

22nd COLLEGE TRAINING DETACHMENT (AIR CREW)

MISSION

LINEAGE

22nd College Training Detachment (Aircrew)
Mar 1943

STATIONS

Canisius College, Buffalo, N. Y.

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

1Lt James Foran
Cpt Harold A. Dunkelberger

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

In 1939, a federal law was passed allowing the War Department to send servicemen to colleges and universities for academic and flight training.

Basic training, college training, classification, preflight, and flight training are all parts of a pattern that was designed with one thought, to train men to become the world's best airmen. Although flight training is the final objective, of almost equal importance is the physical, mental, moral, and military training. The College Training Detachment, which is the second step in the Aviation Cadet Program, is where the fundamentals of groundwork, air traffic regulations, and flight training are taught to the Aviation Student. Here, also, he learns the rigid code of honor of the Aviation Cadet. Military Discipline is maintained throughout the program.

Canisius College was inspected in January 1943 by the Army Air Force. In March 1943 Canisius joined 56 other schools across the nation participating in the Army Air Cadet Training Program. Canisius provided general education courses and housing for this five-month program. The Army designation for this training program at Canisius was the 22nd College Training Detachment.

The commanding officer of the 22nd College Training Detachment was 1st Lieutenant James Foran. He had a staff of three officers: the Adjutant, 1st Lieutenant William Christopher; the Plans and Training Officer, 1st Lieutenant Thomas Christoff; and the Tactical and Supply Officer, 2nd Lieutenant Murray Asch. Along with a three-man military staff, a civilian physician, Dr. Kerin Lyons, was hired by the Army to serve as the 22nd College Detachment's surgeon. Dr. Lyons' military medical staff consisted of Sergeant Ezio Agresta, Corporal Arthur Herman and Private 1st Class Frank Davidson.

The cadets came from all over the United States to Canisius. The first 200 arrived March 1, 1943 and April 1st of the same year another 150 cadets arrived to begin their training. Daily life for a cadet consisted of classes and study hall Monday through Friday, drill and inspection on Saturday and Saturday night and Sunday were left for relaxation. The training consisted of academic classes which included the required courses of English, Geography, Mathematics, History, Physics, Medical Aid and Physical Training. The fifth month of training was conducted at the Clarence Airfield where cadets were taught to fly small aircraft under the supervision of the Civil Aeronautics Association.

This schedule is followed during the first four month. The fifth month is spent at a government contracted airport learning to fly small training planes under the supervision of the Civil Aeronautics Association. He gets dual instruction and while no solo flying is done, he becomes familiar with the controls of a plane, and future flying is thereby made easier. The student is taught to make a line inspection, and is given a flight book with lessons to be studied. How well he does on each lesson depends to a great extent on the knowledge gained through ground school. Ground school is divided into two phases. Twenty hours are spent in learning the regulations of the Civil Aeronautics Association. Meteorology, and celestial navigation are also part of the course. Ten hours are spent with the Chief Pilot, discussing the different phases of

each day's flight. It is here that any difficulties in flying are discussed, and a preview of the next day's lesson is given to the Aviation Student.

Besides school classes, there is a stiff physical training program in progress all through the day. Every Student must attend, unless he is excused for medical purposes, P.T. classes consist of three school days devoted to gym class exercises and two days to the three-mile run.

Canisius professors taught extra classes to prepare the airmen for graduation, as well as assist civilian students in completing their education in three years, as a three-year degree program was instituted to aid students in completion of their college education prior to reaching draft age. Professors worked double hours, with no time off and no transition as each new class of cadets came in on the heels of the previous class. In addition to the teaching schedule the professors also proctored study hours for the Cadets.

The cadets were housed in what was then known as the Masonic Consistory which was leased by Canisius College from the Buffalo City Council. This building, now Canisius High School, is located on Delaware Avenue in Buffalo, N.Y. A popular venue for many of Buffalo's social events prior to 1943, the Consistory's large main ballroom was converted into barracks for the Cadets. According to the March, 1943 issue of The Griffin student newspaper, the two large glass chandeliers hanging in the barracks were all that remained of the Consistory's former elegance after the transformation.

On any given weekday the Canisius students were regaled with the sounds of the Air Cadets' singing as they marched to the Consistory some 6-7 blocks away, to their class or Drill at the Canisius College Campus and back at night. The football field behind Old Main served as the drill field and obstacle course for the Cadets.

Although the Cadets were a class unto themselves given their military affiliation, in the short time they were at Canisius they involved themselves in college life as much as their rigorous schedule allowed. In April 1943, the Cadets initiated their own column, "On The Beam," in the school newspaper, The Griffin. This column was a compilation of mostly humorous news of the Cadets as well as engagements and marriages. They also found time to form a basketball and a baseball team, competing against other military units in the area.

As each cadet class graduated, a Graduation Ball would be held in the Consistory. The May 14, 1943 issue of The Griffin states that "the Consistory once again acquired its pre-war color as Buffalo's showplace, the occasion being the graduation of the first class to pre-flight school."

In May 1943, 79 men from Canisius reported for duty at Fort Niagara and Camp Upton, New York, the largest number of Canisius College inductees up to that time.

The Air Cadet Training Program was terminated in May 1944 as the War Department realized that fewer pilots would be needed in the coming months. In an interview in 1991 with Rev. James M. Demske, S.J., Rev. J. Clayton Murray, S.J., a philosophy professor at the time of the

war, stated that the closing of the 22nd Detachment "...caused quite a bit of turmoil among our cadets as they had hoped to go on to become pilots." Dr. Charles Brady, former professor of English at Canisius, states in his history, "Canisius College: The First 100 Years" "These would-be pilots were diverted to Infantry boot camp."

Although short-lived, this program changed the face of Canisius for a time and helped keep Canisius' doors open during this difficult time. The Army Air Corps Cadet training program trained approximately 1000 men in the 15 months prior to its abrupt end. The final Graduation ceremony for the Air Cadets occurred in May, 1944.

By the last years of the war, a skeleton staff of faculty and administrators was serving a very small student body. Offsetting this financial drain, Canisius received federal funding for an Army air cadet training program and later for a nurse training program. Both contracts enabled the college to stay open during these lean years.

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

Unit yearbook. 22 College Training Detachment, "Chandelle," Winter 1944.