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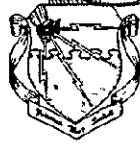
AIR HISTORICAL STUDIES: No. 79

Policies and Procedures Governing Elimination From AAF Schools

1939-1945

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES GOVERNING ELIMINATION FROM AAF SCHOOLS

1939-1945

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F O R E W O R D

This monograph studies the problems arising from the elimination of cadets from AAF schools. Beginning with the Air Corps expansion started in 1939 and ending with V-J Day in 1945, this study treats the problem both from the point of view of administrative personnel responsible for the training program and from that of the student eliminated. It was written by Dr. C. L. Grant.

Like other Historical Division studies, this history is subject to revision, and additional information or suggested corrections will be welcomed.

INTRODUCTION

Air Corps training following World War I was carried on at a leisurely pace and was devoted largely to the production of pilots who were expected to perform all of the various tasks connected with the operation of their aircraft. As there was no necessity for the training of other types of specialists, opportunities in the Air Corps were limited. Despite the scarcity of opportunities and the small authorized annual quotas for pilot trainees, the number of men in primary flight training (an average of 582 annually for the years 1920 to 1938 inclusive) seldom approached the maximum allowed. As a result there was never a shortage of prospective flying cadets in spite of rigid entrance qualifications.

Until 1939 a cadet had to be an unmarried citizen between the ages of 20 and 27 inclusive. He was required to have completed high school (two years of college after 1927) or to have passed an examination which was extremely difficult for anyone without the minimum academic background. A stringent physical examination was also a prerequisite for an appointment as a cadet.¹ Because of these high entrance qualifications, eliminations from training for academic and physical reasons were rare. The rate of elimination was high, nevertheless, with most failures resulting from flying deficiency. During the period 1920-1938, 45.4 per cent of primary flight trainees and 10.5 per cent of those undergoing advanced training were washed-out.² Despite the high rate of elimination, the adequate supply of trainees and the small quotas made it unnecessary for Air Corps administrators to concern themselves with those who did not complete training.

This limited, leisurely training program in all phases of Air Corps activity ended in 1939 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt emphasized in his annual message to Congress the need for a large Air Corps to meet the critical situation in Europe and the Far East. Congress responded by authorizing an expansion of the service by means of a 24 Group program which called for the training of 1,200 pilots annually. This expansion was to begin 1 July 1939. By May 1940 this plan had been superseded by a 41 Group program designed to produce 7,000 pilots annually. Periodically these programs were enlarged, each time before the previous expansion had been achieved, until the final 224 Group program was instituted, for which 70,000 pilots, 14,000 bombardiers, and 13,000 navigators had to be trained every year.³

Technical training needs only was increased to keep pace with the expansion of flying training. During the years prior to 1939, some 1,000 technicians had been in training, all that were thought necessary.

By the fiscal year 1940-1941 the number of technicians to be trained annually had been increased to 45,000. This modest plan was followed in 1942 by an announcement that the AAF would be expanded to a strength of two million men and that the Technical Training Command would be called upon to train 300,000 men annually.⁴

Under this greatly expanded training program the demand for skilled men increased accordingly--men were needed to pilot the airplanes, direct the bombing, service the equipment, ascertain the weather, operate radio and radar equipment, and perform the multitude of tasks essential for maintaining an air armada in continuous operation against an enemy. Training facilities were rapidly developed and courses of instruction were concentrated and accelerated. Of necessity, greater emphasis was placed on the filling of quotas by the mass production of trained men. These factors combined to present the Air Corps many new problems in relation to training.

No matter how students are selected for training courses, regardless of the caliber of students, system of grading, or excellence of tutelage, any course of instruction will invariably include students who are unable to complete it satisfactorily. For both his own good and the good of the over-all war effort, such deficient students had to be removed and reassigned as early in their training as possible. As the Air Corps grew, therefore; it found itself faced more and more with the problem of dealing with these unsuccessful students, or "eliminees," and utilizing them in the best interest of the service.*

The scope of this problem is indicated by the vast number of eliminations from Air Corps courses of instruction: from July 1939 to July 1945 almost 500,000 were recorded.⁵ To process and reassign these eliminated men in order to employ them most efficiently was a constant problem to the Air Corps, one which remained largely unsolved when the training program was relaxed as the war neared its end. This study attempts to indicate the reasons for the elimination of students, the scope of the elimination problem, and the methods employed by the Air Corps to meet the situation. A study of this nature, by collecting all available information, may aid in planning for a future expansion of air force training programs.

* Elimination, as the process of removing a student from a course of instruction is called, varied in its connotation from time to time. Often, for want of a more satisfactory designation, transfers and deaths were included as eliminations. For the purposes of this study, however, an eliminee was "any person who is eliminated from a course of training by reason of failing to meet any standards or requirements necessary for satisfactory completion of a course of instruction." (Hist. Lowry Field, 1 Jan.-30 June 1944, p. 114).

Chapter I

ELIMINATION RATES

Provision of the maximum number of qualified specialists in the minimum amount of time was the primary mission of the Air Force training program. It was not enough, however, merely to turn out the men. The Air War Plans Division had to have some knowledge of the number of specialists which would be made available by the various training schools; furthermore, some method of evaluating the courses of instruction was essential. Since the most widely used criterion for arriving at both these facts was the percentage of students who failed to complete a course of instruction, the rate of elimination became progressively more important with each expansion of Air Force training. Despite its wide utilization and the importance it assumed in planning and evaluation, the elimination rate, in itself, had little meaning. Only by recognizing the variables involved in its computation could it become a valid criterion; nevertheless, in the absence of a more dependable device, the rate of elimination remained an essential factor among training statistics throughout the expansion program.

During peacetime the Air Corps training program--which was largely restricted to pilot training--had eliminated nearly 50 per cent of the students. Since the training was conducted at a leisurely pace, this high rate seemed indicative of inadequate selection methods. Although the strength of the Air Corps had not been decreased by this rate of elimination, some efforts were made to reduce the number of eliminees by better selection devices. Beginning in 1926 experiments in psychological testing were conducted at Brooks Field by the School of Aviation Medicine, and during the 1930's that school and the Training Division of the Office of the Chief of the Air Corps (OC/AC) continued research on the problem. Even though their work was productive, the results were not utilized to the fullest extent possible--probably because there was no pressing demand for flyers. Since the Air Corps could always turn out as many flyers as it needed, it could afford to avoid the nuisance of efficient selection.

The threat of war and the concomitant rapid expansion of the Air Corps, however, made the rate of elimination a more serious problem, and in June 1941 a Psychological Research Agency was established in the Medical Division of OC/AC. Later a separate agency, the Psychological Branch of the Office of the Air Surgeon, Headquarters, AAF, was created from this and put under the direction of Colonel John C. Flanagan. This agency's mission was to devise a method for predicting success or failure of prospective trainees in order to reduce elimination in flying training; soon the office was expanded to include study of bombardier and navigator

selection. As a result of its research, the Aviation Cadet Qualifying Examination for initial selection of aviation cadets was ready for use on 15 January 1942.¹ In addition to this qualifying examination, a battery of aptitude tests was introduced to aid further in the selection of candidates. By use of this battery of tests a numerical score known as a "stanine" was determined. The stanine scores, which ranged from 1 (lowest) to 9 (highest), were used to indicate the probability of success in each of the aircrew specialties. The standard (sta-) 9 (-nine) point scale was determined by dividing the normal distribution curve into nine parts at equal intervals.² Repeated verification of the stanines seemed to indicate that they could be employed in the selection of aircrew candidates with some degree of confidence.

Despite such efforts to reduce the elimination rate by more accurate selection of students, the percentage of failure remained high. From July 1939 through July 1945, 15 per cent of the men in flying training were washed out. This percentage is slightly misleading, however, for the more highly specialized advanced courses had relatively few eliminations. Primary pilot training, during which ineptitude usually was discovered, had an elimination rate of 27 per cent for the same period.³

Since many factors which could not be predicted tended to cause a variation in the elimination rates of classes, schools, and commands, Headquarters, Flying Training Command was at a loss for a clear-cut explanation of these inconsistencies.⁴ Training conditions, such as weather which could not be controlled, and equipment which was often not standardized, caused variations in the elimination statistics. Quality of instruction and the ratio of students to instructors were variable factors. Bookkeeping methods varied among the schools and commands as a result of differing interpretations of what constituted elimination. Lastly, the unpredictable personal element--the individual student's morale and motivation--caused fluctuations in the rate. Technical training, which was expanded simultaneously with flying training, experienced similar difficulties. An elimination rate of 14 per cent for the years under consideration was recorded despite the aptitude tests devised to aid in the selection of students. ;

The variation in rates among the schools was augmented further by the interpretation of policies by administrative personnel and by their different conceptions of what constituted failure. Flying aptitude, judged as it was largely by the subjective opinion of the individual instructor, was difficult to measure. Twelve primary pilot training schools were inspected in July 1943 and the report submitted by the inspector stated:⁵

It can be seen that there are no exact or explicit rules for determining whether a student is satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Whether or not a student is a satisfactory pilot appears to be more or less of an opinion. This depends on past experience of the instructor, opinions of others and the pressure of extraneous factors.

A bombardier school reported in 1942 that the many variable factors outside of the student's control made it difficult to determine whether a trainee should be eliminated.⁶ One Psychological Research Unit observed that⁷

the supervisory personnel and instructors at one school were convinced that it was their duty to eliminate any students whom they felt would not develop into excellent pilots; while those in another school believed that it was their duty to graduate any students whom they considered reasonably capable of succeeding in later stages of training.

Civilian-contract schools in the Fourth Technical Training District were reluctant to eliminate students unless their contracts contained a sliding scale to compensate for monetary losses occasioned thereby.⁸

Because all Air Force schools with the exception of the gunnery schools had no predetermined rate of elimination, the number of training failures remained a matter of deep concern. Every type of school conducting training attempted to lower the elimination rate without reducing the quality of their graduates. But since the problem was for the most part left to the individual stations, the efforts were not uniform and were inclined to vary in intensity with the demand for a particular type of graduate.

Flying training instructors were confronted with the problem continually. The personnel of the Southeast Training Command were aided in lowering the percentage of failure, however, by a clarification of policy issued by headquarters at Maxwell Field. Commanding officers were instructed to "exert every possible effort to graduate all students who possess the ability to become good pilots or show promise thereof." Borderline cases were to be investigated thoroughly before elimination proceedings were instituted, and voluntary eliminations were to be discouraged until the student had been exposed to enough training to warrant his decision. "The primary function of the Flying Training Command," it was pointed out, "is to produce qualified aircrew personnel; and there is no such thing as a quota for elimination. The attitude of encouragement will be evidenced at all times."⁹ According to the administrative personnel at Greenwood and Bainbridge Fields, the policy succeeded in lowering elimination rates.¹⁰

With the exception of gunnery school policy beginning in 1943, there was no attempt to prescribe elimination rates arbitrarily for the various

course of training, flying or technical.¹¹ Flying training schools avoided the use of fixed rates, preferring to eliminate solely on the basis of individual merit.¹² The administrative personnel at the Shaw Field Basic Pilot School never attempted to eliminate a predetermined number of students because they believed that, in preparation for combat, all of the weak students should be eliminated as early in the training as possible.¹³ As a result of a report submitted in 1943 indicating that no uniform elimination policy existed for the gunnery schools, however, fixed rates were prescribed.¹⁴ For flexible gunnery, a rate of 15 per cent elimination was ordered for each class. Three per cent of this was to be as a result of academic failure, 6 per cent for ground firing failure, and the remaining 6 per cent for air firing deficiency.¹⁵ Aerial gunnery training, on the other hand, was to eliminate at the rate of 10 per cent for each class, 4 per cent each for ground and air firing and 2 per cent for academic failure.¹⁶

Determining the percentage of eliminees in advance was defended by a gunnery school director of training who maintained that such a policy was justified because all gunnery schools were using the same final examination. A fixed rate for failure in firing was warranted, furthermore, inasmuch as the average ability of students remained constant from class to class, while training conditions varied considerably; thus it was necessary to eliminate on the basis of the relative standing in each class. By eliminating a fixed percentage, only the best men in each class would be graduated. As a final justification for the fixed rate, he invoked the pragmatic test--this system worked where others had broken down.¹⁷

As the technical training program progressed, improper selection of students became an important reason for high elimination rates. The available supply of manpower decreased in both quality and quantity with the increase in the demand for trainees. Most schools, as a result, received an increasing number of students who did not meet the minimum entrance requirements. Because of the pressure of an accelerated program and a minimum of instructors, these students were unable to grasp the material in the required amount of time. As early as June 1942 the administrative officer of the Lowry Field Armament School reported that the replacement centers were not adhering to the minimum entrance qualifications when assigning men to training at his school. Men with less than an eighth grade education or over the age of 30 were being sent, undoubtedly only to fill the quotas. Other students were being assigned who expressed little or no desire for that type of training. Aviation cadets sent to the armament school, furthermore, were often deficient in their educational background.¹⁸

Other technical schools reported similar complaints as a major cause of high elimination rates. The civilian cryptographic school at Pawling, New York, reported that 16 out of 17 wash-outs from a particular class of officers had insufficient education.¹⁹ Early in 1944 the B-29 Crew

Training Department at Lowry Field protested against the unqualified men that it was receiving for training. The armament school also reiterated its complaint against undesirable students and requested permission to assign them to another school. No record is found, however, of any official action on the request.²⁰ Similar situations were reported by Truax Field, Wisconsin, and Scott Field, Illinois.²¹ The alternative to the elimination of those unqualified students was either a lower standard for graduation or a lengthened course to provide additional instruction. Most schools were unwilling to resort to the former expedient and were unable to do the latter and continue to fill the quotas for trained graduates. The problem of unqualified students thus remained unsolved at the conclusion of the expansion period.

The greatest reason for the fluctuation of elimination rates undoubtedly was the urgency of the demand for a particular type of graduate. Despite efforts by the AAF to maintain uniformly high standards for all courses of instruction, the primary function of the schools was the provision of trained men needed by other agencies. When the demand for a particular type of specialist was pressing, training standards were likely to be relaxed until the requirements were met. Throughout the period from the beginning of 1942 to July 1943, for example, the elimination rate in primary pilot training varied from 30 to 35 per cent. As the demand for pilots increased, the rate gradually dropped until the first quarter of 1944 when only 14 per cent of the trainees were eliminated. By the end of the year the need for pilots had lessened and the rate went up to from 25 to 30 per cent. This elimination rate continued for the remainder of the period under discussion.²²

A more specific example may be found in a report submitted by a group of officers from the San Antonio Aviation Cadet Center in 1944. This group inspected the Santa Ana Air Field to determine the reason for a lower rate there than at their home station. They reported that

On the basis of all information received, it is believed that the principal cause of the relatively low academic elimination rate is the fact that the number of trainees entered in each Santa Ana Preflight Class closely approximated the number of men scheduled for shipment to primary schools or to advanced specialized schools.

At San Antonio, on the other hand, a sufficiently large number was assigned to each class to allow for the elimination of those lacking adequate motivation or learning capacity.²³ The implication, of course, was that the low rate at Santa Ana was due to the graduating of unqualified men in order to satisfy quota requirements.

Technical training produced an analogous situation. In the armament training program, for example, approximately 20 per cent of the trainees

were eliminated prior to July 1943. From that date through September 1944, however, the rate varied from 6 to 20 per cent with an average of about 12 per cent. With the demand for armorers lessened as 1944 drew to a close, the elimination rate increased to 47 per cent for the final quarter of the year and 54 per cent for the first quarter of 1945. Since training standards remained relatively uniform, such an unstable rate may be adequately explained only in terms of the demand for trained graduates.²⁴

Various means for reducing the high elimination were attempted, one of which was the maintenance of a low student-instructor ratio. Statistics at the Marianna Advanced Single Engine School indicated that the rate of elimination was highest for those classes in which instructors were compelled to have more than five students under their direct supervision, and it was generally conceded that training efficiency was impaired when the student-instructor ratio rose higher.²⁵ Commenting upon excessive elimination rates at the Greenwood Air Field, the commanding officer reported that his school had a ratio of 6.3 students per instructor, a ratio which meant that many instructors had as many as seven students.²⁶ Such conditions tended to lessen the effectiveness of instruction, it was maintained, because (1) proper close relationship could not be maintained with more than five students, (2) adequate time was not allotted in the training schedule for an instructor to give training to so many students, and (3) the better students had to be neglected if weaker students were given additional instruction.²⁷ A proper student-instructor ratio was necessary, therefore, to counteract a high elimination rate. In an emergency, however, the demand for pilots was always pressing and teachers frequently scarce: the ideal could not always be maintained.

Because of the high elimination rates in flying training during the spring and summer of 1943, a conference was held between representatives of the Flying Training Command and civilian contractors of primary schools. The contractors were informed that it was the responsibility of the Army supervisors at the schools to make certain that all eliminations were justified. In order to decrease the possibility of failure, primary school contracts were amended to allow an additional 10 hours of instruction for the slower students.²⁸ The Basic Pilot School at Garden City Air Field also increased the number of hours of instruction required for a student before he was recommended for elimination. A minimum of 14 hours was set up for each student instead of the 10 hours which had been the previous minimum. After 14 hours of instruction a student who was recommended for elimination could be checked further by his flight commander. The flight commander, in turn, could recommend more instruction or a check by the squadron commander before a final decision was reached.²⁹

The most effective and most widely employed method for reducing the number of eliminations in both flying and technical schools was that of holding over or "washing back" slow or deficient students for further

instruction. Through the year 1943 Shaw Field reported a definite correlation between the elimination rate and the number of hold-overs. Class 43F, which produced 97 eliminations, reported only 9 wash-backs. Sixty-two students of Class 44C were held over, however, while only 10 were eliminated.³⁰ The hold-over procedure was encouraged at the flying training schools, moreover, as early as 1942. The Southeast Training Command warned that "while it is not intended that those students who show major deficiencies be permitted to graduate in order to meet quota requirements, it is desired that any students who possess possibilities be given every assistance with the training program."³¹

Technical schools made use of the hold-over method freely, and Scott Field reported it as one factor in the reduction of its elimination rate.³² There was a danger, however, in excessive use of the wash-back. In July 1943 it was brought out at a conference of technical training directors that the directors had been "guilty of trying too hard to salvage men who go through our schools." The abuse of the hold-over system had resulted in the assignment to other stations of graduates who were barely proficient. At their next stations, these men were found to be unable to perform the duties expected of them, or if they were sent to a more advanced school, were soon eliminated. As a result of this conference, Truax Field instituted a less lenient hold-over policy. Although this resulted in a slightly increased rate of elimination,³³ complaints were undoubtedly fewer from the stations to which graduates were assigned.

As a result of the variable elimination rate in bombardier training, the Flying Training Command and the training centers watched the trend of eliminations at the schools very closely. If irregularities appeared, an investigation was undertaken immediately. Because of the personal element involved, however, it was impossible to prescribe concrete rules and regulations for judging proficiency. Inexperienced instructors also contributed to an unstable wash-out rate. It was necessary, in the opinion of AAFTC headquarters, that supervisory personnel at the bombardier schools bear the burden of keeping eliminations standardized as much as possible.³⁴

Individual stations devised with encouraging results novel methods of handling the slower students. The Independence Air Field appointed an older, specially trained officer to supervise students on the verge of washing-out, and he was able to save several men who would not have been graduated otherwise. At Sherman Air Field a "Bumblebee Squadron" was operated for the benefit of backward students. By giving this group extra instruction 29 near-eliminees had been salvaged by 1 March 1944.³⁵

When the elimination rate of the Aircraft Armament Course at Lowry Field increased about 200 per cent in 1942 over the two previous years, a board of officers was appointed to investigate. After conducting a lengthy study, the board recommended several methods for increasing the

number of graduates from the course. The officers believed that a more complete orientation of entering students was a necessity. Incoming students should be required to have completed at least four weeks of basic military training in order that they would be more amenable to specialized training. They emphasized, furthermore, that entrance requirements of the course should be adhered to rigidly so that unqualified men would not be enrolled. Although the first recommendation was easily adopted, the latter suggestions depended upon the available manpower and could not be depended upon to influence the elimination rate consistently.³⁶ The authorities at Truax Field also recommended careful screening of entering students, "more intensive efforts toward glamorizing the training," and a more effective orientation. It was pointed out, in addition, that "morale and enthusiasm on the part of the instructor is an inseparable part of good instruction." An advance in ratings for the instructors would result in a higher morale and more enthusiastic instruction. This, in turn, should aid in the reduction of the number of failures, they believed.³⁷ Lowry Field also instituted a special course in trigonometry for deficient students who appeared otherwise capable of completing the armament course.³⁸

Because of the variable conditions under which training was conducted, there can be little doubt of the unreliability of the elimination rate as an exact measure of the proficiency of students or the validity of courses of instruction. A student eliminated in 1942 possibly would have completed the course in 1944 under the relaxed standards and less rigid interpretation of policy. Many students were graduated during the peak of the expansion who would have been eliminated during the earlier years. The elimination rate, nevertheless, remained a major factor in the Air Force training program both as a basis for future planning and as a means of rating the various courses.

Chapter II

REASONS FOR ELIMINATION

In addition to those reasons for elimination which resulted largely from defects in training programs or procedures, there were others which were for the most part inherent in individuals for whom neither further instruction nor a more leisurely training program would be of help. The number of men eliminated for such reasons, furthermore, could not accurately be estimated in advance. The majority of the nearly one-half million eliminations made during the Air Force expansion program were undoubtedly caused by these weaknesses of the individual students rather than by policies or programs of the training schools.

Flying Training

The Army Regulation governing the elimination of aviation cadets from flying training permitted loose interpretation and placed the burden of decision on the personnel conducting training.* It stated that

if at any time the faculty board of the Air Corps Primary Flying School or the Air Corps Advanced Flying School decides that a flying /later aviation/ cadet is for any reason not qualified to continue his training or that he possesses traits of character that would disqualify him for appointment as a Reserve officer, the commandant will forward faculty board proceedings to the commanding officer of the Air Corps Training Center.¹

If the commanding officer of the Training Center approved the action taken by the commandant, the student was eliminated from further training. Needless to say, the phrase "for any reason" allowed the supervisory personnel wide latitude in the matter of eliminations.

The greatest cause for elimination from flying training was the failure of students to master the technique of flying because of ineptitude or the presence of dangerous characteristics which might endanger the lives of the student or others associated with him. If either of these factors was recognized, the student was not deemed proficient. "The standard of flying proficiency," according to a flying instructor's manual, "is that degree of proficiency which a student is required to demonstrate, in the time normally allotted to that phase of training, in order to progress

* Aviation cadets in flying training included pilots, bombardiers, and navigators.

to the next succeeding phase of training."² Failure to achieve this standard of proficiency accounted for 80 or 90 per cent of all eliminations from flying training.³ A number of factors, sufficient singly or in combination to show a lack of proficiency, were united for purposes of statistical reporting under the term "flying deficiency." Among these disqualifying characteristics were: lack of satisfactory progress; poor coordination; poor headwork; poor judgment; dangerous flying characteristics; and inability to control a plane on the ground or in the air.⁴ Since each was difficult to measure, a great amount of responsibility was placed on the judgment of the instructors.

It was perhaps to be expected that, where the personal judgment of the supervisory personnel was the deciding factor in elimination from training, eliminees would feel that a personal motive was involved in their failures. Flying instructors of the Southeast Training Command were warned against this reaction from the disappointed student. Care had to be exercised that the near-eliminee was not given cause to believe that he was being discriminated against or that anyone "had it in for him." When an instructor was convinced that a student did not possess the required proficiency, he was to report the cadet to the supervisory personnel, confining his report to a mere statement of the facts in the case.⁵

Despite efforts to avoid giving eliminees cause for complaint in the manner of their eliminations, the flying trainee was inclined to blame everyone but himself for his failure. Headquarters of the Indianapolis Recruiting District reported to Washington early in 1941 that ex-flying trainees had been charging that they had been washed-out with only a few hours of instruction and that the flying schools were required to eliminate a certain percentage (usually 35 per cent) early in the course. Unqualified instructors and a lack of standardization in the training program were also stated as reasons for their eliminations.⁶ Although AG/AS, Training and Operations, admitted the latter two allegations, it stated that steps were being taken to remedy them; it denied the truth of the other accusations. It was nevertheless expected that such charges would continue to be heard, for there was no way to control the statements of the ex-flying cadets.⁷

Such expectations were not unwarranted. In May 1944 General Arnold received a letter which said that rumors and half-truths of cadets being washed out on a quota basis, many of them for what appeared to be minor mistakes, both entailed a great loss of time and money and caused civilians to distrust the Air Force.⁸ In reply Arnold painstakingly countered the charges and explained the reasons for cadet elimination. The disappointment of an eliminated cadet, he stated, was realized by all concerned with the training program. On the other side of the problem, however, was the necessity for maintaining the maximum standards consistent with the functioning of a combat air force. He continued frankly:

I cannot guarantee to you that there have not been wrong judgments resulting in eliminations. In a field where the human factor is so all-important, fallibility is ever-present. The system is, however, designed to minimize human error. No elimination is made without the impartial and considered judgment of a board or officers. Admittedly, owing to the ever-present human factor, evidence in a particular case may be erroneous or incomplete and mistakes occur. But the decision is a conscientious and responsible determination and not based on any need or pressure to reduce the training establishment.

Although Air Force policy was to eliminate a student as soon as a weakness appeared, it was nevertheless possible that the deficiency would not be recognized until the cadet had completed considerable training. Arnold argued that it was difficult for people to realize that the Air Force was not engaged in training men to fly but was carrying on the more important task of training them for combat. "Every elimination has, as its basic purpose," he stated, "the saving of the life of the man eliminated, either in training or combat, and the saving of other lives which, in training or combat, must depend on him." It was absolutely necessary, therefore, that utmost caution be exercised in the matter of detecting deficiencies among the cadets and eliminating the defective students as quickly as possible.⁹

As a result of this correspondence, all commanding officers were instructed to inform trainees that elimination was based solely on inability to conform to the training standards.¹⁰ Consequently, although flying deficiency remained the greatest cause for elimination, it was hoped that cadets and civilians would be impressed with the fact that each elimination was decided upon the merits of the individual case.

Because of the difficulty in measuring the relative proficiency of a flying student, it was necessary to devise a grading system which would aid instructors in arriving at a comparative evaluation. The instructors of the early classes relied on a simple grading of satisfactory, unsatisfactory, or failure.¹¹ This method proved inadequate because of oversimplification and the Central Instructor's School at Randolph Field devised a substitute which allowed the instructor more latitude in rating his students. Under this system the outstanding students would be accorded a grade of "A" or "B" with their rate of learning the principal difference between the grades. The majority of students, those who progressed at a normal rate and were able to attain better than the minimum standard of proficiency, would receive a rating of "C". A grade of "D" went to a student who was barely maintaining the minimum standards; his principal deficiency would be slow progress without exhibiting dangerous flying characteristics. The grade of "E" was to be given to a student who was performing at below the minimum standard of proficiency and should be removed from training until his faults were corrected. Finally, students

who possessed characteristics dangerous to themselves and others and who seemed unable to improve would with an "F" be made automatic candidates for elimination.¹²

The directions to the instructors in the use of the failing grade were explicit:

If a student's performance makes you feel that he has dangerous characteristics, which after repeated instructions he does not overcome, you must give him an "F". In judging what is dangerous or hazardous, you must remember that all students do dangerous things in the early stages of training. But they learn better in the natural course of instruction. It is those students who repeatedly show dangerous traits, so much so that it is a characteristic, that should be eliminated.

Among those things for which an instructor should be on the alert were bad judgment, slow progress, and dangerous techniques. If any of these traits were apparent and improvement was not noticeable, the instructor had no recourse but to submit the failing grade and turn the student over to a supervisor.¹³

Proficiency in bombardier training was less difficult for the instructors to measure; progress among the bombardier cadets could be judged by the accuracy exhibited on their practice and bombing runs. To arrive at the degree of accuracy made by a student, a certain percentage of hits was required in each phase of training.¹⁴ It was emphasized, however, that bombing proficiency alone was not sufficient for graduation of a cadet. Any cadet who was indifferent to ground school instruction should be eliminated, regardless of his bombing record. "Indifference at this time, when we are at war," it was stated, "cannot be tolerated."¹⁵ Failure to achieve the minimum success in bombing, nevertheless, accounted for the major part of eliminations from bombardier schools.¹⁶

The second most frequent reason for elimination from flying training, and one which was often regarded as flying deficiency, was fear of flying or apprehension in the air. Students were often able to master the techniques of flying adequately but were convinced that they were afraid to fly. These students, for the most part, were not encouraged to continue their training, for they were not considered good risks as combat pilots.¹⁷ An attempt was made at one basic school, nevertheless, to salvage these cadets. Students afraid of flying were referred to the flight surgeon for study and were questioned closely by their supervisors. It was soon discovered, however, that these efforts were to little avail, and the decision was reached that "in a case involving fear of flying, it is considered a waste of time to try to induce the student to continue."¹⁸

Failure to complete ground school training satisfactorily constituted the principal cause for elimination from preflight schools and a secondary reason for failure in flying training. During the early years of the expansion program, however, much leniency had been shown. Most training schools apparently agreed with Shaw Field that cadets could be coached in their academic work as long as their flying training was progressing adequately.¹⁹

In 1941 a policy had been handed down by the Chief of the Air Corps to the effect that a student pilot who failed an examination in an academic subject (70 per cent was the usual passing grade) would be given an opportunity for a re-examination. The cadet's final grade would then be computed by averaging the two grades received on the tests. If his average was still below the grade required for that subject, he would be considered for elimination. Probation could be granted rather than elimination, however, if the second grade showed improvement over the first. The policy emphasized further that "students who are making satisfactory progress in flying training will not be recommended for elimination unless they have failed in two major subjects."²⁰ As a result of this policy, few eliminations for failure in ground school were recorded. In May 1942, however, a new policy was announced which increased slightly the number of failures in pilot training. Under the new directive any student who was deficient in a course either at mid-term or graduation time would be held over to the next regularly scheduled class. If he failed to complete the course satisfactorily for the second time, he would be recommended for elimination. Each student would be allowed only one hold-over, and if he failed another course at a future time, his elimination would be recommended.²¹

With the demand for pilots lessened, standards were raised somewhat in April 1944, and the use of the hold-over system for ground school deficiency was discontinued. A student who received a failing grade in an academic subject thereafter was required to take a re-examination within five days. If he proved unable to pass the re-examination, he was recommended for elimination.²² The increase in the elimination rates beginning in the latter part of 1944 undoubtedly was caused in part by this change in policy.

The policy in non-pilot flying schools, however, was more flexible. By the directive of May 1942, the determination of whether a student should be eliminated or held-over for academic reasons was left to the discretion of the Director of Training at the various schools. If the Director of Training believed that a student could correct his weakness by being held over to the next scheduled class, he was authorized to recommend such a course. "In administering this policy," the directive warned, "at no time will the quality of the graduate of the Air Forces Schools be sacrificed in order to obtain additional men."²³

In July 1943 the rate of academic failure in the Bombardier-Navigation School at Santa Ana was serious enough to warrant interrogation of both students and instructors in an effort to find its causes. It was discovered that 14 per cent of the eliminated cadets felt that they had been out of school too long or had insufficient mathematical backgrounds. The quality of instruction was blamed by 52 per cent, two-thirds of whom believed that the instructors went too rapidly or took too much for granted. The remainder of the students felt that lack of sufficient study time or of a proper place to study and outside interference were responsible for their elimination. Approximately 36 per cent of the instructors questioned blamed inadequate educational background; another 36 per cent found insufficient study the principal reason for student failure. Fifteen per cent blamed failure on a lack of ability among the cadets; and the remaining 13 per cent credited such things as too many absences from class and poor student attitude.²⁴ Most of the causes for academic failure, therefore, fell in two categories from the standpoint of both students and instructors: lack of time (causing too rapid instruction) and poorly qualified students. Little could be done to improve the rate of graduation as long as the objective of the training program continued to be the production of the maximum number of trained men in the minimum amount of time.

According to the basic policy covering the elimination of students, a cadet might be eliminated if he possessed "traits of character that would disqualify him for appointment . . ." as an officer. A relatively small number of cadets were consequently eliminated from training for disciplinary or moral reasons. In August 1942, however, it was called to the attention of the AAF's Director of Personnel that aviation cadets were being eliminated for disciplinary reasons whose flying and academic records were otherwise satisfactory. "Elimination of Aviation Cadets from further training as a disciplinary measure is a severe punishment," he cautioned, "and for this reason should be used only in cases where the absence of extenuating circumstances makes the violation flagrant."²⁵ General Arnold also expressed concern and directed the commanding general of the Flying Training Command to treat disciplinary cases "in as flexible a manner as possible not mitigating against training standards."²⁶ Each of the officers stressed the pressing need for trained men as secondary considerations in a more lenient policy.

As a result of these letters, a new policy was formulated designed to reduce the eliminations for disciplinary reasons to a minimum. No student would henceforth be eliminated for disciplinary reasons without a prior trial by court-martial. Periodically throughout training, cadets were to be advised of the "serious consequences which follow misconduct" and of the importance of maintaining proper dignity and conduct. Any cadets charged with serious offenses, furthermore, were to be disciplined according to procedures in the Manual for Courts-Martial.²⁷ This new

policy apparently solved the question of elimination for disciplinary reasons. Serious violations which resulted in a verdict of guilt rendered by a court-martial resulted in automatic elimination. Other offenses were handled by the individual schools, usually by a system of demerits.²⁸ One exception to this policy was for a violation of the Honor Code involving dishonesty in examinations: when guilt was established either by an Honor Committee or by acknowledgment of guilt by the violator, elimination of the student followed.²⁹

In addition to these reasons for elimination, a small number of cadets were eliminated for a variety of causes. Physical defects, of course, brought about the release of some. Rigid entrance requirements, however, kept this type of elimination from assuming much importance. Occasionally cadets were released to attend other schools or the United States Military Academy. An attempt was made, without success, in 1944 to obtain the release of cadets to accept re-employment in the aviation industry.³⁰ The infrequency of such causes for elimination reduced them, however, to a relatively unimportant role.*

Technical Training

By the nature of the instruction presented in technical training, elimination problems were somewhat different from those confronting flying training schools. Although the rate of elimination in technical courses was slightly lower than that for flying training, the reasons for failure were more varied. Despite the variation in these reasons, evaluation of the technical student's progress nevertheless presented less difficulty to the administrative personnel.

According to reports rendered by technical schools, failure to attain a passing grade constituted the greatest reason for elimination throughout the existence of the schools. This designation does not indicate the basic cause, however, but merely the criterion by which students were compared and the weaker students weeded out. Without such a criterion it would have been impossible to measure progress and proficiency among the students. Although many objections may be raised to the use of grades, in a vast training program some system of that type was a necessity.

The three principal, often interrelated, causes for failing grades--all of them should have been detected before the students entered the school--were inaptitude, a deficiency in educational background, and a

* If an aviation cadet exhibited traits which rendered him a potential subversive, he could be removed from training by a faculty board. Removal by this means did not prove very satisfactory, however, for "members of such Boards cannot explain to the Cadet why he is being eliminated, other than a mere statement that he possesses traits of character which render him unsuitable for commissioning as an officer or that he is being eliminated by direction of higher authority." (Daily Diary, Hq. AAFPTC, 18 Mar. 1943).

lack of interest in the course. Despite the various tests devised to measure qualifications for a particular type of technical training, a lack of aptitude among the failing students was noted by most schools. Early in the expansion program the historian of the Fourth Technical Training District recorded that³¹

although the mechanical aptitude tests . . . were no doubt scientifically designed they were not applicable to all individuals. There were many men who could successfully pass the tests, but, had upon arrival at school, possessed no aptitude whatever for working with tools or other mechanical equipment.

Although aptitude tests possessed considerable merit, they were not infallible, and were consequently unable to separate all inapt students from those qualified for the training. As the expansion program continued and the need for trained men became greater, moreover, the minimum aptitude score for entrance into most courses was progressively lowered,³² so that the effectiveness of the tests was further decreased.

Educational deficiencies also increased in importance as a cause for elimination as the training program progressed. Before the second expansion program most technical schools required a minimum of a high school education for entrance. As the demand for trainees increased, however, educational requirements were reduced until an eighth grade education was sufficient for qualification,³³ and the armament school at Lowry Field reported that even men with less than an eighth grade education were being sent for instruction.³⁴ The inevitable result of this lowering of standards was an increase in the number of students who were unable to complete the courses.

Insufficient aptitude and education were further evident in the experience of the technical schools with the Army General Classification Test (AGCT) scores. Before training programs were increased, a score of at least 110 was required for qualification to a technical school. This score was necessarily lowered as the demand for students grew, and by the end of 1942 many schools required only a score of 80. A study of over 500 eliminees from the Radio-Mechanic School at Truax Field indicated the effect of this diminished standard on elimination. Over 94 per cent of those students who entered school with an AGCT score of less than 80 were eliminated, while over 75 per cent of those with scores of 80 to 89 failed to graduate. In contrast, only 10 per cent of the students who scored between 110 and 119 on the test were eliminated.³⁵ This and similar studies illustrated that a man with a below-average AGCT score would have great difficulty in completing a technical course.

Many factors influenced the amount of interest shown by students in the various courses. Much of the training was monotonous at best and

could be absorbed only by those who were properly motivated. Those students who were aware of their inaptitude or educational deficiencies invariably lost interest in the work, and their grades soon went down. Improper orientation of the students both at the classification centers and upon entrance in the schools also contributed to disinterest. Many eliminees of the Armament School at Lowry Field reported that they had been under the impression that the armament course was either a gunnery course or a prerequisite to a gunnery school. When they discovered the true nature of the school, their interest waned and they ceased to exert the necessary effort.³⁶ Also at Lowry Field it was found that the very nature of the armament course made it unpopular. Its historian reported that armament was regarded as a "tough course" and "purely military." He remarked that "the radio student, or the mechanic, realizes he is learning a profession that will be of use to him in civilian life. Not so the armament student; the respectable civilian has little use for machine guns and power turrets." Many students developed a dislike for the school, therefore, which "led to a 'fed-up', complex and consequent failing grades."³⁷

Technical schools found that the majority of academic eliminations could be traced to the first weeks of instruction. As one school reported, the students, many of whom found memorization difficult, lost interest when faced with new terminology and devices. For others the change from their type of work was too great to be accomplished smoothly.³⁸ It was felt that proper orientation at the beginning of the course would tend to maintain interest by lessening this handicap for the entering student.³⁹

Inadequate or improper instruction was likewise a contributing factor to a loss of student interest. The post technical inspector of Lowry Field reported in November 1943 that instruction was not adequate and recommended that instructional methods be studied. He believed that instructors should develop a more objective and sympathetic attitude toward the students to stimulate their interest in the work. The administrators at Lowry Field, however, disagreed: they thought that the basic trouble lay in the "very mediocre" group from which instructors were selected--those whose only qualification was that they were unqualified physically for combat.⁴⁰

Interest among the students was inclined to lag further because of inferior or non-existent equipment. Regardless of the caliber of instruction, most technical students found it difficult to grasp the principles of complicated mechanisms when instructors were forced to rely on black-board illustrations. Without actual equipment or at least adequate mock-ups for use in practical demonstrations, instructors were handicapped from the beginning.⁴¹ Although this situation was alleviated considerably as the expansion program progressed, it remained a weakness throughout the period under consideration.

In addition to variations in the quality of instruction and equipment, the grading systems used in the technical schools varied considerably both among the different courses and among schools offering the same courses. Similarities existed in that all were designed to establish a basis for the measurement of student progress; moreover, in order to save the administration time and effort, most of them contained provisions for the automatic elimination of students when a designated degree of failure had been reached.

One of the first elimination systems based upon grades was placed in operation at Keesler Field early in 1942. A grade of 70 per cent was deemed passing on any examination written or practical. Any student who received a grade of 65 to 69 on an examination was given three points. A grade of 64 or below earned four points. Any final course grade of less than 70 received six points. When a student had accumulated a total of 12 points, he was automatically eliminated from the school, though he did have the right to appeal to a Faculty Board.⁴² It was believed that such a system would allow the instructors to concentrate on the better students rather than waste time on potential eliminees.⁴³ In April 1942 its essential features became the official policy for the Technical Training Command; only the number of points necessary for elimination was left to the option of the individual school. TTC stressed, however, that this elimination plan was not to be used "in extreme cases where dismissal is warranted, regardless of the grades the man has received in school."⁴⁴ Although minor changes were made later, this point system remained the basis of automatic elimination for academic failure in the technical schools.*

After a few months of operation under the automatic elimination plan, opinion of its merits among the technical schools was divided. One historian believed that it was beneficial because instructors were compelled to follow the syllabi more closely and to give the students more individual instruction. He believed that personalities were removed in the computation of grades and a goal was set up for both student and instructor.⁴⁵ Keesler Field praised the system "because it makes the entering students all grade conscious, and they know exactly how close they are to elimination at any phase of the School, and a student is eliminated on the face value of his accumulated grades only."⁴⁶

Opposition to the plan was voiced by at least one civilian contract school. The Casey Jones School of Aeronautics believed that it was not

* Certain types of courses required different methods of judging student progress. Radio students, for example, were expected to acquire a progressively higher code speed at stated intervals in their course. Failure to do so resulted in elimination for inaptitude. (Hist. Scott Field, 1 Jan.-7 July 1943, p. 678).

producing the desired results. Because entering classes contained a larger percentage of older and poorly qualified students than formerly, many students were washed-out by the automatic elimination system before "they get really started or acquire the ability to study."⁴⁷ Lowry Field also saw a possible defect in the plan if it were used as the sole criterion for judging the capabilities of the students: because it was possible for students to receive passing grades and still not be proficient in the technical work involved, instructors should have to take practical demonstrations into account as well.⁴⁸

Criticism of the system led to its abandonment at the Radio Mechanics School at Truax Field in September 1944. Not only did the authorities there believe the plan needlessly complicated, but the idea that the accumulation of a specified number of points or demerits led to automatic elimination had become so ingrained in the minds of students, instructors, and officers that, contrary to the opinion expressed by Keesler Field, the Truax historian believed that undue stress was placed on grades, to the detriment of the entire program. The responsibility for the future status of delinquent students at Truax, therefore, was returned to the interviewing officer and the faculty board who were to employ grades merely as a guide in arriving at their decisions.⁴⁹

Even though the automatic elimination system remained in force in most technical schools, many efforts were made to salvage those students who fell behind but gave evidence of a desire to learn. As early as 1939 the Armament School at Lowry Field published an order directing that⁵⁰

whenever a student fails to make a satisfactory grade, as shown by his weekly averages, and this failure is not excused by the Director, the student will study for at least one hour each evening of the week following his failure and, if necessary, his Director will make available to him any needed study facilities in his department.

Personal interviews with failing students were held at most schools in an effort to discover and correct the weaknesses which were causing failure.⁵¹ Efforts were also made to improve conditions at the schools to aid in a revival of interest in the courses among the below-average students.

As in the flying training schools, however, the most widely used device for salvaging students in the technical schools was the wash-back system. A radio school instructor reported that it was in unlimited use at the beginning of 1943. "It was common knowledge among students," he confessed, "that washbacks were automatic and that students could wash-back an unlimited number of times. All a student had to say was that he wanted to stay in school and he would be retained in school." Because this policy led to abuses, after 24 April 1943⁵² no student was allowed

to washback more than twice. Other schools experienced similar problems and had devised efficient methods for holding over students by 1944.⁵³ It was emphasized, however, that most cases had to be judged on an individual basis and could not be determined by arbitrary rules.⁵⁴

In addition to academic eliminations, technical schools occasionally were faced with disciplinary problems, some of which were serious enough to warrant dismissal from school. These cases were handled in a variety of ways and were usually judged apart from failures in subject matter. In December 1944 the Armament School at Lowry Field introduced a plan based upon the number and seriousness of offenses. Offenses were divided into three groups according to severity. The most serious indiscretions, insubordination, cheating, and the like, constituted the first group, violation of any one of which called for elimination. Two violations of offenses in the second group, such as careless performance of duty or sleeping in class, were sufficient to warrant dismissal. The third group contained the more minor offenses of talking in ranks or playing practical jokes in class. Three violations of that nature were grounds for elimination. This system, therefore, was basically a demerit system although the department described it as "not a demerit system, but merely a means of accomplishing the same purpose without mentioning the objectionable word 'demerit.'"⁵⁵ As no evidence to the contrary was found, it may be assumed that other technical schools were content to handle disciplinary cases individually through regular administrative channels.

Self-elimination

One outstanding problem of elimination, which was common to both the flying and technical training schools, was that of the student who purposely washed himself out of school. Although the number of these self-eliminees was never relatively great, the existence of such a problem was perplexing to the AAF. Most of these deliberate eliminations were brought about by intentional failing grades or violations of minor rules indicating a malassigned or dissatisfied student. The basic cause, therefore, could be traced to the AAF's failure properly to classify, orientate or teach the student. Self-eliminations thus were largely the responsibility of the Air Force and could be curtailed only by administrative action.

During the first years of the expansion program, self-elimination was infrequent, for enrollment in schools was voluntary. There were instances however, of aviation cadets washing out of training either to pursue some other type of training, or because of a professed loss of self-confidence.⁵⁶ There was also evidence of men stationed in Hawaii who volunteered for cadet training in order to return to the United States and then washed out deliberately in hope of being allowed to stay there.⁵⁷ Except for a ruling in July 1942 that faculty boards should not recommend

for further training those cadets who eliminated themselves because of a desire for another type of training, no definite policy was adopted to combat these voluntary eliminations until 1943⁵⁸ when the problem became more acute.

In January 1943 the San Antonio Aviation Cadet Center (SAACC) proposed that a War Department directive be issued to cover these men who volunteered for training as an aviation cadet or aviation student in order to return from foreign duty and then requested elimination from training. If it was apparent that their primary motive had been a return to the United States, it was recommended that they be relieved from training, reduced to the grade of private, and sent to the nearest Overseas Replacement Training Center (ORTC).⁵⁹ This policy was adopted and was issued in a letter from The Adjutant General, 31 March 1943.⁶⁰ Because the same situation existed in technical schools--technicians in combat areas were requesting further training and, shortly after their entrance into advanced schools, were asking for elimination or deliberately washing themselves out--a similar directive was issued to cover technical trainees. It was reported by the Fourth Technical Training District that the ruling was effective and "that eliminations of this type were materially reduced within a very short period of time."⁶¹

The Commanding General, Southeast Training Command, reported in May 1943 that, despite these rulings, the number of self-eliminations was increasing. Although some of the reasons given for these defections seemed just, the majority appeared trivial. As a remedial measure it was proposed that all cadets, regardless of their prior station, who requested elimination without proper justification be assigned immediately to overseas duty.⁶² Flying Training Command Headquarters concurred in this proposal and strongly recommended its adoption to Headquarters, AAF.⁶³ The Adjutant General, however, disapproved this extension of policy. By indorsement, TAG ruled that foreign service should not be used as a disciplinary measure and that assignment of self-eliminees in that manner was not justified.⁶⁴

When the situation had not improved by late 1943, Major Charles H. Roadman, Director of Psychology and Technique of Instruction, Central Instructor's School, Randolph Field, visited a basic flying school in an effort to discover the reasons for voluntary eliminations. He reported that most self-eliminations were caused by a loss of interest in flying or a fear of flying. It was apparent, according to Major Roadman, that cadets no longer had the extreme desire to fly that had characterized earlier classes. He believed, however, that instructors could develop the desire to fly in these cadets, and that instructors should be alert for any sign of fear among them so that remedial action or early elimination could be accomplished. Major Roadman indicated, furthermore, that a closer coordination between the phases of training would be very beneficial in retaining the interest of the students.⁶⁵

In addition to those reasons discovered by Major Roadman, other factors appeared to be involved in the decision of aviation cadets to eliminate themselves from training. Many students were married and could not devote their entire interest to the problem of learning to fly. It was suspected, furthermore, that some of the self-eliminees had been talked into washing themselves out by their wives who feared the dangers inherent in flying.⁶⁶ Some ex-cadets reported that they had been misled by recruiting personnel and, upon learning the true nature of conditions, had changed their minds about desiring the training.⁶⁷ Weather, crowded schedules, and a lack of supervisory personnel also contributed to a lessened desire for training among cadets.⁶⁸

All self-eliminations, however, were not caused by purely selfish motives. Some bombardiers who were undergoing further training in navigation washed-out of school in order to obtain immediate combat duty. In such cases it was decided to send these men to gunnery school.⁶⁹ The Radio Mechanic School at Truax Field reported that a desire for overseas assignment was the motivating factor in many self-eliminations. Students believed that the length of their training might deprive them of the opportunity to serve outside the United States before the war ended.⁷⁰

In spite of efforts by the Air Force to counteract self-eliminations, they continued to pose a problem. It was announced, to no avail, that voluntary eliminees from aviation cadet training would not be favorably considered for other types of training.⁷¹ Even the knowledge that their training would end upon elimination was not a sufficient deterrent to halt voluntary elimination completely.

The problem became more serious in the technical schools in 1944 when the number of students sent to schools not of their choice increased. Lowry Field found that many students who had been arbitrarily sent to armament training were washing themselves out in order to go to gunnery training. This was admitted by some students when interviewed prior to elimination. Others were former permanent party personnel who were sent to technical schools despite an MOS earned in their former organizations. Many of these eliminated themselves in the belief that they would be reassigned in their former MOS.⁷² To halt this practice, the schools began to eliminate these men "with prejudice" and recommended that men so eliminated be prohibited from further training. Headquarters, Western Technical Training Command (W TTC) agreed with this recommendation but disapproved a further proposal that these men be sent immediately to the Army Ground Forces.⁷³

On 14 January 1944 the Armament School at Lowry Field again protested that disinterested students were being sent resulting in many voluntary eliminations. Some of the new students, furthermore, had been previously eliminated from other technical schools, particularly gunnery school.

Armament supervisors believed that these men had become "professional eliminees" for they apparently "neither have interest nor the ability to complete technical or gunnery schools."⁷⁴ To prevent these men from continuing training, Headquarters, WFTC, added that men eliminated from two or more technical schools should not "in most cases" be sent to another school. At that time, however, Flying Training Command Headquarters refused to approve such a policy.⁷⁵

The Flying Training Command nevertheless recommended on 21 April 1944 that flexible gunnery eliminees who had been eliminated previously from another technical school be assigned as basics rather than sent to another school. These "professional eliminees," it was affirmed, "are no benefit to the war effort in their continuous movement from one school to another in order to undergo a period of training only to be eliminated and made available for still another form of training."⁷⁶ Headquarters, AAF concurred in this recommendation and the worst source of potential self-eliminees was stopped.⁷⁷

The problem of "professional eliminees" was finally clarified by AAFTC in October 1944. The policy was announced that only students eliminated "without prejudice" from technical courses would be allowed to enroll in other schools.⁷⁸ If self-eliminees were eliminated with prejudice, therefore, they would be unable to resume training in another course.

Despite this and similar policies, the problem of voluntary elimination was never adequately solved. Nothing could prevent a student from deliberately failing a course if he were determined to get out of school. The true solution to the problem lay in more careful selection of students in regard to both qualifications and interest. The great demand for graduates precluded this and the problem continued to vex school personnel.

Chapter III

ELIMINATION PROCEDURE

Of the many problems with which the air force was confronted in eliminating students from training schools, that of procedure was perhaps the most efficiently solved. Army regulations gave each commandant authority to suspend from training students who appeared incapable of completing their course;¹ to aid him in arriving at this decision, a board of officers, usually called a faculty board, was authorized "to determine all matters relative to standing, rating, or classification, proficiency, or deficiency of all students."² Despite these regulations, some variation existed in the method by which students were processed out of training courses.

Before a student was eliminated from pilot training, his instructors tried to make certain that he was given every opportunity to complete his training satisfactorily before being recommended for elimination. A minimum of 12 hours of instruction was necessary before elimination proceedings could be instituted. Each student was checked by a minimum of two instructors, the last of whom was one of the more experienced men, and at least three "pink slips" denoting unsatisfactory grades were necessary before the student was considered a potential eliminee. "Before a student is recommended for elimination," one directive stated, "the instructor will be justified in signing the statement 'This student has been instructed in all maneuvers consistent with his flying time.'" When the instructors had decided that elimination was necessary, the student was so informed and immediately suspended from training. The instructors then had to send the student's records to the director of training by 1000 of the day on which they had decided that the student was hopeless.³ Instructors were warned to remember that they had no authority to eliminate--they merely recommended elimination.⁴

Although the next step ordinarily was the appearance of the student before the faculty board, some schools made a further attempt to determine if the proposed elimination was justified by having either the secretary of the school or a staff officer interview him. The student was questioned on his reaction to his possible elimination: did he feel that he had been accorded a fair chance; did he want to complain of his treatment at the school? During this interview a personal history of the student was compiled to aid in the disposition of the case, and after the interview, the potential eliminee was scheduled for an appearance before the faculty board.⁵ During the period between his final check by his instructors and his appearance before the board, the student was expected to conform to the usual routine of cadet life except for training.⁶

According to Army regulations, the faculty board at a training school was to consist of the commandant and his assistant, the directors of the school, and the secretary (to serve as recorder).⁷ Not all schools followed these regulations rigidly; most boards included a medical officer, particularly when the student's physical condition was a cause for his elimination.⁸ The commandant of cadets, commandant of student officers, and the student statistical officer were likewise often on the board.⁹ With the exception of the secretary, each member of the faculty board was entitled to one vote; a majority of the voting members constituted a quorum sufficient for the hearing of a case. When the vote resulted in a tie, the decision followed the opinion of the school commandant.¹⁰ The decision of the board was final, subject only to review by the Commanding General, AAF.

When a student appeared before the faculty board, the members already had all pertinent data on his record. Copies of the interview held by the secretary or staff member were included, as was the student's personal history. The reports of the instructors and an academic report were also before the members. If the cause of elimination was physical or disciplinary, the physical report or trial record was included.¹¹ The secretary opened the hearing with a reading of the medical, academic, and military records of the student and the director of training presented his flying record. When all of the evidence had been presented, the student was again queried on his opinion of his treatment at the school, and he was also asked what other kind of further training he preferred if the board decided upon his elimination. Upon completion of the hearing, the student retired to await the verdict while the members decided both on the question of elimination and on further training.¹²

An accurate report of each faculty board meeting was compiled in triplicate and was added to the other papers in the student's record. The original of the case was then filed at the school for future reference. One copy of the complete file was sent to the Headquarters of the Flying Training Command in which the school was located and the second copy was dispatched to the Aviation Cadet Section, Headquarters, AAF.¹³

Disciplinary cases, by their nature, required somewhat different treatment. Early in the training program some confusion existed regarding the proper course for the faculty boards in using elimination from training as a punishment for breach of discipline. Then, in September 1942 it was directed that any breach of the moral or disciplinary code serious enough to warrant suspension from flying training was to be referred to a court-martial before the student was brought before a faculty board.¹⁴ Elimination for disciplinary reasons was further clarified by a Training Command Memo of 31 August 1943. This directive pointed out that the faculty boards were administrative bodies, not tribunals, and the use of elimination as a punishment for violations serious enough for trial by

court-martial or under Article of War 104 (giving commanding officers disciplinary power to impose "company punishment") was prohibited. Following a conviction by court-martial, the aviation cadet would be brought before a faculty board and eliminated on the basis that he possessed "traits of character which disqualify him for commission or appointment as Flight Officer." His elimination record would then contain both the trial proceedings and the action by the faculty board.¹⁵

Violations of the honor code were usually treated separately from other breaches of discipline. Students suspected of violation were required to appear before a cadet honor council which might impose minor punishment. If the offense was serious enough to warrant more drastic action, the council turned the case over to the administrative personnel for court-martial proceedings.¹⁶ By 1944, however, the use of the honor system had been abandoned at one preflight school. In its place was put a system requiring that "one of two actions be taken upon the discovery of incontrovertible cases of dishonesty in examinations-- acknowledgment of guilt by the cadet, followed by elimination from flying training, or court-martial."¹⁷

The procedure for the elimination of technical training students was similar to that employed by the flying training schools except for those eliminated automatically for academic failure. In the latter case, the automatic procedure was adopted to relieve school personnel of administrative detail and to institute a uniform policy which would afford equal treatment to all students.

Except when disciplinary action was involved, elimination proceedings in the technical schools were begun by the instructor of the phase in which the student was deficient. Upon receipt of an unsatisfactory report from an instructor, the senior instructor often interviewed the student in order to decide whether or not his delinquency was serious enough to warrant an appearance before the faculty board. If the senior instructor believed that the student would be able to improve in his work, he was authorized to return the student to class. If he agreed that the student was a potential eliminee, preparations were begun for his interview by the board.¹⁸ Many schools by-passed this interview, however, unless it was requested by the student.¹⁹

As pointed out above,* an automatic elimination system, which simplified the wash-out procedure when academic failure was involved, was introduced in April 1942. In every instance, however, the student was granted the right of appeal by means of a faculty board hearing. If he

* See p.20 ff.

chose to appeal his case, the student was required to complete a form which was submitted through channels so that it was in the hands of the division director within 24 hours after he was informed of his impending elimination. The director investigated the circumstances and, by indorsement, turned the case over to the faculty board, which when conducted the hearing in the prescribed manner.²⁰

Early in 1943 the Technical Training Command received information that students were being eliminated "as a result of Faculty Board Proceedings which were not in truth and in fact board proceedings at all." According to this report, eliminations were being made solely on the advice of the directors of training. The Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, AAF TTC, investigated the charges and reached a decision that such eliminations were legal if the cause was academic failure. The investigators announced that students eliminated for those reasons "did not have the right to appear before the board and that summary elimination of this type of student was within the prerogative of the organization which accorded him the privilege of attending any school within his command." The automatic elimination system was legalized, therefore, although students were allowed to retain the right of appeal. As a result of this decision, no further difficulties were encountered, according to the report.²¹

Faculty boards at the technical schools ordinarily met weekly or semimonthly unless circumstances warranted more frequent sessions. In January 1944, however, the technical school at Scott Field directed that the board convene daily, seven days each week,²² and the armament school at Lowry also found it necessary to hold more frequent board meetings. Sessions were to be held at the Armament School Headquarters twice daily except on Sundays and Tuesdays.²³ This increase in the frequency of board meetings was undoubtedly a result of the increased number of students in training and the desire to dispose of eliminees as quickly as possible.

Several types of reports were introduced at the various technical schools to aid the administrative personnel in determining the status of students. Student delinquency reports which included the pertinent facts of the case were used by one school. These reports were submitted to the faculty boards in addition to the regular data and were included in the completed file retained on each student who appeared before the board.²⁴ The Armament Department at Lowry Field designated its form as a "Circumstance Report;" it included such evidence as the attitude of the student, number of class periods missed, and in the case of disciplinary elimination the type of offense and testimony of witnesses. Not only was this report submitted to the board, but it served as a guide for the preliminary interview by the division supervisor.²⁵

Late in 1944 the decision was reached that students eliminated "with prejudice" would no longer be eligible for another type of training. This

placed an additional burden on the faculty boards, for their judgment would henceforth affect the entire future career of the student eliminated for misconduct or improper attitude. In order to prevent injustices in dismissing students "with prejudice," the schools at Truax Field were informed that appearance before a faculty board of any student to be eliminated with prejudice was mandatory.²⁶ Automatic eliminations were not influenced by this ruling, for they were designated "without prejudice" in the majority of instances: a student eliminated "without prejudice" was allowed any further training for which he could qualify.

In order to simplify this situation, two kinds of boards were set up, one for "with prejudice" and the other for "without prejudice" cases. Unless the members of the without prejudice board doubted the sincerity of the student, the board was primarily concerned with his proper disposition after elimination. If some doubt existed concerning the amount of effort which had been expended by the student, his case was turned over to the with prejudice board. This board had the greater responsibility, therefore, in that training was definitely ended for the student eliminated by it.²⁷

Eliminations for mental or physical reasons were ordinarily handled in the same manner as those for academic causes, but in 1945 the great demand for technical students created a situation which necessitated a change in policy. Scott Field, in particular, had reported that students were being rushed into classes so rapidly that there was no time for proper processing; as a result, each class contained men who were obviously disqualified mentally or physically. This placed an unnecessary burden on supervisory personnel who were required to interview those men in order to institute elimination proceedings. No elimination for physical or mental reasons could be made without an examination; thus it was necessary for obviously unqualified students to remain in classes until a physical examination could be scheduled. To relieve the schools of this handicap, the supervisory personnel was delegated authority to delete from school rosters before classes began any student who appeared to possess mental or physical deficiencies.²⁸ Considerable time and effort were undoubtedly saved by this new policy.

The Radio-Operator Mechanic School at Scott Field retained the policy of requiring a faculty board appearance for all potential eliminees. The administrative personnel of the school believed that they had been able to salvage many students because, after an appearance before the board, their attitude had changed for the better. These students had been returned to class and had completed the course satisfactorily.²⁹

Despite care exercised in rendering judgment on the type of elimination accorded students, Truax Field reported that many erroneous recommendations had been made in the matter of with or without prejudice eliminations. Such errors, it was believed, "indicated either a lack of ability on the

officer's part, or most likely, a lack of realization of his responsibility in these matters." Inexperienced officers was given as the most logical reason for these errors, and late in 1944 efforts were made, by better orientation and discipline, to eradicate this weakness in the elimination procedure.³⁰

The only instance in which the elimination procedure did not function with relative efficiency occurred in the training detachments at the various colleges and universities throughout the country. With instruction the concern of civilian faculties and administration in the hands of the Air Force, a conflict in authority perhaps was inevitable. The faculty members quite naturally believed that the question of a student's ability to complete a course was their concern; Air Force regulations, however, left the final decision to the training detachment's commanding officer, and many students whom the civilian faculty considered worthy of further training were eliminated by the military authorities. This difference of opinion was reconciled only in detachments having commanding officers sympathetic to the college teacher's right to use his own judgment in evaluating students.³¹

The procedure by which a student was eliminated from an Air Force school functioned reasonably well in comparison with the other phases of the elimination problem. With minor exceptions, students who showed themselves incapable of continuing training were washed-out with a minimum of effort and time. Although injustices occurred, they appear to have been kept to a minimum, for complaints against the elimination procedure were less frequent than in regard to the cause of elimination or the disposition of eliminees.

Chapter IV

DISPOSITION OF ELIMINATED AVIATION CADETS

The proper disposition of eliminated trainees in the best interest of the AAF and of the individual concerned was the most perplexing phase of the elimination problem. As the amount of training which had been completed at the time of elimination was variable, there was a great possibility of waste if the partly trained student was unable to use what he had learned. If the eliminee was not reassigned properly, his resultant discontent affected both civilian and military morale. It was imperative, therefore, that the air force have adequate machinery for reassigning eliminees quickly and efficiently. The fact that this machinery was never perfected provoked the most justifiable criticism of the entire training program.

Before the rapid expansion of air force training, the disposition of eliminated flying cadets and flying students had posed no problem.* A flying cadet who had been appointed directly from civilian life was discharged from the service when eliminated from training. A former Air Corps enlisted man was given the option of a discharge or retention in the service in the grade held prior to appointment. An enlisted man from another branch of the service who had transferred to the Air Corps for the purpose of accepting an appointment as a flying cadet and who did not desire a discharge upon elimination from training was retained in the Air Corps in the grade of private.¹ In the case of officers who were detailed to the Air Corps for one year for pilot training, their detail was terminated and they were returned to their original units.² Late in 1938 it was recommended that officers eliminated from pilot training be asked to volunteer for training as balloon observers;³ the recommendation was approved and the wash-outs who volunteered were allowed to remain in the Air Corps for the remainder of their one-year detail. Eventually this amounted to a virtual transfer for, upon successful completion of the observer training, the volunteers could be assigned to the Air Corps on the basis of their special qualifications.⁴ Since few balloon observers were needed, however, most officer eliminees continued to be returned to their original units. There was no similar opportunity for eliminated enlisted men to volunteer during these years. Thus, little effort was made before 1939 to utilize eliminees in any way unless they desired to remain in the Air Corps.

* Except where otherwise specified, the term aviation (flying) cadet is used herein to denote both aviation cadets and aviation students.

Further Air Crew Training

The Air Corps expansion begun in 1939 was accompanied by a need for trainees in specialties other than that of pilot. As each successively larger training program for pilots was announced, correspondingly larger quotas were set up for bombardiers and navigators. It was decided, therefore, that candidates for these aircrew jobs would be taken from among the cadets eliminated from pilot training,⁵ a source which was expected to yield a sufficient number of partly trained men to fill all quotas.⁶ Eliminees were also permitted to apply for training as instructors in aircrew and combat crew specialties. Two years of college and some background in the subject were necessary for this training.⁷ When the legality of retaining eliminated cadets in the service for other training was questioned, the Judge Advocate General ruled that there was no legal objection to permitting the cadets to continue voluntarily in cadet status in other aircrew training. Furthermore, cadets could be selected directly from civil life for training in other specialties.⁸ The way was thus cleared for a great expansion in all phases of aircrew training.

Despite the removal of legal barriers, however, small navigator quotas and the fact that bombardier training was not scheduled to begin until April 1941 made it urgent that some method of retaining eliminees eligible for further training be developed immediately. Otherwise, if they were discharged and permitted to return home to await assignment, they might conceivably be lost to another branch of the service. Cadets who were eliminated for flying deficiency but were still eligible for navigator training were therefore authorized to remain in the service until they were assigned to training. On the other hand, those cadets who were eligible for bombardier training were placed in the Enlisted Reserve Corps to await assignment to schools. Any eliminated cadet who did not desire, or was not qualified for, aircrew training was to be discharged in the usual manner.⁹

The announcement of this policy brought queries from many ex-flying cadets relative to further training; a letter received by General Arnold in June 1940 was typical of their attitude:¹⁰

I wonder if this letter will ever get to whom it is addressed? This letter speaks for quite a large number of young men who once gave up jobs, school and everything to be of service to Uncle Sam. I am talking about us outcasts ex-flying cadets, unable to find employment. With all this uproar about rearmament, why not give us fellows another chance. We all have had some experience in flying and perhaps with a fresh start, we may get through this time. We all think that a group of ex-flying cadets, given a fresh start, are in a better position to go through than a fresh batch of rookies. Perhaps we are wrong - I suppose so - yes we know - into the waste basket goes this letter.

Since many of these ex-cadets had continued training at civilian schools and had become efficient pilots, there were suggestions that they be reinstated in flying training.¹¹ Despite these sentiments, it was decided that no cadet who had been eliminated for flying deficiency, air sickness, or fear of flying would be granted an opportunity to re-enter flying training.¹² They would be allowed, however, to enter other aircrew training if qualified.¹³

The use of eliminated cadets for training in other aircrew specialties aroused considerable opposition among some Air Corps planners.* It was reported that pilot eliminees sent to bombardier instructors' school were unable to complete that course for basically the same reasons which had halted their pilot training--below average adaptability and insufficient or deficient educational background. When it was recommended that no more eliminees be sent to the school, the Office of the Chief of Air Staff (OC/AS) agreed but indicated that the practice would have to be continued until more desirable trainees became available.¹⁴ It was also reported that eliminees were not doing as well in bombardier and navigator training as was the average cadet taken directly from civil life.¹⁵ Most pilot eliminees felt that they could still learn to fly and regarded other aircrew training as secondary; many were content merely "to coast along" and showed little real interest in the training;¹⁶ and those undergoing bombardier training were inclined to blame their own inefficiency and poor bombing accuracy on the pilot.¹⁷ Still other objections were voiced by The Air Inspector, the Directorate of Military Requirements, and the Directorate of Bombardment.¹⁸

AG/AS Personnel did not agree with these objections, maintaining that eliminees were more suitable than volunteers from civil life because they had already passed before two examining bodies (Flying Cadet Examining Board and elimination board) and had been exposed to some military training--which was expected to decrease their training time. The attitude of the Flying Cadet Section of OC/AS was expressed in January 1941:¹⁹

We give priority on all appointments to specialized training to washed out pilot trainees. The doggone flying schools are still eliminating between 40% and 50% and it helps our pilot boys when they enter to know that if they can meet the educational qualifications for specialized training such training will be given them ahead of civilians. In addition to this we have the advantage of having them under close military supervision for a period of time and the judgment of the officer who has had him under supervision in regard to his suitability for these types of specialized training.

* Until the autumn of 1943 colored aviation cadets were limited to pilot training. Upon elimination, therefore, they were disposed of in whatever duty they were needed. In November 1943 the AAF Bombardier School at Midland, Texas, was opened to qualified colored cadets including eliminees. (Daily Diary, AAFTC, 26 Nov. 1943.)

Despite these diametrically opposed points of view, on the basis of the "advantages" just quoted, eliminees continued to be relied upon to fill quotas for aircrew training according to the qualifications of the individual. In 1941, in fact, bombardier training was open only to pilot eliminees who had been washed-out because of flying deficiency.²⁰

Late in 1941 additional criticism was voiced concerning the effect of this practice on the relative standing of bombardier and navigator training in comparison with pilot training: by filling bombardier and navigator quotas with pilot eliminees, the former aircrew positions tended to appear less important than the latter, a circumstance which lowered the morale of bombardier and navigator students.²¹ In recognition of the truth of this criticism, a new policy was announced on 21 November 1941. Eight courses would henceforth be open to aviation cadets: pilot, navigator, and navigator-bombardier in flying training, and engineering, weather, photographic, communications, and armament training in the ground-duty program. Each cadet could choose any course for which he could qualify, and if he were eliminated later because of unsatisfactory progress, he had the opportunity of transferring to a second course if qualified. His first elimination, furthermore, would have no bearing on his status in the second course. "In applying the above policy," the directive read, ". . . instruction and conduct of all activities will be to the end that as much of the stigma as possible will be removed from those failing to make satisfactory progress in the course in which they are receiving instruction."²²

The outbreak of hostilities on 7 December 1941 necessarily altered the entire aviation cadet program: more trainees were needed to fill the expanding quotas, and Congress extended all enlistments for the duration of the emergency plus six months. This change relieved the AAF of any possible shortage of trainees, but it made the problem of the disposition of eliminees more acute. The aviation cadets in the service at the time of the Japanese attack had volunteered under regulations which stipulated their discharge if eliminated from training. It was believed, therefore, that the War Department had a moral obligation to allow them to return to civilian life, despite the state of war, if they were unsuccessful in completing their training. The final decision provided that cadets who had been accepted for training prior to 1 February 1942 were subject to the regulations in force at that time. Thus if a cadet was eliminated, he could be retained in the service only if he volunteered for and was qualified for further training; if he was not qualified, he would be discharged at the convenience of the government. In the latter case, the ex-cadet would be offered enlistment in the Air Corps as a private; if he refused, he was warned to register with his local draft board within five days after discharge.²³

After 1 February 1942 those men who entered the air force were classified as privates in the Air Corps and only appointed as aviation cadets later. If a man were eliminated from training after his appointment as cadet, he would revert to the grade of private and be subject to such

reassignment as his background warranted.²⁴ This procedure was designed to prevent eliminees being lost to other services and to guarantee the Air Corps an adequate supply of men. In addition to this change, after 14 January 1942 only those eliminees who had not failed ground school subjects and who had exhibited no disqualifying traits such as fear of flying, tenseness, or apprehension, would be eligible for further aircrew training. Those who were not so disqualified were required to take the mental and aptitudinal screening tests if they had not done so previously. The selection of their future training would then be determined on the basis of the test scores as well as the particular interest of the individual cadet.²⁵

The new procedures were not placed in operation without objection from the AAF. General Arnold believed that since aviation cadet training was on a voluntary basis, all cadets should be discharged upon elimination from training if they so desired. It was unfair to retain above-average men in the service as Air Corps privates when they might possibly be able to assume positions of leadership in some other service or in "other National Defense activities."²⁶ Although Arnold's objection had considerable validity, it was overruled by the War Department in the interest of time and economy. Since it would be at the expense of both of these to allow cadets who had completed at least seven weeks training to enter another branch of the service and be required to repeat the training, the War Department directed that ex-cadets be retained in the Air Corps.²⁷

Now that the use of all eliminees in other types of training was possible, certain defects in the procedure became apparent. On the basis of stanine score, an eliminee from one type of training was often recommended for another course for which he possessed less aptitude than for the course from which he was eliminated. Much time and effort were expended uselessly in reclassifying and retraining him only to have him wash out of the second course. To insure entrance into training of only those eliminees who stood a good chance of completing the second course, it was directed that an eliminee would be required to possess at least an average aptitude (stanine 6) to qualify for it. The directive stressed, in addition, that instructors were not to be informed of a cadet's stanine nor was the score to be used as a basis for elimination from any training.²⁸ Another serious defect in the procedure, which was resulting in the loss of potential pilot trainees, was soon noticed. The "New Aviation Cadet Procedure" of 15 January 1942 stated in part that an eliminated cadet would not be eligible for further aircrew training if he had failed in any ground school subject. Thus, a bombardier or navigator cadet who had shown academic weakness would be ineligible for pilot training, despite the fact that the academic work required in pilot training was not as difficult as that in the other aircrew specialties. This was undoubtedly a waste of talent because the bulk of eliminations from bombardier and navigator training were caused by academic failure, and the eliminees were thereby ineligible for pilot training. According

to the Director of Personnel, the policy was defective, for ". . . there is good reason to believe that any Cadet, who shows sufficient aptitude for being originally classified as a navigator, will be able without exception to pass ground school courses in pilot training".²⁹ Accordingly, a policy change was formulated which stated that eliminees from bombardier and navigator training whose failure was due to academic deficiency and who desired further aircrew training could qualify for pilot school if they were able to pass the Aviation Cadet Qualifying Examination with a score equal to the average passing grade plus one-third of the difference between that grade and 100 per cent.³⁰ Since most cadets who had an original aptitude high enough for bombardier or navigator training would have little difficulty attaining that score, this fruitful source of pilot trainees was thereafter utilized.

Despite these clarifications of policy, conflicts continued to appear in the reassignment of eliminees to further training. The entire procedure was restated, therefore, in the fall of 1942. It was emphasized that reassignment was a command function and the responsibility of the officer exercising authority over the faculty board which recommended the eliminated cadet for further training. No reclassification was to be made and no aptitude tests were to be given in the process of reassignment unless the cadet had not been tested previously. An expressed desire for further training, at least an average aptitude, and a recommendation by the elimination board were prerequisites for further training. Air sickness, fear of flying, and tenseness were to be considered final elimination from aircrew training and no cadet was to be assigned to pilot training who had ever been eliminated for flying deficiency from any service flying school.³¹ Except for minor changes, this policy remained the basis for selecting eliminated cadets for further training throughout the expansion period.

Most of these changes were in the nature of restrictions which experience indicated were necessary for the smooth functioning of the training program. For example, in May 1943 it was announced that elimination from two of the three aircrew training courses would be considered as final elimination.³² And, also in 1943 it was directed that no more than 80 per cent of the bombardier or navigator trainees could be eliminees from another course of aircrew training. Although this regulation was designed to reduce the number of eliminees in training, it was seldom invoked since the usual percentage of eliminees from other training was about 50 at this time.³³ Another important alteration was designed to save time and expense in retraining eliminees: in April 1943 it was decided very wisely to combine all aircrew preflight training into one course. This meant that future eliminees from one phase of training would not be required to undergo another preflight training period before entrance into a second course,³⁴ a policy which would have been even more beneficial had it been established earlier in the training program. Finally, though somewhat tangential to the main trend of later changes in the reassignment policy, beginning in 1944 combat crew members returning

from overseas duty were allowed to volunteer for training in any other aircrew specialty for which they could qualify. Upon elimination from one course, they could enter another, if qualified; in the event that they did not desire another course or changed their minds about further combat duty, they were assigned to stations in the United States.³⁵

Thus the entire problem of reassigning aircrew eliminees to another aircrew course was solved by the trial-and-error method: by the time aircrew procurement was curtailed early in 1944, most of the defects had been overcome and the procedure was functioning smoothly.

Aviation Cadet Ground Duty Training

For those cadets whose elimination from an aircrew training course was final, there remained an opportunity for retaining their cadet status by reassignment to an aviation cadet ground duty course in engineering, weather, photography, communications, or armament training, all of which led to an appointment as flight officer or a commission as second lieutenant. Early suggestions to utilize eliminees in these specialties had met with considerable opposition. In July 1940 a recommendation that pilot wash-outs be trained as engineering officers had been disapproved by the chief of the Plans Division. "Air Corps officer pilots," he stated, "have always performed these duties [engineering, communications, and armament] in addition to their duties as members of combat crews and there appears to be no reason for departing from this practice at this time." Rather than train eliminees in these specialties, he recommended the use of experienced non-commissioned officers.³⁶ This short-sighted policy, of course, proved entirely inadequate as soon as the expansion program was well underway. By the end of 1940, however, the decision had been reached to utilize qualified eliminated cadets for ground duty training. Despite a growing need for such trainees, little publicity was given to procurement at first, in the belief that eliminees and specially selected students would be sufficient to fill the quotas. Furthermore, educational qualifications were so high that the average applicant for cadet training was expected to be unable to qualify. A cadet desiring meteorology training had to be a graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology or California Institute of Technology with a major in meteorology and be recommended by the college;* communications and photography trainees were required to be college graduates with certain specified courses. Since eliminees were given priority for training in these specialties, extensive publicity could have caused the accumulation of a back log of applicants which might never have been needed.³⁷

* For a detailed account of this type of cadet training, see AHS-56, Weather Training in the AAF.

When the need for ground duty trainees increased greatly toward the end of 1941, necessary changes in the procurement policy were forthcoming. As pointed out above, these changes were brought about by the announcement that all cadets entering training would be given their choice of any flying or non-flying course as long as they could meet the qualifications. If a cadet proved unable to complete the course of his first choice, he was encouraged to pursue a second type of training; in the event he was accepted for the second, his previous elimination was to have no bearing on his status. As long as vacancies existed, as many aviation cadets as possible were to be trained as flying or non-flying officers.³⁸ To augment the new policy, some relaxation was made in the educational requirements for two of the ground duty courses, and of these two only armament training continued to be restricted to eliminees. Although a college education was still required for armament training, eliminees could qualify for it if they possessed a high mechanical aptitude regardless of the field in which the college degree had been obtained. Two years of college in addition to the successful completion of the radio course at Scott Field was deemed sufficient for entrance into cadet communications training.³⁹ These changes made it easier for both eliminees and civilians to qualify for ground duty training.

Several alterations were made, also, in the procedure by which an eliminated cadet was relieved from aircrew training and enrolled in a ground duty course. In 1941 the commanding officers of the training centers submitted by radio to the Flying Cadet Section, Headquarters, AAG the names of all eliminated aircrew cadets who desired further training, and their preference; accompanying this list were the recommendations of the training center commanders themselves. After the eligibility of the cadets for further training was determined, orders for transfer were drawn up by the Office of the Chief of Air Staff. The cadets were then sent to replacement centers to await assignment to the appropriate schools.⁴⁰ The "New Aviation Cadet Procedure" of 15 January 1942 continued this policy with one exception: the eliminatee would be removed from cadet status between the time of his elimination and his subsequent assignment to a ground duty course.⁴¹ The reassignment procedure was further simplified and decentralized in May 1942, when authority to determine an eliminated cadet's eligibility for ground duty training was delegated to the training center commander concerned, subject to approval by the Aviation Cadet Section. Furthermore, the cadet's statement of his educational background was to be accepted for purposes of reassignment, rather than await the arrival of an official transcript from his college.⁴²

Despite these changes, complaints arose concerning deficiencies in reassignment procedure. Eliminees assigned to ground duty by the training center commanders, under their new authority, were coming to the replacement centers with insufficient data in their records for the commander of the center to determine for what course the cadet was recommended. When the replacement center commanders requested, the

that the records of the eliminees include all data relative to the disposition to be made of the cadets, it was decided to include a notation in the service record of each eliminee defining his status.⁴³ In addition, it was recommended that the replacement centers retain eliminees who had been recommended for ground duty training until they were assigned to schools, rather than assign them to training temporarily as enlisted men with the possibility that they could later regain their aviation cadet status.⁴⁴ This recommendation was adopted in April 1943, removing that problem from the reassignment procedure.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, in the autumn of 1942, many complaints had also been heard concerning the slowness of assigning eliminees recommended for ground duty training: some cadets, it was reported, had been waiting six months or more to be sent to the appropriate schools. Accordingly, orders were sent to all stations advising that the names of all ex-cadets awaiting assignment to ground duty training were to be forwarded to the Aviation Cadet Section. In the future, all such cadets were to be reported if they were not reassigned within four weeks of their arrival at the intermediate station,⁴⁶ a procedure which apparently was effective in reducing the number of eliminees awaiting cadet ground duty training.

As the training program progressed, opposition to the use of eliminated cadets in ground duty training increased. It was believed that many eliminees were dissatisfied with the training, looked upon it merely as a means of receiving a commission, and therefore did not possess the proper attitude. As a result of increased complaints, less encouragement was given to aircrew eliminees to apply for ground duty training. "If an eliminee was qualified and wanted to go into ground duty training," one officer stated, "he was allowed to do so, but he was not asked or encouraged to apply."⁴⁷ In addition, during the latter part of the war period, the demand for ground duty trainees was never very great, so that their procurement presented few difficulties. As age and educational requirements for aviation cadet aircrew training were lowered, most eliminees were unable to qualify for ground duty training. Educational qualifications were lowered somewhat, nevertheless, so that in 1944 two years of college was sufficient for ground duty training except in photography which required three years of college in addition to experience.⁴⁸

Less Strenuous Flying Duties

Many eliminees, particularly from basic and advanced flying schools, had accumulated a large number of flying hours before washing-out, and those eliminated from transition training often had received commissions prior to elimination. To send these men to ground duty training or return them to their unit of origin would have constituted a waste of trained manpower. On the other hand, their elimination illustrated that they were incapable of combat duty either for physical or aptitudinal reasons. This anomaly thus created problems that were not inherent in the cases of other washed-out cadets.

Early in 1943 the Chief of Air Staff announced that because of a threatened shortage of manpower, it was necessary to capitalize on the experience and potential ability of pilot eliminees who had completed a certain number of flying hours before elimination. Accordingly, cadets who had 20 or more hours before being removed from elementary schools were made eligible for either a liaison or a glider pilot course. Those assigned to the former would become aviation students and be appointed as staff sergeants with a liaison pilot rating upon graduation; eliminees selected for the latter would also train as aviation students and, upon graduation, would be appointed flight officers with a rating of glider pilot. Cadets eliminated from basic or advanced flying schools were given three choices for further training: (1) they might be sent as aviation cadets to the AAF Central Instructor's School and upon graduation be appointed flight officers or commissioned second lieutenants with a service pilot rating; (2) they could undertake glider pilot training as cadets with an appointment as flight officer or a commission upon graduation; or (3) they might select liaison training under the same conditions described above for eliminees from elementary schools.⁴⁹

The Flying Training Command expressed disapproval of this entire policy. Vacancies in the glider program were non-existent, it pointed out, and the backlog of prospective trainees was large. It strongly objected, furthermore, to the use of eliminees as instructors, a practice which would be detrimental to student learning since "the student must feel that his instructor is the best pilot in the world."⁵⁰ This, of course, would be impossible if the student discovered that his instructor had once been eliminated from pilot training. AC/AS Training countered these objections by explaining that the program was actually advanced planning designed to go into effect only when the need arose, and since service pilots were in demand, that part of the program would be effective. Regarding the use of eliminees as instructors, AC/AS Training stated that many potentially good pilots were being eliminated because of poor instructors, who nevertheless had to be retained in the absence of more experienced personnel. To ameliorate this situation, the program to train eliminees as instructors was expected to provide instructors possessing at least some experience.⁵¹

Although the need for glider and liaison pilots was never great, the policy was apparently adopted. In August 1943 the Flying Training Command was directed to produce 200 glider pilots each month during 1944; these were to be obtained, in part, from pilot school eliminees, who were to have priority for assignment to the training.⁵² Requirements were stiffened, however, in that eliminees from basic and advanced schools were required to have a minimum of 125 flying hours to qualify.⁵³ By the spring of 1944 a sufficient backlog of prospective glider trainees had been established, so that the program was closed to eliminated aviation cadets.⁵⁴

In June 1943 another limited field was opened to eliminated cadets to make use of their experience. A Radio Observer I course, consisting of six weeks of flexible gunnery training, six weeks of radar training, and three months of radio observer training, was set up at Boca Raton Army Air Field. The program was restricted to eliminated cadets having a minimum of 50 flying hours who had not been eliminated for fear of flying, air sickness, physical disability, or at their own request. Eliminees recommended for this training were to pursue the course as cadets and be appointed flight officers or commissioned at the completion of their training.⁵⁵ With quotas small, however, relatively few eliminees were able to utilize their previous training in this way. Small numbers of eliminated cadets were also absorbed by the Air Transport Command. Those who met the qualifications were employed as co-pilots while others became flying pursers engaged in such duties as handling passengers and traffic control. According to one officer, many eliminees were eager to become pursers for it represented the "last shot to fly."⁵⁶ Because of a shortage of personnel for combat crew training, this training was closed to eliminees in July 1944.⁵⁷

Despite these efforts to take advantage of the flying experience of eliminated cadets, it appears that little could be done. Limited quotas precluded the assignment of many cadets with valuable training to duties which would have made maximum use of their experience. Much time and effort were lost, therefore, which might have been of considerable value to the AAF.

Officer Candidate School

One final opportunity for a commission remained for cadets who were eliminated from flying or ground duty training: throughout the expansion period it was possible for eliminees to apply for administrative Officer Candidate School if quotas were not already filled. Any cadet who could meet the entrance requirements and who was recommended by the elimination board was acceptable if he desired the training. A special quota for eliminated cadets who desired to attend OCS was allotted the Technical Training Command, and in 1942, at least "considerable numbers" took advantage of the opportunity.

Despite the encouragement given, full advantage of this method of receiving a commission apparently was not taken by the eliminated cadets: a survey at the Flexible Gunnery School, Fort Myers, revealed that out of 328 eliminated cadets at that station, only 72 had applied for OCS. Forty-one of these had been rejected, largely because of their youth and lack of military experience.⁵⁸

Perhaps this was fortunate, for successful completion of OCS by these eliminees gave rise to a problem not easily solved. Since the length of the OCS course was generally less than that for aviation cadet training, there was a danger that an eliminee sent to OCS would be commissioned sooner than the cadet who completed cadet training. It was indeed awkward for a cadet to meet a newly commissioned ex-classmate, in addition to the fact that the attitude of the ex-cadets, though commissioned, was often bad when around flying personnel, because of their frustration at being prevented from flying. In an effort to solve both problems simultaneously, it was directed that cadet eliminees who received commissions from OCS were not to be assigned to duty within the Flying Training Command.⁵⁹

In effect these problems were largely obviated as the training program progressed: age and educational qualifications for cadet training were lowered, so that fewer eliminees were able to meet the entrance requirements for OCS. In particular, most eliminees were too young and immature. It was emphasized, however, that this immaturity was not to be considered as permanent: ex-cadets could reapply for OCS later when they had acquired more military experience.⁶⁰ During the entire expansion period, nevertheless, relatively few aviation cadet eliminees were able to receive commissions through Officer Candidate School.

Crew Training

For those eliminated cadets who indicated a desire for enlisted flying or ground duty, there remained the possibility of training as crew members. This opportunity existed under a blanket authority for air force administrators to assign them "to such organization or activity of the Army Air Forces as the Chief of the Army Air Forces, or such officer or officers as he may from time to time designate, shall determine."⁶¹ Assignment of eliminated aviation cadets to crew training was contingent upon the desire of the individual, his physical qualifications, and the need for trainees.

In the middle of 1942, when the need for combat crew trainees began to increase markedly the Director of Personnel recommended that aviation cadet eliminees be urged to volunteer for flexible gunnery training. Earlier, however, attempts to interest enlisted men in gunnery training had revealed that it was not overly popular: the Third Air Force reported that some men had declared that they would rather be in the guard house than take that training.⁶² In spite of this attitude, it was felt that eliminated aviation cadets who could qualify physically were the logical source for gunnery trainees. Thus, in order to fill the quotas for combat crew trainees, it was decided in December 1942 that those eliminees not qualified for further aircrew training be returned to enlisted status and sent to one of the following courses: armorer, airplane mechanic, radio operator, radio operator-mechanic. This procedure was to be

followed rather than that of sending eliminees to OCS or to AAF units for on-the-job training, both of which then had a sufficient number of trainees.⁶³ In March 1943 the policy was further clarified. Eliminated cadets were to be examined upon arrival at the basic training centers to determine for which of the above courses they were qualified; they would then be sent to the appropriate school either before or after the completion of flexible gunnery training. If they were already qualified in one of the combat crew specialties, they would be sent immediately to a gunnery school. Only those eliminees who met the physical qualifications and who had not been eliminated from aircrew training for air sickness or fear of flying were to be considered for this training.⁶⁴ Those not physically qualified for gunnery training would be enrolled in ground duty schools.

With the resultant increase in the volume of eliminees moving to either technical schools or gunnery schools, it soon became apparent that time and effort were being wasted in sending the eliminees to basic training centers before assignment to further training. In May 1943, therefore, a plan was recommended to eliminate the movement through the centers: because of the generally high intelligence level of the ex-aviation cadets, it was believed that a brief interview at the station of elimination would be sufficient to determine proper reassignment. As eliminees who were qualified in one of the combat crew specialties were already being sent directly to gunnery schools, it was felt that a similar plan should be devised for handling all eliminees.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, despite the evident advantages, AC/AS Training disapproved: such an innovation would magnify the problems of personnel distribution and create an uneven supply of trainees at the technical schools. As an alternative, AC/AS Training recommended a modification of the present system to speed up the flow of eliminees through the basic training centers.⁶⁶ This was overruled, however, and movement through the basic training centers was curtailed. Shipments of ex-cadets were to be made "without regard to quota direct to Technical Schools, Army Air Forces Technical Training Command, for which qualified, special orders clearly stating that enlisted men concerned have been eliminated from further Aviation Cadet Training. Whether or not they are qualified for Flexible Gunnery Training should also be stated."⁶⁷ Furthermore, priority for entrance into classes was to be given to eliminated cadets, except for enlisted men on detached service specifically for attendance at the school.⁶⁸ A Training Command memorandum designated the schools to which eliminated cadets were to be sent and the procedure to be followed. In addition to the special orders mentioned above, records of the eliminees were to include a physical examination form and other personal data. Each flying training command was to submit monthly reports on the disposition of all eliminated cadets.⁶⁹ The adoption of this procedure settled a problem which had caused much confusion since the inception of the aviation cadet program.

As early as 1942 General Arnold had posed another problem when he questioned the assignment of eliminated cadets to training other than combat crew. After hearing complaints from ex-cadets that the AAF had promised them they could train as members of combat crews, Arnold came to believe that the practice of placing them in other types of training such as OCS was a breach of contract with the cadets.⁷⁰ If such a promise had been made, it could be fulfilled only by assignment to combat crew training. In answer to Arnold, it was pointed out that the obligation of the AAF extended only to those cadets who were physically qualified for flying duty. Failure to achieve the minimum score on classification tests brought about elimination because of a failing Aptitude Rating for Military Aeronautics (ARMA) which was recorded on the Form 64 physical examination. Since this was considered a physical disqualification, the obligation of the AAF was terminated; moreover, no promises had been made, and the Personnel Division believed that the AAF need take no further action in the matter.⁷¹ This view was substantiated by the Office of the Air Surgeon, AAFPTC, which pointed out that all cadets were required to sign the following: "Should I be found disqualified for any duty with the aircrew or for training as an Aviation Cadet (Ground Duty) I understand I will continue in the service as an enlisted man in the Army Air Forces." No eliminations were made, furthermore, without the concurrence of a faculty board. The Office of the Air Surgeon believed,⁷² therefore, that all promises, actual or implied, were being carried out.

In view of these opinions, Arnold professed to be satisfied that the air force was carrying out its commitments. He suggested, however, that the statement which the incoming cadets had to sign be clarified to prevent any misunderstanding.⁷³ This apparently settled the issue. Nevertheless, early in 1944 AAF officials discovered that the advertising campaign carried on to attract 17-year olds contained an implication that they would be given an opportunity to qualify for combat crew duty if eliminated from flying training. In view of this, it was directed that all such eliminees who volunteered for gunnery training would be sent to gunnery schools regardless of quotas;⁷⁴ as many of this group as possible, however, were to be sent to technical schools leaving other enlisted men to fill gunnery quotas.⁷⁵ This remained the policy until November 1944, when it was directed that aircrew eliminees should be sent to gunnery schools as soon after elimination as possible in order to reduce the number of eliminees in the training pipeline on V-E Day.⁷⁶

Absorption Within The Flying Training Command

Although most eliminated aviation cadets were able to qualify for one or more of the various types of training, many neither desired nor were recommended for further training. Those handicapped mentally or physically, of course, were discharged. The remainder, in accordance with War Department policy, had to be absorbed by the AAF in some way. Prior to

1942 eliminees who did not desire further training were discharged. Those who had transferred from other branches to the Air Corps for the purpose of cadet training and did not desire discharge after elimination were retained in the service in the grade of private; Air Corps enlisted men who did not desire discharge upon elimination were returned to the grade held prior to their cadet appointment.⁷⁷ No particular encouragement was offered to these men to persuade them to remain in the service, and those who elected to remain were assigned to duties commensurate with their qualifications and ability.*

This policy was altered, however, when it was decided in January 1942 to retain eliminated cadets in the service. The "New Aviation Cadet Procedure" directed that any cadet enlisted after 1 February 1942 would, upon final elimination from training, revert to the grade of private, Air Corps, unassigned. Those eliminees who had completed basic training became immediately available to the basic training center for assignment, preferably at "a station other than that at which the individual last served as a Cadet." The assignments were to be made to units possessing vacancies, if possible; otherwise, the men were to be carried as surplus until absorbed.⁷⁸

This procedure, which placed a group of above-average men at the disposal of training center personnel, resulted in frequent malassignments and lowered morale among the ex-cadets. One group of almost 1000 ex-cadets purportedly stationed at the Fort Myers gunnery school voiced their displeasure in a letter to Sen. Claude Pepper: "Our duties at this location are menial," they reported, "or of such a nature that they could be performed most easily by the limited service men."⁷⁹ An investigation revealed that the situation had been exaggerated: only 328 cadets were at the station, and of these, only 25 were assigned to duties not requiring "special knowledge, aptitude or experience."⁸⁰ In regard to these eliminees, the Senator was informed that "a constant effort is made to utilize the aptitudes and abilities of eliminated aviation cadets, as the Army Air Forces is aware of the high caliber personnel represented by eliminated aviation cadets."⁸¹ Although the investigation proved the complaint largely groundless, it indicated, nevertheless, the importance of the problem and the serious concern of the AAF to solve it.

In January 1943 a change in policy was instituted in regard to eliminated cadets not qualified for further training. Only those eliminees who had previously completed a course of instruction or who possessed qualifications which made their retention "particularly desirable" were to be

* See above, pp. 1-2.

retained by the training centers. All others were to be sent to a basic training center for appropriate reassignment.⁸² It was hoped that this would result in better reassignments and improved morale. With the introduction of this policy, it appears that, even though complaints were occasionally heard, most eliminees not eligible for further training were utilized in the best manner possible.

Return to Original Organization

Throughout the entire expansion period until early in 1944, men in the Army Ground and Army Service Forces were free to volunteer for aviation cadet training. When these men were eliminated from training, those who desired to return to their former branch were returned to the grade held prior to appointment as cadets and retained in the AAF pending disposition orders from their former branch.⁸³ Because ratings and promotions were generally obtained more rapidly in the air force, many cadets elected to remain there, thus depriving the other services of many men of high caliber. As a result of pressure from the Army Ground Forces, this policy was altered in November 1943, when it was decided that the AAF could retain only those eliminated cadets who qualified for combat crew (including gunnery) training.⁸⁴ For most eliminees this was not difficult, so that actually very few men were returned to their original units under this directive.

In the meantime the AGF had objected to the discrepancies in the recruiting program which gave the AAF preference in the selection of high caliber personnel. It appeared to AGF that it was not getting a proportionate share of the better men; while conceding that fliers had to be men of ability, AGF maintained that air force ground duty personnel did not have to be mentally or physically superior to combat ground personnel. Therefore, men transferred to the AAF who did not succeed in obtaining commissions as combat crew members should be returned to the ground forces.⁸⁵

Considerable friction developed between the services in regard to this matter. In September 1943 the AAF offered to return to the AGF those men who had transferred to the AAF specifically for gunnery training and who were later eliminated. Without specifying its objections, AGF replied that it did not want these eliminees.⁸⁶ This, despite the fact that the AGF had been demanding the return of all former ground forces personnel. Again, in March 1944 certain AGF units refused to accept their former members when they were eliminated from aircrew training and recommended that they be reported to AGF Headquarters for disposition. This was undoubtedly embarrassing for AGF Headquarters personnel who had been pressing for the direct return of all eliminees. Since the policy of the AAF was to return these men directly to their former organization unless it had departed for overseas--in which case they were sent to the nearest reception center--the AAF was understandably confused.⁸⁷ To ease the situation, AGF Headquarters stated that "if station commanders encounter difficulty in returning personnel they should not delay the return direct

to a unit more than a reasonable time, and send the personnel to reception stations."⁸⁸ The problem was solved, however, only when the transfer of ground troops to the AAF for aviation cadet training was halted on 3 March 1944. Those former ground troops in training at the time were to be sent to reception centers if eliminated. The difficulties encountered in this exchange of personnel, however, were an interesting commentary on inter-service relations.

Reinstatement

At various times during the air force expansion program, suggestions and recommendations were made that certain eliminated aviation cadets be reinstated in training. The justification for such a move was usually based upon either training received in civilian flying schools subsequent to elimination or lowered qualifications which would again make the eliminee eligible. AAF policy in this respect, however, was relatively consistent: except in unusual instances, no eliminated cadets were reinstated in the training from which they were eliminated.* It was possible, nevertheless, for eliminees to be reinstated as cadets for training in other types of aircrew specialties.

As early as June 1940 the Air Corps announced its opposition to reinstating former flying cadets in flying training even though they had continued their training in civilian schools after elimination.⁸⁹ This became Air Corps policy in the following year, and it was further directed that no flying student eliminated for failure in flying would be granted another opportunity to complete the training. This did not, however, preclude pilot eliminees from taking non-pilot training. Students eliminated for physical or disciplinary reasons, on the other hand, might be reinstated on the basis of a re-examination of the individual case. In regard to academic failure, cadets would be eligible to return to training only if they were able to pass a written examination with a grade which placed them in the upper 50 per cent of all those passing the same examination.⁹⁰ Because it proved difficult to determine the upper 50 per cent of the variable groups taking the examination, the policy was changed so that the cadet desiring reinstatement was required to make a grade equal to the normal passing grade plus one-third of the difference between that grade and 100 per cent.⁹¹

* General Arnold reported that "the experience of the Royal Canadian Air Force in experimenting in re-processing of eliminated aviation students is that reclamation has been under 3 per cent." Also, the RCAF found that those reclaimed did not prove to be the type of pilot desired for combat. (Ltr., Arnold to Congressman Richard B. Wigglesworth, 29 Oct. 1943, in DRB, 352.182 Deficiency Vol. #9).

Despite this ruling, AAF Headquarters continued to receive many applications from eliminated cadets re-applying for training. In order to reduce the number of applications from cadets who were obviously disqualified, AAF policy was restated: a cadet who had been eliminated because of fear of flying, air sickness, low ARMA, or low classification scores was not eligible for further consideration as a pilot trainee. There was no point, therefore, in training centers accepting applications from these eliminees. Training center commanders were to decide on the eligibility of applicants for reinstatement and send applications to AAF Headquarters for decision only in cases where the cadet had been eliminated for reasons other than those stated above.⁹²

With increased procurement of aviation cadets, and the lowering of age and educational requirements, came increased eliminations at the classification level because of low classification or ARMA score. When it was recommended that such eliminees be given an opportunity for re-examination,⁹³ The Air Surgeon, though dubious about the prospects of improvement, agreed provided no retest were made before one year had elapsed after elimination.⁹⁴ This was approved and undoubtedly saved some qualified aviation cadets for the AAF.

Throughout the expansion period the AAF received requests from Naval Aviation eliminees relative to enlistment as aviation cadets. In order to establish a uniform policy for the use of these men, it was decided that the Navy eliminees would be eligible only for non-pilot aviation cadet training. Each naval eliminee was required to send complete information in his behalf to the Office of the Chief of Air Corps for decision.⁹⁵ A change in Navy policy in 1942 increased the number of ex-naval cadets who wanted to transfer to the AAF: after 31 August 1943 Navy personnel would no longer be discharged if eliminated from flying training but would revert to seamen, second class, with no further opportunity for flying training or commissions. They were given the option, therefore, of accepting discharges prior to 31 August or continuing Navy training under the new policy. Since many of the cadets who accepted discharge had accumulated a considerable number of flying hours, the AAF basic training centers were instructed to watch for them and give them careful consideration in order to place them in the AAF training for which they were best qualified.⁹⁶ During September between 1,200 and 1,400 applications were received from the Navy eliminees, and those found qualified were inducted into the AAF in the usual manner.⁹⁷

The problem of reinstatement practically disappeared when cadet procurement was halted early in 1944. Only those ex-cadets whose eliminations fell under special categories were thereafter considered for re-entrance into training: reinstatement after elimination for physical or disciplinary reasons was to be made only after careful investigation of each individual case, and the only other class of eliminees to be considered were those who had been eliminated at the request or for the convenience of the government.⁹⁸ This policy was pursued to the end of the period under consideration.

Miscellaneous Disposition

Although most eliminated aviation cadets were handled by relatively standardized policies, small increments were occasionally disposed of through irregular means. Many who were not qualified for combat crew or for overseas duty were assigned to non-combatant technical training; others with special skills were infrequently requested by units or the other services. One thousand eliminated pilots with engineering experience, for example, were requested by the Army Service Forces in 1943.⁹⁹ Although the AAF was willing to offer this opportunity to eliminees, few accepted the alternative because of the many opportunities offered within the AAF itself.¹⁰⁰

Chapter V

DISPOSITION OF OTHER ELIMINEES

The problem of disposing of eliminated students was not restricted to aviation cadet training. For technical schools with many more eliminations--284,771 including gunnery training--the problem was much larger in scope. Schools training officers and foreign nationals also found it necessary to provide for students who were relieved from their courses. In common with the eliminated aviation cadets, each of these eliminees presented an individual problem for AAF classification personnel.

Disposition of Technical School Eliminees

All men enrolled in technical training schools were either on detached service from their units or in an unassigned status. Those on detached service at the time of their elimination were merely returned to their originating units. Unassigned AAF personnel, on the other hand, were at the disposal of the Technical Training Command when washed-out of a technical school. For the most part, the command either sent them to another technical course for which they were qualified or absorbed them within its own ranks in duties commensurate with their abilities and backgrounds. In August 1942 the TTC suggested a modification of this procedure by allowing the training centers to absorb as many of these eliminees as they could utilize without reference to higher headquarters.¹ This recommendation was disapproved, however, because of the shortage of technicians in units having a higher priority than the training centers.² This situation existed until June 1943 when eliminees were sent directly to technical schools or gunnery training.

Under the direction of TTC, disposition of technical training eliminees was thus determined by the decision of the faculty board concerned. No further training was recommended for any trainee whose elimination was accompanied by a "with prejudice" decision by the board; this action indicated that the failure of the student had been caused by reasons inherent in the individual which would preclude any attempt at further training by the Training Command. A "without prejudice" elimination, however, carried no stigma and students so removed from one type of training were considered suitable for any further training, quotas permitting, for which they could qualify.³

Assignment of technical training eliminees to other courses of instruction varied necessarily with the demand for trainees. In August 1943 it was directed that eliminees from radio operator and radio operator-mechanic courses at Boca Raton who were qualified were to be sent to the nearest gunnery school pool immediately upon elimination;⁴

and Truax Field was ordered to send all its qualified eliminees directly to gunnery school.⁵ Some confusion resulted at Truax, however, because of a disregard for the type of elimination of men being assigned to gunnery training: for a number of months in 1944, both with- and without-prejudice eliminees were accepted. Not only did this policy destroy the purpose of designating eliminations "with prejudice" but it induced trainees who desired gunnery training to eliminate themselves from technical courses with no fear of recrimination.⁶ This situation continued to disturb technical schools until the former policy of no further training for students eliminated with prejudice was restated and enforced.

Several technical schools, meanwhile, were receiving eliminees from gunnery training. Lowry Field reported that many of these had previously been eliminated from technical schools and proved to be unsatisfactory students; they might even have been regarded as "professional eliminees" for they apparently had neither the ability nor the desire to complete any training.⁷ As a result of this and similar complaints from other schools, it was announced that a second elimination for any student would be considered final elimination from technical training.⁸ The adoption of this policy largely relieved the Technical Training Command of the burden of the "professional eliminee."

At all times the Technical Training Command made every effort to send eliminees from one course to a related course in order to capitalize upon the training already absorbed by the student. Eliminees from radar and electronics schools, for example, were sent to radio operator-mechanic schools;⁹ radio operator-mechanic eliminees were enrolled in radio mechanics courses;¹⁰ and students dropped from radio mechanic courses were sent either to similar schools under the Army Airways Communications System or to gunnery schools.¹¹ Gunnery eliminees with an Army General Classification Test score of 90 or more, and eliminees from a technical school who were not qualified for gunnery training, were, if qualified, assigned to a ground duty course which did not require gunnery training.¹² A considerable amount of training time was undoubtedly salvaged by this method of reassigning eliminated students. Late in the summer of 1944, when the Technical Training Command was faced with a shortage of personnel qualified for entrance into the technical schools, new instructions were issued to insure proper employment of all eliminees. Classification officers at the technical schools were directed to review impartially the qualifications of all eliminees in order to assign them to courses most suited to their previous training and abilities. "Too great an emphasis," it was declared, "cannot be placed on the fact that such eliminees must receive due consideration in qualifying them for another technical course." Classification officers were cautioned, however, to guard against the "professional eliminee"--he was not to be considered for any further training.¹³

Detailed instructions were also announced for the assigning of gunnery school eliminees to technical training courses. Every eliminee, with

certain exceptions, was to be assigned to a technical school in accordance with his previous training; the exceptions were (1) men who had been eliminated from a technical course within six months of elimination from gunnery school; (2) students eliminated with prejudice; (3) eliminees who had graduated from a technical course previous to gunnery training; and (4) students eliminated because they refused to fly. These instructions were to be carried out at the schools concerned without reference to higher headquarters.¹⁴ This policy was designed, therefore, to institute an automatic system of reassignment which would save time and expense as well as supply the technical schools with men to fill their training quotas. Although it was recognized that this would possibly result in an uneven flow to the technical schools and some erroneous assignments, the situation seemed to demand such an innovation.¹⁵

The Technical Training Command apparently attempted in every way possible to train all men who were qualified and who desired training. Quotas were large, particularly in 1944 and early 1945, and could be filled only by proper utilization of every man who possessed at least the minimum AGCT and aptitude scores. By the end of 1944, therefore, the flow of eliminees to another course of training had wisely been placed on an automatic basis. This system aided immeasurably in reducing the discrepancies between quotas and available trainees, and in retrospect it is obvious that much time and expense would have been saved if it had been instituted earlier in the training program.

For a variety of reasons, reassignment of eliminees to other technical training was frequently impossible. As most of these eliminees possessed at least average qualifications, as indicated by their original selection for training, the Technical Training Command desired to use them to fill noncombatant, ground duty positions within the command. Proper classification was the only problem. Throughout the expansion period, a general policy of reassignment for these eliminees was retained. Periodic reports (as many as two per week in 1944) on those available for reassignment were submitted by MOS to the training command headquarters concerned. All eliminees of basic courses were transferred from the schools on block assignments furnished by the headquarters. Advanced course eliminees, however, were handled individually on the basis of assignments made by the headquarters. All records of eliminees were marked to indicate that they were not eligible for further training,¹⁶ and if no vacancies existed at the station to which they were assigned, they were carried as surplus until absorbed.

One category of students eliminated from technical schools and ineligible for further training were those washed-out with prejudice-- if they were in an unassigned status they were available for assignment to any duty in which a need existed. Ordinarily this type of personnel was assigned to "permanent parties" at other schools or units by TTC headquarters.

Another type of eliminatee who was refused further training was to be found in gunnery schools. Shortly after enrolling, students occasionally decided that they had no desire to fly; elimination, of course, was necessary and their disposition became a special problem. It was decided that students who refused to fly would be treated in the same way as those who purposely eliminated themselves from training: they were reduced to the grade of private, reclassified to an MOS for which they were qualified, and reported to AAF Headquarters for assignment to an overseas replacement depot. Each enlisted man eliminated for this reason was required to sign a statement signifying that he realized that he would be disposed of in this manner.¹⁷ This policy not only provided uniform disposition of students in this category but undoubtedly served to deter insincere students from refusing to fly in the hope of obtaining a more attractive assignment.

In August 1944 Truax Field proposed a novel method of disposing of some eliminatees who were not eligible for further training: a pool of 500 eliminatees would be set up to perform kitchen police and fatigue duties. The benefits of such a plan were two-fold: students would be relieved of the necessity of missing classes in order to perform these duties, and the thought of unpleasant duties would deter potential self-eliminatees.¹⁸ The recommendation was disapproved by ETTG Headquarters, however, as contrary to the Army policy that KP and fatigue duties were normal duties not to be used as punishment.¹⁹

Beginning in 1944 the Technical Training Command was ordered to supply enlisted men (basics--SSN 521) in varying quantities for overseas shipment. In order to fill these quotas it was decided to eliminate the lowest 4 or 5 per cent of the students in technical schools, those who would ordinarily have been eliminated or at best have been graduated with minimum proficiency. This would allow schools to fill the overseas quotas without taking needed assigned men, and would also relieve the schools of providing instruction for personnel who would probably not complete the course anyway.²⁰ By January 1945, however, the AAF was being called upon to furnish men for the Army Ground Forces as well. As far as possible, these quotas were filled with eliminatees from basic technical schools,²¹ but when that was impossible, the lowest ranking students in all technical schools were eliminated to make up the difference. Thus, schools were provided with a convenient method of disposing of below average students.²²

The problem of reinstating students in technical schools was easily solved: once eliminated, students were seldom reinstated in the course from which eliminated. In most instances, elimination from a course was final, although it did not preclude entrance into another course if the student met the qualifications. The bulk of reinstatements, however, were made as a result of correcting a disqualifying physical defect.

A directive issued at Truax Field radio school was typical of Technical Training Command policy in regard to eliminations for physical

or disciplinary reasons. Any student there who was hospitalized for 60 days or in confinement for 30 days would be eliminated without prejudice by the faculty board. Upon release from the hospital or confinement, the student would be reported to the department director who had the authority to determine whether or not the student should be reentered in further training.²³ Finally, in an effort to fill quotas in October 1944, the Technical Training Command established a policy on reinstatement. Students who had been eliminated without prejudice might be readmitted to the course after six months if the school personnel believed that they could complete the course satisfactorily. With prejudice eliminees, of course, were not affected by this directive.²⁴

Policy at the flexible gunnery schools was more rigid. Students eliminated for academic failure were reinstated only "in exceptional circumstances where evidence exists of sufficient interim training or experience which will warrant a second assignment to the same Course of Training." Physical eliminees could be re-enrolled if the physical defect which caused elimination no longer existed. Strong evidence of "meritorious service and exemplary conduct" for at least six months was necessary for reinstatement of a student eliminated as a result of disciplinary action. Reinstatement of all students was subject to quota availability and no re-enrolled students were to be granted priority over entering students in any course.²⁵

As in the case of eliminated aviation cadets, it appears that, in general, eliminees from technical schools were disposed of in the most efficient manner possible. Malassignments were not unknown, of course, nor were instances of wasted training and experience: these were inevitable in the handling of one-quarter million eliminees. By V-J Day, nevertheless, the disposition procedure had been worked out effectively to make use of all eliminees with the greatest possible saving of time and effort.

Disposition of Student Officer Eliminees

As early as September 1940 a recommendation was made that Regular Army officers detailed to the Air Corps for pilot training, and later eliminated, be permitted to enter training in other aircrew specialties.²⁶ Approval was not given, however, for legal barriers precluded its adoption: 90 per cent of the regular officers in each grade in the Air Corps were required to be pilots, and the remaining 10 per cent was filled by ground duty and administrative officers; there was no allotment for bombardiers and navigators. The one-year detail allowed each pilot trainee, furthermore, was not long enough for the completion of aircrew training after elimination from pilot school. In addition to these statutory limitations, the Air Corps believed that the other services would object to the loss of officer personnel if they did not become pilots.²⁷ When General Arnold requested that legislation pertaining to the Air Corps be

amended to take into account the case of student officers,²⁸ Congress responded with an amendment to the National Defense Act which stated that limitations on the number of officers who could participate in aerial flights did not pertain to officers detailed to the Air Corps for training as aircraft observers or members of combat crews.²⁹ In November 1941, also, officers eliminated from pilot training were allowed to apply for ground duty training if sufficient time remained in their one-year detail for the completion of the training.³⁰ With the legal barriers removed, the Air Corps began to dispose of Regular Army officer eliminees by transfers to other types of aviation cadet training.*

With the expansion of training in 1942 and 1943, officers other than Regular Army were allowed to take aircrew training upon elimination from training.³¹ Before May 1943 the authority to assign officer eliminees to other training courses was retained by AAF Headquarters but in May that authority was delegated to FTC. Thus, officers eliminated after 1 April 1943 who met the qualifications were usually assigned to further aviation cadet training. Those eliminees not qualified for or not desiring further training were returned to their original units.

In addition to the disposition of officers eliminated from aviation cadet training, the AAF had to contend with pilots who were eliminated from transition training. Each of these eliminees had won his wings at pilot schools and had continued training, usually as a multi-engine pilot. For various reasons, many of them were unable to adjust themselves to handling the heavier aircraft. In order to dispose of these men efficiently, each training center established a replacement pool to which they were sent. The Training Command emphasized that these eliminees were to be relieved from this pool as soon as possible and were not to be given safer or better assignments or leaves before reporting to their new stations.³² If they desired, officer eliminees were assigned to pilot duty at bombardier or navigator schools;³³ otherwise, they were retained within the Training Command and assigned to duties commensurate with their abilities until added to shipments of new pilots to various units.³⁴ Only those who had "intentionally let down," who were misfits, or who had refused to fly were to be subject to reclassification proceedings.³⁵

In February 1945 all directives concerning the disposition of officer eliminees were rescinded and a new policy, designed to stabilize and de-centralize the procedure, was announced. The various air field commanders

* The U.S. Military Academy was reported to have been very sensitive on the question of elimination of its cadets from pilot training. In the summer of 1942 West Point officials secured "informal concurrence" in a plan which would allow cadets to leave courses prior to elimination. FTC frowned on this, however, and was able to retain authority to treat USMA cadets in the same manner as all others. (Hist. AAFTC, 1 Jan. 1939-VJ Day, VI, 1187.) Twenty per cent of USMA eliminees were allowed to take "other courses" of Air Corps training. (Hist. AAFTC, 1 Jan. 1939-7 July 1943, VI, 1613-14.)

were granted the authority "to take final action on faculty board proceedings concerning any officer student in any course of instruction" at their stations. Any officer, whether assigned or unassigned, who was eliminated from aircrew training was to be returned to his original unit, except those originating outside of the Training Command; the latter were to be reported to Training Command headquarters for disposition.³⁶ This policy efficiently solved, with a minimum of time and effort, the problem of the disposition of eliminated officer students.

Disposition of Foreign Eliminees

Between 1941 and the close of the war the AAF undertook the training of foreign nationals from 31 different countries; a total of 26,377 foreign airmen were entered in training courses in the United States, about 75 per cent of whom were pilots.³⁷ Over 5,500 of these students were eliminated from training.³⁸ Although the total number of men involved was not significant when compared to the United States' training program, the effect on inter-Allied relations was important. As a problem in international relations, the elimination of foreign students called for tact and diplomacy: it was necessary for the AAF to conduct the training on the same standards as American training and yet avoid offending the governments and national pride involved. Continued caution was exercised, therefore, to make certain that all eliminations were justified.

The policy of elimination adopted by the AAF in regard to foreign trainees was essentially the same as for American students, except that in judging individual cases, certain factors were taken into consideration which were considered as handicaps not experienced by American students. Linguistic and temperamental differences, in particular, were recognized and weighed when deciding on the ability of foreign trainees to complete their courses.³⁹ All eliminations of foreign students, furthermore, were reported directly to the Assistant Chief of the Air Staff.

Disposition of foreign eliminees presented no particular problem to the AAF since most of the foreign nations concerned wanted their students to complete some training before returning to their homes. Eliminees, therefore, were enrolled in another course if the minimum entrance qualifications could be met.⁴⁰ Only those students who were eliminated for disciplinary or physical reasons or who were deemed unfit for any further training were returned to their homes without having completed training in some specialty.

Chapter VI

THE MORALE OF THE ELIMINEES

The maintenance of morale among eliminated students undoubtedly constituted the most perplexing problem in the AAF training program. Even if elimination policy were clearly established and the procedure had functioned smoothly in all phases of training, the eliminee would have faced a psychological readjustment too great to be readily overcome. As the method of removing students from courses of instruction was never perfected, the readjustment of the individual was rendered more difficult. Each discrepancy or delay in the reclassification and reassignment of eliminees was reflected in their attitudes and magnified the task of the AAF; indeed, because of the lack of an adequate force of trained personnel and proper methods for combating disillusionment and disappointment, the problem appeared insoluble at times.

At the beginning of the expanded training program, Air Corps publicity was focused upon the procurement of pilot trainees. Despite the urgency of the demand for cadets, physical and mental qualification standards were high. The role of the pilot in the Air Corps mission was glamorized in order to attract all eligible young men, and it quite naturally followed that those accepted for pilot training regarded themselves as superior to the average member of the armed forces, as indeed they were. The disappointment was great, therefore, when a pilot trainee was eliminated and returned to civilian life. For those who entered training after 15 February 1942 and were required to remain in the service as privates after elimination, the let-down was severe.* The mental attitude of these eliminees became very apparent when it was decided to use washed-out pilots exclusively for training as bombardiers and navigators.† Because of the emphasis placed on pilot procurement, the relative importance of other aircrew positions had decreased in the minds of the trainees. The early pilot eliminees, therefore, were "disgruntled and discouraged" as a result of their failure in flying school,¹ and to many, who had completed the major part of flying instruction, training in another aircrew specialty seemed but a poor substitute. Furthermore, this attitude was reflected in public reaction to an alarming extent: the men training for other aircrew positions were increasingly being regarded as "men who couldn't make the grade."²

* The morale problem was very similar among colored eliminees. Hist. Tuskegee Air Field, 1 Jan. 1943-29 Feb. 1944, p. 79.

† See above, pp. 59.

The presence of these eliminated cadets became so harmful at Santa Ana Air Field in 1942 that AAF Headquarters was requested to halt shipments of eliminees to that station. The attitude of the eliminees was infecting new aviation cadets, causing them to enter primary schools "apprehensive and nervous." To alleviate this condition, it was proposed that all eliminees be segregated until their morale had been reestablished.³ The Southeast Air Corps Training Center reported a similar situation among its bombardier and navigator classes. It recommended that a definite percentage of each class be filled by new cadets "who were not imbued with the spirit of defeatism which prevailed among the 'washed out' pilots"; classes made up entirely of eliminees "tended to depreciate the value, responsibility, and importance" of other aircrew specialties in the minds of the trainees. In 1943, then, it was decided that 40 per cent of bombardier and navigator training quotas should be composed of new cadets. A few months later, however, this figure was lowered to 20 per cent.⁴

The most permanent solution to the problem, of course, was the elevation of the other aircrew positions to a place of equal importance with the pilot in the minds of trainee and public alike. Beginning in the spring of 1942 a nation-wide publicity campaign was undertaken to stress the importance of the bombardier and navigator; emphasis was shifted from the pilot to the "crew idea" and trainees were encouraged to regard themselves as members of a combat team.⁵ This new approach was reasonably effective, and it was reported in 1943 that the bombardier and navigator school at Santa Ana had been transformed "from a panic-stricken civilian, technical school into a purposeful and disciplined military training unit."⁶

Basic training centers, to which all eliminees were sent in the early years of the expansion program, were continuously faced with the problem of handling ex-cadets. They discovered that many eliminees had been misinformed about what was in store for them: some, for example, had been told that they did not have to go to a technical school, even though they had been recommended for it, but might be reclassified at the basic training centers; naturally, when they found themselves on the way to a technical school, their discouragement increased.⁷

The greatest cause of discontent among eliminees at these centers, however, was the inevitable delay in their assignment to future training or duty. Upon arrival at the center they were ordinarily thrown together for processing and reclassification, often with no regard for their interests or desires.* Each of them was required to undergo a physical examination and an interview to determine the proper reassignment for him.

* One report stated that eliminated cadets "would and could wreck the morale of new cadets in about two good bull sessions." (Kooker-Emswiler Interview.)

If he had never completed basic military training, this had to be accomplished before reassignment, and all of his records had to be brought up to date before he could be shipped to a new station. This processing required an estimated minimum of 13 days,⁸ and if a new assignment was not available when the processing ended, there was little for the eliminee to do. Furloughs or passes were denied them; the station itself offered little diversion. Thus, with nothing except routine-- and empty routine, at that--to occupy them, their outlook became progressively more bitter, and they frequently began to regard themselves as misfits, the forgotten men of the AAF. The historian of one basic training center painted the following dismal picture of the eliminees:⁹

Their barracks were in a constant state of disorder; they were almost never where they were supposed to be; any attempt at good order and discipline was in vain. . . . One non-commissioned officer who was placed in charge of a troop of eliminees asserted that a soldier with a "tommy-gun" was needed to watch each eliminated cadet in order to keep him in hand.

Basic Training Center #8 at Fresno attempted to alleviate this situation by according special consideration to eliminated cadets. They were segregated into one area under officers assigned to take care of their problems; furloughs were given when possible, and they received special attention at the classification section. Because directives for the latter allowed little latitude in the reassignment of eliminees, however, the special consideration given them was often annulled by malassignments. Several recommendations were nevertheless made by the Fresno center: (1) the eliminated cadets should be dispersed among several basic training centers to reduce their influence on other soldiers; (2) authority should be granted to the training centers to transfer specialists, if they so desired, to units where they were needed rather than to another school; (3) quotas were needed to allow eliminees to attend Officer Candidate School if they could meet the entrance requirements; and (4) cadets should be granted furloughs between the time of their elimination and their transfer to basic training centers.¹⁰ Although these proposals contained considerable merit, none could become established policy as long as technical trainees were in demand.

Other stations devised various methods of counteracting the lowered morale and consequent lack of discipline and interest among eliminated cadets. Basic Training Center #10 at Greensboro, N.C., assigned qualified ex-cadets as drill instructors while they were awaiting disposition; those not qualified for this duty were placed on temporary work details.¹¹ Another station set up a "gig" system with punishment tours for the lax and passes for those who avoided violating military discipline. Although the latter was recognized as no solution to the problem, it was believed to be more effective than no system at all.¹² The basic training centers were partially relieved of this problem, however, when it was directed

in June 1943 that qualified eliminees were to be sent directly to the technical schools from the station of elimination.¹³ Thereafter they were required to contend only with those eliminees who were not qualified for further training.

Assignment of aviation cadet eliminees to technical schools did not terminate the morale problem, for the schools soon discovered that the eliminee still had to be handled carefully. When the first group of eliminated cadets arrived at Scott Field in December 1940 for communications training, it was apparent that they regarded the training as a "make-shift arrangement for employment of 'washed out' and useless men." They had to be convinced that their new training was essential and that they could still be members of the fighting team. Scott Field realized that "the psychological handling of these eliminees was as important as the application of high technical standards."¹⁴ The armament school at Lowry Field reported in January 1942 that 90 per cent of its trainees were men who had been eliminated from Air Corps flying schools; 75 per cent of this group lacked enthusiasm and ambition and brought with them a "defeatist" attitude. Most of the trainees, the school concluded, were interested only in receiving a commission, not in fitting "themselves professionally for the serious responsibilities ahead."¹⁵

As all technical schools recognized the seriousness of the problem, many recommendations were made to ease the situation. One school believed that more individual treatment of eliminees during reclassification would result in fewer malassignments and a greater feeling of importance among the washed-out cadets. Each technical school, the school administrators suggested, should conduct an orientation for all ex-cadets in order to convince them of the potential value of their new training. Better ratings and more furloughs would likewise have improved morale.¹⁶ Although it was recognized that even these incentives would not have resolved the problem completely, they would have aided the eliminee in readjusting himself to his new role.

Three distinct groups were involved in the problem of eliminees re-assigned to other courses of training--the officers in command, the enlisted personnel constituting the school's permanent party, and the eliminees themselves--and the proper attitude on the part of each group was essential. If any one of them failed to meet the situation properly, the efforts of the other groups were ineffective. The historian of Scott Field analyzed the morale problem from the standpoint of each group with interesting results. The attitude of the officer personnel at the technical schools, he reported, was a major factor in determining how readily eliminees adjusted themselves to their new assignments. Much discontent at the Scott Field radio school was traceable to the inability of the officers to cope with the problem; they developed "a feeling which might be termed a combination of annoyance and frustration" which hampered their efforts. The historian believed that their attitude was expressed by Col. Albert T. Wilson when addressing a group of eliminated cadets enrolled for radio

training. He stated that the attitude of the eliminees was impairing their chances of success for "they can be likened to bad apples in a barrel of otherwise good apples in that their rottenness is contagious and is contaminating the barrel as a whole"; every man in the Army, in his opinion, "should submerge his personal feelings to a sense of his duty as a citizen and a soldier."¹⁷ It may be assumed that these remarks did nothing to improve the personal feelings of any discouraged eliminee. On the other hand, the officer-chaplains were probably the most effective in attempting to restore the morale of the eliminated cadet. Their training equipped them with the understanding and patience necessary to treat each case individually on its own merits. Although their usual recourse was to a "pep talk," they believed that it produced results if conducted properly. Despite the efforts of the chaplains, however, such indifference or hostility among the other officers naturally produced an injurious effect on the majority of the eliminees. The enlisted permanent party likewise was often incapable or unwilling, according to the Scott Field historian, to devote the necessary time and attention to the problem. They ordinarily reasoned that the eliminees had been given their opportunity, had failed, and therefore should be willing to accept whatever assignment the AAF gave them. Handicapped by this understandable attitude, it was difficult for the permanent party to sympathize with the eliminated cadets. Further, when the enlisted men discovered that the eliminees were neither amenable to discipline nor interested in absorbing the material presented to them in the classroom, their lack of teaching experience resulted in inefficient instruction and spasmodic attempts at enforcing discipline.¹⁸

Several possible solutions to the problem of permanent party-eliminee relations were apparent, none of which was adopted in its entirety. Higher ratings for the instructors would have alleviated the disciplinary problems; it was difficult for a private, first class, which was the rating of many instructors, to command much respect from a group of ex-aviation cadets. A lower instructor-student ratio would have given the instructors more time for individual cases. Perhaps the most effective solution, however, would have been a more stabilized permanent party to make up an experienced instructoral staff. Because of the manpower demands, school personnel was constantly in flux, with a consequent reduction in efficiency and experience.

These defects among the officer and permanent party personnel, the historian goes on, were reflected in the conduct of the ex-cadets. Their dim outlook as a result of elimination gave way to discouragement, truculence, or despair if they felt mistreated at their new stations. Consequently, "the confusion and resentment which were basic in the ex-cadet attitude developed into an enigma of emotions." The Scott Field historian concluded, nevertheless, that¹⁹

careful probing into the puzzle . . . brings a few factors to light. The men wanted to do the work for which they thought their training

best suited them. They did not understand the Army system of quota reclassification. If radio work were as important as the School claimed, why were recognition and remuneration so meager? The cup of bitterness overflowed at the realization of the great difference in their futures then and now.

In the spring of 1944 when the demand for crew members and technical specialists had been met, eliminees and potential eliminees were sent as basics to fill quotas for overseas shipments. This procedure inevitably increased the morale problem for it was necessary to assign men to duties for which they often had no aptitude or interest. Although the AAF had no desire to "coddle" these men, the potential morale problem was recognized and suggestions made to ease the readjustment as much as possible. Assignments were to be made as closely as possible to individual preferences, quotas permitting, and orientation talks were to be given to the men in terms of patriotism. The opportunity for the men "to deliver a vital patriotic service" was to be stressed rather than reference made to their elimination.²⁰ Although these suggestions by the AAF were undoubtedly sincere, it is doubtful if they were effective with men who were suddenly faced with a transfer from the air forces to the Army Ground Forces.

Obviously, the problem of eliminated student morale was not one to be solved by policies and directives. Full realization of the difficulties involved was long in coming to AAF administrators, and much damage was done before reasonably effective measures were adopted to counteract the disappointment and discouragement of the eliminees. Only a prearranged, well-organized program which informed all trainees of their future in the event of elimination would have kept the problem at a minimum. Lacking that, the AAF attempted to alleviate the conditions with piece-meal expedients. The result could have been foreseen--a group of disgruntled, discouraged personnel who could be returned to effective service only by the most careful treatment.

Chapter VII

CONCLUSION

The great increase in the Army Air Forces which began in 1939 necessitated a rapid expansion in all phases of the training program. In order to train the maximum number of specialists in the shortest possible time, courses of instruction were concentrated and accelerated. As the training program expanded, the number of trainees who were unable to complete such accelerated courses increased greatly and in the interest of proper utilization of personnel, it was necessary for the AAF to dispose of these eliminees--numbering almost 500,000--as rapidly as possible. Because their experience and partial training constituted a large source of available manpower for AAF planners, finding the best method of disposing of these eliminated students efficiently and quickly was a continuous personnel problem.

For planning purposes and, secondarily, for evaluating courses, the AAF relied on the rate of elimination--i.e., the percentage of students who did not complete their courses. During peacetime the elimination rate in pilot training--the principle training carried on--was nearly 50 per cent. Because such a high rate during the war would seriously impair the entire training program, special efforts were made to reduce it: tests were devised to reduce the number of eliminations by better selection of students; many students were held back to later classes. Despite these and other efforts, the rate of elimination, particularly in the basic courses, remained high throughout the war period.

Although the rate of elimination was widely used by the AAF, in itself it had little meaning. Many factors such as weather conditions, lack of equipment, lack of competent instructors, differing interpretations of directives, and student incentive caused fluctuations in the rate of failure. The prime reason for the unreliability of the elimination rate, however, was the result of a variation in the need for trained men; when a particular kind of specialist was needed, eliminations from that specialty's training course invariably were fewer. In the absence of another criterion, the AAF was compelled to continue the use of the unreliable rate of elimination for planning purposes.

Individual eliminations from training schools were caused by a variety of deficiencies which were inherent in the students and which would probably have resulted in failure under the most satisfactory training conditions. Pilot trainees were eliminated for such intangible causes as fear of flying, poor judgment, dangerous characteristics, and poor coordination, any one of which constituted flying deficiency. Aviation cadets training as bombardiers, navigators, or ground duty officers were washed out because of unsatisfactory progress in their courses. Eliminations from technical schools usually were the result of academic failure

which, in turn, was caused by ineptitude, lack of interest, or insufficient background. All schools also experienced a small number of eliminations for other reasons--disciplinary, medical, or deliberate failure by dissatisfied students. Since many eliminations resulted from defects which might have been detected before enrollment, adequate selection methods would have reduced materially the number of failures.

There was little variation in the procedure by which students were eliminated from courses. When it was decided that a student could not complete the course, except in technical schools in which elimination for academic failure was automatic, he was called before a faculty board composed of members of the administrative staff of the school. After a thorough investigation of the case, the board decided whether the student should be given another chance or dropped from the course. Instructors were cautioned to eliminate only when no other recourse was available, and many efforts were made to aid weaker students who were in danger of failing.

Before 1 February 1942 aviation cadets who were eliminated and who did not desire to remain in the service were discharged. After that date eliminated cadets were retained in the service, and the faculty elimination board was delegated authority to assign them to another course of training or type of duty depending upon their qualifications and desires. Qualified cadets who were eliminated from one course, aircrew or ground duty, were assigned to another if they desired; otherwise they were sent to enlisted combat crew training, technical schools, or AAF Officer Candidate School. Technical school eliminees were assigned by the board to another technical course or, if eliminated with prejudice, to any duty in which a need existed. Every effort was made to make the maximum use of the experience and training of each eliminee.

Regardless of the care with which the elimination procedure was handled, it produced a damaging blow to the morale of the individual students. AAF publicity, which was designed to attract the best young men, had glamorized the various air force positions, and when students suddenly found that they were to be deprived of the opportunity of flying, receiving a commission, or becoming skilled technicians, they were faced with a difficult readjustment. Any delay in reclassification or reassignment increased the disillusionment and disappointment which accompanied their failure.

Both the AAF and individual stations attempted to alleviate this morale problem. It was suggested that more attention be given to the eliminees in the matter of furloughs, ratings, and rapid reassignment. Temporary duty was assigned to occupy their time between elimination and reassignment. After June 1943 aviation cadets were sent directly to technical schools from the station of elimination in an effort to reduce the time of reclassification. Despite these efforts, it was very difficult to combat the disappointment which accompanied the elimination of any student from an AAF course of instruction.

It appears evident that recognition of the problems involved in the elimination of students was slow in coming to the AAF administrators. They were met by trial-and-error and were not completely solved at the end of the war. A well-planned program for removing students from schools and disposing of them efficiently and rapidly would have improved the entire AAF training program. In the event of another emergency necessitating a rapid air force expansion, the wide range of experience gained during the period from 1939 to V-J Day should prove invaluable in reducing the elimination problem which will invariably accompany any vast training program.

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2. Psychological Div., The Air Surgeon, "Aviation Cadet Qualifying Examination," p. 3.
3. AHS-15, p. 9.
4. Consolidated Hist. 1st Dist., AAFTTC, 10 Mar.-31 Dec. 1942, p. 359.
5. This figure is for the total number of eliminations. It does not represent the total number of men involved, for many were eliminated from more than one course. Representative figures on the number of eliminations are: pilot training, 128,142; bombardier-navigation, 16,178; technical training, 260,833; gunnery training, 23,938; colored flying training, 1,302. (Army Air Forces Statistical Digest /Washington, 1946/, passim).

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2. "Prediction of Aptitude," The Air Surgeon's Bulletin, I (April 1944), 8.
3. AAF Statistical Digest, 1946, pp. 63-70. These percentages were obtained using only the total of graduates and eliminees. Fatalities and transfers were not considered.
4. Hist. AAFETC and its Predecessors, 1 Jan. 1939-7 July 1943, III, 959.
5. Hist. AAFETC, 7 July 1943-31 Dec. 1944, II, 406.
6. Hist. Victorville Air Field, 8 Dec. 1941-1 Jan. 1943, p. 102.
7. AAF Aviation Psychological Research Program, Psychological Research on Pilot Training, Research Reports, No. 8 (Washington, 1947), p. 85.
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9. Hist. Greenwood Air Field, Activation-1 Feb. 1944, pp. 70-71.
10. Ibid., p. 71; Hist. Bainbridge Air Field, 1 Jan.-1 Feb. 1943, pp. 32-33.
11. In August 1944 eliminations at the Radio Mechanic School, Truax Field, were set at a maximum of 15 per cent. This was a temporary expedient, however, and did not specify that 15 per cent had to be eliminated. (Ltr., Hq. AAFETC to CG AAFETTC, 12 Aug. 1944, sub.: Elimination Rates-- Radio and Radar Mechanic Courses, in Hist. ETTC, 1 July-1 Sept. 1944, App.)
12. For example, Hist. Garden City Air Field, 21 Dec. 1942-1 Mar. 1944, App. II, 8.
13. Hist. Shaw Air Field, 1 Jan.-1 Feb. 1944, p. 39.
14. Annual Rpt., Psychological Sect., TAS, Hq. AAFETC, 1 July 1942-30 June 1943, p. 61.
15. Hist. Buckingham Air Field, 2d Installment, II, 230.
16. Hist. Kingman Air Field, Installment II, 1943, p. 17.
17. Draft, "Procedure Relative to Eliminated Aviation Cadets," in USAF HD 106-36.

18. Hist. Lowry Field, 7 Dec. 1941-31 Dec. 1942, pp. 434-47.
19. Hist. 1st Dist., AAFTTC, 1 Jan.-7 July 1943, p. 243.
20. Hist. Lowry Field, 1 Jan.-20 June 1944, pp. 87-91.
21. Hist. ETTC, 1 July-1 Sept. 1944, App., Doc. #111; Hist. 3505th AAF Base Unit and Scott Field, 1 Nov.-31 Dec. 1944, p. 36 and 1 May-30 June 1945, p. 88.
22. AAF Statistical Digest, 1946, pp. 63-71.
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24. AAF Statistical Digest, 1946, pp. 84-91.
25. Hist. Mariana Air Field, 1 Jan. 1943-1 Feb. 1944, p. 9.
26. Hist. Greenwood Air Field, Activation-1 Feb. 1944, pp. 72-73.
27. Hist. Marianna Air Field, 1 Jan. 1943-1 Feb. 1944, pp. 9-10.
28. Hist. AAFCFTC, 1 Jan.-31 Dec. 1943, pp. 345-46.
29. Hist. Garden City Air Field, 1 July-31 Aug. 1944, chap. II, pp. 12-13.
30. Hist. Shaw Air Field, 1 Jan.-1 Feb. 1944, p. 38.
31. Hist. Greenwood Air Field, Activation-1 Feb. 1944, p. 71.
32. Hist. 3505th AAF Base Unit and Scott Field, 1 Nov. Dec. 1944, p. 36.
33. Hist. Truax Field, 7 July-31 Dec. 1943, pp. 621-23.
34. 3d Ind. (ltr., AC/AS Training to CG AAFTTC, sub.: Elimination Rate at Albuquerque, 30 June 1943), Hq. AAFTTC to CG AAF, 6 Aug. 1943, in AAG Departmental Records Branch DRB, 352.182 Deficiency.
35. Hist. AAFCFTC, 1 Jan.-30 June, 1944, pp. 287-88.
36. Hist. Lowry Field, 7 Dec. 1941-31 Dec. 1942, pp. 424-28.
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3. The FTG reported that flying deficiency caused between 55 and 89 per cent of the eliminations. (Hist. AAFFTG, 1 Jan. 1939-7 July 1943, III, 959. Individual airfields, however, reported figures as low as 81 per cent. (Hist. Marana Air Field, 8 July-31 Dec. 1942, p. 56).
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7. R&R, T&O to Chief, Personnel Div., sub.: Attached Correspondence, 17 April 1941, in DRB, 221 El. Cadets.
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14. Hist. Big Spring Air Field, 1 May-30 June 1944, p. 34. Bombardier and navigator trainees who were unable to qualify during gunnery training were eliminated from bombardier and navigator training. (Hist. Buckingham Air Field, 2d Installment, II, 235-36).
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48. Hist. Lowry Field, 1 Sept.-31 Oct. 1944, pp. 435-36.
49. Hist. Truax Field (3508th AAF Base Unit), 1 Sept.-31 Oct. 1944, p. 75.
50. Hist. Lowry Field, Activation to 7 Dec. 1941, pp. 242-43.
51. Hist. Lowry Field, 1 Jan.-30 June 1944, p. 119.
52. Hist. Scott Field, 1 Jan.-7 July 1943, pp. 1001-2.
53. Ltr., Dept. of Radio Operators (AACS), Truax Field to Dir. of Training, Truax Field, sub.: Policies for Washback and Elimination, 16 Feb. 1944, in Hist. Truax Field, 1 Jan.-1 Mar. 1944, App.; Memo #40-4, 21 Apr. 1944, in Hist. Sioux Falls Air Field, 1 Mar.-30 Apr. 1944, App.; Inter-office memo, sub.: Wash-back and Elimination Policy, 3 Mar. 1945, in Hist. 3505th AAF Base Unit and Scott Field, 1 Mar.-30 Apr. 1945, App.

54. Ltr., Dept. of Radio Operators (AACS), Truax Field to Dir. of Training Truax Field, sub.: Policies for Washback and Elimination, 16 Feb. 1944, in Hist. Truax Field, 1 Jan.-1 Mar. 1944, App.
55. Hist. 3705th and 3702d AAF Base Units and Lowry Field, 1 Jan.-28 Feb. 1945, pp. 169-70.
56. Memo for Gen. G. C. Brant, Hq. GCACTC from Capt. William P. Nuckols, Hq. Randolph Field, 25 July 1941, in DRB, 220.8 B, Separations, Enlisted; ltr., Hq. AAF (AFDOP) to CG WCAFTC and CG SAFTC, 11 July 1942, in PPD, Elimination (Proposed Action Upon).
57. 1st ind. (ltr., Hq. AAFSETC to CG AAFTTC, sub.: Assignment of Overseas Duty of Cadets Eliminated from Flying Training upon Own Request, 31 May 1943), Hq. AAFTTC to CG AAF, 22 June 1943, in DRB, 352.182 #5 Deficiency.
58. Ltr., Hq. AAF (AFDOP) to CG WCAFTC and CG SAFTC, 11 July 1942, in PPD, Elimination (Proposed Action Upon).
59. Ltr., Hq. SAACC to TAG, sub.: Disposition of Aviation Cadets, 13 Jan. 1943, in PPD, Elimination.
60. Ltr., Hq. AAFTC to CG AAF, attn. AC/AS Personnel, sub.: Disposition of Improperly Motivated Trainees, 17 Dec. 1943, in PPD, Elimination of Aviation Cadets (Proposed Action Upon).
61. Hist. 4th Dist., AAFTTC, 1 Jan.-8 July 1943, pp. 267-69.
62. Ltr., Hq. AAFSETC to CG AAFTTC, 31 May 1943, in DRB, 352.182 #5 Deficiency.
63. 1st ind. (ltr., Hq. AAFSETC to CG AAFTTC, sub.: Assignment to Overseas Duty of Cadets Eliminated from Flying Training Upon Own Request, 31 May 1943), Hq. AAFTTC to CG AAF, 22 June 1943, in DRB, 352.182 #5 Deficiency.
64. 2d ind. (ltr., Hq. AAFSETC to CG AAFTTC, sub.: Assignment of Overseas Duty of Cadets Eliminated from Flying Training Upon Own Request, 31 May 1943), AGO to CG AAF, 6 Aug. 1943, in DRB, 352.182 #5 Deficiency.
65. Hist. AAFGFTC, 1 Jan.-30 June 1944, pp. 182-84; CFTC Memo #50-C-16, 19 Feb. 1944, in Hist. AAFGFTC, 1 Jan.-30 June 1944, App.
66. Hist. Greenwood Air Field, Activation to 1 Feb. 1944, p. 72.
67. Daily Diary, AAFTC, 6 Aug. 1943.
68. Hist. Shaw Air Field, 1 Jan.-1 Feb. 1944, p. 42.
69. Draft, "Assignment Procedures for Pilot, Bombardier and Navigation Training," in USAF HD.

70. Hist. Truax Field, 1 July-30 Aug. 1944, p. 624.
71. Daily Diary, AAFTC, 20 Dec. 1943.
72. Hist. 3505th AAF Base Unit and Scott Field, 1 Mar.-30 Apr. 1945, p. 177.
73. Hist. Lowry Field, 1 Jan.-30 June 1944, pp. 114-16.
74. Hist. Lowry Field, 1 Jan.-30 June 1944, pp. 87-88.
75. Ibid., p. 88.
76. 8th ind. (basic missing), Hq. AAFTC to CG AAF, attn. AC/AS Personnel, 21 Apr. 1944, in DRB, 352,182 Deficiency.
77. 9th ind. (basic missing), Hq. AAF to CG AAFTC, 27 Apr. 1944, in DRB, 352,182 Deficiency.
78. Hist. Truax Field, 1 Sept.-31 Oct. 1944, pp. 322-23.

NOTES

Chapter III

1. AR 615-150, 5 Nov. 1942.
2. AR 350-110, 1 Sept. 1942.
3. Flying Memo #4, 22 Nov. 1943, Garden City Air Field; Department of Flying Training Memo. #12-1-0, 1 Jan. 1944, Waco Air Field.
4. The Flying Instructor's Manual, Primary Stage, SEACTC, p. 6.
5. Hist. 78th Flying Training Wg. and SAACC, 1 Nov.-31 Dec. 1944, pp. 25-26.
6. Cadet Orders, May 1942, in Hist. Santa Ana Air Field, 1942, App. 2 to Installment I.
7. AR 350-110, 1 Sept. 1942.
8. Composition of Faculty Board, Personnel Orders #39, OC/AG, 14 Feb. 1942, in DRB, 352.17 Advanced Flying School.
9. Hist. Buckingham Air Field, 2d Installment, II, 233.
10. AR 350-110, 1 Sept. 1942.
11. Hist. 78th Flying Training Wg. and SAACC, 1 Nov.-31 Dec. 1944, pp. 26-27.
12. Hist. Cochran Air Field (Georgia), 1 Jan. 1943-31 Jan. 1944, pp. 22-25.
13. Hist. 78th Flying Training Wg. and SAACC, 1 Nov.-31 Dec. 1944, pp. 26-27. Although the procedures at the various schools differed in minor details, the above was essentially the normal procedure.
14. Ltr., Col. J. H. Hills, AGD, to CG GCAFTC, sub.: Policy Covering Elimination of Flying Cadets, 7 Sept. 1942, in PFD, Elimination.
15. TC Memo #35-6, 31 Aug. 1943.
16. Unit Histories, Big Spring Air Field, 1 Mar.-1 May 1944, p. 6.
17. Hist. SAACC, 4 July 1942-1 Mar. 1944, p. 109n.
18. Hist. 4th Dist., AAFTTC, 10 Mar.-31 Dec. 1942, pp. 90-91.
19. Technical School Circ. #10-5, 2 May 1942, in Hist. Keesler Field, 7 Dec. 1941-31 Dec. 1942, p. 154.

20. Ibid., p. 155. Although this was usually the last recourse for the student, at least one school had a Board of Review to handle further appeals which the eliminee might wish to make. (Hist. 4th Dist., AAFTTC, 1 Mar.-31 Dec. 1942, p. 91).
21. A review by Major Graalman, Hq. AAFTC, Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, 20 Aug. 1943, in Hist. 4th Dist., AAFTTC, Activation to 7 July 1943, Pt. 8, Incl. 7.
22. Technical School Circ. #50-2, 4 Jan. 1944, in Hist. Scott Field, 7 July 1943-1 Mar. 1944, p. 2557.
23. Hist. Lowry Field, 1 Jan.-30 June 1944, p. 116.
24. Hist. Scott Field, 7 Mar. 1943-1 Mar. 1944, p. 694.
25. Hist. Lowry Field, 1 July-31 Aug. 1944, pp. 34-35.
26. TF Memo #50-60, 4 Sept. 1944, in Hist. Truax Field, 1 Sept.-31 Oct. 1944, App.
27. Hist. Truax Field, 1 Nov.-31 Dec. 1944, pp. 64-65.
28. Hist. 3505th AAF Base Unit and Scott Field, 1 Mar.-30 Apr. 1945, App.
29. Inter-office memo, Hq. Scott Field, 3 Oct. 1944, in Hist. Scott Field, Sept.-Oct. 1944, pp. 349-50.
30. Hist. Truax Field, 1 Nov.-31 Dec. 1944, pp. 71-72.
31. Hist. ETTC, 1 Mar.-1 July 1944, p. 285; 1 Sept.-1 Nov. 1944, pp. 278-79.

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Chapter IV

1. AR 615-160, 20 July 1938.
2. 3d ind. (basic missing), Chief, Planning Sec. to Chief, T&O Div., sub.: Training of Balloon Observers, 20 Dec. 1938, in USAF HD 145.91-432.
3. 1st ind. (basic missing), T&O to Exec., sub.: Training of Balloon Observers, 15 Dec. 1938, in USAF HD 145.91-432.
4. 3d ind. (basic missing), Chief, Planning Sec. to Chief, T&O Div., sub.: Training of Balloon Observers, 20 Dec. 1938, in USAF HD 145.91-432.
5. Memo for Chief of Staff, sub.: Plan for Expansion of the Air Corps Training Program, 24 May 1940, in USAF HD 145.91-166.
6. A study made at Randolph Field in 1940 indicated that enough bombardier and navigator trainees could be obtained from the eliminated cadets. (Draft, "Procedure Relative to Eliminated Aviation Cadets," USAF HD.)
7. Telg., Hq. AC to CO ACTG, Randolph Field, 28 May 1940, in DRB, 221 Randolph Cadets.
8. Ltr., Col. Fred W. Llewellyn, JAGD, to TAG, sub.: Legality of Training Flying Cadets and Other Individuals in Certain Specialties Incident to Aviation, 28 May 1940, in DRB, 211 Cadets.
9. Draft, "Procedure Relative to Eliminated Aviation Cadets"; 1st ind. (Hq. GCACTG to C/AS, sub.: Disposition of Eliminated Flying Cadets, 20 Feb. 1941), Acting Chief, Flying Cadet Sec. to Chief, PMP, 12 Mar. 1941, in DRB, 211 Randolph Cadets.
10. AHS-21, Aviation Cadet Ground Duty Program: Policy, Procurement, and Assignment, p. 59.
11. Ltr., Lt. Robert L. Scott, Asst. Western District Supervisor, to OC/AC, Personnel Sect., sub.: Air Corps Expansion, 28 May 1940, in PPD Files, Reinstatement.
12. 1st ind. (ltr., Lt. Robert L. Scott to OC/AS, Personnel Sec., sub.: Air Corps Expansion, 28 May 1940), C/AC to CO ACT Detachment, Santa Maria, Cal., 7 June 1940, in PPD Files, Reinstatement.

13. 2d ind. (basic missing), Chief, T&O Div. to Plans, sub.: Navigation Course for Eliminated Cadets, ACTC, 17 June 1940, in USAF HD 145.91-201.
14. Ltr., School Hq. AC Tech. School, Lowry Field, to C/AC, sub.: Flying Cadets, 3 Oct. 1940, in DRB, A 353.9 Specialized Training.
15. R&R, CG/AS to A-1, 18 Aug. 1941, in USAF 221 Flying Cadets. Between March 1941 and March 1942 navigation schools showed 15.5 per cent eliminations among the ex-pilot trainees and 12.9 per cent among those taken directly from civil life. (AHS-27, Individual Training of Navigators in the AAF, p. 32.)
16. Hist. AAFTTC, 1 Jan. 1939-7 July 1943, IV, 1613.
17. Ibid., VI, 1613.
18. AHS-27, pp. 32-33.
19. AHS-21, p. 60.
20. Ltr., Capt. J. W. Durant, PMP, to Major E. C. Lynch, G-1 Sec., AF Combat Comd., Bolling Field, sub.: Aviation Cadet Specialized Training, 28 July 1941, in USAF HD 2-2848.
21. AHS-2, Initial Selection of Candidates for Pilot, Bombardier, and Navigation Training, pp. 22-23.
22. Ltr., CG ACTIC to CG 2d Dist. ACTTC, Ft. Logan, sub.: Aviation Cadet Training Policy, 26 Nov. 1941, in Hist. 2d Dist. AAFTTC, Jan. 1939-7 Dec. 1941, p. 458.
23. Hist. AAFTTC, 1 Jan. 1939-7 July 1943, p. 1467.
24. AHS-21, p. 54.
25. Memo for CG SEACTC from Hq. AAF, sub.: New Aviation Cadet Procedure, 31 Jan. 1942, in DRB, 221.E2 Cadets. After 21 August 1943 enlisted men selected for aircrew training were also classified for ground training to aid in their disposition if they were eliminated from the former. (Monograph on AAF Classification Centers (Aircrew) 1 January 1939 to 31 May 1944 in Hist. AAFTTC, 1 Jan. 1939-31 May 1944, p. 144.)
26. Memo for AC/S G-1 from OC/LAF, sub.: Continuation in Service of Regular Army and National Guard Enlisted Men and Selectees Who Fail to Complete Aviation Cadet Courses, n.d., in DRB, 221.E2.
27. Memo for C/AS from WD General Staff, Personnel Div., G-1, sub.: same as above, 31 Dec. 1941, in DRB, 221.E2 Cadets.
28. Hist. AAFTTC, 1 Jan. 1939-7 July 1943, II, 509.

29. R&R, AFDOP to AAFTC and AFRIT, sub.: Eligibility for Further Air Crew Training of Aviation Cadets Eliminated for Academic Deficiency, 23 June 1942, in DRB, 211.F Cadets.
30. Draft, "Procedure Relative to Eliminated Aviation Cadets."
31. Ltr., AAFTTC to CG AAFWCTC, CG AAFGCTC, and CG AAFSETC, 26 Nov. 1942 in PPD Files, Elimination (Proposed Action Upon).
32. Daily Diary, Hq. AAFTTC, 24 May 1943.
33. Interview with Maj. W. W. Beasley, Student Sec., Air Crew Training Unit, AFTRC (formerly Exec. Officer of Aviation Cadet Br.), by Lt. Dusenberry, 2 Feb. 1944, in USAF HD 223.3-2 Historical Data.
34. AHS-48, Preflight Training in the AAF, 1939-44, p. 27.
35. Daily Diary, Hq. AAFWPTC, 11 Jan. 1945; Hist. AAFWPTC, 1 Jan.-28 Feb. 1945, p. 289.
36. 2d ind. (ltr., Gen. Delos C. Emmons to CG AAC, sub.: Engineering Officers, 11 July 1940), Gen. Barton K. Yount, Chief, Plans Div., to T&O, 3 Aug. 1940, in USAF HD 145.91-433.
37. Ltr., Chief, Flying Cadet Sec., to Lt. Col. John G. Wytlaw, 2d Corps Area, 13 Dec. 1940, in Draft, "Procedure Relative to Eliminated Aviation Cadets."
38. Ltr., CG ACTTC to CG 1st Dist. ACTTC, Ft. Logan, sub.: Aviation Cadet Training Policy, 26 Nov. 1941, in Hist. 2d Dist. AAFTTC, 1 Jan. 1939-7 Dec. 1941, p. 458.
39. Ltr., Capt. J. W. Durant, PMP, to Maj. E. C. Lynch, G-1 Sec., AF Combat Comd., Bolling Field, sub.: Aviation Cadet Specialized Training, 28 July 1941, in USAF HD 2-2848.
40. 1st Ind. (Hq. GCACTC to G/AC, sub.: Disposition of Eliminated Flying Cadets, 20 Feb. 1941), Acting Chief, Flying Cadet Sec. to Chief, PMP, 12 Mar. 1941, in DRB, 211 Randolph Cadets.
41. Ltr., CG SEACTC to Hq. AAF, sub.: New Aviation Cadet Procedure, 31 Jan. 1942, in DRB, 221.E2 Cadets.
42. Ltr., Hq. AAF to CG WCTC, sub.: Change in Existing Instructions, 6 May 1942, in PPD Files, Reinstatement. In regard to further training for cadets eliminated from ground duty training, the following policy was announced: "A cadet eliminated from engineering, communications, armament, or photography for academic failure is normally not considered as having sufficient ability to successfully complete another of these four courses, even though meeting the formal educational requirements, and would not therefore be approved for further ground duty training." (Ltr., WD to CG AAFTTC, 28 Nov. 1942, in PPD Files, Elimination.)

43. Ltr., Col. J. H. Bevans, DCP, to CG GCAFTC, sub.: Changes in Existing Instructions, 18 June 1942, in DRB, 211 Randolph Cadets.
 44. Ltr., Hq. AAFTTC to CG AAF, attn. Aviation Cadet Sec., DOP, sub.: Disposition of Aviation Cadet Eliminees, 27 May 1942, in DRB, 211 F Cadets.
 45. Circ. #5, Change 2, Hq. AAFJCTC, 2 Apr. 1942, in DRB, 221 Cadets.
 46. Ltr., Lt. Col. Fred G. Milner, AAG, to all CG's and CO's, sub.: Eliminated Aviation Cadets Awaiting Further Cadet Ground Duty Assignment, 12 Oct. 1942, in DRB, 352.182 Deficiency.
 47. AHS-21, 86-87.
 48. Ltr., Capt. John A. Brown, Aviation Cadet Br., to Mrs. W. J. Blackmore, 5 Feb. 1944, in DRB, 353 Aviation Cadet Training.
 49. Ltr., C/AS to CG AAFFTC, sub.: Pilot Eliminees, 22 Jan. 1943, in DRB, 352.182 Deficiency.
 50. 1st ind. (ltr., C/AS to CG AAFFTC, sub.: Pilot Eliminees, 22 Jan. 1943), CG AAFFTC to CG AAF, 17 Feb. 1943, in DRB, 352.182 Deficiency.
 51. Draft, "Procedure Relative to Eliminated Aviation Cadets."
 52. Daily Diary, Air Crew Training Div., AC/AS Training, 21 Aug. 1943.
 53. Hist. AAFTTC, 8 July-31 Dec. 1943, p. 2132.
 54. Daily Diary, Individual Training Div., AC/AS Training, 19 Apr. 1944.
 55. Ltr., AC/AS Personnel to CG AAFFTC, CG AAFTTC, and Comdt. AAF School of Applied Tactics, sub.: Radio Observer I Course, 21 June 1943, in USAF HD 2-2848.
 56. Memo for CG ATC from Hq. AAF, sub.: Program for 1943, 22 Feb. 1943, in DRB, 352.182 Deficiency; Hist. SAACC, 1 May-30 June 1944, pp. 36-37.
 57. Daily Diary, Enlisted Br., AC/AS Personnel, 25 July 1944.
 58. 2d ind. (ltr., Maj. F. H. Walton, Aviation Cadet Sec., to CG SEAFTC, 24 Nov. 1942), Lt. Col. Delmor T. Spivey, Hq. Flexible Gunnery School, Fort Meyers, to CG AAFSETC, 12 Dec. 1942, in DRB, 352.182 Deficiency.
 59. Daily Diary, Hq. AAFFTC, 21 Oct. 1942. AAF announced that it had no objection to the transfer of eliminated aviation cadets to the Army Ground or Army Service Forces for attendance at OCS. (AC/AS A-1 to AC/AS G-1, 6 May 1942, in DRB, 211 Cadets.
- Draft, "Procedure Relative to Eliminated Aviation Cadets."

61. Memo for C/S from Hq. AAF, sub.: Retention in the Air Corps of Aviation Cadets Who Fail to Complete the Prescribed Course of Training, 6 Jan. 1942, in DRB, 221.E2 Cadets.
62. Draft, "Procedure Relative to Eliminated Aviation Cadets."
63. Ibid.
64. Ltr., AFDOP to CG AAFTTC, 3 Mar. 1943, in DRB, 352.182 #3 Deficiency; ltr., Maj. Grover L. Wilson, AC/AS Personnel, to CG AAFTTC, 30 Apr. 1943, in DRB, 353 Gunnery Training.
65. R&R, Comment 1, AC/AS Personnel to AC/AS Training, 19 May 1943, in DRB, 352.182 Deficiency.
66. R&R, Comment 2, AC/AS Training to AC/AS Personnel, 4 June 1943, in DRB, 352.182 Deficiency.
67. Daily Diary, AAFTTC, 23 June 1943.
68. Hist. Scott Field, 7 July 1943-1 Mar. 1944, p. 16.
69. TC Memo #35-22, 3 Sept. 1943.
70. R&R, AFDAS to ASPMP, sub.: System for Reclassifying Disqualified Aviation Cadets, 16 Dec. 1942, in DRB, 221 Cadets.
71. R&R, AFPMP to AFDAS, 29 Dec. 1942, in DRB, 221 Cadets.
72. Office of the Air Surgeon, AAFTTC, to CG AAFTTC, sub.: Aviation Cadet Training, 31 Dec. 1942, in PPD Files, Elimination.
73. R&R, DG/AS to AFRIT, 5 Jan. 1943, in PPD Files, Elimination.
74. Daily Diary, Enlisted Br., AC/AS Personnel, 7 Feb. 1944.
75. Ibid., 1 Aug. 1944.
76. Ibid., 16 Nov. 1944.
77. AR 615-160, 20 July 1938.
78. Ltr., Hq. AAF to CG SEACTC, sub.: New Aviation Cadet Procedure, 31 Jan. 1942, in DRB, 221.E2 Cadets.
79. Ltr., The Ex-Aviation Cadets, Fort Meyers, to Sen. Claude Pepper, 15 Nov. 1942, in DRB, 352.182 Deficiency.
80. Draft, "Procedure Relative to Eliminated Aviation Cadets."
81. Ltr., AFRIT to Sen. Pepper, 14 Jan. 1943, in DRB, 352.182 Deficiency.

82. Ltr., Hq. AAF to CG AAFWCTC, 19 Jan. 1943, in PPD Files, Elimination (Proposed Action Upon).
83. Circ. #5, Change 2, Hq. AAFWCTC, 2 Apr. 1943, in DRB, 221 Cadets.
84. Weekly Activity Rpt., Enlisted Br., PMP, AC/AS-1, 18 Dec. 1943.
85. The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops, United States Army in World War II (Washington, 1948), pp. 16-17, 28.
86. Daily Diary, Enlisted Br., AC/AS Personnel, 21 Sept. 1943.
87. Ltr., Hq. SAACC to CG AAF thru CG AAFCTC and CG AAFTC, sub.: Disposition of AGF Personnel Eliminated from Aircrew Training, 18 Mar. 1944, in DRB, 352.182 Deficiency Vol. #12.
88. 3d ind. (ltr., Hq. SAACC to CG AAF thru CG AAFCTC and CG AAFTC, sub.: Disposition of AGF Personnel Eliminated from Aircrew Training, 18 Mar. 1944), Hq. AAF to CG AAFTC, 1 Apr. 1944, in DRB, 352.182 Deficiency Vol. #12.
89. 1st ind. (ltr., Lt. Robert L. Scott, Asst. West. Dist. Supervisor, to CG/AC Personnel Sec., sub.: Air Corps Expansion, 28 May 1940), G/AC to CG ACT Detachment, Santa Maria, Calif., 7 June 1940, in PPD Files, Reinstatement.
90. Policy #42, CG/AC, sub.: Reinstatement of Eliminated Flying Students, 9 Oct. 1941, in USAF HD 145.96-109.
91. AAF Reg. #50-6, 14 Apr. 1942.
92. Ltr., AC/AS Personnel to TAG (attn. Lt. Col. Sailor), sub.: Applications from Eliminated Aviation Cadets, 19 July 1943, in PPD Files, Reinstatement. Officers training in grade and combat returnees were subject to the same regulations as aviation cadets in regard to reinstatement. (TC Memo 35-20, 1 Sept. 1944; 4th ind. /ltr., Hq. Sioux Falls AAF to CG AAFTC, sub.: Request for Information, 19 Jan. 1945, Hq. AAF to CG AAFTC, 9 Apr. 1945, in PPD Files, Reinstatement.)
93. R&R, AC/AS Personnel to TAS, sub.: Re-examination of Aviation Cadet Candidates, n.d., in DRB, 221.2 Cadets.
94. 1st ind. (ltr., AC/AS Personnel to TAS, sub.: Re-examination of Aviation Cadet Candidates, n.d.), TAS Professional Service Div. to AC/AS Personnel, n.d., in DRB, 221.2 Cadets.
95. 1st ind. (ltr., Lt. Col. Frederick H. Chetlain, Aviation Cadet Board #3, Chicago, to G/AC, sub.: Enlistment in Air Corps for Non-Pilot Training by Cadets Washed Out for Flying Deficiency, 9 Oct. 1941), CG/AC to Lt. Col. Chetlain, 17 Oct. 1941, in PPD Files, Ground Duty-Eliminated Cadets.

96. Daily Diary, Hq. AAFTC, 9 Sept. 1943.
97. Daily Diary, Aviation Cadet Br., 20 Oct. 1943.
98. Ltr., Chief, Aviation Cadet Br., to AFPMP, 8 May 1944, in PPD Files, Reinstatement.
99. Memo for Gen. Arnold from Gen. Somervell, 20 Apr. 1943, in DRB, 352.182 Deficiency.
100. Memo for Gen. Somervell from Gen. Giles, Acting C/AS, sub.: Transfer of Eliminees from Pilot Training, 17 May 1943, in DRB, 352.182 Deficiency. See also R&R, AFTSW to AFDOP, sub.: Weather Personnel Eliminated from Flying Training, 9 Nov. 1942, in DRB, 352.182 Deficiency; Daily Diary, Enlisted Br., AC/AS Personnel, 25 Sept. 1943.

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Chapter V

1. Ltr., Hq. AAFETC to CG AAF, sub.: Disposition of Eliminated Students, 8 Aug. 1942, in DRB, 220.8 C Separations Enlisted.
2. R&R, AFFMP to AFRTT, 12 Aug. 1942, in DRB, 220.8 C Separations Enlisted.
3. Hist. 2d Dist. AAFETC, 7 Dec. 1941-31 Dec. 1942, pp. 314-15.
4. Daily Diary, Enlisted Br., AC/AS Personnel, 5 Aug. 1943.
5. Ltr., AC/AS, Personnel to Hq. AAFETC, sub.: Radar Eliminees, 3 Aug. 1943, in 352.182 Deficiency, Vol. 8, DRB.
6. Hist. Truax Field, 1 May-30 June 1944, pp. 86-87.
7. Hist. Lowry Field, 1 Jan.-30 June 1944, pp. 119-20. In 1942 enlisted men who were eliminated from flexible gunnery training were returned to their original units. (AAF Ltr. 352.9, sub.: Flexible Gunnery Training for Enlisted Men, 10 Aug. 1942, in USAF HD 145.96-110.
8. 9th ind. (ltr., Hq. TS Lowry Field to CG AAFETC, sub.: Eliminees from Other Schools Attending Armament School, 14 Jan. 1944), Hq. AAF to CG AAFETC, 27 Apr. 1944, in DRB, 352.182 Deficiency Misc. #11 Vol.
9. 2d ind. (ltr., Hq. AAFETC to CG AAFETC, sub.: Elimination Rate, Radio Mechanic AACS Courses, 30 June 1944), Hq. Scott Field to CG AAFETC, 7 July 1944, in Hist. ETTC, 1 July-1 Sept. 1944, App.
10. Ltr., Hq. Scott Field to CG AAFETC, sub.: Transfer to AACS Eliminees to Radio Mechanic Courses, 7 July 1944, in Hist. ETTC, 1 July-1 Sept. 1944, App.
11. Hist. Scott Field, July-Aug. 1944, p. 453. Because of a demand for B-29 crew members, some eliminees from the B-29 enlisted flight engineer school at Lowry Field were sent to Boeing Aircraft Corporation School, Seattle, for further training and then were returned to Lowry for re-enrollment in the flight engineer school. (Hist. Lowry Field, 1 Jan.-30 June 1944, pp. 52-53.)
12. Hist. Scott Field, July-Aug. 1944, p. 461.
13. WTTC Memo 35-9, 24 Nov. 1944, in Hist. AAFETC, Nov.-Dec. 1944, App.
14. Hist. AAFETC, 1 Jan.-28 Feb. 1945, App.
15. Ibid., pp. 291-92.

16. WTTC Memo 35-9, 24 Nov. 1944, in Hist. AAF/TTC, Nov.-Dec. 1944, App.
17. Ltr., Hq. AAFTC to CG AAF, attn. AC/AS Personnel, AC/AS Training, sub.: Disposition of Flexible Gunnery Students Refusing to Fly, 16 Oct. 1944, in DKB, 220.01 Classification.
18. 2d ind. (ltr., Hq. AAFTC to CG AAFETTC, sub.: Elimination Rates-- Radio and Mechanics Courses, 12 Aug. 1944), Hq. Truax Field to CG AAFETTC, 25 Aug. 1944, in Hist. ETTC, 1 July-1 Sept. 1944, App.
19. 3d ind. (ltr., Hq. AAFTC to CG AAFETTC, sub.: Elimination Rates-- Radio and Mechanics Courses, 12 Aug. 1944), Hq. AAFETTC to CG AAFTC, 13 Sept. 1944, in Hist. ETTC, 1 July-1 Sept. 1944, App.
20. Weekly Activity Rpt., Enlisted Br., PMP, AC/AS-1, 1 Jan. 1944, in USAF HD 121.39.
21. 1st ind. (ltr., Hq. Sioux Falls Air Field to CG AAFETTC, sub.: Disposition of Eliminees, 21 Dec. 1944), Hq. AAFETTC to CG Sioux Falls Air Field, 5 Jan. 1945, in Hist. ETTC, 1 Nov. 1944-1 Jan. 1945, App.
22. Hist. 3505th AAF Base Unit and Scott Field, 1 Jan.-28 Feb. 1945, pp. 21, 129.
23. Hq. TS Truax Field Circ. #41, 9 Sept. 1943, in Hist. Truax Field, 7 July-30 Dec. 1943, App.
24. Msgform, Hq. AAFTC to CG AAFETTC, sub.: Re-enrollment of Eliminees to Technical Courses, 24 Oct. 1944, in Hist. ETTC, 1 Sept.-1 Nov. 1944, App.
25. TC Memo 35-55, 31 May 1945.
26. 1st ind. (basic missing), Chief, T&O to Chief, Training Sec., sub.: Regular Army Officers (Washed Out Cadets), 12 Aug. 1940, in USAF HD 145.91-434.
27. 2d ind. (basic missing), Chief, Training Sec. to Chief, T&O, sub.: Regular Army Officer (Washed Out Cadets), 15 Aug. 1940, in USAF HD 145.91-434.
28. 4th ind. (basic missing), Exec. to Plans, T&O, Personnel, sub.: Regular Army Officers (Washed Out Cadets), 9 Sept. 1940, in USAF HD 145.91-434.
29. 54 Stat., p. 963.
30. AHS-21, p. 76.
31. Telg., Hq. AMHP to CG AAFTC, 26 May 1943, in HD Files, Elimination (Proposed Upon). Assignment of Regular Army officers to further training upon elimination from pilot schools was halted in October 1942. They were then later returned to their original units. (WTR, AFAAP to AFPMP,

31. Cont'd.
sub.: Training of Regular Army Officers with the AAF, 22 Oct. 1942,
in USAF HD 151.031).
32. Daily Diary, AAFTTC, 14 June 1943.
33. Daily Diary, AAFTTC, 17 Mar. 1944.
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