

Review Articles

Armed Services College Training Programs

Wartime College Training Programs of the Armed Services. By Henry C. Herge and others, Washington, American Council on Education, 1948, 214p. \$3.00.

It is probably only a corollary of the passage of time that the fire and enthusiasm for the wartime work of our colleges and universities, which in 1945 stimulated the formation of the Commission on Implications of Armed Services Educational Programs, should result in a report which is little more than a documentary history and a restatement of the implications made at random and without research by prominent educators two years and more ago. The history is, of course, all to the good. It will be useful to have so coherent and connected a summary of the official documents from which the program necessarily sprang. Even through the hope that the occasion will never again occur, it is comforting to know that an outline and a blueprint are available without frantic research among dusty official documents.

The first chapter, appropriately titled "How Higher Education Went to War," mentions the abortive experience in this field during World War I, and proceeds to give a detailed summary of the many meetings and conferences that preceded the activation of the first Army Training Unit on Mar. 29, 1943. By the time the war ended, it was found that a total of six hundred and sixty-three institutions had been cleared for use by the Army, the Navy, and the Air Corps, in relatively equal numbers for each. Chapters follow on the similarities and differences of Army and Navy programs; a detailed description of the Army Specialized Training Program; the training programs of the Army Air Corps and the Navy college training programs. All are replete with statistics, documentation and extensive quotation from official documents.

Much of the first chapter is clear, forthright and understandable—even though somewhat dull. It is when the reader wades through the ensuing chapters on outcomes and implications that he becomes confused

among quick generalizations, questions that imply their own answers, and statements that could have been—and were—made in 1945 without benefit of the research which has gone into this volume. There is throughout this whole section an urgent undertone of feeling that so large and important a wartime college training program must, simply must, have some implications for peacetime education. Many of the implications so sought and so found can be found as well in the literature of higher education published years before the war. We did not, for example, need the wartime college training programs to tell us that students who possess exceptional and specialized talent will, in many cases, need to be subsidized if they are to go to school at all. We did not need this study to tell us that such a program and scholarships for the talented but needy will have to be financed by the Federal Government, if at all; nor is the idea of federal aid to higher education a brainchild of our wartime college experience.

A section entitled "Emergent Problems" presents a list of seven pertinent questions concerning government educational policy. The answers are neither given nor suggested. It seems unfortunate that concrete reliable data could not have been marshaled to assist the proponent of a broad liberal educational policy in making the necessary political appeal that might spell success.

Certain aspects of the wartime college training programs are singled out for special analysis and attention. One of these is acceleration. Made necessary by the war, it is here advanced as being a good thing in itself. While it is true that many educational programs, particularly in professional fields, are so extended that they interfere with normal social and family living, the solution to the problem is not one of contracting the educational program, but rather one of making possible a more normal life during the years necessary for adequate preparation. All of the evidence presented in favor of acceleration is gathered from limited experiments with small groups of exceptional people,

without benefit of control groups of more normal individuals who need time to think and to argue in order to properly assimilate the many and varied ideas presented to them in the course of a normal college program.

A section is devoted to the integration of areas of knowledge. Two programs are described. One of them is a course on foundations of national power given as a portion of the Navy V-12 program, first at Princeton University, and later at a number of other institutions. The course was undoubtedly an important one and certainly was needed by the future naval officers enrolled in the V-12 program, but the implication that an integrated course in international relations could not or would not have been developed under other than Navy auspices, is more than a little far-fetched. Collaboration among scholars in different disciplines in the teaching of integrated courses was already a fact to many progressive institutions long before the war.

The other example of the integration of areas of knowledge is the so-called C course given to pre-meteorology students at seventeen different institutions. The course included work in mathematics, physics, history, geography, and English. The course was developed in conference by instructors from all of the institutions. Examinations were held independently and objectively by examining boards not composed of the men who taught the courses. Thus a large number of students in seventeen institutions were studying a common required curriculum and taking a common examination not prepared by their instructors. Such cooperation in teaching and examination was found in general to be satisfactory but the observation is made in summary that (1) a common required curriculum can be taught well by a number of faculty only if the faculty believe in it, and (2) a common standard examination always invites instructors to coach their pupils rather

than to teach the subject. Whether or not these two disadvantages outweigh the benefit to faculty, institutions, and armed services is not stated, nor is evidence presented to substantiate one viewpoint or the other.

The volume ends with a chapter having the intriguing title "The Effects of Wartime Research upon Institutions of Higher Learning," but the chapter does not bring out the promise suggested in the title. It begins with an excellent historical statement, complete with documentation, of the various research programs instigated and fostered by various government agencies during the war. This is interesting and important as a matter of record, but nothing of significance is said concerning the effect of wartime research on the institutions in which the research was conducted. The investigation of this highly important and controversial subject was based on a fairly general questionnaire sent to twenty-nine institutions. The reporting here is in the form of fairly random comments from those institutions, all of them personal and subjective in nature, presented without any attempt at organization. The result is a welter of confused personal and unidentified opinion. Tabulations of these random replies would probably result in an equal number of comments for and against wartime research, providing precisely no evidence on its over-all effect upon institutions the country over.

The book, I repeat, had to be written. Too much time, overtime, effort, and more effort was expended by thousands of teachers and administrators in the wartime job of educating young men to do special and important jobs in the armed services to allow these efforts to go unrecorded, and without some attempt at evaluation. The recording has been done. The evaluation is still wanting.—*LeRoy Charles Merritt, School of Librarianship, University of California, Berkeley.*

Bosworth of Oberlin

The Biography of a Mind: Bosworth of Oberlin. By Ernest Pye. Chicago, Lakeside Press, 1948. 2v. \$8.00. Order to Otis C. McKee, Oberlin, O.

This treatment of the career of a notable American religious thinker contains notes

which merit attention from men and women concerned with the discovery and dissemination of knowledge. They follow from the effort, which was prominent with Edward Increase Bosworth, to invoke facts and to reckon with reality in the interpretation of