

DIAL R-326 ALL DEPTS

THURSDAY, JULY 6, 1944

SECTION B—PAGE 1

# Maj. Simon N. Graham Conducts The "University Of Fort Bragg"

Fort Bragg, N. C., July 1.—"Major," said the Colonel, "we are losing too many men and the War Department has determined a method for lightening the losses. You have been selected as the man to take direct charge of the job."

This conversation did not take place on a battlefield; indeed, it was held far from any fighting. At the Army was losing men by the hundreds to a foe that rendered them just as useless as enemy bullets and the process for rehabilitating them was to prove as vital, as intriguing, as those medical men use in healing the wounded.

The time was late May, 1943; the place was Fort Bragg's Reception Center Headquarters; and the foe was a lack of essential knowledge on the part of a too large portion of all Negro men examined for induction into the Army. More than a year has passed since Major Simon N. Graham, of Roanoke Rapids, got his orders and on this weekend, as Commanding Officer of the Special Training Unit, he will direct a celebration of the first anniversary of the unit's initial receipt of trainees.

It was a difficult job the Major undertook, but his experience as a high school principal made him well fitted for the job; and he had the constant encouragement and support of Brigadier General John T. Kennedy, Post Commander, who held the project close to his heart. The problem was acute: draft boards were running far behind in their quotas because the Army refused to accept men whose performance on tests indicated that their educational qualifications were less than that of the average fourth-grade student. Realizing the urgency of the situation, the War Department established the Special Training Unit to salvage such men for military service and on June 1, 1943, Service Command Unit 1425 was activated at Fort Bragg for the training of Negro men whose education had been limited. The unit is a part of Fort Bragg's Reception Center commanded by Lt. Col. Horace L. Johnson, of Smithfield, N. C.

If the program was to be a success, the Major realized it was imperative that he select an outstanding group of instructors. Personnel records were studied carefully and it became apparent that at the Fort Bragg Reception Center there was a number of former school teachers whose records looked promising. These men were interviewed and the most outstanding were assigned to the STU and given basic military training. Two companies were organized and on June 30, 1943, the first shipment of 65 trainees was received.

It was a heterogeneous group of men, these first trainees, and they were to prove typical of those to follow. From farm and factory, plowshare and lathe the long arm of Selective Service had drawn them into an Army which they were not yet equipped to serve. Work had been the lot of most of them and, although a few had attended a year of high school, many had never entered a classroom, and the average of the group had completed only three and one-half grammar grades. A majority had stopped school voluntarily to earn their livelihoods. Clad in zoot suits and overalls, some flabby, many underweight they looked neither like scholars nor potential soldiers. Yet it was the task of the STU, without precedents to follow in establishing a teaching system, to give them the Army

equivalent of a fourth grade education in a maximum of 12 weeks!

Acknowledging the varying degrees of education represented in the group, the unit administered a classification test to the trainees, and upon its results they were put into four different levels. The men with the lowest grades were placed in the first level, those with the best in the fourth, and thus instruction could be given according to the abilities of the men to absorb it. Additional level tests were given each week and advancements in levels were made by trainees upon passing them. After completing the fourth level work and passing a final test, trainees were graduated.

Time being of the essence, it was clear that the Unit must take advantage of the most modern educational methods and even improvised some of its own. The Army Reader, a simplified story of a modern recruit's "Pvt. Pete" adjustment to military life, was adopted as a standard textbook and an Army arithmetic book was also used. But these texts alone proved utterly inadequate for the job and, utilizing the advanced educational knowledge that most quick learning comes through the eyes, the STU established a Visual Aids Department which has become an indispensable part of its program. There alphabet cards, flash cards, posters, and illustra-

tions are produced in large quantities for use by instructors in the classroom, with talented artists executing the ideas.

Word association is drilled into trainees through the use of cards, showing pictures of such familiar items as barracks bags, chairs, tables, etc., with the name of each article written under it. So unique is the function of the Unit that most of the educational materials is needs cannot be obtained from educational publishers but must be created by its own staff.

It was soon learned that one of the most satisfactory methods of teaching the trainees is through the showing of moving pictures. The average trainee sees several films a week on such subjects as hygiene, the Articles of War, tent pitching, use of the gas masks, and firing the rifle. Excellently produced, dramatically presented, these training films advance vital information in a form easily absorbed.

Because many new trainees are not familiar with America's role in the war, great care is taken to explain to them why we are fighting and what will be expected of them in the Army. A feature of this orientation is a welcoming address by the chaplain and a showing of the film, "The Negro Soldier," which gives a vivid demonstration of the contributions men

(Continued on Page 3—Sect. B.)

## SPAR Recruiter Comes Here



Spar Recruiter Virginia F. Clark, Yeoman, second class, who is in Roanoke Rapids today through Saturday interviewing and enlisting young women between the ages of 20 and 36 for service in the Woman's Reserve of the Coast Guard. Yeoman Clark, whose home is Charleston, Miss., is a graduate of Delta State College of Miss. Spar Jean E. Guild, Yeoman, second class, who is the other member of the recruiting team, and Miss Clark, are making headquarters at the local post office. Office hours are from 9 a. m. until 6 p. m. Young women who are unable to see the recruiters during these hours, may make special appointments.

## Have a "Coke" = How are things goin'?



...or being friendly in Newfoundland

There's an American way to make new-found friends in Newfoundland. It's the cheery invitation *Have a "Coke"*—an old U. S. custom that is reaching 'round the world. It says *Let's be friends*—reminds Yanks of home. Because Coca-Cola stands for *the pause that refreshes*,—has become a symbol of our friendly home-ways. So Coca-Cola belongs in your home, too . . . ice-cold and ready in the refrigerator. Get a supply today.

BOTTLED UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE COCA-COLA COMPANY BY  
**WELDON COCA-COLA BOTTLING WORKS, INC.**



"Coke" = Coca-Cola  
 It's natural for popular names to acquire friendly abbreviations. That's why you hear Coca-Cola called "Coke".