

College of the Holy Cross

CrossWorks

Cross Current

ROTC

4-9-1970

Cross Current, April 9, 1970

Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps, College of the Holy Cross

Follow this and additional works at: https://crossworks.holycross.edu/cross_current

Recommended Citation

Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps, College of the Holy Cross, "Cross Current, April 9, 1970" (1970).

Cross Current. 2.

https://crossworks.holycross.edu/cross_current/2

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by the ROTC at CrossWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Cross Current by an authorized administrator of CrossWorks.

19 April, 1970

CROSS CURRENT

Egalitarian Army

perhaps the greatest stumbling block to increasing enlistments in the army or to creating an all volunteer force is the alleged lack of democracy in our armed forces. Civilians are reluctant to leave their present positions in society to enter, at the lowest level, a military establishment which embraces social stratification and is strictly authoritarian in nature. Is this complaint a valid one and can a democratic republic such as the United States tolerate such a system?

Before we enter into any discussion of the merits of establishing a democratic or egalitarian army, it would be wise to define the mission of any military service: victory in combat through battle efficiency. This objective takes precedence over all others and is made possible only through the maintenance of rigid discipline and organization. If the introduction of egalitarian principles into the army damages its efficiency and effectiveness in battle then these principles must be abandoned ~~in~~ in order to achieve the more important objective of victory.

In examining the practicability and desirability of an egalitarian army we would do well by looking at an earlier experiment with this type of military establishment. This example is drawn from the experiences of the United States Army after the second world war. In hopes of eliminating the inequities of the draft and creating a volunteer force, a six man board chaired by Lt. General James Doolittle was convened to study the relationship between officers and enlisted men and recommend reforms.

The Doolittle Board finally came out in favor of eliminating social barriers between the two groups (it was suggested that instead of being called officers and enlisted men the entire group would be known collectively as soldiers). They felt that the regimented life and loss of identity inherent in military life made civilians reluctant to volunteer.

In order to stimulate enlistments, army life was made more attractive. Social distinctions between officers and enlisted men were lessened and discipline was relaxed. Army recruiters advertised the new

recruit's opportunity to learn a trade while in the service and promised that each soldier's personality would be respected. The army received a new mission: to improve each soldier's morale by "improving him mentally, morally, physically, and spiritually." Members of the new army ended up spending more time in classrooms and lectures than in actual training under combat conditions. Discipline was relaxed and sergeants were instructed to respect the personalities of the men under them. An understanding and fatherly sergeant replaced the traditionally harsh drill sergeant.

The results of this experiment in military equality was seen in the first months of the Korean War. In June of 1950, the North Korean Army invaded South Korea, roted her army and pushed an army of mentally, morally, and physically improved Americans back to Pusan. It was evident that the U.S. Army had experienced an alarming drop in efficiency and battlefield effectiveness. The fact was that the American serviceman, while well trained for a host of various other jobs, were not prepared for their primary function--combat.

This example makes it clear that while an egalitarian army may appear to be a fair and feasible alternative to the present military establishment, it does not function well in practise. The armed forces is the guardian of American democracy and in order to accomplish this task its discipline must remain rigid, its organization sound and intact and the authority of its officers unchallenged. - William F. Dougherty

St. Patrick's Day Parade

The Drill Team and Color Guard marched in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in South Boston this past March 17. Their long practise sessions paid off as the unit performed before large crowds lining the four and a half mile long parade route. The day ended with a party at the South Boston Yacht Club at the invitation of a member of the Drill Team.

Names.

Editorial - Directions

Some time after the publication of the first issue of "Cross Current," a letter of criticism was received from William F. Gotha ('70) Purple Patcher Editor. Despite our promise to print anything, we must apologize to Mr. Gotha for not being able to print his entire critique, for the simple reason that its length would take up this entire issue. Nevertheless, several valid points were raised that demand a summary of sorts. Mr. Gotha believes that:

1. "The job of 'defending the rights and good name of the military that defends this country' should never fall on the shoulders of individuals who have very little to do with the policy-making that influences its public image."
2. "The most important issues facing the ROTC program at Holy Cross are more concerned with what ROTC as an institution is doing for (or to) the student members as individuals, and the role of the college in condoning or rejecting the program."
3. Given that the function of a liberal arts college is to maximize "options" to diversify the education of its students, does the acceptance of a military scholarship bring about a situation in which that option becomes a determinant, and that activity an institution?
4. Given the present execution of the ROTC program of officer procurement and training, it is incompatible with what the Holy Cross student sees as the ideal environment for his educational experience.

This summary of course fails to do justice to Mr. Gotha's ideas, and we urge all members of this academic community interested in the ROTC issue to take notice of Mr. Gotha's upcoming White Paper, in which he will make some recommendations for achieving that compatibility.

As for answering Mr. Gotha's criticism of our "direction", his point is well taken, and perhaps we overemphasized our intentions of what may be described as "justifying" the military. Cross Current is by no means yet committed to any such philosophy; our only "motive" was to open a link of communication between the students involved in the military establishment here and the college community outside of the military "sphere of influence." We disagree with Mr. Gotha that a satisfactory integration between the educational experience and the program of officer procurement and training has not been achieved. The editor feels suffi-

ently "integrated," as do no doubt the large majority of upper-classmen. Those midshipmen and cadets who do feel somewhat schizophrenic in "serving two masters" are allowed the first full two years of school to voluntarily disenroll from the program. This is even the case for those students who have accepted the scholarship.

Perhaps the essence of the motive for "Cross Current" is our disquietude. Why is it that some Midshipmen or Cadets feel ashamed about wearing the uniform on Monday or uneasy about revealing their ROTC affiliations to their more intelligent acquaintances, male or female? Why is it somehow no longer fashionable (note I did not say "desireable") to choose a military career? Could it simply be that the military has become part of the "monster that will not obey" or that people are becoming too intelligent to bother with the military? We feel that there is more, much more, on the other side of the coin. Elemental human responses are at work here too, and these anti-rationalities must be explored. (Or most it be the fate of all peacetime soldiers to languish in public moralizing until they are again needed? Kipling put it rather succinctly:

"It's Tommy this an Tommy that
'An Tommy 'ows yer soul?
But it's 'Saviour of 'is country
When the drums begin to roll."

Cross Current (and we hope with your help) will ask the questions. And perhaps it will answer some.

Ridgeville Drive

During the week of March 16-22, several Holy Cross students conducted a drive to aid the Indians of the Ridgeville Reservation in South Carolina. The Holy Cross NRCTC unit contributed a sum of \$ 75 from its budget as well as a fair amount of clothing and food supplies (including no less than an 8 lb. can of baked beans!) But we are not as gratified with that as we are with the fact that, for the first time campus organizations of varying and often opposing goals were able to unite in a worthy effort. Let it not be the last.

"Cross Current is published by Midshipmen of the Holy Cross NRCTC unit, and in no way reflects official views of the Unit nor the government.

Staff- William F. Burgess
William B. Mahony
William F. Dougherty
Robert C. Ball
Frank A. Vargas
James MacInnes