

Not Just A Song To Officer

By MARGIE ROBINSON

"Deep in the Heart of Texas" is more than a song to Captain F. G. Macomber. To him it represents the location of Camp Wolters, one of the largest infantry replacement-training centers in the U. S., where he is classification officer.

In the middle of his fourth year on the University faculty, Captain Macomber was called on January 13, 1941, by the stentorian voice of Uncle Sam. Then a reserve officer (first lieutenant) in the army, the former professor went to Washington, D. C., to enroll in a special adjutant general school for classification officers. After this he was exported to Camp Wolters where he was promoted to the rank of captain.

Selectees Chances

Last term the captain, in the northwest on official business, took advantage of a couple of days' leave to visit friends at the University, including President Donald M. Erb and the education faculty. Brimming over with facts on camp life and inside dope on chances selectees have to "make the grade," Captain Macomber reported that a college education offers great possi-



HORACE ROBINSON . . .

. . . directs huge Junior Weekend musical.

ties for leadership and advancement in the army.

"I'd say that a college education is a very decided advantage in the army." He leaned back comfortably in a swivel chair. "In fact, right now the college student who has definite leadership ability stands a very good chance of being selected for officer training," he stated confidentially.

The captain added that most of the boys in his office working on classification are college graduates. At Camp Wolters the captain's job is to find out the qualifications of men who come in "raw" from induction centers and to determine what type of specialist training they are to take. Of course, some previous experience does help the draftee when he specializes.

Training Pays

"Selection is determined by the requirements of the training the men are to receive," Captain Macomber explained. "For instance, to be placed as motor mechanic you have to be already trained, because in 13 weeks a man can't learn enough to become skilled," he said. To become a radio operator one need not have had previous experience, however. For this post men must have had at least a tenth-grade education, must have fairly high native ability, and must rank in the upper third in intelligence tests.

Captain Macomber named 11 types of specialist training: auto mechanics, truck drivers, buglers, cooks, armorers (general mechanics and repairmen), clerks, pioneers ("He is a sort of a rough

engineer; does demolition work and that type of thing"), radio operators, wire communication, intelligence platoon training, and message center. The responsibility of those at the message center is to see that communications are delivered to their proper places. There are three types of battalion training for actual combat: machine gunners, anti-tank gunners, and riflemen.

Not Enough Cooks

"Not nearly enough cooks have had training—we have to train them," the former University faculty member said, as the sun shining through the window made a bright pattern on his olive-colored coat.

Evidently those who become cooks really want that post and it isn't at all a soft job. The captain reported that many unskilled persons want to get training as cooks because it will serve them later in civil life.

The schedule at Camp Wolters allows six and three-quarters hours or more of sleep a night. Men get up at 5:45 a.m. in the winter and eat breakfast at 6:30.

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Sports in Arenas

Recreation facilities at the camp include a big sports arena ("The floor space is as large as that of the Igloo") and a recreation hall for each battalion. The sports program gives men opportunities to box, and to play soft baseball and basketball although they are not in camp long enough to develop much competition.

Soldiers also have a service club, "like the student union Oregon doesn't have," and in this there are reading rooms, a library, a cafeteria, and a large dance hall. Two expert camp orchestras play for dances on Friday nights. Some members of the orchestra personnels are outstanding, having played in big name bands. Captain Macomber reported a vocalist formerly with Ted Weems was in camp at one time. When the orchestra came to Texas it made a special trip to the camp to see the draftee, who proudly had his picture taken with the musical group in his new uniform.

Equality the Rule

Other notable personalities at Camp Wolters were formerly All-American football players, major league baseball players, and golden gloves champions in boxing. While papers often give these men much publicity, the captain said, they are treated equal in the sight of officers and men at the camp.

"For after all," the captain added, his leather belt creaking at each move, "the thing that makes a soldier is what he can do with rifle and bayonet. If a man is a good leader and is well qualified, it doesn't matter what he did in civilian life."

Camp Wolters, which gives basic infantry training, places emphasis upon marksmanship and training of individual combat skill (with bayonet, hand grenade, etc.) There is not much group work at the camp, but men learn how to defend themselves and wage offensive warfare. After they leave the camp soldiers are assigned to infantry organizations all over the country and go into maneuvers.

Texas Break In

Captain Macomber said that the Texas climate was "not as bad as he had expected," adding, eyes twinkling, that temperatures in the summer were from 95 to 105 degrees in the shade. North-

ern boys have to be "broken in" rather carefully so no heat prostrations will result.

"Complain? Soldiers are always complaining about something," the captain smiled, swiveling dexterously in his chair. "They say if a soldier doesn't complain he isn't any good."

Captain Macomber reports that the morale at Camp Wolters is exceptionally high. After 13 weeks of training a great majority of the men are pretty much reconciled to army life and even like it, he said.

Pedagogy Calls

At intervals, former colleagues of the captain stopped in to shake hands with him and to say that they wanted to be sure and see him before he left. Dr. Freeman Glenn Macomber at the University, the now-military man was professor of education, director of University high school and the placement bureau when he was at Oregon.

He said that he is "finding the change interesting," but is "anxious to get back to teaching" as soon as he can. Captain Macomber said that the men at camp call him "sir," no nicknames. The other officers call him "captain," and he, in turn, calls the colonel "sir."

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