

## BACK IN TIME



*ERC-V12 alumni Sidney Small '46, Leo Pochini '48, Daren McGavren '48 and Mel Corren '46 reunited at Pacific Alumni Weekend 2009*



## Soldiers on Campus

In the 1940s, the military drained college and university campuses across the country of men and some women as the United States went off to fight World War II. This, on the heels of the Great Depression, made the economic realities of keeping a college open fairly dire. In an interesting twist of fate, it was the military that also filled some of that gap.

Nearly 400 sailors and marines of the Enlisted Reserve Corps (ERC) and V-12 reserve programs marched into Stockton on July 1, 1943. These were men training to become officers who would need a college education before being commissioned to active duty. Pacific adapted the school year, moving to a trimester system — three 16-week terms — so that sessions could be offered year-round. Empty fraternity houses were converted into barracks for the Marines. The Navy bunked in the Quonset huts formerly located in the area near the DeRosa University Center. The College provided food, instruction and medical attention, as well as learning facilities. The Navy and Marines paid a guaranteed minimum for room, board and tuition.

Curricula depended on the area of advancement or service, and class schedules weren't easy, beginning at 6 am and filled

with mathematics, sciences, languages, business administration, aeronautical engineering, electricity and magnetism. Pacific offered upper division and graduate courses; lower division classes were taken through adjacent Stockton College. It was a tough regimen, including the military training and participation in physical education, sports, music and theater.

Tiger intercollegiate football and basketball teams were among Pacific's best, in large part because of fit, mature students benefitting from rigorous military training. The double P.E. requirements for trainees were also required for non-military students, who nicknamed them "commando" classes, and the word entered the popular lexicon of the day to include a commando costume party. The women were so glad to have "the fellas" onboard; they held dances often. With their intense schedules, though, the men couldn't stay out late.

The program was phased out in 1945 when the war ended, although Pacific continued to work with the ROTC program over the years.

# 1943