

THE AVENGER

"We live in the wind and sand . . . and our eyes are on the stars"

VOL. 1

AVENGER FIELD, SWEETWATER, TEXAS, MAY 11, 1943

NO. 1

GENERALS VISIT AVENGER

Jacqueline Cochran Established Program

CONVINCED AIR HEADS THAT WOMEN CAN FLY

There may be some of you who do not fully realize just how much we Women Trainee Pilots owe to Miss Jacqueline Cochran. In that case, here is the story of how the 318th and 319th Army Air Forces Flying Training Divisions came about.

For years we women have been told by men that we couldn't fly. We had been kicked out of the Civilian Pilot Training programs because Congress thought we weren't worth our salt and removed our sex from appropriations. For years Jacqueline Cochran, and women like her, have been setting up records to prove that we can.

We had gone through the Ferry Command rumors and the disappointment of hearing that we must have 500 hours and heavy horsepower ratings to enter Nancy Harkness Love's unit. And our 35, 80, 100, and 125 hours dwindled and looked smaller.

At the beginning of the war, Miss Cochran, foreseeing the coming desperate need for pilots, set about trying to convince the tradition-bound Army Air Forces heads that they could use women pilots. She went to the Civil Aeronautics Authority and persuaded them to make a survey of the number of certificated women pilots in the country. That and other evidences of women's ability to fly, she presented to the AAF.

The AAF, busy with mobilizing a giant, winged, male army, failed to see the feasibility of such an idea.

Undaunted, Miss Cochran turned to the English Air Transport Auxiliary, which was using women for ferry work not only in the lighter training ship field but in the heavy fighter class. She got together a group of American women pilots and persuaded the English government to accept them for the ATA.

With the success of the English ATA, the United States military

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Dorothy Young, the first woman to graduate from military flying receives wings from Miss Cochran at Houston, Texas.

Field Has First All - Women Military Flying School in World

By Mary A. Bowles

As the only school in the world completely devoted to the training of women pilots in advanced military flying, the 318th A. A. F. F. T. D. at Avenger Field is under constant surveillance of the high officials of the U. S. Army Air Forces. Recently Major General Barton K. Yount, head of the Flying Training Command, and Major General Ralph P. Cousins, commanding the West Coast Training Center visited the field.

General Yount expressed as being well pleased with the program and its progress.

After this paper goes to press this field will probably be honored with a visit from General H. H. Arnold, commander of the United States Army Air Forces, and General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the United States Army.

With Avenger Field and the 318th being such a focal point of interest it might be well to speak of the history and traditions of the field and the growth of the program.

In June, 1942, this field was inaugurated as a school for training pilots for the British Empire. In August of the same year the U. S. Army Air Corps designated this field as a primary school for our own Air Corps cadets. Six classes of cadets were graduated and two more groups were approaching completion of their courses when in February, 1943, the first class of women pilot trainees arrived. For six weeks we of that class, known as 43-W-4, shared the canteen, passing glances and occasionally a few words with boys who are now at other bases well on their way to becoming fine combat pilots. It wasn't much in the way of personal contact for we were both working too hard. We didn't get to know each other well but we feel they are a part of our history. We are proud of them and will always be wishing them blue skies, fast ships and many tomorrows.

In April of 1943 it was decided by the Gulf Coast Training Center (Continued Col. 1, Page 5)

DOT PT-19-A

(A German spy renders to the Gestapo a report on the PT-19-A as observed at Avenger Field.—By Mary Hart, W/P 43-W5.)

Dot Pt-19-A, ja, ja,
I close it half observed,
Und vot I do, Heil Hitler, see
Hass got me quite unnerfed.

It taxies nefer straight ahead;
Der vays of it are veerable
Becoss der tailwheel dot it hass
Is ver seldom steerable.

Dey roll down wind as though ge-
chased
By der own defil's brodder.
Dey seem to manage to go ofer,
Round, und through each odder.

Dey take off opp into der schy
In efery pose conceivable.
Der way der nose ge-points to
Gott
Is simply onbeleifable.

Der manner to onspin dot schip
Iss bang der stick ge-howling
Und nearly choin der power plant
Out onderneath her cowlng.

Two flops it has fitch hang behing
On each wing down so fenny,
Und if iss taxied in dot way
Instructor lose some money.

Der altimeter keeps der height
A secret military,
Tachometer at any speed
Duss not a hairsbreadth vary.

In stalls it shimmys and it shakes
Like someone mit der chills,
Und ven recovers from der same
Its pilot near outspills.

In landing all its lofely leaps
Der rabbit can't outdo.
Mein freunds, it iss an eagle
crossed
Opp mit a kangaroo.

Ja wohl, der plague of Herrenvolk
Diss schip iss efery vay
So vell to train der maidchens, ja,
Dot PT-19-A!

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Vol. 1

No. 1

Editorial

We are the 318th. We belong to the first all women flying field in America. And we are so proud that our noses reach a higher pitch than any BT prop.

"Avenger Field," our field is called, and aptly named. Drawn together because we are of the clan of "those who love the vastness of the sky," we are out to *avenge*—avenge with sweat, hard work, blue shin bones, sore backs, and service—our men who have made last landings in Africa, Bataan, Pearl Harbor, Kiska.

Listen!

Listen, you little men

who move in stealth and strike without warning.

Listen to the ominous murmur of wheels, millions of wheels, turning and turning in an endless chant,

"Avenge! Avenge!"

Little jeep wheels, giant tank cogs, wheels on a runway, on desert sands, on frozen tundra,

The beating mechanism of a nation fighting.

Hear!

And pipe your thin chants.

Listen to the sibilant flow of blood—blood that is staining the soils of a dozen lands around the globe,

blood that has boiled from December to December—and will never cease to seeth until you are drowned in the crimson flood that bought our freedom.

Hear!

And hiss politely to your Mikado.

For we have a memory—a memory etched in the smoke of burning planes and held in the dead upturned palms of men lying at Pearl Harbor.

That's us. That's the 318th.

The other day we stood at attention and saw our flag go by. What can I write of that experience that has not been written in the hieroglyphics of tears on the war stained cheeks of men who watched it displaced at Wake, in the Philippines, at Guam.

It is our flag. And we—the Avengers—will bear it well.

We thank General Arnold, Jacqueline Cochran, the personnel of Avenger Field, and all those who made this privilege possible.

Solid Landing

(Excerpt from the Wall Street Journal.)

A certain flying instructor in Kansas City has to put up with a good deal of kidding these days as the result of a parachute jump.

Recently he and one of his students were up in a training ship. The student, well advanced in his flying, was doing good work and the instructor, in the rear cockpit, dropped off to sleep.

Upon completion of the flying period, the student returned to the field, landed without disturbing the instructor, rolled the ship into the hangar, and walked off, leaving the instructor sleeping.

Some time later, he awoke and was startled to find no student in the front cockpit. The silence told him the motor wasn't running. In his sleepy state, he thought the motor had quit and the student had bailed out. So he rolled hastily over the side of the plane,

pulled the rip cord on his parachute, landed on the concrete floor of the hangar and broke his collar bone.

Insignia

The 318th has, as yet no official insignia. The insignia "Fifinella" of the 319th will not be transferred to the 318th if and when any of the girls of that detachment come to Avenger. If you have any suggestions please submit them designed in three dominant colors, to A. J. May of A-7, Art Editor of The Avenger. It is hoped that Major McConnell can be prevailed upon to allow us to have the insignia chosen painted on the fuselages of the planes of the 318th so that wherever we go on cross country they will be recognized as Avenger Field planes just as combat squadron ships are identified by their markings.



The Proper Approach to an Army Check Ride . . . or Why Did I Ever Leave the Farm

By Gene Fager

(Gene Fager was a member of Class 43-W-4. A few weeks ago she was eliminated from the school but not from the hearts and minds of all who knew her. In one of her letters back she gave this student's eye view of a check ride. —The Ed.)

Stroll out to the plane about fifty minutes late. This will keep the lieutenant waiting about twenty minutes, as they never show up until the period is at least half over. It isn't a good idea to be too prompt or you might give the impression that you are interested in your work and consider the flight check important. After all, an army check is really a waste of time since you are getting neither instruction nor practice. So why strain a garter over it? A proper sense of values always saves wear and tear, and the army as an efficient organization will appreciate this.

Walk up briskly and tap the executioner firmly on the shoulder. As he turns around say, "Now see here Buddy, before we go up, there are a few things I want you to get straight. In the first place I've probably forgotten more than you'll ever know, but I'll make allowances for that. Furthermore, if I do anything you don't like, just remember that you are in the army and aren't entirely responsible for all your peculiar ideas and beliefs. I understand that and

will try to disregard them as much as possible. And another thing, I want absolute quiet when I'm flying. You may tell me briefly what you'd like to have me do before I take off, and then I don't expect to hear another word out of you."

By this time if he hasn't had a stroke he will be on the verge of one, so before he can swing on you, climb into the ship in a business like manner putting your left knee thru the side of the fuselage. Look at your watch and call out pleasantly, "Lieutenant, since you've wasted so much time on the preliminaries, I'll just dispense with the cockpit procedure—take my word for it, I know it thoroughly. Ready! . . . Contact!"

After he has cranked for about ten minutes turn on the switch. Keep calm don't hurry or get excited. . . . Remember, it's probably the first exercise he's had in weeks, and you know the importance of keeping fit. If he objects to this, call it to his attention and refer him to Lieutenant O'Neil for corroboration. As the engine catches, blast the throttle wide open. Unless he's on his toes, you have a good chance of blowing him clear under the wing. This adds a humorous touch and will start the flight out with everyone in a happy frame of mind. (The line-men will also get a big bang out of it.)

Wait until he has picked him.
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"Bucky" Buckaroo—Alina, Faith Buckner.



Heckle



Rosa Lee



Parachutes on Parade—Or how to get pilot "benda."



Didi.



GI "five by five" modeled by Anne Howell.



"Calamity Jane" Thompson of the Double Heart Ranch.



New additions to the 318th are Pat Holmes and Jean Lendis from the Houston Class. Jean is Squadron Commander.



Maybe she's wishing for a check ride. Anyway Janet Zuchowski pauses at Avenger Field's traditional wishing well.



Treb



A real, live Fifinella—Inez Woodward.



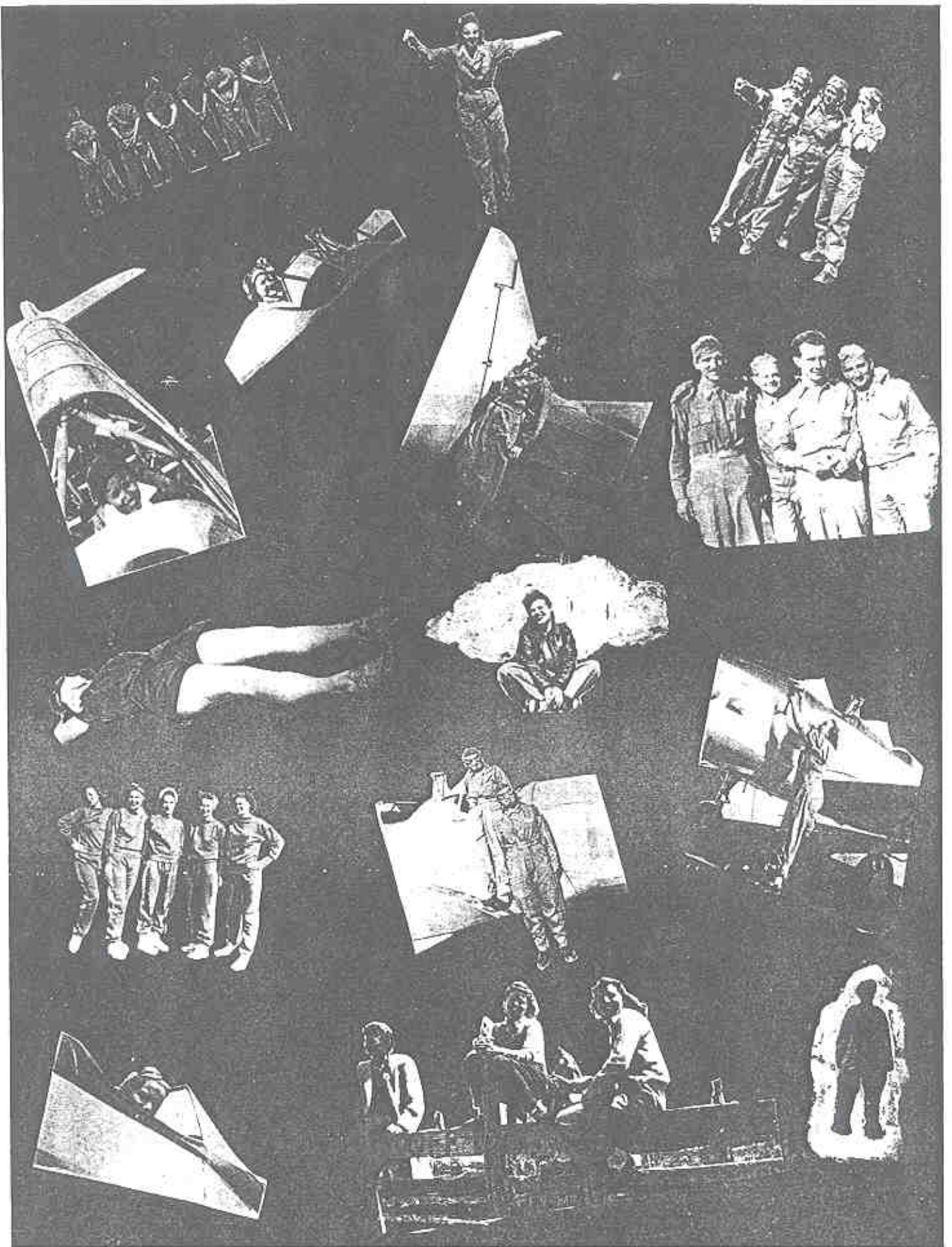
Dit Dah—decided to Vi Thurn and Madge Rutherford.



Willis and Colby



Chandelles—Cookie shows how they go. Left to right, Ellington, Cookie and Jewell.



JACQUELINE COCHRAN

(Continued from Page 1)

aviation leaders began to come to attention!

"What's this," they questioned, "women flying Spitfires?"

With that the Love unit of the Ferry Command was formed. But that left out entirely our great group of potential pilot material with fewer hours. Miss Cochran realized that and the fact that we needed more training. Consequently she came back from England to point out the little matter to General Arnold.

Last October, after arguing and fighting engulfing army red tape, she gained consent to start an experimental school at Houston, Texas. That was the beginning of the 319th AAFSTD which graduated at Houston a few weeks ago. To the mobilization of the 318th AAFSTD at Sweetwater you yourselves were witness.

If it hadn't been for Jacqueline Cochran we would all have been at home twiddling our thumbs and wondering how it feels to fly army ships.

THE PROPER APPROACH TO AN ARMY CHECK RIDE

(Continued from Page 2)

self up and climbed into the rear cockpit and adjusted his safety belt. Then cut the switch, smile sweetly, and say, "Oh, I need another cushion. Will you get me that one in the ready room by the flight board?"

Just remember that transportation is difficult now, and if you haven't a car, be sure you've made your train reservation.

GENERAL'S VISIT

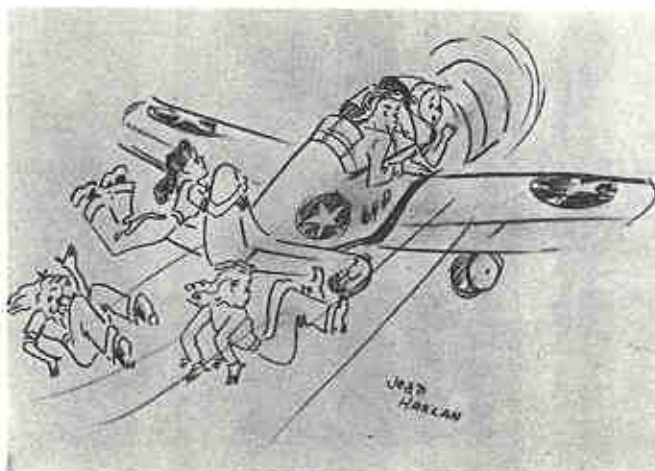
(Continued from Page 1)

and the Flying Training Command to transfer the 43-W-4 class from the original experimental Houston school to Avenger Field to be joined with the 43-W-4 class here; thus the eventual transfer of all women pilot training to this field was to be expedited.

I don't think any of us who were on the flight line the day the girls flew in from Houston will ever forget the wonder and pride we felt at seeing those ships come out of the southwest, their splendid wings bearing true to Avenger Field. Then, we did not know personally the girls who flew them yet they were a part of us and it seemed right that they should join us so. They were symbolic of all of us known and unknown that are, and will be fated to fly across the vast skies of this great continent during these war years, serving our country in the way of her need and our desire.

To others who have joined us, classes 43-W-5 and 43-W-6 you belong to Avenger now, to the 318th and its fast growing traditions of honor and duty above self. We are not the first to send our wings charging the cloud heights

Basic Pre-flight



"And now we rev it up to 1800."

Cockpit Cackle

By Virginia Hill

Social Note:

A recent visitor to bay C-2 was a lieutenant who surprised his girlies Tuesday evening by dropping in to inspect the lighting facilities (he said). The occasion was strictly informal.

Among those present were Miss Patricia Holmes who carried out the patriotic theme by wearing red and white checked seersucker pajamas. Miss Jean Landis wore a varied assortment of hardware in her hair. Mrs. Patricia Schmitt was her own charming self, giving the scene a domestic touch ironing her clothes on top of the lockers. Mrs. Marthas Bevins and Miss Pat Hanley were attired in stunning negligees sans shoes and socks. Miss Marge Moore was unattired and retired hastily to Bay C-1.

P. S. Six bays have reported broken light bulbs since news of the Lieutenant's social call was disclosed.

Church notes:

Heard around town: Miss Forster refusing an invitation to the Roof Garden of the Blue Bonnet Hotel.

Seen last weekend at Lake Inn: CENSORED, CENSORED, CENSORED.

Recipe note: Teta Corbett sug-

gests a well soaked wash rag applied forcefully in the OD's face upon bed inspection, mixed with a dash of cat calls, will make a lovely cake with demerit icing. Particular care must be taken not to apply the wash rag if the OD should turn out to be, not a bay mate, but Miss Forster.

Household notes: Any suggestions on the care and feeding of BT's will be gratefully accepted by class 43W4.

We hear Ann Shields is becoming a connoisseur of demerits.

Applications for enlistment in the Foreign Legion are now being accepted from members of the 118th. After the intensive drill practice in the dust of West Texas getting ready for visiting notables, the Legion feels that trainees will be well adapted to service in the shifting sands of the Sahara.

I THINK THAT I SHALL NEVER SEE—
Marty Bevins being enthusiastic.
A movie produced in the past year showing in Sweetwater. Ginger Disbrow on time for formation.
Someone here not from Lock Haven or California.
Genevieve Brown running away from a man.
Teta Corbett being rude.
Jane Bomgardner getting up before seven.
The wind not blowing.
Pete Madison (The Gem of Crystal City) awake in class.
A nose not unburned.
Jane Champlin not shooting the hooey.
An unpopular girl with a car.
L'Hommedieu not hitting a home run in PT.
Me soloing a BT.
A man.

318th Who's Who



Irene Gregory

Uncle Sam has some eager beavers among his flying nieces at Avenger Field. One of them is Irene Gregory, Class 43-W-5, who graduated from the University of Delaware on June 8, 1942, got her instructor's rating the 9th and started instructing the 10th at Point Breeze Airport, Wilmington, Delaware.

"Greg's" instructing at Point Breeze was cut short by the army moving in. She went to Aroostook, Maine, then and the same thing happened. From there she went to Las Vegas, Nevada, where she taught flying in PT's until she came to Avenger with 750 hours in her log book.

Here she was the first student in 43-W-5 to solo. She had a good idea of an instructor's view point of a student's first solo, having

(Continued Col. 1, Page 6)



Maj. Y. C. Louie and Hazel Lee

WHO'S WHO

(Continued from Page 5)

gone through that agonized period herself when her first solo student leveled off too high and then, overcorrecting, dived into the ground.

A niece of foreign lineage is Hazel "Ah Ying" Lee, whom the students vote to be one of the best liked pilots on Avenger Field.

Born in Portland, Ore., Hazel learned to fly there in 1932. There she met Clifford Louie, who was also learning to fly. In 1933 they went back to China at the same time, along with 11 other Chinese boys and girls to join the Chinese Air Force. Out of that group, the girls were not accepted and all but four of the boys washed out. Louie didn't wash out but continued training.

Hazel, meanwhile, joined the Chinese Commission on Aeronautical Affairs.

When the war started, Louie went into combat and was later decorated for distinguished service. Hazel came back to America to work for the Universal Trading Corporation Agency for the Chinese Government in New York City.

The two met again when the young major was wounded and, upon recuperation, sent to the United States to school.

Three weeks ago Major Louie visited Avenger Field. Shortly he will return to China while Hazel remains here flying for the United States.

After the war . . . There will lie the end of the romance which, disrupted by war, has covered half the world.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

We have been given permission to say just what we please in THE AVENGER, be it critical or be it in praise. So if you have any gripes to make or any questions to ask bring them around to THE AVENGER office and we'll print them.

Officials of the field will endeavor to answer all questions. They also reserve the right to answer any criticisms you may make.



Change of Instructors

The Guy in the Back Seat

By Faith Buchner

That guy sitting in the back seat of your plane may well be a banker in flying clothing. Or maybe he was a horse thief in civilian life, or a shoe salesman perhaps. Some investigation around Avenger, however, has disclosed that the instructors led a respectable life.

Mr. Charles Sproule, our Group Commander—a man who has the gift of making the world seem brighter and who is never too busy to stop and answer questions—has had flying as a career for practically all his life after finishing school. He started flying in 1928. When CPT began in 1940, he owned and operated a flying school in Imperial, Calif. Later he joined Plosser-Prince in Imperial and transferred with them to the new field here in 1942.

Our Squadron Commander, Mr. Eulus Parker, knows how to instruct and deal with people. He has a BS and masters degree in Education. Engaged in school work for 18 years, he started flying in 1933 and has operated fly-

ing schools for the past seven years, leading a double career.

In 1940 the State Department of Education sent him to take over the vocational training in the North Sweetwater high school. He started the Parker Flying Service and when Plosser-Prince moved in, became the First Flight Commander for the British program. He was then made commander for the cadets and added another first to his list by becoming the Squadron Commander for the first group of women pilots at the field.

Mr. Paul Hill, Mr. William R. Deppe and Mr. Robert M. Snyder might well be called "The Three Musketeers." They were all enrolled at the University of Wisconsin with Mr. Hill studying dairying; Mr. Deppe, engineering, and Mr. Snyder, law.

Flying since 1935, Mr. Hill had more flying time than the others. In 1940, however, they got serious about flying and all received their instructor ratings and started CPT flying. They left Madison, Wisconsin, in a rattle-trap Ford. Arriving in Sweetwater, they found Avenger Field with no hangars and with shacks instead of barracks for the boys. They went to work with the first class of cadets and were advanced to check pilot positions, which type of work they have been doing ever since.

So respect that guy behind you. He may be famous for all you know. Respect him anyway. He's a good pilot, the greatest honor that can come to any man. And he's a king, undisguised, in any case, for getting anything through your dumb head.

EPITAPH

She flew BT's.
Died of cockpit DT's.

Them Gremlins Again!

(Teddy Rolfe is the first woman trainee at Avenger Field to become a member of the Caterpillar Club. This, says Teddy, is the way it feels to be thrown out of an airplane in a spin.—The Ed.)

Dear Mom:

You said you'd like to hear more about my parachute jump. I'll tell you how it seemed to me.

Suppose you went to the movies to see us training here at Avenger Field. Then imagine the film commencing and turning out to be a technicolor animated cartoon comedy.

The heroine must, I suppose, look like me, but she is Disneyish and her helmet and goggles and coveralls make her look like a bumpy, green and brown package. There are two heroes, the little blue and yellow PT number 117 with a tail that switches back, and forth like a good bird dog, and the check pilot who wears a certain sort of a halo reserved for check pilots. Now we need a villain and he is a Safety Belt Catch Opening gremlin. Them has beards which they inserts in all types of catches but most especially safety belt ones. This gremlin's name is Tizart.

Then things happen fast. Man and girl are in the cockpits of the PT. Unknown is Tizart who sits unseen on the lap of the girl with his beard twisted and knotted gremlinwise in the catch of the safety belt which the girl has fastened securely. The check pilot looks grim and stern as his halo blows back in the prop wash and he reaches up and clutches it to him as though it might be the only one he would ever have.

Then the PT starts to stall and spin. Here's where Tizart gets out and sits leering from a cloud.

He watches the girl tumble out of the plane and her parachute open like quick smoke. Then he starts singing this little ditty:

Oh us gremlins, we got to do our duty.

So I got my girl a good parachute,

And plenty of Texas wind to put in it.

She'll be down in half a minute. I can't let good clean fun go

stumbling by,

But sure as cloude float PT's gotta fly.

Fun is fun; yet the 318th's first in my heart.

So sing, Ho!, for a good gremlin, Avenger's Tizart.

You see, Mom, just like the short, it was easy. And though I wasn't supposed to, I'm sure I saw Tizart smile when I pulled that rip cord.

Your daughter,
Teddy.



The Last Cadet