



## CORNFIELDS TO THE DEEP BLUE SEA: IOWA CAP AT ITS ORIGINS

Prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 DEC 1941, the War Department was already undergoing a major transformation. Rapid training of personnel with little in the way of materiel resulted in stumbles and falls on the home front. In the weeks that led up to the attack, First Army had conducted and concluded its first major maneuvers since World War I. The aviation component of the Army, the Army Air Corps (USAAC), was also undergoing major modernizations. Industry across the United States was reeling from Lend-Lease, and the greatest shortages of materiel befell the American Warfighter. This, however, did not stop the organization of the civilian population in the United States, and certainly did not stop those in the Midwest.

Following years of discussion by aviators around the country, the CAP was formally established on 1 DEC 1941. Unilaterally, multiple wings were stood up at this time across the United States, including the Iowa Wing. COL Dan Hunter of Cedar Rapids was the first Wing commander. The organization grew rapidly, with seventeen of the proposed twenty squadrons having officers appointed by the end of the January.

The Iowa Wing's organization was an ambitious one, being born on the heels of one of the most significant wartime defense budget packages in the history of the United States. Each squadron was to be composed of four flights which consisted of eight planes and fifteen pilots. At full strength an individual squadron was to include 300 pilots and 160 aircraft. Student pilots that hadn't acquired their pilots license were enrolled as an "observer." Under ruling from

the Civil Aeronautics Authority (CAA), pilots holding licenses could also receive pay for flying on official missions of the patrol. In addition, many nurses and other ground workers were accepted after the organization of flights was completed. By mid-1942, all nineteen squadrons and one flight were staffed across the state.

Aiding in the CAP mission to acquire civilian pilots, the USAAC established a civilian flying training program in Red Oak prior to the war. The initial class included nine men and one woman. This class consisted of ground school twice a week and eventually led to the required 35-hours of flight time required for a private license. The ground school portion of the course took place at the local junior high school. The instructors along with their students formed the nucleus of the Red Oak Squadron following 7 DEC 1941. Of particular note was Earl McQuown, Sr., the organizer; Madeline Taylor, who later became a ferry pilot for the Women's Auxiliary Service Pilots (WASP); and John Carder, a World War II ace credited with seven kills during the war.

The first flight was organized on 3 FEB 1942 in Council Bluffs. Plans were made to retain the airfield at Red Oak as an official full-time airport for CAP use. CAP officers, led by Flight Leader Robert K. Belt, applied to the Works Progress Administration (WPA) supervisor at Council Bluffs for a project that would establish a twenty-four-hour guard duty at the airport. The organization of this new flight was contingent on the airport being designated as an official field. This required full-time guards, a registrar, and a clearance officer. Red Oak's field was large and centrally located. The space was able to

handle the aircraft that owners provided to CAP. These were located at Orient, Lenox, Corning, Shenandoah, and Hamburg, in addition to Red Oak. Despite the space available, some of the aircraft would have to be staked out as there was insufficient hangar space for all of them. The initial organization of 15 pilots provided 11 of their own aircraft.

Throughout the early months of American involvement in the war, the Iowa CAP focused on increasing its role in mission readiness and preparedness while also working to increase education on aviation as a whole. Classroom instruction of members was conducted on four directives: military courtesy and discipline, infantry drill regulations for foot troops without arms, local civilian defense familiarization, and first aid for civilian defense. These programs eventually grew out to the modern Emergency Services program, Cadet program, and Civil Communications program. The Emergency Services mission was the most significant and most imminently formulated following civil defense.

On 16 JUL, it was announced that the Iowa CAP had furnished 15 members as pilots, observers, plotting board operators, clerks, mechanics, and guards for coastal patrol based in the Gulf of Mexico. These coastal patrol missions have historically been a major claim to the CAP. Missions were widely defined and varied between simple observation to harassment. Observation missions aided the armed forces by calling out positions of suspicious locations and activities. Limited harassment missions consisted of munitions use against enemy assets, although the CAP never could officially claim any success in this area.



### DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE APRIL 16-23

Days of Remembrance was established by the U.S. Congress to memorialize the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust as well as the millions of victims who were targeted for racial, political, ideological, and behavioral reasons. More than one million children were killed.

Across Europe, the Nazis found countless sympathizers who willingly worked with them or were complicit in their crimes. The victims had no control over their fates. The rescuers, on the other hand, made choices. The rescuers chose to risk their families' lives to intervene and help those being persecuted.

Irena Sendler made the choice. She smuggled 2,500 Jewish children to safety.

She hid children under stretchers, carried them through sewer pipes and underground passages, in trunks and suitcases, and by ambulance. Her hope was that one day the children would be reunited with their families.

For more information on Days of Remembrance and Irena Sendler's story from the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, scan the code to the right.



## MONTHLY TRIVIA

- 1 Check on Learning: Where was the first Iowa Squadron established?
- 2 How many confirmed strikes on enemy targets are credited to CAP?
- 3 True or False: CAP's primary mission in Iowa was to train and aid in Civil Defense?

## TRIVIA ANSWERS

- 1 What other organizations were a direct result of the CPTP?  
**The Women's Auxiliary Service Pilots  
The Tuskegee Airmen**
- 2 What was the cited cause of women aviators being removed from the ferrying program?  
**The flew them better than the men.**
- 3 Who was the first female fighter pilot (mentioned) in 1993?  
**1st Lt. Jeannie Leavitt**

Safety is always a concern when dealing with aircraft, whether its on the ground or not. Thankfully, the ground emergencies are a bit more easy to cleanup than the airborne ones. Nevertheless, setting off the hangar Sapphire System will probably result in a few things. An article, a FLIPL, and probably plenty of Earth pushing. Always follow the procedures and reduce the chances of being "that person" that kept the crew on post for the weekends.

18	1942	650 miles east of Japan, the Doolittle Raiders scramble to their bombers to launch a surprise attack on Tokyo.
05	1944	The Twentieth Air Force is established with its primary force based in India.
30	1962	The A-12 Oxcart makes its maiden flight over Groom Lake, Nevada.
10	1994	The first bombing operation in NATO history is conducted against Bosnian Serbs as ongoing conflict unfolds in the former Yugoslavia.
22	2010	The Boeing X-37B unmanned spacecraft makes its maiden flight.



1. Cited under "Red Oak Express - Jan 26, 1942" in "Civil Air Patrol began 50 years ago." The Red Oak Express. Red Oak, Iowa. 1 OCT 1991.  
 2. Cited under "Red Oak Express - Feb 5, 1942" in Ibid.  
 3. "Plane Guards: Aviators Ask for OKEH Airport Here." The Red Oak Express. Red Oak, Iowa. 5 FEB 1942.

This month's publication is first of several in a series that observes the rich history of the Iowa Wing and its subordinate units. These publications are part of an anthology currently being constructed by the Wing Historian for internal and external use. If you have information on the Iowa Wing, please feel free to reach out to the Wing Historian to have it included in the larger anthology of the organization.