

# Training the Answer?

## No!

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IF ANY compulsory military training is necessary, the idea must stand squarely on its own feet. Its objectives must be clearly stated in terms of protection of the nation. Our people will want to know how much time is absolutely necessary for basic training and what specific objectives and outcomes are sought. If a clear, concise statement of objectives is made, the nation will be inclined, I am sure, to accept the advice of military and other governmental leaders.

The writer vigorously objects, however, to having the advocates of military training hide behind the banners of physical fitness, training for citizenship, and discipline. These are worthy banners and most of us are willing to march behind them. Because the goals are so desirable let us determine how best they may be achieved. The answer is certainly not military training.

Let us take, for example, physical fitness. No one is going to be fit at nineteen who has neglected his fitness up to eighteen. The long years of childhood and early adolescence are crucial years. Parental education must go on in those years to assure adequate nutrition. Children must be protected against childhood "blights" which become causal factors for so many of our 4-F rejections. Organic power must be built over the long years from six to eighteen. Also a person fit at eighteen may be completely unfit at twenty-five. Many of the men rejected by the armed forces were relatively free from defects at eighteen. The average man in the military forces has been out of school about eight years. We have ample proof that fitness does not automatically continue through the years. Therefore, from the standpoint of physical fitness something more than a year's service is essential. No plan of physical fitness can be made effective which does not include the cooperation of parents, teachers, doctors, and the individual himself.

Considering discipline, military discipline is not the discipline of democracy. Freedom is an outcome of obeying self-imposed laws. Many behavior patterns set long before eighteen; many criminals are hardened before this age. Certainly, important attitudes, prejudices, and principles crystallize around many agencies other than the military group. The type of discipline we want is not acquired under mass instructional conditions or through impersonal teacher-pupil contact. The home, the school, and the church have responsibilities

far beyond those of the federal government.

Again, citizenship is not wholly built in military barracks. There must be opportunities for an individual to serve his nation with satisfaction. This requires service in an area which the individual thinks is significant. There are real opportunities for citizenship. There is work in our national forests where millions of trees should be planted, thousands of acres should be wrested from the grip of erosion. The Japanese beetle and the elm tree blight must be fought. These are just a few examples of public work.

Do we want the federal government to direct all these efforts? Has the history of other nations given us confidence that this is the task of a centralized government? Do we even want to experiment with the beginnings of a nationalized youth movement?

The answer is "No." Desirable outcomes in fitness, discipline, and citizenship should be forthcoming, but they ought to be fostered by our local communities. Many community agencies should be given an opportunity to experiment. The Quakers and others have already organized effective work—experience camps which combine citizenship, discipline, and fitness training. If the grass roots of democracy are allowed to dry up, the main trunk will not live long and that will be the end of our American dream. There is no sense in fighting evils a thousand miles from home and nurturing the same evils here.

Let us segregate our problems and then proceed to solve them individually or collectively. One of these problems would be to provide military training for a limited period, but provide it for its own sake.

Another problem would be to put a fraction of the cost of a compulsory year's training, which is estimated in terms of billions a year, into local school and community health services and into a real physical training program. This would provide service and training to all youth, boys as well as girls, which would form the only possible foundation for national physical fitness.

Another essential problem is to give youth a chance to serve. This service could be on a state or a local pattern. We have been proceeding on the false assumption that because of free schools, libraries, playgrounds, and a land of freedom youth should respond with appreciation and loyalty. But we know well that loyalty is developed from giving, not getting. Men live and die, and youth is no exception, for that for which they have sacrificed. A nation is not the sum of its parts or the sum of its privileges, but the sum of the gifts from its people. Youth will respond to this challenge, but it must be given the challenge in opportunities to serve.

It is generally admitted that universal military training has nothing to do with the winning of this war. We must ask the question, "Will it lend itself to pre-

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## It May Interest You to Know - - -

THE National Recreation Association, 315 Fourth Avenue, New York City, has available for distribution a series of mimeographed and printed materials on various aspects of recreational therapy. *Recreation for Men* which is a guide to the planning and conducting of recreational activities for men's groups (price \$1.25) will be found helpful to people working in the field of rehabilitation.

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"THE Nutritive Value of the Most Common Food" (No. 10) and "Calories, Proteins and Minerals in Average Servings" (No. 11A) are two charts recently published by Rudolph Schick, 700 Riverside Drive, New York City 31. Both charts are in color and measure 44" x 35"

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THE second printing of the Twentieth Yearbook of the American Association of School Administrators, *Health in Schools*, is now in process of manufacture. It will be 400 pages long and the paper cover reprint will sell for \$1.25.

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## Military Training

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vent future wars?" Will it, to be exact, convince our neighbors that we mean what we say when we announce that we want to be "a member of a family of nations."

This raises another problem. Would not the long-range public good be served best by having our country take the lead in calling upon the United Nations to agree to the abolishment of compulsory military training? If this were done it could then be enforced as a world pattern.

Upon all these subjects more time should be taken for consideration. The men in the services who are abroad should have a voice in the settlement. We are setting the sails of our "ship of state" for many years. Let us be sure that these sails are set to take us in the direction in which we really want to go. Let us not be content with only one objective but let us keep in mind the many objectives essential for a living, dynamic democracy. »«

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## Acrobatic Citizens

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sport. A competent leader is qualified to give helpful information on these subjects to his charges

A performer whose physical efficiency is high will have smoothly functioning muscles. He is more likely to develop the necessary forces which make possible the execution of challenging tumbling skills. The well

trained athlete is less likely to be injured. His body and mind are more alert and injuries are avoided through quickness of thought and action.

Coaches and players have, for a long time, recognized the need for thoroughly warming up before a contest. Warming up is a safety factor and should be accomplished before performers engage in vigorous muscular efforts such as are necessary during practice periods and competitions, or exhibitions. The tumbling instructor should post suitable warm-up exercises for the participants to enable them to establish this habit.

Fatigue is a factor in the safety of an acrobat. Efficiency decreases with the increase in fatigue. One cannot put forth his best effort when unduly tired. Individuals vary with the amount of heavy work which can be done before the onset of fatigue. The coach, as a rule, will learn about this dosage for each of his charges and should train his men not to continue practice beyond that stage which makes additional activity hazardous.

Staleness is also a factor in tumbling safety. The condition known as staleness is the result of overtraining. Symptoms of staleness in a performer are a feeling of being tired all over, irritability, loss of interest, a noticeable lack of initiative, a reduced resistance to infections, and a dull expression in the eyes. Instructors should recognize the signs of staleness and help the performer to return to an eager condition of mind and body. Usually a short period of rest from the activity will restore the physical and mental efficiency of the overtrained performer.

10 *Teaching Safety*.—Very early in the education of a tumbler, the instructor should instill safety procedures. Instruction in safety should accompany instruction in the various tumbling skills. The learner should be taught how to avoid injury through necessary precautions or by using such safety skills as rolling, relaxing, etc. An example of safe falling is the army technique taught soldiers who are required to jump from moving vehicles. Paratroopers, when landing, frequently employ a roll to "break" their fall. Advancing soldiers on the field of combat are taught to fall to a prone firing position. In many instances the fall is not only broken by a roll but the feet are regained without unnecessary delay or undue expenditure of energy. Several judo tricks employ rolling. Tumblers should be taught to spot each other in doubles, triples, or group efforts such as pyramids.

Falls often occur because the performer has changed his mind after beginning a stunt. By changing his mind, he may attempt an impossible skill in an effort to avoid injury. Or, he may "hold back" instead of producing the necessary efforts to do the stunt successfully. Such situations should be used by the instructor as teaching opportunities. Greater danger may occur if a performer changes his mind during the execution of a doubles, triples, or group effort.

When there is danger of falling, performers should face the mat, whenever possible, to better protect themselves against injury.

Instructors should impress upon their charges the importance of safe participation in acrobatics. Safety