

Looking Backward . . .

(This is the second and final installment of a retrospective article on our Pre-Flight School.)

The first installment, which appeared in the first issue of the CLOUDBUSTER, reviewed the history of the station from its beginning at Swain Hall early in March, 1942, to the busy days early in May, when officers and crew toiled together bringing order out of chaos.)

By EVERETT BRACKEN, Y3c

CPOs stood shoulder to shoulder with second class seamen; lieutenant commanders covered off in ranks with ensigns. One officer took over the duties of chief yeoman, which the station lacked, and sorely needed. He set up a filing system that was hardly Navy regulation, but it worked.

Alexander Hall was the scene of bustling activity, for the Pre-Flight school was beginning to burst its seams, and urgently needed more space. Several officers who had quartered themselves on the first deck of Alexander, in rooms now occupied by the Military Department, were the first to feel the effects of the increased tempo of the remodeling work. These officers, Lt. Comdr. Graff, Lt. Comdr. Micou, and Ens. Mack, led a hardy existence in their make-shift quarters. When asked about their "living conditions" during this period, Lt. Comdr. Graff said, with feeling, "The radiators were disconnected, the water was icy, the hallways were littered with plaster and trash, the smell of fresh paint was everywhere, and it was cold as . . ." We didn't quite catch that last word he said, but believe he said " . . . as anything." Little Jack Graff, ten year old son of our executive officer, lived with his father in Alexander Hall for two weeks, where he received Pre-Flight training in a Spartan manner.

By the time May rolled around, a few Chapel Hill merchants were cau-

tiously displaying Navy pennants and gear. One patriotic gentleman in the dry-cleaning business, who had offered to clean navy uniforms free of charge, surveyed the rapidly growing complement of the station and quietly tucked away the "free of charge" sign. (For which he could hardly be blamed).

These first two weeks in May saw many changes and developments in the school. Alexander Hall was now ready for occupancy, and the administrative offices were moved from Swain Hall. Some idea of the size of the school at this period may be obtained from the fact that the offices in Swain Hall were completely emptied by three trips of a rather small truck. One telephone was installed in Alexander Hall, an empty packing box was labeled "post office," and desks, chairs, and typewriters were at a premium. A room in the basement, formerly a billiard room, was set up as the disbursing office. Incidentally, blank checks and funds were very slow in arriving, so that the dignity of the Pre-Flight School suffered a bit by the necessity of "stalling" creditors.

Personnel now poured in—five or six third class yeomen, a squad of six Marines, led by Sgt. Faustin Wirkus, the one-time White King of La-Gonave, hospital corpsmen, radiomen and signalmen, and civilian employees, were put on the rolls. The commanding officer arrived to stay at this time, and gave the work and organization added impetus.

Alexander Hall was set up to house about a hundred and fifty cadets, and a temporary dispensary had been equipped in this building. Work was going full blast on Caldwell Hall, which was being remodeled to accommodate the academic staff and about nine hundred cadets at one time—for recitation purposes.

A few days later a telephone PBX

Cadet Spirit at UNC Game Applauded

The spirit of the regiment of cadets at the Carolina-Wake Forest football game last Saturday has been the subject of favorable comment from Gov. J. M. Broughton of North Carolina, Dr. Frank P. Graham, president of the University of North Carolina, and Dr. Roland B. Parker, dean of men, Comdr. O. O. Kessing reports.

In a letter received by the Commanding Officer, Dr. Parker declared:

"May this office convey to you the thanks of the whole university for the splendid spirit which the cadet corps gave to our football team on Saturday. It was one of the finest demonstrations of spirit and comradeship that I have ever seen. It helped the team and helped to draw the members of the cadet corps and the student body closer together."

Similar praise is given in a letter from Denman Hammond, president of the University Club.

"In behalf of the University Club," he states, "I would like to express our appreciation to the U. S. Navy Pre-Flight cadets for the fine support they gave to our team last Saturday. Since the game I have heard much comment on the 'Carolina Spirit' that the cadets showed all during the game.

"In my opinion the exhibition of the cadets Saturday has done more to unify the two schools than any other single thing since the commissioning of the school. Speaking for the Club, what we feel is the sentiment of the entire student body, we would like to express our appreciation for their loyalty to our team, and to congratulate them on their own team's victory over Harvard."

switchboard was installed, and an operator hired. An "Officer of the Day" was appointed, and the Pre-Flight School was ready to "receive visitors."

On May 23 the elaborate and carefully planned commissioning ceremony was held in Kenan Stadium. Many distinguished visitors were present, both Naval and civilian, Comdr. Kessing officially assumed command, and the U. S. Navy Pre-Flight School became a regularly commissioned Naval Station.

With this first big event past, the personnel of the school now busied themselves gathering up loose ends and polishing off rough edges in preparation for the first battalion of cadets, who were due to arrive on the 28th of May.

These young men arrived, two hundred and forty two strong, and gaped at the officers and men and buildings. These first cadets were, however, quickly gathered together and marched to Manly Hall, their new quarters. The civilian painters and workmen walked out one door as the cadets marched in the other.

The Pre-Flight School now took on a new aspect—the physical work was practically finished—the job now was to justify the very existence of the school by turning out hardened, toughened men who could "take it" in the training which lay ahead of them in their crucial flight training. Physical fitness data was compiled and carefully scrutinized from one week to the next; progress was anxiously watched. It was soon apparent that our "guinea pig" cadets were proving themselves in their ability to stand up under the rigorous program which had been planned for them, and everyone breathed easier.

Many minor refinements were made by the advent of our first cadets. A cadet glee club was organized, and soon made its first public appearance; church services were now held under the ministering of Chaplain Arendt; it was soon rumored that "cokes" could be obtained in a room in one of the dormitories which had been designated as a "cadets store." (This room, packed deck to ceiling, and bulkhead to bulkhead, would not now contain the cokes which are now consumed in a single morning by our thirsty cadets).

After three months of drilling, swimming, boxing, wrestling, hiking, and other activities which were designed to produce clear heads and strong bodies, the great day—Aug. 22

Navy Personnel Urged To Re-Examine Insurance Policies

The Bureau of Naval Personnel advises that all holders of commercial life, accident, or health insurance policies, examine their policies, or obtain expert advice, to determine the following points:

(a) Does the policy cover death or injury inflicted within the United States by reason of enemy invasion or bombardment, or by reason of combat with an enemy of the United States?

(b) Does the policy afford coverage to persons in military service outside of the United States?

(c) Are any of the provisions of the policy waived or modified by reason of the holder's participation in aviation activities?

(d) Does the policy provide the protection originally expected by the policyholder?

If the answer to any of these questions is in the negative, the insured should reconsider his privilege of applying for National Service Life Insurance or of increasing the amount of such insurance already held.

The Bureau urges all persons now paying premiums on policies which afford little or no protection to communicate directly with the issuing company with a view of obtaining cancellation of the policy with retroactive prorated refund of payments for periods where coverage has ceased. Persons are not, however, advised to cancel policies without first consulting with the insurance company.

A varied military training already lies behind William T. Council, Jr., 9th Battalion cadet from Hickory, N. C. Cadet Council has seen eight months service in the Royal Canadian Air Force as an aviation cadet, and, in addition, six months service in the U. S. Coast Guard.

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