

STUDENT-SOLDIER

CLASS GRADUATES

WBZ (cont.) Jan. 29

First in Providence College's History Honored at Exercises Yesterday

Providence, R. I., Jan. 29—Curtailement of the Army Specialized Training Program "might seriously handicap the Allied cause in this conflict" Rev. Charles H. McKenna, O. P., professor of political science at Providence College, told the College's first class of AST student-soldiers at graduation exercises yesterday afternoon.

"Recently this program has been under severe criticism," he told a mixed audience of military and civilians. "It is contended that if the numbers now in the Army Specialized Training Program were removed from the colleges and placed in a more active military service it would not be necessary to draft the fathers of the nation. It is very true that the father is essential to the preservation of the home, and the home, and the home is the nucleus of the American form of society. Everyone admits that it is preferable not to have to induct fathers into military service for even a short time. But since we are confronted with an existing fact, we must deal with the reality: the Army Specialized Program is not in any way responsible for the father draft."

"A few minutes of calm deliberation," he continued, "reveals the accuracy of this statement. The total enrollment of the program is approximately 140,000. This is equal, in round figures, to the number called to the service by the draft each month. Consequently, cancellation of the ASTP would do no more than delay the draft of fathers for about one month."

"Shall we endanger the lives of thousands, and, in some instances, millions," he asked in conclusion, "because this nation is lacking in practical wisdom by failing to provide a group of trained specialists? Among these millions, it must be remembered are many who are at the present time fathers of families, fathers anxious to return to their homes, and certainly there are many who will be the fathers of the future."

Members of the graduating class, all of whom had finished the basic phase of their training at yesterday morning's classes, received certificates indicating satisfactory completion of courses in the Army curriculum. Rev. Jeremiah T. Fitzgerald, O. P., vice-president of Providence College, delivered the address of welcome. Seated on the platform were Major Howard B. Smith, commandant of the unit and Rev. Arthur H. Chandler, O. P., dean. The graduates will shortly receive their assignments to other posts.