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WAR DEPARTMENT
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND SPECIAL TRAINING
SECTION OF TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION BRANCH
WAR PLANS DIVISION, GENERAL STAFF
OLD LAND OFFICE BUILDING, 8TH AND F STREETS

Aa-48

December 11, 1918.

WASHINGTON

From: Committee on Education and Special Training.
To: Presidents of S.A.T.C. institutions.
Subject: Reports for historical record. Discontinuance of Students Army Training Corps.

1. The Historical Division of the General Staff of the Army will prepare an official history of the conduct of the war. This Committee has been called upon for a comprehensive report. We believe that the most valuable data we can submit are the statements of the institutions concerned, including not only what was actually done but their comments and suggestions as well. This will constitute an invaluable body of material for historical purposes and as a basis for future policies. The statements will also serve as the war records of the individual institutions.

Instead of supplying a questionnaire we are asking each institution to make its statement in its own way, asking only that certain points be considered and numbered as indicated in enclosed memorandum. Institutions having both collegiate and Vocational sections should make separate reports for each section.

In view of the permanent character of these reports and the purposes for which they will be used, it is requested that they be carefully prepared and that the suggestions for the future represent the considered judgment of the authorities of the institution.

2. In view of many inquiries as to the reasons for the demobilization of the S.A.T.C. it seems appropriate at this time to state briefly the conditions which led to the organization of the Corps and the decision to discontinue it following the armistice with Germany.

(1) Section B. The National Army Training Detachments (later Section B of the S.A.T.C.) were started in April, 1918. The purpose was to make use of the facilities and instruction personnel of educational institutions to mobilize and train a large reserve of vocational specialists, - radio, telegraph and telephone men, motor mechanics, machinists, etc., which the developments of the war had shown to be indispensable. About 140 colleges and schools took part in this project. Nearly 95,000 men were turned out of these detachments, of whom it is estimated about 70,000 were sent to France for service in all branches of the Army, especially, Field Artillery, Engineers, Signal

Corps and Motor Transport. About 35,000 additional were in training at the time of demobilization was ordered. Broadly speaking this work has been wholly successful. In addition to supplying nearly 100,000 additional men when they were sorely needed, the value of the vocational training under a military regime was fully demonstrated. The quality of the men was excellent and one of the features was the ~~very~~ large percentage of men found eligible as officer candidates. The results were accomplished by a remarkable degree of co-operation between the civilian and military agencies. Institutions participating in this training may feel that they made a direct and important contribution to the defeat of the enemy.

The vocational training detachments were conducted to meet a specific military need which no longer existed after November 11. Consideration was given to the possibility of using the schools for industrial training of soldiers during the demobilization, but inasmuch as the appropriations for financing this work were made to train men for military service in the emergency, they could not without Congressional action be used for training men for civilian pursuits.

(2) Section A. A great proportion, probably the majority, of the commissioned personnel of the Army in this war has been composed of college men. The excellent results achieved in the training of these men in the great officers' camps of 1917 made it apparent that in a protracted war it would be of the utmost important to conserve and use to the best advantage the college student body as a source of non-commissioned officer and officer material for the line of the Army. The experience of our allies, especially England, led also to this conclusion. Moreover, certain technical branches of the service such as Medical Corps, Engineers, Chemical Warfare, Signal Corps, etc., were also entirely dependent for a future supply of officers and technical experts on the graduates of professional and technical schools. During the college year 1917-18 the student body, especially in the upper classes, had become greatly depleted. In August, 1918, a new Army program was announced which called for the organization of 98 divisions by June 30, 1919, and the doubling of the Army's strength within less than a year. Simultaneously, the new Draft Act was proposed, reducing the draft age to 18. The fulfillment of this program involved the calling into the service practically all able-bodied college students within ten months, and most of them within a very short time. It became clear that only a small fraction of the college student body would return to college, and that they would become scattered through the Army, the Navy and industry without being put to the greatest possible use. To meet these conditions, the Students' Army Training Corps was conceived purely as military measure in order to hasten the formation and training of the new armies. The purpose was to mobilize young men in the colleges where they might receive special preliminary training and discipline in advance of the time when they would have been called under the draft. No deferment from active service was to be given. The intention was to use this body of men as required, to the best possible military advantage.

The Students' Army Training Corps was, to some extent, misrepre-

sented as a plan for conserving college education for the benefit of the colleges or as a plan to give education free of expense for the benefit of individuals. Its sole purpose, however, as repeatedly stated by the War Department, was to increase the military power of the country as effectively and quickly as possible. With the further development of the Corps under war conditions, this purpose was in a fair way to be achieved.

The Students' Army Training Corps was organized on October 1, 1918 and ordered demobilized on November 26, 1918, so that its period of existence was too short to permit of all difficulties being met. It was anticipated that under the best conditions a number of months would be required to perfect the organization in view of the complexity and size of the problem. In addition, however, to the normal difficulties involved in the adjustment of collegiate machinery to new conditions, special difficulties were met with in the shape of the serious influenza epidemic and an unlooked-for shortage of uniforms due to larger demands for the overseas forces. In addition it was necessary as a matter of military necessity, to supply some 10,000 officer candidates within the first five weeks, whereas it had been planned not to make any drafts on the Corps for three months when the units would have been thoroughly organized and the men systematically classified. In spite of the exceptional conditions, certain definite results were accomplished. Units were organized in 516 collegiate institutions, and 140,000 men were inducted as soldiers. This represented a net increase of the armed forces of the United States, since these men entered the service in advance of their time for call under the draft. Eight thousand six hundred forty-two (8642) candidates were transferred to officers' schools. In the preparatory summer camps 800 picked young men were trained and 2700 second second lieutenants commissioned.

In the great majority of cases the units were functioning satisfactorily and conditions were improving from day to day at the time of the armistice. The entire enterprise was, however, only in its initial stage, and this Committee regrets that there was not more time to perfect the organization of the Corps and to overcome the obstacles that remained. This, it is believed, could have been entirely accomplished within another sixty days. As it is, although a great majority of the institutions concerned have expressed themselves as satisfied with the results of the military training in their institutions, and over seventy percent were willing to continue the Corps until the end of the college year, it is not felt that a final and conclusive experiment in the combination of military and academic training in colleges has been made.

3. Until the time of the signing of the armistice it was necessary for the Committee on Education and Special Training, in common with all other branches of the War Department, to act on the assumption that the war was to go on for an indefinite period. The signing of the armistice however, made it necessary that the War Department should immediately discontinue all military preparations not clearly needed. There were many reasons connected with the plans of individuals and general reasons of

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policy which would have made it desirable to continue the S.A.T.C. However as in the case of Section B, the passing of the strictly military necessity made it impossible to use the appropriations for a continuance of the training for other ends. Accordingly, discontinuance of the Corps became necessary as soon as it became apparent that conditions warranted a general demobilization in this country. The disturbance of the plans of the many institutions which desired to continue the S.A.T.C. to the end of the college year is regretted, but it is felt that the necessity for this demobilization will be recognized by all.

3. The Secretary of War has directed the continuance and development of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps. The response of the colleges indicates a wide spread desire to continue military work under this system. Every effort will be made to improve the R.O.T.C. and your co-operation is invited to make it a complete success.

4. It will be greatly appreciated if the above-mentioned report is submitted without fail by January 10, 1919.

Committee on Education and Special Training.

By: Ralph Barton Perry
Major, U.S.A.
Secretary.