

THE NAVY AT ST. AMBROSE COLLEGE

DURING WORLD WAR II, CHANGES BEGAN OCCURRING AT ST. AMBROSE. WHAT HAD BEEN A LEISURLY COLLEGE ACADEMIC LIFE BECAME HURRIED AS THE WAR BEGAN AFFECTING THE CAMPUS. IN 1942, THE COLLEGE ANNOUNCED THAT IT WOULD OFFER 40 NEW COURSES AND THAT THE COLLEGE WOULD BE OPERATED ON A 12-MONTH BASIS. TWO SUMMER TERMS, RATHER THAN ONE, WOULD NOW BE OFFERED. DESPITE THESE CHANGES, HOWEVER, THE STUDENT POPULATION AT ST. AMBROSE WAS HARD HIT BY THE WAR. UNIVERSAL DRAFT REGULATIONS HAD TAKEN A MAJORITY OF THE 18-22 YEAR OLD MALE GROUP WHICH WOULD NORMALLY HAVE ATTENDED THE COLLEGE.

IN AN EFFORT TO COMBAT THE LACK OF STUDENTS, MONSIGNIOR THOMAS B. LAWLER, BUSINESS MANAGER OF THE COLLEGE AT THAT TIME, SPENT TWO WEEKS IN WASHINGTON, D.C., VISITING SENATORS, CONGRESSMEN AND MILITARY OFFICIALS. HE SUGGESTED TO THEM THAT ST. AMBROSE FACILITIES BE CONSIDERED FOR USE IN TRAINING PERSONNEL FOR ONE OF THE BRANCHES OF THE ARMED FORCES. MONSIGNIOR LAWLER FINALLY MANAGED TO OBTAIN AN INTERVIEW WITH COLONEL EVANS, THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR TRAINING NAVY FLYING UNITS. APPARENTLY THE INTERVIEW WAS SUCCESSFUL, AS ST. AMBROSE WAS SOON CHOSEN AS A TRAINING SITE FOR THE NAVY. ALSO IN THE RUNNING FOR THE SITE HAD BEEN ANOTHER AREA COLLEGE, LORAS OF DUBUQUE. ONE OF THE REASONS THAT ST. AMBROSE WAS CHOSEN OVER LORAS WAS THAT AMBROSE HAD A SWIMMING POOL.

IN LATE APRIL OF 1942 IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT ST. AMBROSE WOULD OFFER A NEW TRAINING PROGRAM WITH THE NAVY BEGINNING IN JUNE OF 1943. IN JUNE OF 1942, A CIVILIAN PILOT TRAINING PROGRAM OPENED.

IN PREPARATION FOR THE ARRIVAL OF THE NAVY, ST. AMBROSE SEMINARIANS WERE MOVED TO LORAS COLLEGE IN DUBUQUE. THE PRIEST FACULTY ALSO HAD TO BE RELOCATED, AS THE ONLY OFFICIAL OF THE COLLEGE ALLOWED TO BE HOUSED ON CAMPUS DURING THE NAVY'S PRESENCE WAS THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT.

ON JUNE 1, 1943, NAVY OFFICIALS BEGAN ARRIVING AT THE COLLEGE TO HEAD THE NEW V-12 PROGRAM WHICH WAS TO HAVE A MINIMUM OF 300 TRAINEES. CLASSES FOR THE YEAR RESUMED ON JULY 1 AND INCLUDED SUCH OFFERINGS AS AVIATION, MILITARY SCIENCE AND TACTICS, AND ADVANCED MILITARY SCIENCE AND TACTICS.

DURING THE NAVY'S STAY, THE CADETS PUBLISHED A PERIODICAL CALLED "SEABREEZ", WHICH CONTAINED ARTICLES DEALING WITH THE LIVES OF THE CADETS. IT WAS SIMILAR TO ANY COLLEGE PAPER, HAVING BOTH INFORMATION AND "GOSSIP" AS WELL AS SERVING AS A VEHICLE TO VOICE GRIEVANCES. IT CONTINUED TO BE PUBLISHED THROUGHOUT THE NAVY'S STAY.

OTHER CHANGES WERE EVIDENCED IN BOTH SPORTS AND VACATIONS. THOUGH BASEBALL AND BASKETBALL CONTINUED TO BE PLAYED, THERE WAS NO FOOTBALL TEAM. CHRISTMAS VACATION, NO LONGER CALLED A VACATION BUT A LEAVE, WAS NO LONGER TWO WEEKS BUT 4 DAYS.

THE NAVY REMAINED AT ST. AMBROSE COLLEGE UNTIL OCTOBER OF 1945.