

# CIVIL AIR PATROL

AUXILIARY OF THE ARMY AIR FORCES

## RHODE ISLAND WING

PROVIDENCE



SQUADRON

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NO. 2

### *Story of the 16th Wing*

In area within its jurisdiction, the Rhode Island Wing is of course the smallest in the country. In aeronautical equipment and flight operations, it is probably close to being the smallest—thanks to the fact that Rhode Island is one of two states entirely within the restricted Vital Defense Area. But in its determination and spirit and its demonstrated persistence in “carrying on” under adverse circumstances it is far from being the least of the forty-eight wings in the country. In our first issue was a brief history of Civil Air Patrol, taken from a recent publication of the Missouri Wing. There have been more elaborate and complete histories of CAP written, but none which tells so clearly and effectively how the organization came into being and what it has done. It may be of interest to supplement this by a brief history of the Rhode Island Wing.

The 16th, or Rhode Island Wing, was organized in January, 1942, under the command of Willard Fletcher, the State Commissioner of Aeronautics. His Wing Executive Officer, Albert R. Tavani, was largely responsible for setting up the organization of the Wing and seeing it through its early stages. Four squadrons were immediately activated: The First, under Archie Burnett, based at the Providence Airport; the Second, under Phil Rocchio, soon followed by Bill Crook, with temporary headquarters at Roger Williams Park; the Third, with George Anderson as commander; and the Fourth, under Walter Main, at the Smithfield Airport. Circumstances resulted in the deactivation of Squadron Three and the incorporation of some of its personnel in Squadron Four. Shortly thereafter, another squadron was activated at Riconn Airport, at Greene, under the command of Everett Potter.

During the spring and summer of 1942 combined meetings of the whole Wing

were held weekly at the Cranston Street Armory, in Providence, as well as squadron meetings at the various squadron headquarters. Average attendance at the drill sessions was about 150.

Early spring saw the Wing in uniform, but it had no sooner become organized than it began to lose members to the armed services. Many of the best qualified flyers were of course the first to go. This process continued to the point where it began to look doubtful whether there were enough air-minded members left to keep the Wing going. The original Wing Staff consisted of W. R. Fletcher, Commander, A. R. Tavani, A. R. Jones, M. E. Eighme, N. W. Rakestraw, A. Dailey, E. McDonald, Ann W. Kenyon. Of these, only two now remain with us. All the original squadron commanders have also gone.

In the middle of the spring the Army moved into Hillsgrove, where Wing Headquarters were located. Civilian ships were soon ordered out of the hangar, and those belonging to CAP members were scattered, to Smithfield, to Seekonk, and elsewhere. Wing Headquarters still remained at Hillsgrove, however, and it was expected that eventually a new headquarters building would be built there, with hangar space for one squadron of CAP planes. Needless to say, that never happened.

During the summer of 1942 training activities went on at a great pace in all squadrons, with a considerable amount of CAP flying at the Providence and Smithfield Airports. But in August the Vital Defense Area was established by the Army and all civilian flying was grounded. Most CAP planes were moved outside the Area, to fields in Western Massachusetts. A very few remained at Providence Airport, and it was hoped that they might be put in active CAP service later. Smithfield Airport closed and Squadron 16-4, based there, began to disintegrate. Its officers scattered

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**CIVIL AIR PATROL NEWS**


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**RHODE ISLAND (16TH) WING****COMMANDER**

Major N. W. Rakestraw

**WING STAFF**

Capt. F. H. Lovenberg    Capt. B. L. Mann  
 Capt. T. N. Saaty        Capt. L. J. Custer  
     1st Lieut. W. P. Jones  
     1st Lieut. A. R. Jones

**PROVIDENCE SQUADRON (16-1)****COMMANDER**

1st Lieut. A. S. Lehmann

**SQUADRON STAFF**

1st Lieut. E. A. Mercier  
 2d Lieut. J. N. Fox    2d Lieut. D. W. Hurd  
 W/O Rosalie Lehmann    W/O A. E. Swift  
 W/O B. H. Gratt        F/O S. W. Bardsley

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Editor.....Capt. F. H. Lovenberg  
 Associate Editor.....W/O A. E. Swift  
 Associate Editor.....Sergeant A. L. Hiller

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and its remaining personnel, along with that of Squadron 16-2, which had never had a flight headquarters, were absorbed into 16-1. The squadron at Riconn Field also disintegrated when that field was closed, and its remaining members were also attached to 16-1. There thus remained only one active squadron, with its headquarters still at Providence Airport. This was the situation in the fall of 1942.

In the late summer the Wing Commander, W. R. Fletcher, had been called into service and N. W. Rakestraw was appointed to fill his place. The Wing Executive Officer went into the Navy at about the same time, so that a complete reorganization of the Wing Staff became necessary, as well as a transfer of the Wing Headquarters to the Armory of Mounted Commands, in Providence, where all the Civilian Defense activities were located.

The generosity of the State Council of Defense was not limited to giving us office space for headquarters but extended to the payment of most of the expenses of the Wing. The Wing would scarcely have been able to survive had it not been for this generous help.

During the late fall and winter there was hope that an industrial courier base might be established at the Providence Airport, which was being kept open by a full time guard. It was not until the spring of 1943 that a final and positive adverse

decision was given by the Fighter Command that no regular industrial courier service would be permitted in the Vital Area.

Throughout the winter meetings and training were continued, at the Armory of Mounted Commands, where adequate space had been provided. Since all but one squadron had by that time been deactivated, practically all distinction between Wing and Squadron activities ceased. But we survived the winter, and spring brought new life.

Interest and attendance picked up when the weather cleared up enough to hold regular meetings again at the headquarters at Providence Airport. The "Prop House" was cleaned up again and every Wednesday evening saw a gathering for drill on the open field and class sessions in engines, code, and other subjects indoors. New enlistments began to appear, especially after the change of our national organization from the Office of Civilian Defense to the War Department. But we still suffered from the lack of any opportunity to fly.

In the middle of the summer the Wing got its first real "break." Until then opportunities for active duty had been few and not very attractive. A small handful of members had been able to get away to serve on Coastal Patrol, but there had been no chance for operational flying within the Wing. Then came a chance to do some regular courier service for the Army Engineers. After a little delay an agreement was entered into by which one of our planes (practically the only one available to the Wing) was based at the Army Air Base at Hillsgrove to be used for courier flights on call. This put us "in business" at least and proved to be an enormous boost in morale. There were of course only very few pilots left in the unit, and only these were really affected by the new opportunity, but it at least made us a flying organization again—in a small way.

Subsequent history is recent enough to be within the memory of all present members. A little later the Wing began to cooperate in the recruiting of Army Aviation Cadets, and this not only brought us a large influx of new members—cadets, to be sure—but gave us more opportunity to do a little flying, first the "air show" on September 18, and now at the present time more flying for cadet recruiting, in the Army ships which were described in our first issue.

Where do we go from here.

The following were at one time officers within the Wing, but have since left us, for active duty or for various other reas-

ons. We like to think they are merely on an "inactive list," gone but not forgotten:

- Captain J. K. Fenno,  
(Group commander, later engineering officer)
- Captain A. C. Burnett,  
(Wing operations and squadron commander)
- 1st Lieut. Ann W. Kenyon,  
(Once wing supply officer; military courier)
- 1st Lieut. W. E. Main,  
(Once squadron commander)
- 1st Lieut. T. S. Messinger,  
(Wing intelligence)
- 1st Lieut. I. H. Strasmich,  
(Assistant training officer; aide for cadets)
- 2d Lieut. C. E. Hagan,  
(Wing medical officer)
- 2nd Lieut. M. T. Boucher,  
(Squadron engineering officer)
- 2nd Lieut. G. I. Rounds,  
(Squadron engineering officer)
- 2nd Lieut. J. D. Austin,  
(Training officer)
- 2nd Lieut. L. E. Moody,  
(Transportation officer)
- Flight Officer T. J. Rannalli
- Flight Officer J. N. Chaffee

This list does not include those who held provisional office in the original squadrons but only those who actually held formal commissions or warrants.

### Visitation to Woonsocket

Major Rakestraw and Captain Lovenberg, members of the Rhode Island Wing, CAP, and Officers of the Providence, R. I. Squadron visited the Woonsocket, R. I. Squadron Sunday morning, February 20, 1944. The Woonsocket Squadron expected visitors and immediately lined up for inspection. They presented the Wing members and the Providence Squadron with a very snappy drill formation. Each Flight Commander drilled his flight individually, and the grils' flight demonstrated their ability in military drill also. Immediately following drill formation the visiting members were shown the equipment of the Woonsocket Squadron. The First Aid, movie projector and office equipment were on display. A few of the many reading films were shown. Following inspection of material on display, an Officers' meeting was called by Capt. Custer, Commander Woonsocket Squadron. The meeting was operated in a "Question and Answer" manner. Many Squadron problems were discussed, such as required attendance, and permanent headquarters for the Woonsocket Squadron.

The meeting was dismissed at 1300 o'clock.

### Your Bulletin

The Wing Buletting is your publication. It wants to carry news about you—news about your flight. It wants to tell other Wings and Squadrons about what you are doing.

Appoint to each flight a reporter, who will receive all items pertaining to his flight and in turn pass this information on to the Associate Editor, who will assemble, edit and submit to the editor for approval such news that is gathered. Select someone who will make it his or her job to get news. Flight leaders should call for a report of materials gathered at each meeting, check it over, ok it and send it in. If everyone follows this plan your editors will be swamped with useable news.

### For the Record

CAP pilots and observers flew more than 24,000,000 air miles over the ocean. . . . 173 subs were spotted, 57 of which were attacked with bombs and depth charges. At least two were sunk in addition to many more sunk or damaged by Army and Navy aircraft summoned for the kill by CAP. Thirty-six bodies, three hundred and sixty-three survivors of ship sinkings, aircraft crashes recovered—17 floating mines in shipping lanes spotted—numerous ships and planes in distress reported.

"Skyways."

### CAP Service Ribbons

Members of CAP who have served more than a year and put upwards of 250 hours into the work may be awarded the CAP service ribbon recently approved by the War Department. A white ribbon with the CAP emblem in the middle and green stripes stand for one year and not less than 250 hours; red stripes for 18 months and 500 actual working hours; and blue for two years and 1000 hours or more.

Members who have put in a large number of hours in less than a year are not eligible for the green ribbon until they have completed a full year with the CAP. A member who has 1000 hours is not eligible for the blue ribbon until he has served full two years but may get the red or green.

### WANTED:

One Indian Guide to break trail for a certain young lady who seems to have untold trouble in finding our big city after she has parked her car.

Salary: One batch of unburnt cookies.

### Recognition

Information regarding the CAP and the official insignia in full colors is now available through the National Geographic Society, Washington 6, D. C., in a booklet entitled "Insignia and Decorations of the U. S. Armed Forces." It includes the information and color plates printed in the December issue of National Geographic. CAP units may obtain single copies for 50 cents each or 100 or more for 35 cents each.

### Why Make CAP Permanent?

Best letters answering this question will be awarded \$64.00 by SOUTHERN FLIGHT Magazine. Many people believe that the Civil Air Patrol should continue on after Victory—as a tremendous reserve pool of airmen and airplanes—a guarantee that we will never again be caught napping. In 640 words or less write a letter to SOUTHERN FLIGHT giving your answer to this question—"How and Why Make CAP Permanent." The contest will run for three months, March, April and May, deadline for each month being the 15th of the previous month. Send YOUR letter to Editors of SOUTHERN FLIGHT, P. O. Box 750, Dallas, Texas.

### Girls Flight

The boy cadets are going to have a little competition in military drill in the Providence Squadron from now on. Maybe you have noticed a few more girls running through the halls of the armory lately. That's it. There is a girls' flight in the Squadron now. It has been a long time since the Squadron has had as many girls. As yet it isn't operating at full capacity, but as soon as the correct quota has been reached they plan to compete with the boy cadets in military drill and in the class rooms.

Several women members of the Civil Air Patrol are assisting in the organization and training of the girl cadets which consists of girls from neighboring high schools. The girls have started meeting each Tuesday with their Flight Leader Rosalie Lehmann for extra training in military drill, and their cooperation shows rapid improvement. Plans for these Tuesday meetings will continue until they are well assured of their capability in drill. With new recruits joining, these meetings will probably continue for several months. The girls show great interest in being cadets and they are willing to give freely of their time.

### Wear Your Uniform With Pride

Your Civil Air Patrol uniform is something in which you can take great pride. It distinguishes you as a person who is giving both time and talent, without demanding payment in return. It tells the world that you are a member of an organization with one of the most outstanding records in the history of the country. It points you out as a VOLUNTEER . . . , one who has earned the nickname of "Flying Minute Man" . . . the hard way.

You are an auxiliary member of the United States Army Air Forces. The uniform you wear is that of the army, with distinguishing insignia.

Therefore, KEEP CORRECT.

When you wear your uniform, wear the whole uniform, including all of the insignia to which you are entitled.

CAP insignia should be centered one inch from the forward fold. Collar ornaments are to be centered, disregarding the collar points, and set back approximately one-half inch.

When wearing your blouse don't forget to replace the sleeve braid with CAP red.

It can't be stressed too strongly that red shoulder epaulets **MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIMES** with your uniform. When these loops are not worn you make yourself liable to arrest for impersonating an officer or an enlisted man of the regular Army.

While in uniform you are under the jurisdiction of the Military Police, who, together with our Allies and Enemies, have your uniform properly registered.

No subject has been stressed as much as CAP Uniform regulations. The reason is obvious. Yet, there is an inexcusable laxity on the part of many members' including officers. National Headquarters warns about the importance of CAP dress regulations, directing all Squadron Commanders to get "tough" with severe disciplinary action for even the slightest violation.

### Uniforms

National Headquarters instructs that CAP uniforms will NOT be worn in the course of members' occupation outside the Patrol and not related to aviation. CAP members and officers particularly must NOT wear uniforms under circumstances which will reflect adversely on the organization.

*Girls interested in the Civil Air Patrol Cadet program will find information at the Providence Squadron Headquarters in the Armory of Mounted Commands Building, Monday and Wednesday Evenings, between 8:00 P. M. and 10:00 P. M.*