

Quartermaster OCS During World War II - 1941-1944

Schuylkill Arsenal, Pennsylvania (Class 1)

Camp Lee, Virginia (Classes 2,3,4 and Classes 10-56)

Fort Washington, Wyoming (Classes 5-9)

The challenge faced by the Quartermasters during the period of national emergency was no greater than the other branches but the immediate impact of having less than the required number of officers became an emergency in itself.

As the nation readied for war, mobilization efforts fell on the Quartermaster Corps. The sinews of war are an apt description for logistics and in particular for combat supplies. During World War II, the Quartermaster Corps provided the great majority of these critical resources. In addition to its traditional missions it also provided for all functions of transportation, to include maintenance of vehicles. At the onset of the conflict, the suppliers would be responsible for setting into motion the great mobilization of the United States Army.

Little in the interwar period would prepare the Quartermaster Corps for the challenges to come. While officers commissioned as Quartermasters existed in the Army, their numbers were far too few to meet the demands. The Quartermaster Officer Corps numbered under 700 officers in 1939. This small core of professional officers were dispersed at the various posts and installations of the Army.

Few field quartermaster units yet existed although the scope of functions assigned to the Quartermaster Corps had already begun to expand drastically with the period of national emergency. Along with traditional Quartermaster functions of supply, clothing and subsistence, the corps' roles now included motor transportation, along with the associated maintenance and repair of vehicles as well as route planning.

While the Quartermaster Corps would receive additional officers from transfers from the other branches of service, graduates of the United States Military Academy and through the recall of retired officers none of these sources would be able to produce the voluminous number of professional officers required by the expansion.

The Officer Reserve Corps, the pool of officers who were graduates of peacetime military programs such as the Civilian Military Training Camps, held reserve commissions and were subject to recall. Their numbers would fill only a quarter of the ultimate requirements. Once this initial pool of officers entered into service however, the Quartermaster Corps, like other branches of the Army, had to turn to qualified enlisted men.

Therefore, the majority of officers commissioned after 1939 came from the civilian world with little or no military training. Of the roughly 30,000 officers commissioned into the Quartermaster Corps during World War II, over 23,000 were graduates of the Quartermaster Officer Candidate School.

The Office of the Quartermaster General laid out guidance for mobilization in February of 1939 that directed the Quartermaster School in Philadelphia to begin planning for wartime. Initial plans for mobilization called for the recall to active duty of Quartermaster officers in the Officers Reserve Corps and officers in the National Guard divisions. These officers would need refresher training prior to assuming duties either within the States or overseas.

Beginning 15 days after declaration of mobilization day (M-Day) the QM school would begin three iterations of 30-day officer refresher classes for recalled officers. Initially with a class size of 275, the classes would grow to 500 within 100 days. Two officer candidate classes of 500 men each would follow this, the first class 60 days in length and the second as a 90-day course. The guidance also specified that augmentation to the school would be from “specially qualified” Reserve officers or retired Regular Army officers.

Four months later the Commandant of the Quartermaster School, Colonel Francis H. Pope, replied that insufficient space was available at the Quartermaster Depot in Philadelphia to conduct training for 500 officer candidates, nor could the Depot provide adequate feeding and lodging. The location of the Quartermaster School in Philadelphia would prove inadequate for any large-scale mobilization efforts. This would force students to live in the city and arrangements for their transportation to and from classes laid on by the school. Pope recommended moving the entirety of the OCS mission to nearby Fort Dix, New Jersey where elements of Quartermaster Officer training already conducted field exercises.

On 7 July 1941, the first Quartermaster Officer Candidate Class opened at the Schuylkill Arsenal, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with 149 candidates. To accommodate this and the simultaneous start of a 300-seat Reserve Officer Training Corps class, the school graduated early all other classes or suspended their start. As Pope had warned in 1939, the Arsenal could not support the influx of so many trainees and even with preparation was not ready for the sheer number. The school annexed a Pennsylvania National Guard Armory for use since it could not find adequate facilities within Philadelphia.

The school anticipated and identified the Officer Candidate Course as a mobilization requirement but The Quartermaster General did not direct its implementation until 26 April 1941. The course was limited in scope to those topics readily available and for which instructors existed. The candidates conducted neither field nor military basic training, but this first class contained

veteran soldiers with at least 6 months of service. The students did visit a supply depot as part of their technical training.

The course called for three hours of calisthenics and four hours of military drill and inspections each week in addition to the academic schedule. The faculty kept close watch of their charges and constantly evaluated the candidates for their potential as officers. From the very beginning, the faculty kept detailed statistics on the class and used these as indicators of likely success. Some of these areas included: source of service (e.g., Regular Army, National Guard, etc.), age, marital status and education level.

The first Quartermaster Officer Candidate Course graduated from Philadelphia, on 27 September 27 1941 at the Schuylkill Arsenal. Colonel H.L. Whittaker Commandant of the Quartermaster School introduced the guest speaker, Brigadier General Henry Munnikhysen, who extolled the young officers to see this not as an end but a beginning to their development:

"In the line of the Army the greatest stress is laid on the quality of "leadership." In the context of the Quartermaster Corps you will also be required to exercise that ability, both directly and indirectly. If you have this quality, or develop it, and it can be developed, you will be successful officers. In the Quartermaster Corps, however, this ability is more often known as administrative ability. It is the same personal quality, however, which the "line" knows as leadership...The future will depend entirely on your own efforts, study and self-discipline. Remember, this is not the end for you, but merely the beginning. You have merely arrived at the starting point for the big race after having qualified in the preliminaries."

Officer Candidate School at Fort Lee, Virginia (The First time)

The Quartermaster School relocated to Camp Lee, Virginia in September of 1941. Plans called for the first Officer Candidate Class to be held at Camp Lee; however, facilities for both The Quartermaster School and the Quartermaster Replacement Center there could not be completed in time. The initial designs called for facilities to support over 750 officers and enlisted from across The Quartermaster School, including 300 officer candidates.

Camp Lee provided all the additional space that Philadelphia could not. Road and rail service to neighboring Petersburg and nearby Richmond ensured easy transportation to and from the installation. The James and Appomattox Rivers joined at their confluence just ten miles away off the city of Hopewell. From there the waterways flowed to the port cities of the Chesapeake Bay and beyond that to the Atlantic Ocean. Nearby training areas included the A.P Hill Military Reservation, Swift Creek National Park and former Civilian Conservation Corps Camps near Blackstone and in neighboring Chesterfield County.

The move took a month and by the end of it nearly 463 tons of equipment moved south. Camp Lee had been one of the largest cantonment areas of World War I and had a rich history. The Quartermaster School was established on 507 acres of land acquired from the Department of the Interior that previously were part of the Petersburg National Military Park. Construction of the Schools facilities and the rest of the Camp continued over several phases until August of 1942.

The Quartermaster School, like the Corps, would see explosive growth. During the war, the size of the faculty would grow from 20 to peak strength of almost 1,900 commissioned and warrant officers and enlisted personnel. Initially organized along battalion lines, the school would eventually form training regiments in February 1942. Students and instructors alike were combined into these organizations at first. However, by late 1942 a change to the organization of the Quartermaster School pooled all academic instructors into an Academic Training Division that served all courses. The goal was to create a greater specialization for technical quartermaster training. Company officers in the regiments remained the primary instructors for all military subjects and as the leadership evaluators for officer candidates specifically.

The commandant both commanded the Quartermaster School and served concurrently as the Commanding General, Quartermaster Replacement Training Center, Camp Lee, Virginia. Under the commandant was an executive officer, responsible for camp administration, an assistant commandant in charge of training and for a time, a Commanding Officer of Troops who oversaw military matters within the four training regiments. Each regiment consisted of battalions and companies. The cadre officers commanded the units but the students would often fill internal leadership positions within the companies.⁹⁶ The Quartermaster School was under the command of the Quartermaster General, located in Washington, D.C. Like the other Service of Supply branches, the Quartermaster reported to the Headquarters, Army Service Forces, the logistical counterpart to Army Ground Forces.

Besides additional space, new topics of instruction would also be required. Quartermaster officers in World War I operated well behind friendly lines. There they established warehouses, depots and bakeries much as they would in peacetime. The interwar mechanization of the Army and anticipated speed of operations would require a new kind of leader—one who could serve as both an expert in his trade and battlefield commander. He would have to be as skilled in the employment of weapons within his unit as a rifle platoon leader in the infantry while retaining the technical knowledge required of special staff officers.

Training Beyond Camp Lee (Fort Washington, Wyoming)

Camp Lee simply could not meet the expanding need for new officers. As new classes reported, the pace of construction at Camp Lee could not keep up. OCS

class 4 reported with 717 candidates. Due to the lack of barracks, many of the men bivouacked in tents. Class 5 was expected to bring another 1,200 men with it. Colonel Whittaker requested that the Quartermaster General transfer a portion of future OCS quotas to an alternate training site until Camp Lee could better accommodate the numbers. The Quartermaster School therefore established a satellite location for the Officer Candidate Courses at, Fort Francis E. Warren in Cheyenne, Wyoming in March 1942.

Fort Warren was already a Quartermaster Training Center and contained an Officer Replacement Pool. The Officer Replacement Pool conducted basic military training for civilians directly commissioned as officers for the technical skills or professions. After thirty days of training, they shipped out to Quartermaster units.

The curriculum at Fort Warren mirrored that of the main school at Camp Lee with few exceptions. One such change was that candidates at Fort Warren completed a 30-mile road march to Pole Mountain as part of their field exercises. 100 The office of the Quartermaster General conducted inspections on this facility and reported compliance with the set curriculum for the Officer Candidate Course. Fort Warren ultimately graduated five classes of Officer Candidates over the course of 11 months. Nearly 3,800 officers commissioned into the Quartermaster Corps from the Fort Warren courses out of 6,000 candidates. At the conclusion of the fifth class, all OCS consolidated at Camp Lee.

Conduct of OCS at Camp Lee (again) for the rest of the War

Wartime requirements of quantity and speed drastically altered the amount and depth of basic level of instruction provided to officer candidates. By April 1942, the curriculum was 12 weeks in length and consisted of 224 hours of classroom instruction.

It also included 30 1/4 hours per week of military instruction in such topics as care of equipment, camp administration and calisthenics.¹⁰³ The final week culminated with field exercises. ¹⁰⁴ This last week was an increase from previous classes' three-day field training, conducted at A. P. Hill Military Reservation. Candidates trained on motor transport operations and establishment of campsites. Planning and reconnoitering bivouac sites and concealing them from air attack while establishing security against mechanized attack was the specific focus.

While the individual topics of instruction certainly had an immediate goal of educating the students, they also served another role. The performance of the candidates' daily execution of tasks would provide an opportunity to assess their leadership abilities as they fulfilled the roles of company leadership.

To further the training of officer candidates the maximum use will be made of CANDIDATE OFFICERS [original emphasis]. All personnel, commissioned, candidate, enlisted and civilian are reminded that the purpose of candidate training is (1) to determine which officer candidates are mentally, physically, and morally fitted for the leadership and ability required of commissioned officers of the Army of the United States during the present WAR, to recommend the relief of those candidates, if any, who are deemed unsuitable for such commissions and, (3) to give those candidates who demonstrate their fitness to be commissioned all possible assistance in their effort to earn a commission, to train them technically for this responsibility; worthy of the respect and confidence of the soldiers they are to command.

Student officers directed the movement of all candidates to and from appointed places. They supervised policing of camp facilities and all student details. Positions ranged from battalion commander to platoon leader and all non-commissioned ranks found within a company. Candidate platoon leaders were accountable for attendance in classroom instruction and group study periods.

In order that these candidates be recognized as acting leaders, they were authorized special accoutrements to their uniforms. These accoutrements were not standard Army insignia of rank and not worn outside of Camp Lee. Battalion commanders wore three inverted chevrons on their collar, company commanders two and platoon leaders one. Candidate non-commissioned officers wore rank insignia appropriate to their positions pinned to felt above their breast pockets. Finally, successful completion of an officer leadership position was noted by a "service ribbon"-like device worn adjacent to the candidate's nameplate.

Graduation ceremonies for the officer candidates were simple but well planned affairs. All candidates in school attended the ceremony and observed the proceedings. Typical of these is the graduation ceremony for class No. 4 on May 19, 1942. Colonel Whittaker, the commandant of the Quartermaster School, hosted the ceremony. After administering the oath of office, the Quartermaster General addressed the assembled formation. The newly commissioned officers then moved forward to receive their commissions from the four student company commanders. After a benediction, the commander of troops for the ceremony dismissed the students, who moved on to their next training event while the staff and faculty attended lunch at the officer's mess of one of the training regiments.

The Quartermaster School continuously sought to ensure that the curriculum of the Officer Candidate course met the needs of graduates and commanders in all theaters of operations during World War II. Did the product of the Camp Lee training base meet the needs of the consumer, namely the United States Army? The answer to the question would either validate the training program or serve as an indicator of needed change. Evidence suggests that both formal and

informal feedback systems existed for the Quartermaster School. Questionnaires, official correspondence, personal letters, and individual feedback from recent graduates all made great impact on not just which subjects were taught at Camp Lee, but how they were taught.

The official history of Quartermaster officer training states, “The need for radical change in the officer training program became apparent late in 1942 and early in 1943.” The Quartermaster School desperately sought answers on how their graduates performed in operations overseas and Operation Torch was the first great opportunity to test their product. Two themes emerged in reports from North Africa. First, the general lack of leadership ability among Quartermaster officers. Simply training as supply technicians would not be enough. Junior officers of the Quartermaster Corps would have to be fighting men.

From: Adaptations to Curriculum at the Quartermaster School Officer Candidate Course During World War II

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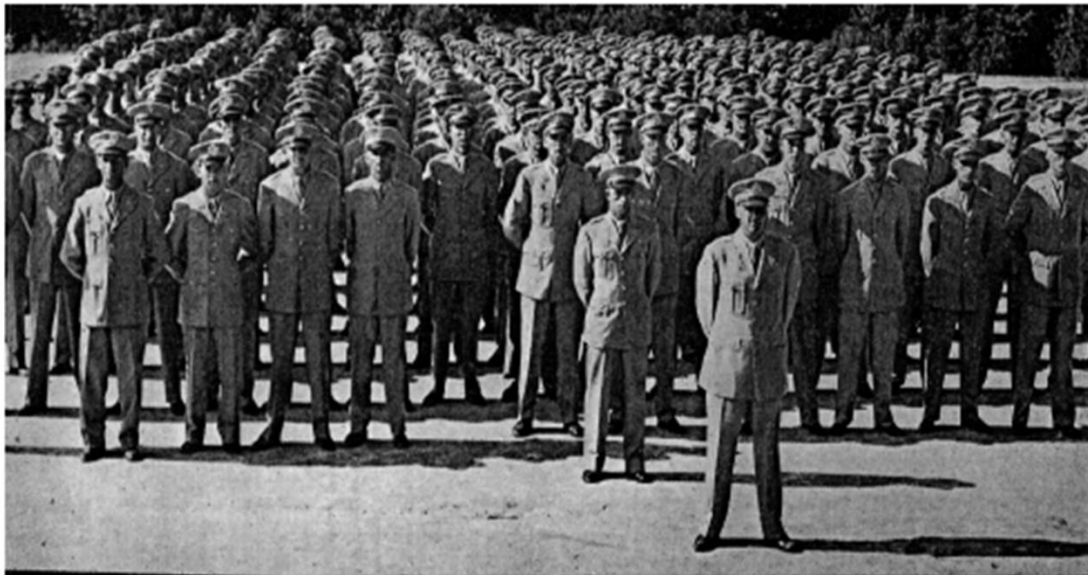


Figure 2. Graduation of OCS class at Camp Lee, 1945

Class No.	Start Date	Graduation Date	Class Length	Enrolled	Graduated	Graduation Rate
1	7-Jul-41	27-Sep-41	11 weeks, 5 days	151	135	89.4%
2	22-Oct-41	17-Jan-42	12 weeks, 3 days	153	146	95.4%
3	26-Jan-42	25-Apr-42	12 weeks, 5 days	497	483	97.2%
4	23-Feb-42	23-May-42	12 weeks, 5 days	717	703	98.0%
5	6-Apr-42	3-Jul-42	12 weeks, 4 days	473	459	97.0%
6	4-May-42	1-Aug-42	12 weeks, 5 days	1,207	1,175	97.3%
7	1-Jun-42	13-Aug-42	10 weeks, 4 days	1,235	1,220	98.8%
8	6-Jul-42	25-Sep-42	11 weeks, 4 days	1,257	1,236	98.3%
9	20-Jul-42	16-Oct-42	12 weeks, 4 days	1,241	1,199	96.6%
10	17-Aug-42	13-Nov-42	12 weeks, 4 days	1,333	1,228	92.1%
11	14-Sep-42	11-Dec-42	12 weeks, 4 days	1,267	1,114	87.9%
12	5-Oct-42	23-Dec-43	11 weeks, 2 days	1,314	1,130	86.0%
13	19-Oct-42	15-Jan-43	12 weeks, 4 days	684	511	74.7%
14	2-Nov-42	29-Jan-43	12 weeks, 4 days	716	591	82.5%
15	16-Nov-42	12-Feb-43	12 weeks, 4 days	702	589	83.9%
16	30-Nov-42	26-Feb-43	12 weeks, 4 days	708	588	83.1%
17	31-Dec-42	19-Mar-43	11 weeks, 1 days	709	603	85.0%
18	3-Jan-43	2-Apr-43	12 weeks, 5 days	725	609	84.0%
19	18-Jan-43	16-Apr-43	12 weeks, 4 days	689	594	86.2%
20	1-Feb-43	30-Apr-43	12 weeks, 4 days	682	557	81.7%
21	15-Feb-43	14-May-43	12 weeks, 4 days	789	650	82.4%
22	1-Mar-43	28-May-43	12 weeks, 4 days	870	684	78.6%
23	22-Mar-43	18-Jun-43	12 weeks, 4 days	984	781	79.4%
24	5-Apr-43	2-Jul-43	12 weeks, 4 days	718	519	72.3%
25	19-Apr-43	16-Jul-43	12 weeks, 4 days	763	565	74.0%
26	3-May-43	30-Jul-43	12 weeks, 4 days	706	607	86.0%
27	17-May-43	13-Aug-43	12 weeks, 4 days	622	494	79.4%
28	31-May-43	27-Aug-43	12 weeks, 4 days	323	262	81.1%
29	21-Jun-43	17-Sep-43	12 weeks, 4 days	375	318	84.8%
30	5-Jul-43	5-Nov-43	17 weeks, 4 days	308	254	82.5%
31	19-Jul-43	19-Nov-43	17 weeks, 4 days	320	290	90.6%
32	16-Aug-43	17-Dec-43	17 weeks, 4 days	304	254	83.6%

33	13-Dec-43	8-Apr-44	16 weeks, 5 days	103	69	67.0%
34	10-Jan-44	5-May-44	16 weeks, 4 days	82	70	85.4%
35	21-Feb-44	16-Jun-44	16 weeks, 4 days	337	257	76.3%
36	6-Mar-44	30-Jun-44	16 weeks, 4 days	352	238	67.6%
37	20-Mar-44	14-Jul-44	16 weeks, 4 days	368	255	69.3%
38	3-Apr-44	28-Jul-44	16 weeks, 4 days	373	256	68.6%
39	17-Apr-44	11-Aug-44	16 weeks, 4 days	362	232	64.1%
40	1-May-44	25-Aug-44	16 weeks, 4 days	261	212	81.2%
41	19-Jun-44	13-Oct-44	16 weeks, 4 days	316	213	67.4%
42	3-Jul-44	27-Oct-44	16 weeks, 4 days	362	251	69.3%
43	17-Jul-44	10-Nov-44	16 weeks, 4 days	381	250	65.6%
44	31-Jul-44	24-Nov-44	16 weeks, 4 days	384	246	64.1%
45	12-Aug-44	8-Dec-44	16 weeks, 6 days	347	220	63.4%
46	26-Aug-44	22-Dec-44	16 weeks, 6 days	398	222	55.8%
47	14-Oct-44	9-Feb-45	16 weeks, 6 days	331	211	63.7%
48	4-Nov-44	2-Mar-45	16 weeks, 6 days	284	164	57.7%
49	20-Jan-45	18-May-45	16 weeks, 6 days	201	130	64.7%
50	17-Feb-45	15-Jun-45	16 weeks, 6 days	111	60	54.1%
51	27-Mar-45	20-Jul-45	16 weeks, 3 days	100	66	66.0%
52	28-Apr-45	24-Aug-45	16 weeks, 6 days	120	86	71.7%
53	19-May-45	14-Sep-45	16 weeks, 6 days	127		
54	16-Jun-45	12-Oct-45	16 weeks, 6 days	94		
55	23-Jul-45	16-Nov-45	16 weeks, 4 days	140		
56	27-Aug-45	21-Dec-45	16 weeks, 4 days	138		

Source: Data adapted from E. Ramsay Richardson, *History of the Quartermaster School*, (Washington: Office of The Quartermaster General), 179-180; The Office of The Quartermaster General, "The Quartermaster School Officer Candidate School, The Quartermaster School, Camp Lee Virginia History: Supplementary Report, 1 January 1945-30 June 1945," Quartermaster School Archives, Fort Lee, VA.