

THE 37th ATTACK SQUADRON'S COFFEE GRINDER

The correspondent of the 37th Attack Squadron, Langley Field, Virginia, spins this yarn. Several months ago, during the Second Army Maneuvers, the 37th had four planes participating therein to lay a smoke screen at Fort Knox. Among the planes not taken on maneuvers was number 84, an A-8A, the only one of its kind in existence. The difference between the A-8A and the regular A-8 was a geared Conqueror motor that sounded like a coffee grinder and the plane consequently took about twice as much field on take-offs. The 37th had just received a new Cadet from Kelly Field and, being ordered on his orientation flights during this time, of course drew the old coffee grinder for his flights. To qualify for further cross-country trips, the new pilot must include in the orientation flights Fort Bragg, Richmond, Bolling Field, Middletown, Edgewood Arsenal and Mitchel Field.

The day this young man was sent to Mitchel Field, someone from GHQ called the 8th Pursuit Group and asked if they had a plane available to go to Ithaca, N.Y., to ferry back a certain Major from GHQ. Noticing that the 37th Squadron had a plane enroute to Mitchel Field with an empty rear seat, the Pursuit Group Operations called the 37th and asked if there were any objections to sending the plane to Ithaca to pick up a passenger and, of course, there were no objections.

The officer waiting at Ithaca is a very close friend of the C.O. of the 37th Squadron, and when the A-8 loomed in sight he felt very pleased inwardly that his good friend was coming to pick him up, not realizing that the Second Army Maneuvers had taken him away. Imagine his surprise after the plane landed to see a big red-headed youngster crawl out. This is the point where the Major made his mistake, because he should have crawled in the rear seat and said "Let's go!" Instead, he asked where the C.O. of the 37th was and why he didn't come after him.

Without stopping for a breath between words, this is the answer he received: "The C.O. of the 37th is on maneuvers with all the good airplanes in the organization; they gave me this old coffee grinder to make my familiarization flights in because it was not good enough to go on maneuvers and I just graduated from Kelly Field."

The young man then got out the tools, tightened up the Prestone pump which was leaking quite badly, and was ready to start. The return to Langley was made without difficulty and, even though the young man made a successful landing down wind at Langley, the Major was so glad to be down that I do not believe he noticed it.

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