

# ROTC Was Established at UO in 1916; Emerald Opposed It Originally

By Paul Keefe

The development of the Reserve Officer Training Corp program on the Oregon campus has extended over a period of 36 years. The military department is planning on further development and expansion here at Oregon.

The army has increased its quota for advanced students as has the air force. The air force has established two more options, or career fields, to facilitate the expansion.

### Strong Opposition

The first factual information about a military program at Oregon is from the Mar. 12, 1915 Emerald. In that issue campus officials expressed their strong opposition to a "military instruction program" here. The view was reflected in an Emerald editorial which also opposed any such plan.

The first positive move toward the establishment of the ROTC program was the presentation of a petition, signed by 100 students, to the administration asking for a voluntary drill.

### Petition Presented

The petition was presented to the faculty on Mar. 18, 1916, and the first drill was held Mar. 29, 1916, in the Eugene armory. The drill was under the direction of Col. C. C. Hammond, Oregon National Guard, and J. D. Foster and Ed Harwood, Oregon students who were elected temporary cadet captains.

The first drills were voluntary with 80 at the first and 62 at the second. After the second drill tentative plans were made for an exhibition drill during Junior Weekend but cancelled because of lack of experience.

### One Hour Credit Granted

The Emerald announced on Jan. 9, 1919, that the faculty had decided to grant one hour credit for drill and all men students would be required to attend three drill periods a week, unless physically disabled or because of "conscientious objection."

Col. William H. C. Bowen, then head of the military department, announced that any student who failed to comply with the rules would be suspended from all University classes. He also said that the first uniforms had arrived.

### Growth Steady

No figures are available on the number of students who attended the early drills, except the first two, but growth from 1921 was steady. Five hundred were enrolled in the military department in 1921, 25 in upper-division courses; nearly 1000 in 1929, and 1093 winter term 1951-52. Of the present number 294 are in army basic, 128 in army advanced, 407 in air force basic, and 164 in air force advanced.

With this progress several other organizations have evolved. The ROTC band was organized in 1924, discontinued for the war years and reactivated in 1947. The rifle club dates back as far as 1928 when they won their first trophy. The actual date that they organized is not available. A woman's rifle

team was active during 1940-42 but was discontinued. Scabbard and Blade, military honorary, received its charter in 1928, was inactive during the war but reactivated in 1947.

### Optional Basis Requested

Throughout the 1930's spasmodic drives called for ROTC on an optional basis. During one of the drives for optional ROTC, a counter-drive, insisting on compulsory ROTC, be launched. Nothing came of any of the drives.

In 1935 Gordon Connelly, an Oregon student, charged that the military program was "valueless, a waste of time and has no legitimate place as a compulsory feature of a liberal university." He said that he would not attend ROTC classes or drills.

### Referred to Faculty

His case was referred to a faculty committee but no positive action was taken for five months. During that time, student opinion seems to have favored his stand. The faculty committee decided that he was exempt because of "conscientious objection."

Upper-division ROTC was discontinued from 1942-43 through the 1945-46 school years. Classes were again held in 1946 and the air force ROTC program was added.

General Mark Clark, as commanding general of the 6th Army, provided a highlight in the Oregon ROTC history when he visited the campus on May 4, 1949. He is the highest ranking officer to ever visit the University. He was here to inspect ROTC facilities and confer with University officials."

## Born Under Fire

BOSTON (U.P.)—Mrs. Ethlet Murray, 35, gave birth to a baby in her apartment even as firemen were fighting a fire in the upper floors of the building.

## Another Big Egg

FORT WORTH, Tex (U.P.) — A half-pound egg nine inches long and seven inches around the middle was laid by a White Rock hen owned by the J. W. Henrys.

Oregon was very slightly favored to defeat Idaho at Eugene when they met in 1949. The Ducks won 41-0, the largest margin in the history of the Webfoot-Vandal series.



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