

Cadets Riding 'Black Cats' Played Hide, Seek With Japs

By Harold E. Hanson, Sp(P), 2c

"Jap planes flew so close to us at times that we could see the fire from their exhausts, yet they were unable to see our big *Black Cats* flying almost alongside them," recalls Cadet F. G. Caro, who, with Cadet H. W. Hollinger, formerly flew with the *Cats*.

Cadets Caro and Hollinger, both of the 66th batt, enlisted in the Navy just before the Pearl Harbor attack and logged almost 2,000 flying hours each as members of Air Force Squadron 81, commonly known as "Rankin's Night Raiders."

In June, 1942, Comdr. E. P. Rankin, USN, first took his PBV group to sea. Traveling from Puerto Rico to the Canal Zone, Trinidad, the British West Indies, Brazil and British Guinea, they accounted for the sinking of at least two German submarines. A year later they returned to the United States, shifted to PBV-5A's, and took off for the Solomons, the area where they were to gain fame as the *Black Cat Squadron*.

Played Hide And Seek

Cadet Caro, in telling of his initial encounter with the Japs, said, "It was on January 1st, 1944, that our *Cat* took off from Guadalcanal on its first mission. We usually flew on single-plane missions, without fighter protection, and with our planes painted as black as pitch. My job was flight engineer, but I also acted as aerial gunner when the occasion arose. Our destination was Buka passage, the northern tip of Bougainville, and our job was to strafe and bomb the landing strips.

"The Japs apparently knew we were overhead because they threw up all the ack-ack they could muster and pierced the sky with searchlights in a vain attempt to locate us. Jap fighters flew all around us but, of course, without radar they could only guess at our position. Had it not been for the seriousness of our missions this hiding almost could have been fun. We were told to make nuisances of ourselves and I guess we did."

The squadron on occasions also coordinated their attacks with PT boats and it was on Feb. 16 that Cadet Hollinger, in his first taste of action against the Jap, rode to an amazing victory.

Flew Cripple Home

An account of this action follows: "A 1,200-ton ship, surrounded by from four to six new-type Jap barges, was the answer to a *Black Cat's* prayer. Aided by PT's, which courageously dashed to help the plane, it bombed and strafed the ships. Shore batteries opened up from nearby Tonelei Harbor, southeast of Bougainville, in an effort to help the guns of the barges drive off the *Cat*. Bullets smacked the plane's port wing. Suddenly the oil pressure on the port en-



Cadets Hollinger, Caro

gine dropped off and the instruments ceased to function. Meanwhile, several PT boats had been damaged with injury to personnel. As the plane lost altitude, struggling on one engine, all loose gear and excess fuel were jettisoned. Low over the water the plane regained stability and flew safely to an Allied base close by."

The *Black Cats* did not lose a single man nor plane during eight months of duty in the Solomons area. They flew 1,777 sorties and amassed a total of 7,676 flight hours, of which 4,765 were flown at night. The 15 planes dropped a total of 5,483 bombs weighing 579,200 pounds. They expended an estimated 2,000,000 rounds of .30 and .50 calibre ammunition and dropped an estimated 5,000 flares. They rescued seven downed airmen in open sea landings.

Cadet Caro wears the American defense ribbon with one star, the American area ribbon, the Asiatic-Pacific ribbon with two stars, the good conduct award and the air crew insignia with three stars. Hollinger wears the American defense, the American area and Asiatic ribbons, the latter with two stars. In addition he has the air crew insignia with three stars and commendation ribbon.

Cadet Hollinger is from Bonne Terre, Mo., and Cadet Caro from Pensacola, Fla.

Band Party Tonight

Members of the Pre-Flight band and guests will be shown the movie, "Princess O'Rourke" and later will dance tonight at the Band Center, Carrboro. The movie will start at 1900. Refreshments will be served.

—Strong Fleet—

(Continued from Page 1)

interests, able to meet unforeseen emergencies and capable of rapid expansion to full war strength.

Strong Air Arm

"The exact size can best be determined later, but we know its proper composition now. It must be well balanced, containing all types of vessels, surface and sub-surface, from tiny landing craft up to the giant battle-ships and carriers, and most important, it must have a strong air arm. The Navy is still our first line of defense and a good slogan is, 'Keep the Fleet to Keep the Peace'."

The Admiral, who won his Naval Aviator's wings in 1923, told members of the graduating class that success of a modern Fleet depends largely upon its air arm which must continue as an integral part of the Fleet.

"There are numerous proposals for a separate air force, independent of the Army and Navy, but within a Department of National Defense," the former Commander, Fleet Air, South Pacific, declared. "I have not the time, nor is this the place, to discuss this in detail. However, current events leave us no doubt that the success of a Fleet in modern warfare depends largely upon its air arm, and unless this air arm is an integral and organic part, the Fleet is crippled.

"Therefore, whatever the final organization of our armed forces, Naval Aviation must be fully and completely under the Navy as regards training, employment, and development of tactics, planes and equipment."

Universal Military Training

Universal military training, Admiral Hardison asserted, is not militarism. "I feel strongly," he said, "that some form of uni-

Regimental Title Won By 65th Batt For The 3rd Time

Taking firsts in Academics and the Sports Program, the 65th Batt compiled a total of 300 points to win regimental honors in the competition period ending last week. It was the third time that the 65th has come off with first place in the fortnightly competition.

Close runner-up was the 64th Batt which gained an aggregate of 274½, including firsts in Military and Class Athletics.

The 67th finished third with 172, followed by the 66th with 148½. Summary:

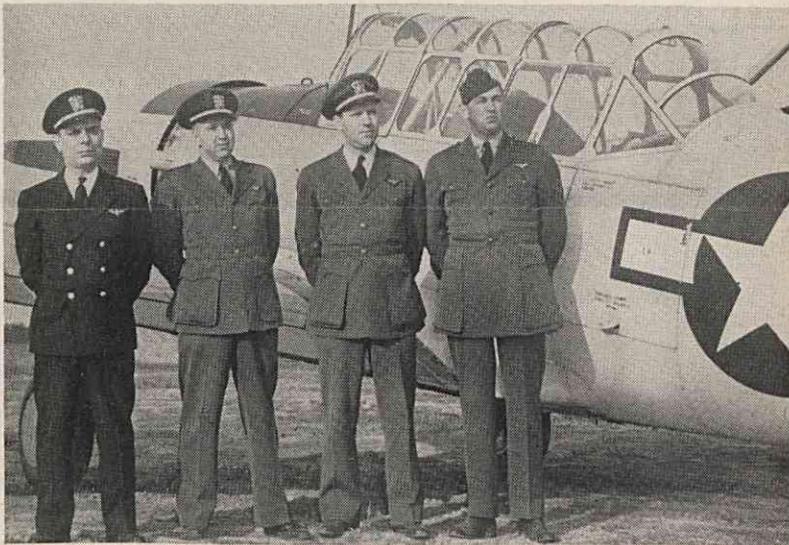
	64th	65th	66th	67th
Military	75	50	25	10
Academic	10	75	25	50
Class Athletics.....	75	50	10	25
Sports Program.....	114½	125	88½	87
Totals	274½	300	148½	172

versal military training for the youth of this nation, of approximately one year's duration, is necessary and I believe this training should be given preferably in the year prior to college entrance. This is not militarism."

He quoted the Secretary of the Navy as saying that "universal military training means no more that we are for war than getting vaccinated means a man is looking for smallpox, or taking out auto insurance means he expects his car to burn."

The Chief of Naval Air Primary Training reported that the Pre-Flight School here, which is a unit of his Command, has furnished more than 13,000 graduates for further air training. "Incidentally," he stated, "I expect that it will continue at full capacity for an indefinite period."

Here To Teach "Principles Of Flying"



Four of the five Naval aviators who recently came aboard to teach "Principles of Flying" are pictured at the Chapel Hill Airport, with a SNV-2 in the background. From left to right are Lieut. (jg) E. A. Guadiano and Lieuts. G. R. McClure, D. K. Watson and W. F. Mitchell. Missing is Lieut. (jg) A. M. Liberatori.