



ROTC members pass Bizzell Memorial Library on an early morning run.

TRAVIS CAPERTON

Since its Earliest Days, OU Has Supported Those Who Serve

OU salutes its military students—past, present and future.

BY ANNE BARAJAS HARP

OU'S COMMITMENT TO national defense has been a cornerstone of the university's history from nearly its beginning.

During World War I, scores of students and faculty served overseas and the Norman campus quickly evolved into a Student Army Training Corps, or SATC, site complete with wooden barracks, stables and a mess hall.

When America entered World War II in 1941, an OU recruiting station cropped up within hours and hundreds of students enlisted. The new Max Westheimer Flying Field north of the Norman campus became OU's salvation when the U.S. Navy established a Naval Flight Training Center, as well as a Naval Air Tech-

nical Training Center on the campus' southern end.

Students participating in the V5 technical training program and V12 baccalaureate program filled OU's classrooms. Student soldiers also filled athletic team rosters. Dozens of buildings mushroomed on "North Base" and "South Base," which were purchased by OU at the end of the war and supplied additional classroom and office space for decades. OU's two research campuses now flourish on their bedrock.

Thousands of WWII veterans poured into OU under the G.I. Bill of Rights. Housing was so tight that an overflowing campus gave birth to "Sooner City," 500 prefabricated housing units locat-

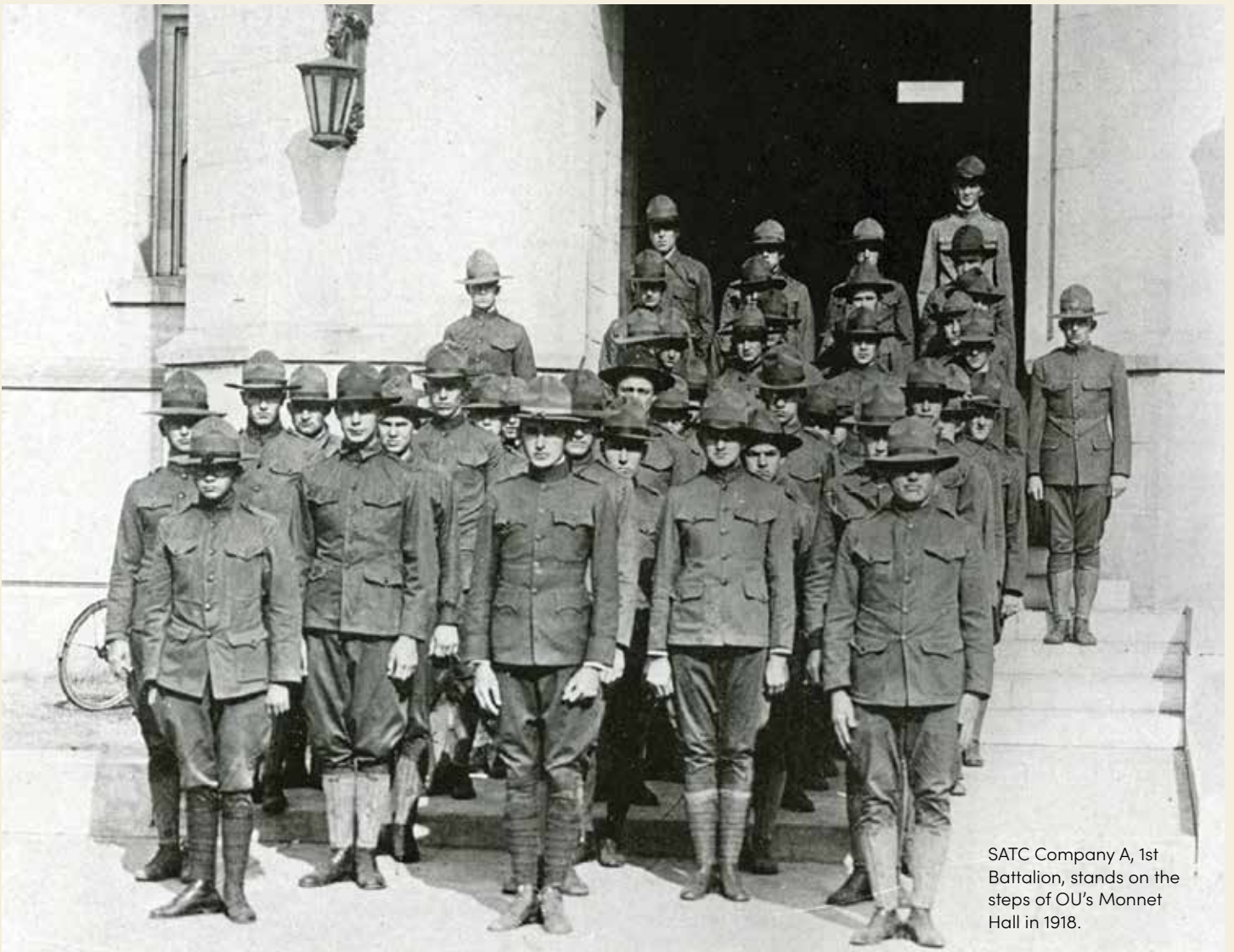
ed south of Lindsey Street and home to vets and married students until 1962.

OU students and faculty continued to serve in conflicts throughout the ensuing decades, from Korea to Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Reserve Officer Training Corps has long been a vital part of OU's fabric, and participation for male students was mandatory until 1965. Army ROTC's Sooner Battalion traces its roots to the SATC and has occupied the OU Armory since construction in 1919. U.S. Navy/U.S. Marine Corps ROTC programs came to OU in 1940, and a U.S. Air Force detachment was founded in 1952.

In 2017, OU Army ROTC celebrated its centennial with a \$20 million gift from James and Miriam Mulva that provided a transformative renovation of the OU Armory and established a scholarship endowment for students participating in each of the three ROTC branches.

Today, OU provides a full range of opportunities to more than 1,200 enrolled active, reservist and veteran service members through the Office of Veteran Student Services, and the university proudly counts tens of thousands of veterans among its alumni. **S**



SATC Company A, 1st Battalion, stands on the steps of OU's Monnet Hall in 1918.

OU WESTERN HISTORY COLLECTIONS



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Members of OU's Naval ROTC celebrate the kickoff of 2023's "Run to Dallas" at Gaylord Family Oklahoma Memorial Stadium.

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