



# End of an Era

*The JROTC Deactivation Parade marks the end of 114 years of military tradition at Kamehameha Schools*



*For 114 years, the hills and valleys of Kalihi have echoed the cadence of cadets marching to the drumbeat of honor, duty and country. First to the Kingdom of Hawai'i, and later to the United States of America, we pledged our allegiance and commitment to serve.*

*Whenever the call was made, Kamehameha graduates answered with valor, chivalry and patriotism. For all eyes and for all time, they courageously stood guard over this beloved land of ancient descent.*

*It is with deep sadness then, that we now bid farewell to a tradition that has been a hallmark at Kamehameha since our beginning. The strength of this program lies in the ideals and values that have been taught to our students, showing them what they should be, what they can be, what they will be. They have learned a strength of character, woven with kūpono, koa and na'auao, that can be traced to Kamehameha the First.*

– Dr. Michael J. Chun  
Kamehameha Schools President  
and Kapālama Campus Headmaster

*Excerpted Remarks, JROTC Deactivation Parade  
May 9, 2002*

*"The mission  
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– COL. CHARLES LEE

In a ceremony brimming with emotion, Kamehameha Schools closed a long chapter in its rich history when it ended its Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program with a Deactivation Parade at Konia Field on May 9. Kamehameha is ending its JROTC program as part of a transition away from federally funded programs.

Senior Army Instructor and JROTC Department Head Col. Charles Lee, a 20-year Army veteran who has been at Kamehameha since 1987, was philosophic about the ending of the program.

"For me personally, it's been a great ride and I wouldn't trade the experience for the world," he said. "These Kamehameha kids have educated me, and our students have reacted with honor and dignity to the closing of the program."

Lee said Kamehameha's battalion fluctuated between 450-500 cadets in recent years, with JROTC a required class for freshman and sophomore boys. Another 5 to 10 percent of those students chose to continue with the program in their junior and senior years.

"The mission of the program was not to make soldiers of these students, but to develop better citizens," Lee said. "We tried to instill discipline, and develop leadership, responsi-

bility and respect for authority. JROTC is a character education program, with emphasis in all these areas, and that's what's going to be missed."

"We all regret and hate to see the program ended," said Kamehameha Schools Chief Education Officer Dr. Dudley "Skip" Hare. "We also know, that in terms of character education, in terms of leadership and other values that JROTC instilled, that there are lots of other ways to do that.

"This program had a certain context, a military context – and that was a great one – but we're going to look at alternatives that hopefully are just as high quality as JROTC was."

"JROTC isn't the only program we have that deals with leadership, citizenship and character, but it has been one of the most important ones for our young men," said Kamehameha Schools President and Kapālama Campus Headmaster Dr. Michael Chun. Chun said character development was a key value the program instilled in students. "Character development not only in terms of integrity and honesty, but how to deal with adversity and how to respond under pressure," he said.

Kapālama Campus high school Principal Tony Ramos said Kamehameha had been looking into developing a character education program for all students even before the decision was made to end the JROTC program.

"We need character development and character education here," Ramos said. "I believe that when a student has been through Kamehameha and graduates, they should have all the knowledge and skills that a leader needs. Students need a well-developed self-concept,

self-esteem, have the courage to lead – and that courage comes from competence – be a critical thinker and a problem solver.

"If you're competent – and you get that from content areas in speech, math, social studies, etc. – then you have that confidence to step out. So our program is really designed for the student to have competence in all



Dr. Michael Chun presents the Kamehameha Sword of Leadership to CDT. Lt. Col. Kuiokalani Gapero.



Col. Charles Lee and Kapālama Campus Headmaster Dr. Michael Chun review the cadets on a final occasion.

areas. And it's not only Kamehameha where we're talking about developing a character education program. Character education is a major educational initiative nationally."

Ramos and Chun, who graduated in 1958 and 1961 respectively, remember a military tradition at Kamehameha which was all-encompassing.

"We were a military institute then, and you were in uniform 24 hours a day, seven days a week," Ramos said. "You had a play uniform, a work uniform, a school uniform and a dress uniform. They even had pajamas for us, but nobody used to wear them. We'd wear khaki shorts and a t-shirt to sleep.

"We learned self-confidence and we had a lot of pride in our school, a lot of pride in the uniform, and we took great pride in our self-discipline as well. We were spit and polish. It enhanced our self-esteem as leaders and being from Kamehameha."

"The program helped me organize myself," Chun said. "It taught me about discipline, about patriotism and about having structure in our lives.



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“To this day, I would make a good wife to someone in terms of neatness,” Chun laughed. “If there’s one thing I can recall from it, it taught us how to take care of ourselves – from our laundry, to our room, to our uniforms. It really taught you how to fend for yourself.”

With so many memories for the two Kamehameha leaders, the final deactivation ceremony was filled with sentiment. “I expected it to be emotional, because we were feeling it ever since we found out the program was going to shut down,” Ramos said.

“It was heavy. I felt for the students and for the end of the military tradition. That was what Kamehameha was known for – for a lot of years. It was hard to turn back the tears.”

“I knew it was going to be emotional, but I didn’t realize how emotional it would be,” Chun said. “In preparing my remarks, I spent a lot of time thinking about it, and once I had it down on paper, whenever I practiced it, I just couldn’t get through it. I kept pushing myself so that I’d be able to control my emotions.

“I knew that I was not going to find the right words to truly express my gratitude for what these military instructors have done here.



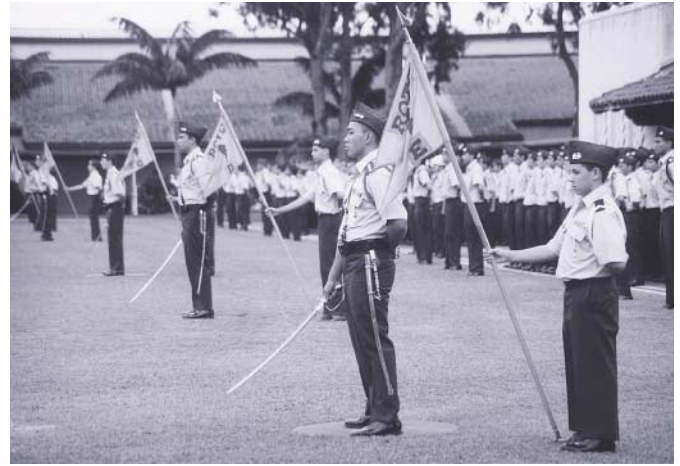
CDT. Lt. Col. Anthony Ramos cut quite the dashing figure as commander of the Kamehameha battalion in 1958.

I’m so grateful for a job well done. I have a sense that, when you look at all our boys in high school, nobody knew these boys as well as those guys did.

“All our boys had to go through there and experience this program. And in the setting of the military, these instructors spoke to our students like men. They just loved being with these cadets, and for

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– TONY RAMOS



me, it was always a privilege to be associated with those guys.”

“Dr. Chun’s speech was super,” Lee said. “It was right on, and right in line with everything else that night – very meaningful. The ceremony basically said it all. If anybody watched it, they could see the discipline of our

kids, the responsibility – all of the things that we talked about that the JROTC program brings. We closed this program with honor and dignity.”

*The end of this honored program does not mean the end of the values that it has fostered and instilled in our cadets. Responsible citizenship, good leadership and noble character will continue to be beacons for our students. We will take with us into the future the same values that have been at the core of our JROTC program.*

*Cadets, you are the last of an honorable military tradition here at Kamehameha. In a few minutes, you will pass in review for the last time. Marching drums and haunting bugles of reveille will be but a distant memory.*

*Just know, that marching beside you will be the spirits of thousands of cadets who have come before you. March tall. March proud. March strong.*

*I mua e nā pōki’i  
A inu i ka wai ‘awa’awa  
‘A’ohe hope e ho’i mai ai*

*Go forward young warriors  
And drink of the bitter waters  
There is no turning back*