

The Aircraft Warning System and Fighter Training

Major Robert T. Jones, Jr.

No enemy bombs have yet fallen on the United States. And for this reason some of the 465,000 civilian volunteers, who comprise the Aircraft Warning Service of the I Fighter Command are becoming restless. They want to fight—to have a more active part in the war—almost to the point of hoping to have a chance to prove the effectiveness of the organization to which they have given so much.

It is not necessary to prove to these people the importance of air defense, or the indispensable quality of the Aircraft Warning Service in connection with this defense. By their loyal services they have proved their understanding of the necessity for protecting our factories, and for making their output available at the fighting fronts.

But to those who may be growing impatient with the "long alert," it may be interesting to know that their service is not entirely one of watchful waiting. For Air Defense is only one part of the responsibility of the I Fighter Command. Our other mission, which is always active, no matter what our enemies may be doing, is the training of military personnel for overseas duty.

It must be kept in mind that the Command has a dual mission; first, to provide for the air defense of the Eastern Seaboard, and, second, to provide competent and trained military personnel for overseas duty.

Wherever important installations in our growing overseas offensive are established, provision must be made for defending them against attack from the air. Defense of these points and areas requires the same type of organization and teamwork with which the Aircraft Warning Service is familiar. There, as well as here, we must have timely warning, proper display of information, radio direction of defending fighters, and pilots trained in following these directions. Our Aircraft Warning Service volunteers, who are accomplishing this work over here, are helping to train military men to perform all these functions overseas.

All this is the work of the Air Defense team, and like any other team, it must have practice before it can do itself justice. Fighter pilots must be accustomed to working with ground control and all officers and enlisted men responsible for this ground control must be equally well trained in their duties.

A high degree of skill in handling communications and operational problems of the Aircraft Warning Service is being developed by officers and enlisted men of the I Fighter Command. Practice interceptions, run almost daily, are providing constant experience for ground officers and pilots in working under simulated combat conditions. To this extent, the volunteers, who make the Aircraft Warning Service possible, are participating in offensive operations, as well as providing for the defense of America.



Here I Fighter Command's Director of Warning Center Volunteers, Major Robert T. Jones, Jr., talks over matters with Mrs. Thomas Keefer, Civilian Personnel Executive of the Philadelphia Information Center.

Lights Out in Pittsburgh —But Not in the Filter Center

Filtering by flash light! That actually happened in the Pittsburgh Filter Center when the power in the building was turned off. The elevators weren't running either and—well, let's have Mrs. Marianna T. Hilliard of the Pittsburgh Center tell the story. She was there.

"PITTSBURGESQUE"

"CONVERSATION WITH A SUPER-VISOR"

"Hello, Hazel 2986? May I please speak to Miss Elsie Delaney?"

"This is Elsie Delaney, Mrs. Hilliard, what can I do for you?"

"Well, the shoe is on the other foot Miss Delaney, and this time I can do something for you. This is the story. The power is being turned off in the building on Saturday night and won't be on until 8 o'clock Sunday morning, which means that your shift 11:30—4:00 can stay home and get a good night's rest—the enlisted men will take care of the Board on Saturday night."

"But Mrs. Hilliard, you can't do that to us."

"Do what Miss Delaney?—Remember that our Center is on the 12th Floor—no elevators will be running—and heaven knows you can't all walk up 12 flights of stairs."

"Well, why can't we? Now listen, Mrs. Hilliard, we all heard about this power being turned off so we talked it over and we've got a plan:

"We all meet in the lobby of the building at 10:30—we bring flash-lights and a few good home baked cakes—and we stay on our shift, see. We think it will be fun and the girls will be awfully disappointed if you tell them they can't come. THEY WANT TO!"

What happened? Mrs. Hilliard is proud of her loyal co-workers.

"So come they did—they walked the twelve dark flights of stairs with their flash-lights. They manned the Filter Board, not only from 11:30 to 4:00 which was 'THEIR SHIFT' but they stayed the night through until they were relieved by the eight o'clock shift Sunday morning. Volunteers also have the privilege of doing their job 'over and above the line of duty,' and they do it because they want to!"