

Thirteenth Squadron

By the time the Wing expansion to 24 squadrons was completed in 1961, the old Ninth Squadron had been redesignated as Thirteenth. This made it the first squadron in Third Group numerically; and as we shall see, it has been first more often than not in most other categories, also.

In 1958-59 the Thirteenth was at the top of the academic heap. The combined leadership of Cadet Squadron Commanders Hansford T. Johnson, Gerald F. Elsbernd, and Major William A. Patch (USA) proved effective as the squadron took individual academic honors during 1958-59 for the classes of '59, '61, and '62.

Strong support for this achievement came from the 1959 first classmen. Cadet Brock Strom, the Academy's first All-American football player, was also an academic stalwart for the Thirteenth as he ranked in the top 5% of his class. Cadets Louis Kingsland, Nathaniel Kuzel, and Charles Zaleski were also in this elite group, (though Zaleski is far better remembered for the abundance of tricks which he pulled while at the Academy, than he is for academic excellence). And certainly one should not dismiss 1959's Thirteenth without reference to Cadet Roger Counts, composer of the Falcon Fight Song.

During the 1959-60 academic year, the Thirteenth was under the leadership of Cadets William G. Goodyear and Howard M. Whitfield. The shift in leadership apparently brought with it a shift in emphasis as the squadron lost some of its academic excellence, but picked up Group championships in lacrosse, boxing and field hockey, and Wing championships in judo, rugby, and squash.