

Pathfinder

September 20, 1950: p. 15

The Big Parade

“Christmas in khaki” became the new theme song of thousands of the nation’s young men last week when the Army handed Selective Service a new quota for November.

And it seemed likely that many more thousands of married men without children, would celebrate their last New Year’s eve in civilian garb for some time to come.

Added to the 50,000 call for this month and another 50,000 to be inducted in October, the Army wants 70,000 in November. Selective Service is expected to start drawing from the nation’s 300,000 married non-fathers in January. Married men with dependents probably will remain deferred, but to bring the Armed Forces to the 3 million men asked by President Truman, it may be necessary to lift the exemption on World War II veterans. Occupational deferments probably will be tightened soon.

Passing Grade. Rep. Carl Vinson (D-Ga.), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, also wants the draft age-limit raised from 25 to 35. Both Vinson and Selective Service Director Maj. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey have urged the Army to lower its mental requirement for draftees from the present score of 70.

But the Army wants to maintain that level as long as possible. Tests taken by 8 million men in the last war showed that all but 7% of the adult population can score 70 or better. Physical requirements, says the Army, are as low as those of World War II, or lower.

But thus far the easy entrance-requirements haven’t worked out: Some 60% of the men called have failed either the mental or the physical test.

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