

*Dr. Woods wanted in ROTC
unit.*

10 West Howell Avenue
Alexandria, Virginia

January 4, 1950

Dr. Ralph H. Woods, President
Murray State College
Murray, Kentucky

Dear Doctor Woods:

I have talked with several people since you called and have received a number of opinions, practically all of which confirm what I told you yesterday.

I called Colonel Dwyer who says that the situation has not changed since I last talked to him. They hope for a decision next week. They have not changed their recommendation.

This morning I discussed your problem with one of our colonels who keeps in touch with personnel matters. He does not know of any announcement relative to the opportunity of men to volunteer for their branch of service. He says that for some time the recruiting agencies have pressed people to enlist while they still had a chance to choose what they wanted. He thinks there are a number of factors working in favor of the announcement of a policy stopping volunteering or selection. The main one, of course, is the growing need for infantrymen. In the last war, it was found that the Army waited too long before insisting on a chance at the best men. Near the end of the war, General Marshall persuaded the other services to allot the Army a large percentage of the draftees. Under the unification system, Secretary Marshall as Defense head could order such a policy put into effect without any great lot of trouble.

I have talked to two other officers who have had some dealings with draftees in World War II and now. They think something may be done fairly soon to limit the choice of branches. However, no one will predict whether or not this will come in the next six months. Much probably depends on the age set in the new draft bill. If Gen Hershey was correctly quoted as saying he wants a draft bill calling all men between 18-25 with few exceptions, and this is passed, there there is likely to be little choice given draftees.

It is somewhat difficult, therefore, to know what to tell students. You might say that even if choice of the branch of service is stopped, a fairly sizeable number of draftees will be assigned to the navy and air force. These assignments will frequently be based on their technical training. There is considerable indication that the armed forces are making some effort to use people with special training in jobs suited to that type of training. Of course, there is no

that this will be done. If a student's main desire is to choose his branch, he is gambling if he stays on in school. Without doubt his chance to choose his branch will shrink as time goes on. He is likely to have less chance to get commissioned or to get rapid promotions. I think that if I were anywhere close to getting a degree I would gamble. If I were a freshman I am not so sure. If a student doesn't particularly mind whether or not he goes into the ground forces, then he probably would do well to get as much training as possible.

I am afraid all this is of little help to you. Therefore, I had a talk with Dr. A. B. Butts, former Chancellor of the University of Mississippi and now head of the Ground Forces program for graduate study of regular officers in civilian universities. He faced some of your problems early in World War II and was later in the Army. He even went through the process of trying to get an ROTC unit for the University of Mississippi early in the war. He agreed on nearly all points with the people I have cited above. However, he gave me the name of the army's member of a new board which had been set up here to give information to the colleges. I talked to the member, Lt. Col. C. S. Hampton. I learned that the new committee is collecting inventories of the facilities various schools have available for armed forces training. He says that you can get information by writing the following:

Secretary of Defense
Attention Chairman Committee on Educational Liaison
Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington 25, D. C.

They will probably send you blanks or instructions. If they haven't ~~written you~~ answered your request for information after some time, you may want to send them a statement as to your present enrollment, training facilities, dormitory space, and information relative to the training programs located there during the war. This is all a guess on my part. I imagine that you have furnished similar information to the ROTC people. This colonel, incidentally, is in Colonel Dwyer's section. Dr. Butts thinks that this Committee may help to solve some problems.

Let me know if I can get any further information for you. I realize that you have a tremendous problem, and I am always willing to do what I can. Just how we find it difficult to find out very much because matters are no longer settled by the Army, Navy or Air Force individually, but by all of them and the Secy of Defense. It is not possible, therefore, to conduct an Army man and find out definitely what the Army intends to do. For that reason, it is often impossible to get anything definite.

Sincerely,

F. C. Ryan