

ROTC

Image slowly changing: 'haircuts no big deal,' regulations relaxed

The image of the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) has been slowly and quietly changing in the past few years. Cadets are wearing their hair a little longer, enrollment is increasing, and for the first time this fall, Army ROTC will be open to women.

"We're trying to get away from the old image," explained AFROTC Captain Micael Dolan, "We're not going out and drilling back and forth. And haircuts are another myth, there are no bald heads. Haircuts are no big deal anymore, and regulations have relaxed quite a bit."

During the last six years, ROTC has often been a target of activists and war protest. Dolan said that the ROTC represented the armed services on campus, and during the Vietnam war, ROTC served as a "symbol people could shake a stick at."

"The biggest group against war is us—we have to fight it," asserted Dolan, "Anyone who has been in battle knows it's very terrifying, hardly romantic. We don't want extremists—we want well-rounded individuals with a potential to lead others."

ROTC has been the major source of officers for the armed services for many years. ROTC is designed to qualify men and women for a commission in either the Army or the Air Force at the time of their graduation.

Students who join ROTC at the University start in the basic course with three credit hours during both their freshman and sophomore years. There is absolutely no obligation during the first two years, and students may withdraw from the program at any time.

At the end of two years, those enrolled in ROTC join the advance course and actually enlist in the reserves. They in effect sign a contract to serve a specified amount of time either in the Army or in the Air Force. In both programs, deferment of active duty may be granted to newly commissioned officers to permit graduate study on a full-time basis.

Those enrolled in the last two years of the program receive \$100 a month, and for those who have been granted one of the several different scholarships offered, books and tuition are paid on top of the monthly stipend.

"We're a very tight, closely knit group, especially during the junior-senior years," said Dolan, "they really get personalized attention that no other department can offer."

Women have been participating in Air Force ROTC for several years, but this year will be the first for the Army.

"We had women in AROTC on 10 different campuses in pilot programs and we got such an enthusiastic response that they opened it on all campuses," said Dolan.

The women will attend the same classes as the men and will have most of the options men have. The only restriction in both the Army and the Air Force programs pertains to combat units. In the Air Force this restriction keeps women out of the flight training as all pilots must be combat ready.

Both ROTC programs have a summer camp, six weeks of training for the Army and four weeks for the Air Force. ROTC students attend the camp between their junior and senior years.

"One purpose of summer camp is to find out how good a leader they are, and to spot any weakness," explained Dolan, "The army's manpower levels are going down, and we've been told to reduce our numbers, so the competition is really stiff. We are looking for quality rather than quantity—and I believe we're getting it."


Kathleen Glanville



ROTC students have some classes in the field. Above, they maneuver a heavy drum up a ramp they have built. Below, they face a harder challenge of building a bridge across a gap, given only three boards not long enough to reach across. They solved the problem by sand-wiching the boards together.



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