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On the Purpose of Pre-Flight Work

A letter written by Lieut. Ernest L. Messikomer, assistant basketball coach of this station, was printed recently in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. With refreshing clarity the former Temple head basketball coach outlined broadly what the Pre-Flight Schools are doing to make the Navy's air cadets the toughest group physically in any branch of military service.

We consider the contents of the Messikomer letter well worth bringing to the attention of CLOUDBUSTER readers, and herewith reprint the text as it appeared in the *Inquirer*:

We realize that every American boy has intestinal fortitude—we call it guts down here. This may seem like a broad statement, but stand by for a few more paragraphs and I'll try to explain.

Not every cadet in the school here in North Carolina is a former star athlete. As a matter of fact, many of them have little or no competitive sports background, and when they come here they haven't developed that will-to-win-at-any-cost spirit that is born of varsity competition.

It is our job to create and then develop that spirit—the spirit that makes a football player hurl himself on a loose ball, a boxer fight harder after he has been stung, a runner sprint to the finish line when he is on the verge of exhaustion.

Let me explain what I am trying to get at by giving you the case of Dick Gish—the name, of course, being fictitious. Dick weighs 150 pounds, is 5 feet 7 inches in height, and is a college graduate who never seriously participated in athletics. A majority of cadets are of the Gish type and with the same case history.

When he first came out for physical training Gish shut his eyes and shied away from violent physical contact, and being a little new to the job myself, my first thought was that here is a kid who hasn't the fortitude—and I never made a greater mistake in my life. Three weeks later Dick shied away from nothing. There never had been anything wrong with his willingness to take it, but he never had any reason to show this willingness.

I was interested and I asked some of the other Gishes assigned to me to explain their reactions. Here are some of the answers: "I never took real bumps before, now I don't mind them a bit." "I'm getting accustomed to being in tough spots" and "I now have more confidence in myself."

And I want to tell you that boys like Gish are going to be just as tough, just as daring and just as hard to bring down as those who have a background of All-American football or professional sports activity.

These kids who are green and inexperienced insofar as athletic competition is concerned are acquiring a poise under pressure that is peculiar to all great athletes and military men—and they are acquiring this "pressure poise" in a far tougher and more thorough school than did the cadets who were famous athletes when they came to this base.

There is no all-for-glory sports or sport for sports sake, around here. It is all pretty grim business, but the boys appear to like it, and the tougher it is the more they go for it.

If experience proves that a sport is not contributing sufficiently to pilot training to justify its continuance, it is dropped and another substituted. And no cadet is held over at North Carolina or any of the other Pre-Flight Schools in order to play football or participate in any outside competition. Furthermore, no cadet is permitted to participate in outside competition unless his conduct and academic marks are up to the high standard that has been set.

The job here is to get these boys in shape to fight, and if those who criticize the Pre-Flight program because so many coaches and athletes have entered this field of activity would visit any one of the four pre-flight schools they would realize that the instructors are developing the finest group of fighting men in the military history of America.

Sure, the varsity football team is getting the headlines because of its victories over collegiate rivals, but remember that for every player on the football squad there are 50 others, many of whom have never before engaged in competitive athletics, being trained to wage the toughest fight of their lives.

**If It Won't Help
WIN THE WAR
Forget It**

This is the pointed advice which since early this week has greeted callers to the office of Lt. Comd. Benjamin H. Micou, supply officer of the station. The nine war-winning words are printed on a small triangular block which adorns the desk of Lt. Comdr. Micou.



By LIEUT. ERIC H. ARENDT
Chaplain Corps, USN

This week our thoughts are both progressive and retrospective.

On Nov. 10, the nation celebrates the 167th birthday of our Marine Corps. At this time, we rise above all rivalry to join with the entire country in a tribute to the Marines. We are grateful for the Corps' long and noble tradition. We know now, as always, that the Corps lives up to its motto, "Semper Fidelis"—"Always Faithful." The emblem, the Globe, Eagle and Anchor, which is worn as its distinguishing mark, is more than ever the appropriate symbol of the Marine Corps.

Back in 1775 when the crying need of the hour was for a group of fighting men who could not only man the ships, but fight in hand-to-hand combat, the first group to be known as *Marines* responded. The old time Marine went into battle armed with musket, pike or cutlass. Today, he is equipped with practically every conceivable military weapon used on land or sea, from machine guns and anti-aircraft guns to fighting planes and amphibious tractors. More than 200 times the U. S. Marines have landed on foreign soil on an errand from Uncle Sam. Today the Corps is continuing nobly in whatever task is assigned.

A good percentage of our cadets will eventually find themselves members of this Corps. We know that they will contribute appreciably to the Marine Corps' continued success. So, today as we think of *progress*, let each of us, with sincerity and gratefulness, pay tribute to this fine branch of our service. "Semper Fidelis" is a most fitting motto.

The day after the Marine Corps' birthday comes Armistice Day. This year we do not celebrate. This year we face the realities of another war and look toward the future of *another* Armistice. Whereas the Marine Corps has *progressed*, the World has *regressed*. But we are not disquieted. We tighten our belts and go to work once again with all the determination that we can muster. Our job is to make God's world more worthy to be His.

**Sunday
Divine Services**
Catholic
Masses 0615, 1000, 1045
Confessions, Friday, 1830-1930
Gerrard Hall
Jewish
1000, Hillel House
General Protestant
1000, Memorial Hall

**PRE-FLIGHT
STATIONERY**

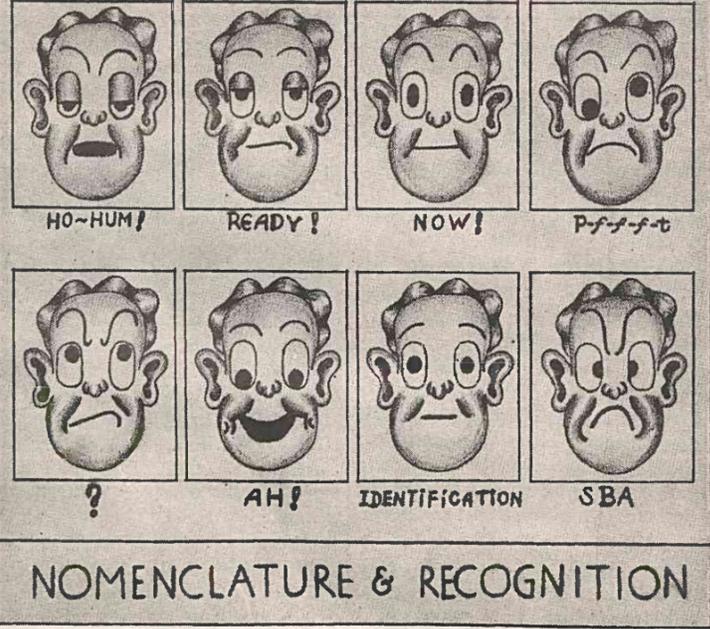
50 Sheets
36 Envelopes

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IT COULD ONLY HAPPEN HERE !

By W.A. M.H.



NRAB News

NEW ORLEANS, La.—A report in *Cross Winds*, fortnightly publication of the NRAB at New Orleans, La., indicates that leadership qualities of Chapel Hill alumni are not dormant at that flight base.

In explaining the demerit system placed in effect at New Orleans in mid-October, the story states that enforcement of the rules rests with the following cadet officers: Walter Abbe, battalion officer; Frank B. Harris, cadet adjutant; and wing leaders E. H. Clark, B. Watts, John Loughran, Andrew B. Jones, E. F. Driessen, and H. J. Eiland.

All except the latter two are Chapel Hill graduates. Abbe, Harris, and Watts were members of the First Battalion which was graduated on Aug.

22; Clark and Loughran were transferred on Sept. 5, while Jones left here on Sept. 19.

"The students," *Cross Winds* explains, "are completely self-governed. Cadet officers have full control of the system and are authorized to report students who break rules of the base. Offenders are then given demerits according to the seriousness of the offense. When five or more demerits are accumulated, the cadet is punished by given extra duty and deprived of week-end liberty."

**PRE-FLIGHT
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CADET TOMMIE WHITE, Manager