

ARMY TRAINING OF ILLITERATES *IN WORLD WAR II*

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Belvoir, Va., a *Pre-reader Workbook, Literacy School*, was used. The material for this book was furnished by the Office of Civilian Conservation Corps Camp Education at the request of the supervisor of the Literacy School. This workbook contained 167 words, carefully selected from seven word lists. These words were printed on cutouts two and five-eighths inches wide. Directions for making a "sentence builder" were also included in the workbook. At the special training unit at Fort Ontario, N. Y., practice exercises in arithmetic were employed along with the following: *Review of Army Reader, Part I; Soldier's Workbook for Use with TM21-500, Army Reader, Part II, Private Pete Writes a Letter;* and *Practice Exercises in Reading and Arithmetic Based on Army Reader, Part III*. At the special training unit at Fort Bragg, N. C., work sheets, word recognition exercises, and completion exercises were developed for the *Army Reader*, and for such supplementary reading materials as "Private Pete Goes on a Pass," "Private Dope Goes on a Pass," "General Orders," "Convoy Discipline," and "Red Cross Unit." For arithmetic, appropriate exercise materials were developed: "Number Concepts," "Addition," "Subtraction," "Multiplication," "Division," "Word Problems," "Mixed Drill," and "Miscellaneous Items." For the development of skill in handwriting, instructional aids and exercises were prepared ("Manuscript Writing Guide," "Cursive Writing Guide," "Payroll Signature Sheet," "Letter Writing Booklet," "My Address Book"), and a series of stories suitable for the different grade levels ("At STU," "Our Flag," "Hey Joe," "Old Glory," "War Movie," and "I Write Numbers"). In addition to the regular workbook materials, the staff at the special training unit at Fort Bragg, N. C., developed remedial reading exercises built around special stories. Part of the remedial materials included Tracing Dictionaries for Level 1 (126 words), Level 2 (98 words), and Level 3 (106 words).¹¹⁸ It would be possible to call the roll of all the special training units—Camp McQuaide, Calif.; Fort Leavenworth, Kans.; New Cumberland, Pa.; Camp Atterbury, Ind., etc.—if such a listing were desired of those units which developed workbook and exercise materials for the trainees.

The workbook materials developed for the different subjects were not unlike those included in commercially prepared workbooks. In the reading workbooks, exercises were designed to aid the trainee to acquire and

¹¹⁸ These were used in conjunction with a multiple sensory approach, making major use of the kinesthetic method, employed with some non-readers.

unit, is the one prepared at Fort Ontario, N. Y. The following were among the publications in this series: Education Monograph No. 1, *Administrative Procedures for the Education Section*, December 21, 1943; No. 2, *Curricular Policies for the Unit*, December 24, 1943; No. 3, *Instructional Methods*, January 12, 1944; No. 4, *Suggestions for Teaching Silent Reading: A Supplement to War Department Publications*, May 1, 1944.

Most of the special training units included recommendations for the improvement of teaching practices in the *Lesson Plans* and *Courses of Study*. The recommendations were highly specific, at times, and related to general practices as well as to different subjects in the program. The following excerpt, entitled "Common Pitfalls in Teaching," from the *Lesson Plans*, developed at the special training unit at Camp Robinson, Ark., illustrates this type of aid:

The following mistakes commonly made by inexperienced teachers, and occasionally by all of us, are expressly called to your attention. Failure to avoid these errors will be interpreted as a sign of teaching deficiency:

(1) In group IV classes, letting the discussion of global warfare degenerate into a lecture by the teacher. We wish to convey information on current events and the background of the war, but our primary mission remains the teaching of reading and writing. Information should be conveyed largely through these media.

(2) In group I classes, not giving enough attention to repetition within a short period of time, as, for example, in a number combination, or word recognition.

(3) Teacher repetition of answers. This is a sure way of losing class attention.

(4) Asking for a show of hands on who has wrong answers, without checking further.

(5) Checking written work by oral answers. This is physically impossible if handwriting is to be checked—and it should.

(6) Using exercises of the "f-eld" (field) type without having a good reason for leaving out one letter rather than another. (At times you may wish to stress silent letters, at other times a phonetic approach. Either is all right, but you should know what you are doing, and adapt your approach to the needs of your particular class.)

(7) Solving arithmetic problems by chorus. If you do, the student who did not understand will still not understand.

(8) Doing all the solving yourself instead of giving the students a chance to show what they can do. This applies to reading as well as to arithmetic.

(9) Having a private chat with the student at the board.

(10) Having students bring work to your desk for individual correction,

TABLE XVII
MONTHLY ENROLLMENT IN EACH SPECIAL TRAINING UNIT FROM
JANUARY 1944 THROUGH DECEMBER 1945 *

<i>Monthly Enrollment in Each Special Training Unit During 1944</i>										
<i>Special Training Unit**</i>	<i>Jan.</i>	<i>Feb.</i>	<i>Mar.</i>	<i>Apr.</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>Aug.</i>	<i>Sept.</i>	<i>Oct.</i>
Fort Devens, Mass.	309	556	622	622	586	398	267	258	243	265
Fort Ontario, N. Y.	1798	†								
Pine Camp, N. Y.		1915	2342	2319	1762	1306	1137	878	783	609
New Cumberland, Pa.	915	1006	1023	1391	1290	1021	962	941	1018	1042
Indiantown Gap, Pa.										
Holabird Signal Depot, Md.	1990	2249	2589	2560	1961	1636	1544	1325	1196	880
Fort Benning, Ga.	3809	3956	4084	3222	3890	3573	3757	3640	2913	1987
Fort Bragg, N. C.	2304	2315	2057	1999	2190	2255	2295	1895	1359	658
Fort Jackson, S. C.	1061	1320	1769	2039	1709	1398	1301	996	1019	1039
Fort McPherson, Ga.	479	488	‡							
Camp Shelby, Miss.	3748	4019	3455	4071	4098	3442	2703	1967	1539	1553
Camp Atterbury, Ind.	2545	2281	2222	2773	2372	2097	1979	1618	1642	1632
Fort Sheridan, Ill.	1017	1198	1033	865	780	630	762	815	759	566
Fort Leavenworth, Kans.	1425	1210	1225	1361	1299	1132	1002	826	829	671
Fort Riley, Kans.										
Fort Des Moines, Iowa***				44	117	113	106	83	62	36
Camp Beauregard, La.	1085	1259	1073	1046	924	817	439	‡		
Fort Bliss, Texas	471	520	421	416	368	366	437	356	335	281
Camp Robinson, Ark.	1040	947	852	930	1239	1070	921	1167	‡	
Camp Chaffee, Ark.									1011	859
Fort Sam Houston, Texas	1200	1317	1025	941	1021	795	893	1207	835	521
Fort Sill, Okla.	551	481	489	595	588	249	▲			
Camp Wolters, Texas	1832	1777	1368	1213	952	705	311	☐		
Camp McQuaide, Calif.	1640	1852	1520	1376	1265	1029	931	918	950	975

* Until July 1945, the monthly enrollment was equal to the average of the enrollments on the 10th, 20th, and last day of the month. Starting with July 1945, the monthly enrollment was equal to the enrollment on the last day of the month.

** Units are listed by service command.

*** This unit was organized for WAC personnel requiring special training.

† Closed Feb. 21, activity transferred to Pine Camp, N. Y.

‡ Closed March 8, activity transferred to Fort Jackson, S. C.

‡ Closed August 15.

‡ Closed Aug. 31, activity transferred to Camp Chaffee, Ark.

▲ Closed June 30.

☐ Closed Aug. 15.

☐ Closed Dec. 21.

☆ Closed July 11.

⊗ Closed July 20, activity transferred to Indiantown Gap, Pa.

were assigned in each inspection to the academic and military parts of the program.⁵⁸

A cursory glance at Table XVIII might give the impression that some units were inspected infrequently. Actually, the units were visited regularly and often, as more careful analysis of the table reveals. For example, it would appear that the units at Fort Ethan Allen, Vt., and Camp Niantic, Conn., were each inspected only once. However, the unit at Fort Ethan Allen was the same one which moved to Camp Niantic, Conn., and eventually to Fort Devens, Mass. Similarly, the unit at Fort Ontario, N. Y., moved to Pine Camp, N. Y.; the New Cumberland, Pa., unit was the one which eventually moved to Indiantown Gap, Pa.; the Fort McPherson, Ga., unit was consolidated with the unit at Fort Jackson, S. C.; and the Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind., unit was moved over to Camp Atterbury, Ill. Similar circumstances surrounded the remaining units listed in Table XVIII. In other words, when the listed units are considered in terms of consolidations and moves which occurred, it becomes apparent that each of them was seen comparatively often.

There were 75 inspections between June 1943 and the close of the program. Analysis reveals that 42 were made in the first year, 26 in the second year, and 7 in the first quarter of the third year. The greater number of inspections during the first year represented a concentrated effort to establish high standards of training and operation in all units. During the first year, the total program in eight units, representing 19 per cent of the inspections made, was rated as unsatisfactory; in the second year, the total program in two units, representing 6 per cent of the inspections made, was rated as unsatisfactory; and in the first quarter of the third year, there were no unsatisfactory units revealed in the course of seven inspections. In addition to the eight total programs rated as unsatisfactory in the first year, there were also five additional units in which inspections revealed part of the program to be unsatisfactory. There were no comparable unsatisfactory ratings assigned to parts of the program during the second year and the first quarter of the third year. It is clear from the data reported that the program was conducted with increased effectiveness during the period of operation.

The generally satisfactory character of the special training program during this period is further revealed through the data contained in Table XVIII. These data, presented in a varied form in Table XIX,

⁵⁸ Based on an analysis of all available inspection reports.

TABLE XVIII
 RATINGS OF ACADEMIC AND MILITARY TRAINING IN INSPECTIONS, SPECIAL TRAINING UNITS,
 CONDUCTED BETWEEN JUNE 1943 AND SEPTEMBER 1945*

	DATES OF INSPECTIONS AND RATINGS ASSIGNED														
	Units Inspected During July-Sept. 1943			Units Inspected During Oct.-Dec. 1943			Units Inspected During Jan.-Mar. 1944			Units Inspected During Apr.-June 1944			Units Inspected During July-Sept. 1944		
	Ratings Assigned	Acad.	Milit.	Ratings Assigned	Acad.	Milit.	Ratings Assigned	Acad.	Milit.	Ratings Assigned	Acad.	Milit.	Ratings Assigned	Acad.	Milit.
<i>Special Training Unit**</i>															
Fort Ethan Allen, Vt.				✓	S	U									
Camp Niantic, Conn.							✓	S	U						
Fort Devens, Mass.										✓	S	S			
Fort Ontario, N. Y.				✓	U	U									
Pine Camp, N. Y.										✓	VS	S	✓	S	S
Holabird Signal Depot, Md.				✓	S	S				✓	E	S			
New Cumberland, Pa.				✓	E	E				✓	S	U			
Indiantown Gap, Pa.															
Fort Benning, Ga.	✓	S	S	✓	U	U				✓	S	S	✓	S	S
Fort Bragg, N. C.	✓	S	S	✓	U	U				✓	S	S	✓	S	S
Fort Jackson, S. C.	✓	S	S	✓	S	S				✓	S	U	✓	S	S
Fort McPherson, Ga.	✓	S	S	✓	S	S									
Camp Shelby, Miss.				✓	U	U				✓	S	S	✓	S	S
Fort Benj. Harrison, Ind.				✓	VG	VG									
Camp Atterbury, Ind.										✓	S	F	✓	S	S
Fort Sheridan, Ill.				✓	S	S				✓	S	U	✓	S	S
Fort Leavenworth, Kans.	✓	S	S							✓	U	U	✓	S	S
Camp Beauregard, La.				✓	U	U				✓	S	E			
Fort Bliss, Tex.							✓	E	S						
Camp Chaffee, Ark.															
Camp Robinson, Ark.										✓	S	E			
Fort Sam Houston, Tex.	✓	S	S	✓	S	S				✓	S	S			
Fort Sill, Okla.							✓	S	S	✓	S	S			
Camp Wolters, Tex.							✓	U	U	✓	S	S			
Arlington, Calif.				✓	E	E									
Camp McQuaide, Calif.										✓	E	E	✓	S	E

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TABLE XVIII (Continued)

	DATES OF INSPECTIONS AND RATINGS ASSIGNED											
	Units Inspected During Oct.-		Ratings Assigned		Units Inspected During Jan.-		Ratings Assigned		Units Inspected During July-Sept. 1945		Ratings Assigned	
	Dec. 1944	Acad. Milit.	Mar. 1945	Acad. Milit.	June 1945	Acad. Milit.	Sept. 1945	Acad. Milit.	Acad. Milit.	Acad. Milit.		
Fort Ethan Allen, Vt.												
Camp Niantic, Conn.												
Fort Devens, Mass.			✓	E	S			✓	E	E		
Fort Ontario, N. Y.												
Pine Camp, N. Y.												
Holabird Signal Depot, Md.			✓	E	E			✓	G	S		
New Cumberland, Pa.	✓	S	S					✓	VS	S		
Indiantown Gap, Pa.								✓	VS	VS		
Fort Benning, Ga.			✓	S	S			✓	VS	VS		
Fort Bragg, N. C.								✓	VG	VG		
Fort Jackson, S. C.												
Fort McPherson, Ga.												
Camp Shelby, Miss.			✓	E	E							
Fort Benj. Harrison, Ind.												
Camp Atterbury, Ind.			✓	U	U			✓	VS	VS		
Fort Sheridan, Ill.								✓	U	U		
Fort Leavenworth, Kans.	✓	VS	VS					✓	VS	VS		
Camp Beauregard, La.												
Fort Bliss, Tex.	✓	E	VS					✓	S	S		
Camp Chaffee, Ark.	✓	F	F					✓	S	S		
Camp Robinson, Ark.												
Fort Sam Houston, Tex.			✓	E	E			✓	S	S		
Fort Sill, Okla.												
Camp Wolters, Tex.												
Arlington, Calif.												
Camp McQuaide, Calif.			✓	S	E			✓	S	S		

* The ratings which are represented by the letters follow in order of excellence: E Excellent. VG Very Good. G Good. VS Very Satisfactory. S Satisfactory. F Fair. U Unsatisfactory.

** The units are listed by service commands.

the methods of training were or how well the men appeared to do in examinations, the final test was the success of the individual and the unit in combat.

TEACHING MILITARY SUBJECTS IN SPECIAL TRAINING UNITS

The reasons for including military subjects in the special training program have already been indicated. The methods employed to teach these subjects were the same as those used throughout the Army. However, it was necessary to adapt the regular training methods to the capacities, needs, and interests of the illiterate, non-English-speaking, and Grade V men.

The importance of adequate preparation was impressed on each instructor. He was made to realize that with the type of men in special training units, it was especially necessary to demonstrate the need for a skill or knowledge before teaching it, to relate new material and concepts to previously acquired experiences and learnings, and to make clear to the men what they were expected to learn.¹³ To insure adequate motivation of the trainees and optimal use of classroom time, instructors were required to formulate detailed lesson plans for each hour of instruction.¹⁴ Instructors were also cautioned to make certain that their preparation for class included the procurement and arrangement of all relevant training aids and the preparation of training equipment and areas.

In general, instructors in special training units complied with the requirement to prepare useful lesson plans. Convinced of the value of these guides, through their pre-service training, in-service courses, and daily experiences, they did not require the persistent attention of supervisors. Many of the units prepared a series of basic lesson plans, which instructors could adapt to their personal requirements and the needs of the group. When it was evident, in the course of an inspection, that instructors were not using written lesson plans, either because the plans were taken for granted or because instructors were newly assigned, it became necessary to point out that fact sharply. The following excerpt

¹³ A good summary of these points is contained in the following: Headquarters, 1210th SCSU, Special Training Unit, Fort Ontario, N. Y., Education Monograph No. 3, Subject: *Instructional Methods*, 12 January 1944.

¹⁴ Notes, Special Training Conference, Camp Grant, Ill., June 1-12, 1943, p. 43.

from an inspection report reveals how failure to use appropriate lesson plans affected adversely the efficiency of training.¹⁵

Instructors were teaching without lesson plans. This resulted in a lack of organization which was especially noticeable at the end of the period when the trainees were dismissed abruptly at the sound of the whistle. No effort was made to pull together in summary form the result of the hour's work and no assignment was made for future classes.

The second stage of the instructional process, presentation, required the greatest attention. Explanation and demonstration, it will be recalled, were the two fundamental methods of presenting material in Army training. Some of the subjects in the military programs, like Articles of War, Organization of the Army, and Safeguarding Military Information, did not lend themselves conveniently to demonstration and had to be taught through explanation. Other subjects, like Infantry Drill, Rifle Marksmanship, and Interior Guard, were easily adapted to demonstration.

In connection with the presentation (explanation and/or demonstration) of subject matter, instructors were admonished to bear in mind the following: To speak clearly and in very simple terms; to present new material as slowly as necessary to assure mastery; to avoid lengthy explanations and remember that learning takes place when the men themselves are active; to appeal to a multiplicity of senses; to develop skills one step at a time; and to be patient with men requiring repetition of material.¹⁶ To provide for those men who required special consideration, the following recommendation was made:¹⁷

The instructor will find among his students some who usually will require more explanation and illustration before understanding a new concept or process, who will need to repeat similar examples more often in order to remember them, and who will retain their learning for a shorter period of time. Patience and persistent effort by the teacher are necessary to bring about the desired results in these cases.

When explanation was used in the teaching of military subject matter, it was almost invariably accompanied by illustrations. With the type of

¹⁵ Inspection Report, SPTRP333.1 (5th SC) (23 Mar 1945), Subject: *Training Inspection of Fifth Service Command Special Training Unit, Camp Atterbury, Indiana*, 23 March 1945.

¹⁶ A good summary of these points is contained in the following: Headquarters, 1210th SCSU, Special Training Unit, Fort Ontario, N. Y., Education Monograph No. 3, Subject: *Instructional Methods*, 12 January 1944.

¹⁷ War Department Pamphlet No. 20-8, *Instruction in Special Training Units*, p. 5, 1944.

INSURING THE PERSONAL AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT OF TRAINEES

The adjustment of illiterate, non-English-speaking, and Grade V men to military training and Army life was facilitated in many ways. Making the men literate and militarily proficient produced feelings of confidence and security. Giving them an understanding of the issues of the war helped to clarify their role and responsibilities. Providing them with sympathetic encouragement and guidance, in the course of instruction, led to the development of friendly relations between the officers and enlisted men and among the enlisted men themselves. In addition to these means of aiding special training unit men to effect satisfactory adjustments in the Army, other, more directed, techniques were also used.

A number of counseling procedures were employed in relation to the special training unit as a whole. First, there was the orientation of trainees upon reception into the units. All units provided an initial period of orientation for entrants. In some (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.,¹¹⁶ and Camp Atterbury, Ind.,¹¹⁷ for instance) the period lasted one day; in others (Fort Jackson, S. C.,¹¹⁸ and Fort Bragg, N. C.¹¹⁹), two days; and in still others (Fort Ontario, N. Y.¹²⁰), several days. In an explanation of the purpose of the orientation course at Fort Bragg, N. C., it is stated that "the transition from civilian life to military life effects a psychological influence upon a trainee." If this transition is made too abruptly, "it may panic him . . . and . . . permit him to enter the military service in the wrong frame of mind, lacking appreciation of the entire mission."¹²¹ Precisely the same reason motivated all units to organize orientation programs during the reception period.

¹¹⁶ War Department Personnel Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kans., 1773rd Service Command Unit, Special Training Unit, *Standard Operating Procedure*, 14 Oct 1944 (section on Trainee's Arrival).

¹¹⁷ Inspection Report, SPTRP 333.3 (5th SC) (29 Jul 1944), Subject: *Training Inspection of Special Training Unit, SCSU 1584, Camp Atterbury, Indiana*, 29 July 1944.

¹¹⁸ Report of Training Inspection, Reception Center Special Training Unit, Fort Jackson, South Carolina, 16 August 1943.

¹¹⁹ Inspection Report, SPTRP 333.3 (4th SC) (25 Jul 1944), Subject: *Training Inspection of Special Training Unit, Fort Bragg, North Carolina*, 25 July 1944.

¹²⁰ Report of Training Inspection, 1210th SCSU, Special Training Unit, Fort Ontario, New York, 19 October 1943.

¹²¹ Headquarters, Special Training Unit, Reception Center, Fort Bragg, N. C., *Orientation Course*, 4 April 1944.

ing Units; War Department Pamphlet 20-2, *Teaching Devices in Special Training Units*; DSTM-3, *Teacher's Guide to Instructional Materials*; and the instructor training program outlined in Army Service Forces Manual M4, *Military Training*.

The following outline of the orientation course, conducted at the 1210th SCSU, Special Training Unit, Fort Ontario, N. Y., is representative of indoctrination programs provided in the various units:

1. Purposes of the unit
2. Selection of men for training in the unit
3. Assignment of men to classes
4. Progress and graduation
5. Elimination of men from classes
6. Post and school regulations
7. Program of study
8. Instructional materials
9. Methods of instruction
10. Lesson plans
11. Testing program

The range of topics covered in the in-service courses was generally comparable to that shown in the following list (Table of Contents of the *Syllabus of Training School for Instructors, Fort Jackson, S. C.*):

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Period | 1. Overview of Teacher Training Program
Lesson Planning |
| Period | 2. Illiteracy in the Army
The Illiterate in the Special Training Unit
Procurement and Use of Teaching Aids and Devices |
| Period | 3. The Instructor's Role in the Special Training Unit
Principles of Learning in Special Training Unit and Application |
| Period | 4. Principles Underlying Efficient Instruction in Reading
Use of Supplementary Materials in Teaching Reading |
| Period | 5. Techniques of Teaching Reading |
| Period | 6. Principles of Teaching Arithmetic
Instruction in Spelling and Writing in Special Training Units |
| Period | 7. Oral and Written Expression and Their Role in the Special Training Unit
Methods of Instruction in Oral and Written Expression
The Blackboard as a Visual Aid in Teaching |
| Period | 8. The Use of Film Strips |
| Period | 9. The Techniques of Drill Instruction
The Use of Training Aids in Army Instruction |