

ROTC Has 94-Year History

Along with its 100th birthday this year, the University will also mark the 94th year in its tradition of military training or "Rotacy" as it is called by the students.

When the Reserve Officers' Training Corps was first started it included only basic training for prospective army officers. Since then it has been expanded to include Navy and Air Force units.

In keeping with an agreement with the federal government, two years of basic training in one of the branches is required of all students who qualify.

Began in 1861

ROTC had its beginnings in 1861, during the Civil War. At that time Evan Pugh, president of the institution, put all men through a military training course.

The training was voluntary until 1865 when a compulsory program was set up. The course included classroom lectures, but was mostly drill. Drill periods were substituted for the three hours of manual labor per week formerly required of students.

At first there were so few regular army men assigned to be college instructors that faculty members were delegated to the posts.

First Army Man

Not until late in 1877 was the first regular army man brought to campus. He was 1st Lt. Walter Howe of the Fourth Artillery.

General military training continued until World War I. It consisted mostly of drill under one officer with an occasional lecture on some military subject.

Even this general program paid off. Of the 2155 Penn State men called for service in 1917, 48 percent emerged as commissioned officers. This gave rise to the present network of ROTC units embracing nearly 400 schools, colleges and universities throughout the country.

National Defense Act

In 1918, the National Defense Act set up the ROTC program we know today. An infantry branch was established at the University in the same year. An engineering branch was added in 1925 and a signal branch in 1942.

Navy ROTC grew out of the wartime V-12 program started at the University in 1943. In July 1946, it was converted into a ROTC unit. Under the V-12 program, members were on active duty with the Navy during their instruction period.

Air Force Program

The Air Force ROTC unit was the result of an act of Congress which separated the Air corps



SIX CADETS POSE for a picture in the uniform worn by military students before the turn of the century. The cadet corps included all men students, and at one time the school was nearly run on military basis with inspections and guard duty. These students were the day's version of 1955's Reserve Officer Training Corps.

from the Army. The Air Force unit was started in 1948 and has since grown to be the largest on campus.

Today's ROTC cadets wear the uniform of their respective branch of service. But it wasn't always this way.

The first uniform was a style required by the University. It began as a fatigue suit of blue cloth with blue buttons and no military trimming and a "black felt hat with a rim 2 1/2 inches wide." The men made their own wooden rifles for drill.

Uniform Required

In 1870 the uniform was made the required dress for chapel and other special occasions. In fact, no other clothes were required except "a warm overcoat, two or more coarse suits for working purposes, two pairs of strong boots and a full supply of undergarments."

In 1877, the uniform was changed to cadet gray with a black hat. The regulations required that students under five feet not wear the dress uniform, but another of gray sack coat, vest, pantaloons and blue forage cape.

Not only the uniform but the entire military program became very formal at this time. By 1873, the University was virtually an

armed camp. There were guard mounts daily, sentinels on duty in their halls until 10 p.m. each night, dress parades weekly, and quarters inspection daily.

ROTC students of today are far different than their predecessors with their modern uniforms, instruction, and up-to-date equipment. While drill is still a major part of their training, they also study subjects ranging from electronics fire control devices on modern warships to jet engines and psychological warfare.

Two years of basic ROTC are required of all male students at the University. At the end of the two years, those who qualify are selected for advanced training leading to a second lieutenant's commission in the Army and Air Force. Most Navy ROTC students are enrolled for four years.

\$5 Fine for Holiday Cuts

Students who wished to begin their 1930 Easter vacation a little early were subject to the usual \$5 pre-holiday cutting fine unless excused by the dean of men, the dean of women, or the College physician.

Former Governor James A. Beaver served 41 years as a trustee of the University.

Daily Chapel Attendance At 5:45 a.m. Compulsory For 1st Sixty-Eight Years

Arising before daylight, students at the University almost a century ago crowded into the chapel in the main building at 5:45 a.m. for scripture reading and prayer before beginning their day's activities.

Though the school was entirely nonsectarian, religious training was from the first recognized as an essential to living and compulsory chapel was instituted.

Compulsory chapel continued for almost three-quarters of the University's first century. Attendance at weekday chapel was required until 1927 and at Sunday chapel until 1930.

But though compulsory chapel has been abandoned, the University has not completely given over the work of religious instruction to churches and affiliated groups. It still employs a "preacher to the University," a practice begun in 1896, and Sunday services open to students of all faiths are conducted in Schwab Auditorium.

Rules Enforced

Rigid rules to require attendance at religious services were enforced over the years. No student could graduate who did not take part.

In the early days demerits or "censure marks" were given for tardiness or failure to attend chapel. When the number of censure marks reached a prescribed total, the student was expelled.

After the University abandoned the practice of suspending students who collected a certain total of demerits for infractions of the rules, they could still be expelled for lapses in attendance at chapel.

Lateness Punished

In the 1890's students were given six marks for absence and two marks for tardiness, and the student who collected 50 marks was subject to suspension. Tardiness was defined as arriving after the close of the first hymn.

A slight relaxing of the rule for compulsory chapel attendance was granted seniors in 1896—they did not have to attend during the last month of the semester.

By the 1920's the student body had grown so large that the auditorium would not hold all students at one time. In 1920 the chapel

exercises were split, with freshmen required to attend on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8 a.m. and on Sunday at 10 a.m., and with the upper classes attending on Tuesday and Thursday and on Sunday at 11 a.m.

Still Compulsory

The rule still required attendance at three-fourths of the exercises, and overcuts meant that the remiss student could not re-enter the University at the beginning of the next year.

In 1924 the rule was changed so that nine absences from morning chapel and four from Sunday chapel automatically resulted in a failing mark. A student was dismissed on receiving two failures.

First Preacher

Until 1896 the University relied on faculty members for the weekday chapel exercises and on visiting ministers for the Sunday exercises. That year President George W. Atherton announced the appointment of the first "preacher to the University," the Rev. Lawrence M. Coffelt.

Since then, with the exception of a period from 1915-1923, the University has had a chaplain, who usually served also as a faculty member or as secretary of the student Christian association.

Daily Military Inspections Carried Work Penalties

At the turn of the century there was a daily military inspection of both dress and rooms.

If the room were untidy or the shoes needed polishing, the offenders got a notice on the bulletin board, each such report carrying a penalty to be worked off on the following Saturday.

There are 21 national sorority chapters at the University.

Congratulations

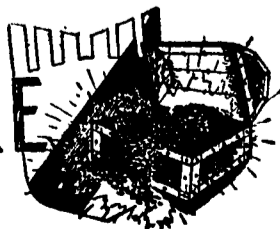
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