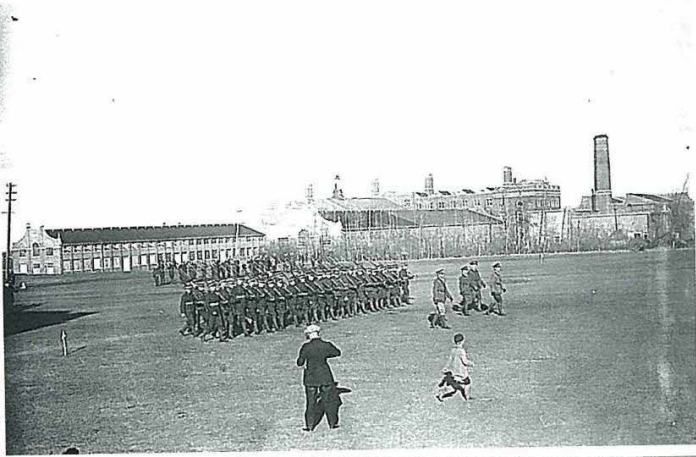


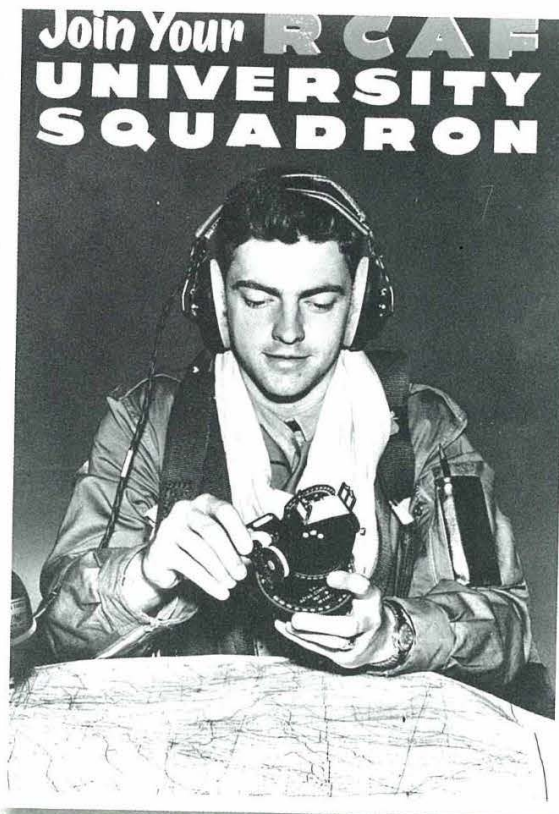
# “LEADERSHIP, CITIZENSHIP, AND NATION BUILDING FOR OUR TIMES”



A UNIVERSITY-BASED, OFFICER  
TRAINING PILOT PROGRAM AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA



COTC parade, February 1931, UAA 72-58-1304



UAA 74-37



UNIVERSITY OF  
**ALBERTA**

Photos: Courtesy of the University of Alberta Archives and Valeria Ferguson  
Cover vignette: UofA COTC Cap Badge III, April 1941, UAA 72-58-466

By building upon its established reputation for leadership, the University of Alberta celebrates its past, and in so doing realizes the lessons of that past and applies those lessons to its advantage in the present. But, it also has an eye on the future, particularly in taking advantage of new program opportunities, and resulting new opportunities for present and prospective students.

This proposal for an **Officers Training Program** builds upon a proud legacy. It draws inspiration from the leadership tenets of the University's *Dare to Discover: A Vision for a Great University*, and is consistent with that vision. It is a proposal for a program to help develop the initiative, self-discipline, and leadership potential of cohorts of students. It will develop their sense of citizenship and responsibility to others; it will bridge the gap between Canada's military and civilian cultures; and it should ultimately broaden the experience and outlook of our public, professional, and parliamentary leaders.

Those goals are well illustrated in this document by the career of Flt Lt Valeria (Val) Ferguson (RCAF, Ret), one of the University of Alberta's own alumnae, and a distinguished graduate of the University Reserve Training Program. This document also complements a 50-minute video, *No Country for Young Men* (Breakout Educational Network/Stornoway Productions), the story of the Canadian Officer Training Corps, which features prominent Canadians who completed such training.

## CANADA'S MILITARY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Although the relocation and centralization of support for forty-seven regular force and reserve military units, of all types, at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Edmonton (Steele Barracks) occurred more than a decade ago, in 1996, it was only with the University of Alberta Library's acquisition of the Sir Samuel Benfield Steele Collection in 2008 that the University and Canada's military establishment were drawn together in a collaborative relationship that continues to blossom in both expected and unexpected ways. For example, an early product of this new link is the establishment by endowment of the *Canadian Forces Chair in Rehabilitation Sciences*, with its emphasis upon the specific medical needs of military and civilian personnel wounded, injured, and otherwise disabled in the line of duty.

As a result of this closer relationship between the military and the University, both Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Carl Amrhein and Vice-Provost Ernie Ingles have engaged in conversations with military commanders to explore projects of mutual interest. These discussions led to representation at the symposium *Leadership, Citizenship, and Nation Building for Our Times: Is There a Role for Officer Training in Universities?* held in the West Block of the Parliament buildings in Ottawa on 21 October 2009, with senior military officers, government officials, members of the Commons and the Senate, and university representatives.





COTC Rifle Range, March 1943, UAA 72-58-961

## THE “CANADIAN NATIONAL LEADERS PROGRAM”

The “Canadian National Leaders Program” is a citizen’s initiative of the Breakout Educational Network working with both the government and military to restore the connections between Canada’s military, civil, and academic communities. It aims to raise the public’s perception of the military as a valued and sustaining national institution through the education of future leaders to develop achievable and linked foreign, defense, and security policies.

Adoption of the “Canadian National Leaders Program” by Canada’s institutions of higher learning – an updated version of Canada’s three former service training programs\* – seeks to renew bonds between the military and the academy; train future leaders and

citizens who are informed about defense and security issues, as well as the role and value of the military; provide a pool of both serving and reserve officers; yield a strengthened military reflective of national values and perspectives; and revitalize the ethos of national service. As with the earlier programs, participating students would experience a full spectrum of military training activities, delivered locally and nationally by local reserve as well as active-service units; benefit from paid summer employment and other financial support; and enjoy camaraderie while developing their potential for leadership. In addition, without disturbing traditional curricula of choice, one can imagine enhancing their programs with additional elective courses taken in many different faculties, including the wide spectrum of courses and degree programs offered in French at the University’s Campus Saint-Jean. The University envisions applying interdisciplinary coordination to ensure the most enriched curriculum possible for participating students.

## HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS & TRADITIONS

With the withdrawal of British military garrisons from Canada, the Royal Military College was established at Kingston, Ontario, in 1876 to provide a cadre of professional officers with a higher level of training than that afforded by militia units and university rifle corps.<sup>1</sup> However, the supply of RMC graduates was insufficient to satisfy the needs of the military establishment immediately prior to the outbreak of WWI. Therefore, the Government of Canada turned to its universities, some of which established contingents of the Canadian Officers Training Corps (COTC) in 1912 as



war in Europe loomed on the horizon. For more than half-a-century, through both war and peace, the COTC and its later variants and naval and air force adjuncts, distributed across 27 university contingents, provided Canada's armed forces with a stream of commissioned officers. As home to one of the earliest and largest COTC contingents, the University of Alberta played a long and illustrious role (see Appendix).

By the 1960s, however, in the midst of a booming economy and plentiful job market, the number of trainee officers who opted to serve in the forces upon graduation dwindled, since by then the decision whether to do so had become entirely optional. Therefore, in 1967 the Department of Defense announced that it would terminate the program the following year because it no longer justified its operating costs. In its place, a Reserve Officer University Training Program (ROUTP) was established in 1969 (later renamed the Reserve Entry Scheme for Officers, RESO), which continues to enroll university students, but which has no visible presence on Canada's university campuses. The 1995 closures of British Columbia's Royal Roads Military College and Quebec's Collège militaire royal further consolidated military training at the RMC in Kingston, and thus increasingly isolated the education of military officers from the education of other professionals.

In addition to widening the gap between Canada's civilian and military establishments, the abolition of university-based programs in military leadership deprived the universities of valuable teaching tools that throughout the critical decades of the 20th century helped them to produce leaders in the realms of business, education, medicine, law, politics, and the military, and thus advance the causes of leadership, citizenship, and service to the nation.

The proposed Canadian National Leaders Program seeks to renew those earlier, university-based programs for the benefit of students, universities, and the country. It will combine the leadership training capacity of the Canadian Forces with the highly developed academic leadership capacity of the University of Alberta, in both Canada's official languages. It is less about creating recruits for either the regular forces or the reserves, since it would entail no commitment to join the Canadian Forces upon graduation, than about preparing young people to become leaders in a wide range of professions and callings. A university-based officer training program develops skills in leadership, teamwork, communication, physical fitness, personal presentation, decision making, problem solving, organization, management skills, and a greater appreciation of Canadian history and civics. It also promotes the development of the personal attributes of flexibility, reliability, initiative, loyalty, responsibility, and resilience.



COTC Band in the quadrangle, October 1929, UAA 80-7-69





Stand de tir du COTC, mars 1943, UAA 72-58-961

## LE PROGRAMME : CANADIAN NATIONAL LEADERS PROGRAM

Le *Canadian National Leaders Program* (programme de formation au leadership) est une initiative citoyenne de l'organisation caritative Breakout Educational Network, qui travaille de concert avec le gouvernement et l'armée afin de rétablir les rapports entre les communautés militaire et civile et le milieu universitaire du Canada.

L'adoption du programme *Canadian National Leaders Program* par les établissements postsecondaires du Canada – une version mise à jour des trois anciens programmes de formation au service\* canadiens – vise à renouer les liens entre l'armée et l'académie; former des futurs dirigeants et des citoyens informés des questions de défense et de sécurité, ainsi que du rôle et du mérite de l'armée; constituer un réservoir d'officiers actifs

et d'officiers de réserve; produire une armée renforcée qui reflète les valeurs et les perspectives nationales et enfin, revitaliser la philosophie du service national. Comme cela avait été fait dans les programmes précédents, les étudiants inscrits au programme participeraient à un éventail complet d'activités de formation militaire, offertes sur place et ailleurs au pays par des unités de réserve et des unités actives. Ils bénéficieraient d'un emploi d'été rémunéré et d'autres appuis financiers. Ils développeraient leur potentiel de leadership dans une ambiance de camaraderie. De plus, sans troubler les programmes d'études choisis, on peut imaginer l'amélioration des programmes à l'aide de cours facultatifs supplémentaires que les étudiants suivraient dans diverses facultés, y compris le large éventail de cours et de programmes menant à un grade, offerts en français au Campus Saint-Jean de l'université. On envisage, à la University of Alberta, la coordination interdisciplinaire afin d'offrir le programme d'études le plus enrichi qui soit aux étudiants participants.

