

FLEET ADMIRAL CHESTER W. NIMITZ, U. S. NAVY
QUARTERS ONE YERBA BUENA ISLAND
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94130

24 September 1965

Dear Nelson:-

It was my good fortune to be a member of the Naval War College Senior class that graduated in June of 1923 after a course of eleven months. Admiral Sims was President, and the Depts of Strategy and Tactics were headed by Captains Reginald Belknap and J. M. Reeves respectively - both splendid leaders and instructors. The enemy of our games was always - Japan - and the courses were so thorough that after the start of WWII - nothing that happened in the Pacific was strange or unexpected. Each student was required to

plan logistic support for an advance across
the Pacific - and we were well prepared for
the fantastic logistic efforts required to
support the operations of the war - The need
for mobile replenishment at sea was fore-
seen - and even practiced by me in 1937
when I was left as senior flag officer on the
west coast during a Fleet Concentration in the
Canal Zone area. One of my classmates
(both in the war college class of 1923 and
USNA 1905) Captain R. C. MacFall -
now retired & living in La Jolla - Calif -
devised the circular tactical formations
used so successfully during WWII. These
formations I personally took to the Pacific
Fleet in late 1923 when I became Asst

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Chief of Staff & Fleet Tactical Officer for Admiral

S. S. Robison - USN - who was then C-in-C

Battle Fleet - and who succeeded Adm.

Coontz in 1925 as C-in-C U.S. Fleet &

continued to serve in key specialty as Asst

C of S. & Fleet Tactical Officer in U.S. Fleet
until late 1926 when I was sent to the

University of California, ^{Berkeley} to start a Naval

ROTC Unit - the first in the U.S. I

credit the Naval War College for such

success I achieved in strategy & tactics

both in peace & war. When I became

Chief of Bureau of Navigation in June 1939 - my

first act was to send for the BuNav War

Plan. To his honor - I learned that on "D"

day - it was planned to close down the Naval
War College and the Naval Post Graduate School
in order to provide officers for an
expanding Fleet - as was done on "D" day for
WW I. I immediately cancelled those plans
and prepared for expanded classes at both
the War College + P. G. Schools - ~~we~~ shortened
the War College Course to five months - in
order that more officers could be rotated
through your fine institutions. The great need
for additional officers needed by Butler
was met by other programs - more NROTC
Colleges - V-7, V-12 programs etc. Similar
steps + expansions took place in the
P. G. Classes. Again I credit the Naval
War College with giving me the wisdom and

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foresight to see the need for these important
changes in our personnel war planning. I
regard your job as President of the Naval
War College as being second only to that
of CNO in importance and I congratulate
you on having that fine billet. And I
hope that your enjoyment of your duties is
commensurate with their importance.

Warmest regards and best wishes.

Sincerely —
C. W. Nimitz