

ROTC enrollment bouncing back

Although UNL ROTC enrollment recently has hit "rock bottom," Col. John E. Wolter, head of UNL's Air Force ROTC detachment, said he is optimistic that enrollment is on an upswing.

Only 20 freshmen participated in the Air Force ROTC program last year, Wolter said. That put enrollment below minimum level and put the detachment on probation, he said.

This year about 30 freshmen participate in the program, and the probation soon will be lifted, Wolter said.

A great deal of emphasis this past year was put on recruiting and "people are responding," he said.

Wolter said the situation with UNL's ROTC program reflects the situation of the national All-Volunteer Armed Forces.

After the end of the Vietnam war, there was a lack of interest, Wolter said. When the draft ended in 1973, recruiting became a very important part of the military, he said. Nationally, recruiting costs in 1976 soared to

\$600 million, as opposed to \$168 million in 1971, he said.

Some of the decline in manpower since the end of the Vietnam war has been balanced by the decline in demand for manpower, he said.

The number of persons the national armed forces accept as officers from the country's ROTC programs has declined, Wolter said. Fifty percent of the money involved in the military goes to personnel, he said. So when military funding is lowered at the end of a war, manpower also is cut, he said.

However, if enlistment continues to fall, Wolter said the return of the draft is a possibility.

"There has been talk of it (the draft) at the national level," he said.

Wolter said that, judging by the mood of the country, he would not be surprised if eventually women were included in the draft, as well as men. But he said he does not think women would be involved in combat duty.

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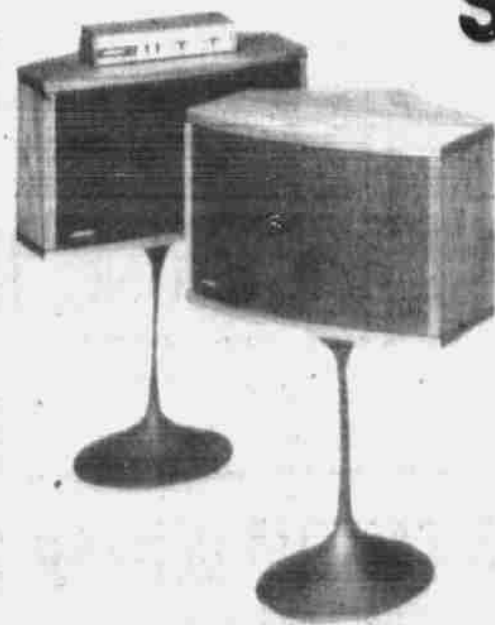
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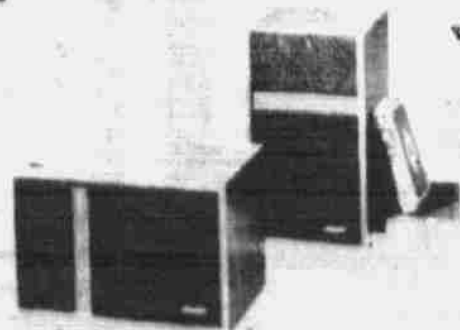
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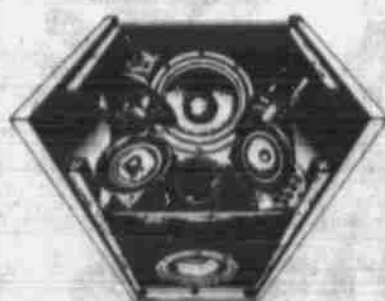
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