

Right in Montgomery County '18 C. O.'s Are Doing a Bigger War Job Than Average Yank in Camp'

Eighteen conscientious objectors at work on Montgomery County farms "are doing a bigger job for the war effort than the average soldier in camp," in the opinion of Dairy Farmer Frank P. Palmer of Olney, who has had one such youth assigned to him for the past six months.

Sixty-five others, say the Interior Department, "are doing a good job" in maintaining and developing the 3000-acre Patuxent Experimental Wildlife Refuge near Bowie, Md., by conducting research for new strategic materials.

Existence of the two nearby projects was revealed today by the National Service Board for Religious Objectors in a comprehensive survey of what it termed "a little-known by-product of World War II—the conscientious objector."

2000 JAILED

The survey showed:

Close to 7000 has been drafted as 4-E and assigned to Civilian Public Service Camps where, tho supervised by Selective Service, they receive no pay for their work and are largely dependent upon church organizations or themselves for maintenance.

A total of 2071 objectors have been sentenced to Federal prisons because draft boards did not recognize the bases for their beliefs or because they rebelled against "church administration of conscription."

Anywhere from an estimated 8000 to 100,000 (no accurate figures are available) have been drafted as I-A-O and assigned to non-combatant duties with the Army's medical corps.

In Montgomery County, objectors are assigned to farms hit by labor shortages. In most instances they live with the farmer. C. O. Lester Blouy of Pennsylvania, according to Mr. Palmer (who commented that "every man has a right to his own opinion") is "an exceptionally good boy, a good worker and very dependable." A similar opinion was voiced of C. O. Earl Boyd and his wife, Margaret, who live and work on the farm of T. M. Barnesly near Oakdale.

FIGHT FOREST FIRES

The 18 men (five are married) received maintenance but no money while pay the farmers give for their services go into the NSBRO "frozen fund," so called because the red tape which bars its expenditure has not yet been unraveled.

Lack of a pay scale comparable to the Army's, NSBRO official commented, is presenting an increasingly acute problem as Selective Service dips deeper into married men. No dependency allotment is provided for husbands or fathers inducted as conscientious objectors and increasing numbers, he said, are writing to the NSBRO that they are faced with subordinating their religious beliefs to economic considerations.

The survey shows that, of the men in CPS camps, 1680 are working on forestry projects, 1398 in soil conservation, and 1075 in public mental institutions which have been especially hard hit by the manpower shortage. Other tasks done by CPS men include acting as guinea pigs for medical research and parachuting from Forest Service planes to combat forest fires.

Two historic "peace" churches, the Mennonites with 2560 men, and the Church of the Brethren with 838, have the largest representation in CPS camps. Third is the Methodist church with 537 and the list ranges on down to the Episcopal church with 62.

NO PERSECUTION THIS WAR

Jehovah's Witnesses, tho they rank sixth in denominations represented in CPS camps with 195 men, furnished 1253 of the 1904 of the objectors sent to prison. This, the NSBRO explains, is largely because the sect, often in the public eye because of its court fights, regards each member as a minister and draft boards refuse to see eye-to-eye with a request for a minister's deferment for each.

World War II's conscientious objectors—generally better treated than in the last war—have reached their peak, the NSBRO estimated, because blanket agricultural deferments prevent boards from calling up members of the largely rural Mennonite, Church of the Brethren and Society of Friends.

"Darkest chapters in the treatment of C. O.'s in 1917-18 were written in camps and military prisons were hard-boiled Army officers tried to overcome conscientious objections with abuse, mistreatment and actual torture," the NSBRO said describing the last war in which 56,830 claims were granted for C. O. status and 503 court-martialed, of which 17 were sentenced to death and the remainder given prison terms ranging from 25 years to life. No death sentences were carried out and all C. O.'s were released from prison by 1920.

"Few, if any, such incidents have been proved in this war."



—Staff Photos

Dr. Arthur Treichler (right), Interior Department, watches C. O. Clarence Klingensmith, chemist in civilian life, carry on his research in the development of new rat poisons from native plants. Klingensmith is one of a small group of trained technical men who, after they were drafted as COs, are performing experiments to produce new strategic materials under direction of Dr. Treichler and A. L. Nelson of the Interior's Economics Investigation Control.



Two COs and an Interior employe (left) work on the spillway of a large earth and concrete dam which has been in the making all summer. The resultant lake will be used by the Fish and Wildlife Division of the Interior for research into the life and habits of game fish and migratory waterfowl. Other COs are trapping small game and preparing the pelts for eventual sale under Interior supervision.



Snowden Hall, left, formerly manor house for the estate on which is now situated the Interior Department's Patuxent Experimental Wildlife Refuge, is administrative headquarters, mess hall and dormitory for 67 conscientious objectors engaged on the project. Neither CO Director Henry Guhr nor the men would pose before the hall because "it was not typical" of conditions under which most objectors in Civilian Public Service camps live. Right: At day's end, COs Glenn Eaton (at piano), Merrill Benner and Reuben Goodlin relax with song in the Snowden Hall lounge. As in Army camps, COs get week-end passes to visit nearby cities—Laurel, Washington and Baltimore—and occasional furloughs home.