

The "Reserve Officers Training Corps"

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ON July 6, 1956, the ROTC Units throughout the country will mark the 10th anniversary of their foundation

as a re-constituted and re-established unit of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The general impression of the public seems to be that the ROTC is nothing more than a glamorized association of college or university boys in khaki uniform strutting up and down college campuses or parading the city streets whenever a national celebration of any kind is

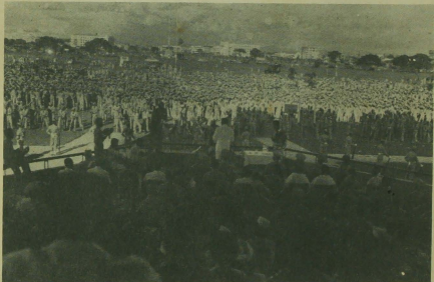
in the making. The ROTC's real import and the necessity for its existence have not been fully recognized and appreciated.

The public seems to have lost sight of the fact that the ROTC is one of the most powerful potential weapons representing as it does the "cream of the youth of the land". It cannot be denied that students taking up the ROTC course make up an enlightened and intelligent group who can easily be trained and influenced. For this matter, the ROTC

has formed a vital role in the training of the youth of the land. Records and performance of ROTC graduates during the last war are eloquent proof of the advisability and importance of such training. It is even a matter of common knowledge now that graduates of the ROTC course have demonstrated traits of leadership and efficiency comparable to graduates of any military academy. Such successes of these men have not only been limited to purely military affairs but also been extended to civilian posts. Graduates of the ROTC like ex-Sec. Fred Ruiz Castro, ex-Sen. Macario Peralta, Congressmen Ferdinand Marcos and Antonio Raquiza, MRR Manager Salvador Villa, NARIC Gen. Manager Jacinto T. Gavino, Col. Conra-

do B. Rigor, AFP Comptroller Simeon Valdez and a host of other ranking present day leaders, are living testimonials of the products of our ROTC.

The history of the ROTC, however, can be traced further than 10 years ago. It can be traced further back to 1912 when military training was first conducted in the State University. Military instruction was conducted informally under an officer of the then Philippine Constabulary. To raise the standard of training, however, the Board of Regents on Nov. 9, 1921 asked the Governor General to request the U.S. War Department for the services of a US Army officer as a professor of Military Science. On March 17, 1922, a US Army officer reported to the State University and the Board of Regents



Basically and principally, the ROTC still provides the cadets with military training sufficient to qualify them as non-commissioned officers and reserve officers of the reserve units of our citizen army. Photo shows Pres. Magsaysay addressing ROTC cadets.



The objectives of ROTC training were broadened to give college and university students theoretical and practical training. Photo shows cadets firing 105 mm howitzers.

authorized the establishment of a Department of Military Science and Tactics. The course of instruction actually started on July 3, 1922.

In the early part of 1921, the Rectors of Liceo de Manila, Colegio de San Juan de Letran and the Ateneo de Manila, instituted a similar movement to give military instruction in their schools. On Nov. 25, 1921, Gov. Gen. Wood approved of this

and shortly thereafter, these colleges began the organization of their ROTC Units. To the Rev. Fr. Luis Mariño belongs the credit of being responsible for the organization of the Letran ROTC Unit, and to the Rev. Fr. W. Y. Byrnes that of Ateneo de Manila. The pioneer commandants of these early units were Capt. H. E. Henion and Lt. Guevarra for Letran, and Col.

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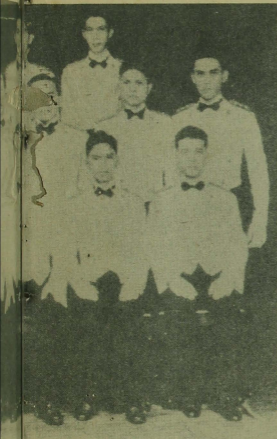


The class of 1936, University of the Philippines ROTC under General Fidel V. Segundo. Front row, from left: Thomas C. Benitez, Salvador T. Villa, Col. Nemesio Catalan, Col. Salvador F. Reyes, General Segundo, Col. Juan S. Moran, Carmelo Z. Barbero, Salvador J. Campos (deceased). Second row: Bienvenido Angeles, Ricardo Bahia, Jesus Castillo, Salvador Abcede, Simeon M. Valdez, Sebastian Javelasa, C. B. Rigor, Alejandro Jimenez, Felix S. Maniego. Third row: Nicanor T. Jimenez, Alberto Fenix, Alejandro Regala, Amadeo P. Villanueva, Salipada Pendatun, and Jose Acevedo.

Antonio Torres for Ateneo. These because the colleges wanted their students and those who followed them for the next fourteen years were all US Army officers. When these pioneer units were first organized, there was little thought at all, of forming reserve forces. These Units were organized simply

because the colleges wanted their students to enjoy a certain degree of military prestige which the military elements at that time would have enjoyed by reason of the victory of the Allies in 1918.

In 1924, a similar unit was set up in the National University. That

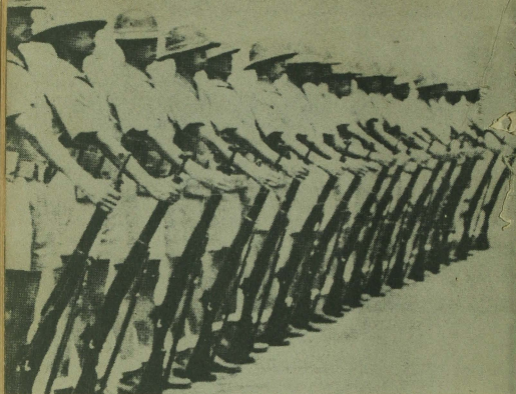


started a chain reaction and other colleges and universities followed suit. With the advent of the Commonwealth period, the organization and development of a regular standing army and a reserve force were given impetus. When the Philippine Constabulary became the nucleus of the Philippine Army in conformity with the plan of gradually enlarging the Philippine Army, the ROTC Units of these colleges and universities were placed under the administration of the Philippine Army for

supply and training. Encouraged by the success of these ROTC Units and recognizing their potential capabilities, the government took steps to generalize the movement with the inclusion of Sec. 35, 36 37 & 38 in the National Defense Act providing for the establishment and maintenance of ROTC Units in the colleges and universities as the President of the Philippines may designate. As part of the pre-war plans for national mobilization, the graduates of the ROTC Units were to be made a pool of officers to fill up vacancies in the reserve force. Control of all ROTC units then in existence in 1935 passed on to the Philippine Army. Col. Salvador F. Reyes, as the first designated Superintendent of ROTC Units, was given the mission of building up the ROTC Units.

As of Dec. 1941, shortly before the outbreak of the Pacific War, 33 colleges and universities throughout the country were operating and maintaining ROTC units with an average enrollment of 24,000 annually. All these units ceased operation at the outbreak of the Pacific hostilities until they were re-activated and re-constituted on July 6, 1946. Needless to say, ROTC cadets and graduates who joined the armed forces made a name for the ROTC.

Activated shortly after liberation, 29 ROTC units re-opened in July 1947. The training period contemplated a period of 3 years with 8 weeks of summer training. The objectives of ROTC training were broadened to include: (1) giving college and university students theoretical and practical training for the military



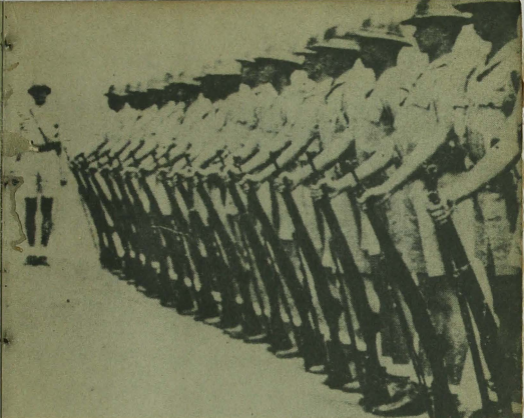
ROTC and PMT cadets undergoing cadre training in a PA camp before the war.

service in order to meet the requirements for well-trained commissioned personnel of the reserve force; (2) giving sufficient basic military training to qualify students for commission as officers in the reserve; and (3) developing national spirit for the realization of their obligations and responsibilities to the State.

When the communist-inspired disservice movement started to flare up in 1948, most of the AFP officer-instructors were sent out to the field to combat the new menace, and as a result, additional ROTC units

were suspended for lack of officers to handle the training. When the Armed Forces was re-organized in 1950 with the creation of the four Military Areas, the ROTC Units found within the jurisdiction of these areas fell under their control and supervision, and only the ROTC units in Manila and vicinity were retained under the control and jurisdiction of the Superintendent of ROTC Units.

At its inception, ROTC units were established solely to provide the Armed Forces with reserve commissioned officers. It was later found out



to be the cheapest and easiest way of producing reservists, and therefore, was exploited to provide the Armed Forces with privates and non-commissioned officers to fill up what could not be produced in trainee training in view of the lack of full financial support.

Today, the concept of ROTC training has radically changed from that of providing only college students with the degree of military prestige. Basically and principally, the ROTC still provides the cadets with military training sufficient to qualify them as non-commissioned officers and reserve officers of the reserve units of our citizen army. The program of

instruction has now been designed to awaken in the cadets a more aggressive spirit of civic consciousness and a more active interest in community projects, in addition to providing them with training to qualify them to assume positions of leadership in their respective communities. Very lately, Col. C. B. Garcia, incumbent superintendent of the Manila ROTC Units, acting on the instructions of Col. Nicanor Velarde, PATC commander, has shifted the weight of instruction in the ROTC to the fighting services like the Infantry and the Artillery — a virtual acknowledgment of the potential capabilities of ROTC cadets as real fighting men of our citizen army.