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Army Specialized Training Program-ASTP-And Ole Miss.

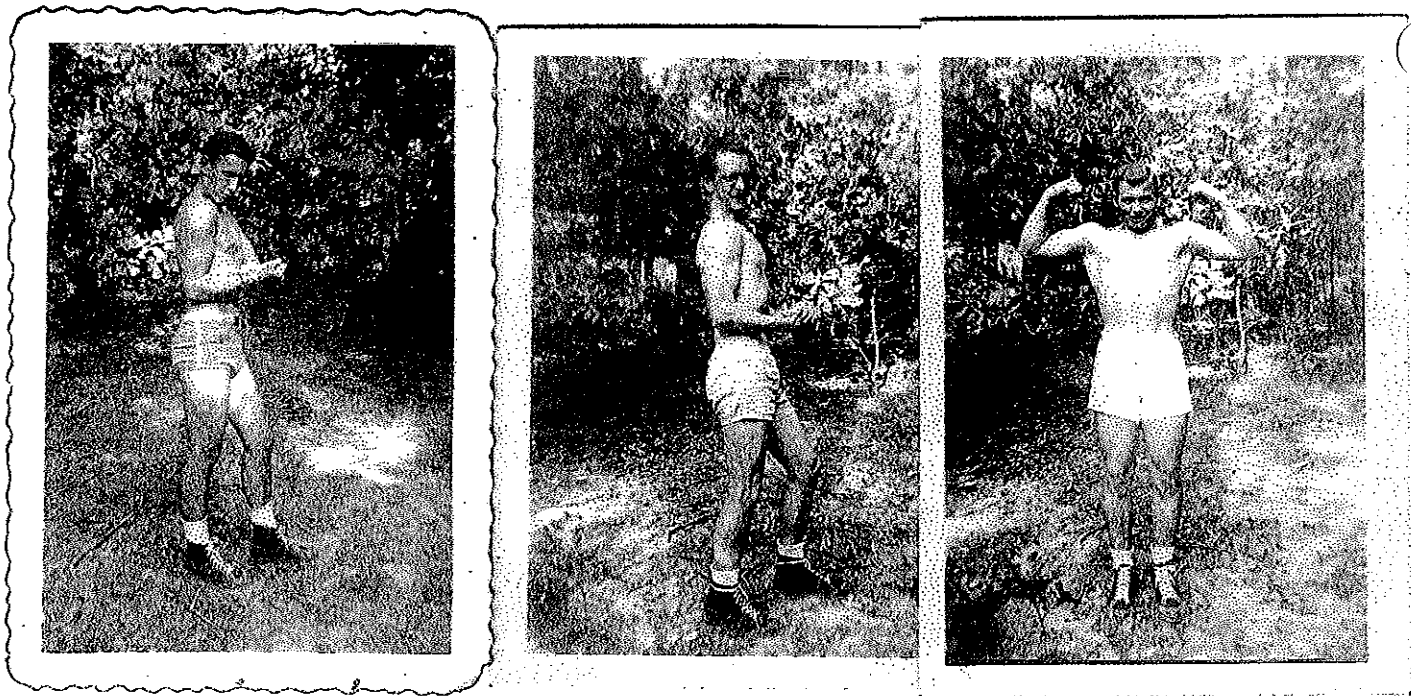
A few days later my life had changed in almost unbelievable fashion. I was no longer living in a temporary wood hutment, surrounded by red clay, but had a cot in the athletic dormitory under Tiger Stadium at LSU (Louisiana State University) at Baton Rouge, LA. There were no bugles. Bells rang to awaken us, and to summon us to meals and meetings. I was one of several dozen men from different camps, and different training backgrounds. We were told that this was a staging area, from which we would be sent individually to various colleges and universities throughout the nation, to begin college studies. We were encouraged to relax, and to use whatever facilities, including the swimming pool, the gymnasium, athletic fields and equipment, libraries, museums or whatever else might interest us. Because we were temporarily in a sort of limbo, the only requirement was that we attend meals in the cafeteria, read the bulletin boards for further instructions, and be in our rooms by 11:00 pm.

It goes without saying that, after the regimentation we had been through in our various units, it was difficult to believe our freedom. I spent time talking with some of my fellows, and it was soon apparent that this was indeed a select group of men. Many had been college students before entering the service, and were delighted to be going back to school instead of to the shooting war. A few were fresh out of high school. In these conversations I rapidly learned that all of us were above average intelligence. One was apt to find a chess game underway instead of the poker so common in unit day rooms. Mathematicians chatted with fellow number crunchers, and chemistry fans and engineering students and English majors found fellows and were happy to discuss their

interests instead of the latest bayonet drill. I can write about this now with some detachment, but at the time it was difficult to really grasp the drastic change in my circumstances.

At an early orientation meeting, the basic idea of the Army Student Training Program, or ASTP, was explained. We would be assigned , along with other men from all parts of the nation, to a college or university for education in a field chosen for us by the army. A rigid curriculum would be established, and the scholastic demands would exceed anything we could have encountered before. Instruction would be by regular college professors, in their fields of expertise. Instead of semesters, our terms would be three months each, and would cover at least a semester's work in that time. It would be important to work hard, because at the end of each three month term the lowest ten percent of students would be washed out, and would be reassigned to active duty wherever the army saw fit at the time. Instead of the usual college study load of about sixteen classroom hours a week, we would probably carry more than thirty. We would be required to complete all segments of the prescribed academic program, and if in our previous college work we had completed one or more portions of the army course of study, we would merely repeat that study because all ASTP students would complete all of the courses in the army program. In addition to academic work, we would continue physical training under tutelage of the school coaching staff, and it would be more strenuous and demanding than our basic training experience.

It was apparent that the future was not going to be a mere holiday. There were ominous overtones in the terms "ten percent out" and "more than thirty hours" and "more



John Pelletier, Don Parks, George Pavlick
1st Term, ASTP, Ole Miss



Marv Park, Lenny Shapiro, Don Parks
3rd Term, ASTP, Ole Miss

strenuous than basic training." As students, we knew that there was a demanding program ahead, but because we had just finished the basic training that converted us into soldiers we were glad to escape and to take our chances on whatever campus the army chose for us. As Lieutenant Encalade had said, there are few enemy attacks on college campuses.

After a few days, I found my name on the bulletin board, along with three others, to be assigned to study at the University of Mississippi, or Ole Miss, as it is universally known. I don't remember how I got to Oxford, Miss, where the school is located, but in due course I arrived, and was put into Company A. There were two companies of military students, A and B. The military contingent and the campus ROTC were under command of a lieutenant colonel, and the usual assortment of junior officers and non-coms was there to manage us. I was placed in a dormitory room, along with two other men. Because room assignment was by alphabet, my roommates were Harry Pappas and George Pavlick, both of whom became close friends and buddies, and both of whom survived the war and at this writing are still living.

We soon became aware that our lives were to be more tightly controlled than in basic training. Each day, Monday through Friday, began with roll call at 6:00 am. We had an hour to put our rooms in order and to shower and shave, and then went to the cafeteria for breakfast. At 8:00 am classes began, and we marched in formation to all classes and other events. At noon we ate at the cafeteria, and were free until 1:00 pm, when classes began again. At 5:00 pm classes ended, and a half hour later we stood retreat and went to eat. We were now free until 8:00 pm when we were required to be in our rooms with the

doors open and an open book in our hands. At 10:30 we were given a half hour to shower and take care of other physical necessities, and at 11:00 all lights were out. To enforce this regimentation there were staff monitors who constantly walked through the dormitories. Saturdays were the same as other days until noon, when we were freed to do as we pleased until 8:00 pm on Sunday, when the study routine began again.

The campus at Ole Miss was very handsome, with many buildings ranging in age from venerable to modern. There was a student union, which served as a snack shop and a meeting place for any idle moments at noon or after supper. One odd circumstance was the scarcity of civilian male students. There was the normal number of girls, but only a very few men. Most of the male dormitories were now military, and only one housed civilian males. We found that these were either not fit for military service due to one or more physical problems, or were medical students. The latter, because of the obvious need for doctors in both military and civilian worlds, were exempt from selective service draft calls. At any rate, the young ladies were happy to have an influx of bright-to-brilliant young men into their world, and we also were happy to be there.

Two other groups were pleased with our arrival. Professors and other members of the faculty were happy to once again have classrooms filled, and as many of them said later on, they found great pleasure in classes made up of only super-bright students, in contrast to the ordinary student body. Their work load was increased by army requirements, but the pleasure of having excellence instead of mediocrity was great. The others who welcomed us were the coaching staff. Due to the war, all intercollegiate athletics had

been curtailed or discontinued, and they were delighted to have us under their control for two hours, three days a week. We were graded on our physical education scores as well as on classroom work, and poor performance in the phys ed portion of the curriculum could wash us out as quickly as academic failure. The ten percent spur to achievement was like a sword of Damocles over our heads, on the playing field or in the classroom.

I had been at Ole Miss for only a couple of weeks when I received a letter from a girl with whom I had gone through school at Sheldon. Her name was Beverly Rhae Hofland, and her father was manager of Flindt and Miller, a long established men's clothing store. Her grandmother was Emily "Nana" Miller, widow of the founder of the store, Fred Miller. Beverly had accompanied her grandmother on yearly visits to Hot Springs, Ark., where Nana took the waters, drinking of and bathing in which was both fashionable and supposedly curative of various ills. This period, the late thirties, had seen an upswing in polio in various places and many polio victims sought relief at Hot Springs, Warm Springs, Ga., and other spas in the nation.

While Beverly was at Hot Springs in 1941, she had met a young man from Oxford, MS, named Bill Etheridge, who had been stricken during his junior year in college. He had gone on to earn a law degree despite his handicap, and was now both a practicing attorney and a member of the law faculty at Ole Miss. Beverly said she had written to Bill, and told him about my presence on campus, and she suggested that I go to see him. Shortly thereafter, I found a note in my mailbox from Bill, welcoming me to the university and asking me to visit him in his office when convenient. I have always been wary about such meetings, but because I was in such strange territory and somewhat lonely I went to see Bill the next day during a brief bit of free time.

When I first entered his office I was momentarily stunned at his physical condition. He was in a steel framework, extending from his armpits to his feet, which was hinged at the knees and hips to permit sitting down. He extended his right hand in greeting, and it was obvious that his left was lying inert on the desk. He smiled broadly and told me he

was glad to meet me, and asked me to sit down, and asked a large black man beside him to get me a glass of tea. He told me that he was aware of the demanding scholastic load we in the ASTP faced, and said he would do anything I might ask to ease my work. He said that since it was Thursday he knew my time was under strict scheduling but that on Saturday he would send Ben to take me to the Etheridge home, to meet his parents and to have dinner. We chatted for a few minutes, and then I had to get back to class and the daily grind.

It may be hard to believe, but after the first shock of seeing his condition, I never again noticed it. His personality was so bright, and his conversation so interesting, that his physical condition became completely unimportant. During the next nine months, I spent many hours in his company and never regarded him as anything but a completely functional human being. The hours spent with Bill and his family on weekends were the most rewarding times I had at Ole Miss.

Bills parents were gracious and welcomed me into their home on that first Saturday, and on every Saturday during my nine months in Oxford. Their house was large and rambling, with twelve foot ceilings and porches all around, and was quite old but in mint condition. The family was wealthy, which was a blessing for Bill because his life would have been much different without the money that paid for Ben's constant attendance to his needs. Ben lived with Bill constantly, bathed him and dressed him and took care of his physical needs, and carried him from chair to bed to wheelchair to wherever the occasion demanded. Ben was gentle, but powerfully strong, and also a considerate and wise companion.

After that first Saturday my life was greatly different from what I had at first expected at Oxford. The Etheridge's provided for me a room, with private bath, for my use on Saturday night. I found pajamas laid out on the bed each week. I ate with them at noon and in the evening on Saturdays, and at breakfast and dinner on Sundays. Because the family had several properties in town and in the surrounding countryside, Bill often spent weekend hours overseeing them., and I accompanied him on these journeys. The Mansion, the best restaurant in town, belonged to them, as did the movie theater. Many Saturday evenings were spent eating at the Mansion and then going to the movie, where Bill had two aisle seats reserved for him and a guest.

The family were all interesting conversationalists, and could talk on nearly any subject. They were kindred spirits politically, and regarded Franklin Roosevelt as a truly great man. I don't know how much of that esteem stemmed from FDR's quasi-brotherhood with Bill as a polio victim, but do know that they were real fans of the New Deal programs Roosevelt introduced which literally rescued the United States from the disaster of the Great Depression. As I recall they were in advance of most of their southern neighbors in racial consideration. They had servants, including a maid and a cook, and treated them with real respect, and of course the complete dependence on Ben which resulted from Bill's illness made Ben an important member of the household.

I would not know how to exaggerate the wonderful change my friendship with Bill Etheridge made in my life during those months at Ole Miss. On weekends I could almost believe I was a civilian again, doing things as I pleased. If ever I could be said to have lived in the "lap of luxury" it was during those happy weekends in Oxford I have ever

since been grateful to those wonderful people who made me a member of their family when I was far from my own.

I should note here that Bill's activities were not limited to family and scholastic affairs. He was an avid reader who wrote reviews for one of the South's leading newspapers, the Memphis Press-Scimitar. Also, he was considered a legislative expert, and wrote bills for members of the Mississippi legislature, for introduction and action. Before his illness, he had been an accomplished musician, playing the saxophone in groups at college. In sum, he was a brilliant mind in a broken body who never succumbed to self-pity or bitterness at the hand fate dealt him. I treasure his memory. He was perhaps the best part of my college education, at Ole Miss.

In addition to Bill, I managed to meet several coeds, at the student union on breaks or on those special occasions when the university sponsored social events for the ASTP men.

The relationship between male and female students was strictly governed by the Dean of Women, who never relaxed her vigilance in defending the virtue of her female charges.

The 1944 Ole Miss yearbook has this to say about her: "Miss Estella Gardner Hefley came to the University as Dean of Women in the fall of 1934. Hers is the responsibility of skillfully blending personal consideration for the individual student with the impersonal regulations upholding the standards of the university. She deals justly, yet kindly and prudently, with those possessed with great problems and little experience."

Let there be no mistake, all the young ladies on campus were considered by Dean Hefley as being of "little experience" and she was determined that under her watch there would be no "great problems."

Among her edicts which were strictly enforced was a ban on female sunbathing on campus, except on the roof of the three story women's dormitory, which could not be seen from any place on the campus, thus protecting the girls from prying eyes. This rule was effective as far as the male population of the campus was concerned, but there were prying eyes she could not control. At Grenada, a nearby city, there was an army air base at which pilots were trained to fly the C47 workhorse planes that were the major transport planes of WWII. On any day when ladies were sunbathing on the dormitory roof there was a constant procession of these big, slow aircraft passing over the campus, while the pilots paid more attention to sunbathers than to flying their planes.

Despite Miss Hefley's vigilance there was a lively romance scene on campus, but because the area was so small and there were so many eyes, nothing very racy took place. There were dances and receptions at the women's dormitories and the sorority houses, and most of the ASTP men were eager to take part. Because Mississippi was a dry state, there were very few incidents involving alcohol. Generally speaking, we behaved extremely well, both men and women, during our time at Ole Miss.

I soon became a good friend to a senior girl, Julya Lewis, who was quite active on campus. The Ole Miss yearbook for 1944 contains these references: Education major, Women's Athletic Ass'n, Home Economics Club, Society Editor of The Mississippian, Senior YWCA cabinet, Rebel staff, treasurer of Phi Mu sorority. She was a rather small, quiet, thoughtful person, quite pretty, and soft spoken. She came from a little town, Satartia, so small that it isn't shown on road maps of Mississippi. I guess we felt a little



Julya Lewis

Good friend and companion at
Ole Miss, 1943 - 1944

kinship because we shared a small town background. At any rate, when there was a dating situation on campus she usually was my companion, and I spent a number of free hours between supper and study with her at the Phi Mu house, sitting in the quite pretty guest parlor. She had a serious boy friend back home, and I was engaged to Pat, but Julya and I did share very pleasant times on campus. I think of her now with great affection, and hope she has had a good and fulfilling life. After I left Ole Miss, I never saw or heard from her again.

I would be remiss if I failed to relate one more great kindness extended to me by Bill Etheridge. While we soldiers most often went to our homes during the week-long interval between terms, on one occasion I arranged for Pat to come down to Oxford, at Bill's suggestion. He knew I was engaged to her, and was interested in meeting her. Her mother disapproved, but Pat decided to defy her mother for once, and arrived on the train in due course. I had a reservation for her at the Henry Hotel, and we spent a very happy few days together. During her visit, Bill lent me one of their cars, and the gasoline ration card that went with it, which allowed for unrestricted purchases because of his disability. It was a Studebaker, and quite a nice vehicle. We made good use of it, and also of the meals at Bill's home, and the theater passes, and the meals at the Mansion, the best restaurant in town, which the Etheridge family owned. Pat's visit lasted four days, and it was a charmed time in both our lives, courtesy of Bill and his family.

I am enclosing, at the end of this section on ASTP, a photocopy of the transcript of my academic record at Ole Miss. I did a little analysis and determined that I was at the university for eight months and twenty one days of instruction. During that time I earned twelve A's, twelve B's, and four C's. We carried thirty five hours of class and laboratory time, combined. My best records were in English, history, military science, and physics lab, which were straight A's, and the worst were geography, mathematics, and physical education, with two B's and a C in each. As I stated earlier, my AGC score was 143, and that's pretty good, but there were men whose scores were much higher, from 180 on up, so it was a highly competitive process to grade highly enough to stay in the program. Some of those who washed out during the time I was at school had scores as high as mine, or higher. I worked very hard to stay, and succeeded.

English instruction was very much like that subject everywhere, including grammar and essay work. Geography was taught with much more emphasis on geopolitics, concerning the relationship of populations and resources on political behavior. History included heavy emphasis on military influence on national goals, and on the inter-relationships of ethnic groups through the ages. Mathematics began in the first term with algebra and trigonometry, and progressed in the second and third terms to calculus, including application of those disciplines to engineering situations.

Physics included present knowledge, which was pre-nuclear, and dealt with pretty basic information on materials and their characteristics, and methods of using them in engineering. Engineering Drawing was preparation for producing plans for machine parts. It included work on proper lettering, and on projecting various views from a base

design, to give three dimensional aspects of the piece. Military science was taught on the premise that we would at some point become officers, and would have to know how to carry out officer functions as widely disparate as mess management and social behavior including proper dress and courtesy. There was emphasis also on leadership and on tactical and strategic planning.

Subject requirements were set by the army, but the instruction was by the civilian faculty (except for military science) and the entire experience was very much like the usual college situation, except for including a work load double that performed in civilian higher education. In retrospect it seems apparent that the average present day college student must be wasting a lot of time that could be more sensibly invested in the future. Admittedly the ASTP men were exceptionally gifted for scholarship, and were thus able to cope with the demands and at the same time have a modicum of social experience. Also, military control and discipline made the regimen feasible. However, self discipline and application could enhance results obtained at college by most young people. This idea was verified during my later years while obtaining a degree at Sul Ross University. It was ridiculously easy to outperform young students, because many lacked self discipline. In addition, many had no idea of work organization and were therefore unable to use time effectively. My year at Sul Ross was actually a walk in the park, and graduating cum laude was no particular achievement.

I did not discuss in the above paragraphs the physical education program at Ole Miss. This deserves separate mention. In charge of PE was the head football coach at the

university, Harry Mehre, and his assistants Eddie Khayat, Edwin (Goat) Hale, Engle May, and Ed Stone. Because of the war, there was no football program to coach and their talents were directed at making life as difficult as possible for the ASTP contingent on campus. They accomplished their goal. At the outset, we were required to do our individual best at push-ups, sit-ups, pull-ups, fifty and hundred yard dashes, and running the stadium. The stadium was forty tiers high, with four seating sections, on both sides of the football field. We ran up and down around each section, and across the field, and up and down the other side. This was really strenuous, especially when performed in regular army shoes, because we did not have sneakers.

We had two hour PE sessions three times weekly, and at each four week interval had to again score our best in all items. We were expected to improve measurably each time we were tested, or at the very least not to lose ground. Inclement weather did not ease our work load. We trained in the gymnasium, and substituted boxing and gymnastics for the stadium run. The coaches were cordial throughout, but never let up in their demands. At Ole Miss I discovered how heavy boxing gloves become after three minutes in the ring, and also learned that to duck is less painful than the alternative. When we left school and rejoined the army, I was in the best shape of my life, thanks to those five slave drivers

There were men among us who were splendid physical specimens. Some had been college football players before being drafted, and others were self-trained for strength and agility. The most push-ups I ever achieved was thirty three, but I watched one fellow do one hundred and then quit because he was tired of counting. Others performed similarly impressive feats. I was quite content to earn my B's, and survive.

The coaches could not forget football, and therefore organized teams in each company, to play three games in the fall, for the championship of Ole Miss. All the players who volunteered had extensive football backgrounds, in high schools and colleges. My roommate George Pavlick, was a star running back on the B company team, which won two of the three games and the championship. My other room-mate, Harry Pappas, was a cheer leader because of high school experience in Chicago, and that was a choice job because the other leaders were some of the more attractive girls on campus. The games were very well played and hard fought, and the entire student body, military and civilian, turned out to watch and cheer for their favorite team. It was quite fitting that the long-time campus mascot, an elderly Negro called "Blind Sam," came to all three games and was delighted to be there. I can say confidently that a good time was had by everyone.

During physics instruction at one point an incident took place that was at the time innocuous but later became quite interesting. In discussions of various materials the radioactivity of certain materials such as radium and uranium was noted by our professor. Also, Einstein's theory of relativity and the equation $E=mc^2$ were mentioned. As a special occasion, the Dean of Science instruction, a respected elderly physicist, was brought in to talk about the implications of Einstein's work. The old gentleman described the vast amount of energy that would be released if anyone could ever manage actually to apply the theory. His lecture was quite interesting, and made an impression on all in the class. He said, finally, that the theory was correct, but that the required materials and systems to make a practical application did not exist, nor could they ever be created because they necessarily were beyond the scope of human knowledge and endeavor.

Ironically, as we now know, at that very time a group of super-physicists in Chicago, engaged in a government enterprise called the Manhattan Project, were involved in the work that led to the creation of the first atom bombs. Who knew, indeed? Only a few. I have, to now, described the ASTP program as it was designed and administered by the army and by the schools involved. The plan was detailed and specific as to goals and methods of attaining them. However, there were, by my count of faces in the 1944 yearbook, three hundred and fifty six very bright young men at Ole Miss. Not much time had elapsed before many of those men were busily devising ways to get around the restrictions while not risking eviction from the university and return to the active army. There were countless tricks, ruses, evasions, and other bits of chicanery in use by various students, and to my knowledge no one was ever caught in anything serious enough to result in being sent away from the school.

Probably one of the first widely used ploys was used at reveille. All students were supposed to assemble in front of the dormitories, to answer to roll call. We soon observed that the young officers were often not completely alert at that early hour, and after a week or two only a portion of the residents in each dormitory fell out, and they answered to the names of their room mates who were getting a few more minutes of sleep. On a couple of occasions the number in formation was so obviously small that our bluff was called and there were room checks to locate malingerers, and for a while we had to really stand reveille, but then we managed to return to our little game for another few weeks.

Some of our brightest geniuses took upon themselves the challenge of working out ways to cheat in examinations. Because they did not really have to cheat, it was really more of an amusement than a necessity. They created signal codes, and hidden messages, and invisible lists written in invisible inks, and worked out many other ways of circumventing test controls. That they were successful did not adversely affect the rest of us, because they could do the work without trouble. The whole effort was merely to defy control.

I determined that I wanted something to do with my spare energy, and decided to build a large balsa wood and tissue paper model of a Vought Corsair navy fighter plane. I bought the kit through the mail, and began assembling it. This was a large model. The wing span when finished was five feet, and it occupied a lot of space. Because such enterprises were forbidden under our rules, I had to keep it hidden throughout the construction process which took at least a month and a half. To hide such large and delicate pieces safely in a bare bones dormitory room, which was inspected every Friday, was a task requiring real ingenuity. I taped the fuselage to the ceiling of the closet. One wing was taped under a cot, and the other was taped under the desk. My room mates cooperated by not crushing my hidden treasures, and after long hours with glue and delicate wood and paper pieces, it was finally finished, and I placed it proudly on my cot on that Friday evening, to await final disposition.

Although lights were out at eleven, I often sneaked out of the room and spent up to two hours on the telephone which was located in a stairway at the end of our corridor.

Because Pat was a telephone operator and working on the night shift at Sheldon, I would just place a call to the Sheldon office and she would answer and we would talk at

company expense. In the process of doing this, I got acquainted with the night operator in Oxford who, I learned, was named Nell Pogue. Nell was a widowed mother of a little boy, and I decided to meet her on that Saturday after finishing my model, and give it to her for her ten year old son. I did so, and that was the end of that personal defiance of restrictions on our activities in our rooms. Because the model was quite delicate, it probably didn't last long in his hands, but I had the satisfaction of making it and of successfully disobeying the rules for a long period.

Nell had divorced her first husband several years before I met her. She had then married a young man, who had to leave for military training on the evening of the day they were married. After his basic training was ended, he returned to Oxford on a furlough. She was working on the day he arrived, so he went with some school mates to a water filled pit near town, to swim. He dived off the side of the pit, and hit a nearly submerged floating log and broke his neck, dying instantly. When I began talking to her at night, she was still quite sad, and I am sure she appreciated an audience. We became telephone friends, and she even offered to do a real service for me and my room mates. She often went to Memphis on weekends, and was happy to become our bootlegger, bringing liquor to us. Mississippi was a dry state, and no beer, wine, or liquors were available locally. Nell kept us adequately supplied, and we were really grateful.

Now, however, a new dilemma presented itself. In our dorm room was no space large enough and hidden enough to permit clandestine storage of illegal booze. We put our heads together, and devised a solution that served effectively. We bought a couple of

pulleys, a hank of clothesline rope, and some wire. Behind the dormitory was a wooded area, and outside our dorm window was a sizable fir tree, with dense foliage. I climbed the tree one evening, and wired one of the pulleys to the trunk at a suitable height. We anchored the other pulley to the electric conduit which ran beside our window. We strung the rope through the two pulleys, and taped the ends together firmly, making a looped conveyor. We used the wire to fashion a sort of basket, which we hung from the rope. Now, and for the rest of our stay in that room, we had a method of hiding our bottles. We placed them in the basket and pulled them out into the tree where they could not be seen from the ground because of the dense foliage. This served us well, and even permitted the opening of an after-hours bar, on occasion, when we would serve drinks to anyone who brought their own glass and any mix they preferred. That improvised assembly was still there, between the building and the tree, when we bade farewell and left Ole Miss to go back to the army at Camp McCain. I like to think that some later occupant may have found it as useful as we did. At the very least it would have been a useful tenement style clothesline

At the end of each term, as expected, ten percent of the men were sent back to active duty. This precipitated a re-shuffling of housing, and I had different room-mates for each term. During the first term, I met Max Kiernan, from Alton, Iowa, which was only a few miles from Sheldon. He was married to a Sheldon girl, and knew Pat. We asked the administration to assign him to my room during the second term, and they complied. The third man that term was a very personable fellow from Chicago, Leonard Shapiro. They were both active in campus activities.,

Max played trumpet in "The Engineers," the dance band organized from ASTP musicians. The band was really very acceptable, played for dances and receptions, and doubled as a marching unit at the three football games. Leonard was an expert bridge player, and usually won any tournament he entered. He competed against civilian and ASTP players, and also against faculty members, and defeated them all. I have heard that among any three or four hundred soldiers during WWII one could find men who were experts in almost any conceivable endeavor. My experience while in the service supports that statement.

At Ole Miss we had experts in almost any ordinary activity, and a few who did not fit in any of the usual categories. One such was a lad from Brooklyn who was a hypnotist, and had performed actively before being drafted. He held several sessions to which both military and civilian observers were invited. He never did anything to abuse any of his subjects, and was therefore able to easily get volunteers. I have seen him take a subject from a sweating stay in the tropics to freezing at the North Pole, all in the space of a few minutes. A favorite post-hypnotic suggestion he left with a subject was to kiss his neighbor when the hypnotist snapped his fingers. This was always used when the young man involved was beside his girl friend, and always produced a lot of laughter and joking. We had poets and woodcarvers, and singers and rope trick experts. There was almost no end to the skills in the group of ASTP men, and the practitioners were usually delighted to display their talents in groups large and small.

In the third term the housing shuffle put Marvin Park and John Pelletier in the room, and

re-located Max and Leonard to other rooms. Marvin was a favorite among the coeds on campus, since he was from a wealthy New Orleans family and could talk Dixie better than anyone around, was a smooth dancer, and also very handsome. His mother used railway express to keep him well supplied with very good wines, and the basket had to be enlarged to make room for new items in the inventory.

Not long after we arrived at Ole Miss, some of our men arranged with the Mansion, a local restaurant, a system for procuring food during our study hours. The process was carried out with great precision. This was, of course, strictly against the rules and was therefore almost obligatory. One or two men would circulate through the halls, getting orders and money from interested buyers. The order would be called in, and the food assembled. The delivery driver would stop at a designated location (which changed frequently) outside a dormitory, and designated receivers would dash out, fling the bagged money into his hand, grab the food, and disappear back into the building, to begin distribution of individual purchases to rightful owners. The system worked perfectly, and in time the monitors seemed to admit defeat, and made only half-hearted attempts to interfere.

Many years after the end of the war, and after ASTP had disappeared from the memories of all but the participants, I learned of the origin of the program. What I was told is not official information, but seems to be reasonable and to fit the situation at the time it began and when it ended abruptly. President Franklin D. Roosevelt had served as a high official in the Navy Department during WWI. He was a student of that war, and deeply aware of the terrible toll extracted on the British population by the loss of a high percentage of the

brightest and best of their young men. The damage extended into all phases of life, and was felt for decades after the end of that combat.

At the beginning of WWII, the president knew the conflict would be costly and deadly, and that it might be fought for many years. With that in mind, he conceived the idea of creating a sort of brain bank, to avoid an outcome as costly to the American population as that inflicted on the British he proposed to siphon off the brightest men after basic training, and to put them on under-utilized college campuses, and to train them in some skill of use in military arenas. Thus, the nation would be better prepared, with engineers and scientists and other educated men. In retrospect this idea may seem to be what is now called "elitist" but the duration of the war and the extent of ruin it might create could not be predicted. As a consequence the ASTP program was created, and continued for nearly a year.

I have heard two versions of the reasons for discontinuance. One is that parents of men in active combat, fearing the worst for their sons, objected to the idea of safeguarding other sons simply because of higher AGC scores. When this kind of complaint reached enough government officials, it has been said, the resulting pressure dictated termination of the program. This seems to be a logical reason for ASTP's ending. Of course, we were given an opportunity to apply for medical school, and some did and continued to study after the war ended and became doctors. I did not choose to apply because I was mentally exhausted after nine months of effort.

The other suggestion about the program's end is that the war's progress became more

effective, and the end of conflict seemed to be approaching, and to accomplish victory a swift infusion of trained and capable young warriors was needed. The easiest place to get such a force was from the college campuses where they had been stored for the future. With a relatively brief refresher period in established units, these men were ready for use in accomplishing victory.

It matters very little which of those two proposed reasons is correct. The reality was that when the end of the third term was approaching, we were told that we would have a week furlough, and then would report for reassignment to active combat units. We accepted the inevitable, and finished our studies, and said goodbye to girl friends, and packed accumulated books and papers and other school materials to be taken home, and after nine splendid months as prospective engineers found ourselves once again in the infantry, recovering our military skills for use in the near future against the enemies of our country. Nearly all of the men at Ole Miss were assigned to the 94th Infantry Division, located at Camp McCain, not far in distance from Oxford but as different from Ole Miss as night from day.