

## Det 650 History

The Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) first arrived at Ohio University in 1935. At that time, the program was for commissioning Army officers. Then following World War II, Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower signed General Order No. 124 establishing Air ROTC units at 78 colleges and universities throughout the nation. Ohio University was one of the institutions to receive one of the new Air ROTC detachments that would eventually evolve into the AFROTC Det 650 we know today.

At that time the Air Force was still known as the Army Air Corps. It wasn't until September 1946 that the first Air Force officer candidates began classes in the basement of what is now known as Scripps Hall. These candidates wore the standard Army uniform, Army "pinks", and used a 25 cent textbook called "The History of the Army Air Corps". Then in September 1947, with the signing of the National Security Act, the Air Force was separated from the Army. Therefore, on 1 July 1949 Army and Air Force ROTC were designated as separate departments at Ohio University. It was then, during the 1949-50 school year that AFROTC cadets received Air Force uniforms to replace their pinks. At that time AFROTC cadets received a monthly Subsistence Allowance of \$27; OU tuition and fees totaled about \$45 per semester.

In 1956 an experimental Women's Air Force (WAF) ROTC program was inaugurated, but cancelled shortly thereafter in 1960. It was not until 1969 that the Women's program was permanently reinstated. This produced Ohio University's first commissioned female cadet, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Harriet Hunter in 1974.

In 1964 the ROTC Vitalization Act created a two-year program, which gave transfer students and those whom were not previously enrolled a chance to join AFROTC.

The size of Det 650 has varied over the years to meet the needs of the Air Force, with enrollment varying from more than 500 cadets in the 50's to less than 50 cadets in other years. With the strong support of OU President Charles Ping, Det 650 survived an effort by the Air Force to close the unit due to budget cuts in the ROTC program. Then in 1985, Det 650 won the AFROTC "Excellent Performance" award for raising enrollment from 99 to 156 cadets with a graduating class size of more than 35 cadets.

Currently Det 650 offers a variety of programs for cadets to participate in, such as the Honor Guard, peer mentoring, study tables, helping at football games, and community service activities. This not only keeps cadets active throughout the community, but also helps to broaden the range on which they may develop their leadership skills. Many types of scholarships are available to high school and college students which may include incentives of tuition payments, book money, and a monthly stipend. Other incentive payments are awarded to cadets for physical fitness, GPA, and even attendance. With 58 cadets currently enrolled and an average graduating class of 13, Det 650 is going strong and is always welcoming new recruits.