

Fields of Battle

War and the Gridiron:

How World War II Interrupted the Collegiate Experience of Student Athletes
and Football Became a Training Ground for Soldiers

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Thanksgiving and football go together in the Southeast. The same can be said of various parts of the county, each with their own style of play, brand of loyalty, and traditional rivalries. Since 1893 the University of Georgia Bulldogs and the Yellow Jackets from the Georgia Institute of Technology engage in a football battle around Thanksgiving. According to Georgia Tech fans, the rivalry stood, in 2008, with 39 wins for the Yellow Jackets, 59 wins for the Bulldogs, and 6 games that ended in a tie.¹ For Georgia fans, the record included two fewer games. Two losses by UGA, during the 1943 and 1944 seasons by a combined score of 92-0, have been dismissed from the rivalry records and minds of the fans of UGA. The dispute developed a few years later when those two losses were marked with asterisks to show that Tech had an unfair advantage due to the Navy V-12 program which gave the school a pool of players to choose from that the Jackets otherwise would not have had. To make matters worse for the University of Georgia Football program, the 1943 and 1944 UGA rosters were composed mostly of freshmen and “4-F’s.”² However, reconstructing the attitude of the players and fans by looking at the way the student body wished to remember the seasons through yearbooks and student newspapers, one will note that these games should not be simply dismissed by UGA fans and forgotten, nor should they stand alongside any other victory in the record books of Georgia Tech. The students at each university during these years of war were focused on much greater issues than an end of season football game. This particular piece of college football history reveals a clearer picture of the war years for the student athlete, whose life plans were interrupted, and the general population whose sons, brothers, and friends were not marching across a gridiron as expected, but rather, they were marching, or preparing to march across Europe. Some government officials, mostly those responsible for the training of naval officers, believed that football and other intercollegiate athletic endeavors would help develop young men into officers that would help America become victorious in World War II. This ideology intrinsically tied the World War II experience of student-athletes and the fans of college football. As boys became men and drafted into service, those who did not meet the physical requirements, the 4-F’s, were given an opportunity to play collegiate sports that they may have not received. Therefore, the lessons of leadership, physical wellness, and other life lessons that one may glean from competitive sports became part of their collegiate training as well.

The disputed games of the Georgia/Georgia Tech rivalry are a starting point for an examination of the experience of the college athlete during World War II. The war interrupted the college plans of many athletes. Collegiate, as well as professional athletics were nearly cancelled during the war years.³ I have chosen several football players from the University of Georgia and Georgia Tech to represent, as case studies, the way in which the war impacted the collegiate careers of athletes, and how the games themselves served as both a distraction from the reality of war and an opportunity to reinvigorate the idealized American spirit.

¹ *Georgia Tech 2008 Media Guide*, (Georgia Institute of Technology, 2008).

² “4-F’s” were those individuals who failed the physical requirements for military duty.; *UGA 2008 Media Guide*, (University of Georgia, 2008).

³ The “Green Light Letter” sent from the office of the White house to Major League Baseball commissioner Kennesaw Judge Landis gave the “green light” or the approval to continue Major League Baseball during the war. University officials expressed similar concerns regarding collegiate sports with the war effort continuing and asked the President for a statement regarding collegiate sports. For the “green light letter see “Letter to Commissioner Kenesaw M. Landis from President Franklin D. Roosevelt, January 15, 1942” n.d. <http://education.baseballhalloffame.org/experience/thematic_units/economics/fdr_letter.html> (accessed 20 April 2009).; For an example of the questions concerning collegiate football during World War II see, Max Kase—Sports Editor, Letter to Mr. Stephen T. Early—Secretary to the President, 15 January 1942, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library Official File 189 Sports.; Max Kase—Sports Editor, Letter to Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt, 15 January 1942, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library Official File 189 Sports.; Ralph Cannon, Letter to General Stephen D. Early—Secretary to the President, 9 March 1942, Franklin Roosevelt Library Official File 189 Sports.; W.H. Britton—Assistant Football Coach University of Tennessee, Letter to Brigadier General A.G. Surls, 15 May 1942, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library Official File 189 Sports.

While the collegiate experience one year after the bombing of Pearl Harbor still included sport, the 1943-1944 academic year promised to be one of change.⁴ On December 4, 1942 the UGA student newspaper pictured twelve Georgia players that would, one month later, lead their team to a Rose Bowl victory, which allowed the team to be selected as the National Champion. However, the same issue of the student produced newspaper, the *Red and Black*, that announced the National Championship title also pronounced the perilous times coming to the University and the athletic teams. The article's opening statement, "We must face facts," set the tone. "If [World War II] continues through next year...practically every physically fit male student now enrolled in the University will be serving in the some branch of the armed forces." However, the article concluded on a positive note. The University would be "loaned" to a Navy pre-flight school that would "take over more University buildings after Christmas [of 1942]," but the future of the school would be "greater after the war."⁵

The American entrance into the global conflict forced American institutions, fans, professional athletes, and college bound student-athletes to adapt to a war time reality. Although, compared to baseball, the historiography on wartime football is sparse, it has not been overlooked altogether. Matthew Algeo's *Last Team Standing: How the Pittsburgh Steelers and Philadelphia Eagles-- The "Steagles"-- Saved Pro Football During World War II*, showed how the NFL adapted to the changes brought about by the war. Tom Perrin's *Football: A College History* focused on the changes that college football went through from it's beginning in the early 1880s, and devoted a chapter to the World War II era. Perrin acknowledged some of the difficulties the college game had to overcome during the war, such as depleted rosters, lack of talent, and general concern focused on the war effort; however, his analysis was more focused on the reinvention of the "T-formation" offense and how the war stifled the creativity and development of the game than on the impact the war had on the athletes and the schools. He did note, however, that some institutions were able to use military trainees, which allowed them to do well in athletics, and how "almost 200 colleges [that did not have military trainees] discontinued football" in 1943.⁶ John Sayle Watterson's *College Football: History, Spectacle, Controversy* also dedicated a chapter to the war years. Watterson noted several interesting transformations about the college game. He explained how the lack of men on campus allowed more women to partake in cheerleading.⁷ According to Watterson, the lack of players prompted the beginning of the "Ivy League," as school presidents took the opportunity (the lack of quality recruits) to try to reform big time college football by doing away with athletic scholarships and other elements that had crept into the "amateur" game of college football.⁸ The war also allowed a joint venture between collegiate athletics and the military. Watterson suggested, "athletes who might have been condemned as professionals before the war now played football on Uncle Sam's 'amateur' teams."⁹ It was this joining of military training and collegiate football that created the disputed games between the University of Georgia and Georgia Tech.

When the Navy decided to allow its V-12 trainees to participate in intercollegiate sports, it allowed those V-12 institutions to field highly competitive teams. (This was an important decision for collegiate athletics because the U.S. Army's Specialized Training Program (A.S.T.P.) did not allow the soldiers to compete in intercollegiate athletics.)¹⁰ One hundred thirty-one schools became Navy V-12 institutions. As one of these institutions, Georgia Tech had to undergo changes to its educational structure. V-12 schools were placed on a year-round schedule, with terms beginning on July 1, November 1, and

⁴ For a good example of a change in a University (the University of Virginia) during the war see, Jennings L. Wagoner Jr. and Robert L. Baxter Jr., "Higher Education Goes to War: The University of Virginia's Response to World War II," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* Vol. 100 No. 3 (July 1992), 399-428.

⁵ "Academic Program May be Suspended During Duration" in *Red and Black*, 4 December 1942, 4.

⁶ Perrin, 213.

⁷ John Sayle Watterson, "Saints and Sinners, 1941 to 1950" in *College Football: History, Spectacle, Controversy*, (Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 2000). 201-217.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Schneider, 262.

March 1,¹¹ which meant that the football season would be interrupted as the semester ended. The classes prescribed to the future officers left no room for electives,¹² making scheduling practices difficult. However, colleges sought the V-12 status as a way to keep faculty members, and to continue the existence of the college. In addition, “the patriotic satisfaction of doing their part in the war effort was a most important ingredient for all the schools,” according to V-12 historian and former V-12 cadet James G. Schneider,¹³ Although schools were selected for various reasons, the Georgia Institute of Technology was chosen because of its engineering program.¹⁴ The already existing NROTC unit at Tech was another advantage that the institute had in being selected by the U.S. military.¹⁵

The University of Georgia also had a strong military presence during the war. The U.S. military used part of UGA’s campus for a Navy pre-flight school. The pre-flight school, however, was not considered part of the university. Although it was inconvenient for the students at the University of Georgia to have campus buildings and grounds used exclusively by the military, they also anticipated an improved campus after the war thanks to the pre-flight school. The U.S. military built new facilities and improved many of the existing buildings.¹⁶ However, students often complained about the presence of military trainees. Newspaper articles and University officials often reminded student that the use of the campus by the military aided the war effort. Thus, the outwardly projected sense of pride for helping the war was conflicted throughout the university atmosphere. The preflight students, being moved through the school quickly, were unable to connect to the other students, in part, because they could not participate in the intercollegiate sports program like the Navy V-12 cadets could. The V-12 trainees were, for all purposes, still college students,¹⁷ while the pre-flight cadets were strictly military personnel.

Student life on each campus was a reminder of the need to adapt to the requirements of a nation at war. As the student newspapers and annuals make clear, it was difficult for students at both schools who lost, friends and family to deployment to see men in uniform as it could be a constant reminder of the perils of war and the possibility of losing a loved one. The university was not a place to escape the reality of the nation at war. Although battles were fought on distant continents, students were confronted with constant reminders of the war effort on their campuses.

However, the yearbooks were most assertive that at each university the student body, in general, supported the efforts of those serving the country in war. The cover of the 1943 GT *Blueprint* was decorated simply with the military insignia of the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine Corps.¹⁸ The 1942 *Pandora* from UGA was colored red, white, and blue, and dedicated, not to a particular faculty member or student, but to “the recent graduates of the University of Georgia, and especially to the men of the class of 1942 who have already entered, or will enter, the armed forces of the United States in this hour of the gravest national emergency.”¹⁹ The 1944 *Pandora* began each section of the noticeably thinner annual with pictures of the campus in Athens, but superimposed over each section was a military themed drawing.²⁰ The universities each tried to portray the idea that a college education, whether specifically

¹¹ James G. Schneider, *The Navy V-12 Program; Leadership for a Lifetime*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987), 57.

¹² Ibid. 57-58.

¹³ Ibid. 10.

¹⁴ Ibid. 15.

¹⁵ Ibid. 11.

¹⁶ *Pandora 1943*, (Athens: University of Georgia, 1943), introduction, n.p.; *Red and Black*, 4 December 1942, 4.

¹⁷ Perrin, 214.; Whether or not UGA used preflight students as players is not clear at this time. Tom Perrin in *Football: A Collegiate History* suggested that the University of Georgia used preflight cadets on the football team. However, much of the research done for this project, including a consultation with Skip Hulett, Head of the Georgiana Collection at the Hargrett Rare Books and Manuscript Library at the University of Georgia, asserted that UGA did not use preflight cadets because of the speed at which cadets came through the school. They were often not considered part of the university.

¹⁸ *Blueprint 1943*, (Atlanta: Georgia Institute of Technology, 1943), n.p.

¹⁹ *Pandora 1942* (Athens: University of Georgia, 1942), Dedication, n.p.

²⁰ *Pandora 1944* (Athens, University of Georgia, 1944), n.p.

military training or civilian, was, in part, to help the war effort. The college experience, from the classes to the military drills to the athletic competitions, was equated with preparation for one's role in the war first, and private life thereafter.

Football, like baseball, may be *read* with a “special, intensified, narrativity” compared to other sports, specifically other versions of football, played around the world.²¹ This concept is necessary to understand how the disputed games during World War II were more than just isolated events. They are, for the historian, a narrative of the wartime experience itself. In a football game, each individual play is a culmination of strategy, practice, and execution; the play itself is a narrative containing a clear beginning, middle, and end; an element absent from the more fluid games of rugby and soccer. The distinct break between the offensive and defensive sides of the football, a result of the rule for possession, is another element contributing to the uniqueness of the American football narrative.²² It is also an aspect that makes the narrative of football a closer correlation with war. The football narrative may be read from the “primary text,” which are the games themselves, as well as the “secondary texts,” which are the writings of sports journalists (who were often newspaper reporters, or university officials, but may also have been fans, yearbook editors, or players writing their thoughts). The game itself may be read as an allegory, while the secondary texts are interpretations of that allegory. It is the “negotiations” between the two texts that create the “meaning” of the game.²³ Thus, the World War II college football games are a story to be read.

In the story of the 1943 and 1944 rivalry games between the two Georgia institutions, the struggle was not just between two rival schools; it was a representation of the change in American society brought about by the war. The U.S. military required college boys to become soldiers. The government required campuses to be turned into training grounds. College plans were put on hold. Civilians and soldiers struggled to define their place in the wartime society, and it is the story of the interrupting effect of war that stands out when reading the narrative of the 1943 and 1944 rivalry games between Georgia and Georgia Tech.

Collegiate athletic teams during the war years were classified into two categories by the media. The terms “civilian team” or just “civilians” referred to those schools that did not benefit from the military V-12 program.²⁴ Although UGA had a pre-flight school, this five-month program did not coincide with traditional higher education. Thus, the military personnel in the Navy pre-flight school endured rigorous physical training and utilized specialized instruction on the campuses, but were not part of the university.²⁵ The civilians of the University of Georgia were one of the few South Eastern Conference (SEC) schools that remained in athletic competition in 1943.²⁶ Students entering the Universities of Tennessee, Alabama, or Clemson, expecting the fall gridiron to be a part of their college experience found athletic programs suspended due to the lack of available male athletes on campus.²⁷ UGA, however, attempted to compete and fielded a team comprised of “4-F’s” and freshmen. The GT Yellow Jackets, on the other hand, were equipped with military personnel from the Navy and the Marines. The civilian teams were often unable to remain competitive against the military supported teams, as would be demonstrated during those war year match-ups. In the two Georgia/Georgia Tech games, the scores were

²¹ Michael Oriard, *Reading Football: How the Popular Press Created an American Spectacle*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 23.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁴ Bill Cromartie, *Clean, Old-fashioned Hate*, (U.S.A.: Gridiron Publishers, 2002), 224.

²⁵ Henry C. Herge, *The Wartime College Training Programs of the Armed Services*, (Washington: American Council on Education, 1948), 46.; Schneider, 262.

²⁶ Tony Barnhart, *Southern Fried Football: The History, Passion and Glory of the Greatest Southern Game*, (Chicago: Triumph Books, 2000), 21.

²⁷ Scott, Richard. *SEC Football: 75 Years of Pride and Passion*. (USA: MVP Books, 2008), 58.

48-0 and 44-0, both victories for the “soldiers and sailors” from Georgia Tech against the “students” from Georgia.²⁸

Georgia Bulldog football fans were proud of their 1942 national champions, but they continued to display pride for both the men serving in the armed forces and the boys who replaced them on the field in 1943. Coach William Alexander of Georgia Tech commended the Bulldog team for “having the stuff to carry on despite the lack of material and with no help from the Navy or Army.”²⁹ The Bulldogs faced a stronger opponent in Georgia Tech, knowing full well the likelihood of defeat, or possibly injury. Coach Wally Butts, Georgia’s head coach, allowed his team the opportunity to gracefully bow out of the contest against the military personnel from Tech. However, the Georgia team voted unanimously in favor of a game.³⁰ After losing “a galaxy of stars the like of who Sanford Stadium had never seen,”³¹ the University of Georgia played the 1943 football season with a team that had no returning lettermen for the first time in UGA history.³² They faced opponents of superior strength with pride and dignity, an act, perhaps also in itself, both driven by and, indeed, a narrative of the wartime desire to find the courage face a foe.

The narrative of these games must be studied within a larger context, not just the individual games. Again, war and football stood side by side in the secondary texts of the sport of college football. Throughout the country, the football programs sold at each game often featured covers that directly equated football to a military training ground. One program cover displayed a quarterback preparing to throw a forward pass with a large shadow behind him, his football uniform replaced with a military one, his leather football helmet replaced with U.S. Military issue. He stood in the same pose, but the pigskin was replaced with a grenade. Another one simply showed a drawing of a football player in uniform (his football uniform) giving a military salute. The 1943 Georgia Tech programs pictured the players, not in football uniforms, but, with the exception of three civilians wearing suits, each of the other thirty-one players in military attire.³³ Playing football at a V-12 or other military college was not a way to stay out of combat; it was no less than an officer training ground for the future leadership of the United States military during wartime.

The Bulldogs and Yellow Jackets had several players and former players that represented the spectrum of World War II college athletes. Frank Sinkwich, a two-year all-American, and Hiesman award winner, graduated from UGA in 1942 after the championship season. The *Red and Black* expressed pride in Sinkwich’s achievements on the field and for his future in the military. The *Red and Black* pictured Sinkwich under the headline “Bulldog to Devildog,” and noted, “he will be playing a major role in the game on Saturday, but in January he will be playing a small role in a much greater game.”³⁴ Charley Trippi, a sophomore star on the 1942 UGA team was drafted into military duty. The future NFL player did not wear a Georgia uniform again until 1945.³⁵ Johnny Cook, the freshman quarterback for the 1943 team, was pictured one year later in the athletic section of the *Pandora*, not wearing the red and black of UGA, but wearing his military uniform. Each of these three men represent a different aspect of the college athletic experience. Frank Sinkwich was a seasoned star that left for war after battling on the football field. Charley Trippi’s UGA football career was interrupted as he shone brightly in 1942 and then returned to shine again for the bulldogs in 1945. And Johnny Cook, the young quarterback who took advantage of the wartime reprieve from the ban on Freshmen players on a varsity squad and led a team of “civilians,” reported for duty after only one year on the football field.

²⁸ Cromartie, 228, 233.

²⁹ Cromartie, 224.

³⁰ Jesse Outlar, *Between the Hedges: A story of Georgia Football*, Huntsville, Alabama: The Strode Publishers, 1973), 78.

³¹ *Pandora* 1944, 138.

³² Thomas Reed, *History of the University of Georgia*, (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1949), 3639.

³³ Georgia Tech Football Programs 1943, bound, GT Archives; UGA Football Programs UGA Archives.

³⁴ “Bulldog to Devildog,” *Red ad Black*, November 27, 1942, 7.

³⁵ *UGA 2007 Media Guide*.

Georgia Tech's wartime football team is not remembered for the players that they lost to the military but for the players that they received as a result of the Navy V-12 program. John Steber, a V-12 transfer from Vanderbilt, led the team in minutes played during the 1943 season and captained the Yellow Jackets along with Eddie Prokop.³⁶ The V-12 military-driven team won 15 out of 20 games during the 1943 and 1944 seasons. In 1944, they only lost to V-12 teams from Duke and Notre Dame.³⁷ In both the 1943 and 1944 seasons, Tech made bowl appearances, winning against the civilians from Tulsa in the Sugar Bowl on 1 January 1944 but upset by them in the Orange bowl in January 1945.³⁸

Tech, however, also lost players to military duty during the war. George Manning, a third team captain in 1943, was called to serve his country in active duty and was not able to finish the 1943 season.³⁹ Perhaps the most famous loss for Georgia Tech was the rising star named Clint Castleberry. Like Johnny Cook of UGA, Castleberry was able to wear a varsity uniform as a freshman due to the wartime rule change. However, Castleberry would only have his freshman year to prove what he could do on the football field. He earned a starting position over future Tech star Eddie Prokop and the previous starting running back, Bobby Shelton, on a team which only lost to the National Champions from Athens. Castleberry finished third in the 1943 Heisman voting behind Georgia senior Frank Sinkwich, and Paul Governali, a senior quarterback from Columbia who turned down professional baseball and football offers in 1943 to enlist as a Marine. With a sense of patriotic duty that seemed to run through those in football uniforms during the war years, Castleberry, left Georgia Tech in February of 1943 just after his freshman season and reported for duty with the Army Air Forces. He would never return to the gridiron. His B26 Marauder airplane was shot down over the Mediterranean, and Castleberry's body was never recovered.⁴⁰ His number 19 jersey is the only football uniform retired for the Tech Yellow Jackets.⁴¹ Bobby Dodd, Georgia Tech assistant coach at the time, later said of Castleberry, "he'd have probably been an All-American for three years and the greatest back in Georgia Tech history."⁴²

Football players often made excellent soldiers. It has been documented that "the marines who played V-12 football were awarded a total of two Navy Crosses, seven Silver Stars, three Bronze Stars, and various other decorations for heroism and valor in the Battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa."⁴³ Players such as John Steber, Clint Castleberry, Johnny Cook, Charley Trippi, and Frank Sinkwich are just a few of athletes-turned-soldiers who wore a Yellow Jacket jersey or the red and black of UGA before donning the colors of the United States Armed Forces.

Bill Cromartie, football historian and author of *Clean Old-fashioned Hate*, eloquently called the chapter of his book concerning the 1943 meeting between UGA and Georgia Tech "Military Might—And Did."⁴⁴ The lopsided victories of Georgia Tech over the University of Georgia during the two disputed games may be read, and was read by many at the time, as an allegory of the strength of the U.S. military. The civilians of UGA were "no match for seasoned sailors," reported the editors of the UGA yearbook.⁴⁵ The strength of the United States military could often be seen on the football field when a V-12 school played. While every V-12 school did not dominate the competition, and every civilian school did not fall to the service institutions, the military equipped universities provided excellent competition in athletics

³⁶ "Steber, Prokop Lead in Time," *Technique*, 10 December 1943, 5.

³⁷ Al Thomy, *The Ramblin' Wreck: A Story of Georgia Tech Football*, (Huntsville, Alabama: The Strode Publishers, 1973), 146.

³⁸ Cromartie, 228, 233.

³⁹ *The Blue Print 1944*, 209.

⁴⁰ Thomy, 142-143.

⁴¹ Thomy, 142; Telephone conversation with author by representative from the GT Athletic Association.

⁴² Robert Lee 'Bobby' Dodd and Jack Wilkenson, *Dodd's Luck: The Life and Legend of Hall of Fame Quarterback and Coach*, (USA: Golden Coast Publishing Company, 1988), 91.

⁴³ Schneider, 270.

⁴⁴ Cromartie, 224.

⁴⁵ *Pandora 1943*, "The 1943 Football Season in Brief."

during the war years.⁴⁶ As the 1943 game between UGA and GT produced the largest margin of victory in the rivalry's history,⁴⁷ the military personnel at GT played the way one would hope a trained soldier, sailor, or marine would perform in a battle of sport. If football was equated as a training ground for war, then the military was expected to win, The "Might" of the U.S. Military was honed on the gridiron and then taken overseas.

The competition on the field may also be read as an allegory about the struggle for military personnel and civilians to find their place during the war, and work together for an American victory. At Georgia Tech, rivalry between the members of the Army and Navy was a concern on campus. University officials also had to deal with tension between the military personnel and the "damned civilians," as the soldiers, sailors, and marines sometimes called them.⁴⁸ Sports created a cooperative college atmosphere by giving the students an opportunity to support the common goal of a school victory.⁴⁹ While military students outnumbered civilian students at Tech nearly three to one, the social clubs were instructed to keep activities going as best as possible during the transition of Tech from civilian to service school.⁵⁰ A Saturday game may have been a unifying and welcomed break, as students—both military and civilian—could take a brief break from war preparation and, together, cheer for their school.

The young men on the Georgia squad represented the courage and tenacity of American civilians during the war. Georgia players could have refrained from football activities as other SEC schools did during the war years. Coach Butts, however, wanted to continue; his players did not let him down, and the fans continued to come to Sanford Stadium. During the time of war both teams' successes, on and off the field were chronicled in student newspapers and in the annual yearbooks. If one is to take the words of the editors of the *Pandora* as representative of the feelings of the student body as a whole then the wartime Bulldogs were meant to be remembered for "victories more important than those reckoned in points and soon forgotten...They lived, indeed, their shining hour."⁵¹ The student body at UGA and Georgia Tech read the narrative of the wartime football games as both a display of trained military might and a show of the courage required of regular (non-military) citizens.

The 1943 and 1944 football seasons was neither a story about a score of 48-0, nor a story of two disputed games. Yet, the score was an important part of the narrative. It was a metaphorical representation of how the U.S. military was well trained and equipped to win battles. The courage and tenacity of American citizens to continue to fight through difficult circumstances was illustrated in the civilian team from Athens. Collegiate careers were interrupted during World War II. Young players with extraordinary talent were unable to pursue the college sports experience the way they had planned before the war began. Charley Trippi played for the University of Georgia during the national championship season of 1942 and then did not return to Sanford Stadium until 1945. Clint Castleberry of Georgia Tech showed great potential on the football field, but his potential was not realized because of his death. The teams as a whole may be looked upon as examples of the wartime American spirit. The civilian team of Georgia portrayed the bravery of those young boys who were called to quickly show the attributes of manhood. Many of them would be called to take that bravery and allow government military training to hone that skill into weapons of liberation. The strength of the Georgia Tech football team, aided by the Navy V-12 program, exemplified the result of that training and strength of the United States Military. The games of the war years should not be forgotten or left out of the win-loss record. The story of men on both sides of the football field represent the idealized wartime spirit of America in the 1940s and, in a small part, the larger story of how life is interrupted by war.

⁴⁶ Schneider, 263.

⁴⁷ *The Atlanta Journal*, November 28, 1943, 1.; UGA Media Guide.

⁴⁸ *Technique*, July 10, 1943, 1.

⁴⁹ Schneider, 270.

⁵⁰ *Technique*, July 10, 1943, 1.

⁵¹ *Pandora* 1944, 139.

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