

Physical Fitness

The Role Of Springfield College In The War Effort

EVERY college today must discover the best way to serve the needs of the nation. Springfield College feels fortunate that through the years it has been engaged in the preparation of young men for certain fields of professional leadership which are crucially important today.

From the Army, the Navy, the Air Corps, Selective Service, industry, and in every community, there is the continuous restatement of the fact that America's young men are lacking in *physical fitness*. The director of Selective Service says,

"About fifty per cent of the approximately 2,000,000 registrants who have been examined for induction into the Army of the United States under the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 have been disqualified because of physical, mental, or educational reasons. Of the approximately 1,000,000 rejected, 900,000, or about 90 per cent, were found to be physically or mentally unfit."

The most common causes were organic deficiencies. However, the Selective Service examinations did not take into consideration the lack of strength, all-around physical sluggishness, and lack of flexibility, which would not show up in ordinary medical examinations.

For years Springfield has been one of the major training centers in the United States for directors of health and physical education in public schools, recreation centers, and social agencies. Springfield College is now at the center of this problem. Students who enter Springfield College in order to major in health and physical education will make a direct contribution to their national defense through the increased efficiency of the boys and girls who come under their teaching and direction.

Springfield alumni in the military services are gradually being assigned to specialized functions in health and physical education. In some branches, the military officers have come to the College directly to seek its graduates for conditioning programs in the services. Not only in the camps but also in the defense industries there is a tremendous need today for adequately trained and socially oriented health and physical education directors.

Nor is this pressing need only a matter of the next year or two. If this need were only a passing one, there would be no urgency in recruiting young men to pursue a course in health and physical education. The American Youth Commission in its recent volume, "Youth and the Future," has called to our attention the fact that health and physical fitness were two of the prime needs of youth and that after the emergency is over we must commit ourselves to the plan of getting every boy and girl developed to his maximum fitness. We are wasting millions of dollars in resources and, of course, millions of hours of personal happiness by letting our people remain at low levels of physical effectiveness.

It seems apparent, then, that now and later, in the war and in the peace, the need of health and physical educators in programs for physical fitness and its correlative mental fitness must be given first place.

Students entering into preparation for careers in health and physical education thus serve their country in three distinct ways: improving their own personal fitness, becoming equipped to assume physical and recreational leadership in military and community services, and preparing for crucial reconstruction services in the postwar period.

More than quickly learned tricks of the trade are needed—even though under emergency some shortcuts may be considered imperative. Springfield's emphasis upon a sensible balance between formal gymnastics and informal game activities, its stress upon a sound biological basis for theory and practice in health and physical education, its insistence that the cultural and the professional should be integrated into a solid curriculum—all these viewpoints are still valid and will be retained.

Should I Go To College In Times Like These?

THIS is a personal question—one fraught with many moral implications. President Conant of Harvard has this to say:

"In this as in preceding wars, it seems that able-bodied young men as yet untrained as specialists, must largely determine their own futures. The decision is a difficult and trying one for young men to make. But each individual must make it for himself, for he will have to live with himself and face the consequences of the decision for the remainder of his days. The question of whether or not he can be of greater service by volunteering for active duty, or by taking another path, can only be settled by each person for himself—settled on the basis of the best evidence he can command and in the light of his own convictions."

Essentially your choices are as follows:

1. Enlisting in some branch of the Army, Navy, Air Corps, Marines, or Coast Guard now or in the near future.
2. Seeking employment in some essential defense industry.
3. Entering the college of your choice in the light of your long range educational and vocational goals, ready to answer the call of Selective Service when needed or to enlist in a preferred branch when educationally and technically prepared.

All three of these alternatives are real and each should be weighed for its merits. Those who are held responsible for the collegiate education of our most competent young Americans for positions of leadership and responsibility feel that the conflict between the first and third alternatives is significant.

This is **total war**. Men must be trained—and trained quickly and in great numbers to fly the planes, man the tanks and sail the ships. For each of the various branches of the service there is need for thousands of men with all sorts of abilities and personalities.

But this is **total war**. It is war which will be won not only on the battlefields but also in the factories and on the farms. Furthermore, in **total war** the defense effort necessarily includes the work of the colleges and universities. In a long war and in a terrifically complicated period of post-war readjustment, the need for an educated leadership becomes very acute. The colleges make their appeal to competent and alert young men to seriously consider entering college as soon as they are ready and continuing as far as they can before their nation calls them for military service. If possible, they should complete their undergraduate course of study.

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