

Recognizing DePauw's History of ROTC and Military Service

Introduction:

The military intervention in Vietnam by the United States government, led to nationwide protests by many students and citizens strongly rooted in academia. DePauw experienced a wide range of protests ranging from organized teach-ins to participation in the peace march on Washington. However the issue reached a boiling point when the U.S. invaded Cambodia. May 1st, 1970, marked a turbulent day on DePauw's campus. Two students set fire to the Aerospace, Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Corp's (R.O.T.C.), building, located on South College Avenue (DePauw University: 12, ch 4). The purpose of this white paper is to give recognition to the Arson fire of DePauw's Aerospace, Air Force R.O.T.C. building and to recognize the services of DePauw University, Alumni, students, faculty, staff, and administrators in the United States of America's Military.

Recognition:

The DePauw student body would like to recognize the importance and necessary presence of a Reserve Officers' Training Corps. Students are provided with an opportunity to train in the military while completing their undergraduate studies, graduating with a degree from DePauw and a possible commission from the United States Army or Air Force. These programs provide scholarships, stipends, and guarantee employment in the U.S. military.

The DePauw student body also recognizes the act of violence against a valued institution. The men and women who have participated and continue to participate in any and all campus military training programs and more specifically the R.O.T.C. program before and after 1970, have done so with selfless action and for the safety of those on DePauw's campus as well as for the citizens of the United States of America. The dialog on campus at the time of the incident included peaceful protest, sit ins, and marches in order to portray the disagreement with the U.S. intervention and the current dialog is one of solemn remembrance and tribute. As a liberal arts university, students are educated in a multitude of subjects, taught how to think critically, develop thoughtful ideas, and to advocate for their beliefs. Burning an educational building seems to contradict such a message, sentiment, and ideology. As such, we recognize the tragic nature of this event and that the actions of these two men do not represent and have never represented the views of DePauw's student body.

We also would like to recognize the service men and women who have perished in the service of the United States of America. The fortitude, selflessness, and determination of these individuals can never be measured. We aim to remember and commemorate you and to reflect upon your selfless actions as we walk in and follow in your footsteps throughout campus and into the world.

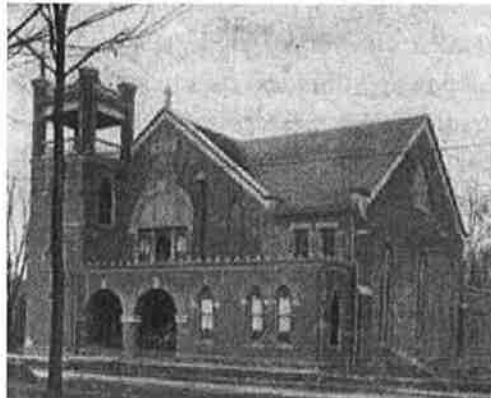


A former Army barracks from World War II was placed on South College Avenue for married veterans' apartments. In 1950 it was converted into the food laboratories for the home economics department and classes of Professor Audrey Beatty. Later it served as headquarters for the Air Force ROTC and Foreign Student Program. After the American invasion of Cambodia in May 1970 it was the scene of student arson.

A Brief History of DePauw, R.O.T.C. and Military Presence on Campus:

Since its inception at DePauw in 1918, Reserve Officer Training Corps (R.O.T.C.) has been through oscillations as an institution on DePauw's campus. Following World War I and the wartime military training program, DePauw's R.O.T.C. program was born. The program was made compulsory for freshman and sophomore males, and allowed upperclassmen the opportunity to commission in the U.S. Army Reserve: "It was often noted that DePauw was apparently the only Methodist-related college or university to maintain a compulsory military training program of that kind" (DePauw: 1, ch 3). However, such a program soon faced heavily opposing ideologies.

In 1923, DePauw purchased the Locust Street church. Originally used for theoretical performances and public speaking, this steeple-less church was fitted to be the R.O.T.C. armory and stood from 1929 until 1934 when President Oxnam called for the abolishment of the R.O.T.C. presence at DePauw (DePauw: 4 Ch 3). However, such pacifism was short lived.



During World War II, the enrollment of men and the number of men on campus saw a sharp decrease as students and faculty entered into the various branches of the military. Due to the lack of men, the university offered its facilities to the U.S. Navy in order to provide education for servicemen in a Naval Flight Preparatory School, also know as the Navy V-5 program. The then Music School Annex was partitioned as a military hospital and men were housed in residence halls and Delta Chi fraternity house (DePauw: 2 Ch 4). DePauw was also host to the Navy V-12 program which trained eligible men for officer candidate.

"We have served the nation," President Wildman said in summing up DePauw's

experience with the Naval units, "in helping to give training to its officer personnel and we have in turn been helped through some extremely difficult years by their presence on campus."(DePauw: 2 Ch 4)

As the war came to an end, men returned home and enrollment returned to campus, as well as the need to refit barracks into new veteran housing or educational space. In 1950, a set of barracks on College avenue was equipped as a food lab but would later host the soon to return, Air Force R.O.T.C. and International studies program until 1970 (DePauw: p 2, ch 4).

The Korean war marked a return to wartime practices at DePauw. With strong support from campus, the administration communicated with the U.S. government and in 1951 instituted the Air force Reserve Officers' Training Corps at DePauw. Known as the 235th Wing, DePauw's R.O.T.C. program "enrolled nearly half of the male student body in its first years" (DePauw: p 6, Ch 4). These cadets were exempt from the draft and would have the opportunity for commission after four years. The campus saw many changes during these years including the bowling lanes in the Gymnasium transforming into an indoor rifle range. The return of the R.O.T.C. program also birthed the Arnold Air Society, an R.O.T.C. honor society (DePauw: p6, ch4).



"Air Force ROTC ceremony in 1955. Captain Joseph Campbell is at the microphone and Lt. Colonel Frederick Sanders presents the award to Eugene N. Holladay '57."

Although enrollment declined by 1970, the Air Force R.O.T.C. program was still involved on campus and was housed in the R.O.T.C. building on College Street. It wasn't until May 1st, 1970, when the United States invaded Cambodia, that the R.O.T.C. lost its home on campus. Two students razed the building through arson in an act of protest. The students, Clark Adams and Steve Conway were caught and brought to trial on charges of second degree arson and later convicted. They were caught due to the burns they received from the ether they used to fuel the blaze.

The September 5th, 1970 issue of "The DePauw," referred to the reconstruction of the R.O.T.C. building. The current Executive Vice President, Norman J. Nights, responded to the act of the two students as, "You don't abandon the R.O.T.C. program simply because someone burns the building. We gain by having an R.O.T.C. unit on campus, especially by the financial aid it provides to the students." Today's students note that his remarks remain true: the presence of any R.O.T.C. program at our University would be a positive opportunity for any and all students interested in Military and Civil Service. From 1970 until 1973, the Air Force R.O.T.C. program was housed alongside the aerospace department.

The program ended on campus in 1973 due to budget cuts and low enrollment. But in 1976, the opportunities that R.O.T.C. programs presented to students survived as DePauw worked with Indiana University and Rose-Hulman Institute to enroll students in R.O.T.C courses in Bloomington and Terre Haute, respectively. A year later, the U.S. army was offering basic military courses on campus (DePauw: p10, ch 5).

Today, all DePauw students have the opportunity to participate in the Air Force R.O.T.C. program through Indiana University via classes in Terre Haute. Students who participate have an opportunity to pay for school through full and partial scholarships, have access to tax-free stipends junior and senior year, and are guaranteed a job in the Air Force upon graduation. Army R.O.T.C. is also offered at Rose-Hulman institute. This program can provide full and partial scholarships, monthly stipends for those enrolled in the Advanced Course or are senior cadets, and for those who complete the course curriculum graduate as commissioned officer in the U.S. Army or Army Reserve (DePauw.edu).

Considerations for the future:

The DePauw student body commends the admirable dedication of these men and women who undergo the rigorous programming offered by Indiana University and Rose-Hulman Institute. We recognize the difficulties that must be involved, and call for the development of a more permanent haven for these men and women on DePauw's campus. The campus plan includes spaces for student organizations and academic programming to gather and foster their own community. We would like the members of our student body who participate in programming geared toward future military activity to have a similar space on campus.

Motion by: Asheley Aclit
Aye 20
Nay 0
Abstain 3
~~Absent~~
D. J. [Signature]
Student Body President

Seconded by:
Representative Stephanie Paul

Attest:
Colleen McErdell
Secretary

Bibliography

“ROTC center repair, ‘only practical solution.’” *The DePauw*. Vol CXIX No 2. (5 Sept 1970) Depauw University Archives, DePauw University Libraries

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