To the Editor:

It would be easier if we all could share in the views expressed by Fred McCracken in his letter: "ROTC students deserve our respect," March 17. Unfortunately, history does not bear out his idealism.

McCracken's "mission set forth for the Reserve Officers' Training Corps" is self-promotion and deception. Talk about the "highest ideals of duty, honor, and loyalty" can undoubtedly be found in the programs of analogous Soviet institutions. Yet one can well imagine McCracken's (or any rational person's) reaction if one were to quote the Soviet version as proof of the Soviet military's lofty ideals and noble intentions.

McCracken states that ROTC members "embrace... the rights set forth under the Constitution." This contention ignores much of the post-World War II US history.

Perhaps the military wants to ensure that the United States enjoys its Constitution, but it certainly has not shown much respect for human rights or even human life in Guatemala (1954), the Dominican Republic (1965), and South Vietnam and the rest of Indochina (1953-1975), all of which were targets of direct aggression from the US military.

The massive number of interventions carried out by the United States should support the illusion that the military exists solely to defend the homeland. Also, the military is not displaying McCracken's values of the "highest responsibilities of citizenship and government," when it arms, trains, and directs the Nicaraguan contra or the Salvadoran army which, under US tutelage, has murdered over 60,000 people during the past seven years.

In addition to actual defense of the United States, the military - comprised of conventional and nuclear forces - serves as a policeman for the US empire. Organizations such as the Rapid Deployment Force and the Marine Corps have been charged with nothing less than torturing citizens in Guatemala and Vietnam.

Also, the military is not disposable. The "highest responsibilities of citizenship and government," when it arms, trains, and directs the Nicaraguan contra or the Salvadoran army which, under US tutelage, has murdered over 60,000 people during the past seven years.

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