

Unit Commanders:

CIVIL AIR PATROL

FOREST PATROL--The United States Forest Service has sent a directive to all of its Regional Foresters explaining the organization of the Civil Air Patrol and authorizing them to utilize its services. In a memorandum from CAP Headquarters (GM-27, May 22) all Wing Commanders have been advised as follows:

"The danger of forest fires, whether by sabotage or by natural causes, must be guarded against with vigilance this year. Timber is a strategic resource which must be protected. Fires in some forest areas would threaten power lines and other war facilities. The man-hours lost in putting out fires is a drain on the labor supply."

Possible forest missions, the memorandum explains, include flights either on regular schedule or in emergencies for such purposes as: detection by observation flights over blind spots or in periods of low visibility after electrical storms; scouting over going fires; ferrying of men to the scene of attack; transportation of supplies and equipment to fire camps; dropping fire fighters; and miscellaneous flying services.

It is emphasized that such work will not supplant or curtail existing commercial services now under contract for work over the forests.

The general plan has been developed in consultation with the U. S. Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture and the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior. It is agreed that the Regional Foresters will set up programs in each State and that the Park Service, Indian Service, and other Interior Department agencies will be tied in to receive service wherever they have areas which need protection.

State-wide conferences of all interested agencies, including State Forestry Departments, are recommended. Per diem compensation for pilots and observers and rental for planes engaged in active-duty forest flight missions are to be paid by the agencies for which tasks are performed. Fiscal procedure and arrangements for official operational orders will be worked out in the State conferences to suit local conditions.

"Since the fire danger has passed until Fall in most of the Eastern States," the memorandum points out, "immediate operations are likely to be mostly in the West. But all Wings should look ahead to future operations in dry periods and plan their practice missions accordingly with the guidance of forest officials."

All planes used on forest patrol must be equipped with 2-way radio. In some cases, modification of fuselages for special work is indicated. Most of the patrolling will be with a pilot and observer in each plane. Both the airplanes and the personnel must be protected by insurance, as prescribed in CAP directives. For information on insurance, see your local aviation insurance agent or inquire through CAP.

Several Wings of the Civil Air Patrol already have seen active duty over blazing forests. Planes have flown through smoke to spot the boundaries of fires, locate the best access roads, and carry fire wardens. In some areas, patrol missions already are being flown on regular schedule.

Wing Commanders are now instructed to develop plans so that their units will be ready to go into action immediately on call. Forest patrol not only is an opportunity for outstanding wartime service but is excellent experience for other types of CAP active-duty missions.

Intelligence Officers may release details of plans in their States, as the program develops, carefully observing any restrictions laid down by the Federal officials for whom the work is to be done.

GLIDER PILOTS WANTED--The Army's call for glider pilots opens the door to military service to many civil airmen previously ineligible for flying duties. Any male pilot 18 to 35 who holds a license of private grade or higher which did not lapse prior to January 1 is eligible. Men who have completed a CAA elementary pilot training course and glider pilots who have made 200 or more glider flights also are eligible. Physical requirements are not as strict as for aviation cadets. Vision may be 20/40 correctible with glasses to 20/20.

Candidates will take a course in light airplanes, featuring dead-stick, power-off landings; then will receive instruction on small and large gliders in Army schools. Initial instruction will be at 20 midwest flying schools recommended by CAA on the basis of their civilian pilot training performance.

Graduates will be awarded wings and rated as staff sergeants. After further experience and demonstration of leadership qualities, they will be in line for commissions. Full information can be obtained from CAA pilot training representatives and Army recruiting stations.

LETTERS TO WASHINGTON--Despite directives and frequent bulletin items on the subject of following channels in communications on CAP matters, some officers and members still write letters in their capacity as CAP personnel to Member of Congress and Federal Officials. This is out of line with the rules of military courtesy and discipline. See GM-29, May 26, for policy on this matter.

FLYING CLUB PROTECTS PLANT--A flying club has been formed at Hammond, Ind., to protect the plant of the Pullman-Standard Car Manufacturing Co. According to a Company announcement, 24 men, including two foremen, have pooled their resources to buy two Piper Cub trainers. Half of them, who are pilots, have joined the CAP and the others are planning to apply as soon as they can qualify for licenses. One of the members was a lighter-than-air officer in the Army Air Corps and another was an aerial gunner in the last war. The club has employed a commercial pilot as instructor. When another group of 12 is formed, another plane will be bought. Several women employes have volunteered.

TORNADO--CAP flyers of Group 8112, Wichita Falls, Texas, flew over Crowell after a tornado had ripped a path two miles wide and four miles long. Half the buildings in the town were wrecked. One block was on fire. Streets were littered with debris and a nearby river was overflowing. Parachute letters reporting conditions were dropped to highway patrolmen. Pilots Jo Cable and C. Y. Gorman and observers J. Sinex and E. Kuntz made the flights.

FLIGHT TRAINING--The Squadron at Jamestown, N. Y., is teaching its non-pilot members to fly. John H. Wright, Commander of Group 217, presented the unit with an Aeronca trainer and local citizens put in funds to buy another. Members have free use of the planes, paying only for gas and oil. Twelve of them recently took tests for private licenses. Several are training for CAA instructor ratings so they can teach the others.

RADIO SKITS--To aid recruitment of Group 914, Riverside, Calif., the Intelligence and Communications sections have prepared two 15-minute radio programs dramatizing CAP missions and are continuing on a weekly schedule, making transcriptions available for rebroadcast in other Group areas.

GRADUATION EXERCISES--Squadron 5201-1, Indiana, is planning graduation exercises for members who have completed the 80-hour basic course. Governor Henry F. Schricker and Wing Commander Walker W. Winslow will address the meeting. Group 527 recently flew an inspection mission at Navy request.