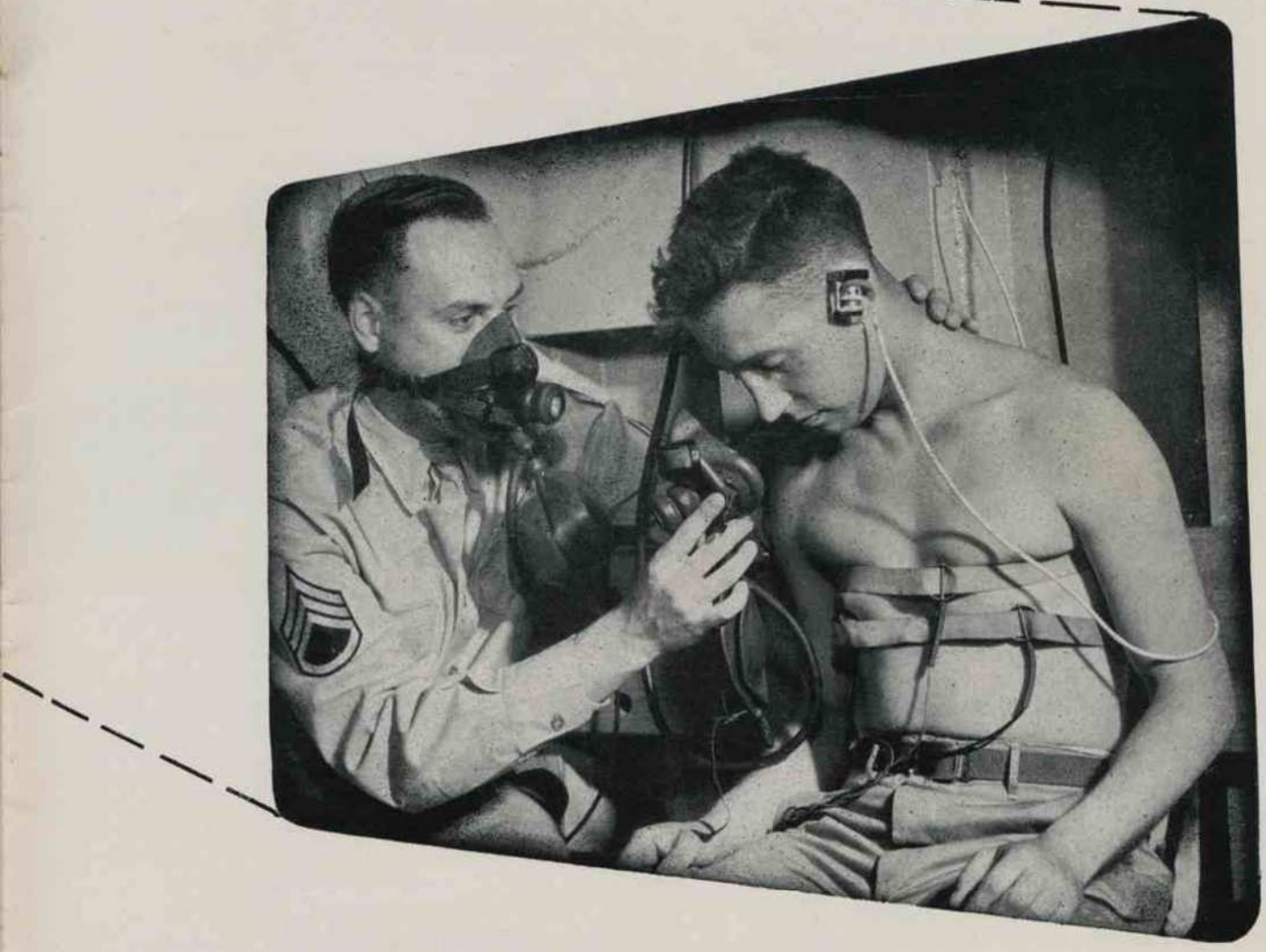
"Take her up," calls the sergeant.

The needle steadily revolves around the dial. The sergeant straps on his mask with the explanation, "Your mind is the first part of your body which is affected by lack of oxygen. You think you are doing fine, but you're not. **I'm** not taking any chances."

We are at 12,000. I seem to be perfectly natural. "Look at your fingernails," is the order. Instead of a natural pink, mine are turning blue. No. 6 extends his fingers, and his nails are the same.

At 16,000 feet I notice that I am weary in most of my joints. The sergeant is alert, checking everybody. No. 13 looks confident.

The needle indicates 18,000. The tech-



nician makes the safe-by-a-mile signal and the man grins through the porthole. "Leveling off," he calls through the tube.

"Anybody feel bad?" he asks. The sergeant inside looks over each cadet individually. He questions me about my eyesight, but I believe I can see as well as ever.

"Put on your masks," commands the noncom, "all except No. 13."

We adjust the straps, hook the oxygen tube to the valve which leads to the tank and set the gauge. No. 13 looks slightly apprehensive as he silently watches, his hands in his lap. Suddenly the lights seemed to brighten up. Our eyes were affected!

We are starting up again now. We stare at No. 13, watching for the first effects of lack of oxygen, but he seems normal. I am beginning to feel tired.

The sergeant hands No. 13 a tablet and pencil. The officer outside watches through his porthole and speaks through the tube: "Write your name and serial number." We are at 21,000 feet.

We crane our necks to view the experiment. The handwriting is clear but No. 13 writes the digits of his serial number slowly. He rewrites the line, just below it, and his letters are sprawling. The needle passes 24,000.

The needle has stopped. We've reached

28,000 feet and have leveled off.

"No. 13, can you hear me?" barks the voice from the tube.

The guinea pig looks up at the face framed behind the glass. His eyes are glazed but he continues to grin. "Count backward from twenty-five", orders the voice.

No. 13 looks down at his tablet like a schoolboy trying to concentrate. "Twenty-four, twenty-three, twenty-two—" He frowns.

"No circulation," the cadet mumbles.

"Can you write your home address?" asks the voice through the tube.

No. 13 grasps the pencil tightly and the color of his fingernails reminds me of blueberries. He painfully scrawls a number which is impossible to read. He breathes deeply and shines with perspiration. Suddenly his head droops forward. The sergeant jams the mask against his face and holds it.

No. 13 glances around at his mates and I can tell he is grinning sheepishly now. "How do you feel?" asks the sergeant through his mask.

"Okay!" yells the cadet. "I thought I was doing all right a minute ago until I keeled over."

No. 14 shows him the tablet. The guinea pig is laughing. "I can't understand it," he tells the sergeant. "I thought I was in fine shape."

"Now you can see, men," crackles the voice through the tube, "that oxygen first affects the brain. It so distorted this man's judgment that he didn't realize he had lost all coordination. If you don't put on your mask at a safe altitude, you will not realize the need for it until it is too late."

I am permanently impressed. No. 13 will not have to be told again, either.

Now we are all ready for the last leg of our vertical ride. The sergeant checks us one by one and picks up the speaking tube. "Take 'er up to thirty-eight," he commands.

We are at 32,000 and my stomach feels congested. The rubber balloon hanging from the ceiling, to illustrate the effects of low pressure, seems ready to pop, and I can imagine the swelling of my stomach. I have to burp to relieve the feeling, and nearly all the other crew members are doing the same.

The dial reads 35,000 and No. 2 is rubbing his arms. I raise my hand to adjust the straps of my mask and find that it requires a concentrated effort. I close my eyes and drink in a huge draught of oxygen.

The needle has stopped. We have hit the ceiling and I stare at the tip of the white pointer, resting on 38,000. I am theoretically over seven miles above sea level, and I get a kick out of thinking about it. I know every cadet in the chamber is thinking of a day when he may be 38,000 feet above the earth in a Thunderbolt, or a Fortress, or between the twin fuselages of a Lightning. Seven miles up! **This** is how it will feel.

The sergeant asks every one of us how he feels. No. 9 says he has a pain in his knee. No. 11 reports a needled, bubbly feeling under his skin. Otherwise the crew is all right. We try to relax for the half-hour wait at 38,000 . . .

We have been at the top for about thirty minutes now. I am tired and my head is slightly fuzzy. The sergeant is talking to No. 11, who is complaining of cramps. Nobody else shows any signs of the bends except No. 9, who is slowly rubbing his knee. We are all sweating.

I punch No. 4 and ask, "how do you feel?"

Like all of us, he tries to appear casual as he nods. The sergeant glances around the chamber. "Ready to go down, men?"

The crew signals in the affirmative, as one man. "Take 'er down," the non-com calls into the tube. There is a stir along the two benches. No. 11 seems to feel better now.

The needle moves backward again. My ears feel stuffed and I swallow. No. 6 is blowing hard to clear his ears. "Dive bomber pilots yell at the top of their voices during a fast descent," the sergeant remarks, and I try it. My throat feels strange, but it works. The needle slowly spins counter-clockwise.

We are down. The technicians outside unlock the heavy door, and the last man takes off his mask. I step out of the chamber and reach for my shirt and tie, which are hanging alongside a row of others on the wall.

I have a hungry feeling at the pit of my stomach as I adjust my tie; then I walk out into the sunshine and inhale deeply of Alabama air. I look down to make sure my feet are back on the ground.

Church Call

First of the Four Freedoms

The army, of course, is not an essentially religious organization. The cadet's life, however, like that of anyone else, would be empty and meaningless without a very definite spiritual guidance. And to provide that influence we have our church call and our chaplains.

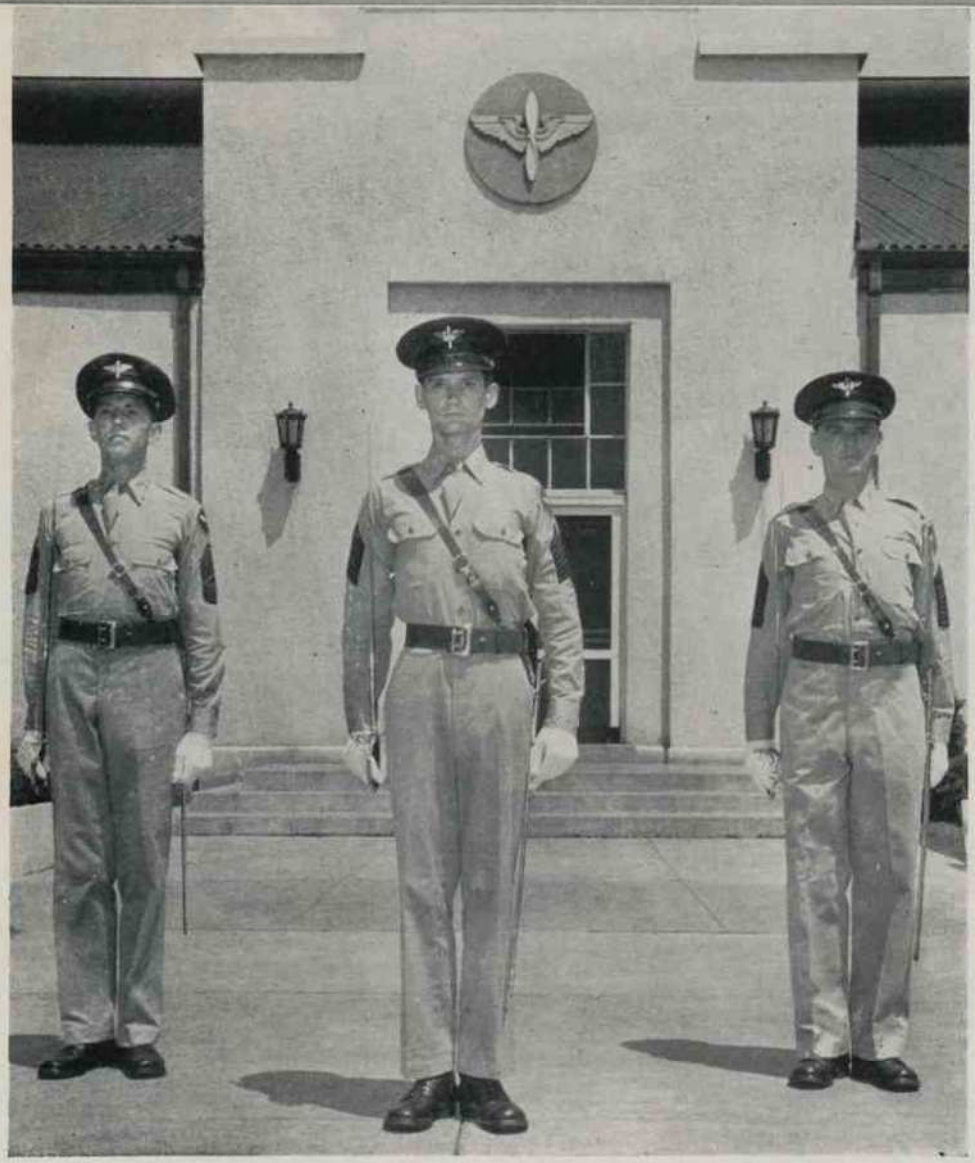
The inspiration that we get from our chaplains is far-reaching. He symbolizes consolation for those in trouble, encouragement for the despondent, and cheer for the sick. He is our link with home. No personal problem is too small for his attention, none too great for his untiring efforts in our behalf. He marries some of us. To others he is that special understanding friend. When everything seems out of focus, it is the chaplain who makes us realize the things that really count and keeps us in their fighting.

We, here at Maxwell Field, Protestants, Catholics, and Jews alike, all realize that we are bound together by the strongest ties of mankind. More than just a uniform, more than just the protection of our own homeland, to us is entrusted the defense of a Freedom essential for the furtherance of civilization.

We are fighting for Four Freedoms. Freedom from Want, Freedom from Fear, Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Worship. Freedom from Want will be solved economically. Freedom from Fear and Freedom of Speech will be slow in returning to a world in twilight. But Freedom of Worship we practice ourselves and in it we find the strength that we will need to return to the conquered peoples of the world the chance to have all Four.

By A/C Charles I. Saxon, I-3.

★ ★ ★ LEADERSHIP



CORPS

Left to right:

Aviation Cadet Corps Adjutant Kenneth E. McCullam, a New Yorker, attended Hamilton College and was employed as a secretary prior to enlisting in the Air Corps last November.

Aviation Cadet Corps Commander Haddon Johnson, Jr., a native of Atlanta, Georgia, and formerly Cadet Colonel of Fulton County R. O. T. C. Schools in Atlanta, was a pre-Law student at Duke University.

Aviation Cadet Corps Supply Officer Donald McKernan, of Sparkhill, N. Y., before his transfer to the Air Corps was a Master Sergeant in the Corps of Engineers. His military background includes 27 months of domestic and foreign service.

The Corps of Aviation Cadets here at Maxwell Field differs from any other organization of the Army and in many ways; but to those of us who came from the Army, it is the difference in our system of leadership and the maintenance of discipline that from the first becomes most strikingly apparent.

Established according to the regulations in use at West Points, the corps, the wings, the groups and the squadrons are governed and led by cadet officers appointed from our own ranks. With them rests the responsibility of command. They are charged with maintaining the rigid standards of the corps, and they, as leaders of leaders, must set the appropriate example.

As each class moves out from here their officers go with them. New ones must step up to replace them. These appointments are made by a group of commissioned officers who carefully filter the records of all who apply. When the choices are made, they are made on the basis of a cadet's standing with respect to leadership qualities, academ-

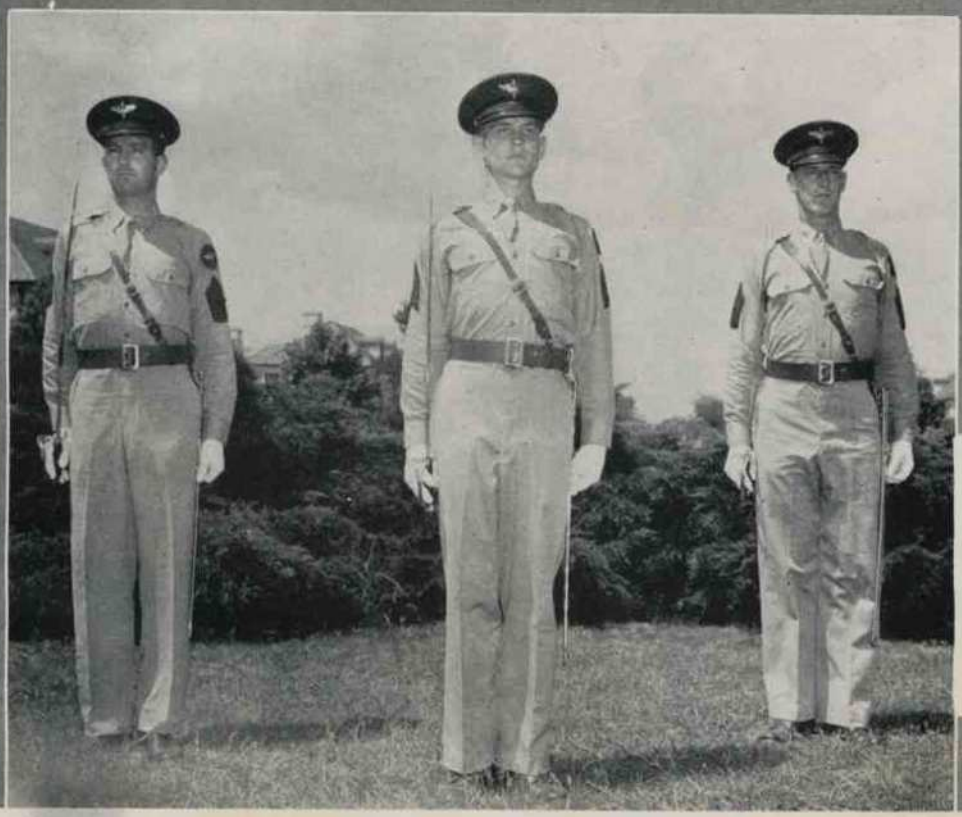
ics, previous military experience, bearing, and —very important—the recommendations of those who must serve under them.

The continuance of this system of command speaks well for its effectiveness. Its success is due to the willingness of the cadet officer to assume his responsibilities and faithfully carry out his orders, and to the willingness of those whom he commands to accept his judgment and respect his instructions. It is the combination of these essentials that makes of us better soldiers—that we, in turn, may be better officers.

A/C Walter E. Mimnaugh III.

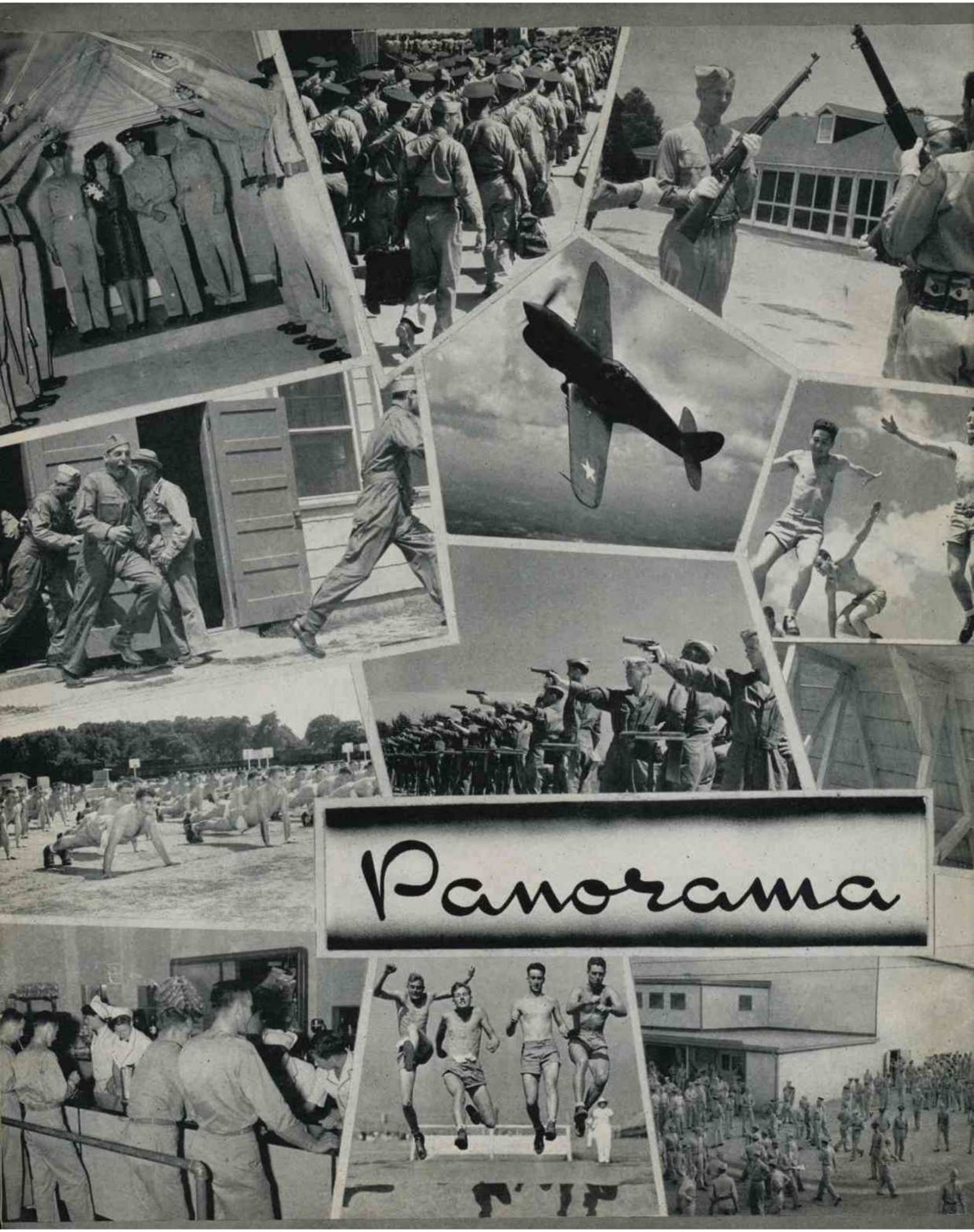
WING I

Left to right: A/C Park R. Birdwell, Jr., Adjutant; A/C Horace Wallace, Commander; and A/C Walter E. Leach, Supply Officer.



WING II

Left to right: A/C Alfred Whittell, Adjutant; A/C Olin O. Rambo, Commander; and A/C James E. Hamilton, Supply Officer.


Panorama

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