

THE CAMPUS CADETS: A HISTORY OF COLLEGIATE MILITARY TRAINING, 1891-1951

By Philip Reed Rulon*

The military history of the United States is again in vogue. Only the perpetual avalanche of literature on the Civil War and on the role of the army in exploring and settling the West kept the field alive as an academic discipline during the long waning period. But recent biographies and autobiographies of World War II figures, the economic and political intrigues of the so-called Cold War, anti-war film and television programming, and agitation over the role of minority groups in the armed forces are the catalytic agents chiefly responsible for reviving the drum and the trumpet in the Ivory Tower. Historians are currently taking advantage of the present situation by extending their researches into this aspect of the nation's past even further. One topic that has not received the attention it deserves is the student cadet, those men and women prepared for military leadership on the campuses of the country's institutions of higher learning. Scholarly investigation might have started earlier, but the unrest of the last two decades postponed analysis. Now, with a more reasoned atmosphere prevailing, it is possible to produce case studies which will provide data for future generalizations. This essay, then, focuses on the development and impact of military instruction at Oklahoma State University, a land-grant institution created under the auspices of the Morrill Act which charged agricultural and mechanical colleges with training students in military science.¹

Cadet instruction originated at Oklahoma State in 1891, the year that the organization opened its doors to the public. It reached its zenith sometime between the end of World War II and the beginning of the Korean Conflict. The Morrill Act was passed during George McClellan's Peninsular Campaign. This measure, among other things, authorized funds to teach students the martial arts. The critical need for Union officers to combat those, such as the men the Virginia Military Institute produced for the

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¹ The standard histories of the land-grant college movement in the United States are: Earle Dudley Ross, *Democracy's College* (New York: The Iowa State College Press, 1942); Edward Danforth Eddy, *Colleges for Our Land and Time* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956); and Allan Nevins, *The State Universities and Democracy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962). Justin Smith Morrill's rationale for including military science in his 1862 education bill is in the *Congressional Globe*, 37th Congress, 2nd Session, Appendix, pp. 256-259.

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South, had much to do with securing the necessary Congressional approval. The specific intent of the legislation, however, appeared vague to the administrators who had to implement it. This led the legislative branch to appropriate funds in 1868 to station twenty regular army officers on land-grant institution campuses.² Four years, however, were needed to work out procedures in the War Department, and then there were not nearly enough people to fill the demand. Robert Barker, the first president of Oklahoma State University, inaugurated stopgap measures, as did many of his regional counterparts. He commissioned Alexander Magruder, a professor of agriculture, to give forty lectures on tactics and the composition of foreign armies and Captain Lewis Darnell, an ex-Confederate officer, to drill the students two afternoons per week. Despite a lack of military apparel and equipment, both men and women took the field. Barker exempted no one, for he feared that if the letter as well as the spirit of the law was not implemented, other Oklahoma communities would wrest the institution away from Stillwater to obtain the coveted federal subsidy. The initial efforts to instruct often were more humorous than educational.³

Chemist George Molter recorded his impressions of the coed drills. He wrote that the⁴

sight of this cadet corps . . . burned a hole in my memory, and the hole is there yet. You have possibly seen a cartoon of an Irish brigade, but if you have, it certainly does not give much light on the subject for a sight of this cadet corps beggars description. Picture if you can, a lot of girls in long dresses, in new dresses, having on their heads all shapes and sizes of sun-bonnets, and you have an idea, possibly of the general appearance of the uniforms. . . . Now take this battalion . . . of girls, form them into a company, and drill them in an average Oklahoma wind, and if the sight does not leave an impression in your memory, you are certainly puncture proof to all sights.

The males did not appear much more dignified. They evidenced a variety of clothing, too, from a discarded preacher's swallow-tailed coat to the customary homespun of the farm. Broomsticks substituted for rifles. And the giving of a command could place one's body in jeopardy. Lieutenant

² Eddy, *Colleges for Our Land and Time*, pp. 41, 64.

³ Alfred Edwin Jarrell, "The Founding of Oklahoma A. and M. College: A Memoir," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXIV, No. 3 (Autumn 1956), pp. 323-324; "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University), p. 306.

⁴ Quoted from George Bowers, "Early Military Training," *The Oklahoma A. and M. College Magazine*, Vol. I, No. 1 (1930), p. 4.

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Norris Gilbert once barked an improper order that resulted in his company toppling him to the ground and marching over his crumpled form. Nevertheless, a high degree of enthusiasm persisted among the cadets. An overzealous drummer once beat his instrument so hard during a parade that the head fell out of its moorings and rolled in front of the entire corps.⁵

Though behavioral objectives, as such, were not a part of the land-grant college curriculum during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the emphasis on accountability was far greater than today. College presidents personally had to defend their programs before members of the state Legislature, and they had to write detailed department-by-department reports for submission to the federal government. The absence of wars [excluding the Spanish-American fiasco], however, meant that military science had to be defended as well. Generally speaking, three reasons were circulated to justify retention of the martial arts in the curriculum prior to World War I. First, drill, plus work on the experiment station farm, was thought to impart manliness and prevent the students from demeaning manual labor. Second, Otto von Bismarck is alleged to have stated that two-thirds of all German university graduates died prematurely. His comment suggested the need for housing active minds in strong bodies in America. Field training, then, provided exercise until physical education classes made their way into class schedules. Third, many of the young people who attended Oklahoma State University came from families who had not attended an institution of higher education. Consequently, the administration and faculty devised a military demerit system to teach respect. This practice was not necessarily undemocratic, for the cadets may have received more due process under the Universal Code of Military Justice than from the autocratic deans of men and women who ruled without restriction before the breakdown of *in loco parentis*.⁶

Henry Elijah Alvord, the second president of Oklahoma State, as well as the founder of the American Association of Land-Grant Colleges and State Universities, decided that a more dignified cadet image would attract additional students and lift the morale of those young men and women already

⁵ *The Eagle-Gazette* (Stillwater) December 13, 1894.

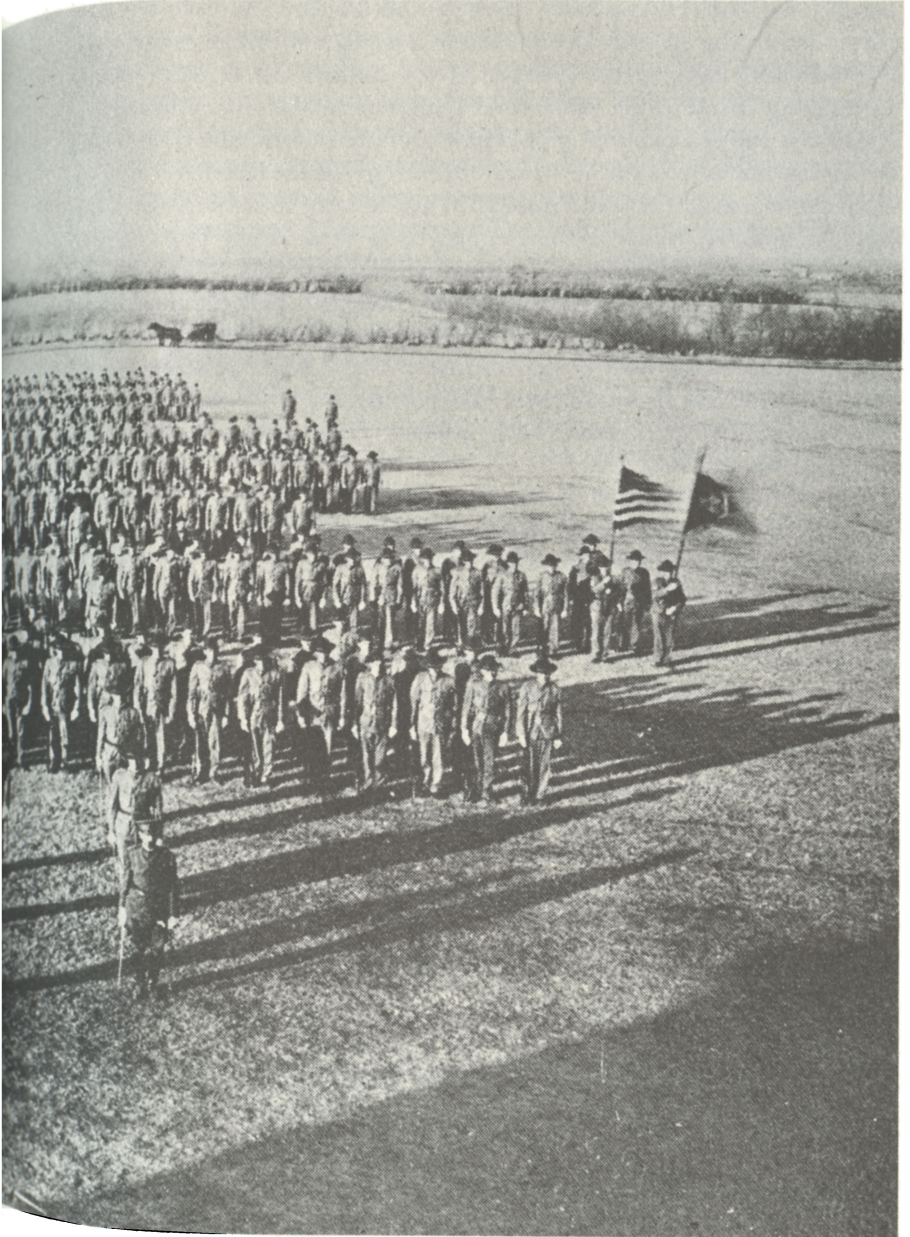
⁶ Kansas State Agricultural College, *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Board of Regents and Faculty* (Topeka: State Printing Company, 1908), p. 82; Eldon Clemence, "A History of the Democratic Party in Oklahoma Territory" (Master of Arts Thesis, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, 1966), pp. 15-16; *The College Paper* (Stillwater), January 28, 1903. Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, *Annual Catalog* (Stillwater: n. p., 1894), p. 93; Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, "Minutes of the First Faculty, March 17, 1892-June 2, 1899," pp. 1-217.

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The Regiment in 1913 at Oklahoma State University getting ready to pass in review.

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enrolled in 1894. He, a soldier, scientist and scholar, had been the first officer detailed by the War Department to a land-grant college campus, the Massachusetts Agricultural College. Alvord codified the demerit system, eliminating many of the more cruel punishments. He also believed the "plowboys and blacksmiths" should have an eastern institution with which to identify just as students in the classical colleges of the Red River Region looked to Harvard, Yale and Princeton. Thus he made mandatory the wearing of a uniform similar to those employed at West Point. The wives of the faculty designed a sailorette costume for the girls. This policy not only instilled pride, but it also had democratic overtones as well. But unfortunately for the administration of Oklahoma State University, Alvord got into a heated debate with certain members of the Board of Regents and resigned at the end of the fall term. His short tenure, however, did leave at least one indelible mark. Henceforth, military training would be viewed in an altogether different light.⁷

In addition to Alvord's personal contribution, the times demanded change. The American Association of Land-Grant Colleges and State Universities scrutinized military programs and offered suggestions to standardize and upgrade curricula. C. W. Dabney, the President of the University of Tennessee, spoke on behalf of a resolution aimed at persuading the War Department to expand the number of army officers detailed to college campuses. Simultaneously, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology discussed the possibility of providing specialized engineering courses for naval cadets.⁸ After the Spanish-American War, Leonard Wood pushed the creation of collegiate and civilian summer training camps throughout the nation, the most famous being Plattsburg, in upstate New York. This experiment encouraged businessmen, educators, professional people, and government officials to prepare themselves in the event that the United States became embroiled in World War I. The publicity surrounding Plattsburg put pressure on Woodrow Wilson to sign the National Defense Act of

⁷ Ronald Butchart and Philip Rulon, "Henry Elijah Alvord, 1844-1904: Soldier, Scientist, and Scholar," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. LII, No. 1 (Spring, 1974), pp. 61-81.

⁸ United States Department of Agriculture, *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Convention of the American Association of Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1890), pp. 68-69; United States Department of Agriculture, *Proceedings of Seventh Annual Convention of the American Association of Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1894), p. 25; United States Department of Agriculture, *Proceedings of Twelfth Annual Convention of the American Association of Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1899), pp. 64-65; Massachusetts Institute of Technology, *Annual Report of the President and Treasurer* (Boston: MIT, 1899), p. 16.

1916 and to issue an Executive Order authorizing the creation of the Student Army Training Corps on August 24, 1918.⁹

The advent of World War I interrupted the football and drinking craze so prevalent in institutions of higher education after the turn of the century, turning many faculty and students into idealistic patriots. In March, 1917, for instance, the male students at the University of Michigan voted 3,369 to 632 in favor of military training on their campus. A significant number volunteered for active duty. The United States Bureau of Education conducted a survey which revealed that enrollment in 113 liberal arts colleges decreased from 60,596 to 48,090 as a result of enlistments.¹⁰ The Oklahoma State campus responded in like fashion. The administration, along with other land-grant executives, helped Secretary of Agriculture D. F. Houston to form and implement the Lever Act of 1917.¹¹ Officials did not protest the Oklahoma Council of Defense's statewide search for alleged unpatriotic books and teachers. Students sold Liberty Bonds. And Ed Gallagher, who later gained fame as the foremost wrestling coach in the nation, captained the Home Guard. Except for the Green Corn Rebellion, and a certain element who thought that the war was a conspiracy designed to kill white males so that Anglo girls would have to marry black men, the war was popular in the Sooner State.¹²

Modern military training in Stillwater may be dated from 1914, the year when L. L. Lewis began serving as Acting President. Initially, though, the students seemed to think that the full scale maneuvers he ordered were more of an opportunity to have a good time than to develop critical military specialties. Mock wars on weekends usually ended with the losers buying the victors free beer at a tavern located near the fringe of the campus. The coeds performed Quartermaster functions, preparing hot meals, repairing

⁹ John G. Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1972), pp. 255-261.

¹⁰ Calvin B. T. Lee, *The Campus Scene, 1900-1970* (New York: David McKay, 1970), pp. 18-19.

¹¹ United States Department of Agriculture, *Proceedings of the AAACES* (Burlington, Vt.: Government Printing Office, 1918), p. 34.

¹² *The Stillwater Gazette* (Stillwater), January 11, 1918, January 26, 1918 and June 28, 1918; *The Orange and Black* (Stillwater), October 13, 1917, October 27, 1918, April 6, 1918 and April 12, 1918; "Minutes of the Oklahoma Board of Agriculture," IV (State Capitol Building, Oklahoma City), pp. 26-28; Melvin Frank Fiegel, "A History of Southwestern State College, 1903-1953" (Doctor of Education Dissertation, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater 1968), pp. 73-94; O. A. Hilton, "The Oklahoma Council of Defense and the First World War," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XX, No. 1 (Spring, 1942), pp. 18-42; "Public Opinion and Civil Liberties in Wartime, 1917-1919," *The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (1947), pp. 201-224.

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uniforms, sewing flags and distributing supplies. In 1916, First Lieutenant Arthur J. Davis arrived from West Point to assume command. He strengthened the military program and put the institution into step with procedures recommended by the War Department. The Board of Regents in October applied for the junior provisions of the Reserve Officers Training Corps. By January of 1917, the college stood ready to train young men for both the combat and technical services of the United States Army.¹³

In April, Davis, who had just been promoted to Captain, assembled all males on the campus. He asked the cadets either to enlist for active duty or to join the Oklahoma National Guard within a week. Approximately one hundred students and faculty took the former course. They, however, were permitted to remain until graduation. Clarence Ousley, former Editor of the Fort Worth *Record-Herald* and now the Extension Director for the Texas A. and M. College, and the Reverend Edward Henry Eckel, Secretary of the Southwest District of the Episcopal Church, spoke at commencement as well as a special ceremony for those entering active duty. The latter were sent to Fort Logan H. Roots in Arkansas. Eighteen received commissions; the others entered the army as non-commissioned officers. Concurrent with their departure, Walter Stimmons informed United States Senator Thomas Gore of Oklahoma that 400 men had volunteered for on-campus training.¹⁴

President James Cantwell notified the Board of Regents that 600 Aggies enlisted in the Armed Forces in 1917 and 1918. But both Oklahoma State University and the War Department were beginning to have second thoughts about conscripting students, because it was believed that the cadets should stay in the classroom until they received their degrees. Therefore, the university decided, as a result of a meeting of land-grant college presidents held at Fort Sheridan in Illinois, to participate in the Students Army Training Corps, a program designed to prepare men for technical rather than combat arms. Students had to possess a high school diploma and be over eighteen years of age in order to qualify. The college president and military commandant jointly were empowered to recommend which individuals should be commissioned when training ended. Male dormitories were commandeered and the Livestock Pavilion remodeled to house those who volunteered. For all practical purposes, the campus became a military installation.¹⁵

¹³ *The Redskin* (Stillwater), 1915, p. 143; *The Stillwater Gazette*, March 1, 1918; *The Orange and Black*, September 8, 1916; "Minutes of the Oklahoma Board of Agriculture," IV, pp. 59-60.

¹⁴ *The Stillwater Gazette*, April 27, 1917, May 4, 1917, May 18, 1917 and August 17, 1917.

¹⁵ "Minutes of the Oklahoma Board of Agriculture," V, pp. 214-15; *The Stillwater Gazette*, September 7, 1918.

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Under Captain Michael McDonald, a retired officer who replaced Davis, the Student Army Training Corps or SATC program began in September, 1918, with 343 enrolled. The candidates were sworn in the next month. But World War I ended before the first class could graduate. Undoubtedly, many of the faculty were not unhappy to see the program terminated, for SATC personnel had not, as a whole, been interested in scholarship. Oklahoma did elect, nevertheless, to continue the Reserve Officer Training Corps or ROTC as reorganized by the National Defense Act of 1920. Here again President Woodrow Wilson had asked the assistance of the Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges in modifying the legislation enacted two years before. The revised measure divided collegiate military training into two segments. The first two years fulfilled the basic provisions of the Morrill Act. Those cadets who evidenced promise were then enlisted "in the advanced course during the last two years of college."¹⁶ Unquestionably, the new program was more strenuous than anything that had been attempted before, yet it would take another world catastrophe for military training to compare favorably with traditional academic instruction.¹⁷

World War I stimulated rather than retarded student and program growth at Stillwater. Since the institution was a developing one, the international conflict forced a more diversified curriculum. President Cantwell, always alert to new opportunities, secured, for example, about \$65,000 worth of surplus aviation equipment. He then hired his aviator son Robert to initiate instruction in gas combustion engines and in flight "training, radio work, aerial photography, and air gunnery and bombing."¹⁸ Cantwell also persuaded the Board of Regents to allocate funds for the purchase of additional machinery under the Caldwell Act, a law which enabled colleges to obtain surplus war materials at fifteen percent of the original production cost. This equipment broadened the curriculum and brought new students to the campus, particularly those interested in engineering. And before the end of the decade, engineering, education, and business had developed to the point where one no longer could refer to Oklahoma State simply as an agricultural college.¹⁹

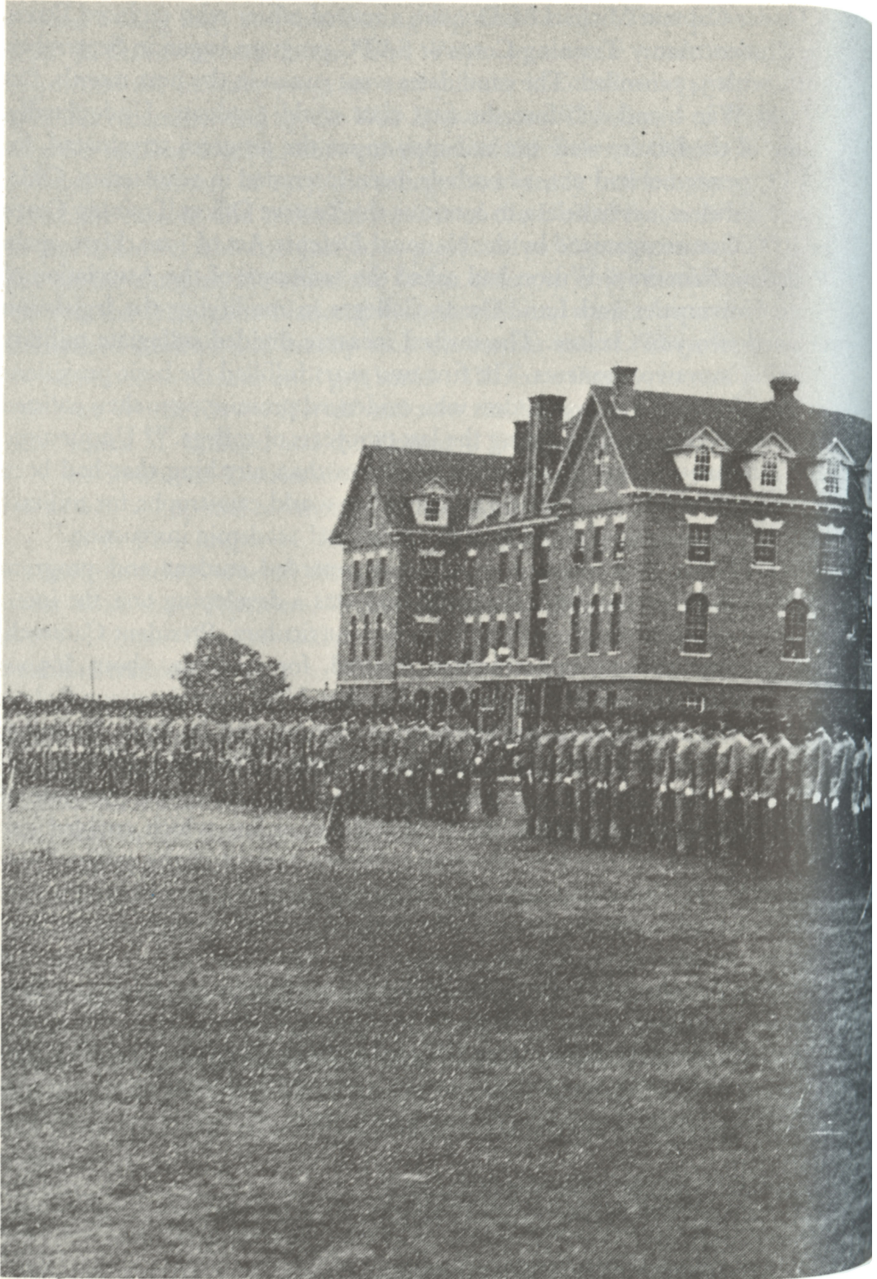
In addition, Oklahoma State University participated in a postwar pro-

¹⁶ Eddy, *Colleges for Our Land and Time*, p. 164.

¹⁷ "Minutes of the Oklahoma Board of Agriculture," VI, pp. 106-107, 145-146, 183-184; *The Stillwater Gazette*, October 4, 1918; *The Orange and Black*, March 11, 1920.

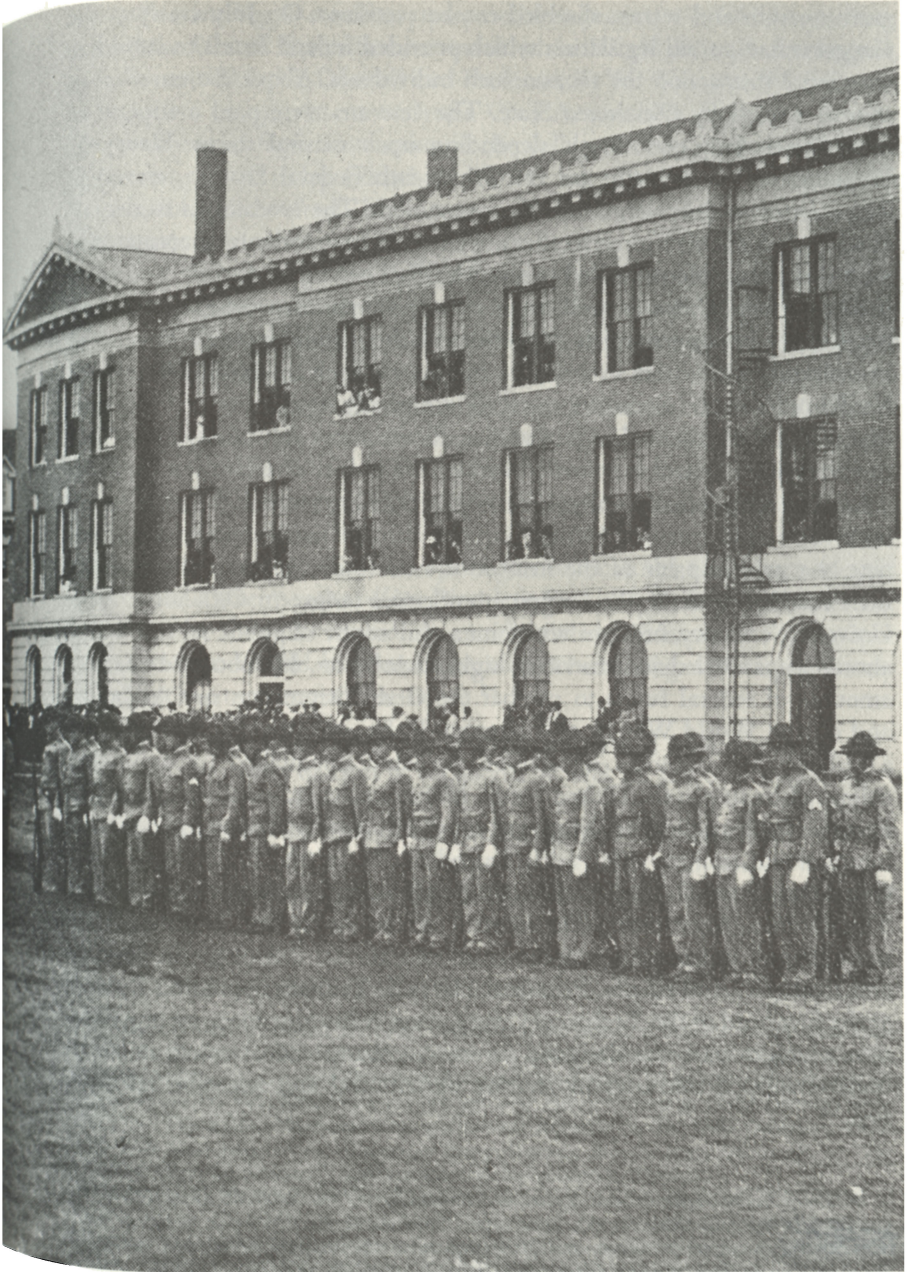
¹⁸ *The Stillwater Gazette*, September 12, 1919.

¹⁹ "Minutes of the Oklahoma Board of Agriculture," V, pp. 42-43; *Ibid.*, VII, pp. 198-199; *Ibid.*, VIII, pp. 156-157; *The Stillwater Gazette*, September 27, 1918; May 7, 1926.



The Regimental Parade at Oklahoma State University mustered for inspection.

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gram to train and retrain disabled combat veterans. On July 11, 1919, the Congress had passed legislation which provided federal funds to subsidize vocational instruction for 100,000 such individuals. About 200 enrolled in courses offered by Oklahoma State. The veterans were paid a stipend of from \$80 to \$147 per month, depending upon marital status. Henry C. Dunlavy, the Coordinator for the Fourteenth Federal District, served as liaison between the college and the government. The "vocational students," as their classmates referred to them, were excellent students in comparison with the young men enrolled in the SATC. They formed study groups to improve their grades as well as to examine their own unique situation. These men became staunch supporters of their *alma mater*.²⁰ When the institution found itself in political hot water, such as in 1921 when the Ku Klux Klan and Socialists engaged in a power struggle within the state that affected educational organizations, the veterans voluntarily went "out to the country school houses and spread the gospel of education."²¹

In 1927, Oklahoma's state university in Stillwater entered a new epoch with the employment of Henry Garland Bennett as chief executive. Bennett, the most capable of the institution's executives to that date and the man destined to have the longest presidential tenure in Oklahoma State University's history, brought with him a philosophy of public service that is almost unparalleled in American higher education. He obtained massive amounts of federal funds to combat the Great Depression in Oklahoma, and during World War II, and afterwards, he converted the campus into a military and veterans installation probably unequalled by any other college of its size in the United States. Moreover, he personally provided an example for his colleagues by giving much of his own time to national and international military affairs. He helped to charter the Food Agriculture Organization which tried to eliminate food shortages in war torn countries. The Civilian Agricultural Department of the Army and Cultural Relations Branch utilized his services as an educational consultant in Bavaria and Ethiopia. And finally, President Harry S. Truman appointed Bennett as the first head of the Technical Cooperation Administration, an organization which in part was designed to prevent the spread of communism in underdeveloped countries by sharing agricultural and scientific information.²²

²⁰ United States Department of Agriculture, *Proceedings of the AAACES* (Burlington, Vt.: Government Printing Office, 1919), pp. 74-79; "Minutes of the Oklahoma Board of Agriculture," VII, p. 267; *The Orange and Black*, September 17, 1919 and November, 1921; *The Stillwater Gazette*, December 12, 1919.

²¹ *The Stillwater Gazette*, February 25, 1921.

²² *The O'Collegian* (Stillwater), July 6, 1949, September 30, 1949 and March 30, 1950;

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Dr. Bennett began a military preparedness program at Oklahoma State before the United States became involved in World War II. In August, 1939, he sent Philip S. Donnell and Professor V. W. Young to Washington to negotiate an agreement with the Civil Aeronautics Authority for the improvement of flight instruction at the college. When implemented, this program operated independently of ROTC, but graduates were eligible for commissions in the army. Males, especially those majoring in engineering, were accepted on a competitive basis provided they had finished their freshman year and could pass a rigorous physical examination. Instruction for the first 40 cadets commenced in late September. Candidates received free board and room and \$40 per month, while the university got an annual \$300 stipend per student. Later, the community, over a period of years, secured over \$2,500,000 to upgrade Searcy Field in Stillwater. The flying school and the existence of a modern airport stimulated civilian interest in the airplane, too. After World War II, Henry Bennett assisted William Enyart in obtaining a charter for the National Flying Farmers from the National Aeronautics Association.²³

In 1940, the maelstrom in Europe began to touch the Oklahoma Morrill institution. Three months before President Franklin D. Roosevelt drew the first name for the peace time draft, an editorialist for the student newspaper predicted that he and his classmates would be among those immediately called for military service. He wrote:²⁴

WAR . . . every able bodied man at Oklahoma A. and M. is threatened by it. WAR . . . every student at Oklahoma A. and M. has been taught the uselessness and ruinous results of it. WAR . . . every man has heard his mother read from the *BIBLE* those words of God's commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." WAR . . . the teeth of it are hungry for human bodies. Your body and mine brother Aggie.

The Stillwater Gazette, March 31, 1950; "Minutes of the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma A. and M. Colleges" (Oklahoma State University, Office of the Board of Regents, Student Union), June 22, 1949, p. 40; "President Returns from Abroad," *The Oklahoma A. and M. College Magazine*, Vol. XXI, No. 3 (1949), pp. 4-5; Henry Bennett to Philip Donnell, Summer, 1949, File Folder "Memorandums to President Bennett," in The OSU Collection, Oklahoma State University; Elmer Thomas to Harry Truman, June 6, 1950, OF 192-E in "The Papers of Harry S. Truman," Truman Library, Independence, Missouri.

²³ "Flying Course Progress," *The Oklahoma A. and M. College Magazine*, Vol. XI, No. 6 (1940), pp. 4, 16; "Lifetime Land-Grant Missionary," *The Oklahoma A. and M. College Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, No. 6 (1952), pp. 8-13; "Minutes of the Oklahoma Board of Agriculture," XLII, p. 154; *The Stillwater Gazette*, August 18, 1939, September 29, 1939 and June 7, 1940, January 8, 1943.

²⁴ *The O'Collegian*, May 9, 1940.

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The Rifle Team in 1913 at Oklahoma State University.

President Bennett, whose three sons would all see military action in the future, understood the students' fears. Yet he attempted to persuade them that democracy was worth a supreme sacrifice. Like John Dewey in World War I, Bennett believed that force could be justified in wartime because he thought it would bring a new world order. In an address entitled "The American Way Shall Survive," he stated that as dark²⁵

and ominous as the clouds of disaster are that are spreading over the world today, I bespeak on your part, young ladies and gentlemen, an unshaken faith in the future. In the very unsettled condition of affairs lies the possibility of their reorganization in the dynamic nature of society and of men lies the necessity for the continual struggle to perpetuate a chosen way of

²⁵ Quoted from *The Stillwater Gazette*, September 27, 1940.

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life as well as the desirability of timely modifications in it; in the long view of history lies evidence of the trend of human progress toward the enhancement of the lives of all; and in the essential unity of our nation for an invincible military and naval preparedness we find grounds for our faith that the American way of life shall not pass away. Let us, pray for a resurgence of that ardent idealism of an earlier day which led men to do great things because they believed in themselves and in their destiny.

Meanwhile, the Oklahoma American Legion and Civil Liberties League started another investigation to ferret out “unpatriotic” educators as they had in World War I. They looked, however, for Communists, not Fascists. A Stillwater man said: “There are not two sides to the question of communism against democracy. There is but one side, and that is the United States, and the preservation of this form of government.”²⁶

On December 29, 1941, President Roosevelt sent telegrams to the nation’s colleges and universities, asking them to support the war effort. Dr. Bennett conveyed this information to the faculty, staff, and students. He reminded them that a university:²⁷

is not an isolated institution but an integral part of the social order—and that its greatest contribution to society—is not in the creation of change as a direct objective but rather in its peculiar capacity to understand change and interpret it.

One hundred thirteen members of the faculty and staff enlisted in the armed services in the next five years. Almost all of those who remained had some connection with the nation’s defense. For instance, H. Clay Potts supervised the collection of scrap metal; H. G. Theusen, the co-inventor of the parking meter, generated time study reports to increase factory production; and others compiled statistics for government agencies or conducted research, such as striving to find a rubber synthetic. Bennett provided overall leadership. He especially took an active interest in increasing agricultural production in the state and nation.²⁸

In addition to ROTC, Oklahoma State conducted twelve training programs for the armed forces during World War II. Most, but not all, were related to the field of engineering. Some 40,000 men and women received certificates for participation in other ventures such as:²⁹

²⁶ The *O’Collegian*, February 4, 1941.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, June 12, 1942.

²⁸ *The Stillwater Gazette*, January 16, 1942, January 23, 1942, May 22, 1942, July 24, 1942, September 18, 1942, October 2, 1942, October 16, 1942, November 6, 1942, November 27, 1942 and October 19, 1945.

²⁹ Henry Bennett, “Contribution of the Oklahoma A. and M. College to the State and Nation in World War II,” in *The OSU Collection*, pp. 1–6.

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VEND	Vocational Education for National Defense	3,655
ESMWT	Engineering, Science, Management War Training	1,268
STARS	Specialized Training and Reassignment School	5,751
CAAWTS	Civil Aeronautics Administration, Civilian Pilot Training	300
CAACPT	Army Air Force College Training Program	3,980
ASTP	Army Specialized Training Program	1,450
AAFTD	Army Air Forces Training Detachment	2,585
ASTRP	Army Specialized Reserve Program	454
WAVES	Naval Training School	10,783
EERM	Naval Radar Training School	6,702
SOL	School of Oriental Languages	402
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		37,503

Furthermore, the military took over the School of Firemanship and subsidized a laboratory for testing diseased plants. And A. E. Darlow left Stillwater near the end of the war to help create military study centers in Europe designed to assist soldiers in making the transition back to civilian life. The first of these was located in Shrivenham, England. It offered minicourses in agriculture, commerce, education, engineering, the fine arts, journalism, science, and the liberal arts.³⁰

George Whiteside, an Annapolis graduate, completed arrangements to bring the first naval operation to the campus. He and Commander H. W. Olds implemented plans devised by Oklahoma State University and the Stillwater Chamber of Commerce with military and governmental officials in Washington. The air force component of the army brought instructors from Fort Logan, Colorado, to offer flight training. The initial experiment proved so successful that Major General Jacob E. Fickel sent additional soldiers for pre-flight instruction. Several dormitories had to be emptied and barracks from Wilburton and Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, were moved in to accommodate the troops. So many military personnel were housed at the college that some people in Payne County felt that the institution might be closed to civilians. In 1944, however, Colonel Howard M. Yost began to

³⁰ Howard Floyd, "Campus Fire Station in War Time," *The Oklahoma A. and M. College Magazine*, Vol. XVI, No. 7 (1944), p. 8; "Minutes of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education," (State Capitol Building, Oklahoma City), June 15, 1945, pp. 312-314; *The O'Collegian*, June 11, 1943; *The Stillwater Gazette*, June 29, 1945, July 20, 1945 and September 21, 1945.

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phase out the army programs, moving many soldiers to Camp Howze in Texas. Meanwhile, the options for the ROTC increased. Infantry training was initiated shortly after the passage of the National Defense Act of 1920 and in 1937 permission was received to offer commissions to engineers. Signal Corp and aviation programs were added during the war. The two new options were open to male students pursuing degrees in transportation, aircraft maintenance, engineering, statistical control, meteorology, supply communications, or armaments. The government provided free uniforms and textbooks and paid students twenty dollars per month.³¹

Without a doubt, the most popular and most publicized military program was the Women Appointed for Volunteer Emergency Service, usually called the WAVES. Oklahoma State became one of the first educational institutions to offer training in this area, and it eventually had the largest enrollment in the nation. The WAVES initially were housed in three dormitories, and later seven sorority and fraternity houses had to be leased to the government as well, for as many as 1,200 young ladies were stationed on the campus at the same time. Lieutenant Helen Sweat commanded. Most of the girls were schooled in clerical duties so that able bodied males could be freed for combat. The group was a diverse one and included an olympic swimming champion, a John Powers model, a golf professional, a Latin American botanist, a New York nightclub hostess, a stage ingenue, a torch singer, and a concert pianist. The ladies represented every state in the nation.

Local, state and national newspapers published human interest articles on the "sailorettes." The editor of the *Daily O'Collegian* even invited the girls to think of themselves as "alumni" of the institution. The first WAVE arrived on the campus in August, 1941; the last left in January, 1945. Male soldiers expended many jokes about them but the women put in long hours. A typical day started at six in the morning and ended with lights out at ten in the evening. Monday through Friday eight hours were spent in the classroom. Both on and off the campus the girls never lacked for attention. The Bluejackets of the radar school usually provided a welcoming dance. And school children in and around Stillwater got the names of the ladies and mailed them greeting cards on holidays, such as Valentine's Day. The WAVES, in their white blouses and blue skirts, added much femininity and charm to a campus that heretofore had been largely male.³²

³¹ "Minutes of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education," June 18, 1942, p. 74; "Minutes of the Oklahoma Board of Agriculture," XLVII, p. 182; Howard M. Yost, "Military Training Expands at Oklahoma A. and M.," *The Oklahoma A. and M. College Magazine*, Vol. XV, No. 3 (1943), pp. 8-10, 14.

³² *The Stillwater Gazette*, November 6, 1942 and March 17, 1944; *The O'Collegian*, November 20, 1942, November 28, 1942, January 6, 1943, January 13, 1943 and February 10, 1944; "Minutes of the Oklahoma Board of Agriculture," XLVII, p. 182.

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On April 12, 1945, the day Franklin Roosevelt died, United States Senator Elmer Thomas announced that the facilities vacated by the army would be utilized by the navy to develop a school of oriental languages. Captain John H. Morrill, a war hero who published his experiences in a best selling novel entitled *South to Corregidor*, assumed charge of this operation. James A. McAlpine agreed to serve as the civilian academic director. Dr. Bennett selected him for this task because he had been reared in central Japan by missionary parents. Washington officials charged Oklahoma State with offering instruction in the Japanese language, while the University of Colorado, in a companion venture, would teach Russian and Chinese. The navy expected that about 150 instructors would conduct classes for some 750 to 1,000 college graduates who ranked in the upper ten percent of their classes.

The oriental language program was the first to come to Stillwater which had the possibility of leaving some long term academic benefits. The other projects, rumors suggest, had sometimes been carelessly handled. Personnel records often were lost, attendance in class proved irregular and high instructional standards did not always prevail because the most highly qualified instructors were away from the campus or engrossed in research. On the other hand, the experience of simply spending time on a college campus inspired some, such as Robert B. Kamm, later President of Oklahoma State University, to consider formal undergraduate or graduate work once military obligations had been completed. The school of oriental languages was to be one of real rigor. The sponsors envisioned fourteen months of intensive work directed by second and third generation Japanese-Americans skilled in language instruction. Unfortunately for OSU, the project ended in summer of 1946. The surrender of Japan seemed to negate the value of continuing the endeavor.³³

Also in 1946, President Bennett released statistics to the Board of Regents which summarized the college's role in World War II. He calculated that 6,067 former students had fought from Pearl Harbor to Berlin, from Iceland to Hiroshima. Of these, 4,464 had served in the army, 1,162 in the navy, 278 in the marines, 48 in the coast guard, 18 in Red Cross service, 66 in the women's auxiliary corps and 19 had been nurses or dieticians. Four thousand, five hundred ten held commissions while 2,411 had earned decorations. These ranged from the Purple Heart to the Distinguished Flying Cross. Patrick Hurley, George P. Hays and Joseph Clark won international

³³ Interview, Robert Kamm, June 10, 1972; "Minutes of the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma A. and M. Colleges," August 3, 1945, n.p.; *The O'Collegian*, April 11, 1945 and June 21, 1946; *The Stillwater Gazette*, May 4, 1945, May 18, 1945, June 8, 1945 and June 22, 1945.

recognition for top eschelon leadership. The military programs and the large number of regular students who served in the armed forces led Bennett on more than one occasion to claim that American education had been the key resource in ending the second great global conflict of the century.³⁴

World War II spawned new academic programs and increased veteran enrollments, too. The Oklahoma Institute of Technology is a prime example of curricular and organizational change. This project was initiated after fighting in Europe had ceased. In 1946, the United States Army, as a result of an international reparations agreement, brought the Klockner-Humboldt-Deutz Laboratory from Oberrusel, Germany to Alexandria, Virginia for storage in the Camden Quartermaster Depot. The government valued the equipment at \$2,500,000. The Department of Commerce selected a retired physicist from the National Bureau of Standards named H. C. Dickinson to head a committee to find a permanent location for the laboratory. Approximately 110 universities and foundations submitted grant proposals. Henry Bennett and Philip Donnell composed a strong rationale for placing the equipment in Stillwater. The writers stated that the central geographic location would protect the hardware from possible enemy attack and that the laboratory would help convert the Sooner State from an agricultural to an industrial base. Moreover, it would provide a testing site for engineering just as the experiment stations created by the Hatch Act of 1887 had for the school of agriculture. Dickinson bought the idea and rendered a decision in favor of this proposal.

President Bennett, before the equipment arrived, asked the Board of Regents to change the name of the division of engineering to the Oklahoma Institute of Technology. He also suggested that the Klockner-Humboldt-Deutz Laboratory be retitled the Oklahoma Power and Propulsion Laboratory and that it be made a sub-division of the institute. The trustees approved both of these requests and voted the expenditure of \$10,000 to build temporary quarters for the 110,000 pounds of steel until it could be made operational. OSU then employed the services of W. S. Burns of England to oversee the operation. He, in turn, scoured America to find academicians who had the background to assemble the equipment. Burns envisioned a staff of twelve specialists and fifty technicians. Donnell and Burns had become friends while the former man was on active duty in England. Together, these two

³⁴ Bennett, "Contribution of the Oklahoma A. and M. College to the State and Nation in World War II," pp. 1-6; "Minutes of the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma A. and M. Colleges," July 6, 1946, n.p.; *The Stillwater Gazette*, August 18, 1944 and September 14, 1945.

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conspired to make Oklahoma the deisel fuel research center in the United States.³⁵

When the seventy-two crates containing the Klockner-Humboldt-Deutz Laboratory were unpacked in Stillwater, it became apparent that a good bargain had not been struck. The Russians, unknown to the American Army, had removed many of the precision pieces and taken them back to the Soviet Union. What remained had only a value of \$200,000. Dean Donnell convinced Bennett to continue with the project, for he felt that Oklahoma had to industrialize to stop population losses. The Board of Regents searched for the funds needed to manufacture the missing parts but failed because state appropriations for higher education in the late 1940s fell lower than at any time since the middle of the Great Depression. The college signed contracts with the navy for defense research, hoping to at least get the Power and Propulsion Laboratory underway. The problems, however, could not be surmounted and PPL was closed in 1955, causing the faculty, staff, and students identified with the project many personal hardships. On the other hand, Dean M. R. Lohman softened the blow by obtaining funds from the Atomic Energy Commission to bring the first nuclear reactor in the Southwest to Stillwater. Oklahoma State University purchased the hardware from the Aerojet-General Corporation the same year the Power and Propulsion Laboratory shut down. Professor John B. West offered the beginning courses in this field: "Introduction to Nuclear Engineering" and "Introduction to Nuclear Technology."³⁶

While the college had only limited success in launching the Oklahoma Institute of Technology, the institution did achieve national recognition for the educational opportunities provided disabled veterans and those who wished to study under the benefits granted under the auspices of the GI Bill of Rights passed in 1944. Dr. Bennett told the faculty shortly after Italy surrendered to the Allies that it was time to begin thinking about postwar educational programs. In September, 1943, he reported that the university had some 7,000 students enrolled and that 14,000 more should be anticipated over the next decade. The president appointed a committee to make recommendations in regard to new offerings. Here Donnell's military background

³⁵ Richard Caldwell, "German Diesel Lab Here!" *The Oklahoma A. and M. College Magazine*, Vol. XIX, No. 8 (1948), pp. 16-17; "Engine Research at A. and M.," *The Oklahoma A. and M. College Magazine*, Vol. XXI, No. 1 (1949), pp. 34-35; "Minutes of the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma A. and M. Colleges," January 24, 1949, n.p.; *Ibid.*, March 13, 1948, p. 23.

³⁶ Philip Donnell to Henry Bennett, February 4, 1949, File Folder "Memorandums to President Bennett," in The OSU Collection; "Scientific Tools for Nuclear Technology," *The Oklahoma A. and M. College Magazine*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 7 (1957), p. 5.

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and his long years of experience as an engineer worked to the advantage of Oklahoma State. He provided much of the leadership necessary to build the largest on-campus veterans program in the United States.³⁷

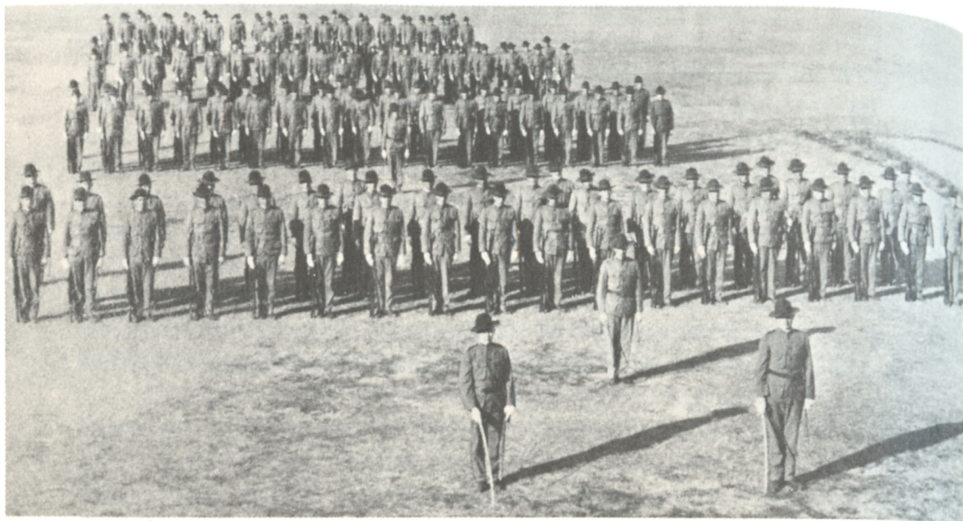
On December 1, 1944, Dr. Bennett charged Vance Posey with opening an office to assist students who wanted to secure educational payments under Public Laws 16 and 346. Posey did not have to wait for clients, finding that the institution already had some 500 veterans attending classes, many of whom were married. Housing reached a critical stage in a short period of time. Donnell moved veterans with dependents into the quarters being vacated by departing military personnel. But there never seemed to be enough space. Subsequently, Dr. Bennett made application to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to secure money to float bonds for married student housing, and by the summer of 1947 the college had a veteran's center valued at more than \$4,000,000. Beyond these facilities, the institution purchased 178 trailers, 410 apartments, and 693 hutments. Most of this equipment had been obtained from military bases in Kansas, Texas, Louisiana and Oklahoma. Still, however, there were 700 requests that could not be filled.³⁸

The complex became known as Veterans Village. Ethel Prosser and Val Connell, the managers, reported a population of 5,000 in 1949. Leonard West and his wife were the initial occupants. Mildred Lucille Bronker, born on February 3, 1946, had the distinction of being the first baby to be born. The Village contained its own laundry facilities, post office, grocery store, fire station, recreation center, nursery and maintenance shop. The main streets were named after the war theaters in which the engineers who built them had served. The roads in the west section were named after islands in the Pacific; the ones in the east section had French names. The smaller streets were christened in memory of towns and counties located throughout the state of Oklahoma. The presence of so many veterans necessitated a drastic change in the regulations that governed student conduct. Bennett, there-

³⁷ Philip Donnell to Henry Bennett, July 1, 1947 in File Folder "Veterans," in The OSU Collection; "Minutes of the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma A. and M. Colleges," December 8, 1945; pp. 19-20; *Ibid.*, October 6, 1945; n.p.; *The Stillwater Gazette*, September 22, 1944, January 5, 1946, February 15, 1946, March 15, 1946, September 6, 1945, November 23, 1945, April 27, 1945, January 4, 1946, and November 1, 1946.

³⁸ "Minutes of the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma A. and M. Colleges," March 9, 1946, p. 23; *Ibid.*, June 8, 1948, p. 27; *Ibid.*, June 22, 1949, p. 39; *Ibid.*, February 8, 1947, p. 24; *Ibid.*, May 3, 1951, p. 35; *Ibid.*, July 5, 1951, p. 67; "Minutes of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education," October 28, 1946, pp. 416-417; *Ibid.*, January 27, 1947, pp. 438-439; *Ibid.*, June 27, 1949, p. 629; *Daily Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City), September 15, 1950; *The Stillwater News Press* (Stillwater) March 18, 1955 and January 23, 1949; *The O'Collegian*, May 7, 1946 and January 25, 1949; *The Stillwater Gazette*, June 4, 1948 and March 2, 1951.

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The First Battalion standing in formation at Oklahoma State University in 1913.

fore, permitted them to form their own government. The inhabitants met on the evening of March 26, 1946, in the Prairie Playhouse and elected John Kelly of El Reno as Mayor and Clifford Byrd of Sallisaw as vice-mayor. These individuals supervised the affairs of a city that was larger than many of the rural settlements that dot the green Oklahoma countryside.³⁹

Henry Bennett took great pride in the development of the Veteran's Village, and he spoke about the project in the community and over the radio as often as he could. Federal and state officials and candidates running for political office recognized the public's human interest in the complex, and they spoke frequently in the Mooney Recreation Hall—a building named after an immigrant janitor who had helped young wives with plumbing, lighting and heating problems. The Village incorporated as a municipality and residents procured the right to vote in state and federal elections. Professors Foster Dowell, Guy Donnell and John H. Hall believed the project so unique that they created a course entitled "Problems of Municipal Administration" in order that political science majors on the campus could see social ideas tested in a real social situation. The veterans also pub-

³⁹ "Veterans Village Comes of Age," *The Oklahoma A. and M. College Magazine*, Vol. XX, No. 1 (1948), pp. 4-5; *The Stillwater Gazette*, March 8, 1946 and March 22, 1946; *The O'Collegian*, January 9, 1946 and March 29, 1946.

lished their own newspaper, *The Village Times*. It helped newcomers to get acquainted, highlighted the achievements of the veterans in the classroom and on the athletic field, carried low cost food recipes, and reported the names of the hundreds of new babies that were born. Different people probably liked different features of *The Village Times*. However, there must not have been many who did not enjoy reading about the practical jokes that Anita Roberts, the dispensary nurse, and Clyde West, a maintenance man, played on each other. Their antics provided chuckles for young married who needed to retain their sense of humor in order to tolerate the academic, financial and social stresses of the unusual environment in which they lived.⁴⁰

In December, 1943, the same month that Vance Posey opened an office at Oklahoma State University to assist students receiving financial aid under the GI Bill of Rights, the Board of Regents discussed with Dr. Bennett the possibility of doing something for disabled veterans. The trustees had sponsored such a program after World War I, and now they heard that the Glennan General Hospital in Okmulgee, Oklahoma would be closed and the facility sold. This prospect raised the question as to whether or not the site might be acquired. Okmulgee, the Old Creek Nation's capital, was located south of Tulsa and fifty miles west of Muskogee. It lay in the center of the State's industrial belt. One year later, Roy R. Tomkins explored the provisions of "Public Law 16." This bill stated that handicapped veterans could be paid as much as \$95 per month for on-the-job or classroom vocational training. Bennett and Donnell went to the nation's capital to seek permission to convert the Hospital into a facility for technical training. In June, 1948, the Regents submitted a bid of \$1,300,000 to be discounted at one hundred percent for future services rendered. The following January the board received title to the buildings and grounds, making Glennan Oklahoma State's second campus.

Okmulgee Tech opened under the supervision of L. K. Covelle, a man personally selected by Dr. Bennett. The institution emphasized terminal technical training, but it also possessed a separate division that functioned as a multipurpose community college. Enrollment quickly jumped from 500 to 1,500. One of the most unusual characteristics of this organization is that it operated without state funds. Student tuition of \$250, which in almost every case was paid by the Federal government, supported the various divisions, including agriculture, food trades, industrial trades and related subjects. The only major exception is that funds were appropriated to purchase printing equipment and to guarantee self-liquidating bonds for

⁴⁰ Compiled from *The Village Times* (Stillwater) September 16, 1946–July 22, 1949.

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the construction of dormitories. Less than ten percent of those enrolled had any previous college training and only fifty percent had graduated from high school. Most offerings could be completed in three sixteen-week terms. One survey revealed that sixty percent of the students who attended from 1948 to 1951 were veterans, of which two percent had a physical impairment. In 1955, legislators from the Okmulgee region tried to separate the satellite from the main campus. The effort failed, but it did result in creating a more healthy financial base for the technical school.⁴¹

On January 18, 1952, the Board of Regents elected Oliver Siralvo Willham as President.⁴² He continued to implement the on-campus military programs in a positive manner. But coming events, such as the questioning of the Korean Conflict and the eventual unpopularity of the Viet Nam War, the McCarthy purge and the Civil Rights crisis, projected another new era aborning. The martial arts, though they had helped the college to institutionalize a mission, trained leadership for the armed forces, spurred defense research and assisted veterans to make the transition back to civilian life, increasingly became subject to question. Dr. Willham, a nationally-renowned agriculturalist, avoided immediate polarization at Oklahoma State University by reminding his constituents that an educational institution can not wholly sever itself from its roots. In his Inaugural Address he said: "We are privileged to reap where others have sown. . . ." At the same time, he employed the university's resources to expand the land-grant college movement overseas, particularly attempting to lessen international tensions by raising agricultural production in underdeveloped countries. By keeping one foot implanted in the past and one raised boldly to step into the future, he preserved a stable atmosphere in Stillwater until a more modern image could be molded for the campus cadet. And today, as yesterday, whether required or voluntary participation, the American college and university remains the civilian backbone for the Nation's defense.⁴³

⁴¹ "Minutes of the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma A. and M. Colleges," March 9, 1946, p. 23; *Ibid.*, June 8, 1948, p. 27; *Ibid.*, June 22, 1949, p. 39; *Ibid.*, May 3, 1951, p. 35; *Ibid.*, July 5, 1951, p. 67; "Minutes of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education," October 28, 1946, pp. 416-417; *Ibid.*, January 27, 1947, pp. 438-439; *Ibid.*, June 27, 1949, p. 629; *The Oklahoman*, September 15, 1950.

⁴² "Minutes of the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma A. and M. Colleges, January 17, 1952, p. 23.

⁴³ "ROTC in Historic Thatcher Hall," *Outreach*, Vol. XV, No. 8 (November, 1974), p. 10; Theodore Wyckoff, "Required ROTC: A New Look at an Old Institution," *The Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 3 (March, 1965), pp. 147-152.