

# SOONER MAGAZINE

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## The Cover

Commander J. C. Van de Carr, head of the University's Naval R. O. T. C. unit, shown in nautical pose with a sextant. Photograph by Harold Tacker.

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## A Policy Needed

IF the Government abolishes voluntary enlistments in the armed forces, as appeared likely when this was written, the college student reaching the age for selective service will be relieved of a terrible decision. Students in this classification have been torn between a desire to enlist immediately, and a feeling that another year or two of college work might make them of more value to the nation's war effort.

Elimination of voluntary enlistments, and restricting the inductions into service to the selective service lists would make it possible for students to continue their college training without their patriotism being questioned.

However, even with this major problem solved, there would still remain the confusion over deferments for college students taking training that has defense value. The student taking engineering or physics or some other special course which high selective service officials have indicated might be considered reason for deferment, but which some local draft boards consider *not* sufficient grounds for deferment, faces a difficult situation. Should the student raise the issue and ask for deferment, or leave the matter entirely up to the local board's judgment as to the defense value of the college training he is getting?

Members of the local draft boards are public-spirited and

conscientious citizens giving their time and energy to an important and difficult job. They are handicapped by not having, in most cases, direct information about the importance of certain specialized training to both the armed forces and to defense industries. This, in a few cases, has led to an attitude that no college student should be granted deferment, on the theory that it would be unfair to selectees who have not had a chance to go to college.

A total war does not seem quite the right time to try to even up personal opportunities or lack of opportunities. The guiding policy should be based on whatever will produce the best results for the nation's war effort. If a certain student will be worth more to the defense program because of another year or two of training, he ought to be given the training for that reason, regardless of the personal effects. If it appears that the kind of college work he is taking will not increase his value as a simple unit of manpower, then there is no reason to defer him.

The early adoption of a clear-cut, comprehensive official policy by national selective service officials, for the guidance of local boards, probably would save a lot of grief for selectees and for the colleges, and would prevent interruptions in the flow of trained men that is a critical necessity for the Army, Navy and defense industries.