



# Gator CAPers

Vol. 5, Issue III

March, 1964

## FLORIDA FIRST WING TO ADOPT NEW CADET PROGRAM

### GROUP XVII ACTIVATED

Colonel S. Hallock du Pont Jr., Florida Wing Commander, announced the activation of St. Petersburg Group XVII and has appointed Major John W. Miller, Sr. as its commander.

Group XVII is composed of all units that formerly belonged to Group III that lie on the western side of Tampa Bay. The split of Group III was designed to give greater training and support to the squadrons assigned to both new groups.

Captain Hagan continues as commander of the new Group III which is composed of units from the greater Tampa area and is now called Tampa Group III as it was many years ago.

### WING FOURTH IN C.O.P.S

Only four wings achieved their 1963 COP quota, and Florida was one of them.

The other wings reaching their quota were Puerto Rico, Delaware and Illinois. Puerto Rico ranked 1st nationally with 141% of quota. Delaware was in 2nd place with 114% followed by Illinois in 3rd place with 106% by achieving 116 COP's to match its 1963 quota.

The 1964 quota's were also published this month by National Headquarters. Florida's National COP quota for 1964 will be 140, an increase of 31% over 1963.

### CADET GETS ANNAPOLIS APPOINTMENT

At first glance T/Sgt. Marc Palaez, cadet IO for Central Miami Squadron, is much like any other CAP cadet, but when you get to talking to him you soon see a difference. Marc's interests are limitless. His knowledge is not confined to any specific field, but his ambition is singular...and strong.

As far back as Marc can remember he wanted an appointment to one of the U.S. Academies. Last month his wish became a reality. He received notification of his Principal Appointment to Annapolis.

It all started years ago, when a friend of the family, a USAF Major General retired, fired Marc's imagination with stories about West Point. Marc decided that he wouldn't be satisfied until he too became a West Point Cadet. His mind was changed, however, when the Public Information Officer for the US Naval Academy convinced him that Annapolis would be more to his liking.

In March, 1963, Marc applied to Rep. Dante Fascell for an appointment to Annapolis. He took and passed numerous examinations and finally was sent before a citizens rating board. They scrutinized his high school transcript, college board exams, checked into his interests and hobbies, examined his leadership qualifications and his moral character. They must have liked what they saw because his



Lt. Clayton Buholtz, Central Miami Cadet Squadron Commander, congratulates C T/Sgt. Palaez on his appointment to Annapolis.

Principal Appointment came through (A Principal Appointment is considered the highest... above any other type of appointment, including a Presidential appointment).

Marc believes that there are two kinds of people; observers and participants. Marc has always been a participant. He was Governor of the Central Park District of the Dade County Youth Council; a special delegate to the Dade County Committee on Children and Youth; Public Relations Director for the Dade County Youth Council; and a member of the American Ordinance Association.

Marc has won many State Forensic League contests; holds two American Legion Oratory Medals; was state CYO champion for 1962

and a National CYO Youth Oratory finalist placing 4th nationally in oratorical interpretation. He is up for the Silver Knight award for speech and drama. Marc is a member of his school varsity club, a track man, football player, and was the first president of the Dade County Junior Rifle Club.

What does he do in his spare time? He writes speeches for others to give.

A senior at Christopher Columbus High, in Miami, Marc is in an accelerated class, taking college level courses in many subjects. He plans for a career in Naval Engineering. Marc was born in Hollywood Florida and lives with his parents and younger brother in Coral Gables.

### PROGRAM IN FULL SWING

The Florida Wing is the first whole wing to adopt the new cadet program in its entirety, according to National Headquarters sources. Some other squadrons in the country have started in the new program, but not their entire wing.

Florida started the first eleven week cycle of the new program during the week of January 6th, depending on which night the individual squadrons had their regular meetings. Florida will be the first wing to award the new series of ribbons for successful achievement accomplishment during the several graduation-parent's night ceremonies which will take place during the 11th week of the first training cycle. This means that our cadets will be presented their ribbon and subsequent promotion on their 11th meeting night of the current cycle between the 16th and 22nd of March once again depending on which night of the 11th week their meeting night falls.

Shoulder boards will be first for Florida also as a result of early program adoption. Eligibility for wearing the new boards will be a COP, present cadet officership, a completion of the new revised leadership exam from National, and the accomplishment of any one of the achievements in Phase III.

Phase III was not started during the present first cycle, but will be included in the second cycle which will begin during the week of March 23rd thru 29th. This will mean that Florida Cadet Officers would be presented their new shoulder boards, costing \$2.50 less grade insignia from National Headquarters, during the graduation-parent's night of the second cycle June 1st thru the 7th.

All present Cadet officers will have to participate in Phase III during the second cycle to qualify for the new boards. It is estimated that there will be 400 cadet officers in the wing at the end of the second cycle in June.

Major Bass, Wing Deputy for Cadets, advises that more detailed information on the transition to the Officers Shoulder Boards will be published in future Cadet Bulletins in advance of the end of the 2nd Cycle.

### ENCAMPMENT APPLICATIONS MAILED

Wing Headquarters announced that complete packages of 1964 Encampment applications have been mailed to all units of the Wing in a special mailing on 8 February.

This mailing includes Cadet applications to attend, Senior staff officer applications, applications for cadet officer positions at encampment and a detailed clothing list. Group Headquarters were sent an additional mailing of these forms to be used for those squadrons who may need extra copies as well as

for the many new units being organized throughout the wing.

Deadline for application to attend the five summer camps is 30 April at Cocoa. Applications to attend encampments do not go through Group Headquarters but are mailed directly from the squadron to Major Bass at Box 3588, Five Points Station, Cocoa, Florida, 32924. Applications for cadet officer positions however, do go through channels to Group Headquarters for indorsement.

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# 'Gator CAPers

## Florida Wing Civil Air Patrol

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WING COMMANDER.....Col. S.H. duPont, Jr.  
DEPUTY FOR INFORMATION/EDITOR .....2/Lt. Ben Wakes  
STAFF CONTRIBUTORS:.....1/Lt. Toni Wakes  
Maj William P. Mullen, 2/Lt. Robert D. Cunningham, S/M Bud Jenkins

Vol. 5, Issue III

March, 1964

## LT WAKES NAMED WING DEPUTY FOR INFORMATION

2/Lt. Ben Wakes, known to most members of the Florida Wing as the hard working editor of this paper, has been named as the new Deputy for Information Services on Wing Staff. His appointment follows the resignation of Lt. Col. Edward J. Campeau, long time wing staff Director of Information.

Lt. Wakes will assume his new post immediately and will continue as the editor of the paper. The IBM Information reporting will be shifted to Miami in accordance with a form letter that was sent to all units on 15 February advising them of the change in mailing address beginning with the February reports.

The Florida Wing Information section has been upgraded from a Director position to that of a Deputy, indicating the increased emphasis on the information program planned for the year 1964. Wakes advised that the wing has finally achieved an increase in the percentage of unit reporting on time exceeding 90% and that now was the time to get the quality of the information program going with the new release center beginning to go into operation.

## RECRUITING A MEDICAL OFFICER

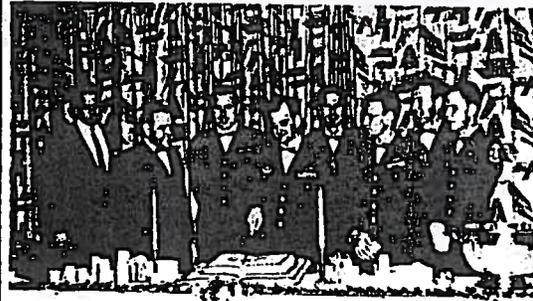
LT. COL. R. H. SABER, MD  
Wing Medical Officer

Many of the medical section problems that present themselves at squadron level could be prevented or easily solved. As in almost any field the simplest solution is to obtain the services of an expert. Stated briefly, this means recruit a squadron medical officer and then give him all the cooperation you can. This will automatically reduce the problems to a minimum.

Despite popular misconception there is an almost unlimited supply of medical officers available to CAP units. Physicians, both MD and DO are eligible for appointment as unit medical officers. This same regulation authorizes appointment of dentists and registered nurses as assistant unit medical officers. Certainly in any area large enough to support a CAP unit there are doctors, dentists and nurses to be found. It's true that many of these people are already overburdened with their routine professional activities. A well organized CAP unit can, however, operate in such manner as to require very little of their time. By assigning an interested senior member to the medical section it is possible to reduce demands on the medical officers time, other than for guidance.

It is apparent that the first step in recruiting a medical officer is careful selection of a responsible squadron member who can support, and at times direct the medical section activities. Particularly suited are trained and qualified first aiders, lab technicians, doctor's office assistants, ambulance drivers, X-Ray technicians, policemen, fireman or hospital blood bank employees, and many others.

(Continued on page 4)



## GROUP II ANNUAL BALL

More than 200 Cadets and their guests attended the Florida Group II Annual Ball held at the Hotel George Washington in Jacksonville. Highlight of the evening of dancing and entertainment was the presentation of the progress trophy which was given to the Fort Caroline Cadet Squadron Commander Lt. Gleason, who gave credit for the award to Lt. Scoof, post Commander, recently transferred out of the state.

A cake, representing the educational books of CAP, was sliced and served. Featured at the Cake Cutting Ceremony were unit commanders (left to right), Lt. Petty, St. Augustine Cadet; Lt. Gleason, Ft. Caroline Cadet; Lt. James, Jacksonville Cadet; Lt. Col. Phillips, Commander of Group II, Capt. Heape, Duval Senior; Capt. Tebbe, W. Jacksonville Cadet, Lt. Putney, Arlington Cadet, and Lt. Kobas, San Jose Cadet.



Jack Lord, television's "Stoney Burke", takes time from his schedule at the Florida State Fair in Tampa, to visit Mac Dill AFB where he and cadets from the Brandon Cadet Squadron look over the AF F-4C Phantom II. Left to right: Cadets Ralph E. Reed, Charles E. Hand, John M. Hand, James M. Strickland & Squadron Commander Capt. Norman G. Kuolas.

## GROUP IX RANGERS FIRST AID WORKSHOP

47 cadets and 12 seniors from Groups IX and XVI attended a special week-end First Aid training program, part of their Ranger Program which is under the command of Capt. Barry Brimacombe. According to Capt. Brimacombe, this was a week-end of work. The seniors and cadets underwent a comprehensive training program which consisted of basic and advanced first aid lectures by Doctor Cohen, Commander of the newly formed Medical Squadron, Lt. Col. Welsler, Commander of Group IX, Capt. Brimacombe and Red Cross personnel. In addition to the lectures, the group was given practical training in bandaging and splinting.



This was strictly a working session with no time out for fun. The seniors and cadets who attended the workshop are looking forward to the next one scheduled for sometime in March.

At the conclusion of the lecture series and practical training session, the group was given examinations and those who passed will receive Red Cross First Aid Certificates.

## MEMO from the Commander

Now that the wing has passed the main hurdle of membership renewal I believe that it is time to go into the finer points of what makes the CAP program go or stop.

One of the real major problem areas that we have in the wing today is that of administrative discipline. When this subject crops up at staff meetings, some of our officers say that this is a volunteer organization, and that you can not expect to receive on-time reports and on-time applications in a volunteer organization. This is where I disagree with them. CAP is a volunteer organization in that one has volunteered to join. Once a man has signed on the dotted line, he agrees to participate according to the rules and regulations of the organization. His volunteering days are over. When he puts on the uniform he undertakes to bring credit on the CAP and the Air Force. He does not decide to volunteer to wear black shoes. He does this because he has volunteered his joining of a program and once in the program he goes by the rules, or he turns in his ID card and gets out.

This is particularly true of unit commanders. Once they have joined the CAP program and are appointed to command positions, they inherit certain responsibilities that they can not shirk lightly. When a man becomes a commander, he not only is responsible for the rules and regulations of the organization, but also in the field of reporting and also applications for various activities. When a notice is passed out 90 days in advance that the deadline for special activities is 1 December, it means just this - the deadline for application is 1 December. It does not mean that if he feels like it, it would be nice if he would consider sending the application in time for his cadets to get on the airplane to go to Orlando on January 18th for the selection. Unfortunately, we had only 34 applications for 1964 Cadet National Special Activities in at Cocoa on the 1 December deadline. A total of 33 additional applications arrived late, and some of them the day of the special activity. Major Bass, Major Barnard, and I conferred at length about the first of December on this matter of discipline on the sending of these applications and came to the conclusion that it would not be fair for the cadets if they were prevented from going to the special activities just because some senior officer was sitting on their applications. For this reason, Major Bass asked that we extend the deadline for the applications until 10 January this time only, which we agreed to do. As it turned out, 8 of these cadets who applied late were selected to go.

Another example of lax discipline is the Phase II selection questionnaires. These were sent to Squadron Commanders on 30 January. The questionnaire said to return it after circling the Phase II achievement they were teaching, immediately to Miami. I'm not sure of the exact definition of 'immediately' but I know that it does not mean in excess of 12 days. After 12 days there were 41 returned - 49 missing. These examples are typical of problems existent in the wing today. Wing staff and Group Commanders agree that something has to be done about this laxity. The first step we are taking is to close out applications for Florida Level Special Activities on 1 March exactly. In the past wing has left deadlines open and allowed late applications to be counted. This is not fair to unit commanders who cleared their applications through their headquarters on time.

Florida Wing operates on time tables prepared in accordance with the needs and planning time required. It is prepared after careful study of lead time needed for such things as travel orders and physical exams.

It is strange that so many staff officers in the units of the wing are so lax that it hurts others completely innocent of their leaders wrong doings.

  
SAMUEL CALLOCK DU PONT, JR.  
Colonel, CAP  
Commander



# Flying Minute Men

## the story of CIVIL AIR PATROL

FROM THE BOOK BY  
**ROBERT E. NEPRUD**

During the initial patrol, which lasted an hour and ten minutes, the pioneer wave-scrappers saw nothing except a lot of water, a few plodding freighters, and some oil patches. The later had significance of a sort; they were probably from tankers previously sunk in the area.

Not nearly so peaceful was the maiden flight out of Atlantic City a few days later. Major Wynant C. Farr, partly New York cardboard manufacturer who took over as Patrol Force One's commander shortly after G. H. Robb Wilson opened up the base, lifted his yellow Fairchild off the runway of the Municipal Airport. Beside him was cigar chewing Al Muthig, who used to fly with Farr around Walden, New York. There were no life-vests aboard—just an inflated inner-tube which lay on the cabin floor. They had been told to "get on your radio and yell bloody-murder for help" in the event they had to come down in the water. As they circled the field, then headed out over Hamid's Million Dollar Pier, Farr and Muthig suddenly realized that this would be their first ride over the ocean. A few minutes later they were far from shore, heading out over the vast Atlantic with only a few fishing boats below to keep them company.

Fifteen minutes out of Atlantic City things started to happen. They spotted the floundering hulk of a torpedoed tanker, which by some miracle had not caught fire and was still afloat. At a safe distance from the stricken vessel, Farr and Muthig could make out the bobbing heads of the surviving crewmen, who were taking no chances of being trapped by a delayed explosion. Near the bow of the ship, where the torpedo had ripped into her, floated the limp bodies of several sailors who had been caught below decks when the torpedo struck.

Muthig radioed the base for help and Farr circled the tanker, wagging his wings. The men in the water understood that aid was on the way and waved weakly. In less than an hour, a Coast Guard cutter came speeding out over the ocean and gathered in the survivors.

The yellow plane buzzed northward again, its course set for New York Harbor. By the time it returned to Atlantic City nearly five hours after take-off with its fuel gauge edging toward the empty mark, Farr and Muthig had also sighted seven floating bodies, an empty lifeboat, and an apple crate. There had been no submarines but evidence of their presence had been plentiful.

(Continued page 4)



### BRIMACOMB HEADS GROUP XVI

Wing Headquarters has announced the chartering of North Broward Cadet Group XVI under the command of Captain Barry Brimacomb. Group XVI was once a part of the old Group IX and now stands on its own in the north section of the fastest growing county in the United States.

Captain Brimacomb was most recently the Deputy Commander for the northern squadrons on Group IX staff, and before that he served as commander of the Mltromor Cadet Squadron in the old Group I.



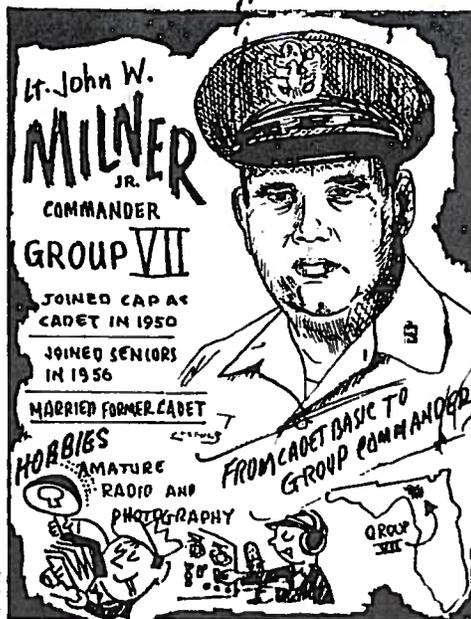
### Central Miami Bivouac

If the way to a cadet's heart, like that of any other man, is through his stomach, then 3 mother-members of the Central Miami Cadet Squadron won close to a hundred hearts during the two week-end encampments.

The mother-members, Cathlene A. Buholtz, Pauline M. Gann and Glenna C. Ryan, took on the cooking and feeding problem for their squadron encampment, which, because of the squadron's size, had to be carried on over two week ends and for the first time in squadron encampment history MESS was not an appropriate name for mealtime. Not only was the food good to eat it was good to look at too.

But it wasn't all eat and no work for these cadets. The squadron Commander had a heavy training schedule all mapped out and the cadets were put through their paces learning military courtesy and discipline, field communications, first aid, etc.

"You're the LEGAL Officer... make it legal!"



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### GROUP X CADETS DO IT ALL!

What is believed to be the first back and watched as the cadets set bivouac in South Florida completely organized and run by cadets, was the complete, drilling and conducting classes in Orientation, Power

Participating in the bivouac for Aircraft and Leadership. were over 125 cadets from Homestead, Tamiami, Miami Springs, shelters and compass reading was Key West, University, Marathon given by three representatives from and Cutler Ridge, the Group's newest squadron.

The seniors, who were present W. J. Alexander and Pfc T. Bishop in an advisory capacity only, stood from the 306th Signal Corps.

### PROMOTIONS

The following promotions were posted at Florida Wing during January:

TO LT. COL.:	Marshall, Paul	Group XII
TO CAPT.:	Altwater, A. C.	Wing
	Leall, R. L.	Wing
	Nelson, G.	Group IX
	Brimacomb, B.	Group IX
	Smythe, J. D.	Winter Haven
	Golding, W.	Group IX
	Bennett, S.	Wing
TO 1ST LT.:	Couch, E. G.	San Jose
	Summermon, D.	Carol City
	Buholtz, C.	Central Miami
	Gleason, D.	Ft. Caroline
TO 2ND LT.:	Squires, W. J.	Corrabelle
	Vaughn, W.	Sunrise
	Buechl, S.	Palm Beach
	Howell, C.	Sunrise

### "PERSONNEL NOTES".....

On 1 March we will be starting the "District Membership" system. Please read and study the Bulletin D/Pers #6 and the "Supplement to Regulations #1" which was mailed out in the 15th mailout to all units. We have made it a different color so it won't be mixed with other bulletins. This is your 'bible' so read it and follow it. The supplement takes the place of the old D/Pers #3 you are all familiar with.

Lt. Col. Raymond L. Kraemer,  
Wing Deputy for Administration



### GROUP VIII HAS FOUR DAY BIVOUAC

To the probable relief of the parents, many cadets from the units in Southwest Florida Group VIII recently left home for a four day bivouac in the woods east of Naples. Lt. Robert Pearman, the Naples Commandant of Cadets, spent many years planning the outing.

Buses and private vehicles unloaded the cadets at the Naples Squadron building at the airport. From there they hiked out to the bivouac area where they pitched tents in two Squadrons, Red and Blue, with Group Headquarters in-between.

Daily routine consisted of reveille at 0500, spot inspections, training classes, infiltration and invasion of the rival squadron, camouflage, first aid, etc. Meals were cooked on the spot, with the aid of the mobile kitchen loaned by the Junior Deputies of the local Sheriff department.

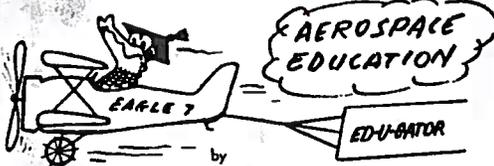
A pleasant surprise was the arrival of Capt. Joyce Ferrin, the Naples Squadron Administrative Officer who prepared two evening meals. Many remarks were heard, such as "This is better than Mother makes at home". Group VIII Hqs. also surprised the cadets with ice cream, cake and apples.

A tired and weary bunch of cadets marched back to the airport echoing the query, "When can we do it again?"

### COMMANDER GROUP IX

Lt. Colonel Melvin H. Weiser, former commander of Carol City Cadet Squadron, and Deputy for Operations of Group IX, has been appointed as the new commander of Group IX, by the wing commander. Col. Weiser follows Lt. Col. Edward T. Cohee who recently resigned as commander of Group IX.

At the same time of the command change, Group IX was split into north and south Broward groups and group XVI was formed out of the northern squadrons. Lt. Col. Weiser has a long and excellent CAP record dating back to the S. Carolina Wing where he began his career. His son is now a squadron commander in the new Group XVI.



by  
Major James W. Sanderson  
Wing Deputy for Phase Fun and  
Aerospace Education...

**DID YOU KNOW THAT....** Generally, to fly under Instrument Flight Rules in Western Germany requires a co-pilot aboard even in a single engine aircraft? Visual Flight Rules for flying at night are so tough that many pilots give up rather than fly under the "impossible" regulations.

Last fall helicopters were used to rescue Indians from flooded areas in the Canadian province of Alberta. The Royal Canadian Air Force airlifted 30% more Indians than actually lived in the area before it was discovered the Indians were recrossing the swollen river to get another helicopter ride.

Designs for the Mach 3 supersonic transport place the pilot as far as 100 feet in front of the aircraft's landing gear. This position may create a 'pilot orientation' problem during landing operations.

Brush control is a new use for agricultural aircraft. Scrub trees and brush on seemingly valueless land can be killed off and the land converted to profitable cattle grazing through aerial applications of herbicides, and through seeding and fertilizing.

"Woomera" is the name of one of the world's largest missile ranges. Situated in Australia, the Woomera range gets its name from a device used by Australian Bushmen to launch a spear on its way to a target.

International cooperation in weather observing was the first form of organized international cooperation, pre-dating even international postal service.

**NEW CROP FOR THE SOUTH....** At present, almost all space vehicles, rocket engines and space capsules are built in the west, the mountain states and in the midwest... far from the launching pads of Cape Kennedy (formerly Cape Canaveral). As rocket boosters and engines grow in power, they will grow in size, and as they grow in size, so will the problems of transporting them from factory to test stand to launch pad. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration has met this on-coming problem by locating its major space centers in the South where a network of rivers, waterways, and the ocean offer the best means of delivering these giant-size products to the launching area.

**THOUGHT PROVOKING:** The trouble with being a cadet encampment leader is that you can't be sure if the troops are following or chasing you...

## ADVERTISERS WANTED!

Advertising rates are as follows: \$5 per column inch. Minimum 3" (One 3" ad or three 1" ads to run consecutively). Copy (wordage) for ads should be sent to Gator CAPers, Advertising Department, PO Box 48-246, Miami, Florida. Remittance should be included with copy. The ad department will lay out the ad for you and set the type. Closing date for advertising is the 10th of the month. Note: a column inch is 2" wide and 1" deep.



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## AROUND & ABOUT

Bradley Cadet Squadron, formerly the Fort Lauderdale All Girls Squadron, Group IX, held a leap-year "Twerp" on Feb 29th at Bradley Field. Squadron Commander Lt. Rae Samples said that the squadron's decision to go "co-educational" on leap year was premeditated.

Maj. Charles L. Mc Kissak, commander of Carrabelle Composite Squadron, has thrown his hat into the forthcoming political race. He hopes to become the next state senator from the 5th District.

Group I's Benjamin Franklin Cadet Squadron celebrated its first anniversary in February. After a rocky start with eight cadets and three seniors, the squadron pulled itself up by its bootstraps and now boasts 54 cadets and 11 seniors.

BFC sent 15 cadets to summer encampment last year and the squadron also boasts of its first inter-squadron marriage. The bride, T/Sgt. Elizabeth Jenkins, is the daughter of Squadron Information Officer Bud Jenkins and S/Sgt. Marjorie Jenkins and the sister of CA/1 Bob Jenkins. The groom Sgt. Douglas Anderson is now on active duty with the USAF.

Members of Group III are busily brushing up on their Spanish ever since it was announced last month that the Group will be one of the host Groups for the Girl's Exchange from Puerto Rico.

Group IV's Choctawatchee Squadron Commander, Lt. Buel Mooney, was CAP-an-th-spot recently when an F-104 crashed at Eglin AFB. The crash occurred near the site where Lt. Mooney works, and within minutes he set up a cordon to hold back the people and guard the site. Part of the aircraft exploded while it was being guarded but no one was injured.

Capt. Doug Keller, Commander of Sunrise Cadet Squadron recruited the final cadet needed to meet the Squadron's Wing quota. The squadron also has enrolled 21 out of its 23 senior members in EC1.

Group IV's Commander, Lt. Paul Kerr, announced the appointment of the Rev. Verl Stiers, Jr., as Group Chaplain. Chaplain Stiers, who recently returned from 4-1/2 years of missionary service overseas, including a period in Guinea, West Africa, served in a Tank Battalion during WWII and was a member of General Patton's army that met the Russians in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia.

Rev. James Gaylord has taken over as Chaplain for the Orlando Cadet Squadron. Rev. Gaylord, who is Group XI's first chaplain, has spent many years working with youths at summer camps and was director of Brevard County Youth for Christ.

## MEDICAL OFFICER

The next step would be to communicate with the family physician of each squadron member. You may find a physician who not only flies but may own his own aircraft. These should be the first to be approached since you will acquire a medical officer oriented in Aerospace medicine with at least a basic knowledge of the ground rules.

Inquiries at the local airport may turn up aircraft owners who are qualified to be medical officers.

When recruiting a medical officer with no knowledge or experience with aircraft, it should be explained that this does not rule out service to the unit. Many squadrons have medical sections commanded by physicians who have never been off the ground.

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# Flying Minute Men

(continued from page 3)

The first sub spotted by the CAP was surprised by two planes from Rehoboth as it was about to fire a torpedo into the side of a tanker near the shallow-water shoals off Cape May, New Jersey, on March 10. Observers Howard Carter and Eddie Edwards were watching two vessels steam past Five Fathom Bank Buoy when they sighted what at first appeared to be a tanker foundering, its decks awash. At closer quarters they could see that it was a submarine, obviously lying in wait for the nearest tanker. As the two unarmed Fairchild's swooped on the U-boat, its commander gave the order to crash-dive. Lieutenants Ivan Clubertson and Benny Benedict, the pilots, circled the area for an hour, but there was no further sign of the sub.

At the beginning of coastal patrol, scouting missions received top priority. Within a few weeks, however, convoy duty became the main job. Planes from Rehoboth flew rectangular patterns over the slow-moving freighters and tankers from Winter Quarter Light north to Delaware Bay, where planes from Atlantic City took over convoy chores, shepherding the ships into New York Harbor. When convoying, the practice was to fly counterclockwise in a regular pattern around the ships, being careful not to leave them uncovered from the rear.

The dawn patrol ordinarily took off from Atlantic City and Rehoboth a half-hour before sunrise, following a briefing session conducted at each base by an intelligence officer. The dusk patrol, or the last escort mission, whichever the case might be, usually returned to base half an hour after sunset. When there were no convoys to ride herd on, planes were sent out on scouting missions at two-hour intervals.

From the first, the dawn-to-dusk patrol planes, flying in pairs for mutual protection, spotted subs for the Army and Navy. Sometimes, as in the first encounter near Cape May, they forced U-boats to crash-dive just as they were about to attack a lumbering oiler or merchantman. And from the very beginning, the CAP saved lives by radiating the position of ships in distress and the location of survivors.

In the early days--and up to October 15, 1942, when the Antisubmarine Command was launched under the operational control of the Eastern and Gulf Sea Frontiers--the First Air Force, with headquarters at Mitchel Field, Long Island, was charged with protecting the East Coast from Maine to Virginia.

At the time of Pearl Harbor, the First Air Force had a strength of 337 planes, including both fighters and bombers, and 57 of these were out of commission. At the time it had only two bases along the coast, one at Langley Field, Virginia, and the other at Mitchel. It was from these and from some later-established fields that CAP planes called for assistance via the Cape May Naval Air Station control headquarters when they spotted submarines. Army bombers were credited with sinking several undersea marauders flushed by the CAP airmen.

The men who patrolled the seelanes on coastal patrol realized that any flight might be their last one. But they didn't carry parachutes because it isn't healthy to bail out at 500 feet or less, which was the usual altitude flown. If an engine failed, a crew's best chance was to try to pancake their ship onto the surface of the water, then to force open the doors and pull themselves out of their flooding cabin as quickly as they could. Odds were good that the sister ship circling above would be able to summon aid from a Coast Guard cutter or a passing freighter. Hitting the drink in the summer wasn't any fun, but it was much worse in the wintertime because a half-hour's lurking in the frigid water was almost sure death. The worst time to come down was during the dusk patrol, with darkness about to pull a black shroud across the ocean's face--and across a man's chances for coming home alive. It was a rugged deal that the "Sunday pilots" of CAP had taken on.

The sun-drenched beaches and the after-dark amusements of Atlantic City and Rehoboth were not permitted to interfere with the task at hand. Between flights and even during the evenings, coastal patrol personnel attended classes in navigation, meteorology, blinker code, and other subjects that fitted in with the type of operations being carried out at the time. At Atlantic City, where Major Farr insisted on strict discipline and where nearly every spare minute was occupied by classes, evening sessions held in the ballroom of the Casapollitan Hotel were attended by all hands. Close-order drill was an important part of the routine, too, since many of the men reporting for duty were paroled gentlemen in their forties and fifties who were a long way from resembling soldiers. At Major Farr's base, a drill sergeant who came to be known as "the man with the whistle" was loaned to CAP by the Army's basic training center. His was a formidable challenge--but he somehow succeeded in converting a sizable group of assorted individualists into a smart-stepping outfit that proved on several occasions that it could hold its own with any military outfit on the parade ground.

Not one got rich on coastal patrol. Pilots received no salary but merely a per diem of \$8 to take care of uniforms, food, lodging, and all incidentals. Observers and mechanics rated \$7, and other ground personnel, including guards and office help, drew \$5 or \$6. The per diem wasn't the lavish gift that some outsiders seemed to think. Captain Robert E. Thomas, a Baltimore broker with a flair for figures, kept careful check of his income and expenses for a six-month tour of duty during which he flew 40,000 miles over the water. Adding up his resources, he found that he had exactly \$56 left after all his expenses were paid. In other words, he had managed to clear a little less than \$10 a month. He was lucky; many of the coastal patrol personnel went into the hole.

(Continued next month)