

OVERVIEW OF THE ARMY METEOROLOGY PROGRAM AND THE PROGRAM AT REED COLLEGE

By

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In 1942, The Army Air Corps determined that there was a huge shortage of meteorologists who were required to support Air Corps operations worldwide in the conduct of World War II. To alleviate this shortage, the Air Corps set up three levels of college study depending on the education of the candidates. Many of the candidates volunteered for military service in order to enter the Meteorology program. The central university for designing the entire program was the University of Chicago. The three levels of study were at universities and colleges which were called "A" schools, "B" schools, and "C" schools. "A" schools were for students who had graduated from college and were ready to go to the weather forecasting school at Chanute AFB, Rantoul, Illinois. In fact, there was only one "A" school which was the University of Chicago. After a short stay at the University of Chicago students went to Chanute AFB. "B" schools were for students who had two or three years of college and would need nine months of college in Pre-Meteorology subjects prior to going to the weather forecasting school. An example of a "B" school was the University of Wisconsin. "C" schools were for students who had less than two years of college or had graduated from high school in the upper quarter of their class and would need twelve months of college in Pre-Meteorology subjects prior to going to weather forecasting school. For "C" school students, two years of college would be covered in one year. In order to accomplish this, classes started at 7:00 a.m. and lasted until 10:00 p.m. with breaks for meals and military training.

A dozen "C" schools were set up including Reed College, Carleton College, University of Oregon, Haverford College, and others. It is interesting to note that former Chief Justice of the United States, William Rehnquist attended a "C" school.

Dr. A.A. Knowlton was in charge of the Army Pre-Meteorology Program (AMP) at Reed College. Marcia Weinssoft, a Reed College graduate, was his secretary. It

should be noted that Reed College was in desperate financial condition because students of college age were being drafted into the military rather than going to college. The funding that Reed College got for the AMP Program helped Reed College survive. There were three groups of persons who were involved in the AMP Program at Reed College: The military staff, the Reed faculty who taught the Pre-Meteorology students, and the Pre-Meteorology students (PMs).

The military staff consisted of six or seven men. The commander of the detachment was 1st Lieutenant Frohberg. Lt. Frohberg was promoted to captain when the program was completed. The athletic and training officer was 2nd Lieutenant Francis Rish. The medical officer was 1st Lieutenant Ogle who was promoted to captain while serving at Reed. The enlisted staff consisted of Technical Sergeant Charles Yadauga, Staff Sergeant Mac McLaughlin, and Buck Sergeant Ray Thornton. There was a corporal on duty at least part of the time.

The Reed College faculty who taught the PMs consisted of Reed College professors who were already teaching at Reed plus outside professors who were recruited to teach solely in the Pre-Meteorology Program. Examples of Reed College professors who taught the PMs were Dr. A.A. Knowlton who taught physics, Dr. Frank Loxley Griffin who taught mathematics, Dr. Rex Aragon who taught humanities, and Professor Frederick Peters who taught geography although he previously taught German at Reed. Examples of outside professors who were recruited to teach PMs were Dr. Harold Shapiro who taught vector analysis, Professor Franklin Haimo who taught calculus, and Professors Robert Summers, Frank Munk, Richard Jones, and Nile all of whom taught various subjects.

The Pre-Meteorology students can be identified in several groups. A grand total of 268 PMs attended Reed College. Of this group, approximately 235 PMs arrived at Reed in February, 1943. These PMs were divided into eight flights. In May, 1943, a group of 33 additional PMs arrived at Reed. This group had been scheduled to go to "B" school but were delayed for three months and never entered a "B" school. So they were assigned to go to the last nine months of the "C" school at Reed. This group was designated as Flight 9. Because they were troublemakers, Flight 9 was later broken up and their members were divided up among the other eight flights.

Out of the 268 PMs who attended Reed, 67 flunked out in quarterly screening exams. Those who flunked out were students who were unable to keep pace with the two years in one year program and those who spent a couple of weeks

in the hospital with measles or mumps and couldn't catch up with the fast moving program. There was a total of 201 PMs who graduated in February, 1944. Prior to graduation, the Army Air Corps decided that it had made a mistake and didn't have the need for so many meteorologists. So all of the PMs in the various "C" schools were given several options as to where they would like to serve in the Army Air Corps. At Reed, 100 PMs went into communications and about 30 went into weather work. Others signed up for pilot or navigator training and many signed up for the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP). The communications group went to Seymour Johnson Field in North Carolina.

Many of the communications group later attended Yale University. The weather group went to Air Corps bases on the west coast and in the Rocky Mountains. Many of the weather group later attended Harvard University. The ASTP group went to the University of California but when they got there, they found that the program had been cancelled and they were transferred to the infantry. One of those PMs, Joe Bruemer, was a rifleman who fought all the way through France and Germany. Ted Godel went into navigator training. Walter Brown became a front line stretcher bearer across France and Germany. Four PMs died during World War II. Their names are commemorated on a plaque at the entrance to Eliot Hall.

During the forty year period from 1944 to 1984, two PMs would meet every year in Chicago and they talked about holding a reunion of the PMs. These two were Bob Betz and Harry Bernat. Finally, Harry Bernat decided to organize a reunion although he only knew of the whereabouts of five of the 201 graduates. Harry wrote to the president of Reed College, Dr. Paul Bragdon, stating that he (Harry) wanted to hold a reunion of the PMs but he needed help. Dr. Bragdon wrote back that he would be delighted to have a PM reunion at Reed and was assigning Florence Lehman, Director of Alumni Relations, to help with the reunion. Florence contacted Harry saying that she would take care of all of the mailings and would arrange for the reunion festivities and the reunion dinner to be held on the Reed campus. Then came the job of tracking down PMs after 40 years. Florence knew of the whereabouts of some of the PMs. Others were located through PMs who were in contact with other PMs. Graduates of Stanford, Washington State University, the University of Washington, and other colleges contacted their colleges and found other PMs. Bill Mancina's mother found a number of PMs by searching through the telephone directories of all of the communities in the Los Angeles area. Harry found many PMs by driving zigzag across the country to the first reunion and finding PMs in their home towns by consulting telephone directories. Florence Lehman was asked to track down Dr.

Harold Shapiro, the favorite professor of the PMs while at Reed. Florence found Dr. Shapiro at New York University by consulting a listing of physics professors. Dr. Shapiro said that nothing could keep him away from attending the PMs reunion at Reed. Altogether, about half of the PMs were found after 40 years - an amazing feat. The other 100 PMs were never found. Many of the found and presumably many of the never found are already deceased because the average age of the living PMs is 82 years. The Oral Historians aren't familiar with the names of the PMs who were never found. For example, Bob Black was found but Rudy Black was never found.

The PMs have had six reunions in all: 1984, 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004, and 2006. The last reunion was held only two years after the previous reunion because of the death rate or infirmity of the PMs. The early reunions had large turnouts of PMs but the numbers have been declining. Many Reed professors attended one or more reunions, such as Dr. Aragon, Dr. Peters, Dr. Shapiro, and Professors Munk, Jones, and Nile. Only one of the military group attended a reunion - Lt. Rish, who gave a wonderful talk. He has since passed away. Of the faculty and military, only two are still known to be alive - Dr. Shapiro and Tech Sergeant Yadauga.

It is hoped that this Overview is helpful for the Oral History program. I have the names of all 268 PMs including the names of the 201 PMs who graduated and the 67 PMs who flunked out. Also, I have the identification of which PMs were in which of the eight flights. I also have the names of the PMs who attended the various reunions. I will will all of this information to the Alumni Relations Office when I join the departed from this earth. Also, if I can find them, I will will all of the photos that I have from Reed to the Alumni Relations Office. And finally, I was able to track down what happened to our beloved dog, Navigator, 63 years after we left Reed College. One last point. It was through the tracking down of all of these PMs that a large number of contributors to the Reed College Annual Fund has been generated for the past 22 years.