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Cross Current

ROTC

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Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps, College of the Holy Cross

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# CROSS CURRENT



AN OPTIMISTIC FUTURE

TOWARDS LEADERSHIP

The change over in command of the NROTC Battalion each year calls into question the accomplishments of the out going command and the future course for the new leaders. In the context of the present controversy over the role of military and quasi-military organizations in the academic community, the evaluation of the past performance of the Holy Cross Unit serves to suggest directions for 1971.

Perhaps the most noticeable trend of the past two semesters has been the phase out of strictly military drill and its replacement with constructive athletic activity. Gone are the days of rifles and weekly company formations, instead there is swimming, football, softball, target shooting and sailing. But the most important change seems to be deeper than the switch to athletic activities, the new drill format seems to have shortened a gap that had developed between the Midshipman's role as an NROTC member and as a member of Holy Cross. There seemed to be a note of alienation in the Monday afternoon marching with rifles and swords, and the seeming futility of it all was no consolation to the besieged ROTC student. In light of the new changes there also seems to be a new spirit of fellowship in the Battalion which may be a product of the athletic competition and the relaxed but by no means slack regulations.

The out-look for 1971 seems bright not only for the Midshipman as an individual, but also for the Unit as a whole. After the Fall referendum, the Holy Cross community seems to have accepted the Navy and Air Force as a viable part of the campus and the EPC study of the military curricula has shown a definite concern in our future. It seems that we can look forward to a continuation of the new and constructive trend of 1970 in regard to activities and at the same time we can hope for an increased alignment of NROTC and college goals. Perhaps this one point is the most important, that we as quasi-military personnel, keep in mind the fact that our role as an NROTC student and as a member of the Holy Cross community need never be one of conflict or paradox

By Michael Sise 1972

If ever there was one single issue facing the new NROTC Battalion officers of the Junior Class, it is right now. With much of the external pressures reduced, the key objective now becomes internal in nature. The accomplishment of this objective must act as the core for all changes within the NROTC.

I speak here of the instilling into the minds of all the midshipmen the desire to obtain from the program the proper attitude and motivation towards the attainment of leadership. This seemingly vague concept forms the crux of the on-campus training of ROTC that many, if not most, within the program fail to come to know. There is much more to being an officer in the Armed Services than just command appearance, forcefulness and experience. What is crucial is a proper development of the officer candidate as a decision maker capable of offering rational alternatives to realistic objectives.

The changes within the NROTC must reflect the desire to educate those who will be making the decisions; to make the NROTC students aware of what the program is all about.

By Kenneth Marra 1972

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## PERSONALIZATION

During the past two years we have heard much about an enemy who is constantly working at the demise of our number from the "outside" -- and would succeed if we but gave "him" the chance. Whether or not there lurked anyone beyond the immediate circle of our council fire, all are on the verge of passing through an uncertain night. In anticipation and fear we have huddled closer -- we have sat waiting, watching outward. However, in the meantime, our fire has begun to burn ever lower and colder -- how does one rekindle this flame?

I believe the heart of this problem of apathy -- the "enemy within" is a "reevaluation" of the lower levels of command in the Battalion organization. Now is the time to make headway in this area. Such apathy at the company and platoon levels is but a symptom of a basic deficiency -- the lack of dynamic leadership.

My solution to this problem though fairly simple in conception; demands much dedication for a successful execution. To be cured I believe the unit must be "personalized". Everyone must play a role in this program. For the present student officers this means a sincere attempt to appreciate the responsibility they have been given with their duty of officer selection. I ask, that throughout their deliberations they make judgements with the integrity of the individual candidate always in mind. Also I demand that they choose for each billet, a man who will help to shape the individuals under him into men. It is also important that they give these "new leaders" the benefit of their experience. To these "new leaders" I suggest an even more active role in this "personalization program". Their tools for this operation are by no means revolutionary. They are the "company activities" and the "personal interview". Whether such activities are professional, athletic or social in nature they can become, if properly organized, builders of "unit-pride". On the other hand personal interviews by company and unit commanders of each and every man under their command stresses the factor of "individual integrity" as the other necessary element needed to cure apathy. In short, all these leaders must demonstrate by their good example and demand of their troops -- spirit -- born of "personal integrity" and "unit-pride". Only their spark can rekindle the flame that has grown low.

The dawn has come; we are, for awhile, away from the "uncertain night". But during this "day" we cannot rest. We must search out and shore up our weaknesses. We must demand excellence of ourselves in choosing our leaders; we must demand excellence of ourselves in acting. Our fire must be rebuilt by eager hands -- its flame of "spirit" must burn ever brighter in the face of the night which must come. Only then can we act together as officers, as comrades and as men -- without fear.

By Kenneth Tarrant 1972

## INTEREST AND ENTHUSIASM

By far the most necessary change in the new Battalion would have to be an increased interest and enthusiasm by everyone in the Unit. Everything else should act as a vehicle to attain this end. Once it is reached, training is easy. To effect this, one important concept can never be overlooked: the creating of changes, whether structural, organizational, or training program changes, must not be done for the sake of change itself. In the recent past, and perhaps too, in a part of the present, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on change for the primary purpose of increasing participation through a widening of possible interest ranges. I often wonder, though, whether this method is actually attacking the problem or merely scrubbing at the symptoms which, at best, will sweep the problem itself further under the rug by disguising it even more. Whether or not changes are implemented, it is obvious that their success or failure depends upon essentially the same variable on which the present system has been based. Without the interest and involvement of each midshipman, any change, however well conceived and brilliantly planned, is doomed to failure.

By Mark Rader 1971