
Defense Report

AUSA™



The Reserve Officers' Training Corps —A Valuable Asset, a True Success Story

Not very many years ago, the Reserve Officers' Training Corps units at college campuses across the nation were the butt of jokes and the focal point of demonstrations reflecting opposition to the war in Vietnam. Many prestigious universities withdrew from participation in ROTC, and enrollments sharply declined. But, as the war faded away in time and the public became convinced that there are real external threats to the nation's security, ROTC has once again become popular. We are now assured that the program which has trained young men and women on civilian college campuses to serve in our military forces will continue to be the source of most of our career officers.

The Army ROTC program alone touches 1,409 college campuses and is expected to have an average enrollment of more than 73,000 during 1983. In 1983 an estimated 14,300 ROTC cadets will participate in the summer encampments that polish military skills between the junior and senior years of college. As the business of fighting a war grows more complex, the Army will shift the concentration of its ROTC program to more students who are undertaking engineering, scientific and business-related academic majors. By 1985 all but 20 percent of the program's output will have followed these specialized curricula.

Scholarships have unquestionably been a factor in renewing interest in ROTC, but even when they Army hits the peak of 12,000 scholarships in 1984 those students will still account for just 15 percent of the total program. Of the ROTC scholarships awarded for the current academic year, 46 percent went to students in science and engineering disciplines. Upon graduation they have a service obligation of four years.

Since it was first established at land grant colleges throughout the country, ROTC has put down deep roots as a respected institution in itself. Along with the resurgence of its popularity have come calls from many of the colleges that rejected the program a few years ago, asking to have their units reestablished. They now see ROTC for what it truly is—a force for leadership in both peace and war.