



A group of O. U. students who went to Fort Sheridan, Illinois, during the World War to take officers' training. On the left are five faculty members: S. W. Reaves, R. C. Terrell, the late J. C. Davis, Guy Y. Williams, A. J. Williams

When War Called in '17

By CAPT. MORRIS U. LIVELY

CHAPLAIN, RESERVE, U. S. ARMY

IN the winter of the year 1917 there was every indication that the United States would, very probably, and in a very short while, become involved in the imbroglio that was then raging in Europe. Naturally "the war" was the main topic of conversation among people everywhere. Those of us who were students in the University of Oklahoma took up the popular chant and added our opinions to those commonly expressed. We who were boys, in the late teens and early twenties, knew that we would be called upon to play a more or less prominent part in that unpleasantness.

By the middle of March, 1917, it was the consensus among the male students of the University that the boys should be organized into military companies for the purpose of learning the rudiments of infantry drill. Accordingly a canvass was made of the student body to learn the names of those who had had any previous military training.

Shortly thereafter Josh Lee (now Senator Lee), who was president of the Student Body, called a mass meeting of the men of the University in order that we might vote upon the question of a military organization for the University of Oklahoma. It is needless to add that the "motion carried unanimously."

One might say that the meeting on that occasion was sacrosanct. There was no spirit of levity, or of the exuberance of youth. Truly, we youngsters could have been no more serious minded had we been assembled for a funeral. It seemed that even Josh Lee was in no hurry to get on with the agenda of the day, and that time was killed until all of the available ammunition was exhausted.

When the meeting was called to order Josh saw that a bit of humor was needed, and, in his unique way, said, "Now boys, you know why we are here. Let no one lose his head in this matter. As you know,

men oft-times lose their heads, both literally and figuratively, in war time."

This witticism produced the desired effect. The pall of silence was broken, and there was an immediate roar of laughter.

Josh asked me to act as secretary. He then named officers sufficient to organize a battalion (for there were sufficient volunteers to organize four companies). May I add here that I kept for several years the original sheet of paper on which I kept the minutes of that meeting, and the names of the officers who were appointed. I treasured that sheet of paper very highly, and always said that—*manana*—I would send it to the University for preservation in the archives; but, the years went by, and I moved from place to place in the United States, and in my peregrinations it was lost.

I do not recall the names of all the officers who were appointed at that meeting. I remember that there was one mature student present (whose name I do not recall) who was a major in the uniform rank of the Woodmen of the World. He was named as Commandant of Cadets, Cadet Major, Battalion Chief, G-I, *et cetera ad infinitum*.

Albert Clinkscales (I believe) and a youngster who was to be made a second lieutenant in the Oklahoma National Guard upon the attainment of his majority, a third young man, and I (the fourth), were each appointed captain of a company. As I remember, I was designated as commander of Company C.

On three days a week the battalion was assembled for drill. We used the north part of the campus, which was all open, as our "theatre of operations." A costume designer for comic opera could create no more nondescript garbs than those which were worn to drill. The major wore his W. O. W. uniform, and all the accoutrements pertaining thereunto. Each company commander assembled a suit of *some*

kind to show the authority which in him had been vested. The "enlisted personnel" wore anything, some were even *sans* shirts. But we drilled with all the earnestness and seriousness of Napoleonic veterans. Occasionally a captain, with all the pride of the famed Scottish commander, Mac Murtray, who

"Marched his 10,000 men up the hill,
and marched them down again,"

would parade his command down Asp, or Boulevard, to be admired (the men of the company, of course) by Thetas, Tri Deltas, Pi Phis, Kappas, Alpha Chi Omegas.

Came the day at long last when the United States declared war on the Central Powers. We boys knew that we would have to go—but how about our work, and grades, for that semester? Again Josh Lee called the men together. Two others, and myself, were named as a committee to call on Dr. Stratton D. Brooks, who was president of the University, to ask about credit for that semester, for it was then very early in April, 1917.

I shall never forget our visit to Dr. Brooks' office. Miss Jennie Pickering, who was the doctor's secretary, received us so graciously. She knew why we had come. She appreciated our embarrassment at calling on the president of the University. When we were in President Brook's office there were several moments of silence. Each boy waited for the other to state the purpose of our visit.

Dr. Brooks evidently noted our obvious embarrassment, and he broke the silence by saying, "Boys, I know why you have come. I have not talked with the Board of Regents, but I shall take the responsibility on my own shoulders. Go, and may God bless you. You will receive credit for this semester in those courses in which you are now enrolled.

Each member of this committee was a

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and requesting that it be started with the Directory issue.

Tentative plans have been made to devote the 1941 alumni directory issue of *Sooner Magazine* to graduates of the College of Business Administration.

O. U. Plates Arrive

They were a long time getting here, but two shipments of the O. U. Commemorative Plates made by the Wedgwood Company of England were run past the blockade and arrived in Oklahoma last month.

The first shipment was just enough to take care of advance orders, and incidentally not a single person who had placed a deposit in advance requested a refund during the long wait for delivery. A second shipment of fourteen dozen plates arrived shortly after the first one, and a third shipment was expected to complete delivery of the entire first order of forty dozen plates.

The First edition plate has an etching of the Administration Building in the center in Staffordshire red.

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senior. On the front steps of the Administration Building each one looked at the other, and said, "Well, I'm graduated right now." We were "graduated" then, and our transcripts for that semester read "P-war credit."

A day or so later one officer, a captain, came from Oklahoma City to the University to seek recruits for the First Officers' Training School, Leon Springs, Texas. He worked in Miss Pickering's office. As we boys came to the office she presented each one personally to the captain. One by one we "signed up" for Leon Springs. Soon there was an exodus of the older boys from the campus, and only the young freshmen, and the girls, were left.

As a final, and personal, recollection, Dan D. Stewart (now an abstractor in Durant) and James E. McKinney (now vice-president, Fort Worth National Bank), and I, left Norman on the midnight Santa Fe for our homes in Durant. The train reached Ardmore about three o'clock in the morning, and we were to wait until eight o'clock for the Frisco. We three had planned to take a room in Ardmore, but we were so excited that sleep was impossible. We sat until breakfast time in the lobby of the Whittington Hotel, talking about the war to which we were going.

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