What Can We Do?

The local posts of the Society of American Military Engineers play a definite part in the fulfillment of its raison d’être. They are the active field forces which study local conditions and help to convey the message of preparedness to their communities. They serve a valuable purpose to individual members. They bring into personal contact Reserve and Regular officers who would serve together in time of emergency and whose mutual acquaintance will be most valuable in the efficient functioning of a smooth running, military machine. Through lectures on military and engineering subjects and by inspection trips, they serve as schools of instruction on military engineering.

But, in addition to the personal value to the members, local posts may render a most valuable service to the nation. They may accomplish this in a body or by the assignment of committees to investigate and report on special subjects to be later discussed and digested by the post as a whole, and appropriate action taken. Requests have frequently been received from local posts asking what activities and endeavors will render the greatest service. A few will be suggested here, but a study of local conditions by thoughtful men will bring out many others.

A definite object of the Society is to keep national defense before the eyes of the community, and that part which engineers take in preparedness. The best answer to the assertions of pacifists and millenniumists is a statement of cold facts. There are many sincere and patriotic people who believe that disarmament would produce world peace. They are not inspired by communistic doctrines, but are simply unacquainted with the lessons of history, and fall an easy prey to those with ulterior motives. The Society has published a pamphlet entitled “The Military Policy of the United States” which presents, in ready form, disproof for the theories of those opposed to preparedness.

At the present time, there is a determined effort on the part of pacifist propagandists to abate military training from our schools and colleges. A definite program could be worked out by each local post to counteract such activities in their communities.

There are many technical questions which require a thorough study by local groups. Are the highways and bridges such as will suffice in time of war? Where are the bottlenecks in railway and highway transportation in the community? Are there any new methods of construction and repair in the community that would be of use in time of war, especially where speed is the main criterion?

The country has been divided into a number of procurement districts that the supply of a mobilized national army may proceed with rapidity and smoothness, and without the competition and high prices that were attendant upon the World War. The post may assist the local procurement section in obtaining valuable data.

The draft will not go into effect until thirty days after M-day. How is The Society going to assist in voluntary enlistment at the outbreak of a war?

If we are so unfortunate as to be plunged into another war, there is going to be a much greater demand for engineering skill and knowledge than in the World War. Of this, only a small part will be performed by combat engineers at the front. With the tremendous supply program which will be put into operation, the masters of the wheels of industry and Regular officers who would serve together in time of war.

Major General Harry Taylor

Closing a brilliant and distinguished career of forty-two years as an officer in the Corps of Engineers, United States Army, Major General Harry Taylor retired from active service on June 26.

Born in the state of New Hampshire on June 26, 1862, and appointed from that state as a cadet at the United States Military Academy, he graduated in the class of 1884 and received his commission as Second Lieutenant, Corps of Engineers.

His service, with the Corps of Engineers consisted of a variety of duties; a lieutenant in the Battalion of Engineers at Willets Point, New York; Assistant Professor of Mathematics at the Military Academy; in immediate charge of the construction of the defensive works at Sandy Hook, New Jersey; assistant in the Seattle district, where the principal work was fortification construction; assistant in the Portland, Oregon, district; at various times in charge of the defenses of Portsmouth, New Hampshire; river and harbor works in Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and New York, dealing with all the works on Lake Champlain; in charge of the defenses of Boston; commanding Company L, 3d Battalion of Engineers, at Washington Barracks pending his departure for the Philippines where he assumed the duties of Engineer Officer, Department of Luzon; commanding 3d Battalion of Engineers, and was in immediate charge of all fortification construction in the Philippines; in charge of the defenses at the eastern entrance to Long Island Sound; in charge of...