

505. - Historical

## SAN DIEGO STATE COLLEGE IN WORLD WAR II

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The 134 names at the end of this chapter are those of graduates and former students of San Diego State College who gave up their lives in military service during World War II. The length of the list attests to the tremendous role played by the College which, as a liberal arts and teacher training institution, did not train students specifically for war. The College, like many others, has no department of military training. Yet, when the emergency demanded, the Aztecs\* participated so actively in the war that more than 3,000\*\* graduates, former students and faculty members are known to have entered the armed forces, and the percentage who lost their lives far exceeded the national rate.

Throughout hostilities the campus enrollment dropped. Our enrollment, which had reached its maximum figure in the fall of 1939 with 2,400 students, dropped to a low of 800 in 1944, and the faculty which had numbered 110 decreased to 60.

Lack of dormitories and housing facilities prevented the College from participating in an Army program or the Navy's V-12 program. Not only was the housing situation an important factor, but the San Diego area was adjudged to be overcrowded, and military programs were placed in the less crowded areas in the hinterland. During the time that our own enrollment was reduced, several other institutions such as the University of California which offered ~~special~~ special courses in war work held some of their classes on the campus. Courses in First Aid were given by our faculty members both on and off the campus.

\* Aztecs are San Diego State College students.

\* By the very nature of the problem of gathering statistics on scattered personnel, it is impossible to ever obtain a complete list of persons who entered the service. Such figures or lists are not obtainable from the government, and even the issuing of a military transcript of record by the college to a branch of the service does not necessarily mean that the person for whom it was issued ever entered the service.

We do not know how many of our men were wounded, decorated, or commissioned for many never reported that information. Such information as is available was compiled in connection with the editing of The Aztec News Letter, a serviceman's monthly periodical published by the writer of this chapter for four years. It will be referred to later.



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During the early months of the conflict abroad State College men began to be attracted to war activities. Among these, especially for the home front, was employment in the local aircraft plants. This demand for labor in many cases offered the first opportunity for industrial employment for some students who had been brought up in the hard Thirties. The numbers, who were so employed at some time before Pearl Harbor or shortly thereafter, certainly ran into many hundreds.

Air-mindedness in our pre-war students, many of whom were sons of servicemen, caused many to go into civilian pilot training, and still more were attracted into the Air branches of the different services. Many State College students were flying when training hazards were greatest and early commissions caused them to be among the early fighting Aztecs. Although many had taken civilian pilot training before the war, a wartime ban on flying in this area made such training impossible here. Some students commuted to Yuma, Arizona, twice weekly for their flying lessons. The College was represented in combat in the Royal Air Force and among the Flying Tigers before Pearl Harbor, at Pearl Harbor, in the early Philippine campaign, on the Doolittle raid over Japan, and also in the 19th Bombardment Group in the East Indies. Those trained men who were in combat in the early stages of the war proved to be men of ability with high qualities of leadership. Those who survived naturally rose to ranks and positions of responsibility.

An event which foretold to many the approaching hostilities occurred on September 16, 1940 when the old 251st Coast Artillery (Anti-aircraft) was called to active duty. On October 31 the unit sailed for Hawaii where it saw action at the very opening of the war in the Pacific. While the nickname of the 251st was "San Diego's Own", to us it might well have been "San Diego State College's Own" for in it were many of our former students. In it also were many local high school graduates who had joined up as National Guardsmen. Many of these boys, then deprived of the opportunity of getting higher education, are now attending the College after having served their country for periods of as much as six years.



The individual movement of men students and faculty members into the armed forces went on at an accelerated pace. Those gradual movements were punctuated by the calling into immediate service of 33 men students who were on the V-7 program, and 38 others who were on the Enlisted Reserve Corps who were unceremoniously called out of their college programs and placed in the infantry where they soon saw combat duty. Before hostilities ended the source of new male freshmen had been cut off completely except for the 17-year olds and those who were physically unfit.

Research on scientific projects engaged many of our scientists both in and out of the armed forces., Only after V-J Day did we learn that some of them had been prominently active in atomic research. Other fields such as chemistry, physics, meteorology and radar attracted still others. Research in the social sciences some as did the writing of parts of the history. Political geography and research in the Office of Strategic Services engaged still others.

Whatever the branch of the armed forces or of war work, there were to be found in it many of our former faculty members and students serving as instructors. As might be expected of ~~scholarship students~~ personnel from a liberal arts and teacher training institution, they were equally active as administrators.

The part played in the war by the Aztec women deserves special mention. About 150 women students and faculty members went into the service which carried them to practically all major theaters of action and to every section of this country. Hundreds of others went into other branches of war work, and nearly every one seemed to be engaged in some form of activity to aid the war effort. Although the College sponsored some organized entertainment for service men, by far the greater portion of such service was rendered by the individual Aztec women through their own church, social and other organizations in the community. For many, this service was in addition to studies, and either part or full time employment.

The fall of 1945 saw the upswing in enrollment with the return of disabled veterans. Most of those entering the college at that time enrolled under Public Law 16, while the much greater influx of later semesters came mainly under the provisions of Public Law 346, or the G. I. Bill. There now are about 2,000 veterans enrolled on the campus, many of whom are our former students resuming their education with greater maturity and almost invariably with greater determination and success.

This chapter would be incomplete without reference to The Aztec News Letter, for that publication contains our most complete record of the "Aztecs in Service." Its 48 issues were edited and published over a four-year period by the writer of this chapter also, by various means, raised funds amounting to nearly \$10,000 for its publication and mailing costs. The Aztec News Letter was planned as a clearing house of news from service men to service men, and undoubtedly it became the College's most widely read publication. Its peak circulation was 3800 copies for both service and home front readers.



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There were many adjuncts and auxiliaries to the News Letter. One was an address file which was referred to innumerable times by friends of those in service. Another was a picture panel at the college with provision for names and pictures of all of the "Aztecs in Service." Because of the availability of their addresses, campus students found it possible to write annual Christmas letters to them.

Complete volumes of The Aztec News Letter may be referred to in the College, San Diego City, and the Junipero Serra Museum libraries. Most of the printed issues are still available at the office of the San Diego State College Alumni Association which now publishes the Alumni News, a successor to The Aztec News Letter. With the return of so many of the service men, the emphasis in the news is upon civilian and alumni activity.

Names of the former students who died in military service will be placed upon a bronze plaque by the veterans now attending the College. The list, as complete as it has been possible to make, follows:



John E. Abbott  
Raymond L. Adair  
Herman Addleson  
Robert M. Alber  
James Norwood Amos  
Roger Armbrister  
Martin P. Anderson  
Richard Dennis Aubert  
William E. Baldwin  
Allen Bailey  
Joseph Barkley  
John W. Bassett  
William C. Batchelor  
John I. Beck  
Clair V. Berdel  
Jack N. Berg  
John Burdette Binkley  
John William Borum  
Frank Braisted  
Forrest H. Brown  
Warren W. Brown  
Maxton Brown  
Richard W. Burch  
John C. Butler  
Raul Callo  
Wesley E. Carter  
Dennis Chamberlain  
Gordon Chamberlain

Richard R. Clark  
Richard W. Clark  
Robert Cochrane  
Thomas H. Cozens  
Harold D. Currey, Jr.  
George R. Dall  
Thomas J. Davies  
Edward B. Davis  
Sherman Denny  
Charles W. Dowell  
Leslie Duvall  
Wesley P. Eby  
Howard J. Engle  
C. Gene Erdman  
George J. R. Ewing  
Adelbert Faulconer  
Paul A. Fern  
Don Finney  
Gilbert O. Fitzell  
Howard Flisrand  
John J. Fraser  
Jack Frost  
Robert M. Fuller  
Lyman J. Gage, Jr.  
Joseph Norman Gates  
Al Goeddel  
William S. Goodchild  
Robert A. Griffith



Frank J. Guasti

Stanley Gue

George E. Hammond

James C. Hardin

Mason Harris

William S. Harshaw

William Headington

Edward L. Imblum

Douglas Jacks

Kenneth L. Johnson

Charles P. Jones

Richard Kates

Arthur Kelley

James D. Koester

Paul Kraemer

Robert J. Landis

Wendell Langford

James Leonard

Allen Lovine

Howard McBride

Lyle C. McClocklin

John B. Megrew

Maurice C. Morrell

George R. Mohr

Francis Moore

Ray E. Moore

Kenneth B. Moyer

Raymond Mueller

Russell Newbury

John R. Nolan

Frank Oliver

Thomas Cook Owen

James Parks

Royal A. Parks

Sam Patella

Robert C. Peterson

Atwell Milton Phelps

Raymond Craig Potter

Gilbert Quon

Lynn Rogers

Kramer Rorig

George Rosado

Richard W. Roth

Francis Richard Ryan

William E. Sage

James Samuels

Joseph Savage

Richard Sawaya

Edward L. Searl, III

Maxwell Butler Sherwood

William B. Shropshire

Pfaffle Simpson

Paul Siraton

Thomas A. Skinner



Frederick B. Smith  
Robert Harlan Smith  
John Stevenson  
Victor Raymond Talbot  
William Taylor  
Ross A. Tenney  
Clarence F. Terry  
Alan Thomas  
Jerry E. Thomas  
Walter L. Tichenor  
Parker Totten  
Thomas Traylor  
Russell Dean Wahlberg  
Frank R. Verducco  
John H. L. Vogt, Jr.  
Peter Leo Volz  
Mark P. Wangness  
Donald L. Webber  
Lawrence I. Werner  
Clarence H. White  
Clea E. Williams  
Maurice Wilson  
Louis Massie Winn, Jr.  
Charles M. Witt