

UNL could lose Army ROTC program

By Theresa Forsman

September will mark the 100th anniversary of the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program on the UNL campus. But a warning that the program here may be terminated will cast a shadow over any centennial celebrations.

The United States Department of the Army in Washington, D.C. has placed the UNL Army ROTC unit on probation, said Col. Lucien Rising, professor of military science and head of UNL's Army ROTC program.

The probation warning, received this spring, means that unless the Army ROTC junior class enrollment is increased to at least 20 students, Army ROTC will no longer be available at UNL, Rising said. No deadline has been set for the enrollment increase, he said, but added the program is subject to review each year by the Department of the Army.

In an effort to increase enrollment, Rising said, the department is offering ROTC classes during the summer for the first time. Students who will be sophomores in the fall may compress their freshman year of ROTC into summer sessions, he said.

It is not too late for students to sign up for ROTC summer classes, Rising said, explaining that ROTC classes will be arranged according to an individual

student's summer academic schedule.

Students who will be juniors this fall and have never taken ROTC may qualify for junior ROTC standing in September by successfully completing a six-week basic training camp at Fort Knox, Ky. this summer, he said.

Army veterans who join the program receive credit for the first two years of ROTC and enter the program at the junior level, Rising said.

UNL's program is not the only ROTC unit suffering declining enrollments, Rising said. Several units across the nation are on probation.

He attributed smaller ROTC enrollments to a "general anti-Vietnam" feeling among students. Also, he said, because the first two years of ROTC are no longer required of male university students, many do not find out what ROTC is all about. Many students have misconceptions about the program, he said.

ROTC is no longer a lot of close order drill, he said. ROTC is helpful for the student who has no definite career plans, Rising said, because it teaches basic management and leadership skills useful in any career. For those who have definite career plans, ROTC is no hindrance since the Army offers job openings in almost every field, he explained.

"If more students were acquainted with the program

we would have no trouble at a university of this size in reaching an enrollment of 20 in the junior class," he said. Projected enrollment for next fall includes approximately 15 junior Army ROTC cadets.

"I realize ROTC is not for everybody," Rising said, adding that if more students would acquaint themselves with the program, they might decide ROTC would benefit them.

Junior and senior ROTC students receive \$100 a month during the school year and are eligible for Army ROTC scholarships. He explained that upon graduation, ROTC students may join either the active army or the army reserves.

"Nobody I've come into contact with likes war or killing," Rising said. "But the nation needs to maintain a strong defense."


"The influx of college students into the Army keeps the Army in contact with civilian life." He said he thinks it is important that Nebraska continue to contribute its share of college graduates and their ideas to the Army.

Rising said the ROTC program at UNL has a rich history. He cited the late 1800's when Gen. John J. Pershing was head of UNL's Army ROTC program. "It would be a shame if we had to close down."

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Editor: Theresa Forsman
 Business Manager: Bruce McMorris
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