

WAR DEPARTMENT

FUTURE

RELEASE

FOR RELEASE IN AFTERNOON PAPERS OF FRIDAY, JUNE 24, 1927.

ADDRESS OF MAJOR GENERAL CHARLES P. SUMMERALL, CHIEF OF STAFF,
AT GRADUATION EXERCISES OF THE ARMY INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE,
WASHINGTON, D. C., FRIDAY, JUNE 24TH, AT 11.00 A.M.

Though your class is the sixth to graduate from this institution, it is the first to have devoted a full free academic year to the study of the war-time problems of industry. These graduation exercises, therefore constitute an especially significant occasion. They signalize the progress which has resulted in conformity with an idea to which I gladly gave my sincere approbation.

Your studies have contributed to a compilation of basic information on the industrial effort in war, comparable in value to the purely tactical literature which was formerly of main concern to military students. However, your mission in this line of endeavor is not completed. You have had the privilege of release from all other duty for a period of nine months, in order that your devotion to reflection and study on this all-important question of industry in war might prepare you for greater responsibility. Your attention to this question does not cease with your graduation. You have the basic facts as a groundwork. We hope and expect that you will contribute further elaboration of your ideas on this subject during the ensuing years of your military careers.

This is a unique institution from the standpoint of old conceptions of army schools. At our service schools for many years military art was studied mainly from the point of view of troop leadership. We thereby gained a habit through prescribing the principles upon which the eligible manhood of the country was to be organized and trained as an army. We could stipulate the basic requirements of a soldier without reference to civil requirements. You have had to take a different point of view during the courses here. You learned at an early stage in your studies that you could not prescribe a new machine or organization for war, but that the war-time

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should eventually exceed any probable enemy in production, provided we are not crippled before we develop our industrial potentialities. Planning in peace for the prompt and efficient use of these industrial advantages, assures such early supply as should prevent our being crippled during the early months of a war, and so should make possible the mobilization of such strengths as might be needed for a decisive victory.

During the World War the monthly increment of soldiers sent to France was at its maximum about 300,000. Your future efforts will follow your studies which have pertained to reduction of the time necessary for obtaining the vital articles of equipment and supply. We are not so much concerned with eventual quantities of munitions, which will be sufficient even though no thought or effort is given to this problem prior to the actual beginning of war, provided defect does not disrupt industry. We are concerned with reduction of the time required to start effective production. If you can reduce this period thirty days, the combat army is increased by 300,000. This is equivalent to giving the commander of any future army a re-enforcement of fifteen divisions; or, if you wish to view the problem from the other angle - if you fail to reduce the period of production by thirty days, and such reduction be possible, your failure is equivalent to the loss of fifteen divisions. Therefore, your task has potentialities of the greatest import to the future safety of our nation. Your work is of prime interest and importance to all military men.

There is another aspect to your endeavors. During the World War, 39 per cent of our Regular officers were sent to the theater of operations. Of the remaining 61 per cent, many were employed in an attempt to obtain the munitions and supplies required by our forces. These officers on this duty were not all officers of the supply branches but were drawn from the Infantry, Cavalry, and Artillery. If plans are prepared, and the task broken up into clear-cut missions, all but a few Regular officers can be released for the zone of combat. Any commander of an army who received an addition of a thousand regular officers would certainly extol the benefits of a plan that made this possible and practicable.

Notwithstanding our best attempts to foresee the future, it may be necessary, in the early days of an emergency, to bring men to the colors at a greater rate than is now contemplated. We must be ready to do this so far as it is within the bounds of possibility. We must make definite investigations in order to determine the availability of all practicable substitutes. While we can not, of course, improvise ammunition and airplanes, we can, from the abundance of our resources, find substitutes for clothing, transportation, and many other articles.

Research for improved weapons and improved methods of manufacture must receive persistent attention if we are to fully perform our obligations to preparedness. In your work on plans you represent the War Department, which has been charged by law with the task. As these plans touch every phase of our nation's industries, you must deal with many leaders of industry. With definite purpose and knowledge you must present to them our needs so they can prepare their plans, so their willingness to co-operate can be made effective, and so they may give us the benefit of their suggestions.

In conclusion, I congratulate both the faculty and students upon the completion of an extremely beneficial course of instruction. I know the Army and the nation will benefit from the interest and ideas which you graduates will carry to your duties from this college. Your preparation for those duties assures you an eager welcome on your new assignments.

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