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STATE AND LOCAL

CIVIL AVIATION MOBILIZATION

By MERRILL ARMOUR *

THE resources of the 100,000 or more active civilian pilots and the 60,000 odd civilian aircraft—the flying public—are affected by the action taken by the aviation industry and the Government to marshal the non-airline aviation resources on a voluntary basis for civilian defense purposes.

In July, 1950 aviation leaders became aware of the immediate need for a program and a plan of action if the civil aviation resources of the country were to be ready and able to do their full share for national defense. The problem was discussed by various segments of the industry in July and representatives thereof met as the Emergency Aviation Council in August 1950 and formulated a mobilization plan of action.

The plan was designed to prepare for the worst possible situation—an attack on the continental United States. If civil aviation could be made ready for this situation it would then be prepared for any lesser emergencies. For enemy bombed areas, it was pointed out, the functions of civil aviation should include:

1. *Bringing medical and other urgent personnel and supplies.*
2. *Evacuation.*
3. *Patrol.*
4. *Traffic control.*
5. *Communications.*

To be ready to discharge its function in the event of such an attack the mobilization plan pointed out that substantial operations of civil aircraft must be maintained or the personnel and facilities would not be available at the time of greatest need. Some of the non-airline activities which should be continued and which would serve the country production-wise were enumerated.

The emergency plan proposed the control of airports, aircraft, personnel and flight operations, for two primary objectives. One,—control to secure the utilization of the facilities in our defense program and, two—control for security purposes.

The plan proposed that airmen should be properly identified by a card with their picture, description and fingerprints. It was contemplated that this would permit a screening which would give an opportunity for adequate security check and provide a reliable force of both airmen and ground personnel for emergency situations.

The plan provided that substantial control and security would be effected by a comprehensive organization of airports with a division of these into control airports and non-control airports. A control airport would be responsible for all of the non-control airports assigned to it and complete cooperation between the control and non-control airports would be required. Aircraft and airmen would be registered either directly at their nearest control airport or at their nearest non-control airport which, in turn, would supply the parent airport with these records.

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In the registering of the aircraft and airmen, information would be required to show the service which the aircraft and the airmen would be capable of rendering and also the type of service they wished to render. There would be available at each control airport information necessary for the immediate utilization of the aviation facilities in that area. The plan made it clear that these control airports would have to be integrated into a national plan to assure complete utilization of all civil aviation facilities and the concentration of these at whatever point they might be most useful or needed.

It was recognized by the Emergency Aviation Council that all of the planning, organization and records proposed by the plan would not be enough. If any organization is to operate smoothly in an emergency it must function to some extent prior to the emergency and must, in a word, try out its own programs from time to time to see that it can actually operate as planned.

While the ultimate goal was to provide the nation with the full capacity of non-scheduled civil aviation for defense emergencies, it was the belief of the industry that to achieve that goal it was essential to have the program provide for the maximum use of civil aviation consistent with the country's defense economy and defense program, believing that there might be a considerable period of semi-emergency status and hoping that the ultimate emergency for which we should be constantly prepared might not occur.

As part of its general program of action for the appropriate federal and state government agencies, the following steps were proposed. These are not given in the order of priority as no such order is deemed possible but merely for the purpose of summarizing the steps that should be taken.

1. Complete surveys, national and state, as to available civil air resources.
2. Decide on the identification needed by airmen, ground crews, and aviation radio operators (such as old AGO card) bearing picture, signature, and thumb prints. Devise a special identification to issue to those who now lack such cards.
3. Plan for supply of aircraft parts and critical materials.
4. Form state aviation councils to advise on plans (also aviation councils in the larger cities) where such groups do not exist.
5. Select control airports tentatively.
6. Issue unclassified, tentative security rules and forms for study and comment.
7. Conduct simulated operations to pre-test proposed security rules.
8. Encourage training and practice by all aviation personnel, such as navigation, meteorology, cross-country flying, and simulated disaster and search missions.
9. Encourage physical check-ups so pilot licenses will remain valid.
10. Arrange police authority for appropriate personnel, if later necessary, to carry arms and make arrests.
11. Encourage operators to buy fuel, parts and other items not now in short supply.
12. Circulate initial plans and gather information as to activities across the country to stimulate and guide volunteer effort in advance of a formalized program.
13. Fix rates for aircraft rental on government missions to cover operation, maintenance, depreciation and insurance.
14. Encourage publicity of a constructive nature to create new interest in the role of local airports and civil aircraft for public welfare.

Development of State Aviation Mobilization Plan

As time went on it became clear that the government was going to be lagging too far behind in implementing and developing the mobilization program which had been suggested by the Emergency Aviation Council. Some of the individual States commenced formulating State organizations to carry out the general program. It seemed obvious that there was a need for uniformity in the State plans and organizations in order to insure satisfactory results on a national basis. Industry, through the Emergency Aviation Council, again developed a uniform State plan. This State plan was published on December 12, 1950.¹ It was designed to fit in with the general plan for civil defense which has been suggested by National Security Resources Board. The NSRB contemplated that each State would have a civil defense director directly responsible to the Governor. It seemed proper then that civil aviation should be directly under the director of civil defense and the State plan was designed with this in mind. The State plan, it should be emphasized, follows the original program for making the control airport the basic unit in the whole civil aviation defense plan.

In setting up the aviation mobilization programs, it was realized that it might have to operate while the nation was in one of three general stages of building military strength. The first was the one then existing, a national emergency was anticipated but had not been declared by the President; the second would be that following such a declaration by the President; and the third would be when we were in a full scale war as a result of a declaration of war or an enemy attack.

Almost before the work of the Emergency Aviation Council or the Uniform State Plan was completed and distributed, the President of the United States declared a national emergency and the second condition was in effect even before the "shake-down" tests recommended during the first condition had been performed. This in itself established the accuracy of industry's conclusion that the federal government was going to be too slow.

The Emergency Aviation Council

At this point a word about the Emergency Aviation Council itself. The EAC was in one sense a child of the National Conference of Aviation Organizations. It is an informal organization without constitution, by-laws or officers. By common consent it has so far confined itself to organizations of national character. Its actual work and policies have been carried on by persons whose livelihood depends upon aviation. We generally think of such a group as distinct from government. The Council actually is separate and distinct from any federal agencies but oddly enough it has as one member the National Association of State Aviation Officials.

At the time the State plan was developed and published the following thirteen national organizations participated:

American Association of Airport Executives	Corporation Aircraft Owners Association, Inc.
Aviation Distributors & Manufacturers Association	National Aeronautic Association
Aircraft Industries Association of America, Inc.	The National Air Council
Airport Operators Council	National Association of State Aviation Officials
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association	National Aviation Trades Association, Inc.
Aeronautical Training Society	National Flying Farmers Association
Air Transport Association of America	

¹ Copies of the full plan, "State Plan for Civil Aviation in Civil Defense," may be obtained from AOPA, Washington, D. C.