

HISTORY OF THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
(1884-1899)
By Captain C. H. Stockton

LIBRARY OF NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
U.S. NAVAL STATION, NEWPORT,
R. I.

(Section 5 - Envelop 4)

HISTORY OF THE U.S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE.

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On the 30th of May, 1884, the Secretary of the Navy, then the Hon. Wm. E. Chandler, of New Hampshire, constituted a board of officers, which consisted of Commodore Stephen B. Luce, USN, Commander W. T. Sampson, U. S. N., and Lieutenant Commander C. P. Goodrich, USN, to consider and report upon the whole subject of a post-graduate course or school of application for officers of the navy of the United States.

On the 13th of June following, this board of officers made a full report to the Navy Department. Among other reasons for establishing such a school of war, the following were given:--

"The bare statement that our naval officers not only do not study war as a science, but have no adequate school of practice, seems in these days of broad and liberal culture so extraordinary, that it is alone, in the judgment of the board, sufficient reason for the early founding of the institution which the Department now has under consideration."

The Board outlined a course to last six months, and recommended very strongly practical exercises in combination with the North Atlantic Squadron, during the summer or autumn months. In considering the location of the proposed war school, the board took into consideration the following places:--Washington, Annapolis, Newport, New York and Boston. As practical exercises afloat were considered important in connection with the course, Newport and its adjacent waters and especially in its proximity to the sea, offered exceptional advantages. The fact that the Navy Department also, was already in possession of ample grounds and the necessary buildings at Coasters Harbor Island, near Newport, had weight with

the Board in its recommendation of location *at this point*

A consideration weighing upon the Department, was the fact that a course of torpedo instruction was gone through with every year at the Torpedo Station, and the course at the War College could thus be made to supplement the course given at the Torpedo Station to the same class of officers.

The Board therefore recommended the establishment of the War School at Coasters Harbor Island, in Newport Harbor, R.I. This island is about one hundred acres in extent, and had been previously ceded by the city of Newport to the State of R.I., and by the State, to the United States. At first, the act of cession contained a provision that the island should be used for the purpose of the training of boys for the navy of the United States, and that otherwise it was to lapse to the city and State. But as the United States Government, under advice of the Attorney General of the U.S., declined to accept a conditional cession, it was ^{any} offered again, without reservation or condition, to the United States, and by the general government so received unconditionally.

The report of the Board was approved in general by the Navy Department, and the new institution was inaugurated by General Order No. 325. (See Appendix).

In answer to a resolution of the Senate, the Secretary of the Navy addressed the following letter:-- (See Appendix).

The principal building ^{then} upon Coasters Harbor Island ~~was~~ referred to in General Order 325, is the ~~well proportioned~~ ^{idea that} ~~building~~ ~~so familiar to visitors in Newport Harbor,~~ which was formerly used as the Asylum of the city of Newport. It was put in good condition and suitably arranged, with a library and lecture room, and upon the 4th of September, 1885, a class of officers, eight in number reported for duty and attendance upon the course. An appropriation

of \$3000 had been previously made for the maintenance of the College, in the Act of Congress, approved March 3, 1885.

Lectures were delivered during this course by Commodore Luce, the president of the College, Rear Admiral ~~Ammen~~, Commander ^{of most of} ~~Ammen~~, ^{men} H.C. Taylor; Professor J.R. Soley, U.S.N.; General Gordon, U.S.V.; General Palfrey, U.S.V.; and ^{That friends of the college do not here.} ~~the Honorable J.C. Lopes. (See Appendix)~~

The ~~first~~ course lasted but one month.

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On the 22nd of June, 1886, Rear Admiral S.B. Luce was detached from the College as its president, and ordered to take command of the North Atlantic Station. He was succeeded as president by Captain A.T. Mahan, USN.

On the 4th of September, 1886, the second course was begun at the College, with twenty one officers in attendance. Rear Admiral Luce, in command of the North Atlantic Station being in the harbor with the vessel flying his flag, upon invitation of the president of the College, made the opening address.

The subjects of the course this year were the study of Naval Warfare, Naval Tactics, Naval History, Military History, advanced Gunnery, Art of War, International Law, Operations of War, Military Strategy, Coast Defense, Naval Construction, Naval Hygiene, and War Games.

The lecturers were Rear Admiral Luce, Captain Mahan, Commander Goodrich, Commander W. Fairbridge, Lieutenant J.F. Meigs, Lieutenant C.C. Cornwell, Lieutenant J.C. Rogers, Lieutenant W. McCarthy Little, Surgeon R.C. Dean, Prof. J.R. Soley, Asst. Constructor Gatewood, Captain W.H. Bixby of the U.S.A. Engineers, and Lieutenant T.H. Bliss, of the U.S. Artillery.

This course closed Nov. 19th, 1886.

The President of the College in his annual report this year, called the attention of the Navy Department to the advantage

from the presence of the Flagship of the North Atlantic Station, the U.S.S. "Tennessee", both as to its effect upon the officers in attendance and those on board ship. (For list of officers and lecturers, etc. see Appendix).

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The next annual course began September 5th, 1887.

The opening address was delivered by Commander Sampson, U.S.N., Superintendent of the Naval Academy.

This course was attended by twenty-two officers, in rank from Ensign to Commander.

During this course the presence and cooperation of the North Atlantic Fleet, under Rear Admiral Luce, gave opportunities which were fully used for various practical exercises illustrating and giving point to the oral teaching of the lecture room, both to the College staff and to the officers in attendance upon the course.

In the annual report made for this year, the president of the College, Captain Mahan, for the second time urged the wisdom of providing some means for carrying on tarring drill by steam cutters, launches, or by boats especially built and fitted for the purpose.

There was no specific appropriation made for the War College made this year. (For list of officers, lecturers, subjects, etc., see Appendix).

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The fourth annual session was opened August 6th, 1888.

The opening address was delivered by the President, Captain Mahan, upon the necessity and utility of the War College; this address, remarkable for its ability, was printed in the proceedings of the U.S. Naval Institute in No. 4, vol. XIV, 1888.

Instruction was given as in previous years by lectures and oral discussion, the more important lectures being upon Naval History, Tactics and Strategy.

The course was intended to have extended over a period of four months, but on account of a scarcity of officers for active duty, the term of the course was reduced to three months.

In the Act appropriating for the expenses of the Naval Establishment for this year, it was directed that the War College should be conducted upon this island up to January 1st, 1889, and then provided that the Secretary of the Navy was authorized to consolidate and place under one command, the torpedo station and the naval war college, at Newport, R.I., after January 1st., 1889.

This consolidation was neither desired by the Bureau of Ordnance and the Torpedo Station on the one hand, nor the Bureau of Navigation and the War College on the other. It arose from an attempt to consolidate the two Stations and the Training Station under one command, and also from the desire of the Training Station to possess itself of the building used by the War College. The system for training of boys for sea life having gradually become more and more of a shore establishment.

In the annual report of the President of the College for this year the following reference was made to the consolidation.

"The word consolidation is of elastic meaning x x x x If by consolidation is meant providing a common head and central administration for two undertakings in close proximity, the question is one of detail and economy, of subordinate importance, and consequently not vital. But if by consolidation is meant the merging of two lines of thought radically distinct and in temper of mind opposed, under a single directing intellect, the result will be the distinct destruction of the one or the other."

These words proved prophetic and the work done by this Congress was undone by a succeeding one.

As a result of the legislation referred to the consolidation of the two Stations was directed by order of the Navy Department, dated January 11, 1889, and the old War College building was taken possession of by the Training Station. Up to that time the Training Station had control of the entire island, with the exception of the War College building and the grounds and buildings immediately surrounding. The apprentices were quartered on board the "New Hampshire" an old line-of-battle ship at the wharf of the island, and a large brick building near by was used for a gymnasium and drill hall.

Captain Mahan, having been previously detached from the presidency of the War College, all of the material of the College was removed to the Torpedo Station, and the newly combined establishment known as the Torpedo Station and War College was placed under the command of the officer in charge of the Torpedo Station, Commander C. F. Goodrich.

During the years that the War College had been in operation there had been a course of torpedo instruction given to a class of officers at the torpedo station, which had commenced either upon the 1st of May or the 1st of June, after which the same class had attended the course of instruction of the War College commencing in August or September, the two courses in 1888 covering a period of six months.

(For list of lecturers, etc, see Appendix).

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In 1889, a combined course was held at the Torpedo Station, which in its ^{entirety} completeness was neither satisfactory to the friends of the War College nor to those of the Torpedo Station.

In the Naval Appropriation Act, approved March 2, 1889,

Congress provided for the construction of a building at the Torpedo Station for the use of that Station and the War College (as consolidated) appropriating a sum of one hundred thousand dollars to be immediately available, and which was to be in full for all expenses of designing, erecting, and furnishing the building.

In August of this year, typhoid fever made its appearance on board the stationary training ship, the "New Hampshire" and the apprentices were transferred on shore and quartered in tents upon Coasters Harbor Island. At a later date the apprentices were lodged in the building erected as a drill shed and gymnasium; the meals being served in the central building formerly used as the War College. The "New Hampshire" was moved to New London, and the steam corvette "Richmond" was anchored in the stream off the island to take the place of the "New Hampshire" as a stationary ship.

The limited space on Goat Island, where the Torpedo Station was placed, and the fact that the island was yet included in the territory vested with the War Department, as well as other reasons, led to the change of the site of the building for the War College, etc., to Coasters Harbor Island, where there was ample available space. This change of site was provided for in the Act making appropriations for the Naval Service approved June 30th, 1890. The title of the consolidated establishment was changed to the Naval War College and Torpedo School. The usual summer course at the war college and Torpedo School was allowed to lapse this year the reason assigned being that a sufficient number of officers to form a class could not be spared from other duties.

The plans of the War College building as it now stands, were prepared, so far as its internal arrangements are concerned, by Captain A. T. Mahan and Civil Engineer George Mackay. The plans

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for the exterior and the general specifications of the building in all its details were made by Messrs Geo. C. Mason and Son, Architects, of Newport and Philadelphia, who were selected as supervising architects. These plans were examined and approved by Civil Engineer Endicott at the instance of the Bureau of Navigation.

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On the 18th of May, 1891, Lieutenant Commander C. H. Stockton was ordered to Newport on special duty connected with the College under Captain A. T. Mahan.

On the 7th of September, 1891, Lieutenant Commander Stockton was ordered to duty in connection with the erection of the building for the War College under Captain F. M. Bunce, commanding officer of the Training Station and the Senior officer in Newport harbor.

The plans having been duly adopted, the contract for the erection of the building was awarded after advertisement, to Mr. Ashton S. Tourison, of Philadelphia, Penn., the amount of his bid being \$82,875. Ground was broken for the building September 14th, 1891, and the work went steadily on during the mild winter, the building being under roof by the beginning of 1892, and the whole structure completed and accepted by the Navy Department on the 28th of May, 1892.

The building consists of the College proper in the central part of the structure, with a separate set of quarters under the same roof at each corner of the building. The building is of rock faced ashlar granite backed with brick, and the framework inside giving ample air space between the wooden frame and the brick backing. It is Flemish in its style of architecture, with three stepped gables in front. It is 210 feet long, along the front line and with a depth of 47 feet, having three stories and a basement. The building on an elevation faces directly South; looking upon the

inner and outer harbor of Newport, and being opposite the entrance to the Bay, from the sea, possesses a beauty of location and accessibility of the sea that is exceptional.

The college proper consists of two large lecture rooms, a fine library, a number of offices and chart rooms, and also lodging rooms for the lecturers, having ample space in the basement for quarters for the employes, for work shops, for coal, etc.

The remainder of the appropriation for the construction of the building has been absorbed by the cost of the steam heating apparatus and the necessary furniture and equipment of the building.

The grounds assigned to the War College, by direction of the Navy department, occupy a space of about three and one half acres of the island, which is nearly one hundred acres in extent; the rest of the island being under the jurisdiction of the Training Station. The island is about one mile from the thickly settled part of Newport, both by land and water. The island is connected with the mainland by a causeway, while a ferry launch plies to and from the city, thus affording the most convenient means of transportation.

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On the 22nd of July, 1892, Captain Mahan assumed the Presidency of the War College by the direction of the Secretary of the Navy.

On the 7th of September, of the same year, the sixth course of the College was begun in the new building, with a class of twenty-two officers in attendance, in rank from design to Commander. The introductory address was by the President, Captain Mahan, and treated particularly of the practical utility of the College to the naval service. The U.S.F.S. "Chicago" being in the harbor, Rear Admiral J.G. Walker, commanding the Squadron of Evolution, and a number of officers from the "Chicago" and from the

neighboring naval and military Stations were in attendance.

The course closed October 29th, 1892.

(For list of officers in attendance, lecturers, subjects, etc., see Appendix).

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On May 10th, 1893, Captain A. T. Mahan was detached from the War College as President, and ordered to the command of the U.S.S. "Chicago."

The charge of the College devolved upon Commander C. H. Stockton as the senior officer next in rank.

During the summer of 1893, arrangements were made for a course and the fact so reported to the Navy Department. No course was directed, however, for this year. During the summer the College was visited and inspected by the Assistant Secretary of the Navy

X On March 14, 1894, a general order was issued by the Department, consolidating the War College, Torpedo Station, and Training Station into one Station, to be known as the U.S. Naval Station, Newport, R.I. The senior officer present, Captain F. H. Duce, was named as the new Commandant.

This consolidation, whatever its object may have been, did not materially affect the College.

X On June 12th, 1894, a class of eighteen officers reported to the College for the course. Two officers of the Swedish Navy two officers of the U.S. Revenue Marine, and three Rhode Island Naval Reserve officers presented authority from the Navy Dept. to attend the course.

The Assistant Secretary, Hon. Wm. McAddo opened the course

the next day with an address.

A very successful course was held, professor Freeman Snow of Harvard College, delivering a series of lectures, the summing up of this series by him being prevented by his untimely death.

The Secretary of the Navy, Hon. H. A. Herbert, visited the College officially, and attended the lectures on August 22.

The course was brought to a conclusion on October 1, 1894 by an address from Captain Taylor.

On the 15th of October the quarters vacated by the detachment of Commander Stockton, by order of the department, were transferred to the Commandant of the Station, thus leaving but two out of the four sets of quarters under the College roof at the disposition of the College.

The officers of the permanent staff, five in number, were engaged, during the winter and spring of 1894-5, in putting into permanent shape the results of the course and problems of 1894, and preparing lectures, problems, etc., for the course of 1895. (For list of officers, lecturers, subjects, etc., see Appendix).

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On May, 1895, three additional officers were ordered to the College for tactical studies and work in anticipation of the course of the year.

On June 1st, 1895, twenty-two officers of the Navy, two of the U.S. Marine Corps, and an officer of the Danish Navy, assembled at the College for the course of the year. On the 4th, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Mr. McAdoo, delivered the opening address. A very successful course followed during the ensuing months. During the course Secretary Herbert visited the College and inspected its workings. The North Atlantic Squadron visited Newport during the course. Torpedo instruction was carried on at

the Torpedo Station by the officers in attendance upon the College course.

The course was closed October 15th.

The permanent staff of the College was employed during the winter and spring of 1895-6 in making a permanent abstract of the course completed, and the solutions of its problems, and also in tactical studies and war games and in the preparation of the course of 1896. Special Order No.40, and Special Circular No.22, were issued by the department with respect to the College, under date of November 15, 1895. The library was catalogued and found to contain 2794 volumes in all. Much work of a confidential nature, in connection with possible hostilities was carried on at the College during the winter by the permanent staff, which consisted of the President and five other officers.

An unmarried officers mess was kept up during this year.

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In May, 1896, the roof of the College building, was strengthened and tie rods introduced for bracing the walls.

On June 1st, 1896, the course of the College began, and twenty-five officers reported for attendance. The Asst. Secretary of the Navy, Mr. McAdoo, made the usual opening address, on June 2nd. Members of the Naval Reserve attended the course at various times during its continuance.

On the 10th of August, the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Herbert visited the College and delivered a lecture entitled "The Sea and Sea Power as a factor in the History of the United States"

A personal reconnaissance of the sea coast of New England, with a view to coast defense, was made during the course by the various officers of the class.

On the 1st of September, the N.E. Quarters were occupied

by Lieutenant Commander J. E. Pillsbury, of the permanent staff; having been vacated by Commander Dickins, commandant of the Training station. Commander Dickins took possession of the S. E. Quarters of the College, which had just been vacated by the Commandant of the Naval Station, Commodore Wallace.

Special Order No. 51 ^{relating to the Course} from the Navy Dept., was issued in connection with the College, under date of August 19, 1896.

During the winter and spring of 1896-7 the customary ^{on the subject discussion, lecture problems of the} work ~~of conclusions and preparations~~ of courses was carried on by the permanent staff in addition to war games, studies, and matters of a confidential nature.

On December 31, 1896, Commander C. F. Goodrich, relieved Captain Taylor, as president of the College.

(For list of class, lecturers, subjects, etc. see Appendix).

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On June 1st 1897, the course was begun, twenty-two officers being in attendance. On the 2nd of June, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Hon. Theodore Roosevelt, delivered the opening address. The course, conducted upon the usual methods, followed, and

A personal reconnaissance, by order of the Dept. was made by officers of the class.

The course closed on September 15th., 1897.

During the winter of 1897-8, the permanent staff were engaged in the usual work of the college, and in addition thereto in the formulating of various data for use at the Navy Department, in view of a possible war with Spain.

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Upon the outbreak of the war with Spain, the officers at the College were detached and ordered into active service one by one. Captain Goodrich was detached on April 23, . On the 3rd of

June, Commander C.H. Stockton, previously on duty in connection with the College, in the preparation of lectures upon international law, was ordered to temporary duty in charge of the College.

On June 15th, Commander McGowan, having vacated the S.E. quarters, by direction of the Secretary of the Navy, they were once more turned over to the College for use thereby. The College is now in possession of everything under the roof of its building.

On September 2, 1898, General Order No. 496, Dated August 16th, 1898, was received, revoking General Order No. 421, of 1894 consolidating the various establishments at Newport.

During the summer and fall, a new edition of the Manual of International Law, based upon the lectures of Prof. Freeman Snow, was prepared by Commander Stockton, by order of the department, the large and increasing demand for the 1st edition having exhausted the copies for issue.

~~1000~~ 500 copies of these Manuals were printed in the winter of 1898, ^{500 for Bureau of N.} 90 of which were sent of the College, and 500 to the Naval Academy, where it was intended for use as a text book.

On November 2, 1898, Commander C.H. Stockton was detailed for duty as President of the College. Two officers for the permanent staff were ordered to the College just previous to this, and work on international law situations, the formulating the main problem for the coming year, the study of the war games, strategical, tactical and naval, were carried on.

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The Bureau of Navigation having announced that it was not possible to provide a class of officers for the College for the Session of 1899, it was arranged that the N.A. Fleet would rendezvous at Newport, and the officers attend the College course.

After consultation with the commander-in-chief of the N.A. Fleet,

The president of the College arranged a programme for the summer which contemplated a course of six weeks--four weeks in June, and two weeks in July.

On May 29, 1899, the "New York", "Indiana", "Massachusetts" and "Texas" anchored in the harbor of Newport, ^{later on the New Orleans, Annapolis, and} and upon May 31, the War College opened with a lecture from Commander Stockton entitled "Preparation for war".

The course included the reading of Captain Mahan's lectures, the author being in Europe as naval member of the American--United States Commission to the Peace Conference; lectures by Captain Taylor, ^{Capt.} Commander McCalla, Captain Stockton, Major S. S. Leach of the Army; discussions on international law, "Operations in Charleston Harbor, the "Lessons of the Spanish War"; war games.

The attendance from the fleet averaged about 18 officers a day through the course, which was concluded in the latter part of
(For list of lectures, subjects, etc. See Appendix)