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"A Graduate School of War"

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Not many years ago an officer of our army, who carried a satisfactory string of service ribbons on the left breast of his fatigue-jacket and on his shoulders insignia considerably higher than the double bars of captaincy, experienced an interesting conversion. Of the elder school was this officer¾ the old, Indian-fighting, up-an-at-'em type, whose creed was a clean carbine, an easy saddle, and a competent quartermaster. Soldiers were made in the field, not in the class-room; fighters could take nothing of profit from a book, according to his doctrine, bred of experience in Cuba, China, and the Philippines. He snorted disdainfully at the enthusiasm of younger officers for a school of instruction in the higher arts of war; grudgingly he forwarded to the Adjutant General of the army each year the names of young fools of his command who desired to absent themselves from the regiment for the purpose of "book-grubbing." But each young officer returned to his post a missionary of a new idea, and the Old Man, mingling saving grace of curiosity with his conservatism, whiffled through his nose less loudly. At last he applied for permission to take the special three months' course for officers of higher command in the Army Service Schools at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Then commenced the interesting processes of conversion in the hardened professional conscience of Colonel Shellback. He found himself all at once thrust into an atmosphere of tremendous effort, of fervid zeal. Men of his own rank, as well as of lesser dignity, were going to school under instructors their junior in years and grade, were applying themselves in laboratory and under student lamp twelve, fourteen, sixteen hours a day. Instructors, themselves of necessity students of the arts they taught, worked harder than the men who sat before their lecture platforms. Old Colonel S. Made, first off, a striking discovery: the habit of study slips far away from a man on the gloaming side of fifty. But the education of the seasoned campaigner, thus fairly grounded in humility, progressed satisfactorily within the limitations of the special course allowed him, and he was only too glad to acknowledge¾ not without a twinge of sadness¾ that three months, instead of the year or two-year regimen pursued by younger men, was a limit set for such as he in wisdom. He went back to his regiment, convinced of the success of that institution whose object, according to the terse phrase of "General Orders No. 128," is "the better preparation of the mobile army for war." Since his return to his command¾ and one

hastens to assure that Colonel Shellback's is a composite photograph¾ every bulletin, every book and treatise on the specialized theory of war issued from the press of the Service Schools at Fort Leavenworth has been made mandatory reading for his junior officers by orders of one of the Service Schools' most ardent supporters.

It was the Colonel's peculiar privilege to attend for three months what is beyond doubt the most unique and least-known graduate school in the United States. Unique in that it draws its students from a class of men that have been from fifteen to twenty years in the pursuit of their profession and with the school that gave them license to practise a memory of boyhood; little known because of the civilian world's complete ignorance of all matters pertaining to the two services. Yet since the foundation of the schools in 1881 nearly a thousand officers of the army have been entered upon the "Army Register" as graduates, the institution has grown from a single School of Application for Infantry and Cavalry, as designated by General William Tecumseh Sherman, its founder, to a group of five colleges with power to command the respectful interest of European war specialists. By the widening influence of the Army Service Schools the Colonel shellbacks of the staff and line are being brought to appreciation of the fact that the most competent to command, whether a patrol or a division, is he whose familiarity with theory matches his experience in the practical, however wide. In a word, the Army Service Schools are making the personnel of the army's commissioned force truly professional. "The better preparation of the circumstance that no science is moving forward to more infinite complexities than does the grim business of war, none developing new problems with greater swiftness. It looks to the Service Schools to keep the nation's defensive arm abreast of advancing knowledge.

Great has been the change in the character of the Service Schools and the capacity of their plant since Fort Leavenworth's post headquarters housed the first class in 1881. Then Colonel Elwell S. Otis, commandant of the post, found himself at the head of a teaching staff comprising five officers highest in rank of the infantry and cavalry detachments stationed at the post. Student officers from like branches of the service throughout the country were attached to the units stationed at Leavenworth and were expected to perform all their duties as company officers in addition to those of instruction. Rank of student officers was not to exceed that of lieutenant. "Correct reading aloud, with care and precision"¾ this is quoted from the prospectus of instruction for the first class¾ "Writing a plain hand, easy to read, designed for the use of the party receiving": two essentials of an officer's higher education in the days when a raid by restless Indians constituted almost the sole military problem against the horizon. But with years came expansion. After the Spanish War, which with the ensuing Philippine campaigns, caused a cessation of work at the Leavenworth schools for four years, came to reorganization, whereby the old Infantry and Cavalry School became, first the General Service and Staff College and, in 1911, the present collection of five schools with a roll of seventy-five student officers, thirty instructors, and a curriculum embracing such subjects as the mobilization of national resources and the laying and repairing of ocean cable. On the heights above a crescent bend of the Missouri River, three miles north of the city of Leavenworth, stands the academic building, its clock-tower a landmark for the far hills behind Kansas City. Under the wide roof of Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan halls are electric laboratories, printing, book-binding, and map-making plants, a library of thirty thousand volumes. Comfortable brick houses and bachelor flats, scattered under the oaks and elms on the high lands over the river, provide quarters, one hundred and fourteen in all, for the student officers

and instructors and their families; these apart from the homes of the officers on duty at the post. Barring the stiff presence of certain cannon *emeriti* deployed about the flagpole, the prospect from the steps of Grant Hall might be that of some hallowed campus in New England.

The basic school of the five at Leavenworth, and the one considered of most value, is the Army School of the Line, designed to give in a year's course a general military education of the higher order to the student officer who is willing to apply himself to the stern exactions of the curriculum. Attendance upon this, as well as the four other schools of special character, is purely voluntary; only men of enthusiasm and virile regard for the advancement of their professional standing can survive the rest of a year in the School of the Line; shirkers who think to evade the monotony of post life by being detached for study in the graduate school at Leavenworth soon discover their grievous misjudgment. Competition dictates the selection of candidates for attendance upon the School of the Line, and competition of the keenest sort attends their every moment of application. One officer of grade not lower than captain and of not less than five years' commissioned service is chosen from every regiment of infantry, cavalry, and field artillery not on duty in the Philippines; the choice lying in the hands of the commanding officer of each regiment, subject to confirmation by the Secretary of War. Further restriction is imposed by the requirement that the number of field artillery officers for any one class be limited to five; this because of the practical and specialized field instruction provided by the Field Artillery School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. The rigors of competition for appointment, coupled with individual hard luck in being detailed for service in the Philippines at a favoring moment, sometimes brings to the School of the Line men who have grown gray in the waiting.