



## Queens Guard at Rutgers taps into an exciting show

By RICHARD D. SMITH

Heavy shipping crates, made to carry uniforms, boots, rifles and bayonets overseas, are stacked to form a narrow aisle.

Along the surrounding walls, shelves filled with trophies look like parade grounds lined with soldiers.

The room bespeaks the history of the Queens Guard, Rutgers University's military display team.

Dedication and attention to detail have made the Queens Guard (named after Rutgers' original name, Queens College) the most successful team in the school's history. The ensemble has excelled at national competitions and won acclaim at shows worldwide.

THE QUEENS Guard is probably better known in Europe and Australia than in New Jersey. And few students or alumni ever see the Queens Guard's impressive collection of awards.

"We have the best winning record of any sport or club at Rutgers, but the trophies are kept here in the basement," said one team member, surveying the low room.

"The college would give us a space to display them, I'm sure," added another, "if we raised the money for the display case."

The team members were speaking with regret, not bitterness. Being very much in demand on an international basis means that the travel fund comes first. A trophy case remains a distinctly lower priority.

Douglas Galuppo, a senior and this year's group commander, recently had to tell a long-distance caller, "Sir, we really can't miss more than five school days."

It was 9:45 a.m. in New Brunswick, New Jersey, but it late night in Sydney, Australia. The organizer of an international "tattoo" (drill and marching exposition) was calling to satisfy public demand for the Queens Guard to be on his program.

"If we could get back Sunday night, it might be possible," added Christopher

Kovach, another senior and the Guard's executive officer. "It's just before an examination period."

Captain Joseph Sanders, a Rutgers R.O.T.C. instructor and faculty advisor to the Queens' Guard, was on an extension.

"They make all the decisions, sir, I'm just the advisor," he explained to the Australian promoter. "But I'm going to give them some advice now."

After a quick huddle in which a compromise was suggested, everyone went back to the phones. Soon, Capt. Sanders smiled as he listened and gave a thumbs-up sign.

WHAT EXACTLY does the Queens Guard do to result in sagging shelves of trophies and persistent calls from the other side of the world?

The term "tattoo" is said to have come from "taps to", a drum roll signaling for pubs to be closed and for soldiers to march back to base. Some say that the close-of-day bugle melody "Taps" originated as a similar call.

Modern tattoos are events featuring large marching teams, often military bands. There are also squads and small platoons like the Queens Guard that demonstrate elaborate "trick" drills. These displays are based on formation and rifle drills that have been taught soldiers for centuries.

But comparing what the Queens Guard does to basic drill is like comparing a Ferrari to a family car.

The members of the Queens Guard wear dress uniforms pressed and polished to parade perfection. "Getting dressed is like a ritual," Mr. Galuppo said. "It helps you concentrate."

They carry 13-pound, World-War-I, 1903 Springfield rifles with full-size 16 inch bayonets. "That's what impresses soldiers in other countries," Mr. Kovach reported. "They expect us to have three-pound plastic band rifles. And almost everyone else uses the smaller eight-or-10-inch bayonets."

BESIDES precision marching, the team displays rifle drills — spinning, tossing and catching the heavy wood and metal weapons.

One famous Queens Guard routine, a combination of marching and whirling weapons, is appropriately known as "suicide" or "the meat grinder." While the bayonets are not sharpened, they've left bruises and gashes enough during practice session mishaps.

"One of our reviews talked about 'the sense of danger that the Queens Guard adds to the show,'" Doug Galuppo grinned.

"Another thing that may be part of our effectiveness is that in tattoos where there's constant marching band music, we come out and are silent. There's no sound except the click of our boots and the swish of our rifles."

But the routines themselves are like music, with rhythm, peaks and valleys. It's a challenge to update a drill's arrangement and make it more dynamic without taking away from another part of it.

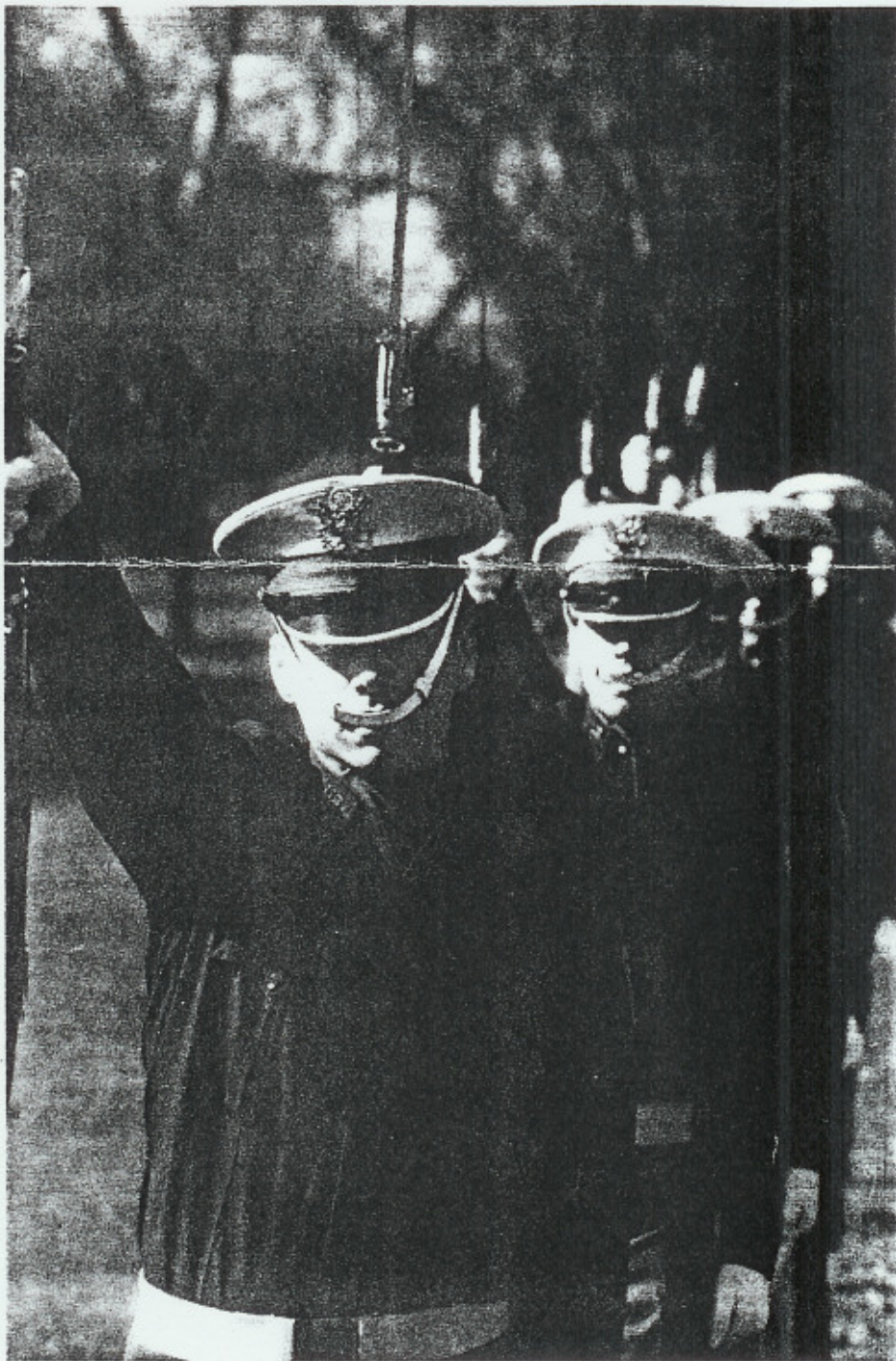
ONE OF THE team's biggest challenges is management. It's like running a small business, the officers said.

"When that barrage of paperwork comes in, it's usually in the middle of mid-terms!" Mr. Kovach exclaimed. "We don't have a secretary, and (producers) want answers to those letters."

In addition, the Queens Guard will be hosting a national drill competition at the Rutgers Athletic Center on April 5. Planning has to start early.

Queens Guard membership is not limited to R.O.T.C. students. Mr. Galuppo, for example, is a psychology major, and Mr. Kovach is studying industrial and research ceramics.

R.O.T.C. enrollment declined on many campuses during the Vietnam era, and Rutgers was no exception. To continue the Queens Guard tradition, membership was opened to non-R.O.T.C. students, perhaps



the only college military display team with this arrangement.

**THE DISCIPLINE** is demanding, the art satisfying. And travel brings experiences and lasting memories, team members reported.

"When we've participated in the summer tattoo at Edinburgh Castle and toured military bases in Europe, we've made a lot of close friendships," Mr. Galuppo said. Some of these friendships started not in spite of differences, but because of them.

"The Scottish Black Watch regiment's way of stomping when coming to attention is completely different from the American method. We'd each think what the other was doing was hilarious, and we'd imitate each other to make fun. But then we ended up teaching each other."

The Queens Guard has also inducted

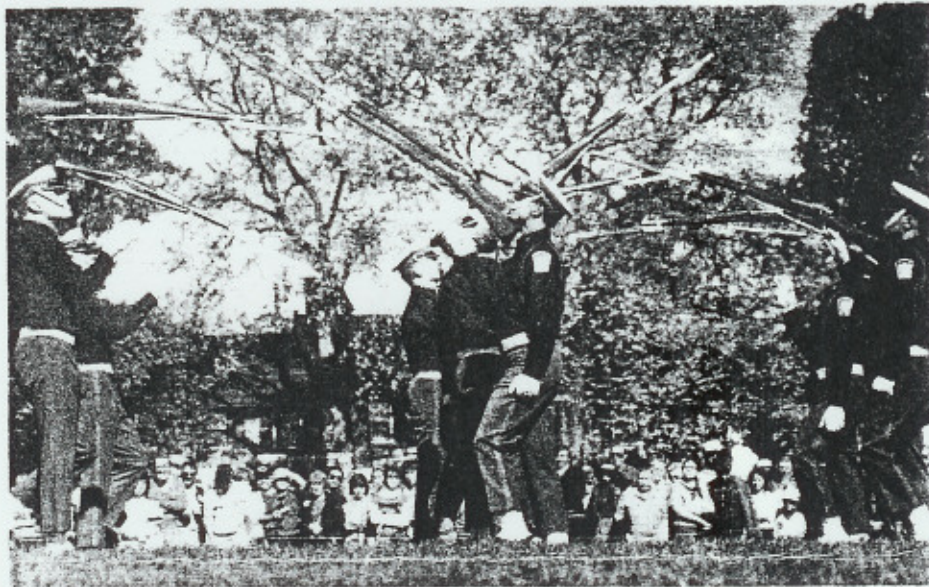
foreign military personnel into the mysteries of American baseball. Bats and gloves make good packing material in the rifle cases, it seems.

"We beat the Royal Navy in softball 25 to 12," Mr. Kovach reported. "They did pretty well, considering they'd never played before."

But team officers emphasized that membership in the Rutgers Queens Guard means hard work in preparation and execution. Even a summer tour is not just a summer fling.

"We miss work and spend money to do it," Christopher Kovach said, surveying the stacks of shipping crates and rows of trophies. "If we go to that show in Australia, we'll work our tails off, just for a one week trip."

*Richard D. Smith is Time Off's staff writer*



PHOTOS BY  
RICH PIPELING

*The Queens Guard, Rutgers University's military display team, is probably better known in Europe and Australia than in New Jersey. The guard members, carrying 13-pound, World-War-I, 1903 Springfield rifles with full-size 16 inch bayonets, display percision marching and rifle drills — spinning, tossing and catching the heavy wood and metal weapons. One famous Queens Guard routine, a combination of marching and whirling weapons, is appropriately known as "suicide" or "the meat grinder." While the bayonets are not sharpened, they've left bruises and gashes enough during practice session mishaps.*