

***Beloit College’s Legacy:
The Achievements of the 95th College Training Detachment
March 1943 - March 1944***

by Patricia Overman

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In 1943 the Army Air Forces called for a quota of aircrew members that only a few years ago would have challenged the boldest imagination. This expansion of air power was to be effective without sacrifice to training standards. The bulk of America’s manpower who could meet the former Aviation Cadet educational requirement of two years of college had been exhausted in the latter part of 1942. (AAFWFTC, Anketell, i)

The sacrifices made by our men and women in uniform during WWII are legion. The contribution by the men and women of our nation’s industries, exemplified by the image of Rosie the Riveter standing on top of a B-17 with riveting gun in hand, are also well known by most Americans. What is not as well-known is the contribution made by this nation’s colleges and universities both in preparation for and during the war. Beloit College is representative of the 150 colleges who answered the call.

PILOTS IN DEMAND

Even before the United States was officially involved in World War II the Army Air Force (AAF) Aviation Cadet Training Program was running at maximum capacity. After the attack on Pearl Harbor it was clear that even more pilots would be needed. Men were signing up in droves to enlist in the Army, Navy and Marine Corps, and, with the lowering of the draft age from 21 to 18, all of the services were increasing their size at an unprecedented rate.

The problem facing the AAF, however, was not just a need for manpower. The AAF needed qualified manpower; men who had the aptitude to successfully pass the cadet training examination. In 1942 two changes were made by the AAF to ensure that a sufficient supply of candidates would continue to be available for the Army Air Forces Training. First, the two year college requirement was dropped because the number of two year college graduates had been completely depleted. Second, the Aviation Air Forces Examination was redesigned to test for aptitude

16

REMARKS—ADMINISTRATIVE

Under this heading will be shown all administrative matter not shown elsewhere and not of a character authorizing pay. Show wounds, battles, engagements, etc., and such other entries not set forth elsewhere as may be required to make soldier's record complete.

"Qualified for Aviation Cadet Appointment Air Crew
Screening score 85 Type W"

This EM having been inducted into the
AUS this date is hereby trfd to the
ERC pursuant to the authority con-
tained in letter WD, AGO, Washington, D
C, file AG 220.31 (2-7-43) PR-I-A,
dated Feb. 9, 1943, Subject: "directed
Assignment of Aviation Cadets, Officer
Candidates (VOC), Candidates ofr Army
Specialized Training, and Armed Forces"
and will be called to active duty at
a later date and assigned to the Air
Corps for pre-aviation cadet training
by the Commanding General of the Second
Service Command pursuant to the above
authority.

instead of knowledge. These two changes resulted in a tremendous increase in the pool of qualified candidates. In order to keep them from being drafted by other branches of the military while they were waiting to be called to service, a third change had been implemented: the formation of the Air Corps Enlisted Reserve (ACER). This program allowed the AAF to hold men eligible for the Aviation Cadet Training Program in reserve until they could be scheduled to start their training.

While ACER solved one problem, it created another. So many men were passing the Aviation Cadet Examination that it sometimes took more than six months before they could be placed in training. Candidates were in limbo and the pool was increasing by up to 3,000 men a month. This perceived hoarding of manpower did not please either the Selective Service Board or the War Manpower Commission. As a solution to this predicament General Henry H. (Hap) Arnold, Commander of the Army Air Forces, proposed the College Training Program.

It took 60 weeks to transform a cadet into a pilot. However, at least one third of the cadets were not completing the program; the main reason being failure to keep up with the academic demands. General Arnold knew that while the men were waiting for placement in the Aviation Cadet Training Program, continuing education would help reduce their failure rate once in the program. Potential cadets no longer waited for available placement in the aviation cadet training program but were called to active duty and assigned to a college training detachment. The goal of the college program was to graduate these men with the same level of knowledge; an equal and high standard of education to increase retention during the next three rigorous phases of the cadet's aviation training.

This purpose was mandated to the Colleges:

The College Training Program contemplates the assignment of students to college training for a period of five months, designed to prepare the student educationally to understand the basic principles of mechanics, physics, mathematics and political geography, combined with physical and military training considered essential to operate and navigate modern high-powered aircraft in combat. The curriculum varies both in scope and in purpose from the normal curriculum of educational institutions, and in its treatment the purpose should be clearly kept in mind by all concerned in order that the time of the students and their efforts will not be wasted in work which does not contribute to the purposeful intent, that of educationally equipping each student to understand the basic principles behind the operation and navigation of the weapon as the "military airplane." Without an understanding of the principles outlined in the curriculum, these students become a hazard to scarce and expensive equipment, as well as to the lives of highly trained personnel. (AAFWFTC. F.T.C

Memorandum 50-25-3)

All of this was to be accomplished in a maximum of five months, or sooner, depending on the cadet's level of education. The 150 colleges accepting the cadets would need to prepare the cadets for this challenge and those colleges would be administering the Army's version of education on steroids.



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BELOIT ANSWERS THE CALL

The Army used several very specific criteria for selecting a college for their Air Crew Cadets. Beloit College, in Beloit Wisconsin, was one of the qualifying colleges for this program because it met five of the most important criteria: first, an excellent faculty and curriculum; second, dormitories; third, a mess hall (cafeteria); fourth, Athletic facilities; and fifth, close proximity to an airport, Machesney in Rockford, IL. Beloit College was also a good candidate because it had a history with the government and our country's defense: in World War I the college was used as a training station. In addition, the college had already been proactive in the current war effort when, in 1939, the college's Board of Trustees voted to participate in the Civil Aeronautics Program providing a ground school to prepare college students for further flight training. A faculty committee was appointed by College President, Irving Maurer, to discuss all National Defense problems that related to faculty and students and to explore ways in which the college could be useful to the Government's Defense Program. In early 1941

Professor Philip Whitehead, chairman of the faculty group, sent letters to the Wisconsin Militia, the 6th Corps Army Area located in Chicago at Camp Grant; the President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and the President of the United States offering their facilities and the services of Beloit College to the National Defense Program.

As the Beloit College faculty began working with the government in support of our National Defense, the student body majority was going in the opposite direction. They considered themselves “isolationists” and not only voted overwhelmingly to stay out of the war effort but to offer Beloit College as a place where men could go to avoid enlistment under the Deferred Enlistment Program. An article in the student newspaper demonstrated this point of view:

This brings to mind the question of military training in the smaller colleges which are without the jurisdiction of state legislatures. Shall schools such as Beloit maintain units of the Reserve Officers Training Corps? We think not.

Until a more vital need than the existing is proven to us, we recommend no change on our campus. Here remains one sanctuary for civilian life in all its carefree glory in a world surrounded by conscription and preparedness. We would far rather suffer the sight of worn-out saddle shoes and corduroy shirts than have the nattiest of uniforms paraded before us every day of the year. (Beloit In Defense? 2)

After December 7, 1941 the student body did an about-face. There was even a place on campus to enlist and the men of Beloit stood in line to sign up.

On February 20, 1943 Beloit opened its doors to the 95th College Training Detachment (CTD); the first detachment of 150 Army Air Crew Cadets, soon to be 300 strong. These were the men who would

become the pilots, bombardiers, and navigators, who would crew the bombers, the fighters, and the troop carriers; the men who would put their lives on the line for our country's freedom and their comrades. Many would make the ultimate sacrifice.



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IMPACT ON THE COLLEGE

The Army had to make physical changes to the college to accommodate the cadets. The estimated startup cost was \$6,111.00, and included building alterations, equipment additions and activating an infirmary. Dorms were remodeled to handle bunk beds, extra study desks (for supervised study in individual rooms), lockers, dressers and bookshelves. Gym classes for cadets were moved to

the Walter Strong Memorial Stadium to accommodate the enhanced obstacles needed to meet Army specification (the wall and pits). Physics classes had to be expanded. Fifty percent of Beloit's facilities were used by the 95th CTD.

The cadets were assigned to two dorms; Haven and North. They had access to the Student Union building where the Post Exchange was set up. Instructional and classroom buildings used by the cadets included the Gymnasium, Science Hall, Stadium Rooms, Logan Museum, Morse-Ingersoll Hall, Carnegie Library and Wright Art Center. Chapin was their mess hall.

THE PROGRAM

The total strength of the 95th CTD was 300. This number was divided into five squadrons consisting of 60 cadets each. The squadrons were further divided into two flights of 30 cadets.

The cadets arrived each month in groups of 60 and upon arrival were first addressed by Bradley Tyrrell, Beloit College's President:

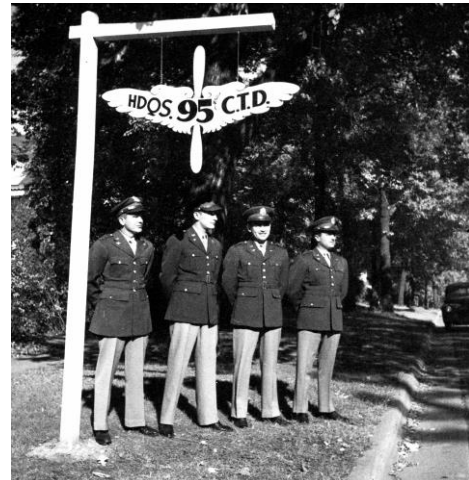
... We hope you will feel that Beloit is your school, and thus can become "Alma Mater" to you as she has to thousands of other student over the years. All these sons and daughters of Beloit will be watching your progress here with loyal and friendly interest—your future achievements with pride and gratitude. (Beloit College: Souvenir 1).

They were then addressed by their Commanding Officer, Capt. Charles Manning:

As you enter the College training phase of your Aircrew training, your status in the Army has changed from a "GI" soldier to a full-fledged Aviation Student and potential flying officer. ... It will be a tough grind for many of you and some of you will fail to make the grade. ... The high standards of discipline, honor, leadership, and military bearing have characterized the men of the Army Air Forces since its beginning. I know you are proud of these standards and will keep them constantly before you throughout your Army career. To all of you, on behalf of the officers and non-commissioned officers of the 95th College Training Detachment, I say best of luck and happy landings.

(Beloit College: Souvenir Booklet for the 95th College Training Detachment (Air Crew, 3).

A total of sixteen men met the needs of the cadets, from food, to pay and 280 hours of basic military indoctrination; military etiquette, leadership, Articles of hygiene and sanitation, infantry drills, ceremonies, inspection and even guard duty. The program's Commanding Officer was Captain Charles Manning from Cuero, Texas. Commandant for students was Lt. William Manning (no relation) and later 2nd Lt. Marshall Sipkins. Detachment adjutant was 2nd Lt. John Dewland and the tactical officer was 2nd Lt. William G. Anketell.



From left Lt. Wm. J. Manning, 2nd Lt. Wm G. Anketell, 2nd Lt. John J. Dewland, and Capt. C. R. Manning

War,

Noncommissioned officers were in charge of military tactics and drills. From Sgt. Jack Butler and Sgt. Joe Oleszycki the cadets learned the art of square corners on the parade ground. Close order drills were conducted during inclement weather on the side streets bordering the college.

CADETS NEED SLEEP?

Army personnel overseeing the program set forth requirements within the curriculum. Since these men belonged to the military 24/7, class time could be increased; thereby allowing more instruction in the areas needed most by the war



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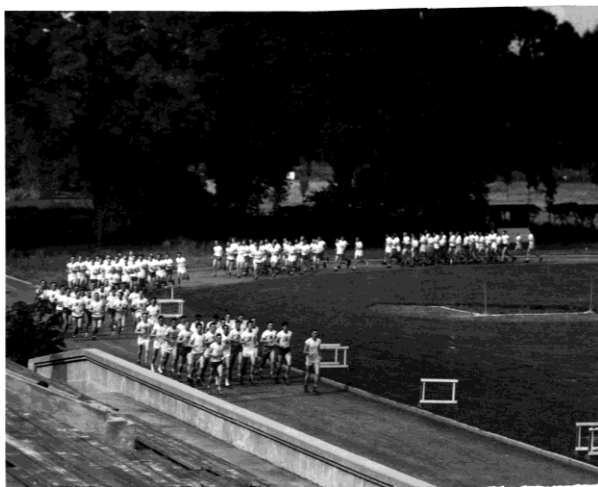
efforts. As an example, physics was increased by two hours a week, focusing on mechanics, heat, electricity and light. Since Beloit was a liberal arts college, art was an important component of the curriculum. The Army embraced this concept whole heartedly and designed their curriculum; the study of camouflage.

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A day's schedule had the cadets up at 0600 every morning and classes starting at 0800. Every evening started with Retreat, then several hours of study, of which some was supervised, and ended with uniform preparation for the next day. On Saturday, after morning classes, a two hour inspection was held. Saturday afternoon was flight training. On Sunday the cadets attended church. With the exception of church the cadets had "open post" late Saturday afternoon (for those not in flight training), through Sunday.



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In the early stages of the program the faculty determined that the cadets were not keeping up with the rigid demands of the Army Air Forces. Upon successful completion of the program the cadets from Beloit College were transferred for their Army Air Forces Training Program to the Army Air Forces Western Flying Training Center (AAFWFTC) at Santa Ana, California.

Therefore there was strong and open communication between the faculty and headquarters personnel at Santa Ana. On June 19th 1943, after the graduation of one cadet Squadron, Ivan M. Stone, from the Department of Geography, sent a letter to Major S. Joseph De Brum acknowledging the

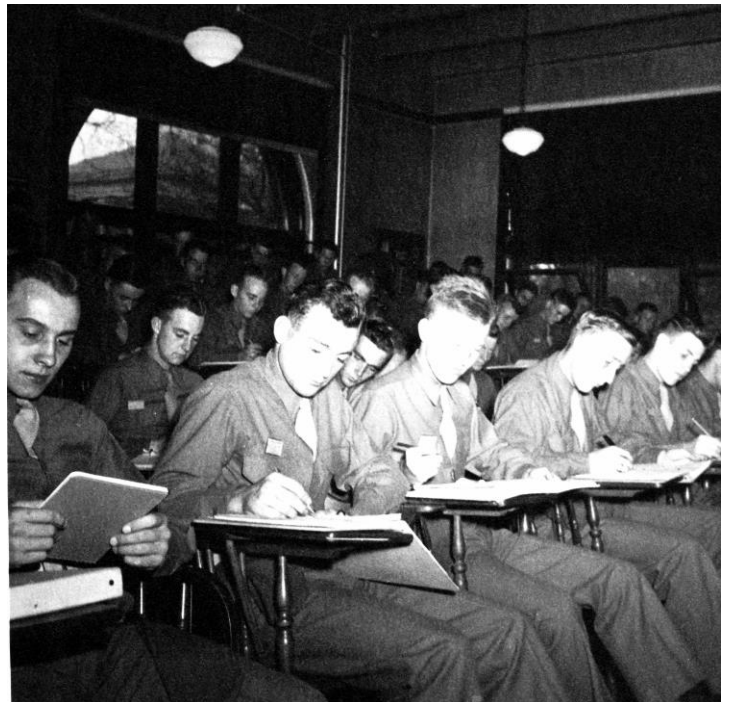
“wisdom” of the Army to include Geography into the curriculum as many of the men were lacking in this area. Mr. Stone did, however, go on to suggest that the men were in need of more sleep.

The Army should be complimented in allowing the various colleges to substantially prepare their outline of the instruction in Geography... The materials supplied to us were adequate, and I have no criticism from that quarter. All together, the men in the course were bothered and diverted from their primary task of learning by too many diversions of sundry sorts. There was regularly evidence that the men had not received enough sleep to permit them to get the most out of the class hour—they were often present in flesh only, and had to fight to stay awake. Obviously, this constitutes a waste of time so far as progress in the academic subject is concerned. (Stone)

Even with all these demands on the cadets only 3.8 percent failed to go on to the AAFWFTC. Those who could not meet the standards were immediately transferred. Some would go to ground crew training while others to the infantry. The commanding officer of the detachment commented on their rigorous training,

“There is little in the life of the aviation cadet to bring back nostalgic memories of the informal days of ‘Joe College.’ The life is rough from early

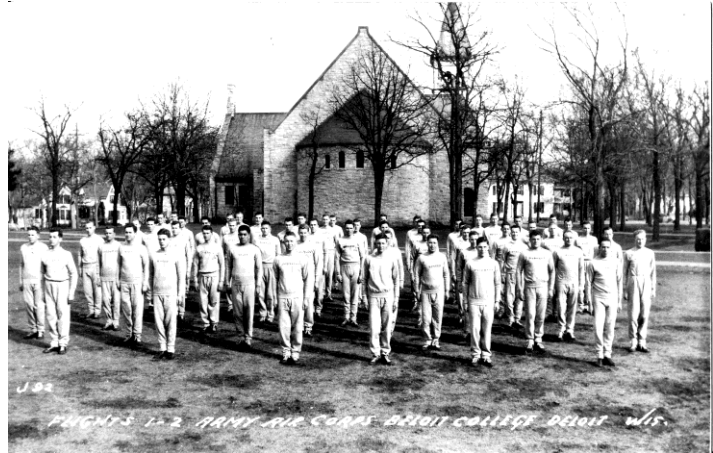
morning until late at night, and always there is the strict military discipline making soldiers from all...”
(Manning)



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FACULTY GIVE 110%

The largest impact to the college was on the faculty's time and responsibilities. Increased class time also meant increased faculty responsibility. The faculty absorbed and implemented all the required changes. At least 75 percent of the faculty took on extra work, giving freely of their time and knowledge to instruct the cadets. The faculty did this without complaint, devoting much of their personal time. The extra workload also affected the flexibility for civilian classes as was revealed in regular announcements:



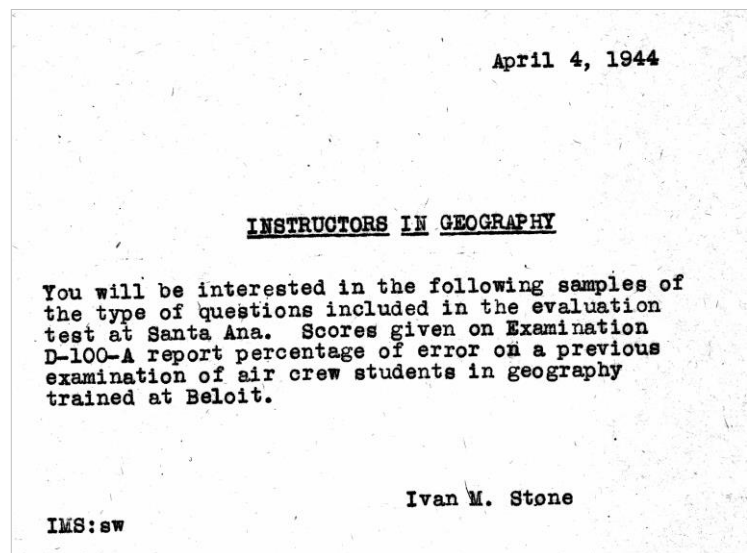
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“The athletic department now carrying a tremendously increased load, will find it impossible to reschedule classes for afternoon times as was done last fall.” (Beloit College, *The Round Table*, 1943)

Faculty teaching math, geography, physics and athletics were now teaching specific information required by the AAFWFTC. Among these were map reading, including aerial; supplementary mathematical material; quantitative and qualitative problem solving in physics, etc.

The continuing communication between

Santa Ana Headquarters and Beloit College included informing the faculty how the graduating cadets



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were testing at Santa Ana. The scores were given back to the Beloit College faculty with the request to improve the training in the areas where cadets were consistently receiving low scores. As an example the Army requested that greater emphasis in the geography classes be placed on: 1. Latitude and Longitude; understanding world grid and location of points by geographic co-ordinates. 2. Measurement of distance; nautical miles, statute miles, and kilometers as well as conversions. 3. Map Projections; types, properties and their uses. 4. Conventional Map Signs and Symbols. It was recommended that a passing grade of ninety percent be required of all cadets in these particular phases of training (a passing grade for the Army was usually seventy percent). These constant evaluations were taken in stride by the faculty and were applied to the best of their ability.

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

Today the area that was Machesney Airport is a shopping mall, but during World War II Mr. Fred A. Machesney, owner of the airport, and his civilian staff took the 95th College Training Detachment Cadets under their wings, literally. With direction from the AAFWFTC, Mr. Machesney, Chief Flight Instructor R. S. Day and nine Civil Aeronautics Authority qualified instructors gave the cadets their first taste of flying.

The cadets were bused to the airport, a little over twenty miles from Beloit College. Awaiting them were eleven Piper Cub trainer aircrafts, model J-3. The cadets learned elementary flight maneuvers, landing and traffic procedure on an airfield

Flying Training Schedule (1 flight of 30 Aviation Students)			
Morning Schedule		Afternoon Schedule	
Bus Leaves Detachment	0635	Bus Leaves Detachment	1230
Bus Arrives at Airport	0700	Bus Arrives at Airport	1255
Ground School	0700 to 0800	Flying	1300 to 1645
Flying	0800 to 1145	Ground School	1645 to 1745
Bus Leaves Airport	1150	Bus Leaves Airport	1750
Bus Arrives at Detachment	1215	Bus Arrives at Detachment	1815

2800 feet by 2100 feet. The landing area was not paved, but was a grassy strip, “...*the ground was in such condition that landing could be made upon any approach without presenting a hazard.*”

(AAFWFTC, Anketell, 28)

The airport buildings were remodeled to add a “ready room” where daily ground instruction was held. All cadets received the necessary air training, which included ten hours of flying instruction and ground instruction. All flight instruction was headed by Mr. Day and all classroom and flying instructions were given in a military fashion. Military forms, records, rules and regulations were all taught by the various instructors. All cadets kept a rating book documenting their progress and deficiencies. Inspections were conducted by military officers from AAFWFTC and feedback was given at a round table discussion with the flight instructors. The instructors reported that these discussions were a great aid. It was reported that the relationship between the 95th CTD and the flight instructors “*was the best...a benefit to all participants.*” (AAFWFTC, Anketell, 30)



**“EYES STRAIGHT AHEAD,
MISTAH. YOU DON’T SEE
THOSE GIRLS.”**

The cadets outnumbered the non-cadet male population on campus but those men on campus who were not serving actively were all slated in some way for the war effort. Some were Marines and Navy

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[NWWIGPA – Return to Training](#)

Reservists waiting their call to active duty. Others were deferred because their educational major was essential to the war effort. The cadets, however, were the only men under the direct control of the military. The cadets were required to march, singing or chanting to keep the cadence, from class to class. The intertwining of military indoctrination and education throughout the cadets' day proved to be a very successful method of implementing military training and preparation for Army discipline. This was enforced by unexpected inspections that occurred between classes and was observed by civilian students. The civilian students would stop to watch as the cadets, never taking their eyes from the back of the head of the cadet in front of them, marched by. Cadets, for their part, got very good at using their peripheral vision to try and evaluate the female population on campus. The school newspaper, *The Round Table*, published many articles about the reactions of the students and the community. One article published early in the program read,

“Thus far we have been able only to watch their orderly procession between classes and back and forth to their new barracks... We hope that you will come to feel the congeniality which pervades the atmosphere. Your stay here will be long enough so you will come to know Beloit well. We hope that you will like it as well as we do... When we stop and stare at you now, we do not intend to be rude... The site of thirty or forty men in uniform is bound to catch the eye of any civilian in view... cadets, we open our doors to you.” (“Hello” Soldier.)



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Response

“...we could tell you all about our mid-week trips to the student union, where we had a gay old time dancing with ourselves to the juke-box; co-eds we need help...about the willpower it requires to march right past a beautiful brunet (or blond if you prefer) without so much as a turn of the head, flicker of an eyelash or what-have-you. Don't think we're high-hat or playing “hard-to-get” when we march by in strict cadence with eyes glued to the front... We're playing the army game, and its rules come first; fun, later”

(Driscoll)

The Round Table articles revealed a positive and proud atmosphere about the campus. The editor of *The Round Table* invited and encouraged the cadets to reciprocate with articles about their reactions to the school. These exchanges aided in understanding the cadets and vice versa. *The Round Table* also covered the cadets' sports events. The cadet flights would compete with each other but the most exciting competitions were always between the Fraternities, Navy reservists and the cadets. Such headlines received great attention from the students.



STYLE

The Fraternities took turns graciously inviting the cadets to their formal dances where their favorite local band would play. The cadets reciprocated with their formal graduation dances, which occurred once a month. The civilian students especially enjoyed the cadets' dances for two reasons; the 95th CTD had a dance band (that was very good) and the female students were permitted to stay past their curfew to

attend the whole evening. This was an occasion when the cadets put aside their military bearing for one night before going to Santa Ana and another step towards war.



In mid-September 1943, “mixers” were added to the social curriculum. Most of the civilian students were now women. Twice a month nineteen of the women were chosen to attend a mixer with the cadets.

The cadets also made an impact on the community. The citizens of the City of Beloit suddenly found

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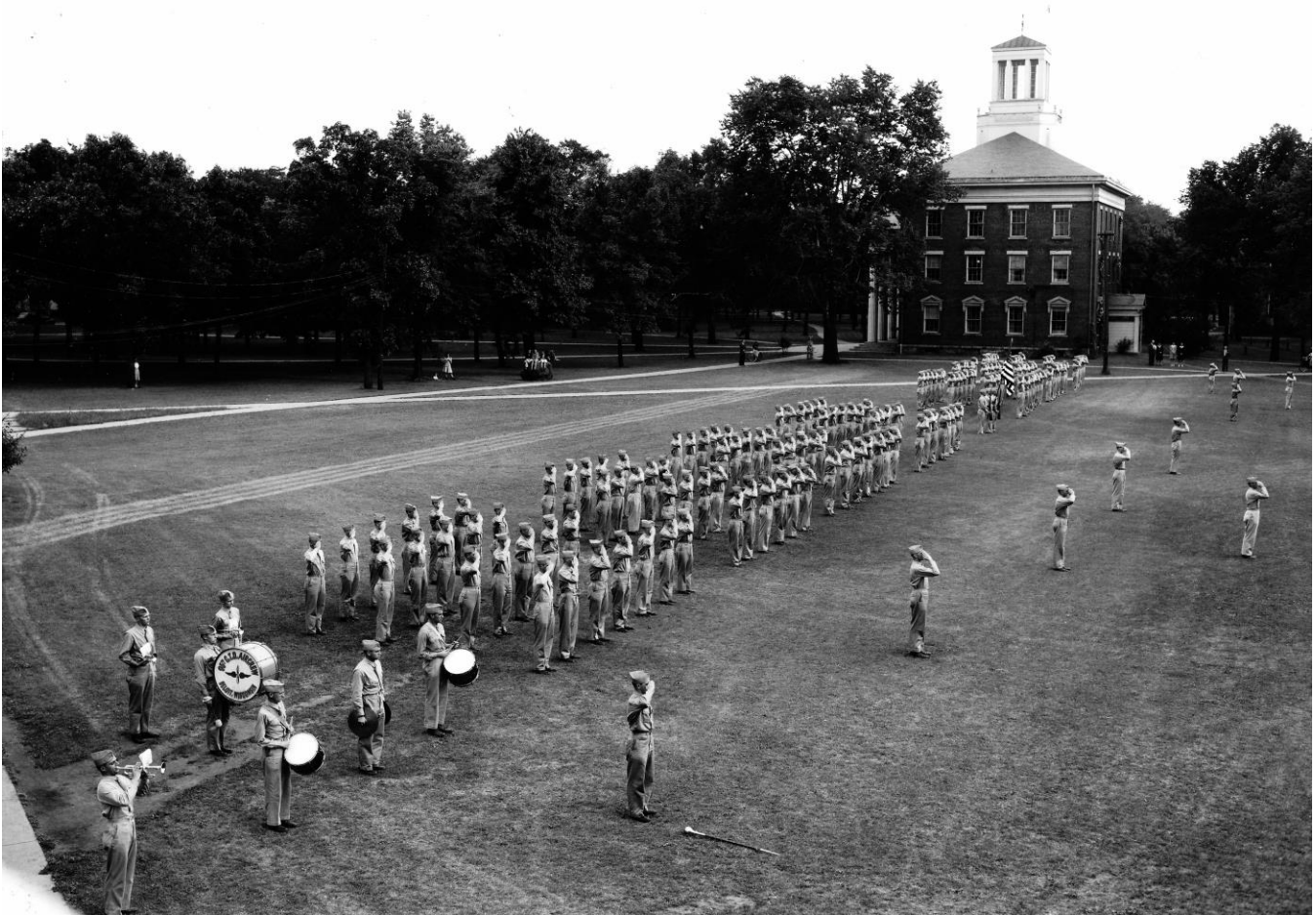
themselves visiting the college in the evenings. Army experts, who trained the cadets, frequently put on evening exhibitions such as demonstrating Jiu-jitsu or the modern method of self-defense used by the Army. The community took special pride when watching the cadets drill or listen to taps when striking the colors. Retreat occurred every evening at 1715 and, weather permitting; there was a Saturday afternoon parade. The winning squadron received a ribbon for their guidon. The community found themselves watching the time and making adjustments to their schedules so as not to miss what they knew was a delightful historical experience.

Retreat: the lowering of the flag, the end of another day for the 95th CTD. Beloit students watched retreat ceremonies for over a year. At first they were very strange, this bit of army stuck so suddenly into civilian college life. At 5:15 in the afternoon 150 army air crewmen mounted the stairs at the side of Chapin and marched to the middle of the main campus, facing Science Hall and the flag. Student,

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faculty, and townspeople watched from the steps of Chapin, North, and Science. “Sir, Squadron A all present and accounted for,” was reported with militaristic precision. The flag was taken down, as the aircrewmembers presented arms. Playing the “Star Spangled Banner,” the band stood off to the side. And with the same expressionless rhythm the army men marched down the stairs and off the campus again.

(Beloit, Yearbook, 45)



Beloit College Archives

A LEGACY IN GOOD STANDING

[NWWIGPA – Return to Training](#)

Some historians and authors have written that the College Training Program was non-effective, that it was only a place to “park” the cadets until they could be placed at an Air Force Training Center. General Arnold and the men conducting the training at Santa Ana would have disagreed.

The proficiency level of the cadets was improved by the introduction of the College Training Program in January 1943. (Miller)

By the end of the program in March of ‘44, 100,000 men had entered the Army Air Force Training Center through the 150 colleges offering the CTD program. 1,100 cadets had come and gone from Beloit College.

Beloit’s willingness to serve the country by opening their doors to the men of the 95th Cadet Training Detachment is, to this day, an historical treasure for Beloit College and a credit to the country they served. Capt. Manning’s prediction about nostalgia is doubtful; the young men never forgot the campus they once called home or the faculty who prepared them for a successful aviation career.



Beloit College Archives

Patricia Overman

Daughter of Major Elmer Lee Whitmire (Ret.) 1924 – 1971

95th CTD Flight #17, Pool F, Section 18, 02 Aug-22 Oct., 1943

All photographs circa 1943-1944 are from the Beloit College Archives, Morse Library, Beloit College, Beloit, WI.

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