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SUPERINTENDENT

UNITED STATES
MILITARY ACADEMY



1939

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SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORT, 1939.

TO: THE ADJUTANT GENERAL,
WAR DEPARTMENT,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

1. In compliance with the provisions of paragraph 2a (7) (d), A.R. 350-5, there is submitted herewith report covering the operation of the United States Military Academy for the Fiscal Year 1939.

2. ADMINISTRATION.

There were no major changes in the administrative organization and procedure during the year. Improvement was sought in regrouping and better coordination of numerous activities, organization or reorganization of various advisory boards, and in consolidation and supervision of quasi-public funds.

Steps were initiated for development of a six-year program for each academic department, the library, and other activities as a guide for their development, preparation of estimates and utilization of funds.

Revision of the regulations governing the Corps of Cadets has been accomplished and a comprehensive budget of normal cadet income and expenditures has been prepared.

An administrative weakness not overcome lies in the inadequacy of officer personnel for the office of the Treasurer. The War Department allotment of officers for duty here provides but one officer for the Treasurer's activities which embrace not only keeping of all cadet accounts but also operation of the cadet mess, laundry, store, barber shops and restaurant. An additional officer as assistant to the Treasurer is a real need.

Many provisions of law relating to the Military Academy are quite obsolete and not in accord with present day conditions. A study has been initiated with a view to seeking repeal and amendment of such legislation.

3. PERSONNEL.

a. **Commissioned.** The average strength of the commissioned personnel during the year was 299. Of this number 202 were assigned to the academic departments; 22 to the Department of Tactics; 14 to organizations; 17 to the Medical Department, and 44 to administrative positions. To continue in full the advantages derived from restricting academic sections to small numbers, the number of officers assigned to academic departments should be increased to 206.

There were also 7 civilian instructors on duty, 2 in French, 1 in Spanish, 1 in Wrestling, 1 in Boxing and 2 in military gymnastics.

On July 1, 1938, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas D. Stamps succeeded Colonel William A. Mitchell as Professor of Civil and Military Engineering, the latter having been retired for physical disability.

The rank of a permanent professor is determined by a law enacted in 1875. For 10 years following his appointment as professor, he is restricted to the rank of lieutenant colonel and thereafter has the rank of colonel. With increasing growth of the Academy, it has become of greater importance that an officer appointed professor be of an age that insures the knowledge, experience and judgment that his responsibilities require. Also it is my belief that a too long tenure of office by a professor should be avoided. Both factors indicate the desirability of appointing as professor an officer having from about 14 to 19 years to serve before reaching the statutory retirement age, i.e., he should be 45 to 50 years of age when appointed. Under conditions now obtaining, an officer of such age cannot accept appointment as professor without a considerable sacrifice in rank and pay, and in rank upon retirement, should he be found incapacitated during the first ten years of his service as professor. The result is to confine selections of professors to younger officers who will not subject themselves to such sacrifices by appointment as professor. Solely in the interests of the service and of the Military Academy, I believe the basic law should be changed so that any officer appointed a professor would be advanced to the rank of colonel on the date he would have been promoted to colonel had he not been appointed a professor.

b. The Corps of Cadets. The authorized strength of the Corps remained at 1960. The Corps reached its maximum strength on January 2, 1939 with a total of 1842 cadets present, and its minimum on June 30, 1939, with a total of 1274 cadets present. The average number of cadets for the year was 1756.

The total number of admissions during the year was 436. The total number of cadets discharged for deficiency in studies was 104; separations for other causes amounted to 23. The aggregate loss of 127 was approximately 7% of the average strength for the year. 456 cadets were graduated June 12, 1939. Seven foreign cadets received instruction during the year.

c. Civilians. There were 697 civilian employees under the Military Academy as of June 30, 1939; 522 of these occupied classified positions and 175 occupied unclassified positions.

The major change in civilian personnel status at the Academy during the fiscal year 1939 was the recommendation for the classification of approximately 176 positions under Executive Order No. 7916, dated June 24, 1938. Practically all of these positions are at the Cadet Mess. This change will operate to the exclusion of excepted appointments under paragraph 10 (b) of Schedule A of the Civil Service Rules and will result in filling subsequent vacancies in these positions from registers established through competitive examinations. It will also operate to confer on this personnel the social security benefits of Civil Service rules.

d. Enlisted. The authorized strength, all organizations, for the year was 1294. About 60% of the enlisted men are occupied in maintaining the animals and military equipment used in connection with cadet instruction and in assisting with such instruction. The remaining 40% are used largely in maintenance and operation of the plant.

There are present units and detachments of all the arms except Infantry. While there is not a need for a tactical unit of Infantry, there is a distinct need for a small detachment for the care, operation and demonstration of the use of Infantry weapons in the instruction of cadets.

4. APPOINTMENTS AND ADMISSIONS.

The authorized strength of the Corps is 1960. During the fiscal year 1939 the average strength of the Corps was 1756, and the average strength of Classes was: First Class: 457; Second Class: 452; Third Class: 444; Fourth Class: 427. It will be noted that these strengths progressively decrease whereas they should normally increase.

The inequality in Classes results mostly from the annual inequalities in making appointments. It has the disadvantage of a fluctuating annual output, but a much greater disadvantage in the difficulties caused in administration and training, particularly in academic departments. Nearly all instruction is by Classes and the fluctuations in use of facilities and transfer of instructors between departments to accommodate to the varying size of Classes reaching a department is inimical to efficiency. The remedy lies in the equalization of the size of Classes entering annually. If this were stabilized at about 570, vacancies would be well filled, attrition would cause the succeeding Classes to be handled by the various departments to be approximately of equal strength, and the annual output would be uniformly about 450. I believe every effort should be made by the War Department to endeavor to equalize the strength of entering Classes even to the extent of seeking legislation to permit it to fill such number of unfilled vacancies as may be necessary for this purpose.

The Act of June 8, 1936 authorizes 40 cadets to be appointed by the President from among the sons of officers, soldiers, sailors and marines who were killed in action or died prior to July 2, 1921. All of these vacancies have never been filled. At present there are only 18 cadets appointed from this source. The maximum entrance age being 22 years, this class of appointees will rapidly diminish and after 1943 no such appointments can be made. It is believed action should now be taken to permit these vacancies to be otherwise filled. To distribute them equally for appointments by the President from (1) the Regular Army and (2) the National Guard would be a satisfactory solution.

It has long been the practice to require candidates seeking admission on secondary school certificates to substantiate their certificates by a test known as a Validating Examination. This requirement was changed during the year by introducing the College Entrance Examination Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test as an optional method of substantiating such certificates. During the year, 16 candidates took this optional test but only 3 were admitted. Until a greater number are admitted as a result of this test, it will not be practicable to fully judge its effectiveness.

Other changes in admission requirements included: (1) making honor graduates subject to same rules for qualifying as all other candidates, (2) simplification and shortening of the validating examination.

5. ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION.

There have been no major changes in the curriculum during the year. Continued effort has been made to effect improvement in methods and in the content of courses. Instruction has benefitted by the improved laboratory facilities resulting from recent construction.

Perhaps the most marked improvement in instruction has been in the enhanced ability of instructor personnel. This, in turn, has been due to some increase in tuition funds permitting a greater number of officer instructors to take special courses at other educational institutions to better fit them for duty as instructors.

During the fiscal year 1939 tuition funds made available by the War Department totalled \$4062.50 which permitted 34 officers to pursue graduate studies. While the quality of instruction has been markedly raised, further steps along this line are desirable and necessary if the Military Academy is to remain abreast of leading civilian institutions. Tuition funds so spent also benefit the government in the broadening of officers and better fitting them for future command and staff duty.

Tuition funds are now appropriated in a lump sum to meet all the needs of the Army, including the Military Academy. To meet the special needs of the Academy, I believe an amount for tuition should be included in its estimates and appropriations.

A liberal education embraces many subjects that cannot well be included in regular courses. Also there is necessary the supplementing of regular course subjects by lectures. During the year improvements in lecture programs has been accomplished through some increase in funds for lectures, but primarily through the supervisory and coordinating action of the Lecture Committee of the Academic Board. Every effort is made, within the limit of funds available, to integrate into a coordinated whole the general lectures, the department lectures and the lectures provided by the Cadet Lecture Committee.

The curriculum of the Academy has been a gradual development over a long period. Manifestly to keep it abreast of conditions and to fulfill the mission of the Academy it must be subjected in its entirety to periodic, exhaustive and critical study. Action was taken in March, 1939, initiating such a study by the Academic Board.

6. MILITARY INSTRUCTION.

Theoretical and practical military instruction was carried on in varying degrees throughout the year, the period June 15 to August 26 being devoted exclusively to military training, culminating in a 5-day period of marches and maneuvers in the field. This instruction, while generally satisfactory, was carefully studied with a view to improvement. The absence of the First Class on training trips to Mitchel Field for Air Corps training, to Fort Benning for demonstrations of combined arms and to Fort Monroe for sea-coast and anti-aircraft firing has heretofore covered a large part of the period of the summer encampment. The Mitchel Field trip is essential but studies were made concerning other trips with a view to striking a reasonable balance between necessary instruction and the exercise of command and leadership. The greatest opportunities for the latter are during the cadets' First Class (last) encampment, opportunities which are lost when the First Class is absent on trips most of the summer. As a result of these studies, it was decided to abandon the Fort Benning and Fort Monroe trips for the summer of 1939 and to give the First Class more experience as instructors and to afford them more opportunity for leadership.

It is manifestly impossible, under modern conditions, to produce graduates proficient in all the technical duties of all the arms to which they may be assigned. The attainable objective cannot go far beyond a broad and basic military education as a foundation upon which the graduate may build as an officer. The development of individual proficiency in technical duties must be left for post-graduate accomplishment. This conception is being carried into training programs and schedules of military instruction.

7. PHYSICAL TRAINING AND ATHLETICS.

Emphasis has been continued upon this phase of instruction and training, the objectives of which are development of sound physique, endurance, alertness, coordination, military bearing, knowledge of sports and a high sense of sportsmanship.

Intramural participation was had in 23 sports and athletic teams engaged in intercollegiate competition in 18 sports. All forms of recreational athletics are encouraged in every way.

8. RECREATION AND WELFARE.

In view of the restriction of cadets to the military reservation, the exactitudes of cadet life and the rigorous course of the Academy, means for suitable recreation and for promoting welfare are of the greatest importance. Recreational athletics, motion picture shows, entertainments, dances, lectures, concerts, hobby clubs, visits of families and friends, and other extra-curricular activities are all fostered as a means to this end. Unfortunately the growth of installations and facilities for these activities has not kept pace with their increase and the expansion of the Corps. The existing deficiencies indicate a distinct need for the addition to the plant of a suitable building for recreational and social activities.

9. HEALTH, HOUSING, SUPPLY, ETC.

The health of the command has continued to be excellent during the year.

Additional new barracks for cadets were occupied for the first time during the year. Overcrowding in barracks so prevalent during recent years has thus been eliminated.

The Cadet Mess has been maintained at a high standard.

Uniforms, equipment and articles for personal use have continued to be supplied by the Cadet Store.

Laundry service is below the desired standard due to the inadequacy and age of the plant.

10. DISCIPLINE.

Discipline in the Corps of Cadets continues excellent. A most gratifying situation is manifest in the willing and self-imposed observance of regulations which characterizes the Corps. Serious offenses are rare and are condemned by the Corps, apart from any punishments imposed. Increasing responsibility for conduct and good order is being thrown upon the Corps, particularly upon officers, non-commissioned officers and the First Class with very gratifying results.

11. INSTALLATIONS.

The installations of the Academy are in general satisfactory and well balanced to the needs of the present size of the Corps and instructional staff.

During the year there were completed a field house, an addition to North Barracks, an addition to the gymnasium, 10 sets of officers' quarters, a fire station, and a cavalry garage. The Ordnance and Engineering Laboratory is nearing completion. Considerable progress has been made in minor construction, roads, grading, etc., through use of W.P.A. funds.

The completion of the above buildings accomplishes a marked improvement in instructional facilities. Class rooms and laboratories are now adequate for all departments. There remains only the completion of equipment of the laboratories as necessary funds therefor become available.

The acquisition of land for the water shed and target ranges is progressing slowly. On June 30, 1939 approximately 528 acres had been acquired. Further acquisitions have been delayed incident to legal proceedings for condemnation.

There are two outstanding needs in the physical plant. The most urgent is a laundry of adequate size and suitably equipped to meet current demands. The estimated cost is \$290,000. This item has been included in the War Department Construction Program. It should be authorized and appropriated for at an early date. An almost equally urgent need is a large combined assembly hall and theatre with suitable appointments for large assemblages, dances, theatricals, lectures, concerts, etc. Such a large structure, in harmony with existing buildings, would probably cost approximately \$5,000,000. Several years would be required for its completion. It is very desirable that prompt action be taken to authorize such a building and to provide funds for plans and construction.

12. EXTERNAL RELATIONS.

Affiliations and contacts have continued with the Association of American Colleges and the College Entrance Examining Board.

The most extensive contacts with other colleges are in the field of athletics. Some visits were made by professors to study methods of other colleges and many officer instructors have taken special preparatory courses at other institutions. The cadets have engaged in debates with students of several other colleges.

Most cordial relations were maintained with the U. S. Naval Academy. The Second Class of the Naval Academy visited the Military Academy in three increments during their summer destroyer cruise. Six cadets of the Third Class participated in the annual summer practice cruise of the midshipmen and steps are being taken to increase this number to twenty.

Public relations in general have been very satisfactory. The New York World's Fair has brought to West Point a greatly increased number of visitors from all parts of the country and abroad and special attention has been given to their cordial treatment.

13. DISTINGUISHED VISITORS.

a. Of the U. S. Senators and Representatives appointed to the Board of Visitors only three, Senators Harry H. Schwartz, Warren R. Austin and Rufus C. Holman, visited the Military Academy on April 28, 1939. Their report is published in the Congressional Record for June 19, 1939, Vol. 84, No. 122.

b. Distinguished U. S. visitors included: President and Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt and party, June 12, 1939; Governor and Mrs. Herbert H. Lehman of New York, accompanied by a party of 30 other State governors with members of their families, June 28, 1939; Rear Admiral Wilson Brown, Superintendent, U. S. Naval Academy, June 12, 1939; Major General Hugh A. Drum, Commanding, 2nd Corps Area and First Army, April 25, 1939; Major General Julian L. Schley, Chief of Engineers, March 27, 1939; Major General Fred. W. Boschen, Chief of Finance, December 16, 1938.

c. Distinguished foreign visitors, in chronological order, included: Lieut. Johan A. A. S. Ekelof, Signal Corps Reserve, Swedish Army, July 8, 1938; Commander Washington Perry de Almeida with 35 officers and midshipmen,

Brazilian Training Ship "Almirante Saldanha," July 16, 1938; Colonel Andre and Captain Renard, Haitian Army, September 6, 1938; Major H. A. Macochie, British Royal Artillery, September 24, 1938; Major A. G. Little, British Army (in charge of American affairs in British War Ministry), September 30, 1938; Mr. W. H. Weech, Inspector of British Board of Education, October 4, 1938; Dr. Francisco Pares Macias, Civil Military Institute of Cuba, October 18, 1938; General Freile, Ecuadorian Military Attache, October 21, 1938; Colonel Fulgencio Batista, Chief of Staff of Cuban Army, November 14, 1938; H. E. Victor Badulesco, Under Secretary of State of Roumania, November 16, 1938; Marquis A. di Bugnano, Royal Vice Consul of Italy, with Vice Consul-Marquis I. Sanfelice, December 7, 1938; Captains DePerrot and Paltcer, Swiss Army, December 12, 1938; Lieut. Angel Tamayo and 9 cadets, Columbian Army and students of Ramirez Military School, March 14, 1939; Captain G. A. King, South African Defense Force, April 27, 1939; Crown Prince Olav and Crown Princess Martha, Crown Prince and Princess of Norway, accompanied by Hon. Munthe de Morgenstjerne, Minister of Norway to U. S., and Mme. Morgenstjerne, Major and Mme. Ostgaard, Court Marshal to His Highness and Lady in Waiting to Her Highness, April 30, 1939; General Anastasio Somoza, The President of Nicaragua, accompanied by Senora de Somoza, Senor Dr. Don Leon de Bayle, Minister of Nicaragua, and Senora Dona Hena de Bayle, May 15, 1939.

14. GRADUATION EXERCISES.

The graduation exercises for the Class of 1939 were held on Monday, June 12, 1939 in the newly completed field house.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, delivered the address and presented diplomas and commissions to the 456 graduates.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS.

To further increase the efficiency of the Military Academy, I consider the following items beyond local control to be of paramount importance and recommend action, including such legislation as may be necessary, for their accomplishment:

a. Any officer of the Army now serving or hereafter appointed a professor at the Military Academy to be promoted to colonel at the time he would have been so promoted had he not been so appointed.

b. The reallocation of the 40 vacancies now provided for sons of veterans who died prior to July 2, 1921, preferably to the Regular Army and National Guard.

c. Such control of appointments as will stabilize at approximately 570 the size of classes entering each year.

d. Rehabilitation of the cadet laundry plant. Also the construction of a large memorial building suitably designed and appointed for general assemblages, lectures, concerts, theatricals, dances, reception hall for visitors, etc., and for display of memorials to World War and subsequent military leaders.

Jay L. Benedict

JAY L. BENEDICT,
Brigadier General,
Superintendent.



