

PILOT TRAINING UNDER THE EXPANSION PROGRAM  
By the Randolph Field Correspondent

An Air Corps of 5,500 airplanes by June 30, 1941, was the goal set by Congress last summer before adjournment. In addition to building the planes, training large numbers of mechanics to maintain them, there was also the task of training pilots - pilots and officers who would come up to the rigid standards that have always been in vogue. "There will be no compromise with safety," was the watchword when the expanded pilot training program got under way on July 1.

Exactly half a year has passed since the task of Primary Flight Training was turned over to nine carefully selected civilian flying schools, located from Alabama to California. Randolph Field was turned into two basic flight training schools. Likewise, Kelly Field, gobbling up its neighbor, Brooks Field, for additional ground and air room, became two Advanced flight training schools.

Here's what has happened in the way of pilot training since July 1st. A total of 759 student pilots have been graduated from the nine civilian schools and sent to Randolph Field for training on BT-9's. They came in three almost equal increments - Classes 40-A, with 257, which reported to the "West Point of the Air" the last week in September; 40-B, with 238, which arrived November 15th; and finally, 40-C, with 264, completed primary training just at the close of the old year.

The total number of pilots-to-be who started primary training with these three classes was 1,181. Therefore, the aggregate percentage for these classes is 64.2%, who successfully leaped the first and most difficult hurdle on the course to a pair of wings.

Class 40-A already has spent its three months at Randolph Field, and is now at the Advanced School, Kelly Field. The members of this class started training in various sections of the country on July 1, with a total of 386 potential pilots, 257 reaching Randolph Field for basic training. Thus, 66.6% completed primary training; an average almost as high as the best ever established while Randolph Field was giving this first phase.

A total of 25 of them were unable to master the intricacies of the larger, powerful basic training planes at Randolph Field and were eliminated, leaving 232 to be transferred to Kelly Field, where they now are. In other words, 60% of the original class are now at the Advanced Flying School.

Class 40-B, which started primary training on August 15th, had 394 members the first day, but dwindled to 238 at

the end of the twelfth week, which also marked the end of the first phase of training. One casualty marred their record, when a Flying Cadet and his instructor were killed in a crash during primary training. Of the original class, 60.4% completed primary training. This class is now at Randolph Field, more than half way through, with 225 of them still on the active list. Thus, it would appear that at least 55% of this class will also get to Kelly Field for advanced training.

The present "freshman" class at Randolph Field is Class 40-C, which has only recently reported. They started primary training with 401 members, gradually losing one now and then to the "Washing Machine," and wound up with 264 of them being transferred to Texas for the second phase. Thus, their percentage for the first phase was 65.8%, just a fraction of one percent lower than the record set by the first class under this new system.

And that's the statistical picture as painted for the first half year of the expanding Air Corps. Classes entering the civilian flying schools every six weeks number approximately 400. Thus far, 64.2% of them complete the first phase and come to Texas for basic and advanced training. Their future success, both at Randolph Field and Kelly Field, depends solely on their own ability to fly a military airplane as it should be flown. The watchword - "there is no compromise with safety," stands out in just as big letters as ever before.

---oOo---