

THE**AEC****SERIES**

By Captain FIDEL L. ONGPAUCO

"For most men, the matter of learning is one of personal preference; but to Army officers, the obligation to learn, to grow in their profession, is clearly a public duty."

—Gen. Omar N. Bradley

"It is criminal for an untrained officer to lead his men to battle."

—Author. unknown

FROM the time the Philippines joined the family of nations as an independent country seven years ago, the responsibilities of the Armed Forces of the Philippines have increased tremendously. As a consequence of this fact and the rapid growth and expansion of our defense establishment the maintenance and training of a strong, well-prepared officer corps has become vitally important.

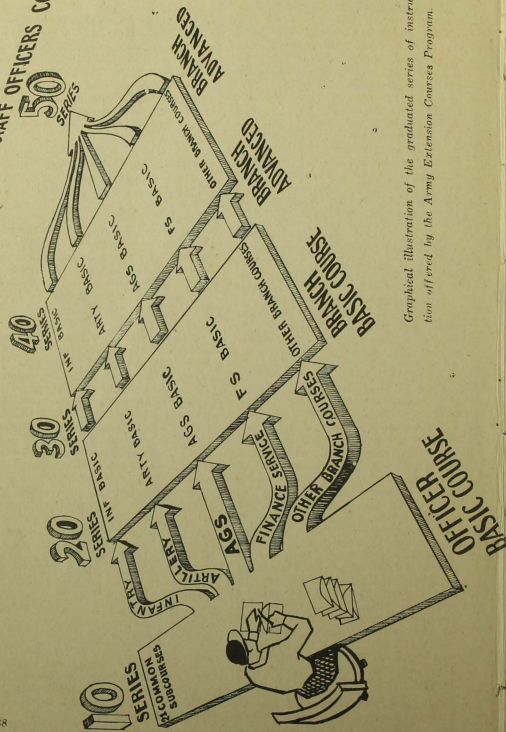
The great bulk of our officers are in the Reserve Force which forms the main bulwark of our defense in the event of war or other emergency. The importance of the training of these officers cannot be too strongly stressed. These officers however, being mostly on inactive status live in distant places all over the country. Those of them who are on active duty are also mostly stationed in remote AFP installations or camps in the provinces. This situation

has always presented a great obstacle to any officer training program. To solve the problem, the Armed Forces inaugurated its Army Extension Courses recently, to handle the training of AFP officers through lessons by correspondence.

The Army Extension Courses Program is designed for the benefit of both Regular and Reserve officers. Although a similar program was conducted by the Philippine Army before the war, it was only last year that Gen. Calixto Duque, AFP chief of staff, felt the great need for its revival. The question of funds delayed its opening, but in July this year an allotment was given to it. The Army was then able to launch the first extension course, the Officer Basic Course, last September 1. This course being common for all branches of service is sometimes called the Common Course, but the familiar official reference to it is the "10 Series."

The correspondence courses, with the exception of the courses on medical subjects are prepared by nine of the eleven different schools of the Philippine Army School Center (PASC) of the Philippine Army Training Command (PATC) at Fort McKinley. The medical subjects are prepared with the cooperation of the Armed Forces Medical School located in Quezon City. All the courses are generally equivalent to the resident courses offered in those schools. No fee is charged and no expenses are incurred by the students because addressed stamped envelopes are provided and special texts and equipment are furnished on a loan

GENERAL STAFF OFFICERS COURSE



Graphical illustration of the graduated series of instruction offered by the Army Extension Courses Program.

basis.

The opening of the Extension Program had scarcely been announced when a flood of inquiries swamped AFP general headquarters. "How can I take an extension course?" inquired a technical sergeant on duty at a BCT Headquarters somewhere in Central Luzon who is a graduate of the School for Reserve Commission (SRC) of the Philippine Army School Center and who has been commissioned a 2nd lieutenant in the Infantry Branch of the Reserve Force. A similar question has been asked by an Advanced ROTC graduate who is a commissioned officer in the Reserve Force and is at present employed in a bank in Manila.

Applications for enrollment in the AEC should be filed with the commanding officer of the PATC. These applications are then referred to GHQ, AFP for approval. After such approval, the applicants are enrolled, and the Philippine Army School Center sends them their first lessons. The date of the receipt of the first lesson is considered the effective date of enrollment.

What is the "10 series?" This is the Basic Officers' Course for all branches: the Infantry, the AGS, the FS, the Artillery, the QM, etc. It is designed primarily for 2nd lieutenants. The BCT sergeant whom we have mentioned before, for example, can take the "10 series" because he is a commissioned 2nd lieutenant in the Reserve Force and it is his first time as a commissioned officer to take service schooling. The designation for the series for particular grades is not however arbitrary. A major may take the "20 series" designed for 1st lieutenants while a 2nd lieutenant may take the "20 series" if he has taken the "10 series". The "10 series" is divided into 21 units called common sub-courses which are numbered serially into Common Sub-courses 10-1 to 10-21. 10-1 is the "Organization of the AFP"; 10-2, is "Leadership, Discipline, Courtesy and Customs of the Service", and so on.

Subcourse 10-1 consists of four lessons and an examination, all for a to-

tal of eight credit hours. Lesson 1 has a credit of one hour; Lesson 2, two hours; Lesson 3, one hour; Lesson 4, two hours and the Examination, two hours. Just what are these credit hours? If a lesson is credited one hour, an average student is supposed to finish it in one hour. These credit hours are meant for crediting purposes only; not for limiting the student in the number of hours he may devote in reading his lessons and solving the lesson exercises.

If an officer completes the "10 series," lessons and examination, he will be given a certificate attesting to his completion of the course. His grades will be sent to GHQ where a credit for the series will be recorded at the G-1 Division where a roster of officers, both Regular and Reserve, is maintained for each series of the AEC. In addition, his scholastic record is also incorporated in his personal file kept by The Adjutant General.

After completion of the "10 series," an officer is qualified to take the next higher course, the "20 series" for the branch of service to which he belongs. This is designed for 1st lieutenants and is the Branch Basic Course. As told previously, it has a total of 300 credit just like all the other series. The next higher series is the "30 series," equivalent to a resident Advanced Course. This course is designed primarily for captains. The "40 series" is a higher Advanced Course. In this series, the GHQ limits the number of students in consonance with the needs of the service. It is a course designed especially for majors. The highest course is the "50 series," which is a branch immaterial course for General Staff Officers. This course is designed for lieutenant colonels. In this course, GHQ again carefully screens the lieutenant colonels or colonels who apply for enrollment.

Many Regular officers now ask this question, "Aside from my sense of duty to study, what incentive has the AFP to offer its officers to take the extension course?"

GHQ Circular No. 61 published in September 1953 makes the successful completion of an appropriate extension course a prerequisite to promotion, that is, if the AEC is able to accommodate all officers to take appropriate extension courses. If all officers cannot be accommodated because of limited funds, then the successful completion of a course becomes only a strong factor for promotion. It also becomes a

great determining factor for calls to active duty of reserve officers.

The mission of the AEC is a big one. While resident courses can only reach out to a few officers in the active service, the AFP can extend the benefits of its training program to those who need them most—the officers of our big Reserve Force, our Citizen Army—in the most convenient and inexpensive way, *by mail*.

LOYALTY

If you work for a man, in heaven's name work for him, speak well of him and stand by the institution he represents.

Remember - an ounce of Loyalty is worth a pound of Cleverness...

If you must growl, condemn, and eternally find fault, why - resign your position and when you are on the outside, damn to your heart's content - but as long as you are a part of the institution do not condemn it. if you do, the first high wind that comes along will blow you away, and probably you will never know why ::

Elbert Hubbard