

The Philippine Air Force Flying School

By Jose Ma. Guerrero

The PAF blue-print for aviation training, long envisioned but allowed much longer to remain in an incubus of inoperation, is made effective this year.

THE PHILIPPINE Air Force Flying School, after so many years of inactivity caused directly by the last war, commenced in earnest the training of more than fifty-two appointed aviation cadets at Lipa Air Base, Batangas on February 16, 1948. The new school, which will offer the primary flying course in a definitive period of four months, constitutes the basic core of the training system of the PAF and will directly operate within the set-up of the Headquarters Training Group.

Since the early part of 1946, there had been appointed a number of cadets for training in the US SERVICE SCHOOLS in accordance with the Military Assistance Pact entered into between the Philippine government and the United States. These Cadets were, however, disbanded due to some unavoidable hitch in the arrangement and misinterpretation of the Pact. The agreement was held to be primarily intended for

the PAF officers and EM who could be sent to the different Service Schools in the US for Refresher's training and specialized courses in the varied lines of aviation.

It could be consistently interpreted and deduced that the limited appropriations for the training of aviation cadets in the US would be too much a sint of appropriations and of ill-effect on the pursued economy of the country. The opinion was entertained, further, that the establishment of a flying school in the Philippines, manned and administered by PAF officers who thus have had specialized training in the US, would produce the same effect.

The blue-print thus evolved by the PAF to this end, long envisioned but allowed much longer to remain in an incubus of inoperation, was made effective this year. The course covered under Phase I of the training, with a total of 52 aviation cadets and 14 student

officers, is in progress at the present time.

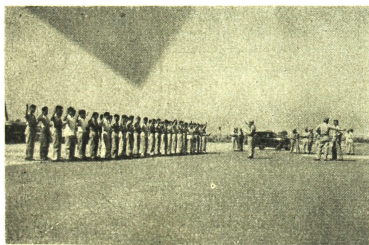
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The present school has been founded upon the original characteristics of the pre-war PA Flying School at Zablan Field. The original flying school was first established in 1936 upon incorporation of the Philippine Constabulary Air Corps (PC Air Corps) into the Philippine Army Air Corps (PAAC). At this time the US Army Air Corps detailed Lieutenant William I. Lee as adviser to the UAAC. Colonel Curtiss Lambert, AUS, then a civilian, was employed as technical adviser and inspector of the school.

Three (3) Stearman Primary Trainers purchased from the US and augmented by one plane of the same type (a donation of the Filipino community in Hawaii) constituted the early outmoded facilities of the school. The first batch of student components were drawn primarily from graduates of the PC Academy (in later years the PMA), after strict physical screening. Flying cadets were appointed from among civilian applicants who successfully passed strict credits and, as it is of the present requirement, were required of each cadet applicant.

Two US Army Air Corps officers, Lieutenants Lee and Parker, started as instructors. Among the first batch of successful student officers were Major Eustacio D. Orobia, Major Ramon Zosa, Lt-Colonel Jesus Villamor and Major Andres O. Cruz. The next batch of successful student officers included the (late) Colonel Edwin D. Andrews, Major Oscar Sales,

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Oath taking of the first batch of graduates of the new PAF Flying School.

The Philippine

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Major Basilio Fernando, Lieutenant Isidro Paredes, (living) Colonel Pelagio A. Cruz.

REASONS FOR CREATION AND FUNCTION

The school was re-established in order to satisfy the need for professional training of a specialized type. As a matter of fact, until lately, there had been no new additional qualified pilot from Philippine Schools after liberation.

Ninety-five percent of the personnel of the PAF and of those contracted by the different commercial air lines, were products of the old Aviation School before the war and graduates of the various service schools in the US. This has required considerable effort and dint of hard work on the part of the PAF in adjusting itself to the organization expansion presently being undertaken. To premise the unit requirements of the PAF, more so in this period of development where pilot replacements will be drawn basically from graduates of US Service Schools, will be deemed inexpedient and expensive. Moreover, the training of Filipino pilots in the US in accordance with the Military Assistance Pact, is only of limited duration, contingent proportionately upon the period of existence of the agreement between the two governments.

It is more in compliance with statutory requirement and in consonance with the new political status of our country, that the revival of the school was necessitated. In addition, and this point should be emphasized, the school also has the task of affording the exploratory means by which the continuity of progress of civil aviation in the Philippines could be based. Qualified pilots and trained aeronautical personnel graduated at the rate of 50 a year by the school, would be more than sufficient to cover the unit requirements and of the different commercial airlines at a rational proportion.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL AND ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION

Though the examination for entrance to the school is obligatory and required by present regulation, enrollment in the same is optional, and followed on request of the candidates, providing they possess certain educational and moral qualifications. There is not much difference to the statutory requirements called for prospective cadets to the Philippine Military Academy. The basic differences lie on the minimum educational pre-requisite and the

manner of appointment. Where secondary school certificate is required for PMA cadets, the educational basis for appointment to the Aviation School calls for a minimum of 60 units of college credit. The appointment to the Flying School is not further based on congressional district allotment as in the case for PMA candidates.

Reserve and Regular Officers of any branch of service may also enter the school, pre-conditioned on the following:

a. The age requirement should comply to not more than 26 years maximum.

b. Irrespective of present commissioned rank and upon successful completion of the course, graduates should resign or relinquish such rank to accept original commission of 2nd Lieutenant in the Air Corps branch of service.

In order to comply with its mission, the general plan of studies of the Headquarters Training Groups comprises three phases, namely:

Phase I—generally covers the present course of the school in operation, called the "Primary Training Course".

Phase II & III—normally called the "Basic Flying Course" and "Advanced Course" respectively, will be covered in the instruction of the schools to be opened in Floridablanca Air Base, (FAB), immediately upon the acquisition and arrangements of a priore facilities.

Each school period covers a duration of four months intensive training on both the theoretical and practical phases.

Completion of the courses will mark the successful evolution and transition of a cadet from a "Dodo" status to a full rated pilot and awarded the "Certificate of Proficiency" as a full-blown pilot and winged officer.

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