

# Fostering New Military Heroes

continued ▲ from front

however, many cadets who want to go through the ROTC program may not be as fortunate.

"The Army is downsizing and up to 50,000 soldiers have been cut from active duty within the last year," said Lt. Col. Lewis Doyle, a professor of military science at the University of Portland. "If a student were to walk in right now, they couldn't get a contract."

According to Doyle, because of the war on terror, recruiting numbers for the Army are up. "We thought we would have more need, but now, our need has been reduced," he said.

Consequently, the process to become an officer on active duty has become more competitive.

"There are some cadets out there who know they want to be army officers, but the army is full," said Doyle. "And what's worse is there is a cap on how many students can join the ROTC program."

ROTC is one of three traditional routes to become an officer in the Army, including WestPoint and Officer Candidate School, said Doyle.

"The benefit of ROTC is you get a traditional college experience," he said. "The army wants the cadets to have that college experience because they are learning respect, self-sufficiency and experience with a wider range of cultures."

The intent for the students within the elective program, in which over 120 Army cadets took part last year, is that they are first and foremost students at the university, said Doyle.

For nearly 15 years, the United States Army has operated a military science and leadership unit of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps at the University of Portland, which enables future officers a chance to simultaneously study a discipline of their choice.

The elective program, which is a cooperative effort between the Army

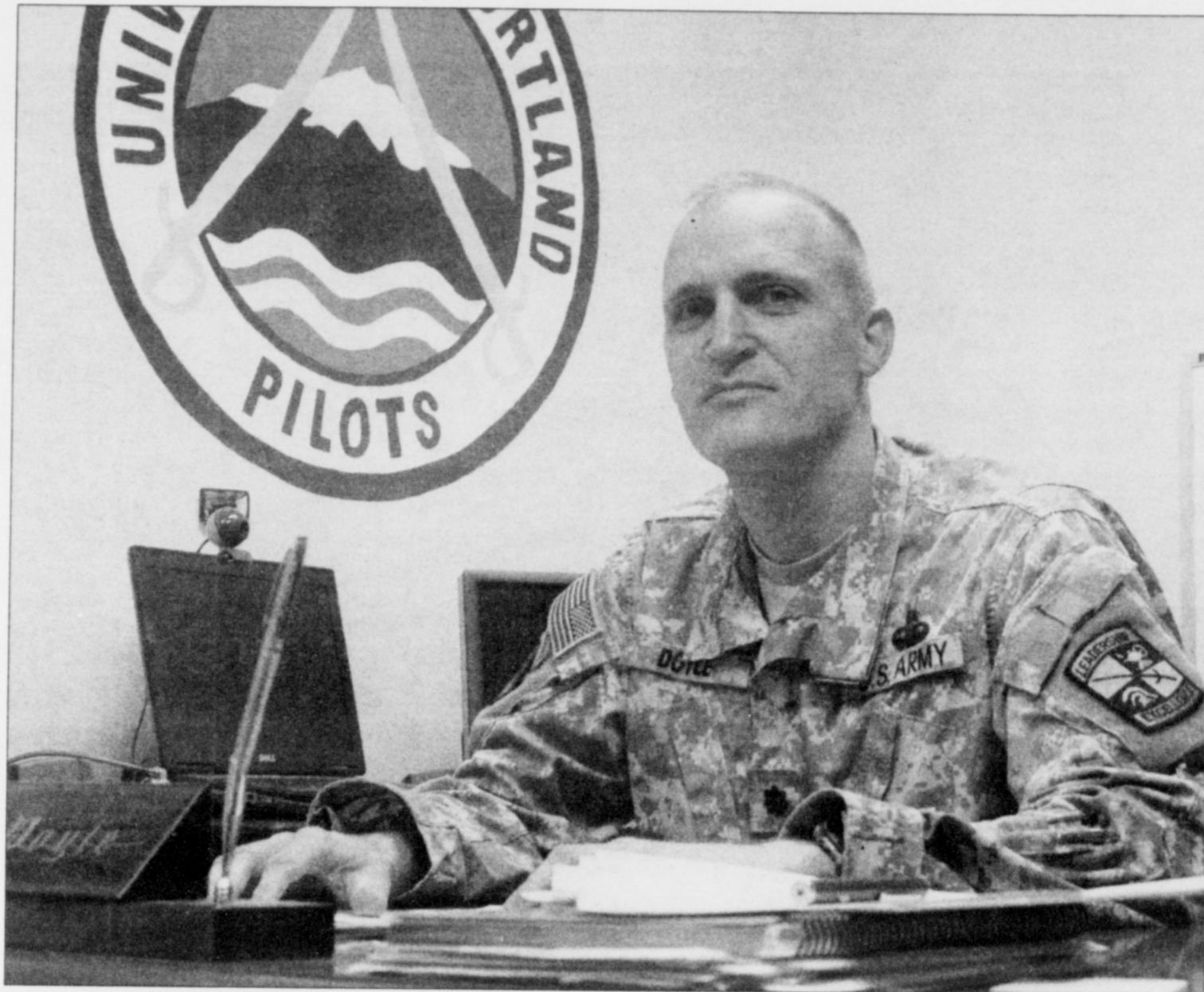


PHOTO BY MINDY COOPER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Lt. Col. Lewis Doyle, a professor of military science at University of Portland, works in his office in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps building on the north Portland campus where he helps train future officers of the United States Army.

and the university, provides prerequisite leadership training qualifications for students desiring to earn appointments as Second Lieutenants in the United States Army, Army Reserve, or the Army National Guard.

Of the graduating class from ROTC, a certain number of cadets go onto either Active Duty or the Army Reserves.

According to Doyle, the choice is usually made by cadets within the program, but the spots available to go into active duty are becoming smaller as more cuts are being made to the number of individuals within the military.

"The Reserves aren't full time," he said. "It is a part-time service to the country, which is good too, but there are always, in my experience,

more people who want to be in the Army than in the Reserves."

This year, he said, the army is expecting 5,643 cadets to graduate, and 3,962 cadets are eligible for active duty.

"But there isn't enough space," said Doyle. "Roughly 1,000 who are eligible won't get active duty because there are congressional mandated limits, known as end-strength, to how big we can be as an army."

According to Doyle, the university had 90 to 95 percent of students on scholarship for the program two years ago. "But that rate is going down," he said. "There are 16 sophomores waiting to sign a contract to become an officer, but the junior class is 50, when historically it was 20."

He said the Army in the past had

a need, and people needed scholarships. But now, there isn't enough money.

"I see it (the cuts) as a good and a bad thing," said LaMarca. "It is good because it is a tougher process, and the Army is going to get better quality people because it won't be as much about filling slots."

He said, however, it makes things a lot more difficult because it puts a lot of pressure on students trying to get those slots, and with the junior class so large, there are extras.

"So the students coming here just for the money may not make it if their heart and souls are not in ROTC," said Doyle. "What I want from my students, and what I qualify as success is first, that they graduate and earn their commission."

Doyle also considers success to

be when students have their choice of active Guard Reserve, and then choose the job they want to do in the Army, versus the Army telling them what they want.

Even with the current cut to the number of open spaces available, however, students who are a part of the elective ROTC program have high-hopes for their futures.

Everyone who graduates will, at a minimum, have a part time job as an Army officer with some benefits, said Doyle.

Danielle Bibbs, a Journalism and Communications major in her senior year at the U of P, began the ROTC program as a freshman, and against her father's wishes. She chose to become a Reserves officer. "I am a person of many interests," she said. "A 24/7 Army job is not my thing."

Now that she has been selected for Reserve duty, Bibbs said she will have to find a unit to work with and a civilian job. "I also want to go to culinary school," she said.

According to Bibbs, the ROTC program has not only given her experience on how to be a good officer, but also how to be a decent human being.

"The Army is a values-based organization," said Doyle. "And we expect that out of cadets too, so we hold them to higher standards."

He said, however, there is a common misconception that ROTC is a scholarship program. "But in reality, it is an officership program," he said.

Although scholarships are often offered to get high-quality applicants, he said it is their job to get them from seeing dollar signs to wanting to save their country.

And that is what these cadets want to do, he said. "It isn't all about the money. They know what is coming down the road. They are the first generation since World War II to raise their hands to be an army officer and go into combat."

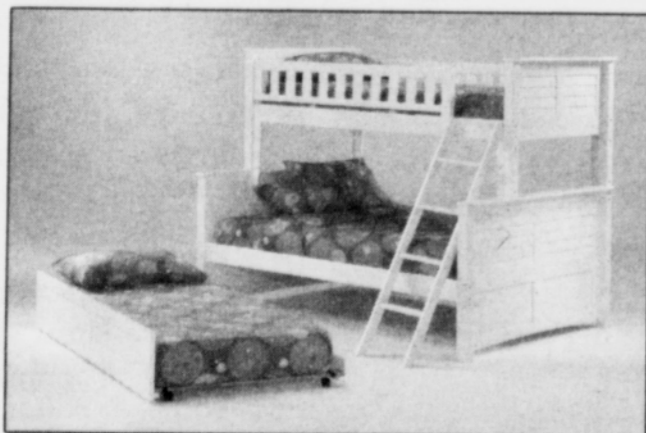
"This is a generation of heroes," he said.

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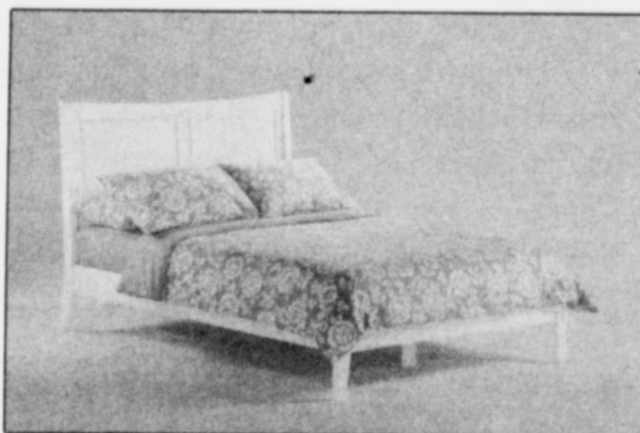
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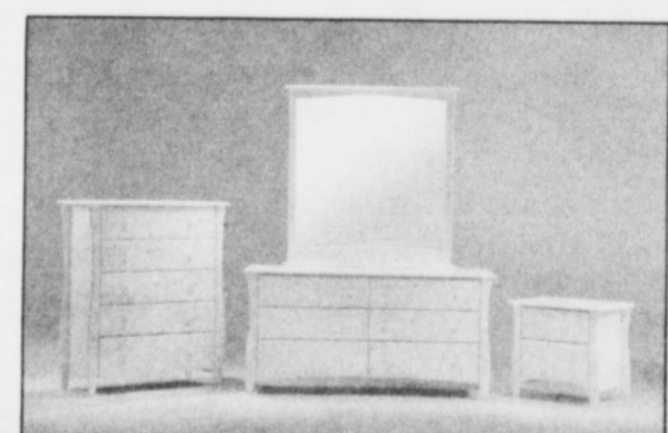
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