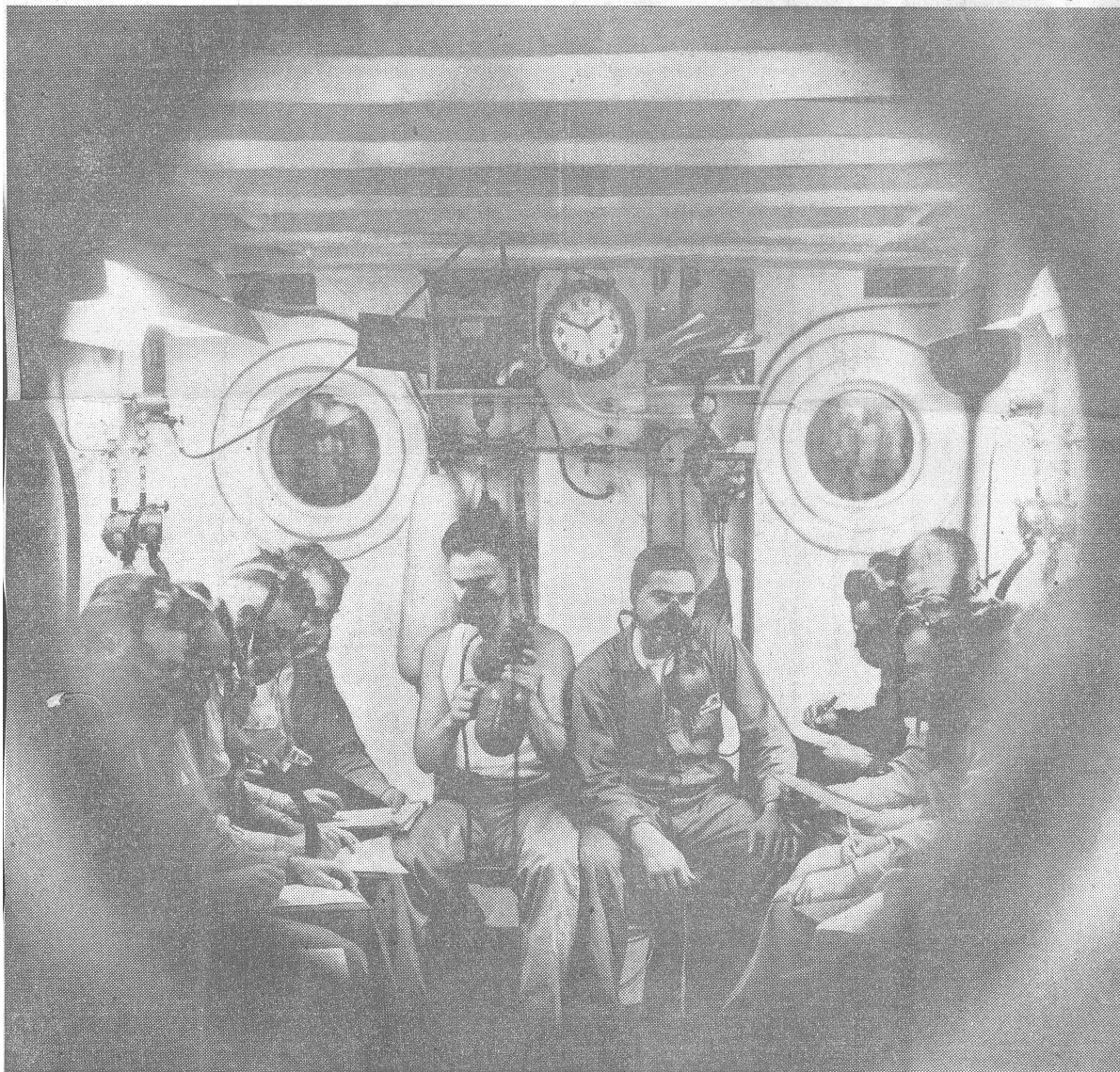


# Los Angeles Times

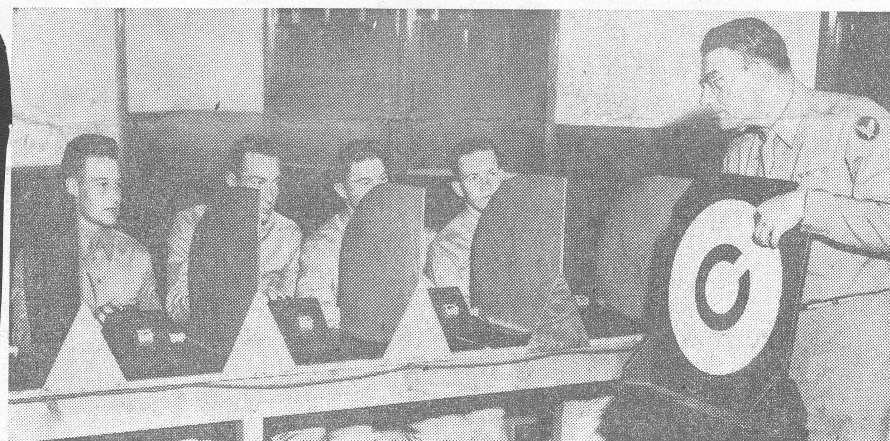
SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 10, 1943

## HIGH ALTITUDE VIEWED THROUGH A PORTHOLE



**WHILE FLIGHT SURGEONS WATCH**—A group of cadets get a taste of high altitude in a decompression chamber

at Santa Ana Air Base. This experience makes future flyers aware of peril of neglecting oxygen at great height.



**NIGHT VISION TEST**—These cadets will try to record the position of the C as it is rotated in the darkened room. The C is held by Maj. R. E. Weismann, flight surgeon and executive officer of Santa Ana Air Base Medical Detachment.



# FLIGHT SURGEONS PLAY VITAL AIR SCHOOL ROLE

Continued from First Page

normal. It's simply that he's not adaptable—like a blow-furnace operator might not be adaptable emotionally to a doctor's chair."

## Test Flyers' Fear

The doctors at the base early learn that most flyers know fear in combat, but the question is how will a candidate handle that fear when the moment comes? This is determined by psychological tests, continual observation and man-to-man talks through which the future flight surgeons pile up their knowledge.

"In a way we're almost country doctors," continued Maj. Weismann. "We try to be fair with these youngsters and give them every chance to prove their worth. We hear their problems, give advice and serve as all-around morale builders wherever possible."

## Night Vision Vital

Special features of the school include night-vision studies and the training of cadets in the use and maintenance of oxygen equipment.

With night fighting becoming increasingly important, each cadet is required to take tests to determine his night vision.

"Night vision is an asset that a man has from birth, and eating carrots will do nothing to produce it," the major smiled.

The tests are held in a blacked-out room and the cadets must peer through the gloom at a dimly lit circle on which revolves a black letter "C." As the C

changes position the cadets must record the change on a special device.

The letter makes 40 changes, against a background that grows increasingly dim, but some boys get 40 out of 40.

## Stalk Night Bombers

With such a record—if they have the desire and the ability—they'll become night fighters and stalk enemy bombers through blacked-out skies.

Oxygen, of course, is an all-important part of the training conducted by the doctor candidates whose classrooms for this course are a series of huge decompression chambers at the base.

Each boy is taken "aloft," shown how to adjust his mask and given a taste of the rarefied atmosphere he can expect in current operating altitudes up to 40,000 feet.

But it's not the young flyers that the flight surgeons have trouble with, according to Maj. Weismann.

## Veterans Scoff

"They're brought up on oxygen," he explained. "But some of the older pilots still think it's sissy stuff—until they get into trouble."

When the young doctors have completed six weeks' training at the base they are rated as aviation medical examiners, but each one has his eye set on the flight surgeon's wings and the pay of a flying officer for continuing air work.

And most of them make it, too.





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Times photos

## Pilot Selection Vital Role of Air Surgeons

BY MARVIN MILES

He's a curious mixture of doctor, scientist, father confessor, ogre and right guy—a chap who wears a set of gold wings and carries the title "flight surgeon"—but most of the fellows call him "doc."

Although he enters Army life as a full-fledged medico, his air education is just beginning.

### Air Medical School

For weeks he studies at Randolph Field's mother school of aviation, learning his profession as it applies to airmen. He becomes a specialist in neuro-psychiatry and learns the effects of acceleration. He studies the problems of high altitude and oxygen, and he bones up on sanitation, tropical medicine, administration and a score of other subjects.

Such is his Army academic training.

Next comes his "internship" as an aviation doctor.

He's assigned to a branch school to work with cadets and put his training to practical use before he's rated an aviation medical examiner.

### Seek Surgeon's Wings

But even then he's one service year and 50 hours' flying time (as a passenger) away from a flight surgeon's wings—unless he's assigned to overseas duty.

At the sprawling Santa Ana Army Air Base scores of these young doctors are working for the prized gold wings and emblazoned caduceus under direction of Col. Steven Guzack, commandant of the medical detachment, and his executive officer, Maj. R. E. Weismann.

It's their duty to examine cadet candidates, accept only those suited for air duty, select among them the pilots, bombardiers and navigators, ascertain their night-vision capabil-

ties, instruct them in the use of oxygen and keep them well and fit, mentally and physically.

### Sift Cadets

Later it will be their job—at flight stations—to determine if a man is in condition to fly or if he should be grounded temporarily or permanently.

"Our main job," explained Maj. Weismann, himself a flight surgeon, "is to get as many men into the air as possible and keep them there—although that may be hard for rejected candidates to believe."

Hardest part of the task, he said, is to get into a man's mind and determine if his emotional stability is suited to flying.

"If we turn down an applicant because he's not emotionally suited it doesn't mean he's ab-

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