

duties of the Corps of Engineers, it has been necessary to conduct the examination of records and requests for consideration with an altogether inadequate force. An attempt has been made in each instance to tender the commission with a rank appropriate to the actual capacity and service of the officer concerned. Since the records are voluminous, though in many cases incomplete, the work involved in determining the proper grade for officers who were not formally recommended, but whose experience demonstrates suitability is enormous, and unfortunately has produced an impression of delay or indifference. Notwithstanding these adverse circumstances, steady progress is being made in this work of reorganization.

Under the law commissions in one grade higher than those held by them during the war may be offered to former officers whose records warrant it, and every effort is being made by the Board of Review to accomplish this in all appropriate cases without additional correspondence.

On the first of December there were about 3,185 reserve officers classified as to their availability for immediate duty with combat engineer troops, or for duty with certain specialist engineer organizations. This total was distributed in grades approximately as follows: 15 colonels; 70 lieutenant colonels; 300 majors; 850 captains; 850 first lieutenants; 1,100 second lieutenants.

Every reserve officer is urged to keep his correct address on file in the Office of the Chief of Engineers to the end that communications may reach him without delay. Under plans now being made, it is anticipated that information of value will be sent to these officers from time to time in order to keep them in touch with military developments.

A Society of American Military Engineers

THE war left its mark on the engineering profession as a whole, for in some capacity or other, in the government service or in the industrial world, at home or abroad, all took part in it. On April 6, 1917, when the existence of a state of war with Germany was formally declared, the engineers available for immediate military service consisted of 256 officers and 2,228 soldiers. In November, nineteen months later, there were in the Engineering Department of the United States service 10,886 engineer officers and 292,300 soldiers. There were in addition in the Ordnance Department, in the Construction Division, in the Chemical Warfare Service and in various other branches of the Government, a vast number concerning whom exact data are not now available. The engineers of the country bore well their part and when the final record is written no page will be more brilliant than that which chronicles their achievements. They are justly proud of their

service and their contributions toward the winning of the war are too well known to need comment here. They are vivid in the memory of all and many of their accomplishments are perpetuated in the form of structures and devices which, though created for war, will continue to serve the purposes of peace for all time.

By far the greater number of these officers and men have long since returned to their former less spectacular if more beneficent labors. Some few of these thousands of engineers came out of the war perhaps with a just grievance and a mental resolve expressed by the slogan "Never again." Improper assignments were undoubtedly made—the square peg did not invariably get to the square hole. Promotions were slow in coming and were not always made with even-handed justice. Now and again some regular officer whose rank had outstripped his judgment, "dressed in a little brief authority" took undue advantage of his position, but with the passage of time the disappointments, the resentments, the bitter memories have faded and their once sharp outlines have been softened in the happier recollections of great achievements. Distance has cleared the vision and restored the sense of proportion, and the citizen soldier now judges the army, not by the markedly inefficient nor yet by the conspicuously able, not by the most arbitrary nor yet by the thoughtfully considerate. He has begun to apply the law of averages—he realizes that the regular army man is neither god nor devil, saint nor sinner, but combines the attributes of them all and the composite result is an individual on whom the country may place its reliance.

The thinking citizen everywhere has come to realize that in deflecting an unprepared nation from the paths of peace to those of war, mistakes will occur, that war itself is a dislocation of the normal processes of thought and normal lines of endeavor, that it breeds mistakes and that unpreparedness, such as was ours before the war, serves to multiply natural errors and omissions. He now appreciates that, in consideration of things as they really were before the war, results, by and large, were not so bad after all; he experiences in his inmost soul a keen sense of gratification that it was his privilege to have taken a man's part in upholding the standards of a free people.

Under the wholesome reaction that has set in, the citizen soldier has ceased to brood upon the trials and tribulations of a day that is passed, and in the light of his experience has turned to the solution of new problems which now confront the country. His previous resolution to avoid all military service is directed instead toward the maintenance of personal preparedness to do his part should the nation again require his services, toward the formation and adoption of a sound military policy for the nation, toward preventing a recurrence of national mistakes and toward

so training coming generations as to spare them the painful and humiliating blunders of the past. "Never again" will his country face a great conflict in behalf of liberty and justice, unprepared, if he can prevent it.

But these thousands of officers and men are no longer in the service and there exists no distinct agency to unite them as engineers in their common purpose or to direct their efforts to a common goal. There are, to be sure, great numbers of engineering societies, each with its specific purpose, and all thoroughly imbued with the most patriotic spirit. These societies include within their membership those professional men who by virtue of experience and training are now qualified as military engineers or who may so qualify hereafter. But there is no society which concerns itself consistently with questions of military engineering and allied military activities.

There is, therefore, a pronounced need for a society or an association of American Military Engineers. The reasons for its existence are primarily of a professional and patriotic nature and secondarily, only, of a social or sentimental character. Its first purpose should be to conserve the teachings of the World War in the field of military engineering and to maintain unimpaired the assets represented by our late experience. Its policies and aims should be of a positive and constructive nature looking to the needs of the future rather than the glories of the past. Such a society will provide a common meeting ground for those who in a future national emergency must shoulder the engineering burdens of the country. It will furnish a medium for the interchange of ideas and for the dissemination of professional information of military character.

Steps have been taken to form such a society and it is hoped that those whom the supreme need of the nation once welded into an effective instrument for the vindication of its ideals and the preservation of its sovereignty will, now that the bonds of military compulsion have been dissolved, unite voluntarily to maintain the ties of a common experience and preserve the heritage of their service in the cause of freedom and democracy.

The Aeroplane in Surveying and Mapping

THE extent to which the aeroplane may be used in mapping and the methods of its employment have been subjects of much speculation amongst all who are interested in maps, and that means most engineers. Many have hoped that it offered a large measure of relief from the laborious methods we have heretofore of necessity employed, have hoped in fact that the butterfly would now take over the functions of the ant. In this issue appears an article by two well-known authorities on this important subject, which must be of great interest to all our readers.

Essayons

EVERY ENGINEER OFFICER in our service wears over his heart, as well as at sundry other points on his person, a button bearing the seal of the Corps of Engineers. This emblem of a distinctive service is the oldest in the army. Its origin and the circumstances of its adoption are lost in the unrecorded history of the early days of the nation though we know it came to us from France with that little band of self-sacrificing but practical idealists who accompanied Lafayette or followed in his train.

Amongst these were Louis le Begue du Portail, who was the first Chief of Engineers in our service appointed by act of Congress (though the third to occupy the post), and the gifted L'Enfant, to whose artistic genius and far-sighted faith in the young republic we owe the present beauties of the national capital.

In consideration of the scholarly attainments of these ancients, their mastery of speech and the leisurely politeness of the times, we may not doubt that the simple motto "Essayons" adequately represented their ambitions, but we may not doubt on the other hand that our literal translation "Let us try" lamentably fails to express their high-souled hopes as signally justified by their actual achievements.

For them "Essayons" was not a mere polite phrase, it conveyed no sense of weak irresolute endeavor, it carried no suggestion of possible failure. It stood for a living fighting force, a determination to win through at all costs. Its real spirit was "let us try, we will not fail; let us do, and it will be done."

Our motto, "Essayons," has served the Corps of Engineers through long years of earnest endeavor and consistent achievement. We cherish it for its associations, for the memories it evokes, for the examples it calls to mind of engineer officers of other days who have essayed and won.

But fashions have changed; the lumbering coach-and-four has given way to the luxurious auto-limousine; the stately minuet has been replaced by the romping jazz; politeness has succumbed to "pep." While the spirit may be the same the polished phrase of other days has been done to death by the demand to "make it snappy."

During the past five years the French have had slogans, the verbal manifestations of their unconquerable spirit, breathing sentiments and determinations far above the simple "Essayons" which served their forebears and ours. The spirit is the same but finds its expression in other terms. In August, 1914, Viviani said, "We are here without reproach, we go forward without fear." At Verdun there came through set teeth, "They shall not pass." There was no hesitation, there was here no "if possible," no idea of "let us try,"—and trust to luck.

It is related that during one of the first engage-