

AAC & AAF Civil Primary Flying Schools 1939-1945

Part I



General "Hap" Arnold's Great Gamble of 1939: Civil Contracting for the First Nine Replacements for Randolph Field—and the First Class of 40-A.

by Robert F. Schirmer, Col. USAF (Ret.), Class of 40-A



PROLOGUE—This is the story of the first nine civil primary flying schools of 1939, which General Arnold, then Chief of the Air Corps, decided was the only way to beat the German Luftwaffe at their own game of overwhelming airpower: to design a pilot training program which could keep up with our American industrial production of U.S. war planes—up to 50,000 planes per year. Thus, to keep pace, General Arnold had to develop a pilot training system that would eventually produce over 200,000 combat pilots in five years or less (1939-1944), which he did!

He started with these original nine civil contract primary flight training schools, adding nine more in a year (1940), then leapfrogging upwards to an overall total of more than 60 such civil primary schools, four of which taught not only primary but basic phase flying as well.

The capacity of these schools absorbed training for over 8,500 British, French, Chinese, Dutch, Turkish and Brazilian Air Force cadets, as well as cadets for eight other Latin-American nations.

Major General H.H. Arnold—It was 1938. In September of that year, Major General Henry H. Arnold was appointed Chief of the Air Corps. It was as though he had been standing off stage waiting for the call to lead the Army Air Corps to greatness.

All through his outstanding career, "Hap" Arnold was a doer and he liked to remember people's names. It was said that he once knew the first names of every officer and enlisted man he had ever met in the Air Corps, including the names of their wives and children. And his way to lead was to startle, inspire and move the complacent to action to meet the objectives he had charted, leaving the details to them.

In 1938 there were approximately 700 qualified candidates available for starting as flying cadets for flying training, per Office of the Chief of the *Air Corps Newsletter*, dated 21 December 1938.

Cadet pay in 1938 consisted of: \$127.50 per month, which included \$75 flying pay, \$30 for rations, and \$22.50 for rental allowance.

Major General Henry H. (Hap) Arnold found he had to make a great gamble in 1939. He was faced with the problem of how to expand the pilot production from 500 (then the capacity of Randolph Field) at least fourfold to 2,000.

What he really needed was several more Randolph Fields to work his plan of expanding the Air Corps pilot training program. But how to get these additional facilities when he had neither the authority nor the funds to do the task?

After surveying the assets and capacities of the two sole



North American BT-9 basic trainers lined up at Randolph Field, Texas, in 1939. (USAAC Photo)

The cactus garden and administration building at Randolph Field, Texas. (Author's Collection)



training bases (Randolph and Kelly Fields), he decided to go outside the Army and have the primary training done by civil flying schools. He knew most of the outstanding civil flying school owners / operators.

Strangely enough, there was a handful of old-time Army pilots from World War I days, and a few experienced civilian pilots and flying school operators, who also owned pilot training schools, who were concerned that our airpower strength was nonexistent, and they had faith that the answer to meeting the challenge of the German Luftwaffe and the Japanese Air Forces (which had taken these enemy powers over 10 years to develop), was to build a superior Air Force of our own. He had his staff meet several times with different groups of these civilian operators to find out, first, whether they were interested in performing such training, and second, whether they felt up to the task and had the necessary facilities and trained personnel to do it.

When General "Hap" Arnold started talking to this handful of older military and civilian pilots about whether they could be depended upon to train Air Corps Flying Cadets, they all agreed to do their share and to start a program if called upon. That was what General Arnold was waiting to hear. So he threw them the challenge to start training 40 days from the final meeting in May 1939. They all responded and instantly set about meeting the 1 July 1939 deadline.

He had told them he thought that war was inevitable. He said the Army didn't have time to prepare facilities for the training of flyers and that we were unprepared to cope with all-out war. "We've got a job to do and do it fast!" were his parting remarks to them.

This, then, was the genesis of what has been called the

greatest single American masterstroke of World War II—the early starting of the training of combat pilots by using civilian flying schools to make up for the lack of expandable production capacity of Randolph Field, whose standard rate of training pilots was only 500 per year.

Later, in 1942, General Arnold was to say: "The resourcefulness and energy of our people [Americans] would have been of little avail against our enemies if the Army Air Forces had not begun preparations for war long before Pearl Harbor. By December 7, 1941, we were in low gear and were shifting into second."

They required no prodding, no pressure, no guarantees, no contracts. They were businessmen willing to forget business. They undertook the job, the biggest any of them had ever had, and they took it without any contracts and without the assurance they would ever be paid (though General Arnold had promised he would do what he could). They gambled their last dollar and all they could borrow also to make good their obligation to General Arnold, to the Army Air Corps, and to the nation. It was their answer to the challenge.

These eight operators knew the nation was heading for a crisis. They trusted Hap Arnold. Each of them returned to



Randolph Field cadet mess hall in 1940.

(Author's Collection)



A cadet's room in order for inspection.

(Author's Collection)

forthright effort, a gamble, to get this program going in the least possible time.

Within 40 days from the afternoon these men had left General Arnold in Washington, D.C., they were receiving flying cadet classes assigned by the Army Air Corps—going to work on a tremendous program while a bill to reimburse them was still pending in Congress.

In 1939, when the Office, Chief of the Air Corps (OCAC) determined to make contracts with nine civilian flying schools, it was explained to Congress that the use of civilian schools for primary flying training would materially reduce the time required for expansion of the Air Corps. Also, that the cost of tuition and other such expenses would be largely offset by a saving in additional airfields, materiel, personnel and equipment.

Early in July 1939, the nine civil primary schools had the necessary equipment (planes, etc.) and personnel (both military and civilian) and were ready to start operations.

Expansion of the basic pilot training presented no serious difficulty for the time being, since the facilities at Randolph Field were more than sufficient to accommodate the graduates of nine civil primary schools. Kelly Field, which conducted flying training, was augmented in the spring of 1939 by the addition of Brooks Field as a subpost. These two fields proved adequate for the preliminary expansion.

General Arnold had been lacking authority to enlist the help of the civilian schools. He had made that plain to the operators. That fact alone made it a gamble for them. But the program, lacking "official" sanction, was started anyway. The idea was to build an Air Force pilot potential and there was no time to lose waiting for "authorization." The immediate goal was 2,400 pilots a year. It was soon raised to 7,000, and then to 12,000, then to 30,000, but it was to go far beyond that figure in the end.

Congress eventually authorized the program. But authorization was granted by just two votes. The operators knew they had gambled but they hadn't realized that the ice on which they were skating was that thin.

The idea for the use of civilian contract schools was criticized as being against precedent, said General Arnold later (1944), but the heads of the nine civilian flying schools were nevertheless called in by the Air Corps to begin the unauthorized and unprecedented program.

Years later (in 1944), Lt. Gen. Barton K. Yount, then CG, AAF Flying Training Command, wrote to Capt. Maxwell W. Balfour, Director of the Spartan School of Aeronautics, Tulsa, Oklahoma, one of the original eight contractors: "It seems only yesterday that this command placed its entire future in the hands of a few patriotic men such as yourself. Without the nucleus of civil contractors, this command could not possibly have expanded from four or five hundred a year to the astounding rate of 100,000 pilots per year."

The story about General Arnold and his eight old-time friends deserves to break out of the dark past, for it was Arnold's answer to the boastful Luftwaffe. It is the story of a full-speed-ahead project unparalleled in military history.

Thus, in 1939, faced with the necessity of expanding the

their schools and, solely on General Arnold's verbal request, began to make preparations to train Army Air Corps Flying Cadets to fly at their schools.

Thus, the civil elementary school system was born where all the Air Corps primary flight training was given by civilian contract schools under Army supervision. New schools were added to this system until some 60-odd schools were in operation by December 1943. This saved some 100,000 Army personnel who otherwise would have been tied up in primary training activities. The wisdom shown in creating this setup (and avoiding the costly construction of nine more little Randolphys) saved the U.S. taxpayer over \$283 million a year before and during World War II.

The job that these eight operators did, along with the Air Corps, to get ready for these first flying cadets was momentous and truly monumental. In a few short weeks, they together had selected the many flight instructors and put them through the special refresher course at Randolph Field. They had moved over 150 training planes out to these nine locations of the selected contract primary schools. They were busy selecting, modifying and constructing dormitories and barracks to house the incoming cadets. All on a desperate, but

rate of pilot production from 500 to 2,000 per year, the Army had solved the problem by concentrating the limited facilities then available at Randolph and Kelly Fields in basic and advanced flight training, respectively, and turning over all primary (elementary) flight instruction to nine civilian schools.

By 4 May 1939, the original nine civil primary schools had been selected, but the execution of the plan depended upon availability of funds. Yet, although Congress had not appropriated the money, the eight contractors (Mr. Parks had two schools in the original nine: Parks Air College at East St. Louis, Illinois, and the Alabama Institute of Aeronautics at Tuscaloosa, Alabama) went ahead and secured the facilities needed to meet the training requirements. Indeed, it was not until the very end of June (1939) that Congress made the appropriation for reimbursing the contractors.

If the owners had not been willing to go ahead without the guarantee of compensation, the revised 4,500-pilot program mission would have failed. The revised program called for 2,298 instead of 4,500.

Only the cooperation of the contractors made it possible for the expansion program to start on schedule on 1 July 1939.

Part of the reason for reducing the original goals of 4,500 to 2,298 pilots was the fact that there would have been a shortage of 230 primary training planes, 96 basic training planes, and 55 advanced training planes.

On 1 July 1939, two and a half years before Pearl Harbor, there were nine civil primary flying schools opening their doors to 390 flying cadets of the Army Air Corps, and 17 student officers (West Point graduates) across the country from California to Nebraska and Illinois, to Texas and Alabama, for a total first class of 407 students. The first article covers East St. Louis Primary (Parks Air College, Inc.), one of the original nine civil primary schools as they originally operated in 1939- The other civil primary schools will also be covered.

The majority of the data and photographs shown in these articles came from the historical files of Flying School Class of 40-A. This was the first class of flying cadets and student officers to enter primary pilot training in what was then known as the 4,500 pilot program. This program originally called for 66 cadets/students to be entered into the civil primary schools every six weeks. But this figure was reduced in January 1939 to 396 students every six weeks, due to shortages of planes and instructors at the beginning of the program.

The original nine civil primary schools to be covered in this series are the following:

1. East St. Louis, Illinois: Parks Air College, Cahokia, Illinois (Parks Airport I).
2. Glenview, Illinois: Chicago School of Aeronautics, Curtiss-Reynolds Airport.
3. San Diego, California: Ryan School of Aeronautics, Lindbergh Field.
4. Tuscaloosa, Alabama: Alabama Institute of Aeronautics, Hargrove Van de Graff Field, Tuscaloosa, Alabama.
5. Lincoln, Nebraska: Lincoln Airplane & Flying School, Municipal Airport.
6. Glendale, California: Grand Central Flying School, Grand Central Air Terminal.



Original nine Civil Primary Schools of 1939. Western District included Santa Maria, Glendale and San Diego. Central District included East St. Louis, Glenview (Illinois), and Lincoln, Nebraska. The other three schools at Tuscaloosa, Tulsa and Dallas were controlled by Hq. AC Training Center, Randolph Field, Texas.

7. Dallas, Texas: Dallas Aviation School & Air College, Love Field.

8. Santa Maria, California: Hancock College of Aeronautics, Santa Maria Airport.

9. Tulsa, Oklahoma: Spartan School of Aeronautics, Tulsa Municipal Airport.

Table I lists the nine original civil primary schools which started training flying cadets and student officers in July 1939. This list indicates the owners/operators. Note that one operator, Mr. Oliver L. Parks, opened two primary contract schools: East St. Louis, Illinois, and Tuscaloosa, Alabama, in July 1939.

Dates of opening and closing are shown for all nine schools. Five of the schools: Glenview, Illinois; Lincoln, Nebraska; Dallas, Texas; Glendale, California; and San Diego, California, were to be closed within two years.

The first of these to close was Lincoln, Nebraska, which had such poor winter flying weather in 1939-40 that it had to be moved to Lakeland, Florida, in August 1940.

The next school to be closed was Glenview, Illinois, near Chicago. It was moved to Albany, Georgia, in August 1940 for the same winter weather reasons.

The Albany school, which Mr. Darr had opened in Georgia in August 1940, had to gradually assume the student load from Glenview. However, the Glenview school did not actually close until March 1941. Then the U. S. Navy took over the field (located near Chicago) which became "U.S. Naval Air Station, Glenview, Illinois."

About the same time in August 1940, Dallas became overcrowded on Love Field and the training program was moved to Ft. Worth. Concurrently, the Glendale, California school was replaced by the Ontario, California school in August 1940 and was renamed Cal-Aero.

Over a weekend in July 1942, San Diego's Ryan School of Aeronautics was moved to Tucson, Arizona, to become Ryan's second "branch" school. This was because of overcrowded aerial traffic on Lindbergh Field. Ryan's first "branch" school had already opened at Hemet, California, in August 1940.

Seven of the original nine schools were redesignated from their Air Corps Training Detachment category to AAF Flying

TABLE I - THE ORIGINAL NINE CIVIL PRIMARY FLYING SCHOOLS OF 1939
CLASS 40-A (FIRST CLASS-Aug 41-Jul 42)

No.	Location	Name of School	Owner/ Operator	Opened	Closed	AAF FTD No.	AAF BU No.	Total Enter	Pilots Grad.
1	Tuscaloosa, Ala. Hargrove Van de Graff Field	Ala. Inst. of Aero	O.L. Parks	1 Jul '39 (40-A)	Sep '44 thru 44-G)	51st	None	4215	2556
2	Glenview, Ill. Curtiss-Reynolds Airport	Chicago School of Aero	H.S. Darr	1 Jul '39 (40-A)	Mar '41 thru 41-F)	52nd	None	484	240
3	Dallas, Tex. Love Field	Dallas Avn. School & Air College	W.F. Long	1 Jul '39 (40-A)	May '41 thru 41-E)	None	None	917	525
4	Glendale, Ca. Grand Cen. Air Terminal	Grand Central Fly. School	C.C. Moseley	1 Jul '39 (40-A)	29 May '41 thru 41-G)	2nd	None	562	467
5	Santa Maria, Ca. Santa Maria Airport	Hancock College of Aero.	G.A. Hancock	1 Jul '39 (40-A)	Jun '44 thru 44-J)	1st	None	8000	5000
6	Lincoln, Nebr. Union Airport	Lincoln Airplane & Fly Schl.	E.J. Sias	1 Jul '39 (40-A)	19 Oct '40 thru 41-B)	None	None	294	209
7	(Cahokia) E. St. Louis, Ill. (P) & (C)	Parks Air College	O.L. Parks	1 Jul '39 (40-A)	12 Mar '44 thru 44-G)	311th	None	5090	3141
8	San Diego, Ca. Lindbergh Field	Ryan School of Aero	T.C. Ryan	1 Jul '39 (40-A)	Jul '42 thru 42-E)	11th	None	1133	797
9	Tulsa, Okla. Tulsa Intl. Airport	Spartan School of Aero	M.W. Balfour	1 Jul '39 (40-A)	Aug '44 thru 44-K)	314th	2565th	6564	4231

Note: E. St. Louis, Ill.: (P) Parks Airport. (C) Curtiss Airport. Data as of 26 August 1987.

TABLE II — CLASS 40-A IN PRIMARY TRAINING

No.	School	Planned	Actual		Graduated to Basic	Eliminated Rate	Graduate Rate
			Enrolled	Eliminated			
1	Tuscaloosa, Ala.	40	43	-17	26	39.5	60.5
2	Glenview, Ill.	25	25	-9	16	36.0	64.0
3	Dallas, Tex.	60	64	-26	38	40.6	59.4
4	Glendale, Calif.	38	38	-12	26	31.5	68.5
5	Santa Maria, Calif.	50	49	-16	33	32.6	67.4
6	Lincoln, Nebr.	25	23	-8	15	34.7	65.3
7	E. St. Louis, Ill.	40	43	-17	26	39.5	60.5
8	San Diego, Calif.	35	36	-13	23	36.1	63.9
9	Tulsa, Okla.	86	86	-36	50	41.8	58.2
Totals		399	*407	-153	254	37.5	62.5

*Including 17 officers taking training in grade (West Pointers), of which 10 survived primary. See Table HI.

Training Detachments (AAFFTD) after the Army Air Forces had replaced the old Army Air Corps designation in June of 1941.

The last column shows the approximate number of pilots entered and graduated by each of these original nine civil schools during their lifetimes of flying training activity.

Later, each of these original nine schools run by eight civil contractors was supplemented by nine "branches" by the mid-1940s.

In 1941, yet another nine "branches" were opened to bring the total up to 26 (less the three which were then in the throes of preparing to close operations as indicated above). These 23 schools (net) as operated by the original civil contractors were to produce almost half of the 240,000 pilots who were trained and graduated from 1939 to 1945, when the last of these schools was closed. Over 60 such civilian-run primary schools (including four basic) were opened from 1939 to 1944 to conduct General Arnold's expansion program.

Table II presents for Class 40-A the school location, the number of cadets/students planned to be assigned, the actual enrollment, and number of eliminees, together with the percent eliminated and the percent graduated to basic.

Scattered through six of the nine contract schools were 17

West Pointers who were taking Primary Flight Training in officer grade. To us, as flying cadets, they were in a class by themselves. Some of them acted like it, while others did not. Eight of them made it through the course and got their wings, while nine did not. This was a 53 percent washout rate—a 47 percent graduation rate. These commissioned officers in Class 40-A were distributed as follows to these six contract primary schools in 1939:

TABLE III -
DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENT OFFICERS TRAINING IN GRADE

School	PRIMARY		BASIC		ADVANCED		Grad.
	Asgnd.	Elim.	Asgnd.	Elim.	Asgnd.	Elim.	
1. Tuscaloosa	8*	4	4	1	3	0	3
2. Glenview	4	2	2	0	2	0	2
3. Dallas	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
4. Santa Maria	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
5. E. St. Louis	2	0	2	1	1	0	1
6. Tulsa	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
Total	17	7	10	2	8	0	8

Note: The other three primary schools, Glendale, Lincoln and San Diego, had none in 40-A.
*First Lt. S.T. Wray, C.E., was withdrawn from flight training Sept. '39 by Corps of Engrs.; however, he did return to primary at Tuscaloosa the following year and went on to graduate with Class 41-A.

The eight officers who graduated with Class 40-A were:

1. Tuscaloosa, Alabama: 1st Lt. Peter McGoldrick, Inf. (d. '42) (KIA); 1st Lt. Jergen B. Olson, Cav.; 1st Lt. Edward W. Moore, Coast Artillery Corps.
2. Glenview, Illinois: 2nd Lt. John W. Griffith, Inf. (d. '45); 1st Lt. Richard H. Smith, Infantry.
3. Dallas, Texas: 1st Lt. Howell M. Estes, Jr., Cavalry.
4. East St. Louis, Illinois: 1st Lt. Jack W. Turner, Cavalry (d. '67).
5. Tulsa, Oklahoma: 2nd Lt. John C. Pitchford, Field Artillery.

TABLE IV - ELIMINATION RATES FOR PRIMARY TRAINING ONLY
Classes 40-A through 40-H (1 July 1939—31 July 1940)

The following table shows the comparison in elimination rates for the first eight Contract Primary School classes, bearing the designation prefix of "40" (up to the end of July 1940).

Class	Number Entering Training	Number Eliminated	Percentage Eliminated	Percentage Graduated
40-A	407 (390 + 17 Off.)	153	32.5%	62.5%
40-B	396	154	39.0%	61.0%
40-C	376	112	29.6%	70.4%
40-D	376	122	32.4%	67.6%
40-E	376	142	37.8%	62.2%
40-F	376	113	30.0%	70.0%
40-G	376	123	32.7%	67.3%
40-H	475	171	36.0%	64.0%

CLASS 40-A CASUALTIES—While at Randolph Field, two cadets of Class 40-A died. One was killed in an auto accident; and the other died of cancer in the base hospital. However, the class lost no member due to training accidents while in primary training, although there were several who had forced landings or crash landings that they walked away from.

The Stearman PT-17 primary trainer. This was the most widely used primary trainer in the U.S. Army Air Corps with nearly 4,000 being produced.
(Author's Collection)

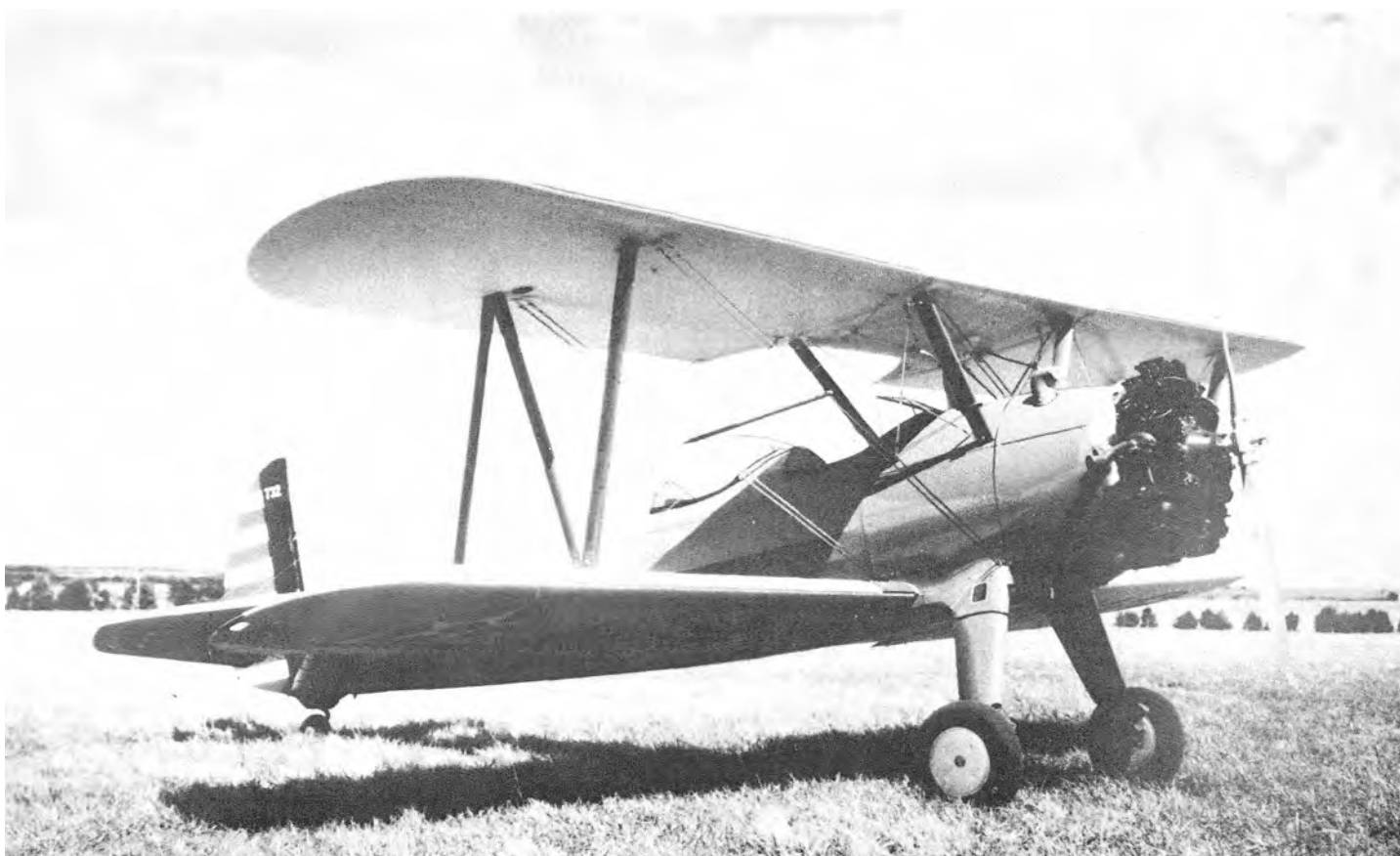
BC-1s vs. BT-9s at Civil Primary Schools in 1939—Reference is made to Table V—Inventories of Types of Training Planes on Hand July/August 1939 & 30 June 1940, and to the article by Bob Cavanaugh, *AAHS Journal*, Fall '86: "U.S. Army Inventory—1940."

During the Class 40-A survey made to confirm what type of plane was actually assigned to each Primary School (Civil) for use of the Detachment Tactical officers, one 40-A member, Col. Bill Johnstone, remembers the following story about the BC-1 being flown at Glendale Primary in July 1939: "To the best of my recall, the powets-to-be had a BC-1. I specifically recall the retractable landing gear, plus a Colonel Smith (Medical Officer) who flew it once at Glendale and then complained to our Commanding Officer, Captain Day, because it was so slow. Captain Day teased him unmercifully because he (Colonel Smith) had had his plane's gear down all the time (i.e., Colonel Smith was evidently not familiar with the retractable gear feature on the the BC-1, confusing it with the old BT-9 he had been checked out on earlier at Randolph)."

In addition, the BC-1s at both Lincoln and Tuscaloosa Primary had checkered engine cowlings.

Summary and Evaluation—Success of the civil elementary training program was immediate, and exceeded the expectations of even the champion of the plan, such as Brig. Gen. Barton K. Yount, then Assistant Chief of the Air Corps, who had sat on the Board of Officers which had formulated the civil elementary school plan in November 1938.

On his return from a visit to all the new civil schools in July 1939 (Class 40-A), he wrote Col. A.W. Robins, Commandant of the Air Corps Training Center (Randolph Field, Texas): "All in all, I am most agreeably impressed with the





A ground and flight view of the North American BT-9 basic training aircraft at Randolph Field, Texas, in 1939. (Author's Collection)

The instrument panel of a BT-9 basic trainer. (Author's Collection)



setup as a whole, and I feel that the training program at the civil schools is going to be a great success."

In November 1939, Colonel Stratemeyer informed General Arnold and General Yount in Washington, D.C.: "The stage commanders and all the authorities at Randolph Field reported that this class, 40-A, is one of the best that has ever been at Randolph Field."

In 1943, Col. John R. Morgan who, as Director of Training at the Air Corps Training Center during this early period, had had much to do with the planning, establishment and supervision of the civilian schools, was asked: "If the job were to be done over again, would the solution still be considered the best in the light of subsequent knowledge?" To this, Colonel Morgan, who on his own confession had originally been skeptical, replied: "Yes, the results were very gratifying, and certainly exceeded expectations at the training center. It was a lifesaver and the only solution."

Time was getting much shorter. By mid-1940, the Luftwaffe had struck and German planes and panzer divisions were delivering knockout blows on the unprepared nations of Europe. The victories mounted, the destruction spread, and there was no apparent way to stem it. The map of the continent was fast being changed as the arms of the swastika cast

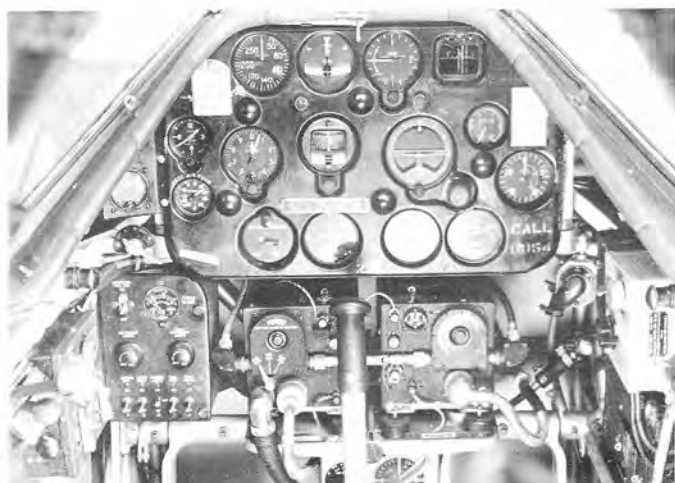


TABLE V - INVENTORIES OF TYPES OF TRAINING PLANES ON HAND JULY/AUGUST 1939 AND 30 JUNE 1940

Original Nine Civil Flying Schools	July/August 1939		30 June 1940		Sources of Data for 1939 Inventory
1--Ala. Coll./Aero. Tuscaloosa, Prim. Cadets: 35 plus 8 Off.	BC-1	1	BT-9	1	Photos of 1939 show 21 PT-11Ds at Tuscaloosa plus BC-1 in hangar there.
	PT-11D	21	PT-11D	18	
			PT-13B	5	
			PT-14	4	
2--Chicago Primary, Glenview, Ill. Cadets: 21 plus 4 Off.	BT-9	1	BT-9	1	Data tell of 10 PT-13As on hand for 40-A.
	PT-13A	10	PT-13A	16	
			PT-13B	5	
3--Lincoln Primary, Lincoln, Nebr. Cadets: 23	BC-1	1	BT-9	1	Aerial photos show 10 PT-13As in 1939.
	PT-13A	10	PT-13A	14	
			PT-13B	8	
4--Parks Primary, E. St. Louis, Ill. Cadets: 41 plus 2 Off.	BC-18	2	BT-9	2	Photos show 14 PT-13As lined up.
	PT-13A	14	PT-13A	19	
			PT-15	12	
5--Dallas Primary, Love Field, Tex. Cadets: 63 plus 1 Off.	BT-9	1	BT-9	1	Data show 30 ea. PT-3A on hand for 40-A/40B.
	PT-3A	30	PT-3	2	
			PT-3A	26	
			PT-19	4	
6--Spartan School of Aero, Tulsa, Okla. Cadets: 85 plus 1 Off.	BT-9	1	BT-9	1	Aerial photo of 1939 shows 30 PT-3As on field; data show 34; some in hangar.
	PT-3A	34	PT-12D	1	
			PT-3	2	
			PT-3A	27	
			PT-13B	20	
			PT-19	16	
7--Hancock Primary, Santa Maria, Calif. Cadets: 48 plus 1 Off.	BT-9	1	BT-9	1	Photo of 1939 shows 25 PT-13As lined up w/cadets.
	PT-13A	25	PT-13A	33	
			PT-13B	10	
			PT-16	1	
8--Grand Central Glendale Primary, Calif. Cadets: 38	BC-1s	2	BT-9	2	Photo of 1939 shows 12 PT-13As.
	PT-13A	12	PT-13A	24	
			PT-13B	11	
			PT-16	1	
9--San Diego Prim. Lindbergh Field, Calif. Cadets: 36	BT-9	1	BT-9	1	Photos of 1939 and data both show 5 PT-13As and 4 each YPT-16s on hand.
	PT-13A	5	PT-16	14	
	YPT-16	4	PT-20	28	

NOTES:

A bare minimum of aircraft was on hand 1 July '39 to start flying; more planes were delivered during July/Aug. '39 to support both 40-A and 40-B.

Third column data are from article by Bob Cavanaugh in *AAHS Journal* (Fall '86): "U.S. Army Inventory—1940." However, a survey made of Class 40-A members who attended these first nine civil schools shows that only 5 of the 9 schools actually had BT-9s assigned; the other 4 had

BC-1s for tactical officers to fly.

The extra BC-1s at Parks & Glendale were for the use of the two District Supervisors: Captains Rodieck and McNaughton.

Recorded/confirmed by Schirmer, 40-A Historian, Rev. 10 Feb. 88.

their widening shadow. Hitler was making good his public boasts. And the United States was still without an air force.

Air Corps recruiting was stepped up and it went fast. The training program couldn't keep abreast. It took 12 weeks for a cadet to complete the primary course. One class would be midway through the course when another class came into the school, and the schools were operating at capacity. It was soon obvious that eight men operating nine schools couldn't possibly do the size job that General Arnold had envisioned.

At the nine primary contract schools, Class 40-B showed up in as large numbers (396) as had Class 40-A (407). This meant

that the operators had a second deadline to meet six weeks after the training period had started for Class 40-A, the first class of cadets. By mid-August 1939, the schools had to have double the capacity they had to care for Class 40-A, just to handle the influx of Class 40-B.

On 4 September 1939 Lt. Davenport was promoted to rank of captain, and in November 1939 Lt. Brown was promoted to rank of 1st lieutenant. On 21 March 1941, Captain Davenport was promoted to major.

The aircraft that were assigned to this detachment when operations began (1939) consisted of 27 Stearman PT-13s. On or about 1 August 1940, these assigned airplanes were replaced by 74 Stearman PT-17s. This was at the time the size of each class of cadets was increased from about 40 to about 110, and all flying activities were moved to Curtiss Field.

In November 1940, the PT-17s were replaced by 74 PT-19 airplanes. Additional aircraft had gradually been added since November 1940, to where they then had the following: 59 PT-19s; 9 PT-19As; 29 PT-19Bs; a total of 97 planes.

On 5 August 1942, the first Link Trainers were received at this detachment and Link Trainer instruction was begun and was continued since that time. These Link Trainers were Type C-3. The first shipment consisted of three machines and on 1 September 1943, two more trainers were received and installed.

An auxiliary landing field known as Aux. Field No. 1 was established and put into use on 3 July 1940. This field was located about three miles SE of Belleville, Illinois. Another

Ryan YPT-16 primary trainer used by Ryan School of Aeronautics for primary training and replaced by the Ryan PT-22 early in WWII.
(Author's Collection)

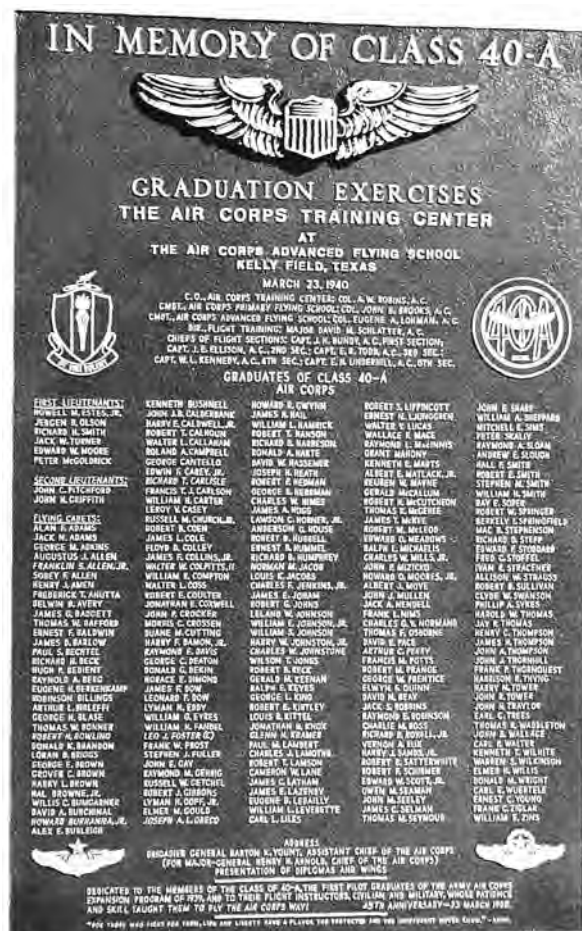


TABLE VI: SUMMARY OF DISTINCTIONS AND DECORATIONS WON BY GRADUATES BY SCHOOL — CLASS 40-A

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	T
1-Disting Service Cross			2	2	2		1			-	7
2-Navy Cross				1							1
3-Disting Svc Medal—Army	4		4	4			1		3	-	16
4-Disting Svc Medal—AF			2	1						-	3
5-Aces in 40-A			1	1	2		1				5
6-General Officers	2		5	5		1	2		2	-	17
7-Airline Cpts.	1	1		2	1			1	1	-	7
8-Silver Stars	5		2	3	4	3	6	5	4	-	32
9-Legion of Merit	11	1	13	11	4	4	10	2	11	1	68
10-Disting Flying Cross	12	3	25	18	22	5	16	13	10	1	125
11-Soldiers Medal	1		1		1		2		1	-	6
12-Bronze Star	1	1	3	2	2		4	4	4	1	22
13-JT Svc Commem Medal	2	1						1			4
14-Meritorious Svc Medal			1								1
15-Air Medal	39	12	47	43	43	18	84	40	64	2	392
16-Army Commend Medal	3	1	8	2	7	2	2	6	8	-	40
17-Air Force Com Medal	1		7	4	5		4	2	6	3	33
18-Purple Heart	3	1	5	5	7	3	7	2	2	-	35
19-Korean Service				2		1	1	2	4	-	10
20-Vietnam Service			1	1			1	1	1	-	5
21-Dist Unit Cit (DUC)	17		12	4	9	1	13	5	8	2	71
22-AF Outstanding Unit			1					1			3
23-Pres Unit Citation	4										4
24-Regular Commissions	12	4	6	11	11	4	8	12	13		82
Foreign Decorations											
25-Belgian Croix de Guerre											1
26-British OBE (Cdr)							1				1
27-British DFC (RAF)	1								1	-	2
28-Czech War Cross			1								1
29-Iranian Medal of Merit							1				1
30-Japanese Medal			1								1
31-French Croix de Guerre	1	2	8	3	3		1	4	3		24
32-Chinese Yun-Hui Order			2			1			2		5
33-Paraguay Order of Merit				1							1
34-Peru Peruana Cruz	1										1
35-Russia Alex Nevsky			1								1
36-Brazil Medal				1							1
37-Spain: Medal			1								1
Other Awards											
38-Aerial Victories	6	0	16	14	17	6	16	5	2	0	8214
Ranks Achieved											
39-Colonels	10	6	10	6	9	4	10	10	10	1	76
40-Lt. Colonels	6	1	8	9	11	4	2	5	20	2	68
41-Majors	1	2	3		5	2	3	3	5	-	24
42-Captains	1	2	3			1	3	1	1	-	12
43-1st Lieutenants	1		1	3	2		1	1		-	9
44-2nd Lieutenants		1	2	2	3	2	2		3	-	15
45-Killed in Action	2	2	2	4	3	3	5	2	2	0	25

A—Tuscaloosa B—Chicago C—Dallas D—Glendale E—Santa Maria F—Lincoln G—E St Louis H—San Diego I—Tulsa J—39D Randolph T—Total
 Note: For more details and names of those graduates who won these decorations distinctions please see the history of each civil primary school of 1939.

auxiliary landing field, known as Aux. Field No. 2, was established and put into use in August 1942, located about four miles NE of Millstadt, Illinois. Both areas were under lease.



Memorial Plaques for Class 40A—The first Class 40A Association memorial plaque was placed at Randolph AF Base, Texas, on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary Reunion there in March 1980. Entitled: "First Class in Expanded Air Corps Program at Randolph Field," this bronze plaque measures 16 x 32 inches. The plaque contain the names of all of the original nine civil primary flying schools where Class 40-A was the first to enter training. It is believed to be the only place where these nine school names all appear together in public. The plaque can be seen today in the new Instrument Flight Simulator Building at Randolph AF Base.

The Class 40-A Association also presented a bronze plaque measuring 14 x 22 inches to Brooks AF Base commemorating the presence of part of Class 40-A, the 45 members who overflowed the facilities at Kelly Field in February 1940. Entitled "Brooks Field Hangar 9," this plaque is installed in hangar No. 9 at Brooks AF Base as part of their Astronaut Edward H. White II Memorial Museum. Astronaut White was killed in the Apollo I capsule fire which also took the lives of astronauts Grissom and Chaffee.

Presented to the USAF Museum 7 May 1987, the latest memorial consisting of a seven-foot shaft of polished black granite displays a special aluminum plaque with a replica of the graduation program for Class 40-A of 23 March 1940, Kelly Field, Texas. It bears the names of all the members who graduated with Class 40-A and is dedicated to their memory. One hundred members of the class are now deceased. This memorial is located near the main entrance to the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. It bears the date of 23 March 1985, the 45th anniversary of Class 40-A.



EAST ST. LOUIS PRIMARY

Parks Air College, Inc. (Air Corps Training Detachment)

Parks Airport, East St. Louis, Ill. (Cahokia). Established 1927.

Owner/Operator: Mr. Oliver Lafayette Parks (10 Jun. 1899-28 Feb. 1985).

311th AAF Flying Training Detachment (As of Aug. 1941).

In 1939, 12 years after its establishment, when the Army was looking for commercial flying schools in which Army Flying Cadets could be taught primary flight, Parks Air College was among the first nine schools selected.

The first officers to report for duty at this station reported by virtue of Para. 26, AGO WD S.O. No. 141, 17 Jun. 1939, and were as follows (the three tactical officers):

1st Lt. Robert B. Davenport, A.C.; 2nd Lt. William M. Brown, A.C.; 2nd Lt. Robert L. Johnston, A.C. Also, Capt. Frank W. Lane, M.C.

In addition to the above-named officers, the first cadre included Capt. Leonard H. Rodieck, who reported for duty 4 July 1939. Captain Rodieck was the Central District Supervisor for A.C. Training Center.

The Morning Report for 26 June 1939 included three flying cadets and four enlisted men: The Flying Cadets were Russell M. Church, Jr., George H. Blase and Harold Garber.

The enlisted men: T/Sgt. Louis W. McKenney; S/Sgts. Henry J. Shaeffer and Arthur E. Soball; and Private Wm. S. Singer (Med. Det.).

Lieutenant Davenport assumed command 23 June 1939. Lieutenant Brown was appointed Adjutant, Engineering Officer and Operations Officer, and Summary Courts Officer, in addition to his flying duties. Lieutenant Robert L. Johnson was appointed Commandant of Cadets, Supply Officer & QM. Captain Lane was appointed Flight Surgeon.

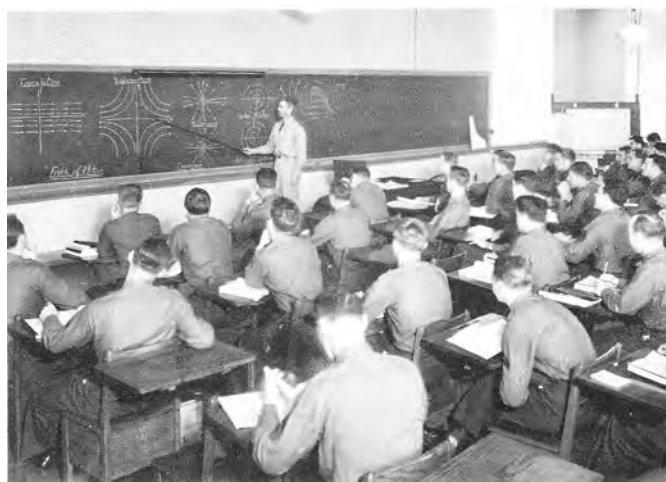
Morning Report for 1 July 1939 shows the same officer personnel, 40 Flying Cadets and six enlisted men.

List of students in Class 40-A, Section "A":

1) Coulter, Robert E. 2) Damon, Harry F., Jr. 3) Dow, James F. 4) Fandel, William H. 5) Gibbons, Robert J. 6) Johnson, Leland W. 7) Lambert, Paul M. 8) MacInnis, Ray-

Saturday morning drill in field dress with caps, Cadet Sgt. Walter leading. Parks Air College, East St. Louis, Illinois, July 1939.

(Photo from Walter, 40-A)



U.S. Army Air Corps Class 40-A in the classroom for meteorology instruction. (Author's Collection)

mond L. 9) Perry, Arthur C. 10) Springfield, Berkeley I. 11) Thyng, Harrison R. 12) Turner, Jack W. (1st Lt.).

Section "B":

1) Billings, Robinson. 2) Blase, George H. 3) Church, Russell M., Jr. 4) Gay, John E. 5) Hassemer, David W. 6) Lippincott, Robert S. 7) Ljunggren, Ernest N. 8) Mullen, John J. 9) Normand, Charles G.Y. 10) Stoddard, Edward F. 11) Walter, Carl P.

Total both sections: 23.

Plus 20 others eliminated: 17 in Primary; 3 in Basic.

School President, Oliver L. Parks; Vice President & General Manager, Walter P. Thorpe; Field Manager, Henry F. Schnittger.

Ground Course Instructors—W.V. Brown; G.H. Hamilton; C.H. Karvinen; H.C. Larrick; J.A. Marshall; N.W. Scanlon; C.J. Schwarz; J.W. Terrell; W. H. Thompson; D.H. Weber; H.J. Zimmer.

Flight Instructor—Chief Pilot, George J. Gruen.

Instructors—Frank Auering; Arthur Edwards; Kenneth Gobel; Harvey J. Glass; Robert J. Hughey; Joe B. Lambert; Fulton Moore; Robert L. Myrick; H.R. Renninger; B.B. Rice; Richard M. Ruble; Howard Trunnell; E.J. Weisbruch.

Flying Equipment: 14 Stearman PT-13s.

Above records from Walter, Class 40-A.

The Nine Little Randolphins—The Nine Little Randolphins are mentioned in an interview with Col. William M. Brown, then Director of Flying, AAF Central Instructor's School, Randolph Field, Texas, on 1 November 1944. Parks Air College was one of those Nine Little Randolphins.

Second Lieutenant William M. Brown, A.C., was one of three tactical officers assigned to Parks Air College as part of the Air Corps Detachment staff in July 1939.

This is the experience of one of the tactical officers of those early days at one of the nine original civil primary flying schools. He said, "I got to St. Louis about 26 or 27 June [1939] and the enlisted men came a few days later; I had no authorization to hire or get equipment. We found a stack of mail pouches in a corner and fortunately one of our officers could type, so we opened this stuff up and that kept us going for a few days with paperwork. On 30 June, the first class of cadets came in on top of us, and of course, we had no airplanes. Some of the first cadets we had to hold as much as two months after their elimination because there were no procurement allotments for their pay. There was still only one Train-

ing Center and Colonel Robins was the Commandant.

"All nine schools sent their graduates to Randolph for their basic, and they went from there to advanced at Kelly, and later to Brooks, too, when it became a kind of Kelly No. 2. The original nine schools were scattered all over the country from California to Chicago, and Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

"The weakest thing about the civilian primary setup was there couldn't be enough tactical officers and permanent party personnel in control of the cadets. There were only three officers [assigned to the Training Detachment at Parks Air College] to do the job for one school and everyone had more duties than he could perform. You were as busy as a one-armed monkey. We had every problem arise that you would have on a post. We never got off the job 'til 6 or 7 P.M. every night and the discipline and proper supervision of the cadets was almost impossible. The effects showed up later in combat where there was a lack of discipline. The ground school and flying instruction were both done by civilians. Some of them were military in their attitude, but some were definitely non-military, and that was not good for the cadets.

"Another problem at our school [Parks], and I think it applied to all the civilian schools, was that we could not get the flying instructors to eliminate students at first. The flying instruction was comparable to any Army school, but it was

Fourteen PT-13S lined up at Parks Airport, Parks Air College, July 1939, Class 40-A primary training. (Photo from Walter, 40-A)





U.S. Army Air Corps flying cadets at drill.

(Author's Collection)



Mass calisthenics were a regular part of the flying cadet's daily schedule.
(Author's Collection)

the hardest thing to get the instructors to realize they had to eliminate some of the cadets. Not a single student was put up for elimination by the instructors at our school [Parks] in the first class [40-A], The Army had to step in and jerk men. We explained the situation to the school staff and after the first few classes they 'played ball' pretty well!"

Dave Hassemer, 40-A, wrote: "My most memorable and happy days were getting my first flight in a PT-13 at Parks and feeling like a real flying cadet at last!"

"My solo flight," Hassemer continues, "took me until I had 12 ½ hours of dual before I was let loose. The only other two guys who took longer to solo didn't wash out in primary but they did wash out in basic at Randolph [Bretell and Rickenbaugh]. Incidentally, the solo landing was as smooth as any I ever made!"

Mr. Oliver L. Parks—Parks, as a youth, enlisted in the Army Signal Corps for training in 1917. He withdrew his enlistment upon the persuasion of his parents, but later joined the Marines with whom he served both in Santo Domingo and in France. After the war, and a year at Washington University in St. Louis, Parks began a spectacular career as a salesman, but eventually gave that up for flying. He owned a secondhand OX-5 *Standard* and had a transport license so he went into the aviation business, hopping passengers. His own flying ability was uneven and he figured that perhaps the established flying schools weren't giving their students enough flying instruction. That idea prompted him to go into the business of training students himself.

Parks Air College was opened on 1 August 1927, and the original operation had little or no resemblance to the modern institution into which it developed. Parks was not only the proprietor but he was also the school's original staff of instructors. The operation was housed in a rented hangar at Lambert Field, and the school had only two planes.

Shortly after the school opened, Parks crashed while flying some passengers. The passengers escaped injury but Parks spent the next five months in a hospital. He was still on crutches when he rented the present site of Parks Air College, near Cahokia, Illinois.

Years later, in 1938, Parks was one of the main civil school operators to be approached by Maj. Gen. Henry H. Arnold,

chief of the Air Corps, to discuss ways of meeting the Air Corps' critically short pilot program. From its humble beginnings it had grown into one of the leaders in training civilians for the aviation industry, as executives, pilots, mechanics and many other occupations required by modern aviation.

In October 1938, General Henry H. Arnold (at that time Maj. Gen. Arnold) telegraphed Mr. Parks, president of Parks Air College, Inc., to come to Washington, D.C., and to bring with him two other owners of civilian flying schools, for the purpose of discussing the feasibility of civilian flying schools undertaking the training of Army Air Corps flying cadets.

Mr. Parks then requested Mr. C.C. Moseley of the Curtiss-Wright Technical School, Glendale, California, and Mr. Theopolis Lee, of the Boeing School of Aeronautics, Oakland, California, to accompany him to Washington to meet with General Arnold.

These four men, in October 1938, laid the groundwork for the development of the present system of primary flight training of flying cadets of the Army Air Corps by civilian flying schools.

This meeting resulted in Mr. Parks and seven other flying school operators being called to a subsequent conference in April 1939, with General Arnold, at which times planes were agreed upon whereby these private flying schools were to contract with the Army Air Corps to provide primary flight instruction for Army personnel.

Although the Congress had not yet approved a bill then pending to appropriate government funds for this purpose, General Arnold, feeling the pressing need for the establishment of these primary flying schools, urged Mr. Oliver L. Parks and the seven other civilian operators who met with him to immediately make plans, build needed additional facilities and employ the necessary personnel to start the program.

Realizing the need for such training to be urgent and having faith in General Arnold, Mr. Parks and the other private flying school operators immediately readied themselves and their organizations to take on the job of teaching Army personnel to fly.

The primary flying training program was approved and financed by congressional action, the enabling act becoming law on the night of 30 June 1939.



The buildings having already been erected, the first class (40-A) having reported for duty, and all personnel being ready to begin, Parks Air College, Inc., began its training program for flying cadets on 1 July 1939. Actual flight training began 4 July 1939, with 43 students (41 cadets plus two officers) comprising the first class of 40-A.

The first contract between Parks Air College, Inc., and the Army Air Corps was entered into on 28 June 1939.

The original site of this detachment was Parks Air College, Inc., the flying cadets being housed in barracks and flying from its airfield known as Parks Airport No. 1.

Parks Air College is located about four miles south of East St. Louis, Illinois, being about two blocks east of U.S. Highway 3, about a mile east of the Mississippi River. It has an attractively landscaped campus and is located in the heart of the level river valley, the campus and flying field occupying 114 acres.

He forgot the law of gravity. Russ Church comes in low and slow and takes off top of tree, stalls in from 20 feet, knocks motor off and gallops to headquarters with form No. 1 in hand, saluting, says: "Sir, Cadet Church wishes to report a crash!"

(Photo from Walter, 40-A)



Class 40-A Air Corps Training Detachment, Parks Air College, East St. Louis, Illinois, August 1939. Top row standing: Dow, J.F.; Damon; Locke; Perry; Hassemer; Gibbons; Ljunggren; Springfield; Wildner. Second row: Lambert; Gay; Johnson, L.W.; Fandel; and Blase. Third row: Walter; Billings; Coulter; Normand; Pond; Lippincott; Brattell; Richenbach, LT. Bottom row: Turner, LT; Thyng; Yeo; Stoddard; MacInnis; Mullen; and Church.

(Photo from Stoddard, 40-A)

First Class: 40-A—The first class of 41 flying cadets and two student officers arrived for training on 1 July 1939. This was known as Class 40-A. They were provided with flying clothing. For several days after 1 July they watched the PT-13s arriving from Randolph. One PT-13 was flown in by Capt. James Stowell, who later was commandant of cadets at Randolph. (Colonel Hassemer remembers seeing Stowell then, when Hassemer was a cadet at Parks in Class 40-A.)

The training program got under way on 4 July 1939. The first flight training accident at this detachment occurred 31 July 1939. This was the only accident in which a member of the first class (40-A) was involved while in training at this station.

The accident occurred in the course of a routine training flight by Flying Cadet Russell M. Church, Jr., while landing at Parks Airport. The pilot undershot the field, the lower left wing of the PT-13 hitting a tree causing the airplane to fall to the ground. The motor and nacelle were sheared off and both left wings damaged beyond repair. The pilot was not hurt. Church was to be decorated later posthumously with the Distinguished Service Cross in the Philippines.

Training Results—Class 40-A started at Parks with 43 students (41 flying cadets and two officers training in grade), of which 17 cadets were eliminated in Primary, leaving 24 cadets and two officers to go on to Basic at Randolph Field on 24 September 1939. There, in Basic, two cadets and one officer were eliminated, while there were no losses at Kelly in



advanced training. This left 23 students to graduate (22 cadets and one officer). The overall graduation rate for Parks Primary (Class 40-A) was 53.5 percent, an elimination rate of 46.5 percent.

On 1 August 1940, the headquarters of this detachment and all flying activities were moved from the grounds of Parks Air College to another flying field known as Curtiss Field. This latter field is about one mile north of Parks Air College. All aircraft and flying operations were transferred from Parks Airport at that time.

Curtiss Field was laid out and its buildings constructed by Curtiss Flying Service, Inc. (later merged into Curtiss-Wright Corp.), in 1929, at a cost of about \$1,800,000. It was originally used by Curtiss as its operating base for an aircraft school, airplane sales, maintenance, aerial photos and charter trips. The field was also to serve as a base for Transcontinental & Western Airlines, but this plan was never realized. The entire layout covered 569 acres, and was first used as a flying field in February 1930, being operated by the Curtiss Flying Service, Inc., until 1933. The company then leased the field to Mr. Charles R. Wessell, who operated it as a commercial airport until 1 July 1940, at which time Curtiss leased the field to Parks Air College for use in the Army flying training program.

Curtiss Field has a rather unique history and played a prominent part in aeronautical history in this country up until the time it was taken over for use in the Army training

Class 40-A Air Corps Training Detachment, Parks Air College, East St. Louis, Illinois, August 1939. Cadets on flight line ready for instruction wearing parachutes.
(Photo from Stoddard)

program. The site was originally chosen by Mr. Charles A. Lindbergh, who was then in the employ of Transcontinental & Western Airlines.

The first man to land on the field was the late Mr. Smith Reynolds, president of the Reynolds Tobacco Company, makers of Camel cigarettes. Among the prominent figures in aviation history who flew from the field are James H. Doolittle, Charles A. Lindbergh, Amelia Earhart, Art Goebel, Wallace Beery, Wiley Post, Wilbur Shaw, Clarence Chamberlain, Louise Thadden, Patrick J. Hurley (at that time Secretary of War, now Brig. Gen. Hurley), W.K. Vanderbilt, Col. Horace Hickam, Jim Haizlip, and Bellante and Costes (the two Frenchmen who were the first to fly the western flight over the Atlantic Ocean).

During 1937, 1938 and 1939, the U.S. Navy used Curtiss Field for dive-bombing practice, the planes being stationed at Lambert Field, Robertson, Missouri. Ten-pound bombs were used, this practice usually being carried out on Sundays and attracting large crowds from St. Louis and the surrounding area.

It is of interest to note that James H. Doolittle (now General), while testing a racer over the field in 1932, was forced to parachute onto the field due to aircraft failure.

The countryside surrounding Curtiss Field is level. To the



Cadet Bob Lippincott.

(Photo: C. Lippincott, widow)

north and northeast, about a mile from the field, is a heavy industrial area. Large manufacturing plants of the Monsanto Chemical Company, Socony Vacuum Oil Company, and other large concerns occupy this area. The other surrounding area is comparatively free from manufacturing plants and is devoted almost exclusively to agriculture.

With regard to climate and weather conditions, visibility is the chief cause of cancellation of flights from Curtiss Field. During the average January, the visibility at Curtiss Field (airport later named Curtiss-Steinberg Field) is two miles or less during 40 percent of the daylight hours.

The three concrete runways at Curtiss-Steinberg Field (Parks Airport at this time not being used by the detachment) are 1,000 feet in length, the field affording additional runway space of about 2,500 feet for each of the said three runways.

Barracks A, B and C were of concrete and masonry construction while barracks D and E were of wooden construction. The ground school buildings were of concrete and masonry.

The mess hall was of masonry, wood and concrete, while the dispensary was located in a building of masonry and concrete.

The four hangars on Curtiss Field were of masonry, concrete and steel, and the pilot house was of wood.

The original Parks Air College facilities remained open at Parks Airport I, however, to continue its original and basic programs of providing all branches of commercial aviation with properly trained graduates.

The performance of the detachment and the part it played in the training of Army Air Corps pilots is best reflected by the figures showing the classes given training; the number of cadets that reported with each class; the number of cadets that were eliminated from further pilot training; the reasons for their elimination and the number of cadets graduating in each class. These figures are shown in Table I for Parks Air College, classes 40-A through 44-G.

Total Pilot Production by Parks—A total of 5,090 cadets had reported for duty at this detachment (Parks); of this number 1,949 were eliminated from further flight training for an elimination rate over the entire program of 41.0 percent.

Of the number eliminated, 1,733 were eliminated for flying deficiencies while the other 84 were eliminated for medical or other reasons.

Therefore, a total of 3,141 flying and aviation cadets have successfully completed their primary flying instruction at this detachment.

Training Fatalities—Over the course of this instruction, five aviation cadets met their deaths while engaged in routine training flights. All these deaths were instantaneous upon the crash of the aircraft as follows:

Date	Name of Aviation Cadet	Place
1 1 Oct. 40	George J. Roberts	2 mi. W. of Dupo, Ill.
4 Feb. 41	Edward E. Hersman	1 mi. S. of Centerville, Ill.
16 Jan. 42	Robert E. Hornbeck	4 mi. W. of Dupo, Ill.
18 Feb. 42	Edward F. Crandall	8 mi. W. of Millstadt, Ill.
1 4 Sep. 43	William F. Carney	2 mi. W. of Dupo, Ill.

The first class, 40-A, was given a course of flying instruction that covered a period of 12 weeks and included 65 hours of flying time, in addition to ground school and other instruction. This same course of instruction continued until Class 41-C on 17 September 1940. At that time the course of flight instruction was changed from 65 to 60 hours and the duration of the course from 12 to nine weeks.

On 15 December 1939, General H.H. Arnold, chief of the Air Corps (at that time a Major General) and his staff made an inspection visit. The men flew there in a B-18 aircraft. On 24 July 1942, Maj. Gen. F.B. Wilby, commanding general of the U.S. Military Academy, visited the field with his staff. Brig. Gen. Hubert R. Harmon, C.G., AAF Gulf Coast Training Center, visited this detachment in May 1942.

On 7 June 1941, the observance of Flying Cadet Week involved a detachment of approximately 200 aviation cadets from Parks Air College participating in a parade held in St. Louis, Missouri. Over 7,000 soldiers took part in that parade, most of the men being from Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, and Scott Field, Illinois. Fifty-two of the Army training planes assigned to this detachment participated in the program by flying in formation in groups of three over downtown St. Louis.

A Very Unusual Occurrence in Training—On 10 July 1941, a very unusual occurrence took place in the course of a routine training flight from Curtiss Field. Aviation Cadet Victor H. Woodrich of Three Oaks, Michigan, and a civilian instructor, David J. Mattis, were approaching Auxiliary Field No. 1 in a PT-19A Fairchild trainer, equipped with a canopy, for a practice landing. Woodrich began climbing the plane so sharply that Mattis feared it would go into a stall and used his controls to thrust its nose down sharply. Woodrich did not have his safety belt fastened and, the canopy being partially open, was thrown out of the plane, did a complete somersault in the air and landed on his back at the rear of the aircraft, facing the rear, with one leg on each side of the vertical fin. He then grabbed the horizontal stabilizer at each side of the fin and hung on while Mr. Mattis landed the plane.

They were flying at an altitude of about 500 feet at the time the cadet was thrown out of the cockpit. Woodrich suffered nothing but a torn sock. This unusual event received national publicity and Cadet Woodrich was invited to relate his experience and did so, on *We, the People*, a nationwide network radio show.

The Hon. Calvin Johnson, congressman from the 22nd District of Illinois, presented to the aviation cadet detachment a flag of the United States that had flown over the national Capitol; and this flag was raised in an Army Day ceremony, 6 April 1943. Mr. Oliver L. Parks made the presentation with the Cadet Detachment and certain of the officers were present.

First Detachment Commander, Major Davenport, later became a full colonel and was heading the Frederick Army Air Field, Advanced Flying School, Frederick, Oklahoma, in 1944. Later, as Colonel, AF-Ret., he died on 24 February 1979 (per AFPMP, 1986).

Former students decorated (partial list)—The following men who received their primary flight training at this detachment have been decorated by our government:

40A—Church, Russell M., Jr. 1st Lt. [DSC]. Stoddard, Edward F. Capt. [SS, DFC, AM].

40B—Haviland Maj. [AM]. MacTaggart Capt. [AM].

40C—Meals Capt. [DSC]. Romig Maj. [DSC].

40E—Hosh Capt. [AM]. Kess Capt. [AM]. Moore Lt. [AM].

40F—Kahr Lt. [AM] w/20LCs.

40G—Linn, J.R. Lt. [SS] w/OLC. Wilson, J.A. Maj. [SS, DFC].

Flight Training and Ground School Instructors—Parks Air College began its flying instructor program with 12 civilian pilots under the Director of Flying, Mr. George J. Gruen. They were as follows: chief pilot, Harvey H. Glass. Instructors: Fulton M. Moore, Kenneth J. Gobel, Nicholas W. Scanlon, Frank Auernig, Arthur G. Edwards, Joe B. Lambert, Robert L. Myrick, Richard M. Roble, Edward J. Weisbruch, Robert H. Grundy, Henry B. Renniger.

Mr. Gruen stayed as Director of Flying until 22 March 1943, when he resigned his position. Mr. Weisbruch took this job until December 1943 and was succeeded by Mr. David J. Mattis.

As the number of cadets per class increased so did the instructors until, in 1944, there were 62 on duty at Parks Air

College.

Mr. Fred Mueller was in charge of all maintenance mechanics. On 1 July he had seven mechanics under him. In 1944 there were 27 more; in 1943 he had 43.

Ground school instructors were under Mr. Frederick Roeber and included: Harry Larick (engines); George Hamilton (airplane structures); Kenneth Williard (meteorology); Fulton Moore (navigation).

During the course of flying training instruction, two civilian flight instructors had been killed while engaged in their duties. These were S.L. Harris (Harris Field was named in his honor at Cape Girardeau Primary), killed on 4 February 1941; and Mr. Edward O. Koch, killed 14 September 1943, both of whom were flying routine training flights.

Inactivation—On 1 February 1944, Capt. John F. Davis, then C.O., 311th, received official notice that the cadet training program for Parks Air College would cease with the graduation of Class 44-G on 12 March 1944.

Two classes were in the process of training when the inactivation order was received: Class 44-F and 44-G. With the graduation of Class 44-F on 7 February 1944, there was a surplus of civilian and military pilots, mechanics and planes.

The problem of placing the civilian personnel in employment where they would best benefit the war effort was solved by the contractor, Mr. Oliver L. Parks. The Air Transport Command (ATC), represented by Maj. Harold M. Skeels from Dallas, Texas, accepted 19 of the civilian pilots and 17 of this number joined the ATC during the second week of February.

Ten other civilian pilots were absorbed by other primary training schools. One pilot went to work for Parks Air College. Of the 32 flight instructors remaining, it was believed six or seven would join the ATC and the remainder would go to primary training centers.



Parks Air College instructor Harvey Glass with three cadets from Class 40-A, July 1939. Left to right: Dave Hassemer, Garber (never soloed), Harvey Glass and George Blase. (Photo via D. Hassemer)

Douglas B-18A, flagship for General Yount when he visited Parks Air College in August 1939. (USAAC Photo)

Likewise, the civilian mechanics who were no longer required at Parks all found employment with the major airlines, principally American Export Lines of New York and United Airlines of California. It was felt that the remainder of the mechanics would be absorbed by these two lines.

Although the news that the training program would cease was received with disappointment, the fact that all civilians found employment elsewhere without delay was met with a note of relief and satisfaction by the entire training complement.

SUMMARY

In summarizing the history of this detachment, it occurs to the writer that the most appropriate comment that could be made—a point that should be most forcefully emphasized—is that the arrangement of the combination civilian-military instructional program functioned smoothly and successfully at this detachment.

The great majority of the men who had been assigned to this detachment for flight training had no previous pilot experience and almost none had any prior contact with aircraft or aeronautics; yet in the short space of time in which they were stationed there, the majority of those boys progressed most rapidly.

Not only does this speak well for the mentality and adaptability of the American boy, but it also substantiates and serves to ratify the judgment of the Chief of the Army Air Forces (General Arnold) in deciding to use civilian schools and civilian instructors as the first step in converting the raw recruit into a combat pilot.

Between 1940-1944, Oliver L. Parks, the civilian contractor and president of Parks Air College, ran a total of five civil primary schools. These schools entered a total of 22,848 student pilot trainees and graduated 15,005 from primary train-

ing, including 4,000 British RAF cadets; also several hundred French and Dutch Air Force cadets, along with thousands of aircraft mechanics. For this contribution, he was honored by both Great Britain and the United States. Later, in 1984, he was elected to the Illinois Aviation Honor Roll for that year.

A total of 3,141 flying/aviation cadets and student officers, trained under Army supervision, were graduated from Parks Air College primary into basic and advanced between July 1939 and March 1944, when the combat pilot training program at that school was discontinued.

St. Louis University—In 1977, Parks Air College, now known as Parks College of St. Louis University at Cahokia, Illinois, was deeded to the university by Mr. Oliver L. Parks.

Branch Schools—During World War II, Mr. Parks, starting out with two of the original nine contract pilot schools, opened three others at the following locations: Missouri Institute of Aeronautics, Sikeston, Mo.; Mississippi Institute of Aero, Jackson, Miss.; Cape Institute of Aeronautics, Cape Girardeau, Mo.

This does not include the moving of his school contract operations from Parks Airport I to Curtiss Field, Illinois, in August 1940.

CLASS 40-A PROFILES

Raymond L. MacInnis—The following information on Ray MacInnis is furnished by Carl P. Walter, 40-A classmate who was at Parks Air College at the same time that Ray was. Carl says: 'Ray MacInnis was at Parks with me in 1939. He was my roommate there and my good buddy. I probably knew him better than anyone.

"Mac was a Grade A worrywart all right. He held a private pilot's license before enlisting so the flying didn't worry him.



However, he had no college education, which gave him a little inferiority complex, and led him to sweat out the academics to an excessive degree.

"He was a naturally diffident and quiet guy—gentle, never your macho fighter pilot prototype. He was my roommate at Randolph, too, I think. We were both very serious students and not much on the social bit . . . no dates. Neither of us had ever learned to dance so we finally got up enough courage between us to both go down and enroll in a ballroom dancing class in San Antonio. We managed to 'graduate' but not summa cum anything.

"Mac was happy as a clam to get posted to fighters and on to the Philippines. I envied him at the time. Such is fate!" (End of statement: 25 September 1986.)

[Editor's note: Lt. Ray MacInnis died in Japan in a POW camp in December 1942, after having been captured in the Philippines early in WWII.]

Colonel George H. Blase—"I was 26 years old and working in a small rural county of Missouri as a social service representative when I applied for the flying cadet training program. I had been interested in flying since I was given an opportunity in 1927 to fly a small open-cockpit plane owned by an older friend with whom I worked then at a neighborhood drug-store.

"Since I was a college graduate with two degrees and in good physical condition, as well as unmarried and under 27 years old, I was accepted for training. In 1938 when I applied for training, I was not concerned that the United States would be at war within two years. I was mostly intetested in learning how to fly and securing a commission in the Army Air Corps.

"I was sworn in as an aviation cadet in June 1939 in St. Louis, my hometown, and assigned to Parks Air College at Cahokia, Illinois, which is located just across the Mississippi River from St. Louis. My instructor at Parks was younger than I and this seemed to cause some problems for him as he thought I was not as trainable as someone younger.

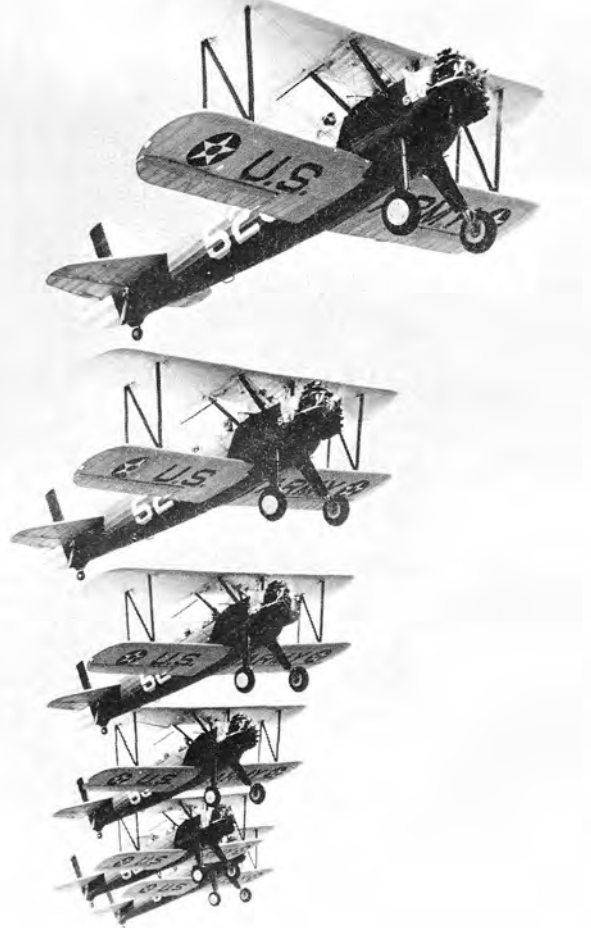
"Parks Air College was one of the nine original civil contract flying schools. The owner, Mr. Oliver L. Parks, was a pioneer in all facets of aviation training, and after World War II he gave Parks Air College to St. Louis University where it is now an important division of that private Catholic university. I thoroughly enjoyed my assignment to Parks. Some of my best friendships were made there. Some of these close friends were killed during the early stages of the war and my thoughts of them bring back some happy memories.

"Being close to St. Louis, my home, gave my folks an opportunity to learn more about primary flying training, since they had had very little exposure to flying, military or civilian.

"My decision to apply for and being accepted for flying cadet training turned out to be one of the best decisions of my life. Being a member of the class of 40-A and my surviving the training and the war itself, gave me and my family a fine life and more fulfilling than it would have been under other circumstances.

'You only pass this way once and I am glad I lived to pass this way.' (End of statement: 6 December 1986.)

Lt. Col. William H. Fandel—"I was a 1938 graduate in mechanical engineering from Penn State and a Reserve 2nd Lt., Army Corps of Engineers. I had two weeks of active duty at



Six PT-13As flying in echelon over Randolph Field, Texas, 1938.
(USAAC Photo via Nendell, 40-A)

Fort Devins, Mass., in August 1938. Good jobs were hard to find at that time. I took temporary work with a building and repair contractor in Boston, Mass., as a general handyman and carpenter. A friend in the Air National Guard convinced me to try for entry in the Army Air Corps Flying School. I took a physical exam in January of 1939 by a flight surgeon of the Massachusetts National Guard and passed. I was ordered to report to Parks Air College at East St. Louis, Ill., for primary training in July 1939." (End of statement: 24 November 1986.)

Major General Robert J. Gibbons—"I was a sophomore [1937] at Alabama in a premed program when a great big—impressive to me—B-18 showed up at the dirt field in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Three or four Army recruiters, first and second lieutenants, showed up in full array—blouses, belts, ribbons, shiny boots. Since I was in the ROTC along with other prospects, they hit on us first. Among other inducements, \$225 a month and learning to fly was a mighty incentive to the 77 of us who took the medical. Three of us passed. They were Jim Tipton, a tackle on the football team and a soon-to-be engineering graduate; he was taken first since he would have graduated before either of us. He became a USAF major general. Don Bryant was next: 1938 end; and I don't know what happened to him. When I graduated in January 1939, I was enlisted as a flying cadet in May 1939- So I really had no motivation other than chance; if that great big impressive B-18 with those spit-and-polish officers had not shown up, who knows, I might have become a world-famous surgeon instead of a tired, old, retired major general!"

Colonel David W. Hassemer—"Jim Hail and I were second lieutenants on active duty (Thomason Act) at Fort Crockett, Galveston, Texas, in March 1939, when we decided to apply for training together. We took the tests at Randolph Field, met the board. Hail selected Santa Maria and I asked for Parks and got it. But we really had had no intention of applying prior to that time. We were each one out of 12 or 13 applicants who made the exam (because of our good eyes and hearts)." [Note: Jim Hail, after graduation and commissioning as Second Lieutenant, Air Corps Reserve, died in a two B-18 collision over Long Island on 17 June 1940, along with Jim Dow and Paul Lambert who attended Parks Air College with Hassemer.]

Colonel Carl P. Walter—"How did I get to be an Army Air Corps cadet? Well, in 1937, the 'old Air Corps' sent a cadet recruiting and medical examining team to the University of Wisconsin where I was laboring on my engineering degree. Most of the school jocks plus the whole ROTC battalion, including me, took their tests for the hell of it. To mass mortification, almost everyone flunked the physical, including me. Most flunked on eyes. I was different. I flunked on a busted nose, souvenir of freshman boxing. Might interfere with my O₂ intake at a high (12,000 feet) altitude, they said.

"So I forgot it, though I did get my nose reamed out, graduated and became an impoverished junior design engineer, commuting three hours a day in the rat race to New York City, poring all day over lens-lighting layouts for industrial plants, schools, stores and hospitals, with lots of unpaid mandatory overtime, etc.

"By 1939, the winds of war were blowing across the Atlantic. President Roosevelt proclaimed his goal of 25,000 aircraft, and the pilots to fly 'em. The hard-pressed Air Corps dug through its old records, picked up all the old rejects, and

sent each of us a personal letter asking if we would like a free second physical. Free? I needed one anyway, so sure. This time I passed (the Army doc seemed to know I would) and they immediately offered to enlist me as a flying cadet, with \$75 per month, free medical, free food, clothing and tent, all the airplanes I could handle and, if I survived for 30 years, a fat pension (hah!).

"I thought the deal over long and carefully for about 30 milliseconds, then went back to my office and told my bosses to take this job and shove it, then went down to Newark to enlist.

"The fat, friendly sergeant swore me in, gave me travel orders and a voucher for train fare to East St. Louis, looked at me, shook his head sadly and sent me off with one piece of memorable advice: 'Son, in the Army keep your mouth shut, your bowels open, and never volunteer.'

"I squandered the travel fare, heeled around until the day before I had to report, drove nonstop from New Jersey to St. Louis, stopped for an Army 'skin' haircut, then drove into the newly opened Parks Air College Air Corps compound.

"A supply sergeant took my papers, shoved a set of fatigues and a pair of boots at me, and pointed me toward the contract barbershop.

"But, Sarge, I just got one this morning. . . .

"Mister, I said go get a haircut. NOW! ON THE DOUBLE!"

"I had started my new career." (End of statement: 27 September 1986.)

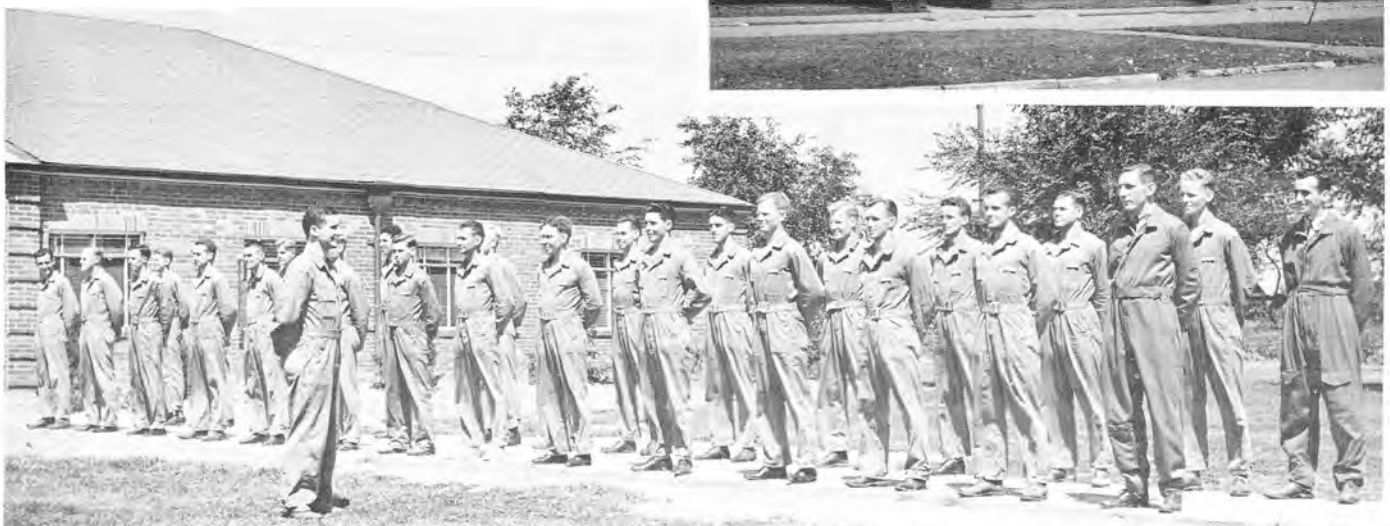
Second Lieutenant James Frederick Dow—Upon graduation from the University of Maine in 1938, with a degree in mechanical engineering and a commission (ROTC) as a 2nd Lieutenant, Infantry Reserve, he served a year at Ft. Williams, Portland, Maine, under the Thomason Act, receiving the

Dow Hall about 1970, the chapel/library at the South Campus of the University of Maine-Orono was designated "James F. Dow Hall" on what was formerly Dow Air Force Base, Bangor, Maine.

(Photo from Mrs. David H. Cotton, sister of Lt. Dow)

Parks Air College, 1939. Class 40-A in formation "at rest" during a training session. Flying Cadet James F. Dow in charge in front. Dow lost his life in a collision and crash of two B-18As in formation near Mitchel Field, N.Y., on June 17, 1940, along with Paul Lambert also here at Parks. Dow AFB Base, Maine, was named for the future Lt. J.F. Dow. The two lieutenants who were taking training in grade are at the far right in slightly darker coveralls, 1st Lt. Jack Turner and 2nd Lt. Rickenbaugh (the latter washed out in basic).

(Photo from Hassemer Collection, 40-A)



grade of 1st Lt., Inf. Res., First Corps Area.

Later he took the physical exam and applied for enlistment in the Air Corps as a flying cadet. He was accepted and in June 1939 he went to Parks Air College in East St. Louis, Ill., for primary training as a member of Class 40-A. Three months later he moved on to Randolph Field, Texas, for basic flight training. By January 1940, he had been sent on to Kelly Field, Texas, for his advanced flight training where he graduated 23 March 1940 as a pilot and commissioned Second Lieutenant, Air Corps Reserve. He spent April on field maneuvers with the Third Army in Georgia. In May he was assigned to Mitchel Field, where he joined the 5th Bomb. Squadron, 9th Bomb. Group (M). He was being indoctrinated in B-18A medium bombers when he met his death.

Class 40-A and Dow Field—In 1940, Bangor Airport, Maine, was designated as primary site in Maine for Aerial Defense of the Northeast Coast. Construction began on facilities for the 43rd Bomb. Group (H) which arrived in April 1941. In January 1942, the base was named Dow Field in honor of Second Lieutenant James Frederick Dow of Houlton, Maine, who was killed while on a training flight in a formation of four B-18As near Long Island, near Mitchel Field, New York. That flight took place on 17 June 1940, and Lt. Dow, a former flying cadet at Parks Air College (July-Sept. 1939), and three other 40-A classmates were among the 11 military persons killed when two B-18A bombers collided in midair, causing them to crash separately only moments later.

By the end of World War II, over 100,000 combat aircrew members and their aircraft had passed through Dow Field on their way to and from Europe as an aerial port.

Dow Field later became Dow Air Force Base and alternately was under the control of the Strategic Air Command and Tactical Air Command for a number of years.

Dow AF Base was inactivated officially in July 1968 due to cutbacks in defense spending. Dow AFB is now Bangor International Airport.

After Dow was inactivated, the University of Maine bought some of this large installation and expanded the university, calling it the South Campus of the University of Maine-Orono. The trustees of the university decided to perpetuate the name and memory of Lt. James F. Dow by designating the most impressive and important building on their South Campus—the library/chapel—as the "Lieutenant James F. Dow Hall" (1978).

NOTABLE 40-A GRADUATES

1st Lt. Russell M. Church, Jr.—Won the DSC posthumously at Vigan, Philippines, when he was shot down while attacking a Japanese airdrome on 16 December 1941 in his P-40. His flight leader was 1st Lt. "Buzz" Wagner, and they were protected above the airdrome by another 40-A classmate, 1st Lt. Allison W. Strauss, who witnessed both attacks by Wagner and Church in that order that day. The Japanese were so impressed with Church's bravery that they gave him a funeral with full military honors.

Maj. Gen. Robert J. Gibbons—Two-star General as of 1964. Brig. Gen. Harrison R. Thyng—One-star General as of 1963. General Thyng became an ace in 1943 by his first five aerial

victories in the North African Theater. He flew *Spitfires*, P-40s, when a major, shooting down planes of Germany, Italy and France. Shot down eight enemy planes in ETO/N. Africa; later in Pacific, flying P-47s, shot down a Jap Zero. Several years later, in Korean conflict, flying F-86s he shot down seven more planes (Russian MiGs). He was both a prop and jet ace! He was decorated with three Silver Stars, three Legions of Merit, four DFCs, Air Medal with 34 Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart. He flew in Vietnam also as a combat advisor for the USAF.

Decorations won by graduates of East St. Louis Primary: Distinguished Service Medal (Army)—One: Gibbons.

Silver Star Medal—Six: Blase, Normand, Stoddard, Thyng (3).

Legion of Merit—10: Gibbons (2); Johnson, L.W. (2); Ljunggren; Thyng (3); Walter (2).

Distinguished Flying Cross—16: Blase (2); Fandel (2); Gibbons; Hassemer; Ljunggren (2); Normand (2); Stoddard; Thyng (4); Walter.

Soldier's Medal—Two: Church; Normand.

Bronze Star Medal—Four: Blase; Gibbons; Stoddard; Walter.

Air Medals—84: Blase (6); Fandel (3); Johnson, L.W. (2); Lippincott (2); Ljunggren (15); Normand (7); Stoddard (10); Thyng (35); Walter (3); Mullen.

Army Commendation Medal—Two: Mullen; Stoddard.

AF Commendation Medal—Four: Gibbons; Hassemer; Johnson, L.W.; Thyng.

Purple Heart—Seven: Church, KIA; Coulter, KIA; Gay, KIA; Lippincott, KIA; Normand (wounded); Springfield, KIA; Thyng (wounded).

Distinguished Unit Citation—13: Gay; Gibbons; Johnson, L.W.; Normand (2); Stoddard; Thyng (4).

Aerial Victories—16: Thyng (16).

Graduates Killed in Action (KIA)—Five: Church, '41; Coulter, '42; Gay, '45; Lippincott, '43; Springfield, '44.

Prisoners of War—Two: MacInnis, '42 (d. Japan); Normand, '44.

Korean Service—One: Thyng, 114 combat missions, F-86, plus seven MiGs shot down; now jet ace.

Vietnam Service—One: Thyng, called to AD as military advisor on air tactics; plus three combat missions.

Decorations Awarded by the French Government, 1945—For distinguished flying in combat, in defence of the Allied Cause during World War II, the French Air Ministry awarded Colonel Harrison R. Thyng, 0-376197, United States Army Air Forces, the *Croix de Guerre*. (Per Col. Delwin Avery, 40-A, USAF.)



H.R. Thyng (C.P. Walter, 40-A)

Continued

A collage showing all the activities of U.S. Army Air Corps basic training at Randolph Field, Texas, before WWII. (Author's Collection)

