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Anthony Wong graduated in December 2014 with a degree in political science and a minor in history. During his time at Cal Poly, Anthony's research primarily focused on U.S. Foreign Policy, American Constitutional Law, and East and Southeast Asian affairs. Aside from academics, Anthony was the president of the Cal Poly Political Science Club and is currently a member of Pi Sigma Alpha, Phi Alpha Theta, and the Golden Key International Honour Society. Anthony is currently applying to several graduate programs to further improve his academic background and career opportunities.

## Abstract

*Cold War memory is punctuated with many memorable events such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War, and President Nixon's decision to escalate the Vietnam War by authorizing military incursions into Cambodia and Laos. Due to the negativity of these events, the Cold War has traditionally been associated with the expansion of the American military industrial complex. This has led to the obfuscation of numerous other historical events that occurred during the Cold War. Therefore, this paper attempts to illuminate a tiny segment of forgotten Cold War history by examining the California Polytechnic State University's Reserve Officers' Training Corp (ROTC) from 1953 to 1957. Based on the available evidence from the El Mustang, this paper discovered that the Cal Poly ROTC actively protected Cal Poly students from mandatory military service and served as the university's representative to the collegiate, student, and local communities.*



# COLD WAR CULTURE: THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE CAL POLY ROTC FROM 1953-57

By Anthony Wong

## Introduction

Throughout World War II, the Allied and Axis powers devoted vast amounts of resources to develop technologies that could potentially give each side a tactical advantage over the opposition. During the war, each faction made significant advances in the fields of applied science, industrial science, and military science.<sup>1</sup> Among these many scientific innovations, the atomic bomb was the pinnacle achievement of World War II. Due to this discovery, the war in the Pacific Theater quickly drew to a close with the destruction of Hi-

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1 Frank B. Jewett, "Industrial and Scientific Research for National Defense," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 19, no. 2 (January 1, 1941), 41, doi:10.2307/1172587, Joseph F. McCloskey, "U.S. Operations Research in World War II," *Operations Research* 35, no. 6 (November 1, 1987), 910–925; D. S. Davies and Judith R. Stammers, "The Effect of World War II on Industrial Science," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London. Series A, Mathematical and Physical Sciences* 342, no. 1631 (April 15, 1975), 511–518.

roshima and Nagasaki on August 6, 1945, and August 9, 1945, respectively.<sup>2</sup>

In the aftermath of the nuclear attacks, the United States government recognized the value of scientific research and technological superiority in national defense. To capitalize upon its initial successes, the United States established numerous independent research organizations and funded various research and development projects at American universities.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the American public was forced to abdicate its traditional state of isolationism to assume the responsibilities of reconstructing the postwar domestic and international political and economic order under the newly established United Nations. To address these postwar challenges, the Truman Administration considered implementing two policies: “universal military training (UMT), to provide a large and stable pool of trained manpower available for recruitment into the organized reserves and for quick mobilization in any future crisis; and extended selective services, to meet the immediate needs for large numbers of men in the active forces following the release of wartime veterans.”<sup>4</sup> However, instead of attracting widespread support, these policies sparked a debate on the issues of peacetime conscription and increasing military involvement at American universities—the military industrial academic complex.<sup>5</sup>

The scientific innovations made by the military-industrial academic complex constitute an important historical issue. Despite the importance of this topic, this paper offers a different glimpse of Cold War history by focusing on the Cal Poly Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) to illuminate its non-military functions and contributions to the San Luis Obispo and Cal Poly communities from its inception in 1953 to 1957, when the Military Science and Tactics Department changed the course materials that were being taught to its cadets. By examining the non-military aspects, this paper argues that the Cal Poly ROTC defied its traditional role as a military recruitment center since it provided students with a safe haven from the draft and served as the university’s representative to the collegiate, student, and local communities.

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2 “First Atomic Bomb Dropped on Japan; Missile Is Equal To 20,000 Tons of TNT; Truman Warns Foe Of A ‘Rain of Ruin,’” *The New York Times*, August 7, 1945; “Soviet Declares War on Japan; Attack Manchuria, Tokyo Says; Atom Bomb Loosed on Nagasaki,” *The New York Times*, August 9, 1945.

3 Dan Kevles, “Cold War and Hot Physics: Science, Security, and the American State, 1945-56,” *Historical Studies in the Physical and Biological Sciences* 20, no. 2 (January 1, 1990), 239–46, doi:10.2307/27757644.

4 James M. Gerhardt, *The Draft and Public Policy: Issues in Military Procurement 1945-1970* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971), 3.

5 John M. Swomley Jr., *The Military Establishment* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 29.

## Historiography

Before the founding of the United States, the British forced the colonists to quarter their soldiers during the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War.<sup>6</sup> In response to these experiences, the American public became averse and suspicious of any permanent military, illustrated in the Third Amendment, which states, “No soldiers shall, in times of peace be quartered in any house without the consent of the Owner, but in a manner prescribed by law.”<sup>7</sup> Further, during the War of 1812, the British navy exacerbated this aversion, as it impressed many American citizens into military service.<sup>8</sup> As a result of these actions, the American public has also strongly opposed forced conscription since it deprived an individual of his or her rights to self-determination. Due to these historical precedents, many Americans have displayed vehement opposition to the expansion of military control over civilian industries and universities to meet the demands of the Cold War.

As one of the most complex issues in human history, the Cold War has been the subject of rigorous academic research. Among the different areas of research, scholars have usually focused on the scientific projects and achievements that occurred during the Cold War. In her book, *Creating the Cold War University: The Transformation of Stanford*, Rebecca Lowen focuses on Stanford University’s joint venture with the military. Throughout the majority of her book, Lowen provides an extensive historical overview of the development of Stanford University from the 1930s to the 1960s. But unlike other scholars, Lowen’s research also focused on the undergraduate and political science department’s experiences and perceptions of the university’s involvement with the military. According to Lowen, many of the undergraduates were upset with the military industrial academic complex at Stanford because it stifled, rather than stimulated, intellectual thought and discussion.<sup>9</sup> Coupled with the students’ displeasure, the political science department was coerced by the university to abandon its association with the humanities and adopt modern quantitative and scientific approaches.<sup>10</sup> Through

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6 William S. Fields and David T. Hardy, “The Third Amendment and the Issue of the Maintenance of Standing Armies: A Legal History,” *The American Journal of Legal History* 35, no. 4 (October 1, 1991), 395, doi:10.2307/845653.

7 United States Constitution, Bill of Rights, Amendment III.

8 Paul A. Gilje, “Free Trade and Sailors’ Rights’: The Rhetoric of the War of 1812,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 30, no. 1 (2010), 9, doi:10.1353/jer.0.0130.

9 Rebecca S. Lowen, *Creating the Cold War University: The Transformation of Stanford* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1997), 227.

10 *Ibid.*, 212-213.

her research, Lowen asserts that the military-industrial academic complex only negatively affected the university's abilities to create a conducive learning and social environment.

Besides this area of research, researchers have also focused on the development of the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) at American universities. In the literature focusing on ROTC, the majority of studies focused on individual ROTC units and on the entire ROTC system's role in the universities. In his article, "University Neutrality and ROTC," Robert Holmes attempts to answer two questions: Should universities be neutral, and what constitutes neutrality? In his analysis, Holmes argues that universities are ideally neutral institutions of learning, but under certain circumstances, universities must sacrifice independence and ideals to protect national interests. Applying this concept to the ROTC program, Holmes asserts that this organization actually compromises the universities, as it exposes them to external influences that could thrust the students and faculty into the center of political controversies.<sup>11</sup> Due to these findings, Holmes concludes that the ROTC only benefits the military since its primary function is to prepare college students to become officers in the armed forces.<sup>12</sup>

Michael Neiberg disagrees with Holmes' analysis of the ROTC. In his book, *Making Citizen-Soldiers: ROTC and the Ideology of American Military Service*, Neiberg argues that the ROTC did not solely strive to recruit college students into the military. Rather, many university officials approved of the ROTC because it allowed students to concurrently complete their military obligations and university education.<sup>13</sup> Expanding on this point, Neiberg further argues that most universities actually favored ROTC because it ensured ample civilian participation in military training programs, which will check the expansion of a professional military.<sup>14</sup> From these findings, Neiberg concludes that universities might have allowed the ROTC onto their campuses in order to preserve the founding principles of the United States.

Supporting Neiberg's argument, Charles Johnson, in his *African Americans and ROTC: Military, Naval, and Aerospace Programs at Historically Black Colleges, 1916-1973*, asserts that the ROTC also had other functions besides

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11 Robert L. Holmes, "University Neutrality and ROTC," *Ethics* 83, no. 3 (April 1, 1973), 190.

12 *Ibid.*, 189.

13 Michael Neiberg, *Making Citizen-Soldiers: ROTC and the Ideology of American Military Service* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 36.

14 Neiberg, *Making Citizen-Soldiers: ROTC and the Ideology of American Military Service*, 37-38.

providing officers for the military. According to Johnson, ROTC programs at Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) enabled African Americans to develop and mature into productive individuals. Further, Johnson also asserts that the ROTC provided African Americans with numerous opportunities to participate in a variety of formal events and organizations in segregated America.<sup>15</sup> Due to these opportunities, Johnson concludes that the ROTC helped African Americans foster stronger social relationships within their own communities and subsequently with other communities.

With these historical studies in mind, the majority of these studies cover a broad range of topics. In this analysis of the existing literature, the majority of these studies neglected to examine the local histories of individual ROTC programs, which contributed to a negative portrayal of the military-industrial academic complex. To counter this negative view, this paper will further contribute to the discussion of ROTC in Cold War America by examining the history of the Cal Poly ROTC. Through this research, this paper will rebuke the arguments made by Lowen and Holmes and supplement the arguments made by Neiberg and Johnson in their respective studies.

### **The Role of the Cal Poly ROTC in Deferments**

Throughout American history, the majority of the public has traditionally viewed and treated the military with suspicion. However, with the onset of World War II, these negative perceptions temporarily dissipated as Americans united to face the threats of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. Following the end of the war, the public gradually embarked on the process of normalization, which threatened to limit the expansive powers of the military. As a result, the American community became deeply divided over the continuation of compulsory peacetime military service versus returning to a state of normalcy.<sup>16</sup>

With this setting in mind, the Cal Poly community played an important role in opposing the continuation of compulsory universal military training and selective services in the 1950s. In the student and university's publications, the Cal Poly administration actively reminded students to apply for

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15 Charles Johnson Jr., *African Americans and ROTC: Military, Naval, and Aerospace Programs at Historically Black Colleges, 1916-1973* (Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002), 204-212

16 Swomley Jr., *The Military Establishment*, 29.

a one-year deferment in order to avoid being drafted.<sup>17</sup> In addition to these constant reminders, the Cal Poly administration also periodically provided students with information and opportunities for selective service deferment tests and due dates for paperwork.<sup>18</sup> Following up on these announcements, Dean of Students Everett Chandler personally urged the students to be mindful of their current and upcoming paperwork to ensure they were still eligible for deferment.<sup>19</sup> For example, Dean Chandler advised students that they had to submit paperwork to change their “1-A” classification to “1-S” classification in order to remain eligible for deferment.<sup>20</sup> Through these publications, the Cal Poly administration was clearly taking an active role to protect its students from being drafted into active military service.

In order to bolster their efforts, Cal Poly administrators, in 1952, began to solicit the United States Army to establish an ROTC unit on campus.<sup>21</sup> By establishing an ROTC unit, Cal Poly administrators likely believed that this organization could prevent a decline in enrollment levels — which happened in the first and second world wars — by offering students an opportunity to complete their military obligations and college education.<sup>22</sup> Due to the administration’s persistence, the U.S. Army formally established a “general branch” ROTC unit, which differed from other ROTC units across the country, at Cal Poly.<sup>23</sup> As a “general branch” unit, the U.S. Army christened the Cal Poly ROTC as a pilot program to test the effectiveness of a “West Point”-styled training program.<sup>24</sup>

With an ROTC unit established on campus, individuals — such as Holmes — would argue that the Cal Poly administration’s efforts to obstruct the draft were over. But, rather than working against the university’s stance on deferments, the Cal Poly ROTC worked concurrently with the university to increase the amount of student deferments. For example, Cal Poly ROTC officers issued statements to the student body to clarify the procedures and

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17 “Are You Draft Bait?,” *El Mustang*, September 28, 1951.

18 “What, Again? More Draft Test for Students,” *El Mustang*, October 12, 1951; “Deferment Test Application Due Nov. 5,” *El Mustang*, October 19, 1951; “Selective Service Test Application Deadline March 10,” *El Mustang*, March 7, 1952.

19 “Save Your Neck by Draft Card Check,” *El Mustang*, November 2, 1951.

20 “Draft Eligible Men Make Certain of Your Deferment,” *El Mustang*, January 18, 1952.

21 Kennedy, *Learn By Doing: Memoirs of a University President: A Personal Journey with the Seventh President of California Polytechnic State University* 152.

22 Cal Poly: *The First Hundred Years*, 29; Neiberg, 36.

23 “Branch ROTC Unit Established Here,” *El Mustang*, June 27, 1952.

24 *Ibid.*



requirements for deferments.<sup>25</sup> Through this public outreach, the Cal Poly ROTC received considerable support from the administration and student body. For instance, many students saw this program as an excellent opportunity for first- and second-year students to automatically receive full deferment from the draft.<sup>26</sup> In addition to the students' support, Chandler personally supported the Cal Poly ROTC and urged all eligible students to join since it guarantee a four-year deferment from the draft.<sup>27</sup> Besides urging students to consider the deferment scheme, Chandler also urged students to join the Cal Poly ROTC because it sheltered them from the unpredictable administrative changes in draft policies. For example, the United States Selective Service considered drafting students with a "2-S" classification in late 1952. In response to this policy change, Dean Chandler urged students with a "2-S" classification to join the Cal Poly ROTC in order to avoid being drafted.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, the university's actions strongly indicate that the administration was not averse to the notion of having an ROTC program on campus.

Through these examples, the Cal Poly ROTC clearly did not solely focus on recruiting students into military service; rather they were highly supportive of continuing student deferments. Therefore, these examples refute Holmes' argument that the ROTC was designed to benefit the military because the Cal Poly ROTC was clearly influenced by the national debate on compulsory peacetime military training. Due to this influence, the Cal Poly ROTC actively helped students to avoid being drafted into active military service.

### **The Cal Poly ROTC and Its Social Relationships**

Despite its military affiliation, the Cal Poly ROTC made significant social contributions to the collegiate, student, and local communities. Since its inception in 1952, the Cal Poly ROTC provided various extracurricular activities and opportunities for its cadets to develop leadership skills. For example, Lieutenant Colonel James M. Cochran, the commanding officer of the Cal Poly ROTC, announced the formation of an ROTC drill team, drum and bugle corps, and the Scabbard and Blade military honor society in the October 3, 1952, issue of *El Mustang*.<sup>29</sup> In addition to these organizations, the Cal

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25 "ROTC Officials Answer Deferment Questions," *El Mustang*, January 30, 1953.

26 Willie Thomas, "I-round th' Corner," *El Mustang*, June 27, 1952.

27 "ROTC Program of Deferment Given," *El Mustang*, September 11, 1952.

28 "Dean's Opinion That Young Men Should Join ROTC," *El Mustang*, September 26, 1952.

29 Glen Johnson, "Cochran Outlines Poly ROTC Plans For Now, Future," *El Mustang*, October 3, 1952.

Poly ROTC also formed a mounted cavalry, a rifle team, and color guard.<sup>30</sup> Through these organizations, Cal Poly ROTC cadets represented Cal Poly in various collegiate events throughout the United States. For example, the Cal Poly ROTC mounted cavalry competed and placed third at the Fiesta de las Flora parade.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the Cal Poly ROTC rifle team also traveled to other universities, such as the University of Idaho, to compete with other ROTC cadets across the United States.<sup>32</sup> Besides these individual and group competitions, the Cal Poly ROTC junior and senior cadets also attended a summer ROTC training camp at Fort Lewis in Washington state.<sup>33</sup> At Fort Lewis, Cal Poly cadets consistently placed in the top five out of all the ROTC units attending the training camp.<sup>34</sup> Coupled with this achievement, the Cal Poly cadets also received many individual awards for their merits in military skills.<sup>35</sup> To recognize these achievements, President McPhee and Dr. Kennedy constantly lavished the Cal Poly ROTC and its cadets with both praise and awards.<sup>36</sup> Due to the accolades of the Cal Poly ROTC, the U.S. Army decided to use the program as a template for other ROTC programs at Stanford, UCLA, UC Davis, Montana State, and other universities across the United States.<sup>37</sup> With these examples in mind, they strongly rebut Lowen's argument that military involvement at the universities was mostly, if not always, negative.

Besides representing the university at the collegiate level, the Cal Poly ROTC also built relationships with the local and student communities by participating in university functions such as Poly Royal and Homecoming.<sup>38</sup> During Poly Royal, Cal Poly hosted a variety of activities and events to showcase the students' achievements and college lifestyle to the students' family and

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30 "ROTC Horseman Enliven Poly Activities," *El Mustang*, November 6, 1953; "Poly Bows to Idaho In First Rifle Tilt," *El Mustang*, November 20, 1953; "Guard Places Third," *El Mustang*, May 22, 1953.

31 "Guard Places Third."

32 "Poly Bows to Idaho In First Rifle Tilt."

33 "Poly ROTC Takes Part at Fort Lewis," *El Mustang*, June 10, 1955; "Poly ROTC at Summer ROTC Camp," photograph, in *El Mustang*, July 15, 1955, 1.

34 "ROTC Cadets Rank High At Fort Lewis," *El Mustang*, August 12, 1955.

35 "Poly's Crack ROTC Battalion Captures Many Top Awards," *El Mustang*, September 16, 1957.

36 El Mustang, "Congratulations," photograph, in *El Mustang*, August 16, 1957, 1; Gus Beck, "ROTC-Lap Company-AS348," photograph, 1954, Folder Military-ROTC c. 1951-1986. Special Collections and University Archives, Kennedy Library, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California.

37 "West Point Style Proved At Poly; Example For More," *El Mustang*, September 4, 1953.

38 "ROTC Directors Make Big Plans," *El Mustang*, January 16, 1953.

to the local community.<sup>39</sup> For example, during the 1953 Poly Royal, the Cal Poly ROTC sponsored a drill team competition for the local Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) units.<sup>40</sup> In addition to hosting these competitions, the Cal Poly ROTC also held exhibits during Poly Royal to educate the local community and the students' families about cadet life in the ROTC.<sup>41</sup> Also, the Cal Poly ROTC mounted cavalry opened Poly Royal, participated in the Poly Royal Rodeo, and escorted the Poly Royal Queen.<sup>42</sup> With the exemplary participation of the Cal Poly ROTC in Poly Royal, McPhee personally was very proud of all the students who participated in Poly Royal.<sup>43</sup> With that in mind, McPhee's approval indicates that the Cal Poly ROTC was a respected part of the university. Besides participating in the Poly Royal festivities, the Cal Poly ROTC drill team also performed during the annual homecoming parade.<sup>44</sup> Due to its involvement in these activities, the Cal Poly ROTC was not a separate institution that existed at the university — it actually played an active role in enhancing the social lives of the student community.

In addition to participating in these university functions, the Cal Poly ROTC was also heavily involved in the local community. For example, during the Korean War, the local community held blood drives at Cal Poly to gather blood donations for wounded Korean veterans. During these blood drives, the Cal Poly ROTC drill team entertained blood donors while they waited for their turn to donate blood.<sup>45</sup> Due to its contributions, the Cal Poly ROTC was gradually accepted as part of the local community, which granted the organization the opportunity to represent the local community in a variety of public events. For instance, on October 13, 1954, the Cal Poly ROTC provided an honor guard to greet Vice President Nixon during his visit to San Luis Obispo.<sup>46</sup> By inviting the Cal Poly ROTC to this event, the local community respected the Cal Poly ROTC and its cadets enough to allow

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39 Glean L. Black, manuscript letter to Douglas W. Miller, 1954, Box 3, Poly Royal Ephemerata(1953-58), Folder: Poly Royal: Planning (Committees, groups, policies, and procedures), 1954. Special Collections and University Archives, Kennedy Library, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California.

40 "Poly Royal Show to Include New Activity," *El Mustang*, March 6, 1953.

41 "Army Life Depicted In ROTC Display," *El Mustang*, April 26, 1957; "Visitors Participate In ROTC Display," *El Mustang*, April 27, 1956.

42 "ROTC Horseman Enliven Poly Activities."

43 "McPhee Says Best Poly Royal Ever," *El Mustang*, May 3, 1957.

44 "Drill Team To Make Debut At Homecoming," *El Mustang*, October 21, 1955.

45 "Big Push Prepared for Coming Blood Pledge," *El Mustang*, February 20, 1953.

46 "Honorguard Greets Nixon," *El Mustang*, October 15, 1954.

them to represent the community in this important event. Further, the local community was invited to campus when the military and the university president conducted an annual inspection of the Cal Poly ROTC.<sup>47</sup> By allowing public attendance, the community was able to demystify the impersonal veil shrouding the military-industrial academic complex. Through their interactions with the local community, the Cal Poly ROTC was gradually able to successfully integrate as a key segment of the local community and student communities.

Besides fostering these relationships with the local and student communities, the Cal Poly ROTC also had its own social events. During the 1950s, the Cal Poly ROTC hosted a variety of social events for its cadets. For example, as a military organization, the Cal Poly ROTC offered its cadets the opportunity to join the military honors society “Golden Blade” and later “Scabbard and Blade.”<sup>48</sup> By joining these organization, Cal Poly ROTC cadets could form connections with their peers across the country. In addition to these opportunities, the Cal Poly ROTC also hosted an annual military ball for its cadets at the San Luis Obispo Veterans Memorial Hall and later at Camp San Luis Obispo.<sup>49</sup> During these dances, the Cal Poly ROTC hosted a competition to select an “ROTC Queen” to represent the organization in military inspections and other social events.<sup>50</sup> Due to these experiences, the Cal Poly ROTC was not consumed by military fervor; instead, this organization constituted one of the many subcultures that existed at Cal Poly.

Therefore, the Cal Poly ROTC clearly does not fit into Lowen’s Stanford analogy. Due to its integration into campus culture, the Cal Poly ROTC affirms Johnson’s argument in his book, which argued that the HBCU ROTC units enabled African Americans to be full members of American society and to have access to better opportunities that fostered cross-racial connections. Translating this to the Cal Poly ROTC, the students, like their African American counterparts, were able to benefit from being involved in the ROTC since it enabled each cadet to gain vital life skills and experience,

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47 Gus Beck, “R.O.T.C.-Annual Inspection 1954, #42,” photograph, Folder Military-ROTC c. 1951-1986. Special Collections and University Archives, Kennedy Library, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California.

48 “Charter Members Selected in ROTC Military Society,” *El Mustang*, February 20, 1953; “Golden Blade Dissolved: ROTC Admitted To Scabbard and Blade,” *El Mustang*, May 18, 1956.

49 “Final Plans Made for Military Ball,” *El Mustang*, February 26, 1954; “Military Ball Has ‘Outpost’ Theme,” *El Mustang*, February 3, 1956.

50 “Five Coed Finalists Vie For Queen Title of 5th Military Ball,” *El Mustang*, January 22, 1957.

which transformed them into better members of society.

## **Conclusion**

In this chronicle of the Cal Poly ROTC, the military-industrial academic complex did not always negatively affect the community and student body. Instead, the Cal Poly ROTC had numerous other functions than just military recruitment. To reiterate, the Cal Poly ROTC offered its cadets access to career opportunities and to participate in university functions such as Poly Royal and Homecoming. Throughout the early 1950s, Cal Poly administration was already working to ensure their students were deferred from the draft. With the establishment of the Cal Poly ROTC in 1952, the university administration was given another tool to help students avoid active military service. Despite its military affiliation, the student body and administration favorably viewed the Cal Poly ROTC because it offered students a longer period of deferment while allowing them to fulfill their military obligations. As a result, the Cal ROTC played an instrumental role in assisting students in avoiding the draft.

In addition to assisting student deferments, the Cal Poly ROTC also fostered social relations with the collegiate, local, and student communities. Since its inception, the Cal Poly ROTC has distinguished itself and the university at numerous collegiate events. Due to its accomplishments, the Cal Poly ROTC was eventually chosen as the model for other ROTC units across the United States. Besides representing the university at collegiate events, the Cal Poly ROTC also fostered social relationships with the local and student communities. Throughout the 1950s, the Cal Poly ROTC participated in Poly Royal, Homecoming, and other local events. By participating in these events, the Cal Poly ROTC earned the trust and respect of the local and student communities.

With its high level of involvement in the community, the Cal Poly ROTC clearly was not an organization obsessed with military recruitment. Therefore, these findings contradict the notion that military involvement at the universities was solely focused on developing technologies and recruiting college men for the Cold War. Therefore, this paper illustrates that there was a non-military culture that existed during Cold War America. Due to the existence of this non-military culture at Cal Poly, this paper strongly indicates that Cold War culture was not simply militaristic; rather, the military aca-

ademic industrial complex also produced a vibrant social culture that existed at certain American universities during the 1950s.

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