

The University of Michigan In Times of War



Mexican War 1846 - 1848

The University of Michigan has long contributed to the defense of the nation during times of war. The University had been in Ann Arbor only five years when the Mexican War broke out in 1846. Five students fought in the war, three as officers.

The Mexican War between the United States and Mexico began with a Mexican attack on American troops along the southern border of Texas on April 25, 1846. Fighting ended when U.S. General Winfield Scott occupied Mexico City on September 14, 1847. A peace treaty was signed on February 2, 1848 at Guadalupe Hidalgo. As a result, Texas was ceded to the United States, along with California, New Mexico, and Arizona.

Civil War 1861 - 1865

“On Friday, April 12, 1861, they fired on Fort Sumpter. On the Sunday morning following, in a very impressive manner, Dr. Tappan announced that Fort Sumpter had been fired on, that a great civil war was impending, and that the north must be aroused to defend and save the government. He announced that he would address the citizens of Ann Arbor at three o’clock in the afternoon on the Court House square.

Dr. Tappan, a little before three o’clock, came down from the University with the old chapel Bible under his arm. Dr. Tappan got upon the platform, read some rousing chapters from the Bible and commenced his address. You could distinctly hear every word that he said in the farthest part of the square. Dr. Tappan spoke for about two hours.



News of the Civil War Announced by President Tappan
On the Court House Square

Tappan informed the students that he had engaged Joseph H. Vance, the librarian of the Law library, to act as drill master, to prepare the students to properly act their part in the coming conflict. A room on the first floor at the south end of the South College was used for a drill room. The Doctor assured the students that failure to reach recitations on time caused by attendance at drill would be overlooked.

One regiment was called the ‘Tappan Guards,’ the other the ‘U of M Guards,’ and the two together, ‘The University Battalion.’ Canes were used for guns and swords.” Noah W. Cheever ’63, ’65, (Michigan Alumnus, June, 1897)

Three companies of student soldiers were at once recruited: the Tappan Guards, commanded by Captain Charles Kendall Adams ’61, later Professor of History in the University and President of Cornell and Wisconsin; the Chancellor Greys, commanded by Captain Isaac H. Elliott ’61; and the Ellsworth Zouaves, under Captain Albert Nye ’62. A large part of the University’s student body underwent military training, which continued through 1861 and 1862, and nearly one-half the members of the classes of 1859, 1860, 1861, and 1862 entered the war—78 out of 165. Nearly 2000 Michigan men served in the Civil War under the Union colors, many as officers and non-commissioned officers.



Charles K. Adams, Capt. of the University Guards (left)
Isaac H. Elliot, Captain of the Chancellor Greys (center)
Albert Nye, Captain of the Ellsworth Zouaves (right)

Captain W. H. Allen Zacharias ’60 of the Seventh Michigan Infantry was mortally wounded at the battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862. His body was found on the battlefield. The following lines were written on an old envelope clutched in his hand:

“Dear Parents, Brothers and Sisters: I am wounded, mortally I think. The fight rages round me. I have done my duty. This is my consolation. I hope to meet you all again. I left not the line until all had fallen and colors gone. I am getting weak. My arms are free but below my chest all is numb. The enemy trotting over me. The numbness up to my heart. Good-bye all. Your son, Allen”
(UM Encyclopedic Survey, p. 195)

Spanish American War - April 25, 1898 - December 10, 1898

On April 25, 1898 the United States declared war on Spain following the sinking of the Battleship Maine in Havana Harbor on February 15, 1898. The war ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898. As a result Spain lost its control over the remains of its overseas empire—Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippine Islands, Guam, and other islands.

In the spring of 1898, when it became apparent that the United States would be involved in a war with Spain, a mass meeting was held in the auditorium in University Hall. Students were urged to keep calm but get ready. Plans for military drill were considered. 576 Michigan men enlisted in the Spanish American War in 1898. The Hay Bill and the Chamberlin Bill provided a mechanism to develop officers on university campuses, and in 1898 an officer battalion was formed at the University to serve the needs of the war with Spain. Graduates of the Nursing School also served in the Spanish American War. From the faculty, Victor C. Vaughan, Dean of the Department of Medicine and Surgery; Charles B. de Nançrède, Professor of Surgery; Mortimer E. Cooley, Professor of Mechanical Engineering; and Walter R. Parker, Professor of Ophthalmology were in active service.



Victor Vaughan



Charles B. de Nançrède



Mortimer Cooley



Walter R. Parker

Dr. Vaughan and Dr. de Nançrède served as surgeons at the base hospital in Siboney where all the wounded from the battle of Santiago were treated. Dr. Vaughan was later stricken with yellow fever. Both men were cited for their heroic deeds and faithful service.

Mortimer Cooley was chief engineer on the United States' converted cruiser "Yosemite," which was on blockade duty and acted as scout and convoy. Walter R. Parker, Professor of Ophthalmology, was watch and division officer, with the rank of ensign, on the "Yosemite."

War Memorials

Alumni Memorial Hall was built by the Alumni to honor those members of the University who had served in the Mexican, Civil, and Spanish-American Wars. The building was dedicated on May 11, 1910, and officially presented to the University. The Moro Castle Mortar, a War Memorial of the Spanish War, was given by the Class of 1899.



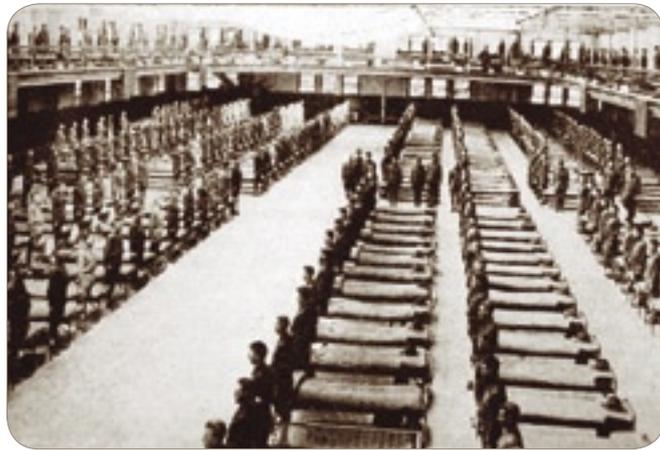
Alumni Memorial Hall - Moro Castle Mortar (right)

World War I 1914 - 1918

Almost immediately after the declaration of war in 1914, two divisions of the Naval Reserves were mobilized and stationed at their headquarters in Waterman Gymnasium. Drills were held on Ferry Field. In addition to the gymnasium, other University buildings were brought into use, and the campus and town were occupied by marching men.



Drills on Ferry Field



Barracks in Waterman Gymnasium



Students Marching

During the war years, the University refocused its efforts on the military needs of the nation, in many cases at the expense of its academic programs. The College of Engineering and the Law School modified their courses so that at least two days a week were devoted to drill. To supplement these drills the Engineering faculty started an elementary course in military engineering enrolling some 210 students, including 30 from the Literary College. Special courses were given in signaling, munitions, railroad transportation, automobile engineering, and the classification and handling of stores.



Class in Visual Signaling
(Semaphore)



Communications



Class in the
Engineering Shops Foundry



Class - New Engineering Building



Surveying



Code Training

In 1916 voluntary military training of students was started on the campus and was carried out under the direction of Major Clyde Wilson, of the College of Engineering faculty. "We do not believe in war, but we do believe in peace—peace with liberty and justice for all. Therefore we are all working for reasonable, defensive, 'preparedness' which we hope will become permanent" C.E. Wilson (*Michigan Alumnus*, May, 1916).

At the close of the spring term there were over nine hundred men in training. Victor Vaughan, Dean of Medicine; Mortimer Cooley, Dean of Engineering; and Henry Bates, Dean of Law were all active in promoting the work of the Security League. Several professors connected with the Department of German used their classrooms for active German propaganda and were consequently dismissed.

World War I 1914 - 1918

Early in 1918 the government asked the University to determine how many men could be trained on campus to serve as army mechanics. The University replied that 200 could be accommodated. Washington expected a larger commitment, and with the use of additional temporary barracks 700 men were trained.



Barracks in the Union



The Unfinished Michigan Union



The Union Kitchen

Because of the War, the Michigan Union was not ready for the students until 1919. With a loan of \$260,000 from the Michigan War Preparedness Board, the building was sufficiently completed to be used as a barracks for the Students' Army Training Corps. During this emergency it served as a dormitory for 800 men and as a mess hall for some 4000.



Army Students' Mess
Michigan Union Ballroom



Temporary Mess
Beside the Michigan Union



Navy Students' Mess
Michigan Union Unfinished Pool



Building a Temporary Mess beside the Michigan Union

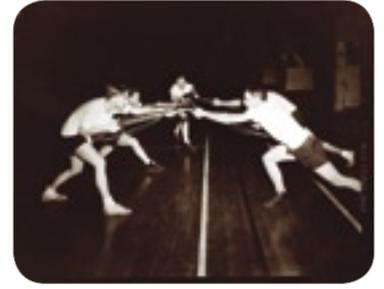


"Spanish influenza" struck the Michigan campus in October of 1918. This was during the period of the S.A.T.C. (Students' Army Training Corps), which enrolled approximately 3,600 men housed in hastily prepared barracks contrived out of fraternity houses and the half-finished Michigan Union. When the flu came, 1,207 members of the S.A.T.C. were stricken, and 59 died.

The infirmaries of the military units and the hospital facilities of Ann Arbor were strained by this emergency. The women of the city, under the leadership of the Ann Arbor group of the American Association of University Women, helped to feed and nurse the sufferers. Barbour Gymnasium became an auxiliary hospital.

World War II 1941 - 1945

When the United States entered the war in December, 1941, it was obvious at once the University of Michigan would be deeply affected. The University War Board was organized to expedite the transition of the University from a peacetime to a wartime basis. Among the first actions was that of revising the 1941-42 calendar. The University would operate on a year-round basis; examination periods were shortened; and spring vacation was eliminated. Professionally and technically trained students were made available for war work almost three weeks earlier than the normal schedule would have permitted. The Board encouraged the University to invite the armed forces and civilian government agencies to send selected groups for specialized training and offered its assistance. Recognizing that it was primarily the function of the armed forces to provide training in combat skills, the Board did not follow the lead of some colleges in recommending specific military preparation for all students. Instead the University continued its emphasis on undergraduate education in the liberal arts and professional disciplines, augmenting this instruction with course work addressing the specific needs of the wartime military and stressing the physical conditioning of students.



The College of Engineering offered a special course to women in Engineering, Science, and Management to prepare them for war jobs. This put many young women in the predominately male school, and more than 150 women frequented the halls of West Engineering. Surveying, Topographic Mapping, and Photogrammetry were taught.

Women also came to the College of Engineering for training in aircraft inspection work. Military map making was taught to qualified second-term senior women in a special course offered at the request of the Army Map Service. Women were also instructed in making bombing target maps for use by the Air Force.



World War II 1941 - 1945

In the summer of 1942, the University War Board supported President Ruthven in his position that the University take contracts for training war personnel only if it involved using University faculty members. In many instances, the faculty members had to take refresher courses to teach classes they had never taught before.

By the fall term of 1943 there were over 4,000 military personnel on campus. The Army had stationed more than 2,300 soldiers at Michigan. They were studying engineering, meteorology, foreign languages, military government of occupied territories, medicine, dentistry, and military law. The Navy sent 1,500 sailors, marines, and coast guardsmen for basic training in science and history, medicine, dentistry, and naval architecture. More than 200 nurses in the School of Nursing were enrolled in the U. S. Cadet Nurses.



Approximately 4,000 men wearing the uniforms of the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard enrolled for the Fall Term of 1943. Of these, more than 2,300 were soldiers, housed in the East Quadrangle, Vaughan House, Fletcher Hall, and leased fraternity houses. Many of the latter were available with the falling off of civilian fraternity men. The others were quartered in the West Quadrangle, with the majority of the officer personnel living at the Michigan Union. There was a significant decline in the enrollments of traditional civilian students. However, the presence of Army and Navy personnel brought the enrollment to numbers which demanded the full utilization of all the facilities.

The wartime atmosphere had some amusing features, such as the decision to reset campus clocks: *“A little confusion has been in the air during the past week as to what time it is—the reason being that Ann Arbor is on Eastern War Time and the University is on Central War Time, or an hour earlier than the city. To make things easy, the time of classes has been set forward an hour, so under the new system students go to class at eight o’clock Ann Arbor time, and arrive in the classroom at seven o’clock, University time—or thereabouts. To a stranger arriving in Ann Arbor, things might seem a little strange at first, when he gets off of the train at 1:30, for instance, and forthwith arrives at the Michigan Union an hour earlier.”* (Michigan Alumnus, January 20, 1945, p. 217)

All the more remarkable was that in the midst of this massive effort to support the nation’s wartime needs, the University managed to remain intact as an educational institution and sustain its core academic programs. Ruthven understood well the dangers of wartime priorities, and he was skillful in protecting the core education and research missions of the university, even as it served the nation in exemplary fashion.

The Phoenix Project

Following World War II, there was strong University interest in creating a fitting memorial to honor the 579 Michigan men and women who had fallen in wartime service. It was the students themselves, many of whom were veterans, who proposed that rather than build “a mound of stone, the purpose of which might soon be forgotten,” the University instead create a project that would aid mankind in living in a war-free world.

On May 1, 1948, the Regents adopted a resolution that “the University of Michigan create a War Memorial Center to explore the ways and means by which the potentialities of atomic energy may become a beneficent influence in the life of man, to be known as the Phoenix Project of the University of Michigan.”

The Phoenix Project received its financial support primarily from students, alumni, and friends of the University. This support totaled about \$7.5 million when the drive for funds was completed.

President Ruthven called the Phoenix Project “the most important undertaking in the University’s history.” President Eisenhower highlighted the importance of the Phoenix Project: “Few causes are more urgent today and more noteworthy of your support. In war or in peace, the atomic research being done at the University of Michigan will strengthen America” (*Michigan Technic*, December, 1950).

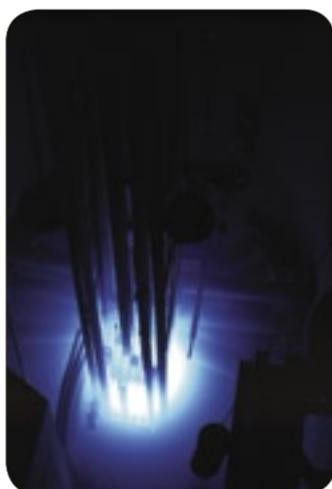


As the research program on peacetime implications and applications of atomic energy began to take shape and gain momentum, it was apparent that a laboratory with special facilities was needed. Research on atomic energy involved the handling of large amounts of radioactive materials and the use of high-intensity radiation sources. Such work could be carried out safely and adequately only in facilities designed for the purpose.

On June 9, 1955, the Phoenix Memorial Laboratory was dedicated to provide radiation research facilities unequalled in any non-government laboratory in the country. With the new Ford Research Reactor, completed in 1956, the University had the facilities and equipment necessary to study all aspects of atomic energy. The Phoenix Memorial Laboratory was a tangible manifestation of the Phoenix Project, the University’s war memorial research project.



Phoenix Memorial Laboratory



The Ford Nuclear Reactor

The Korean Conflict 1950 - 1953

The Korean War, which began on June 25, 1950 and ended with a cease-fire on July 27, 1953, was a conflict between North and South Korea. In the United States, it was termed the Korean Conflict and considered a police action under the aegis of the United Nations, largely to avoid the need for a Congressional declaration of war. The University did not have to develop programs to meet the needs that were generated by these events, as they had done in earlier times. College students were deferred from the military draft.

The Vietnam Conflict, Teach-ins & Protests

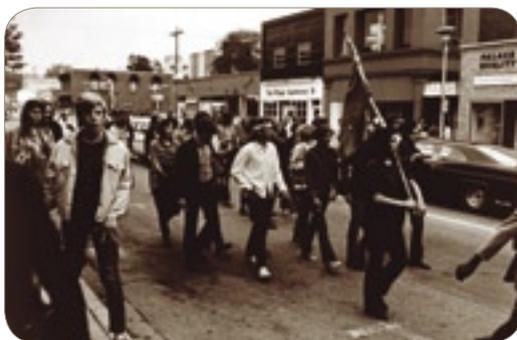
In March of 1965, fourteen faculty announced that they were canceling their classes on March 24 to protest the United States policy in Vietnam. The whole state reacted in objection, and President Hatcher, who personally was opposed to the Vietnam venture, declared that “dismissing classes is certainly not an acceptable method of registering a political opinion.” He did, however, support Dean Haber’s offer of a building in which to stage an all-night “teach-in” about the war. The teach-in was a new form of intellectual involvement with controversial issues consisting of lectures and other forms of academic meetings wherein issues were discussed and debated. The speeches and discussions, all against U. S. policy, attracted some 2,500 students whose enthusiasm waned as the night progressed (only 500 remained after midnight) (*UM Encyclopedic Survey, The Turbulent Years*, p. 9, online at www.hti.umich.edu).

Soon the Vietnam protests were increasing in number and severity. In the fall of 1965 Vietnam involvement was protested at Homecoming. On October 15, 1965, 200 students protested at the draft board office on Washington Street in downtown Ann Arbor. Thirty-eight persons, 32 men and 6 women, participated. All 38 were arrested and convicted. On September 20, 1966, 30 students remained overnight in the office of Vice-President Wilbur Pierpont protesting plain-clothed police personnel on the Ann Arbor campus. A student referendum was held in November of 1966, and overwhelming opposition was voiced to the University’s maintaining class rankings which would be used by the Selective Service system. A teach-in on November 2, 1966 attracted 4,000. Student Government Council severed its formal ties with the University administration. When the Regents rejected the withholding of class rankings from the Selective Service authorities, 1,000 students conducted a sit-in in the Administration Building. A teach-in followed that sit-in. The 1966 academic year concluded with the National Students for a Democratic Society Convention being held in Ann Arbor (*UM Encyclopedic Survey, Student Life Since 1945*, p. 5, online at www.hti.umich.edu).

In September of 1969, President Fleming again demonstrated his belief in the principle that the University should offer a voice of reason when audiences were otherwise likely to hear only rhetoric of action. A student-faculty group had organized a weekend “Teach In to End the War” and invited a number of activists, including Rennie Davis and David Dellinger, to participate. Davis was just back from North Vietnam where he had been instrumental in the release of several Americans being held prisoner. Fleming accepted the opportunity to share the platform with Davis at Hill Auditorium for the opening night of the teach-in, and his remarks were not only a cogent exposition of his personal belief that the Vietnam War was a “colossal mistake,” though an honest one, but also contained a reasoned plea that reaction should not take any form that would produce further “erosion in values within our universities—dangerous to the climate of free inquiry.” The teach-in was successfully channelled toward non-violent actions to force the end of the war (*UM Encyclopedic Survey, The Turbulent Years*, p. 8, online at www.hti.umich.edu).



Homecoming Parade Protest



Student Protests