

*This is the meeting place of the WAR BIRDS flying club.
Each month news of the organization and members will be discussed.*

THE COCKPIT
(TERENCE X. O'LEARY'S WAR BIRDS 6/35)

THE CO.'S MESSAGE

GENTLEMEN:

The Adjutant had warned me that he is going to bring his challenge right out into the open this month on the question of mess strength. I want to say a few words about our organization before the Adjutant's remarks have time to occasion alarm.

I am pleased and proud at the way our organization has filled out. I've said that before, but the occasion for saying it this time is the fact that, for the first time, the officers' mess has been out-numbered by the non-coms. For the past few months, the applications for non-commissioned memberships have been coming in rapidly while the applications for examinations and commissions have fallen off. This is natural and normal and no occasion for alarm.

We were pretty nearly up to strength on our commissioned forces and the reason for the establishment of a non-com mess was to provide the opportunity for membership to those who either could not or would not take examinations for commissions. We cannot have a healthy organization if we have an excess of officers over non-coms and cadets, so I am satisfied with this latest development.

After all, we are all interested primarily in seeing the organization strong rather than in building up one branch at the expense of the other. Let us continue to have flights and to have meetings of those flights. Let us continue our live interest in every phase of aviation and let us never forget that there is more in membership than the wearing of a pin.

Your interest this month is directed particularly to our Words-awing column. That department has grown and the growth is of interest in itself, but there are two messages in there which particularly interested me.

One of our members is organizing a Zeppelin Division of the War Birds for those who are interested in lighter-than-air. He is alive and interested in his specialty and he is qualified to take the lead in a movement calculated to direct attention to dirigibles. Despite the recent tragedies in this country, the cause of lighter-than-air is not a lost cause. There is a wide field for anyone who can dig in and master the principles. Our fellow member offers to supply data to members who are interested and I recommend that you get in touch with him if you are willing to cooperate seriously with him.

In the same column there is still another amazing offer. One of our members is an expert on the very newest thing in aviation; the rocket ship and rocket propulsion. He, too, is volunteering to supply information and help to those who want to join the rocket division and dig in for knowledge in this field.

Both movements have my hearty endorsement and I'll make a request that neither member makes for himself. If you write and can do it conveniently, it would be the courteous thing to enclose a stamp for the data that the members have offered to mail. The stamp does not compensate for the time and trouble of aiding you, but it helps to cut down the expense.

Only one more thing and I'm through for the time being. I saw a riot stopped in France once during those mad days after the armistice where there were a lot of American casualties on the loose and too many A.W.O.L. soldiers to be adequately handled by the authorities. In a little town behind the lines, a bunch of men in American uniform were going hog wild and taking things apart. A handful of M.P.s were knocked galley west and it looked too bad. Then a little red faced padre who had been a chaplain up in the line stalked into the ruckus, climbed up on a table and boomed for order.

The boys would listen to anybody for a minute and he didn't need more. "Boys," he said, "the French people in this town are going to tell their grand children and their great grand children what kind of a country America is. You're throwing mud on the flag and it will take a hundred years to wash it off."

It stopped them cold when a hundred M.P.s would have fallen down. I want you to remember it. Don't ever act in a way that will throw mud on any worth-while thing that you represent or that stands behind you. It may take a hundred years to wash the mud away.

My salutes to you,
Carson W. Mowre, C.O.

THE ADJUTANT SEZ

HOWARYA, Citizens!

It's time to shuffle in for another meeting and this time I'm going to let you shuffle. There's shiny booters who frown at such carryings-on and who think that we non-coms ought to march into one of these sessions like a lot o' lads hatched right out of Sousa. . . .

Well, you can't sling a wrench all day and act like the pride of West Point in the evening. And I don't think that you muggs out front would rally around me like you have if you had to carry your dictionaries into mess like a bunch o' deacons carrying prayer-books. And my, how you have rallied!

No foolin', but we've got the officers pacing the floor. The new members have just been pouring into the non-com ranks and there's more non-coms now than officers—which is ree-markable when you consider that they had nearly a year of head start over us. If you don't think we're going places, just look at the squadron line-up. Haha, bookoo and two toot-sweets! (I simply must guzzle over into French occasionally.)

The funniest thing about it is the way the C.O. has taken it. At first, he was kind of piping us down in this noisy corner. He liked us but he didn't think we would ever amount to much. Then, he started riding us a little bit . . . and now he just rattles papers around on his desk when I come in behind my grin and he says deep down in his throat:

"Ah . . . ahem . . . a hundred new non-coms, you say? Ah. That's fine. Now how many officers have qualified this week?" Right in the eye I look at him and then I draw up in a very snappy pose with my heels clicking like a Prussian. "Six," I tell him.

You should see him, Modocs. You should see him. They've been coming like that; one hundred or two hundred non-coms at a time and only a dribble of officers. If I thought it was because the War Bird gang couldn't qualify for bars, I'd be as worried as the C.O. has been, but I know that it isn't that. You just like it in this hut and I'm glad . . . and I want to make you feel at home.

To show you that I do, I'm going to answer a few questions and that's something that I practically never start but you'd practically never let me stop.

A lot of you have written to me about triplanes and you've stated what's a fact when you say that there's a lot of confusion on the subject of who was first with what and how many there were and all that.

Well, as near as I've ever been able to find out, the first really successful triplane scout was the Sopwith—and what a honey it was. It gave the non-coms and ack emmas all kinds of grief, though, and that's how it washed out at last. It was all aeroplane in the air for anyone who could fly it and it piled up one of the most amazing records of the war for Ray Collishaw and his Canucks, but it took all day and all night to rig one properly and when they cracked—as they did frequently—the ack emmas were worked right down into the ground putting them together again; not to mention the load on motor transport lugging up spare parts, etc.

About the time the Sop was cracking into the field of operations, the Albatross people were building a tripe in Germany that never amounted to much and then dear old Tony Fokker brought out his hellish little contraption and darn near won the war with it for a few weeks till the Allies found out that he glued the wings on—or something like that—and then the boys on Camels, etc., started feinting the tripes silly till the things broke up in the air. Werner Voss was the big tough bozo of the tripes for Germany, and it took darn near all of the star-turn aces that England had to get him at last after he'd scored something like 22 victories in three weeks.

Nieuport came out with a funny looking tripe that had the wings staggered like the steps of a church, but that was just one of the mistakes of Monsieur Nieuport, and should not be held against him. Curtiss had a tripe in this country and he may have been ahead of Sopwith, but we weren't in the war then and that didn't count. Nobody would fly a tripe just for fun. And, of course, there was the 1916 monster of the Italians; the Caproni tripe. That thing was a bomber and just too darn big to be talked about on the same page with Sops and Fokkers. Late in the war, Pfalz built a tripe and Albatross built another, but the only war plane that either one of them could have licked was—perhaps—the Nieuport tripe. So-oo-oo!

There's your tripe story and I picked that question to answer because I want to remind the snooty officers that even a good ship wasn't any good to the air force unless the men on the ground approved it. When the ack emmas grumbled and threw up their hands and decided that a plane just wasn't a service proposition, that plane didn't stay up long. There never were enough good ack emmas in the war and no air force could afford to spend too many wrench heavers on any one ship. . . .

Remember that when you get to designing airplanes, you technical buzzards! Build performance into them, of course; but don't forget the boys who have to fix 'em up. If you do, bloolie to you. . . .

It's pretty much the same way with life in general, Kaydets. Some of you lads are so busy trying to rig up a way to get citations and promotions for yourselves that you forget to do anything for the organization that you're trying to get a promotion from. You may be okay but you don't make it possible for other lads to work with you.

And with that little moral, I pipe down—except that I thought you might like to hear a little Tony Fokker story that a friend of mine sent me from England. A few months back, Fokker was asked to give a talk at a dinner of British flyers who had fought in the war. It was a tough spot for Tony because he'd been over there with the enemy; but here's how he handled it. He got up and looked around and said—

“I always felt very friendly to the English pilots. They were so very good that they kept knocking down the ships that I built and the German government had to keep buying more from me.”

Rather neat, eh wot?

THE ADJ.

CITATIONS AND PROMOTIONS

Note—A citation is not a promotion but each citation goes into the service record and counts in the officer's favor when names come up for the promotion lists. The following officers are cited in this month's orders:

For exceptional service and outstanding ability, the following officers are raised to the ranks indicated (effective May 1, 1935):

- 1st Lieutenant Daniel J. McGuire—16 Squadron—to Captain.
- 1st Lieutenant Buster French—20 Squadron—to Captain.
- 1st Lieutenant Chester Opacki—34 Squadron—to Captain.
- 2nd Lieutenant Joseph M. Novak—43 Squadron to 1st Lieutenant.
- 2nd Lieutenant Clarence Miller, Jr.—1 Squadron—to 1st Lieutenant.
- 2nd Lieutenant Billy Ague—37 Squadron—to—to 1st Lieutenant.
- 2nd Lieutenant Alex Chisholm—20 Squadron—1st Lieutenant.
- Corporal Herman Price—1 Squadron—to Sergeant.

CITATIONS

The following officers and non-commissioned men are cited for exceptional service in this month's orders:

1st Lieutenant Dorothy L. Kohn, 39 Squadron.
2nd Lieutenant Sydney M. Shapiro, 5 Squadron.
2nd Lieutenant Ed. Michalski, 43 Squadron.
2nd Lieutenant Alfred F. Rickey, 50 Squadron.
2nd Lieutenant J. E. Lance, Jr., 46 Squadron,
2nd Lieutenant Melville Boynton, 5 Squadroh.
2nd Lieutenant Lester Lee, 43 Squadron.
2nd Lieutenant Donald Hegger, 52 Squadron.
Corporal Paul Boyd, 41 Squadron.
Corporal Henry J. Sebry, 50 Squadron.

WORDS A-WING

Publication of your name in this department entails an obligation to answer all letters received. Post card replies are permissible, but WAR BIRDS who fail to obey the rules governing the use of WAR BIRDS facilities and privileges are subject to court-martial and the revocation of commissions.

WILLIAM S. TREASURE, 48 Noble Avenue, Winnipeg, Canada—would like to hear from Canadian War Birds, particularly in Winnipeg.

JAMES CHARLES, King George Hotel, Hamilton, Ont., Canada—wants letters from anywhere. Is 20 years old, 5 ft. 8 in., 140 pounds, blue eyes, brown hair and a model builder.

HARRY SMITH, 42 Revere Street, Everett, Mass.— would like to hear from WAR BIRDS in Massachusetts.

MELVILLE BOYNTON, 21 Ewing Street, Trenton, N. J.—wants letters particularly from mates in Squadron 5. Is 5' 11½" with brown hair and eyes. Was horn in Virginia and would like letters from there. Fair sex not barred.

ALFRED F. RICKEY, 3 Trefann Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada—particularly wants letters from Squadron so mates in Toronto but welcomes letters from anywhere. Is 21 years old, 6', blue eyes, weight 150 pounds. Was two years in cavalry as mounted machine gunner. Is model builder and has over 2,000 plane photos.

TALMADGE LETHERWOOD, Altoona, Alabama—wants to hear from WAR BIRDS in Alabama, Oregon, New Jersey and Mexico.

J.E. LANCE, 810 East First North Street, Morristown, Tenn.—wants letters from anywhere particularly from Squadron mates in 46 Sq. Is 5' 11" and tips the scales around 140. Is a veteran model builder and interested in all sports.

LESTER LEE, 306 South Front Street, Milton, Pa.—says that he will answer all letters received and make them three times as long as the letter received.

JUDSON THOMAS, 509 West 26th Street, Austin, Texas—is interested in organizing a ROCKET DIVISION of the WAR BIRDS and has complete data on rocket ships which he will send to those interested enough to write.

EDWARD HOLDEN, Oswego, Oregon (Box 336)— wants to hear from squadron mates in 36.

MORTON LEGG, Clay, West Va.—wants to get in touch with West Virginia WAR BIRDS to form a flight.

WILLIAM DURKA, 25 Greenwood Ave., Waukegan, 111.—is a first lieut. in the WAR BIRDS and is forming an aeronautical correspondence club. He promises to answer all letters received and explain his idea.

MICHAEL COLLIN, 21 Prairie Ave., Suffern, N. Y. —wants to hear from squadron mates in Number One Squadron.

HOWARD E. COX, 3903 Silsby Road, S. W., Cleveland, Ohio—wants to hear from squadron mates in II Sq. and WAR BIRDS in Cleveland.

FRANK ZOVISKA, 3021 So. Kolin Avenue, Chicago 111.—wants to hear from squadron mates in 34 Sq. and particularly from WAR BIRDS in Chicago. He would also ' like to know where to obtain war plane photos.

E. PETERSON, 26 Aspen Grove, Lodge Lane, Liverpool, England—would like to hear from members of Squadron 52 or from anyone interested in fencing. Mr. Peterson is an instructor at the Liverpool Fencing Club and British epee semi-finalist.

G. W. R. RHODES, Antioch, West Virginia—has studied dirigible construction since 1918 and is anxious to get in touch with WAR BIRDS who are interested in lighter-than-air. He will send data to those interested and wants to establish a Zeppelin unit of the WAR BIRDS.