

War College Library

THE UNITED STATES NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

GRADUATION 2 Dec. 1941

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INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT

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(Delivered by Rear Admiral C. W. Nimitz, U.S.N., Chief of
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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
GRADUATION EXERCISES
DECEMBER 2, 1941

Time was when the War College needed strong support to protect it from the scoffers who believed that the place to learn about war was in a ship, and who looked askance at War College students. I am not so sure that some of my early predecessors in the Bureau of Navigation were not among the doubters. Fortunately, those times are past, and the College is now firmly established. It is the intention of the Navy Department that this College shall continue to function regardless of circumstances. Its graduates are indispensable to the National Defense. No matter how badly officers are needed afloat -- no matter how scarce they may be -- it is during a period of personnel expansion that our schools and educational institutions must be expanded, rather than curtailed. Curtailment plans probably stem from the incorrect premise that the emergency or war will be of short duration, and that essential officer training must give way to filling billets afloat.

The emergency has, however, had its effect on our schools. The Naval Academy course has been reduced from four to three years with a loss of only eleven per cent in academic subjects. Postgraduate courses have also been shortened. Through the efforts of your President and the

staff, the War College course has been streamlined and compressed from about eleven to five months, which makes it possible to send many more students through this fine institution. Not only has the length of the course been reduced, but the junior and senior courses have been abolished in favor of one combined course for officers of all ranks of the regular Navy, a Command Course. This simplifies the teaching problem and gives younger officers an opportunity to profit from the experience of officers of more mature judgment. As our service expands, there will be an ever-increasing need for officers with War College background.

The Navy welcomes the Naval Reserve officers who have been included in the War College Courses. The Reserve officers graduating in the present classes are the first who have completed this course and they are being sent to important billets afloat and ashore. In view of the large and increasing number of Naval Reserve officers on active duty in billets both ashore and afloat, it is appropriate and necessary to train Reserve Officers in staff procedure, the elements of strategy and tactics, and military planning. We are very proud of the manner in which our Reserve officers are meeting the requirements of the service -- both ashore and afloat.

A brief resume of our present and future educational program for officers and men is perhaps the most useful con-

tribution I can make to your store of information for use in your new assignments. The personnel problem touches on all our naval endeavors.

Our officer procurement program is more nearly in step with our expansion than is the case with enlisted men. Our C-in-C in the summer of 1939 suggested and strongly supported the so-called V-7 program with which you are, no doubt, familiar. This procedure will probably be repeated each year until our twenty-seven Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps Units are all producing Reserve Ensigns. Our Air Station at Pensacola has been duplicated at Corpus Christi, and an additional station only slightly smaller established at Jacksonville. The Miami Naval Air Station has been enlarged to take over from Pensacola a part of the training in carrier-based planes. Fifteen Naval Reserve Aviation Bases conduct elimination flight training and some ground school work preparatory to the work at the big training centers at Pensacola, Corpus Christi, and Jacksonville. Following completion of the curtailed courses at the larger air training centers, pilots pass through pre-fleet training schools at Norfolk or San Diego, and then to the fleets. This expansion of aviation personnel was not accomplished without growing pains which are still continuing. To jump from a modest 1500-plane program to one providing 10,000 planes in service, with 5,000 in reserve, is no minor undertaking. As might be expected,

the initial bottleneck was lack of instructors and training planes. The fleets were called upon to supply instructors, and a large number of training planes were ordered. A new station -- Corpus Christi -- was built in record time, and is now functioning at full capacity of 300 entrants per month -- as is Pensacola. Jacksonville was similarly built and has a capacity of 200 entrants per month. With a monthly input of 800 students and an output in excess of 600 pilots, our demands for naval aviators are well in hand, provided there is no interruption in supply of students.

The large expansion of the Army Air Force will doubtless react unfavorably on our procurement of Reserve aviation cadets, but recent legislation authorizes the training of a new class of young men to be Reserve aviation pilots. These will be high school graduates, and this group will probably be designated as V-8. Recourse to this legislation will be withheld so long as there are sufficient applicants from College sources for aviation cadet training. By the end of December, the large air training centers are expected to have their full complements of enlisted personnel, which will enable them to operate effectively at full capacity. The manning of these stations has necessarily been at the expense of the fleet requirements, but from now on, men will flow from the training stations and trade schools to the fleets in ever-increasing numbers, provided, of course, our enlistment

rate is maintained.

The present procurement program calls for the enlistment of 13,000 men a month, which rate should be stepped up to 15,000 men a month beginning the first of January and to 16,000 men a month beginning July 1. For the past three months, enlistments have been running at the rate of about 10,500 men a month.

On the first of November, there were 280,343 enlisted men in the Naval Service, which was 11,000 under a full complement for all stations and ships to commission.

The Recruiting Service has already been stepped up to the point where it is in position to process 16,000 men a month, and is now being expanded to a size which will allow it to process as many as 18,000 men a month.

Navy Main Recruiting Stations have been established in 37 cities, and other Main Stations are now being opened so that there will probably be one in each state. In addition, substations have been established in 359 cities and part-time substations in 633 cities.

While the Selective Service Act provides for supplying men to the Navy as well as to the Army, every effort is being made to maintain the service of Navy personnel on a voluntary basis in order to promote efficiency and discipline. In order to avoid going to the draft for the men required to man the ships being added to the fleets, it was decided in June to

conduct an advertising campaign for recruits. Since that time, the Navy has advertised in Newspapers in 28 states. The advertising has resulted in improved recruiting in those states where it has been conducted, and it is hoped the effect of the advertising will continue to sufficiently benefit recruiting efforts to allow the Navy to remain on a voluntary basis. I regret to state that incidents like the Kearny, Reuben James, and Salinas have adversely affected enlistments, and several weeks are required for the recruiting service to recover from them.

Postgraduate instruction of officers is conducted in service schools and in civil institutions. This specialized instruction varies in length from short courses of a month to more advanced courses of three years.

Special training is given in all subjects needed to increase the efficiency of the Navy and the efficiency of its officer personnel. Due to the limited number of young officers that can be spared from the forces afloat, it has been necessary to suspend postgraduate instruction in the School of the Line subjects, but the number of officers under postgraduate instruction in technical subjects has been increased since the beginning of the emergency.

The total number of officers in the regular Navy and Marine Corps who were in training schools in the fall of 1939 was 430. This included all schools, such as the Naval War

College, the Postgraduate School, civil institutions, Pensacola, etc. At the present time, there are 889 regular naval and Marine Corps officers undergoing special instruction at schools ashore. This number will be increased to 1065 in July of 1942. Approximately this same number will be in training during 1943.

There were 1533 students enrolled in the Naval R.O.T.C. Units in 1939. At the present time, there are approximately 5300 students enrolled. In 1942, there will be about 6100 students enrolled, and in 1943 approximately 6900. The Naval R.O.T.C. Units will provide 1176 Ensigns in June, 1944, and 1580 in June, 1945. Legislation provides for the commissioning in the regular line of the Navy of as many of these graduates as may be needed.

Except for the normal peacetime training cruises and 1546 officers enrolled in correspondence courses, no Reserves were in training in 1939. Approximately 3360 officers and 11,657 men participated in the summer training duty or in elimination flight training.

On November 1, 1941, 8300 Reserve officers were in training. Reserve officer training estimates for fiscal years are as follows: 1941 - 14,492; 1942 - 19,965; 1943 - 18,737.

The figures for officers include the surface and aviation officer candidates training (V-7 and V-5). During fiscal years 1942 and 1943, practically all organized Reserves

will be on active duty and are not counted in the above figures.

Reserve officer training includes Diesel Engineering, Aeronautical Engineering, Aviation Engines, Aerology, Naval Architecture, Indoctrination, Nets, Mine Warfare, Local Defense, Chemical Warfare, Naval War College Junior Staff Course, Torpedoes, Firefighting, Armed Guard, Supply, Communications, Radio Engineering, Merchant Marine, Sound, and other specialties.

In September, 1939, at the beginning of the emergency, there were in operation a total of forty-eight schools of all classes for enlisted men of the Navy. At that time there were 2229 enlisted men under instruction. These schools were conducted principally at the Naval Training Stations at San Diego, California, and Norfolk, Virginia, and at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida.

To meet the demands of a rapidly expanding Navy, the schools at the Naval Training Stations, San Diego, California, and Norfolk, Virginia, and at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, were expanded, and new schools were established at the Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, Illinois, and Naval Air Stations, Seattle, Washington; Jacksonville, Florida; San Diego, California; and Norfolk, Virginia. Specialized instruction has also been made available at various industrial plants. At present, we have in operation 189 schools of all

classes with a total of 16,118 men under instruction with an annual capacity of 49,861. This includes regulars and Reserves.

Cognizant of our needs, Mr. Henry Ford offered to the Secretary of the Navy facilities of the Henry Ford Trade School to help meet the demand for trained men. At no cost to the Government, he has made available administration buildings, barracks, mess halls, and a recreation building to accommodate two thousand men. The facilities of this school are used to supplement those of the Great Lakes Training Station. In addition to the above Mr. Ford also supplies the instructors -- another important contribution, as it relieves the Navy of the necessity of drawing on its trained officers and men for this purpose. This school was inaugurated on January 15, 1941.

In addition to the schools that have been established for the regular Navy, there have been established various Reserve Naval Training Schools for different ratings. At Navy Pier in Chicago, Illinois, the Naval Training School for Aviation Maintenance and Diesel operators has been established. This school will have a capacity of 6,000 men this year and 10,000 next year with an annual output capacity of 20,000 in fiscal 1945.

Expansion of enlisted instruction continues. In July, 1942, the number of enlisted men under instruction in the various schools is expected to be 23,000 with an annual out-

put of 89,000 and in July, 1943, there will be approximately 30,000 men under instruction with an annual output of 90,000.

I have given you a rather complete personnel picture -- and purposely so -- because no matter how much material we will eventually have or how good it may be, our personnel is equally, if not more, important and will ever be in your minds in your new billets.

And now -- about your work at this College and the use you make of what you have learned here. No one ever claimed that this institution turns out finished tacticians or strategists. What is claimed, however, is that every officer who passes through the Naval War College and who has applied himself assiduously, is a better and more useful officer to the Navy. He is better able to attack perplexing problems which will confront him daily. Reasoning ability has been strengthened and, one might say, regularized, so that, presented with similar factors bearing on a military situation, a number of students working independently and widely separated, can be expected to estimate situations and reach decisions that will contribute effectively to a general plan. This is a matter of great military importance. Furthermore, this course has served to stimulate your intellectual curiosity with respect to the world crisis which now surrounds us and threatens to engulf us. In normal peaceful times it is sometimes difficult for the staff to prepare problems that appear convincingly

real -- real enough to excite the full efforts of the students in their solution. How different now! The whole international situation; the local problems that await solution in every direction; the Mediterranean; the Far East; the North Atlantic; the Black Sea; -- to mention only a few; -- each of these areas presents a challenge to the imagination that your course here will help you to attack with some degree of confidence in reaching logical solutions. The completion of this course is not an end in itself. It is only the beginning of a period of enlarged usefulness -- of wider horizons.

And may I call attention at this point to the obvious necessity of maintaining your physical fitness at the highest practicable standard so that you can meet the maximum demands which the emergency may place upon you. Physical fitness is necessary to enable you to utilize to greatest effect the mental attainments which I am sure have been enhanced by your months of study here at the War College.

No matter what we in the Personnel Bureau may attempt to do, or what the Material Bureaus are planning -- you must remember that you in the field must make the best of what you have! Perfection though desirable, is not attainable and the leader who insists on waiting for the last gaiter button may still be waiting when the enemy has occupied his country.

At no time since the Revolution has our country been confronted with more perplexing problems and more serious menace than the present day. The advances of science have made iso-

lation impossible. As the Constitution recognizes the principle of Unity of Command by making the head of the Executive branch the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, the situation which now confronts us requires that the C-in-C and the armed services be fully supported by a nation completely united in purpose. Individual and partisan interests must give way to the national interest. We in the armed services have sworn to support and defend the Constitution. All citizens have pledged themselves times without number in a similar manner. We must now stand by these pledges.

In conclusion, I wish for you good health, good luck, and Godspeed.

