

= Samuel Escue Tillman =

Samuel Escue Tillman (October 3 , 1847 ? June 24 , 1942) was an astronomer , engineer , military educator , and career officer in the United States Army who spent 30 years teaching at the United States Military Academy at West Point , New York . In addition to writing for periodicals on a wide range of subjects and authoring several influential textbooks on chemistry and geology , in 1917 Tillman was recalled from previous mandatory retirement to serve as superintendent of the United States Military Academy for the duration of conflict which became known as World War I.

= = Early life = =

Samuel Tillman was born in Bedford County , Tennessee , near modern Shelbyville on October 3 , 1847 , one of several sons of Lewis Tillman and his wife Mary C. Davidson Tillman . The younger Tillman and his brothers were raised on the family plantation in wartime Tennessee during much of the American Civil War . Tillman left the farm in 1864 to attend Miami University in Oxford , Ohio , but left after a year to accept an at @-@ large appointment to the United States Military Academy in July , 1865 , months after the end of the rebellion .

= = Military career = =

Tillman proved an excellent cadet , graduating 3rd out of 39 in the USMA graduating class of 1869 . Tillman spent fifteen months on the frontier at Fort Riley , Kansas , then returned to the academy for a period as assistant professor of mathematics . The following years would see Tillman alternating tours between teaching assignments at the academy and surveying the last unexplored portions of the American West . In addition to involvement in expeditions to explore and map parts of the western states of Arizona , California , Idaho , Montana , Nevada , New Mexico , and Utah , Tillman was detailed for a year as assistant astronomer on the national expedition to Northern Tasmania observe the Transit of Venus . In late 1878 , Tillman became the sixtieth of the founding members of Washington , D.C. ' s Cosmos Club , but resigned in 1881 , after he was given permanent assignment at West Point as professor of chemistry , mineralogy , and geology .

Lieutenant Tillman sat on the board of inquiry concerning the alleged assault by cadets on Johnson Chesnut Whittaker . As full professor Tillman was given responsibility for redesigning the physical science curriculum at the academy ; U.S. Army Adjutant General Richard C. Drum ordered Tillman and fellow academy instructor George L. Andrews to visit Harvard , Yale , and other American institutions of higher learning to investigate new educational technologies in order to incorporate them into the curriculum .

The next thirty years of Tillman 's life were devoted to writing and teaching at the academy . He wrote for popular periodicals like Popular Science and Cosmopolitan and literary journals like American Monthly Review of Reviews . Tillman authored several science textbooks for use by academy instructors , notably the physics work Elementary Lessons in Heat (1889) , Descriptive General Chemistry (1897) , and A text @-@ book of Important Minerals and Rocks (1900) . He was responsible for the academy 's mineralogical and geological cabinet . Tillman also wrote a series of memoirs which have been featured in the works of Miami University historian Dwight L. Smith .

Toward the end of his career , Tillman was presented with an honorary degree from Yale University in 1906 . In 1911 , after 44 years of active U.S. Army service in the classroom and field , Tillman was retired . He spent some time in Italy , leaving at the outbreak of World War I ; Tillman settled in Princeton , New Jersey , continuing to write , presenting A Review of West Point 's History before the New York Historical Society in October , 1915 .

In early 1917 , the United States Army was preparing for its involvement in the war raging in Europe , and all academy instructors who could be detailed were assigned to field commands . This left an understrength USMA teaching staff not only doing " double duty , " but also teaching in officer training schools during the summer . When Colonel Tillman was recalled from retirement to serve as

USMA superintendent in June , 1917 , the cadet class of 1917 had already graduated two months early and been assigned to wartime posts . The USMA class of 1918 graduated in the Autumn of 1917 , the classes of 1919 and 1920 graduated in June 1918 , and the cadet class of 1921 were graduated before the Armistice was signed . " On November 2 , 1918 , the Corps of Cadets consisted of members of the Fourth Class only . " Tillman had seen the graduation of an entire corps of cadets before he was again retired , this time with promotion to Brigadier General and the Distinguished Service Medal for his wartime service . While Superintendent of West Point , Tillman refused repeated requests to add military aviation to the curriculum .

= = Legacy = =

Samuel Escue Tillman died June 24 , 1942 at the home of his daughter , Katherine Tillman Martin , in Southampton , New York and was buried at West Point Cemetery . According to his obituary , he was survived by one brother , A.H. Tillman , who served for a time as United States district attorney in Washington D.C . Four brothers had preceded him in death .

In 1885 , when Henry Tureman Allen was exploring the Copper River in the new U.S. territory of Alaska , he named a discovered peak after Tillman , his academy professor , but the discovery proved to be one major error in the survey , Allen mistaking either Mount Wrangell or Mount Sanford for the non @-@ existent Mount Tillman .

In 2008 , Kent Biffle of the Dallas Morning News reported receiving newspaper clippings from a local lawyer and historian on the subject of UFO sightings in Stephenville , Texas . Apparently in 1897 , widespread newspaper reports of a cigar @-@ shaped flying object started to circulate in the Midwest and Southwest . Responding to sightings previously reported in the Morning News , on April 17 , 1897 , one respected Erath County farmer , C.L. McIlhany discovered such a craft had landed on his property , and reported two human operators , a pilot and an engineer , who gave their names as " S.E. Tilman " and " A.E. Dolbear . " The two operators performed minor repairs on their electrically powered lighter @-@ than @-@ air craft , then again flew away .

= = Selected works by Tillman = =

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