

# Cutbacks mean less job security in Army; but improved chances for blacks, females

By Tarsha Carter

ECSU's ROTC cadets—like their counterparts across the nation—face an uncertain future due to the current and impending cutbacks in funding for the Armed Services. Although cutbacks translate into less job security for cadets, officials say conditions are now more favorable for minorities and females.

"Because we are accepting a fewer number of people, minorities and females are replacing the spots normally held by white males," said Warrant Officer Lewis Shield, of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. "During Desert Storm, 11 percent of the guard personnel in the Gulf and 25 percent in Saudi Arabia were female, proving that women are capable partners in support of combat missions."

ECSU's Captain Leodis Jennings said the cutbacks will benefit ROTC programs at all predominantly black campuses.

"There is always a real need for minorities in the military," added Jennings, an assistant professor of military science. "20 to 25 percent are in the enlisted military and less than 10 percent are officers."

Despite the benefit to minorities and females, ROTC officials admit that the leaner economic times translate into far

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**Captain Leodis Jennings**

less job security in today's Army.

"The intent is to put out the people who really aren't qualified, the dead weight," said Jennings.

Jennings and other ROTC officers say the cutbacks mean more opportunities for younger officers, but point out that officers will have to work harder—and be more aggressive—to keep their jobs and to advance.

"As we speak the Army is asking soldiers to leave or not allowing them to reenlist so we can bring in the young blood that we don't have to retrain," said Captain Clifford Taylor of Camp Ripley, Minnesota. "Therefore these cadets will have a job but it will be up to them to try to keep it. There is always someone waiting to take your place."

The cutbacks mean many units welcome newly commissioned officers over established ones because new officers are trained with updated military tactics and therefore don't have to be retrained, ac-

cording to Warrant officer Lewis Shield, of Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

"Retraining of officers costs money and money is something the military doesn't have right now," said Shield. "If you don't perform up to the Army's expectations, you will be put out."

The Army is winnowing out people by becoming more strict in job performance, physical and tactical training and weight control, said Shield.

Captain Clifford Taylor of Fort Jackson, South Carolina said the Army used to work with overweight soldiers, giving them many opportunities to pass the P.T. (physical training) test.

"Now if you don't pass the P.T. test you are retested once. If you still don't pass it you will have your pay cut or be dismissed from the Army. That goes for everyone."

"If you are not going to give 100 percent, don't even think about promotions. Promotions are going to be harder to

come by. Today's soldier is going to have to work hard all the time if he or she plans on being promoted."

Jennings said today's cadets should consider ROTC as an opportunity, pointing out that he has been able to "elevate his economic status," through the military.

"We as blacks have to be better than others," he said. "We are not going to progress unless we are educated."

ECSU currently has 47 students enrolled in its ROTC program, 20 females and 27 males.

Cadet Dawn Conner said she believes her ROTC training and the resultant opportunities will help her provide a better future for her child.

Cadet Reginal Barkley said the women he trains with help inspire him to work harder.

"Cadet Clarisa James and Cadet Diedra Barns are two females who drive hard all the time," said Barkley. "They motivate me."

Although the military is facing more cuts under the Clinton administration, the number of enlistees in the Armed Forces has remained stable. From 1987 to 1993 over 125,000 people have enlisted in the Army and remained.

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