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REMARKS BY
GENERAL HARLEY B. FERGUSON
FOUNDER, ARMY INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE

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Introduction by Colonel Harry B. Jordan,
Director, Army Industrial College.

I have just had one of the most pleasant surprises of my life. Coming down the hall just before the bell rang I ran into General Ferguson. I told Captain Burgess to ring the bell immediately, that we wanted General Ferguson, who is the founder of this College, to say something to us. I want you men to know him. I cannot tell you how much pleasure it gives me to introduce to you - General Ferguson

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Founder, Army Industrial College.

Colonel Jordan and Gentlemen I really haven't anything at all to say, and I feel as though I had been waylaid. However, I am glad to come back again and see that the school is still alive. An idea is the hardest thing on earth to get corralled and elected and headed some where. You see, you cannot carry an idea around in a basket, it has to go through men's brains and be backed by some kind of will or purpose. I am really delighted to see, every time I come to Washington, that you are still mentally alive and have enough purpose to keep on pounding, pounding away with results mostly yonder but sticking to a notion that in the next war there must be some beginning based on previous thinking. It is a terrible thing to hang on to a notion in an executive department -

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it is perilous. However, somewhere planning must be done.

I suppose I could talk by the hour about our arguments back and forth and how this school happened to get started. At that time we had a Secretary of War who had real brains - Mr. Weeks. Mr. Weeks was a man of ability. He was a large man physically, seemed austere in a way, but he was not. He knew the military angle, he knew the industrial angle, he was a man of very keen, quick mind, as all of you know who have read about him. He graduated from Annapolis. You could talk to him just as you could to anybody else and he would talk about what you were talking about instead of blustering something to cover up the few moments you were together.

This school happened in a curious way. We were working under the first theory of education, which was that we had a job assigned. We picked out six or eight men and decided that we would each study some phase of this thing, all of us covering all of it until each man knew more about it than any other man in the United States. We worked for about three years on that basis day after day, and they were able men, too. You know who they are: Colonel Hunt, Colonel Fife, Major Pettis - men like that whose minds could not twist, they just could not get an answer if the answer was not true. Well, that was a long, tedious job. The next thing was to get an understudy for each to replace them - the old, old apprentice system - somebody helping a man and eventually taking his place.

Finally, after a good deal of struggling, we induced Mr. Weeks to promise to come down and take a look at us. He came down. I

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have forgotten how many acres of records we had, but we sat around the table, six or eight of us, and talked about two or three hours on each of these things. He knew something about it, he was in the Senate during the war time and it was not new to him at all. We went back and forth through this, and when we got through he said: "How many people have you got that understand this for the next war?" I said "I think we have about six." He said "How many do you need?" We had made a chart (Colonel Burns and I made that chart) as to the men we would need in a war. It wound up that we would need about forty men a year ^{with half losses} for twenty years/and maybe ten times that many reserve officers. We showed the chart to Mr. Weeks. He said "How are you going to get these men?" We said, "We are glad you asked that question. We would like to start a regular place to train them." He said, "All right." And the College came from that. That is, we had to get his approval first, (we could not get anybody to go to him with a built up idea) and it was a very fortunate thing that we had such a man. Of course, immediately he understood the Navy angle of it. We are really working for the same nation, you know. So it came out very well.

We had quite a struggle writing the little thesis as to why we have the College. We took that almost bodily from the founder of Cornell. "Found a school where men can acquire useful knowledge". I do not at this moment recall the name of the founder of Cornell, some of you perhaps remember. That was quite a step from the theologians. You see my State, like many of the States, have many schools to teach lawyers and doctors and speakers to talk like this that never did come to very much, so we

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copied Cornell.

I am truly delighted, gentlemen, to see that the place is still
going I do not know what more I can say. Thank you very much