

Aggielife

Army reservists split time helping military and leading civilian lives

BY STEPHEN WELLS
The Battalion

"I remember pretending to be the war hero when I was a kid," Ben Fraustro, an Army reservist from Dallas, Texas, said. "Now I get paid to do what I used to day-dream about doing."

The United States Armed Forces Reserves trace their origins back to 1908 with the establishment of the Medical Reserve Corps of the U.S. Army. Since then, it has undergone a steady evolution to become the force it is today.

In 1916, Congress passed the National Defense Act, which ensured the existence of a reserve pool of officers for the Armed Forces by creating several reserve officer and officer training corps.

After World War I, several of these new groups were combined under the banner of the Armed Forces Reserves.

Today's reservists are specialized for combat support and combat service support. In the Army, reservists account for 40 percent of these personnel.

One of the more interesting reserve units, particularly for the cloak-and-dagger crowd, is located right here in Bryan.

The 3420th Military Intelligence Department is a reserve unit charged with developing and testing security systems for one of the nation's most secure military computer systems, DODIIS.

Each individual working for the 3420th has top-secret clearance and works with organizations outside the military such as the CIA and software companies around the globe.

According to U.S. Army Reser-

ve magazine the unit is stationed in Bryan because Texas A&M produces more military intelligence officers than all of the other universities in the nation combined.

Everybody has seen the advertisements coaxing viewers to serve their country in the Armed Forces Reserves, but only a small percentage take the United States' offer.

Those who do, find the rewards far outweigh the work.

"If you're doing something you enjoy, and you're getting paid to do it, how is that working?" Fraustro said.

the Armed Forces after graduation.

Lt. Col. Jake Betty, a tactical training officer for the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets, said many Corps members enter the Reserves with an eye on an officer ranking upon entering military service.

"I think that those individuals who are in the Reserves are interested in being commissioned as an officer," Betty said. "In addition to the training they get, they usually also have a desire to be an officer, either in the regular services or in the reserves."

Betty is an Army Reservist. He said his 25 years of military service have included 21 years in the Reserves.

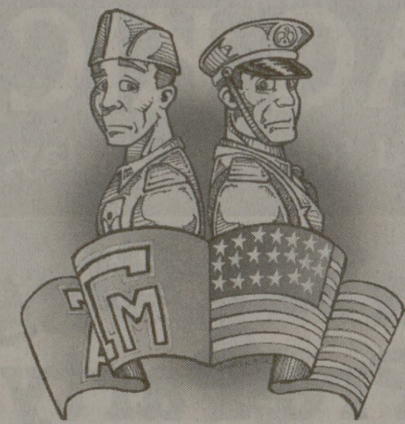
"I stayed in the reserves because there is a feeling of serving the country," Betty said. "The opportunities I've had [as a] part of the reserves, as far as the places I've gone to and the ability to see things, and do things I wouldn't have otherwise been able to do, were also a big part."

"I've also made many friendships serving in the military. A combination of all those things keeps me in the reserves."

The time obligations required by the military reserves are well within the reach of a college student.

"If you were just going into the reserves, realistically it works out to one weekend a month," Betty said. "It may rise a little depending on your position and rank. Normally, there's a two week commitment sometime during the year, so students could take time over summer or winter breaks and serve their two weeks then. Honestly, if you look at other jobs you could do over the weekend, the pay is pretty good."

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GRAPHIC BY ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

Fraustro said the Army Reserve provides just the right amount of military experience.

"I wouldn't want to live every day like it was boot camp," Fraustro said. "Why play Army when I can do things that actually help soldiers in the field?"

Many members of the Corps of Cadets are reservists, and they find the service helps them learn many additional military-related skills.

It also may cement a position in



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