

Remarks of
Vice Admiral W. S. Pye, U.S.N.,
President, Naval War College,

at Opening of College
on 3 July 1944

DUPLICATE

[OPENING DAY]

Officers of the Command Class and of the Preparatory Staff Class:

As its President, and on behalf of the Staff, I welcome you to the Naval War College.

We know that there exists in the active elements of our armed forces an almost universal shortage of officers and therefore we appreciate that the assignment here of so many student officers is a tribute to the course of instruction provided at this institution.

Your presence here is, likewise, an expression of faith in each of you as an individual; and of confidence that each will employ the time allotted to War College training with diligence and sincere effort, in order that he may most effectively prepare himself for later important assignments.

The far-flung operations of our armed forces, and the ever-present need for coordination of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps in amphibious, and in air operations, have created an unprecedented demand for officers who have had Naval War College training.

I can assure you one of the greatest needs of our Pacific Fleet is more officers with War College training. And I can assure you, also, that with the continued expansion of our operations there the need will increase rather than diminish.

The Navy Department has expressed its intention to fill many staff assignments, such as Flag Lieutenant, Flag Secre-

tary, Assistant Operations Officers and Assistant Intelligence Officers from officers of the Naval Reserve, primarily from those who have completed the Preparatory Staff Course at the Naval War College.

Never before, therefore, have entering Classes had a more excellent prospect that upon completion of their courses of instruction they may have an immediate opportunity to employ in active operations the knowledge of the conduct of war that by persevering application may be acquired here.

The Bureau of Personnel is endeavoring to select for these courses officers whose records indicate that they possess capacity for such advanced training.

I desire to impress upon each of you that under these conditions, to be a student at the Naval War College is an honor, and a privilege which should be definitely recognized and appreciated.

During your courses here you will learn many things of a confidential nature. You will learn more about the past naval operations and actions of this war than is known to but a few officers, even more than is known to many officers who took part in them. Because of these facts it is imperative that outside the walls of this College, you refrain from all discussion of what you are doing or learning here. In no other activity is it more important to remember that "Silence is golden."

In this connection, I desire to bring to your attention the following letter for your information and guidance:

"Subject: Disclosures of Vital Information.

1. Despite previous instructions to the service prohibiting disclosure of vital military information, reports have been received lately which indicate that leaks of vital information continue.
2. The Commander in Chief, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and our military and naval leaders in combat areas are seriously concerned over comments in the press and on the radio, and disclosures to these agencies by American citizens, both civilian and military.
3. Responsible officers will bring to the attention of all personnel of the Naval Establishment under their jurisdiction the above information and will direct them to refrain from any speculation or discussion, either privately or for publication, regarding secret weapons or equipment, current and future military operations or plans, movements of troops and ships, prior to announcement by the proper military or naval or higher authority; and, in cases of high-level international conferences, prior to authorization being secured from the Executive Office of the President.
4. Appropriate and positive disciplinary action will be taken immediately in any infraction of the above di-

rective.

--Sec. Frank Knox"

It may be well to point out to you at once, that although no marks are assigned to students and, consequently, no official competitive basis exists for grading student officers as to class standing, each such officer is carefully studied by the officers of the Staff in order to determine his military character, his intelligence, industry, and ability to learn and to apply his knowledge in tactical and strategical maneuvers. The records of student officers so accumulated, constitute the basis for fitness reports and for recommendations for assignment to duty upon completion of the Course.

Due to war conditions, the courses of instruction at the War College have been reduced in time from eleven to five months, but the field covered by these courses could not be reduced in the same proportion. It is, therefore, incumbent upon student officers to study, and to work with extreme earnestness.

Many of you have passed the age when study was a part of your daily routine. At first, you may find that concentrated mental effort is difficult. May I suggest that mental effort becomes easier by continued exercise of the mind, in the same manner that physical effort becomes easier by

continued exercise of the muscles. May I further suggest that mental acuteness in many cases is dependent to a large degree upon physical fitness, which latter requires moderation in food and drink, at least eight hours' sleep, and a moderate amount of physical exercise.

Considering that we are laboring under war conditions, the hours of routine employment at the War College are short; namely, from 0830 to 1230, and 1330 to 1630, except that on Saturdays the closing hour is 1230, and that there are no sessions of the War College on Sunday. In addition to the above stated routine employment at the College it is required that each student officer shall spend two and a half hours each day except Saturdays, in study or in prescribed reading. This study or reading, except secret or confidential matter, may be done at home, or at the War College where suitable accommodations will be provided for those who prefer to study there. Married officers are encouraged to have their families with them in Newport, but such officers' periods of concentrated study must not be interfered with by family affairs.

The closing hour of routine work at the College is such as to permit at least an hour's exercise before dinner on Mondays to Fridays, and for longer periods on Saturdays and Sundays. The use of such periods for exercise in the open

air, is strongly recommended, as much for your mental, as for your physical well being. Most of you upon completion of your course of instruction will be ordered to duty in active theaters of operations. It is essential, therefore, that you pay particular attention to your mental and physical condition.

A reasonable amount of social life is desirable as a relaxation, but as a rule social engagements must be limited to Saturdays after 1300, and to Sundays before 2000. It is most desirable that wives of officers living in the same vicinity in town become acquainted at the earliest opportunity, in order that in each other they may find companionship while their husbands are studying or reading.

Because of the time, gasoline and tires consumed in making formal calls, the requirements as to calls are suspended.

Before proceeding with a short explanation of the work to be undertaken by you, there is one more point to which I invite your most serious attention. It is this.

The prestige of the Naval War College in the City of Newport and in the State of Rhode Island is of the highest. Officers on duty here are more closely associated with civilians than are officers on duty at the various other nearby naval stations. Citizens of Newport look upon War College student officers as selected officers, ordered here for train-

ing for important future duty. You, as student officers, will be carefully observed not only by these civilians but by officers of other activities and by thousands of enlisted men on duty in this vicinity. Your conduct as officers and gentlemen must be beyond reproach. I shall have not the least sympathy for, nor compassion on any officer who so far forgets himself as to become intoxicated or otherwise behaves himself in a manner to bring discredit upon the armed forces. In any such case I shall request the officer's immediate detachment, and if the circumstances warrant, shall recommend him for trial by General Court Martial. This is not a threat; it is a statement of policy concerning which you all have a right to be informed in advance.

In the Prospectus of the War College Courses, a copy of which each of you has received, the Command Course and the Preparatory Staff Course are outlined in detail. Please read this Prospectus carefully. I shall limit the remainder of my remarks to a discussion of some phases of the course of instruction which are not covered in the material with which you have been supplied.

By many officers the Courses at the Naval War College, at first, are found to be difficult. I wish to assure you immediately that there is nothing inherently difficult in either Course. No higher mathematics are required. The essential

characteristics for the student are: average intelligence, sincere application, clarity of thought and sound judgment.

Instruction at the Naval War College has five principal objectives:

(1) to increase the students' technical knowledge in regard to naval weapons, types of ships and aircraft, and of standard practice in the use of such weapons and types in attaining the objectives of naval warfare;

(2) to increase the students' understanding of the attributes and characteristics of command, and of the methods by which command is most effectively exercised;

(3) to instruct and to train students in the mental process which by many years' experience has proved to be the most effective in reaching sound military decisions;

(4) to instruct and to train students in the formulation of directives by which military decisions may be translated into effective operations; and,

(5) to instruct and to train students in the use of an effective method for the supervision of the planned operations.

It will be manifest to all that without technical knowledge and without an understanding of command, no process of reasoning can produce sound military decisions, no directive can be formulated which will translate a decision into

effective operations, and no amount of supervision of planned operations can produce a successful outcome.

Under current directives the officers of the regular Navy, officers of the Army, Marine officers of the rank of Major and above, constitute the Command Class. All other student officers constitute the Preparatory Staff Class.

As has been stated above, both courses have the same five principal objectives. The courses differ primarily in the difference in emphasis placed upon certain of these objectives.

In the Preparatory Staff Course emphasis is placed upon objectives (1) and (2), namely, an increase in technical knowledge, and an understanding of command. In the Command Course emphasis is placed upon objectives (3), (4) and (5), namely, the making of sound decisions, the formulation of directives, and the method of supervising a planned operation.

Most of the students' difficulties are experienced in the early stages of the Courses, and are due largely to the fact that many student officers, especially Army officers and Naval Reserve officers of little sea-going experience, and to a lesser degree, officers of the Navy Staff Corps, are unfamiliar with Navy terminology, and have only a limited technical knowledge of naval weapons, types of naval vessels and aircraft, and of the manner of employment of such types in naval operations.

The Command Course is designed primarily to meet the needs of the officers of the regular Navy, who presumably possess a knowledge of the elements of command, and a substantial amount of naval technical knowledge.

It is assumed that the Army officers and the Naval Medical officers assigned to this Class have the same knowledge of command and have adequate technical knowledge of their own branches. Thus they should be able, later, to apply to operations of their respective branches, what they learn here in respect to the process of reaching sound military decisions, the formulation of directives, and the supervision of planned operations.

It is recognized that for Army officers an important additional feature of the Course is, to become familiar with Navy terminology and with those naval activities and operations encountered in joint Army and Navy amphibious and air operations.

It will be apparent that these officers are particularly handicapped in the work of the Command Course by their lack of naval technical knowledge. Especially is this true in the solution of purely naval problems, in maneuver board exercises and in strategical chart maneuvers.

In the arrangement of the Command Course this handicap

is given recognition by providing at the outset two weeks' instruction in characteristics of naval weapons, and of types of naval vessels and aircraft; in standard practice for the use of such types; and in the general nature of naval warfare.

On January 11 both Classes begin the study of the publication "The Operational Functions of Command", but during the entire month there will be continued presentations by officers of the Staff to illustrate practical applications of the features of this publication, and as a continuation of instruction with a view to increasing technical knowledge.

These Classes will be the third to study the revised edition of the publication, Operational Functions of Command, which is a revised edition of the former War College publication entitled "Sound Military Decision". We regret that it is available only in mimeograph form. The revised edition does not involve a change in basic ideas. It is hoped that the subject matter is presented in a form which can be more readily absorbed. Before attempting to study the process for the solution of a military problem it is essential that the student thoroughly comprehend the meaning of the terms used. Too much stress cannot be laid upon the importance of this preliminary study without which it is impossible to avoid confusion of thought.

In the belief that such close association will be beneficial to both, it has been the policy ~~in the Command Class~~ to assign as room-mates, a line officer of the Navy with each Army officer and Navy ^{Staff} Medical officer. This policy will be continued so far as possible.

In the Preparatory Staff Class we have officers of wide differences of naval experience and of technical knowledge. The Course has been designed, we believe, to meet the needs of the majority. However, there may be among its members, or even among members of the Command Class, those who feel a need for even more elementary instruction. It is impossible to foresee all the needs of officers of such diversity of education and training, so we ask you to be frank in informing the Staff as to any deficiencies which in your opinion, exist in the course of instruction as provided. It will be our pleasure, if it be within our power, to provide any additional instruction that may increase the value to you of the time spent at this College.

Approximately in the middle of the Command Course, a period of nine days will be devoted to the study of some phases of International Law. The purpose of this study is to present for consideration a few situations which you may later meet in practice, and to familiarize you with text books

and compilations on International Law. Also by changing your line of thought for a short period you may at its end, return to the more important features of your Course with your minds refreshed.

During the later months, both classes will be required to write a thesis. The object of requiring this thesis is to cause you to make a research for material, thus familiarizing you with many valuable books; and to exercise your mind in organizing and presenting facts in order to support your definite conclusions. In the library of this College you will find one of the world's largest collections of books on history and war, and in the archives much confidential material of interest. In both places you will find personnel well qualified to help you to find material in which you may be especially interested.

I shall detain you no longer. Again I welcome you to the Naval War College. I congratulate each of you upon being assigned to this duty, and I ask you to remember that should any one of you desire personal instruction in any subject which will advance your understanding of the conduct of naval warfare, whether or not the subject is a part of the Course, we shall be glad, as far as possible, to meet your desires.

The value of these courses of instruction is unquestioned; the extent to which you profit by them will be measured by your effort and capacity to learn, and by your ability

to apply in practice what you will have learned here.

It is up to each of you as an individual to justify the confidence in your ability which was expressed by your respective Personnel Bureaus in ordering you as a student officer at the Naval War College. The excellent assignments to duty received by most of the officers of the recently graduated classes are ample proof that future important assignments await those of you who prove most worthy. Good luck and success to you all.