



Air Force ROTC cadets get a taste of what's to come in a new college training program. Cadets are required to solo in light craft before graduation.

Sensation of Speed

A new program of flight training for Air Force ROTC cadets was instituted at O. U. this year. The author provides an authentic report; he is undergoing the training currently.

By PERRY ROBINSON, '57

YOUR LEFT HAND, sweating perhaps, pushes a black knob forward; your ears become glutted with a rising roar, now you are tilted forward and a long gray concrete path runs beneath with increasing speed. The sensation of speed pulls a trigger somewhere in your memory and a conditioned reflex tells the right hand to pull a black stick back.

Suddenly, with an almost subtle springing motion, you are uprooted from the gray path. The world becomes overwhelmingly

four-dimensional and the buildings and cars which seemed so lifelike seconds before take on the appearance of toys in the department store window.

You are flying an airplane, a machine that obeyed the knob-pushing and stick-pulling talents which sound simple but are important enough that the 84th Congress passed Public Law 879 this year, creating a college flying training course for senior Air Force ROTC cadets.

The University of Oklahoma was one of

the first three schools in the country to start the training, initiating its program November 7 with the facilities of its regular department of aviation at Max Westheimer Field. By April 1, 47 cadets, only months away from a diploma and active duty, had amassed a total of over 800 hours in the air.

Cadets fly between and after classes and have had the benefit of excellent instructors. The Air Force, which plans similar

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training for its units at 180 colleges within the next two years, foots the bill for the training but expects the 35 hours of light-plane training to result in great savings of the taxpayer's dollar by a reduction of the "washout rate" when cadets enter regular Air Force flight training.

With the advent of supersonic jet aircraft, the number of young men who can and will become flying officers is reduced. Selection standards are necessarily higher and the danger has increased. A mistake of two seconds in an aircraft flying over 1,000 miles an hour may reduce a million-dollar machine to fragments of twisted metal and disintegrate the pilot to even less. To combat these problems in the interest of national defense, the Air Force is searching for answers.

The college flying training program is one answer. It is designed to achieve two purposes, motivation and selection. Of the 47 O. U. cadets who have flown and are flying this year, none have fallen by the wayside and many have been motivated.

After 35 hours of flying and the accompanying instruction, a cadet may obtain a private pilot's license by successfully completing a "check ride" with a Civil Aeronautics Authority examiner. At this time he has completed a course free of charge that costs the regular college student in excess of \$200.

The flying course differs from the regular classroom type. A mistake may cost the student's life. However, like a car, the airplane is safe when handled properly. The sky as a classroom is fascinating. The teacher sits behind the student, controlling the same piece of chalk with reassuring deftness.

He may make corrections with astonishing candor, and give tests at a moment's notice. "Okay, let's see that accelerated stall." The nose comes up and suddenly, in a burst of agony against its unnatural suspension, the plane shudders and falls forward. But the student has sensed the shudder and made the prescribed adjustments; the aircraft settles comfortable and the instructor, hinting slightly of praise, intones, "That's right. Now let's go shoot some landings."

This is happening six days a week from sunrise to sunset at Westheimer Field. Public Law 879 is making 47 young men more than odds-on favorites to cope with the complexities of the F-100, the F-102 and all their brothers and sisters.