

SOONER MAGAZINE

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Educational Techniques

The spectacular success of the Army and Navy in rapid training of men for specialized jobs in the armed forces has led many persons to believe that after the war the colleges and universities, by adopting similar techniques, should be able to reduce greatly the time and effort required for higher education.

It is quite true that both the Army and Navy have accomplished wonders, and the colleges and universities should welcome any improvements in educational techniques that have been discovered. However, there are a number of reasons why no one should anticipate a drastic change.

In the first place, many if not most of the training programs conducted by the armed forces were devised by and administered by professional educators commissioned by the armed forces for such purposes. The standard courses and techniques of colleges and universities were, in a great many cases, the background from which highly concentrated courses were prepared for the armed forces.

Because men were being trained on an emergency basis for certain specialized jobs only, all other educational objectives could be ignored and the specialized courses stripped to bare essentials.

Another highly important factor not ordinarily taken into account is that through the well-developed classification and screening systems, the armed forces selected only the very best qualified men to take the various kinds of specialized training. A college or university cannot reject all but a few of its applicants, and then form an ideal class including only young men and women with natural aptitude and qualifications for the special subject to be taught.

Too, the young man in the armed forces trying to qualify for a special job has strong motives driving him toward success. The knowledge that he is serving a cause greater than himself, a cause great enough to risk life itself, provides a motive for success much stronger than the largely selfish interest motivating the average peace-time college student.

Still another point is that the men in training in the service have little to distract them from concentration on their studies. Their rooms, their meals, their clothing, their equipment, their medical care, all are standardized and provided for them. They are removed from the emotional problems faced in their peace-time environments.

The point is simply that a peace-time college program cannot possibly operate under the same conditions as an armed service training program, and therefore the techniques used must necessarily be different.

There are a number of interesting things in the war program that might help the colleges and universities—such as more use of visual education. But we should not expect revolutionary changes.

Regents Amendment

Two constitutional amendments of special interest to O.U. and A. and M. alumni are to be voted on in the July 11 election. One of these would change the University Board of Regents from a statutory board to a constitutional board, without, however, making any change in the present personnel of the board.

The effect would be to take the affairs of the University of Oklahoma one step farther away from possibility of political attacks. The present statutory board is subject to change by the State Legislature at any time, and in the very unlikely case that a Legislature wanted to control the University it could abolish the board and the governor could appoint an entirely new one—as has happened to some highway commissions in the past. If the board is made constitutional, then only a vote of the people could overthrow the board.

The other amendment is one which would create a constitutional board to administer the affairs of Oklahoma A. and M. College, removing such control from the State Board of Agriculture. Aggie alumni have advocated such a step for many years.

The approval of both measures by the people of Oklahoma should add to the stability of our state system of higher education.

The Cover

Lt. Col. James E. Mills, '36eng, Norman, receives the Silver Star for gallantry with the Marines on Tarawa from Adm. Chester Nimitz.

Contents

FACULTY	2
THE UNIVERSITY	3
SOONER SPORTS	7
<i>By Harold Keith</i>	
WITH THE ARMED FORCES	8
<i>By Elaine Larecy</i>	
ALUMNI IN THE NEWS	16
OKLAHOMA BOOKS	17
ASSOCIATION PROGRESS	18
CALLING THE ROLL	19
<i>By Elizabeth Lees</i>	
MEDICAL SCHOOL	23
<i>By Beverly Howard</i>	
CLEARING THE DESK	24
<i>By R. C.</i>	

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