

## Pvt. EKSTRAND



This is still the army, Pvt. Ekstrand! Rhode Island boy, student-soldier in Army Specialized Training unit at Providence College, has his rifle inspected by Second Lt. Frank E. Terrell of El Paso, Texas.



Geography lessons for men who will re-map a free world. Pvt. Malcolm Ekstrand, right, whose routine at P. C. includes lectures by Rev. George Q. Friel, O. P., head of geography department.

### In the Army Shuffle, He Landed in P.C.'s Sword and Lamp Detail, Three Bus Fares from Home

STORY BY ROBERT L. WHEELER  
PICTURES BY HARRY A. SCHEER

**A** FAIR SIGHT on a sunny day is Providence College's Aquinas Hall—a noble building robed in scholastic calm, sitting on its hillside in a Gothic dignity serenely regardful of the Providence skyline and factory chimneys.

Each morning at 6:15, however, that calm, that dignity are rent like tearing silk by electric bells pealing through the corridors of Aquinas Hall and penetrating dormitories with the sharpness of knives slitting podsful of peas. Only the 400-odd young men who roll out protestingly in compliance with the bells' shrill insistence are not as alike as the proverbial two or 200 or 400 peas in a pod. They are as different as their parents and environmental variations of 38 States could make them. But they do have this in common: If you were to look at the shoulders of some of the tunics being struggled into before reveille, you would observe that they display the Army's newest insignia, the Sword and the Lamp.

The young men are, in short, soldiers of the Army Specialized Training unit at Providence College. They represent a new kind of soldier and a new kind of college student. Presumably all these youthful warriors stampeding down the stairways of Aquinas Hall to the clangor of a bugle-less reveille are potential officer material. They have been individually plucked from one phase or another of basic training or this and that Replacement Group and assigned to a study program intended to fit them for this multi-purpose Army, which can use unbounded quantities of "know-how."

Not all of them will become officers but some will. A few may even make West Point. Others will develop into specialists of one sort or another and a certain num-

ber will "wash out", like others before them, and go back to straight soldiering.

Let us step into one of the dormitories on the third floor of Aquinas Hall while the rightful occupants are at breakfast on the first. It contains the bunks, assorted shoes, textbooks and plain pine desks of several young men, all from different parts of the country.

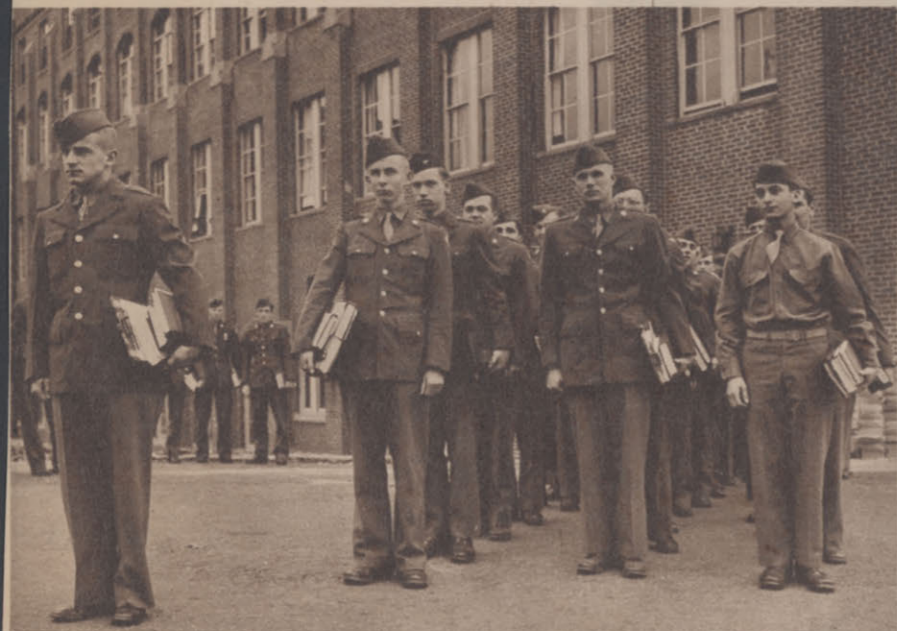
The atmosphere is infinitely more Spartan than that of a college dorm in time of peace. In fact, it's practically monastic. Only one of the desks has a kind of Joe College look to it, an effect produced by a girl's photograph and a pipe stand flanking the usual array of textbooks. There is an almost total absence of light reading, except for a single surprising item tucked away in another young man's severely factual library—a pocket-size, "Short-English Novels of the 18th Century," with the leaf turned down at that ancient thriller-diller, "The Castle of Otranto." Wonder if he really means to read it or if that's just the effect of the modified Gothic of Aquinas Hall on the youthful mind.

The boys inhabiting this scholarly retreat are Glenn Elste of Chicago, Jack Fetig of Cliffside Park, N. J., Richard Enright of Warren, Ill., James Ferullo of Boston and a young man named Ekstrand. He's the one this story is interested in. Why?

Well, for one thing because he's a Rhode Island boy. For another, he is the studious, quiet type, almost completely unmilitary to the eye, like so many citizen soldiers. When you say "eye" you mean civilian eye. The eye Army interviewing and classification puts on a man is a different optic, infinitely more discerning.

Anyway, meet Pvt. Malcolm Ekstrand, of Greenwood,

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Off to classes, HUH, two, three, four! Specialized Training calls for a full day of classes, study and physical education. Assembly for school is at 7:45 a. m. Ekstrand's first class is at 8:00.



Mail call is one formation they never miss. Doesn't mean so much to Ekstrand, who lives in Greenwood, R. I. But most of the 400-odd student-soldiers at Providence College are a long way from home.



Physical education, it is known as. Army Specialized Training program strives to keep student-soldiers at peak of physical fitness while undergoing intensive study course of general basics.



Chemistry Lab. Pvt. Ekstrand performs experiment with assistance of Pvt. Oliver Gallagher of Zion, Ill. Ekstrand's six subjects keep him busy all afternoon until 5:20 or Recall from School.

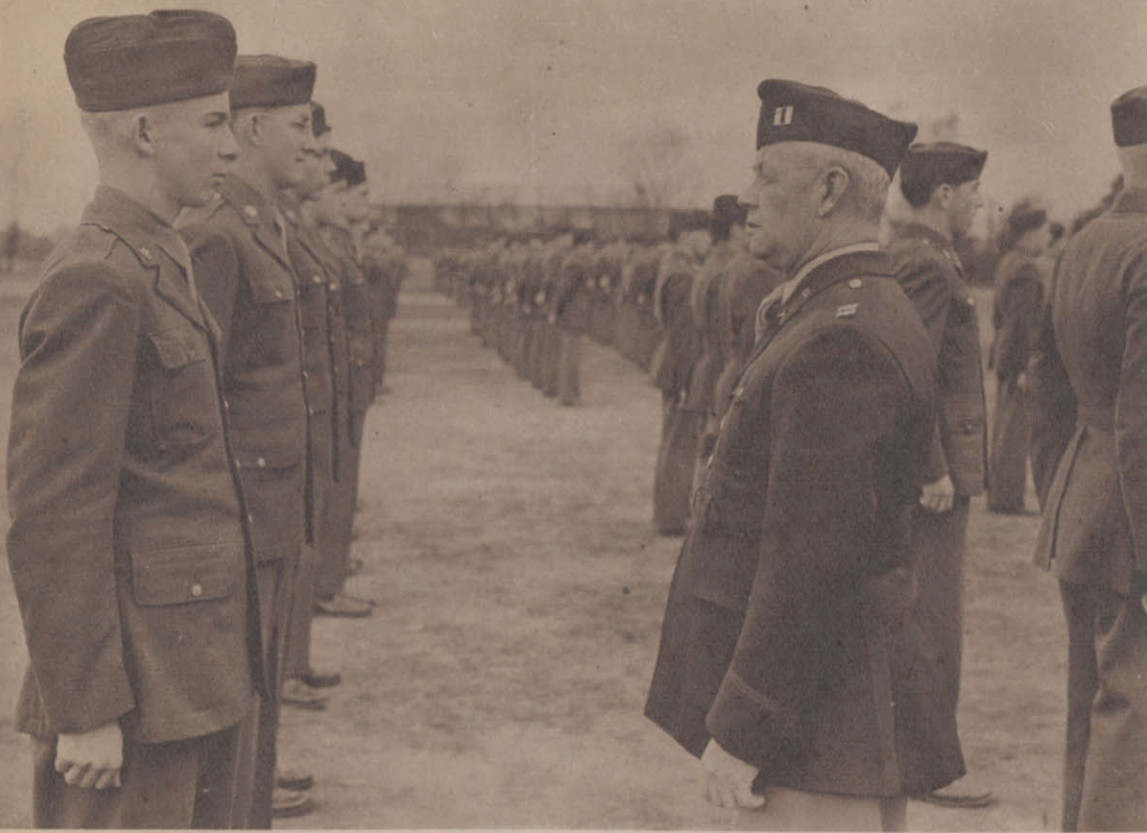


Supper—chow to you, Ekstrand!—is at 5:45. Mess is in Aquinas Hall, where healthy student-soldier appetites are appeased by excellent grub. Men have free time until Study Call, at 7:30 p. m.



From 7:30 until 9:30 all student-soldiers, including Pvt. Ekstrand, study. Or else! Recall from Study is followed by Tattoo at 10:00. Then comes Taps—bugled by electric bell. And out go lights of Aquinas Hall.

# Pvt. Ekstrand's Week End



Saturday afternoon inspection. A week-end pass is good from 3:00 p. m. Saturday to 6:00 p. m. Sunday, so look smart, soldier. Ekstrand gets once-over from Capt. James F. McFarland, inspecting officer.

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R. I., who was inducted back in April, 1943 and "processed" into the Army at Fort Devens, Mass. After that he went to Atlantic City for his basic training, which was interrupted by his present assignment. He is now in the BE 1-2 phase of what is called the General Basic of Army Specialized Training. BE 2-3 starts Feb. 7 and if the subject of this article does not "wash out" then or subsequently, he will go on to Advanced Training.

As a soldier, Ekstrand has a number, ASN31293358. As ASN31293358, he works a day contained tightly between the peeling of electric bells at 6:15 a. m. and 10:30 p. m. There are other bells shrilling at him in between but those are the important ones, inasmuch as they are still called reveille and taps.

Five days of assorted bell-ringing add up to a 59-hour week: 24 hours of school, 24 of study, six of physical education and five of military training. His studies are Physics, Chemistry, English, Geography, History and Analytic Geometry. So much for ASN31293358. For Pvt. Ekstrand is also an individual.

HE is a slight kid 19 years old—fair-complexioned, well-mannered, serious, and not much of a one for talking. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Otto Ekstrand, live at 2879 Post road, Greenwood, and he has two younger sisters, Martha Jane and Greta. Dad says they both boss Pvt. Ekstrand quite a bit.

Twenty Eight Seventy Nine Post road is the typical compact suburban home—small, white, with a yard, handy to busses. The living room is orderly, warmly friendly. There is a piano. Pvt. Ekstrand plays a little, not especially well. He plays tennis a lot, and very well indeed. Malcolm is a graduate of Lockwood high school, in Apponaug. Likes mathematics and has no hobbies except tennis.

If pressed, Pvt. Ekstrand will admit having read about the war "a little," but his general attitude toward it is incurious. He accepts the fact of it, just as he accepts the fact of the Army's cut-and-shuffle having flipped him within three bus-fares of his home after all that "processing" and shunting around.

Pvt. Ekstrand's attitude toward the war is not indifference, nor is it untypical. He is, like many other young citizen soldiers, taking the whole business in stride. It is a known but curious fact that Specialized Trainees get very little time to think about the war. They are too busy marching to class in cadence, hup-hup, and not getting "washed out."

The military side of life at P. C. is perhaps most in evidence on Saturday afternoons when columns of Specialized Trainees pour onto the athletic field and uncoil into ruled lines of olive drab paced by inspecting officers who look everybody over, just like careful mothers of large families, and do not omit to glance behind ears and at the heels of shoes.

After that the columns move off the field to the crash of band music and at roll call a cheerful voice says, "Now I've got some very bad news about restrictions."

Life is real, life is earnest—in the General Basic of the Specialized Training program.



Ekstrand got his pass, so he must have had a good week. Too many demerits and he'd have to stay at P. C. and STUDY Saturday night and Sunday. But all's oke with Ekky and he's off to Greenwood!



Homecoming. That's Mom—in other words, Mrs. Malcolm Otto Ekstrand, 2879 Post road, Greenwood. Right, ASN 31293358—in other words, young Mal Ekstrand, about to enjoy a rest from student-soldiering.



And this is home. After supper, the Ekstrands gather about the piano while Malcolm goes to work on "Pistol-Packing Mama," which is not in Specialized Training curriculum.

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