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THE AMES FORESTERS IN THE WAR

By Professor G. B. MacDonald.

The response of the colleges and universities of the country during the war is well known. The students of these institutions were among the first to respond to the Nation's call. Those who were present at the Iowa State College when war was declared, know well the depletion in the student ranks at the first call for volunteers. Many of the foresters then in school enlisted. After the first wave of enlistments, many students remained in their classes at the request of the military authorities.—much against their own desires. In some instances fully as great a patriotism was shown by some hasty enlistments. The question which seemed to be uppermost in the mind of every Ames forester was "when and how shall I go."

Soon after the first call for volunteers the organization of the forestry regiments was undertaken, which offered inducements too strong for most of the Ames foresters to resist. The thought of being able to apply, even to a small degree, their forestry training in the prosecution of the war was the cause of thirty Ames foresters entering this branch of service. It would be interesting to follow through in detail the varied experiences of this group of men in France, but here only a few may be mentioned.

The foresters from Ames held all ranks from that of "slab
carrier’ and ‘river rat’ to that of first lieutenant. A large number of these men were directly engaged in either logging or milling with the 10th and 20th engineers, where each unit endeavored to outstrip the others in production of lumber or timber products for the army. Others of the foresters were engaged in estimating timber and mapping parcels of forest land which were soon to be logged. One Ames forester was transferred to the British Army for work of this kind. At the conclusion of the war two of the Ames men were giving instructional work in forestry in one of the army schools.
The foresters were not without their thrills and worries. Five of the men were aboard the Tuscania when it was torpedoed but all eventually were landed either in boats or rafts on the Irish and Scotch coasts.

During the last days of the war the college had about 35 forestry students assigned to the Student Army Training Corps. These men were mostly first and second year students who were awaiting their call into active service. These men would have formed the first line had the war continued for a year or two longer.

In addition to the war activities of the Ames students, the forestry faculty made its contribution to war service. One mem-
ber undertook important investigational work at the Forest Products Laboratory at Madison, Wisconsin, where many experiments with woods and forest products were under way for the army. Other members of the faculty were engaged in work connected with the production of spruce, oak, and walnut lumber for military needs.

A number of the Ames foresters who were engaged in practical work when the war came upon us were prevailed upon to await the draft before engaging in direct military service. Some of these men were occupying responsible administrative positions in government and other work classed as "essential" and it was only through a true sense of loyalty and patriotism that they too did not cast their lot early in the war in the more spectacular service in France. The fighting spirit was displayed on both sides of the water.

A word of appreciation can only be given to these men who willingly responded,—two with their lives, the others with their services, when the call came. This service was not offered in a spirit of sacrifice but rather in a spirit of true loyalty to a cause worthy of the courage and strength of the country.