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AIR FORCE ROTC AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
1951-1957

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of History
University of Richmond

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Arts

by
Robert J. Dandridge
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. ESTABLISHMENT	1
II. ENROLLMENT	4
III. COURSE CONTENT	8
IV. FACULTY	11
V. GENERAL HISTORY	13
VI. DISESTABLISHMENT	17
VII. CONCLUSION	19
BIBLIOGRAPHY	21

CHAPTER I

ESTABLISHMENT

In the summer of 1950, after the seriousness of the Korean conflict had become evident, a special committee appointed three years earlier by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees was reactivated for the purpose of considering "the feasibility of applying for a Reserve Officers Training Corps unit"¹ for the University of Richmond. This special committee, called the ROTC Committee, after thorough study, rendered a unanimous recommendation to the Board that a unit of Army ROTC be applied for. The application was completed and mailed to the Department of the Army. Approval of the application was not long in arriving, and by late 1950 plans were well underway for the establishment of an Army ROTC unit at the University.²

In early February of 1951 the Department of the Air Force, not to be outdone by the Army, extended to the University the opportunity of applying for a unit of Air Force ROTC. With authorization from the Executive Committee the President submitted the application on February 15, 1951.³ On April 20, the University was informed by a telegram from the Secretary of the Air Force, the Honorable Thomas K. Finletter, that it (and the University of Virginia) were among the sixty-two colleges and universities chosen from a field of more than four hundred colleges and universities across the nation to have an Air Force ROTC unit

¹Annual Report of the President (University of Richmond, 1951), 11.

²Ibid. (Whole Paragraph).

³Interview with President George M. Modlin, University of Richmond, August 10, 1967.

established on its campus.⁴ The Department of Defense had again smiled upon the University of Richmond. The date of establishment was set for the first of July, 1951.⁵

To house the two new ROTC units, two of the temporary barracks which were built soon after the end of World War II to accommodate the high student enrollment resulting from government educational assistance under the G.I. Bill were converted into classrooms, offices and supply rooms. An experienced hand in establishment and organization was lent to the infant Air Science Department of the University of Richmond that summer in the form of Colonel Frank R. Pancake, the Professor of Air Science and Tactics from Virginia Military Institute.⁶

It was the hope of University officials that the establishment of the two ROTC detachments would offset the decline in enrollment at the University of Richmond (a general, nationwide trend) which resulted from a gradual decline in enrollment of World War II veterans.⁷ This offset to declining enrollment would, hopefully, be accomplished by the attraction of students interested in becoming officers in either the Air Force or Army Reserve, students who normally would not enroll at the University were there no ROTC programs.⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Raymond G. Teborek estimated from questionnaires returned by incoming freshmen that the number of students in the Air Science

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Annual Report of the President, (University of Richmond, 1951), 11-12.

program would be in excess of one hundred for the school year 1951-1952.⁹

The objective of both ROTC programs, as stated in the catalogue, was "to provide systematic military training at civilian institutions for the purpose of qualifying selected students in such institutions as reserve officers in the armed forces of the United States."¹⁰

In the event that the programs became too popular, a quota system was developed whereby students who could not get into the programs under the quota could still attend classes, drills and summer camp and receive a commission upon graduation; however, they did not draw pay or receive uniforms until vacancies arose under the quota.¹¹ To the best knowledge of this author, though, the enrollment never exceeded the quota.

⁹The Richmond Collegian. (September 21, 1951), 1. [Hereafter referred to as Collegian.]

¹⁰Catalogue of Richmond College (University of Richmond, 1952), 80. [Hereafter referred to as Catalogue.]

¹¹Catalogue (1951), 80.

CHAPTER II

ENROLLMENT

The Air Force ROTC program at the University of Richmond was divided, as is the Army ROTC program today, into a Basic Course for freshmen and sophomores and an advanced course for students having no less than two years remaining at the University. Both courses were elective and both carried college credit; however, a student who enrolled for either course had to complete that two-year course in order to receive credit for any part of the course and as a prerequisite to graduation from the University of Richmond.¹² This restriction was not rigidly adhered to; consequently, a student who presented to the Professor of Air Science and to the administration just cause for disenrollment could receive credit for the part completed and still graduate.¹³

Enrollment in either program was, of course, prerequisite~~d~~ with acceptance by and enrollment in the University of Richmond.¹⁴ To enroll in the Basic Course for the school years 1951-1952 and 1952-1953, students had to be between the ages of fourteen and twenty-seven years.¹⁵ However, enrollment in the basic program was restricted to students between the ages of fourteen and twenty-three for the following school year, 1953-1954, and until the disestablishment of the Air Force unit.¹⁶ The students had

¹²Catalogue (1952), 80.

¹³Interview with Dean of Students Clarence J. Gray, Richmond College, August 7, 1967.

¹⁴Catalogue (1951), 80.

¹⁵Catalogue (1952), 81.

¹⁶Catalogue (1953), 81.

to conform to the physical requirements set down by the Department of Defense, be a citizen of the United States, and express a desire to be commissioned in the Air Force Reserve.¹⁷ After successful completion of the Basic Course, students were eligible for the Advanced Air Science Course, provided they had two years of college remaining and had been recommended by both the President of the University and the Professor of Air Science. Enrollment in the Advanced Course was limited further "to those students who have manifested special interest and ability during the Basic Course, and who desire to pursue the course to completion with the view of qualifying for a Commission in the Air Force Reserve."¹⁸

Upon enrollment into the Advanced Course at the beginning of his junior year, the student received from the government an allowance of approximately twenty-seven dollars per month.¹⁹ Along with his salary, however, the student also gained greater responsibility in the cadet organization, an additional hour per week in the classroom, and a five-week tour of any one of several Air Force bases which normally fell in the summer between the junior and senior years. The student received approximately \$105, plus expenses incurred traveling to and from camp.²⁰ Finally, the student was obligated "to serve, if called on active duty, for two years following receipt of his commission and also to remain in Reserve status for a total of eight years."²¹ Advanced Course enrollees were guaranteed draft deferment, while only the possibility

¹⁷Catalogue (1952), 81.

¹⁸Ibid., 82.

¹⁹Ibid., 80.

²⁰Ibid., 80.

²¹Ibid., 80.

of deferment existed for Basic Course students.²²

According to figures released by the Air Science Department to the Registrar of the University of Richmond, there were a total of ninety-seven students enrolled in all of the Air Science courses for the first semester of 1952-1952. Of these ninety-seven only four were enrolled in the Advanced Course, with the remaining ninety-three enrolled in Air Science 101 of the Basic Course. By the end of the second semester of that school session there were only seventy-seven students, all of whom were enrolled in Air Science 102.²³ Enrollments for the following three years were distributed as follows:

	<u>First Semester</u>	<u>Second Semester</u>
1952-1953	158	133 ²⁴
1953-1954	153	130 ²⁵
1954-1955	140	116 ²⁶

Displeased with the low enrollment figures and even more so at the gradual decline in enrollment, the Department of the Air Force decided to disestablish the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps at the University of Richmond, and an announcement to that effect was made to the cadets in early November, 1955. Students in the Basic Course had the option of transferring to Army ROTC or dropping out of the ROTC program altogether.²⁷

²²Ibid., 80.

²³Study of Professoral Load, 1929-1957 (University of Richmond: Office of the Registrar, 1951-1952).

²⁴Ibid., 1952-1953.

²⁵Ibid., 1953-1954.

²⁶Ibid., 1954-1955.

²⁷Collegian, (November 11, 1955) (Whole Paragraph)

When the announcement to discontinue was made there were 148 Air Force cadets in the program. The class distribution was as follows: In the Basic Course there were sixty-seven in A. S. 101 and forty-three in A. S. 201, while in the Advance Course there were twenty in A. S. 301 and eighteen in A. S. 305. Second semester, after the announcement to discontinue the program was made, there were sixteen students in A. S. 302 and sixteen in A. S. 306, for a total of thirty-two.²⁸

It would be difficult to determine the exact number of Air Force cadets who transferred into the Army ROTC program, because neither that figure nor the number of Army ROTC cadets who "washed out" after first semester could be located. However, the enrollment in the Army ROTC Basic Course jumped from 134 to 180 between first and second semester, indicating that at least forty-six out of 110 of the cadets in the Basic Course of Air Force ROTC transferred.²⁹

In the school year 1956-1957, the Air Force ROTC unit's last at the University of Richmond, there were fourteen students in the course A. S. 305 first semester and thirteen in second semester's A. S. 306.³⁰

²⁸Study of Professoral Load, op. cit., (1955-1956).

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Study of Professoral Load, op. cit., (1956-1957).

CHAPTER III

COURSE CONTENT

As indicated in the preceeding chapter, the Air Force Reserve Officer Training program was divided into a Basic Course and an Advanced Course.

Basic Air Science was composed of Air Science 101-102 (A. S. I) and Air Science 201-202 (A. S. II). Classes met twice weekly and one hour per week was set aside for drill. Two semester hours of college credit was given for each semester course completed.

For the school years 1951-1952 and 1952-1953, Air Science 101-102 consisted of "leadership, drill, and exercise of command; [and] world political geography."³¹ The course expanded somewhat in 1953 to include an "introduction to AFROTC; introduction to aviation; fundamentals of global geography; international tensions and security organizations; instruments of national military security; [and] basic military training."³²

In the Air Science 201-202 course students were originally instructed in "organization for the defense of the U. S.; maps, aerial photographs, and aerial navigation; meterology; aerodynamics and propulsion; applied air power; personal maintenance; leadership, drill, and exercise of command."³³ As in the case of A. S. 101-102, 1953 also brought change to the A. S. 201-202 course. The seemingly less imposing topics of instruction

³¹Catalogue (1952), 82.

³²Catalogue (1953), 83.

³³Catalogue (1952), 82.

consisted of an "introduction; elements of aerial warfare; targets; weapons; aircraft; the air ocean; bases; forces; careers in the USAF; [and] leadership laboratory."³⁴

Students taking the Advanced Course received six hours each for both A. S. III and A. S. IV. During the school years 1951-1952 and 1952-1953, the Advanced Course offered two options. Students enrolled in either the Administration and Logistics program (courses 301-302 and 305-306) or the Flight Operations program (courses 303-304 and 307-308).³⁵ The Administration and Logistics course 301-302 consisted of "air operations; administrative techniques; Air Force supply; transportation; leadership, drill, and exercise of command."³⁶ The A. S. IV course in Administration and Logistics (305-306) included "military teaching methods; Air Force inspection system; career development; Air Force management; logistics; military law; staff organization; functions of air comptroller and food service supervisor; leadership, drill and exercise of command."³⁷ The other alternative, the Flight Operations program, included the study of "air operations; military publications; Air Force supply; major commands; meteorology; leadership, drill, and exercise of command"³⁸ in Air Science 303-304 for the junior year. Seniors in the A. S. IV Flight Operations program (A. S. 307-308) studied "military teaching methods; Air Force inspection system; logistics; military law; advanced instruction in navigation and bombing; duties and responsibilities of a counter-measures officer and radar observer."³⁹

³⁴Catalogue (1953), 83.

³⁵Catalogue (1952), 82.

³⁶Ibid. ³⁷Ibid., 83.

³⁸Ibid. ³⁹Ibid.

For the academic year 1953-1954 the Air Science Department adopted a more generalized curriculum for the entire Air Force ROTC program.⁴⁰ One of the most noticeable of the changes that occurred in the program was in the Advanced Course in which the Administration and Logistics-Flight Operations option was done away with. Emphasis was placed on administration and logistics reserving the study of flight operations for flight school (for those who were qualified).

Under the new program, the Air Science III course (301-302) consisted of a study of "[the] Air Force Commander and staff; problem solving techniques; communication process and Air Force correspondence; military law; courts and boards; applied air science; air craft engineering; navigation; weather; Air Force base function; [and] leadership laboratory."⁴¹ Air Science 305-306 (A. S. IV) remained unchanged from the previous year's study of administration and logistics.⁴²

In 1954 the 305-306 course was modified to include a "[summer] camp critique; seminar; career guidance; military aspects of world political geography; military aviation and the art of war; and briefing for commissioned service."⁴³ However, in 1955 the Department returned to the 305-306 course used in the year 1953.⁴⁴

It is significant that, although the catalogues explicitly stated the course constituency, the courses were subject to revision by the Professor of Air Science and Tactics during the year

⁴⁰Annual Report of the President (University of Richmond, 1954)

11.

⁴¹Catalogue (1953), 83. ⁴²Ibid., 84.

⁴³Catalogue (1954), 84. ⁴⁴Catalogue (1955), 84.

⁴⁵Interview with George F. Tidey, graduate of AFROTC at the University of Richmond, August 9, 1967.

CHAPTER IV

FACULTY

Late in the spring of 1951, after having officially established, on paper, an Air Force ROTC unit for the University of Richmond, the Department of the Air Force set about the task of selecting a staff. Lieutenant Colonel Raymond G. Teborek was appointed Professor of Air Science and Tactics and Detachment Commander.⁴⁶ Colonel Teborek was joined in September, 1951 by Major James G. Davidson (a veteran pilot of the European, Pacific and Asiatic Theaters) as second in command.⁴⁷ First lieutenant Thomas J. Morgan, Assistant Professor of Air Science, and Master sergeant Samuel Weiss, Instructor in Air Science, completed the AFROTC staff for the first year.⁴⁸

In July, 1952 Lieutenant Colonel Thomas J. Clark succeeded Colonel Teborek, who left the University of Richmond to assume duties at Walters Air Force Base in Texas "after having formed one of the finest Air Force ROTC units in the eastern United States."⁴⁹ In the same summer, Major Robert C. Robinson was added to the staff as Associate Professor of Air Science and Tactics and was joined by Captain Richard W. Booze. Sergeant Weiss was transferred elsewhere.⁵⁰

After having been promoted to the rank of Captain, Morgan was reassigned in the summer of 1954. Major Davidson, who had

⁴⁶Collegian (May 23, 1952), 6. ⁴⁷Collegian (September 28, 1951)

⁴⁸The Web, University of Richmond yearbook (1952).

⁴⁹Collegian, (May 23, 1952), 6.

⁵⁰Catalogue (1953), 8-11.

served on the staff since its establishment, also assumed duty elsewhere that summer.⁵¹ Major James T. Stroud was assigned to the University of Richmond's Air Force Detachment the following semester to fill the vacancy left by Major Davidson.⁵²

Late in the school year 1954-1955, Captain Charles W. Norton was assigned to the University to compensate for the loss of Captain Booze, Assistant Professor of Air Science, who was leaving in August, 1955, after three years on the University's AFROTC staff.⁵³ Captain Norton was joined by Captain Joseph A. Rhea.⁵⁴

There were no further changes in the staff for the sessions 1955-1956 and 1956-1957 until second semester of 1956-1957 when Lieutenant Colonel Clark, Major Robinson and Captain Norton were reassigned during the phase out of AFROTC. In August, 1957, with the disestablishment of the program completed, Major Stroud and Captain Rhea left the University for reassignment.⁵⁵

The year following the disestablishment of Air Force ROTC at the University of Richmond, Lieutenant Colonel Clark was killed in an airplane crash in the Philippines.⁵⁶

⁵¹Annual Report of the President (University of Richmond, 1954), 11.

⁵²Collegian. (December 17, 1954), 4.

⁵³Annual Report of the President, op. cit., (1955), 13.

⁵⁴Catalogue (1956), 12.

⁵⁵Annual Report of the President, op. cit., (1957), 12.
(Whole Paragraph)

⁵⁶Interview with George F. Tidey.

CHAPTER V

GENERAL HISTORY

A military training program was established at the University of Richmond in 1951 for the first time since the V-12 program (a Naval officer procurement program) was disorganized in 1945.⁵⁷

As mentioned in chapter I, enrollment was declining yearly as fewer and fewer World War II veterans applied for admission. It was hoped that, with the establishment of a military program, the problem would be solved.

Dean Raymond B. Pinchbeck of Richmond College, men's undergraduate unit of the University, said he was convinced the location of the two ROTC units on the campus had served to 'offset materially the drop in enrollment.'⁵⁸

Enrollment, however, did continue to decline at the University, but it was checked to some extent with the establishment of the ROTC units.⁵⁹

After the organization of the AFROTC Department was complete, it was necessary to organize the cadet corps. The four veterans who enrolled in A. S. III in 1951 were appointed by the Professor of Air Science and Tactics to serve as the cadet officers, and students who had attended military preparatory schools served as cadet sergeants in the corps.⁶⁰ The cadets were organized into a squadron composed of three flights (roughly equivalent to the Army's "company" and "platoon" respectively)⁶¹. According to the

⁵⁷Collegian (September 21, 1951), 1.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Interview with President George M. Modlin.

⁶⁰Interview with George F. Tidey.

⁶¹Collegian (May 23, 1952), 6.

Registrar's enrollment figures for the first year of AFROTC, each flight would have been composed of approximately thirty cadets. In 1952-1953, with increased enrollment in the program, it was necessary to enlarge the cadet organization to group size (the equivalent Army ROTC's battalion). The group was composed of two squadrons which in turn were composed of two flights.⁶² The AFROTC group commander held the rank of cadet/Lt. Colonel and was assisted by a staff consisting of an adjutant and a supply officer.⁶³ In 1955 an executive officer was added to the staff.⁶⁴ The squadrons were usually commanded by cadet/captains and the flights by cadet/lieutenants.

Except for the nomenclature of the cadet units, the color of the uniforms (blue), and the fact that the cadets did not drill with weapons, the Air Force cadet corps appeared very similar to the Army cadet corps.⁶⁵

As the focal point of the cadet's week was the drill, the focal point of the year was the awards presentation drill which was usually held the day of the Federal Inspection which normally fell late in the second semester. Awards were presented to cadets for such diverse achievements as being the most outstanding cadet in the Basic and Advanced Courses, possessing the most leadership potential, being the most outstanding student in World Political Geography, and for being the most outstanding athlete and marksman.⁶⁶

⁶²Collegian (April 10, 1953), 3. ⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Collegian (October 7, 1955), 1.

⁶⁵Interview with Major Raymond S. Hawthorn, USA, a cadet in the AFROTC program at the University of Richmond, 1954-1956.

⁶⁶Collegian (May 23, 1952), 1.

The highest award, designation as a Distinguished Military Student was reserved for seniors.⁶⁷ In order to qualify for the award, A. S. IV cadets had to be in the upper third of both their Air Science class and their class in the University of Richmond, "display high moral standards and an aptitude for leadership in the Air Force either at summer camp or in their college life, and have the recommendation of a faculty member."⁶⁸ If the Distinguished Military Student maintained his standing until graduation, he became a Distinguished Military Graduate and was offered a commission in the Regular Air Force.⁶⁹

At the annual Federal Inspections, the entire Air Force ROTC cadets included, received words of praise and recognition for jobs well done.⁷⁰

Intramural athletics appeared to have been the only area of competition and rivalry between the Air Force and Army ROTC.⁷¹ Under the expert direction of Captain Morgan, the Air Force Volley Ball Team went undefeated in its first year and again won the championship for the second straight year in 1953.⁷² The cadets

⁶⁷Catalogue (1951), 83. ⁶⁸Collegian (December 4, 1953), 1.

⁶⁹Catalogue (1952), 82.

⁷⁰Collegian (April 25, 1952), 1; Annual Report of the President, op. cit., (1953), 11-12; Annual Report of the President, op. cit., (1954), 11; Annual Report of the President, op. cit., (1955), 11-12.

⁷¹Interview with George F. Tidey.

⁷²Collegian (January 18, 1952), 5.

also participated on the newly organized Varsity Rifle Team which was coached by Army Sergeant Weaver.⁷³

Cadet involvement was not limited to athletics. On May 16, 1953, a chapter of the national honorary military science society, Scabbard and Blade, was established at the University of Richmond from a colony of the society called the Southern Colonels.⁷⁴ Organized by eleven Air Force and Army cadets, the Southern Colonels was chartered for the purpose of promoting "Scholarship, Leadership, and 'Good Military Bearing' among college cadets."⁷⁵ Scabbard and Blade was to become well known on the campus of the University of Richmond for its sponsorship of the annual Military Ball, the first of which was held in 1953 before the society was established.⁷⁶

Late in the second semester of 1954-1955 another cadet organization called the Cadet Association was formed to "... . promote closer unity and more 'esprit de corps' in the Air Force ROTC unit" ⁷⁷ The Cadet Association, which originally consisted of 130 students, was formed voluntarily and was completely administered by the cadets.⁷⁸

⁷³Collegian (February 3, 1956), 3.

⁷⁴Collegian (May 15, 1953), 1.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Collegian (January 9, 1953), 1.

⁷⁷Collegian (February 11, 1955), 1.

⁷⁸Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

DISESTABLISHMENT

After having attained its peak enrollment in 1952-1953, the second year of its establishment, enlistments in the Air Force Reserve Officer Training program declined in both 1953-1954 and 1954-1955, and increased only slightly in 1955-1956.⁷⁹ As the unit was operating, at best, only near the minimum enrollment requirements, the Department of the Air Force, in the summer of 1955 informed the University that it would be necessary to withdraw the detachment by August 1, 1957.⁸⁰

In early November of 1955, AFROTC cadets were notified during drill of the plans for disestablishment.⁸¹ The cadets were considerably more surprised at the announcement than was the University Administration when it was notified the previous summer.⁸² Lt. Colonel Clark, addressing the cadet formation, stated that the seniors and juniors then enrolled in the Advance Course would be allowed to continue in the program to its completion and to earn their commission, and that the freshmen and sophomores would be given the opportunity of either transferring into the Army ROTC

⁷⁹Cf. ante., 6.

⁸⁰Annual Report of the President, op. cit., (1956), 10-11.

⁸¹Collegian (November 11, 1955), 1.

⁸²Annual Report of the President, op. cit., (1956), 11;

Interview with George F. Tidey.

program or of dropping out of the Reserve Officer Training program altogether.⁸³ According to President Modlin, "a large majority of them shifted to the Army unit."⁸⁴

The Air Force soon had a change of heart and on February 1, 1956, it informed the Administration that Air Force ROTC would be allowed to continue on the Richmond campus after all.⁸⁵ However, since the University Administration had already made plans to disestablish the unit, the offer was declined.⁸⁶

In July, 1957, the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps unit at the University was officially disestablished.⁸⁷ The building occupied by the detachment, once a student dormitory, now serves as offices and classrooms for other departments of the University and is still known today as the Air Science Building.

⁸³Collegian (November 11, 1955), 1.

⁸⁴Annual Report of the President, op. cit., (1956), 11.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Catalogue (1956), 95.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The reasons for the disestablishment of Air Force ROTC at the University of Richmond were many. Of primary importance was the declining interest shown by the students in the program.

With the end of the Korean War in the summer of 1953, pressure from local draft boards was relaxed and most students no longer needed or sought the refuge of an ROTC deferment. Another important reason was that by previous agreement with the Administration, the Air Force ROTC Department could accept only forty per cent of the students desiring to take military training leaving the remaining sixty per cent for the Army program.⁸⁸ Finally, entrance requirements for the Advance Course were considerably more rigid in Air Force ROTC than in Army ROTC. In the summer of 1953, Congress enacted a ruling which stated essentially that candidates for the Air Science Advance Course had to agree to take flight training after receipt of their commission.⁸⁹ Few students (in comparison to Army ROTC cadets entering the Advance Course) could pass the flight physical and of those who failed, only the students with exceptionally high grades could enter.⁹⁰

Air Force ROTC never quite "got off the ground" at the University, either literally or figuratively. It was the hope of the Air Science Department that the detachment have its own T-6 (trainer) to be maintained at Byrd Airport for week end instructions.⁹¹ However, this ambition never became a reality primarily because of

⁸⁸Collegian (September 25, 1953), 1.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Interview with George Tidey.

⁹¹Collegian (March 27, 1953), 2.

a shortage of trainers in the Air Force and the small size of the Richmond detachment.⁹² Had the unit received a trainer, it is most probable that student interest, and therefore student enrollment in the program would have been considerably higher.

Air Force ROTC, as of July 1957, is no longer at the University of Richmond; however, it is the fond hope of this author that it return. Not only would students be offered a choice in military programs, but the spirit of competition between the existing Army ROTC unit and the Air Force unit would make for a better military training program in general.

⁹²Interview with George Tidey.

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