my fraternity in the “Spring Sing.” Many had absolutely no experience. About 20 of the guys couldn’t function at all; I put them in back and called them “mouthers.”

I realized I could hear—my ear could analyze where the problems were, and I really enjoyed being up in front of a group of singers. I knew that quality of leadership from a church group; at one point, I thought of being a minister. From sophomore year on, I knew I wanted to be a college chorus director; I was on fire about this.

We are wind instruments. I’m a tenor. I’ve never really been a solo singer. Any student will tell you that while I have the volume, the voice timbre is not always the most beautiful! I sang with Robert Shaw on and off for 12 years. What I instantly saw in Shaw was a boyish enthusiasm and a love for the art, which I greatly identified with.

Studying a score, I form a “mental-aural image” of how it ought to go. It’s clear as a bell when I come to rehearsal. Rehearsing comes from the possibility of re-hearing. I measure what the students sing against what is in my mind’s ear. I tell them, “Bach wants ABC, but right now you’re singing XYZ.”

If you started your musical life listening to Brahms, or Ligeti, or perhaps Josquin Des Prés from the fifteenth century, that will affect how you approach a piece. The entry point is actually a very important factor. Professionally, I came into choral music through Renaissance music of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which is our richest tradition of choral music. So I might see relationships between a Haydn mass and a mass of the Renaissance—there are principles in common. Someone who didn’t have that background and instead came to the Haydn mass through Shostakovich and Mahler would hear it very differently. It’s the same way with tempos—a conductor’s version of allegro moderato in Beethoven might depend on his insight into Brahms, or into Mozart.

I’m hoping that as a conductor, my physical gestures will call up musical gestures. The chorus has to get in tune, get in balance, get the vowels to match, and get it together! If they all do it, you may have one of those magic moments when they all are doing something the same way. It engenders inspiration. When we sense this spiritual force at work, there may be an awe-filled silence at the end: there’s nothing like it!

Rehearsal has to be at least as good as a performance in order for the performance to happen. That magic quality has to occur so they know what it is. My job is to urge them to greater heights.

There’s an opportunity to be creative in performance, not just repeat what you have rehearsed. The highest level is a sense of music-making that’s absolutely spontaneous—their eyes are totally glued to you, and they pick up on the slightest gesture, and so they start the ritard. three beats earlier than we’ve done before, or build to a crescendo in a certain place where we’ve never rehearsed one. There’s a moment of transcendence; that’s the goal here. Once you’ve experienced it you want to re-experience it, and you come back again and again. I want to create magic moments with them.

---CRAIG LAMBERT

THE UNDERGRADUATE

Crimson, White, and Blue

by GARRETT M. GRAFF ’03

On a campus steeped in lore and history, perhaps no history is more visibly honored than that of Harvard’s warriors. Since the earliest days of the United States, brave Harvard students and alumni have fought and died to preserve liberty, freedom, and the red, white, and blue. From the six College men who stood on the green at Lexington facing the muskets of the British regulars in the first battle of the Revolution to the fallen soldiers remembered in Memorial Hall and Memorial Church, Harvard has always held its fallen alumni in special esteem.

We are proud of our Crimson soldiers. Or, at least, we used to be.

Somewhere between World War II and Vietnam, somewhere in the 1960s, the University lost the important distinction between supporting the troops and supporting the military’s policies. For a generation now, through Vietnam and “Don’t ask, don’t tell,” Harvard has tried to rebuke the military brass by making life hard on those students who wish to enlist. The once-proud Reserve Officers Training Corps program, depicted in numerous yellowing yearbook photographs, has faced a near-relentless push from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), which has sought to scale it back and force it out.

The sad result is that modern-day students see no proud legacy of service on campus.
Students today understand more about and identify more closely with SDS and the students who occupied University Hall in 1969 than with the 19 Harvard alumni who died fighting the war in Vietnam. For too many modern students, born and bred in privilege, the idea of serving our country is too foreign to comprehend. War now is a blue-collar affair, fought by young men from backwoods states and inner cities—hardly big feeders to Harvard. The feeling of detachment is further institutionalized through the University’s past refusal to allow recruiting on campus based upon the military’s discriminatory “Don’t ask, don’t tell” policy on soldiers’ sexual orientation. M.B.A.s and J.D.s have supplanted NCOs and Lt. J.G.s in the plans of graduating seniors.

Thankfully, there are a few noble exceptions. For 32 years, since Harvard banished ROTC from its campus, hardly ROTC students—roughly a dozen annually—have boarded buses at 5:30 A.M. to take their classes at neighboring MIT’s program. For the last eight years, this arrangement has been funded through a backhanded and shameful University-administered private trust fund that “allows” patriotic alumni to fund the program while giving the University some deniability. Of late, President Lawrence H. Summers has called Harvard’s funding system “uncomfortable and unorthodox.”

Now Summers is slowly trying to welcome the military back into the fold. In addition to becoming, this past June, the first president since 1969 to address the annual commissioning ceremony, he sent Harvard’s ROTC cadets supportive letters on Veterans Day and asked informally that the program be reintroduced to the pages of the yearbook. Summers even stars in a new Army ROTC recruiting video, explaining of the cadets, “Their work is America’s work and I am proud that they are part of our Harvard community.” The Law School will allow recruiters on campus officially for the first time in a generation—albeit only under the threat of a loss of federal funding. (Many of these distinctions are admittedly silly and trivial: the military has never been kept off the Law School campus—they were always invited by a student group; now they will merely get a different table and a different office from which to work; see page 57.) And, thanks to Harvard’s cross-registration program with MIT, ROTC cadets have long been able to cross-count some courses they’ve taken there for Harvard credit—despite the FAS refusal to allow ROTC courses on campus.

Nevertheless, through all of this academic infighting, Harvard has lost sight of one of its main traditional goals: to provide intelligent leaders and guidance to our country and the world. By continuing to begrudge the military, Harvard is doing a disservice to the military, its students, and not least of all its own history of proud and willing service. In discouraging students from joining our armed forces—by dangling consulting and banking jobs in front of their faces while keeping the army, navy, and air force at arm’s length—Harvard is still one of the military’s best hopes for change and improvement: recruitment of bright, talented, enlightened men and women. “There’s never been a greater need for intelligent junior officers,” says Jeffrey C. Munns ’03, a Navy ROTC cadet who heads the student group Harvard Reserve Officers Training Corps Association—founded during the last academic year to encourage changes in the College’s stance towards the program. The military has spent a generation attempting to recruit “thinking soldiers,” Munns explains, but a large pool of such people has gone largely untapped through the ill-placed stubbornness of Harvard and other elite schools. “We need people who think and who understand the issues, and those people are being lost at Harvard and other schools,” he says. “It’s critical to the military and to the nation.”

If the University community thinks the current military’s policies are wrong-headed, why then discourage its own students from joining up and trying to improve them? It’s not as though the recent wave of corporate scandals has prompted Harvard Business School to discourage students from joining accounting firms. Quite the opposite, in fact. Usually, if Harvard thinks something in the world is wrong, it throws its academic resources behind solving the problem. Why not with the military? If “Don’t ask, don’t tell” is the wrong policy, offer solutions and assistance. Hold panels. Write reports. Don’t withhold students and don’t make signing up difficult for undergraduates.

Summers is right to sing ROTC’s praises from the rooftops. Military service builds character, discipline, and strength. Law School dean Robert C. Clark is right to pronounce military service “honorable and essential to the well-being of our country.”

Walking into Memorial Church, after passing row upon row of the names of Harvard dead, one is drawn to the dedication offered by President A. Lawrence Lowell: “While a bright future beckoned, they freely gave their lives and fondest hopes for us and our allies, that we might learn from them courage in peace to spend our lives making a better world for others.” That is Harvard’s legacy of military service. The future of Harvard’s students is still bright, but we cannot say the same for the whole world. As war looms in Iraq, as the military becomes an ever more important part of “homeland security,” the military grasps for new confident leaders, let Harvard step forward and live up to that legacy.

Photographs by Jim Harrison

Garrett M. Graff is a history concentrator who lives in Cabot House.