

The R.O.T.C. System Pays Off

The University has turned out enough reserve officers in 23 years of military training to staff army of 50,000 soldiers

*Over hill, over dale, as we hit the dusty trail,
And the caissons go rolling along;
In and out, hear them shout, countermarch
and right about,
And the caissons go rolling along.*

—Caisson Song

The University of Oklahoma is conducting an extensive program of war activities, but its most important contribution to the nation's war effort is probably a project that was started 23 years ago.

Since 1919, the University has maintained a unit of the Reserve Officers Training Corps and this unit has trained, commissioned and placed on reserve nearly two thousand officers. Now the nation, in its national emergency, is calling a high proportion of those officers to the special duties for which they were prepared in the military science classrooms and on the drill fields at O. U.

The value of 2,000 officers to the military establishment of the nation can be visualized by citing a hypothetical case. If it happened that the 2,000 officers fell into the right assortment of officer grades from second lieutenant to general, the number of officers would be sufficient to command *three full divisions* of the United States Army—a total of nearly 50,000 men in round figures.

As a matter of fact, the Army is drawing about half of all its officers from the reservoir of college-trained reserve officers built up during peace time.

During the last year reserve officers have been leaving their businesses and their professions to answer the call to the nation's service. In the last few months, the process has been speeded up. And throughout the world, wherever the stars and stripes fly, Sooner officers are on active duty. From China to Iceland, in both hemispheres, men commissioned by the University R. O. T. C. are stationed on military duty and a number are in the actual combat area in the Pacific.

Not only are the 2,000 officers who once drilled on O. U.'s marching field contributing to the all-out defense program, but former R. O. T. C. commanding officers and staff members are carrying notable

responsibilities on home and foreign fronts.

Of the ten commanding officers who successively guided the destiny of the R. O. T. C. unit during its 23 years, three now hold the high rank of brigadier general. They are Edwin P. Parker, Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Harry J. Malony, Washington, D. C., and Carl A. Bachr, Fort Ethan Allen, Vermont.

Other former staff members also have had extraordinary military careers. Lt. Col. Ivan D. Yeaton served as military attache at Moscow, Russia, for several years after leaving the University, and recently was recalled to the United States. While at O. U. Lieutenant Colonel Yeaton developed and awakened student interest in polo, boxing and pistol shooting. Once when some of the R. O. T. C. horses needed treatment the colonel's fellow staff members discovered that he also had latent abilities as a veterinarian.

The pistol team sponsored by Lieutenant Colonel Yeaton walked away with top honors in national and district intercollegiate pistol competitions. Two of his crack shots were called the "dead-eye twins," Tom and Bob Mayrath, twin brothers who received their commissions and engineering degrees in 1933 and have been stationed at Wright Field, Ohio.

Military training at the University for the last 23 years has been more than simply military training. Those boys in the R. O. T. C. have taken part in more athletic and other extra-curricular activities, brought more honors to the O. U. campus and staged more special events than any other one division of the University.

The University R. O. T. C. unit was established back in 1919 at the request of the student body. The first commission was granted two years later to Donald E. Mathes, '23ba, who is now a major at Fort Lewis, Washington. In civilian life, Major Mathes was an engineer at Houston, Texas.

For a time, all commissions were granted in the infantry division, but as enrolment grew and the unit blossomed out, the number of branches in which training was offered was expanded. At the present time, commissions are given in the following branches: infantry, field artillery, ordnance, cavalry, chemical warfare service, signal corps, quartermaster corps and coast artillery. This year for the first time, two military students will be commissioned as engineers.

Individual personalities and exploits of both military science instructors and students have contributed to the progress of the unit. Discipline has been maintained, but friendly relations between teacher and student prevailed.

For instance, there was the time back in the early '20s when the commanding officer, his staff members and students went to bat and cleaned up on the other baseball teams in the area, including the Norman and Oklahoma City sandlotters. This and other yarns are recalled by lively, black-haired Sgt. Ralph Dougherty, who, as member of the R. O. T. C. staff for more than twenty years, probably knows more of the 2,000 Sooner officers than any other one person.

An interesting but obscure bit of information in R. O. T. C. archives is that Major E. L. Gruber, commandant in 1922 and '23, composed the *Caisson Song*, the first four lines of which appear at the beginning of this article. This song, well known throughout the armed forces, is the official tune of the field artillery units. Under Major Gruber's command, the R. O. T. C. unit received its first distinguished rating in the annual government inspections.

Despite the masculine emphasis naturally expected in military training, the women are not to be overlooked. A co-ed art student, Aileen Connally, '29fa, in

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OKLAHOMA INSIGNIA

Aileen Connally, '29fa, designed this emblem worn by R. O. T. C. men at O. U. It's a formalized design of a man driving a covered wagon

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1927 designed the Sooner Wagon insignia of the University R. O. T. C. unit, which is stenciled on all military machines and equipment and worn in pin form by officers and military science students. The pins, made of red and white enamel, show in formalized style the front view of a covered wagon with driver and horses. Miss Connally is now Mrs. Corwin and lives in New Philadelphia, Ohio.

Scattered far and wide throughout the United States are some twenty alumnae who at least have one thing in common. They were the popular co-eds elected honorary colonels by the R. O. T. C. Attired in military costume, they all presided over their share of reviews, parades, balls and banquets.

Horses and mules, maintained by the R. O. T. C. for riding classes and draft work, also have a place in R. O. T. C. history. Many of the animals have been or were connected with the unit so long that they have become a little tradition all their own. What faithful alumnus, remembering Jug, the little army mule sold on the auction block after eight years of loyal service to the R. O. T. C., isn't prompted to shed a crocodile tear or two? Stories about the antics of Copenhagen, who devoted 16 of his 23 years to nibbling R. O. T. C. pastures, will not soon be forgotten although the horse has been dead more than a year. A memorial plaque has been erected at his grave.

Since 1928, the R. O. T. C. unit has been given the highest, or "Excellent," rating, by the officers who annually inspect such units at the nation's colleges and universities for the War Department. Brig. General Parker was commandant when the first excellent rating was received. Prior to this, the unit received the second highest, or "Distinguished," rating for five years. Since its installation, the unit has always been classed among the top ranking units in the nation by the War Department.

Lt. Col. Hal Muldrow, '28bus, formerly of Norman and now stationed at Camp Barkeley, Texas, is believed to hold the highest rank now among the 2,000 men commissioned at the University. Of the Sooners now in active service, about ten wear the gold leaf of a major and approximately forty wear the two silver bars denoting the rank of captain.

Major Lee B. Thompson, '25ba, '27law, for 16 years aide to Gen. W. S. Key, now commanding officer of the 45th division at Camp Barkeley, Texas, recently was appointed division personnel officer at Camp Barkeley.

Headquarters of the P. M. S. and T. (which sounds like an alphabetical puzzle but stands for Professor of Military Sci-

ence and Tactics) have become much busier since the United States entered the war. R. O. T. C. offices in the long red-brick armory on the corner of Brooks and Asp have literally become an information bureau for men students who want to know about entrance requirements for various branches of service and the ever-changing draft laws.

Despite the added work, activities of the military science department are carried out in the usual brisk and efficient manner under the supervision of Lt. Col. Charles H. Brammell, present commanding officer. Each day's mail brings news of more Sooner officers called to active duty, and almost daily communiques from the War Department. Outgoing mail, in the spirit of the times, bears the print of a rubber stamp recently acquired by the department which reads, "Remember Pearl Harbor."

Seven of the nine members of the military science faculty are Sooner alumni who have returned as instructors to the post where they themselves were commissioned. Adjutant to the commanding officer is Capt. George H. Shirk, '35ba, '36law, Oklahoma City lawyer in civilian life. Others are Lt. Dale D. Desper, '39ba; Lt. Bill J. Tutin, '35bus; Lt. Stuart F. Brady, '36; Lt. N. F. Williams, '39eng; Lt. Richmond F. Thweatt, '39eng; and Lt. Thomas Perry Ewing, '38bus.

Capt. Shirk has recently prepared a record of all Sooners commissioned by the University R. O. T. C. unit, as well as a record of officers now on active duty, with their ranks and last known addresses. Copies of both these lists have been sent to Sooners in service with a request to send in addresses for any officers whose names do not appear on the latter list. The response has been excellent and each day brings more of the requested information.

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Faculty Speakers Available

About 250 University of Oklahoma faculty members, all experts on various phases of national and international developments, are available as speakers for organized group meetings of Oklahoma citizens.

An invitation to schedule these lecturers through the University's Lecture and Entertainment Bureau has been issued state residents by J. F. Malone, '37ba, bureau director.

Speakers for lectures, roundtable discussions, and so forth may be secured by schools, civic clubs and study groups. The bureau encourages the organization of public forums and other discussion groups in the state, Mr. Malone said.

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