

WEST COAST AIR CORPS TRAINING CENTER

MISSION

LINEAGE

West Coast Air Corps Training Center

STATIONS

Moffett Field, CA

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Brig Gen Henry W. Harms, #1941

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Headquarters, West Coast Air Corps Training Center, was organized and established at Moffett Field, California, on July 8, 1940, for the purpose of controlling and coordinating the activities of

such number of training schools as might be placed under its jurisdiction. Its mission is to supervise the training of students in flying and the duties of Junior Officers, and to assure that they attain qualifications required of Squadron Officers and tactical pilots in combat organizations of the Air Force of the United States.

Prior to 1938 the pilot training program of the United States Army Air Corps was conducted under one training center, the so-called "West Point of the Air" at Randolph Field, San Antonio, Texas. The program at the Air Corps Training Center, Randolph Field, was established and operated by the Air Corps for a number of years, turning out very excellent pilots and keeping the small air force of the United States well supplied with excellently trained pilots. However, when the United States Government determined upon a policy of a moderate expansion of the Air Corps to such size as in 1938 appeared would adequately meet any threat of outside aggression from foreign powers, it was found that it would be necessary to enlarge the existing establishment for the training of pilots for the United States. As a result of this moderate increase in facilities for pilot training it was found that the Army setup at Randolph Field and Kelly Field had not sufficient personnel to adequately train primary students, and at the same time give more specialized training at basic and advanced schools. Therefore a system of civil schools was established throughout the United States on the basis of paying civil contractors a set price per hour of instruction for students, these students being instructed according to a curriculum laid down by the Air Corps. The original complement of these civil schools was nine, scattered throughout the United States, and all of them were placed directly under the Air Corps Training Center at Randolph Field.

In the spring of 1940 an additional increase in the pilot training program necessitated an increase of training centers in order to handle the ever-growing pilot training program. As a result, two additional training centers were established, one at Maxwell Field, Alabama termed the Southeast Air Corps Training Center, and the other at Moffett Field, California, termed the West Coast Air Corps Training Center. These headquarters were originally established and now function as completely separate and distinct training centers for the complete processing of flying students from the time they are originally taken into the Army as flying cadets or student officers to the turning out of a product that is a finished pilot, capable of taking his position in a tactical organization of the Air Force of the United States. The original complement of nine schools was found to be inadequate to handle this latest increase under three training centers, and as a result this number was raised in 1940 to a total of 29 civil schools, divided between the three training centers.

The West Coast Air Corps Training Center is a territorial command and embraces all student pilot training from the 108th meridian westward. The Headquarters of the West Coast Air Corps Training Center was established at Moffett Field as a convenience for office space and due to its favorable location with respect to the schools under its jurisdiction; it has no direct function of command in so far as the basic flying school at Moffett Field is concerned.

The Headquarters, West Coast Air Corps Training Center, consists of the Commanding General and such officers from units under his command as he may select for his staff. In addition, there

is Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron of the West Coast Air Corps Training Center, troops of which are used to man training detachments at the civil elementary flying schools under this Headquarters and perform Headquarters duties in the West Coast Air Corps Training Center. At the present time there are eight active schools under jurisdiction of the West Coast Air Corps Training Center, as follows:

Civil Elementary Flying School—Ryan School of Aeronautics, San Diego, California; Ryan School of Aeronautics, Hemet, California; Cal-Aero Academy, Glendale, California; Cal-Aero Academy, Ontario, California; Cal-Aero Academy, Oxnard, California; Alan Hancock School of Flying, Santa Maria, California.

Army Schools—Basic Flying School. Moffett Field. California; Advanced Flying School (two-engine), Stockton, California.

It is contemplated that in the near future additional schools will be established in West Coast Air Corps Training Center as follows:

Civil Elementary Flying Schools—Rankin School of Aeronautics, Tulare, California; Palo Alto Airport, Inc., King City, California; Southwest Airways, Clendale, Arizona.

Army Schools—Basic Flying School, Bakersfield, California; Basic Flying School, Taft, California; Advanced Flying School (two-engine), Mather Field, California; Advanced Flying School (single-engine), Phoenix, Arizona; Flexible Gunnery School, Las Vegas, Nevada

In the offices of Moffett Field are many enlisted men who have put down the sword and picked up the pen in performing their duties. To these men goes much credit for the smooth-running, efficient operation of Moffett Field.

Competent, well-trained clerks and office workers possessing initiative, administrative ability and a high standard of efficiency, in addition to a specialized knowledge of the particular duties assigned them, are needed and especially desired in the Air Corps.

Fully realizing the urgent need for such clerks and office workers—as much so as for skilled mechanics, radio operators, machinists, photographers and other technicians—the Department for Instruction of Air Corps Supply and Technical Clerks was organized in 1933 and equipped with the most modern office equipment available.

As the result of organizing this Department, many men, who had some limited clerical training upon entering the service and were thereafter assigned clerical duties, have been afforded the opportunity to be detailed to a course of instruction arranged and specialized to "round out" their earlier training, thereby fitting them for more efficient performance and accomplishment of their duties as well as increasing their value to the service. Likewise, men who have had no clerical training but believe they possess the ability, capacity and educational qualifications necessary for a clerk are given the opportunity to enter the course. The value of these graduates is readily recognized by their organizations and departments, with advancement and

promotion awarded accordingly.

Since the parachute game is one in which a 100 per cent performance is required and mistakes are too costly, it is of paramount importance that men assigned to this department be of the type who can be thoroughly depended upon and who possess a high degree of mechanical skill.

In order to be eligible for enrollment in the Parachute Riggers' course, Army Regulations provide that applicants must have been graduated from one of the other technical courses at the Air Corps Mechanical School or have had at least one year's experience as a mechanic in the Air Corps. In any event, the detail of applicants as students in this course is subject to the approval of the authorities of the school and of their respective organization commanders.

In the last stage of his training as a parachute rigger, each student is encouraged to make at least one live parachute jump. As this jump is made with a parachute folded, packed and inspected by the student jumper, it is looked upon as the final examination which entitles him to a diploma as a qualified parachute rigger.

The standard of training is so high and quality of service so nearly perfect, the Parachute Department at the average field is taken for granted as a department which always clicks and requires a minimum of supervision by anyone other than those assigned directly to the department.

Well-trained and proficient in their duties, the men in the welding shop at Moffett Field are specialists at their trade. They know the care and operation of standard welding equipment, the use of welding fluxes, the various types of welded joints, and their adaptability to general repair work.

As representatives of one of the oldest trades in the world, the men in the carpenter shop at Moffett Field put to good use the knowledge of this ancient trade in performing their duties as part of one of the newest of professions —aviation. They are thoroughly trained in this trade.

The men in the propeller shop at Moffett Field are fully acquainted with the operating principles of each propeller used in the service and are highly qualified by experience for the duties they are required to perform, using only the most modern and approved methods.

The men in the engine repair shop at Moffett Field are thoroughly trained in the general construction principles, minor repair, adjustment, inspection and maintenance of the complete airplane, engine and affiliated equipment. Their responsibility is to keep the engines running smoothly.

In the Photographic Department, Moffett Field, the men are not only able to accomplish the photographic duties assigned to them, but they know the reasons behind every operation they perform. They are trained in four general phases of photography. They are first given careful instruction in the basic principles of photography, then they are instructed in ground

photography, with instruction on ground cameras and their use. Aerial photography comes next, and the men learn the maintenance and operation of aerial cameras and associated equipment and the processing of aerial camera film. Their final training comes in mosaic and map making, which is of great importance in the Air Corps.

In this department at Moffett Field, the men are experts in all these phases of photography.

There are two more lines along which an Air Corps enlisted man can pursue a trade. One is the venerable and honorable trade of the blacksmith, while the other is, in comparison to the blacksmith, a modern one—that of machinist.

At the mention of the blacksmith, the mind of the average person fashions a picture of "sinewy muscles" and a "spreading chestnut tree" or the shoeing of four-footed animals, but in the Air Corps, the blacksmith has many varied duties in his work in iron and making of iron utensils. The bellowing flames, the thump of the hammer and the red-hot metal are sure signs that the blacksmith is contributing his share toward the efficient maintenance of Air Corps equipment. In this "machine age," there are untold opportunities for the man who not only "feels at home" in the machine shop but who also is an expert in the operation of its equipment. As in the other trades offered the enlisted men of the Air Corps, the machine shop worker is thoroughly trained, taught both the theoretical and practical sides of his work, and is given the opportunity to put the training and theory to practical use.

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.
Unit History. *West Coast Air Corps Training Center, Air Corps Basic Flying School, Flying Cadets, US Army, Moffett Field, CA.* 1941.