

Penn State's ROTC marching back to popularity

By LEON J. POLLUM
Collegian Staff Writer

When the antiwar movement was at its peak, probably the most unpopular program on the nation's campuses was the Reserved Officer Training Corps. But recently, ROTC has felt an upswing in popularity as an increasing number of students are enrolling in its programs.

Attempts were made in the 60's to force ROTC from the campuses. Organized demonstrations accounted for most of the attempts, although some student activists tried to burn ROTC out.

Penn State students never burned down the Wagner Building, the campus ROTC program was far from popular.

"The students saw us as the closest representative of the government," said Col.-Clifford T. Kirkwood, director of Penn State's Army ROTC.

ROTC's only measure of student support came from those who joined the program to get a draft deferment, Kirkwood said.

Capt. Charles D. Bolan, commanding officer of the Navy ROTC at Penn State, agreed that ROTC programs suffered from the campus unrest.

"The quality of our Navy cadets was down in those days," Bolan said.

"We had fewer applicants and those who did apply were more interested in avoiding the draft than becoming good officers," he explained.

But Col. Alan J. Grill, director of the Air Force ROTC, denied that student antiwar sentiment had any dramatic effect upon the Air Force program.

"We maintained the same strength level," Grill said. "The only dramatic change occurred when the mandatory ROTC was dropped," he said.

Prior to 1964 all male students were required to take two years of ROTC. When the requirement was dropped, ROTC programs experienced tremendous declines in enrollment.

The Air Force, for example, had an enrollment of 2,354 students in 1963, but dropped to 159 ten years later.

All that is history now and the popularity of ROTC programs appears to be improving.

Army ROTC reported its national enrollment showed an increase last fall for the first time in eight years. It reported 39,346 students on 291 campuses were enrolled in the program.

This number includes 6,354 women.

The Army ROTC program at Penn State experienced this year a 15 to 20 per cent enrollment increase over last year, Kirkwood said.

"We're not sure why, but our ability to retain cadets has also improved considerably," Kirkwood said. "Last year at this time 164 cadets had left the program. This year only 85 have left."

There are currently 393 Army ROTC cadets at Penn State. University Park hosts 180 cadets and the balance are located at Altoona, Ogontz, Delaware and Schuylkill campuses.

Kirkwood said the sagging economy probably has had some effect on the program's growing popularity.

"A cadet knows he has a job waiting for him in the Army when he graduates," Kirkwood said.

He said one of the female Army ROTC cadets was told there were no job openings in her major, but she felt confident of a secure future in the Army, he said.

When cadets receive their commission they are paid a starting salary of \$9,500 per year. "That's not a bad incentive if you consider the tight job market", Kirkwood said.

ROTC scholarships are also available to qualified cadets. There are 76 Army cadets at Penn State who carry this scholarship of \$100 per month, tuition, books and fees.

Congress allows a maximum of 6,500 ROTC scholarships for each branch of the service, but the Army is asking for an increase to 10,000. The Navy and Air Force are requesting smaller increases.

Kirkwood said the primary difference with the Army is that the Army is looking for people in nearly all professional fields.

There are 137 cadets enrolled in the Air Force ROTC program at Penn State, of which 60 are on scholarships.

Grill said the Air Force's two-year program seems to be gaining popularity. The two-year program allows students to join Air Force ROTC in their junior year provided they go to a six-week summer camp.

"We are looking for professionals with good leadership qualities," he said.

Bolan said the enrollment of the Navy ROTC at Penn State did not increase this year, but the quality of the incoming cadets was better than previous years.

"Unlike the Army, the Navy is very selective," Bolan said.

The officer's role in the Navy has become increasingly complex, requiring they be highly trained, he said.

"We are the only service that offers practical training in nuclear propulsion plants."

Because of its emphasis on nuclear power, Navy ROTC gives priority to engineering, chemistry, physics and math majors. Penn State's Navy ROTC program has 80 per cent of its 194 cadets on ROTC scholarships. Guidelines established by the Secretary of the Navy permit only one per cent of the 6500 scholarships to be granted to female cadets.

Bolan said that this practice would change if the Equal Rights Amendment is passed.

"The way it stands now, a girl has to be vastly superior academically if she is to get a scholarship," he said.

There are currently 12 females enrolled in Penn State's Navy ROTC. Three of them are on ROTC scholarships.

The Equal Rights Amendment would also permit stationing women on combat ships and aircraft. Present Navy policy limits women to non-combat craft.

According to Grill, women in the Air Force are not even permitted to fly non-combat craft. He explained that Air Force policy requires pilots to be "universally assignable," that they must be able to fly combat and non-combat aircraft.

"This automatically excludes women as pilots since they can't fly combat aircraft," Grill said.

There are four women enrolled in the Air Force ROTC at Penn State this year.

"There has been a decided shift of emphasis in the Air Force from pilots and navigators to the technically skilled," Grill said.

He said the Air Force ROTC is particularly interested in attracting engineers, meteorologists, computer scientists, mathematicians, and physicists.

Last year's senior class of Air Force ROTC cadets was faced with an overabundance of pilots, he said. Grill blamed the situation on the sudden rise in fuel costs and the manpower ceiling imposed on the military by Congress.

Military moves back to HUB

By DEANNA FINLEY
Collegian Staff Writer

After a long absence, military representatives will move back to the HUB to offer career information and answer questions, according to Raymond O. Murphy, vice president for student affairs.

The military left the HUB during the campus antiwar movement in the late 60s, and have been providing these student services in Boucke.

Murphy said he was not sure when the move would be made. "It could even be as early as this spring," he said.

Murphy said the Student-Advisory

Board agreed unanimously to bring them back after the representatives had requested the move.

Murphy said all branches of the armed forces would be represented and the ACTION program would be included.

Sgt. James Washington, an Army recruiter in State College, said the military stayed out of the HUB because "it just wasn't appealing to people at that time."

Washington said the Army would be there to answer questions and not to recruit. "We realize these kids are at the University for an education, and

we're not here to yank them out of school," he said.

According to Washington, there are not as many openings in the Army as there were last year. Despite the increase in enlistment and the high retention rate, students still want information, he said.

Sgt. George Rheim of the Air Force said, "Recruiting is up in the officer ranks, but openings aren't that many." Rheim said he does not see any point in trying to increase student interest if there are insufficient openings to accommodate them, although he says he thinks the HUB exposure will be good.

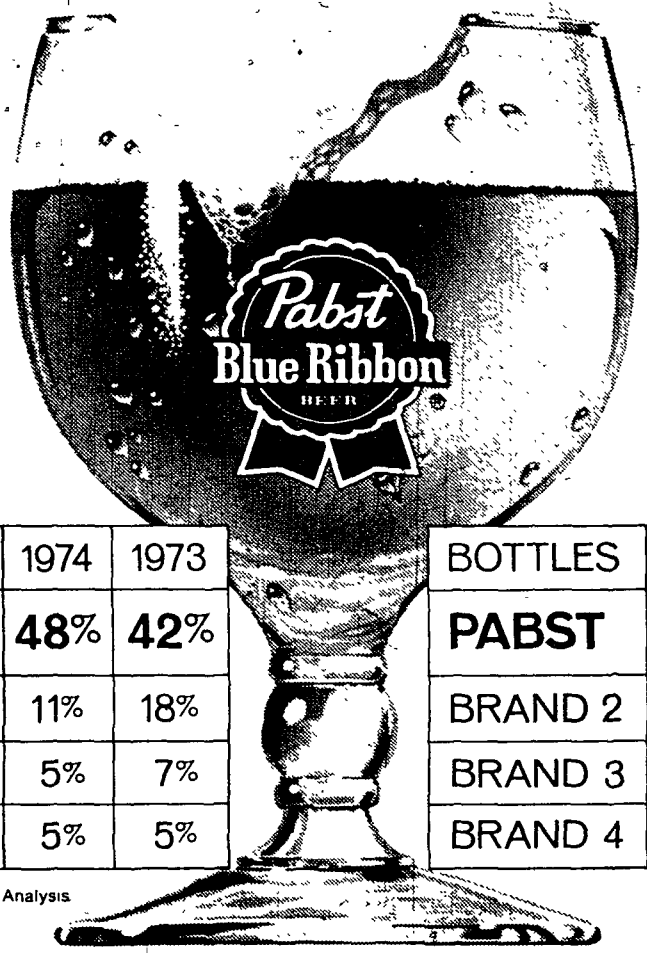
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