

TOURING THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

The NWC is a scholarly institution that focuses on the big picture in developing future leaders and in helping to chart the future of the Navy.

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The New York Council of the Navy League of the United States has a close relationship with the Naval War College. Faculty members from the NWC speak at Council events. (See p. 3 supra). The Council, through the Naval War College Foundation, makes donations that help to fund projects at the NWC that are not funded by the government including improvements to facilities and classrooms and the purchase of certain books and materials. In addition, many Council members participate in programs held at the NWC such as the yearly Current Strategy Forum. In October, RADM Joseph C. Strasser, USN (ret.), then-Executive Director of the Naval War College Foundation, showed the NWC to the The Log.

Situated on a gentle slope looking out across Narragansett Bay in Newport, Rhode Island, the NWC looks like many college campuses. Green lawns surround the college's buildings. The styles of architecture of the buildings differ, reflecting the changes in taste over the years as the college grew and more space was added. The oldest of the buildings is Founders Hall built in 1820, which was once the Newport Asylum for the Poor. It now houses the college's museum. In 1893,

the dark stone citadel of Luce Hall was constructed. Today, it houses offices and the College of Distance Learning. Spruance Hall is a more contemporary design and contains classrooms as well as the large hall that is used for ceremonies and lecture programs. The Admiral Henry Effingham Eccles Library can be found in Hewitt Hall built in 1976.



Founders Hall, once the Newport Poor House, is now a national landmark and home of the College's museum. (Photo: R.H. Wagner).

Except for the occasional painting or statue of an admiral, there is little to show that one is on a Navy base. Indeed, the only ship in sight was a cruise ship out in the Bay. Even the decommissioned aircraft carriers USS FORRESTAL (CV 59) and USS

SARATOGA (CV 60) that are moored at Naval Station Newport are not readily visible from the college.

The NWC was founded in 1884 in order to give naval officers an advanced course of professional study. As originally conceived, this course would be a month long program for junior officers. However, the college's first president Admiral Stephen B. Luce envisioned a much different institution. Unlike many of his contemporaries who believed that everything a naval officer needed to know could be learned on a ship, Luce believed that academic study and research into the causes, dynamics, and history of war would produce much more skilled officers and better leaders. "Fancy a university man aspiring to the honors of the legal profession and ignoring the law school and the science of law. . . . It must strike anyone who thinks about it as extraordinary that we members of the profession of arms should never have undertaken the study of our real business." Accordingly, Luce expanded the program into a year-long series of lectures, seminars, and research that became an important part of a naval officer's career.

Another major force in shaping the NWC was one of the first faculty members who later became its second president, Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan. During his time at the college, Mahan delivered a series of lectures that detailed how naval operations had affected geo-politics and economics which were published in 1890 as *The Influence of Seapower upon History, 1660-1783*. This book had an immediate worldwide impact. It brought Mahan into Theodore Roosevelt's circle and supported his efforts to revitalize the

Navy. Unfortunately, it was also taken to heart by Kaiser Wilhelm II who saw it as justifying his plan to build the German fleet into a force that would rival that of Great Britain. In any event, the book put Mahan and the NWC on the map.

The college was closed during America's participation in World War I. However, the officers who had trained at the NWC and the concepts that had been developed there proved so useful during the war that the college was re-opened and expanded after the war was concluded. In addition, it remained open during World War II and provided much analysis that was useful during that conflict.

During the Cold War, the College expanded to reflect the new roles that the United States military had assumed on the global stage. Courses on international relations, international law, and policy making were developed. International students were admitted. Three new buildings were constructed and computers became part of the NWC's arsenal. A wide variety of elective courses were added to complement the college's core offerings.

The Naval War College's mission today is two-pronged - - to educate tomorrow's leaders of the Navy and the nation, and to define the future of the Navy.

Focusing on the first prong, the NWC is not a technical school, rather it seeks to provide students with a foundation on the principles of war and strategic thought. "Everything is at the strategic level. There's nothing about how you fight your ship or what tactics to use. People have that by the time they get here," Admiral Strasser explained.



Luce Hall, named after the College's first president, Admiral Stephen B. Luce, was the college's first purpose-built structure. (Photo: R.H. Wagner)

To provide the necessary environment for broad strategic thinking, students do not come just from the Navy. Rather, about half of the American students are either officers from the Marine Corps, Army, Air Force, Coast Guard or civilians from defense-related agencies such as the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense. Approximately 100 officers from the militaries of foreign countries also study at the NWC each year. The college is not open to civilians who have an academic interest in learning about the subject matter.

Somewhat surprisingly for a military college located on a naval base, the students do not typically wear uniforms but rather usually wear business casual civilian clothing. It is felt that this allows the students to interact more freely, placing less emphasis on a student's rank or branch of service.

Students attend the college for a year and the academic year is divided into three 15-week trimesters. Upon

graduation, the NWC awards Master of Arts degrees in National Security and Strategic Studies as accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

The curriculum is based upon three core courses. The first of these is Strategy and Policy, which is designed to teach students to think strategically about the theory of warfare. The focus is on the relationship between a nation's political goals and the way in which its military means are most appropriately used to achieve those ends. "It looks at 15 different wars that have occurred throughout history, starting with the Peloponnesian Wars and working up to modern times. The students try to answer the questions: how did the war start; why did the war start; what were the objectives; were they successful; if successful, why; if not successful, why not; how did they mobilize public opinion; how did they finance the war; how did they end the war. It is not a history class but the students spend a week dissecting each of those things to give them ideas that could be useful to them at an appropriate time."

The second core course is National Security Decision Making, which is designed to assist leaders in dealing with the economic, political, and military factors of decision making in the national security arena. Case studies exploring major contemporary warfare, geopolitical crises, and contingency force-planning issues challenge students to develop the skills to assess the many, often competing, demands involved in the size, shape and budget of future military forces. Among other things, it looks at world trouble spots, "what kind of forces would best be used in those

areas and how you go about getting those forces, what is the decision process from the time the Navy says it needs an aircraft carrier until it is launching aircraft, what is the role of Congress, what is the role of the Congressional Budget Office, what is the role of the President. Part of that course also looks at leadership in large, complex organizations like a base, like an aircraft carrier. "

Joint Military Operations is the third core course. "This is operations at a strategic level - - fleets, divisions, things like that, how you use them. It really stresses jointness. Most everything is done in small seminar groups of about 15 students. In the seminar you might have two Army, an Air Force, a Marine, a Coast Guard, two internationals, one or two civilians and five Navy. You have a rich background, a lot of people doing a lot of different things. We want people when they leave here to have an idea of what the other guy brings to the table and what is the best way to utilize it."

The core courses take up about 75% of the students' time at the college. Another 20% is for elective courses. These courses are designed to complement the core curriculum and include such diverse offerings as: "National Security Policies of Middle Eastern States"; "Sun Tzu's The Art of War"; "War Gaming Theory and Practice"; "War At & From the Sea"; "Winston Churchill; Statesman and War Leader" and "Shipwrecks, Underwater Archaeology and Seapower." In the past, students could scatter their elective courses wherever they wanted. Based on guidance from the CNO, however, NWC students are now required to choose an area of study rather than

individual electives. The theory is that "they would have three lectures in one area and become more expert in that area."

Since the object of the school is to develop the individual, allocation of the remainder of his or her time is left to the student. According to the student handbook: "Your year at the College should be viewed as an opportunity to interact and exchange views with officers from sister services and civilian agencies. For many, this may be the first and only such other opportunity. Study hard, but leave appropriate time for reflection, development of perspective, participation in athletics, extracurricular activities, and family."



Spruance Hall includes an area for ceremonies and for large lectures. (Photo: R.H. Wagner).

The NWC has two constituent residential colleges for American students. The College of Naval Warfare is a multidisciplinary program designed for U.S. Naval and Coast Guard officers in the grades of captain or commander, U.S. Marine Corps, Army and Air Force officers in the grades of colonel or lieutenant colonel and civilians of equivalent seniority from various

Federal agencies. It is designed to prepare students to become flag officers or generals. More than half the entering students already have been awarded master's degrees and three percent hold doctorates. All will have compiled outstanding performance records during their 15 to 20-year service careers and be considered to have the potential for higher command. Between 200 to 225 students are admitted each year.

The College of Naval Command and Staff is designed for Navy and Coast Guard lieutenant commanders and officers of equivalent rank in the Marine Corps, Army, and Air Force as well as civilians of equivalent seniority from the defense-related agencies. It provides an initial opportunity for professional education for those who have been deemed to have the potential to take on the responsibilities of more senior officers. While the basic curriculum is essentially the same as that of the more senior students enrolled in the College of Naval Warfare, individual courses are tailored to the experience level and career needs of mid-grade officers. Half the entering class will have master's degrees and will have been outstanding performers during their 12 to 15-year careers. A typical entering class will have approximately 250 students.

There are two resident international programs at the NWC. The best known of these is the Naval Command College, founded by Admiral Arleigh Burke in 1956 as an elite school for senior naval officers (i.e., commanders and captains) from all over the world. (See The Log, Fall 2004 at p. 13). "The international officers are very carefully selected. It is a real feather in their cap to get here. What it signifies is

that they are doing very well in their career. Statistically, in the senior level course, about 55% have become admirals in their navies and about 10% have become the chiefs. There are somewhere between 25 to 30 chiefs of navies who have graduated from here."

"The invitations are issued by the Chief of Naval Operations to their chief of naval operations. There is input from Washington as well. Several of our largest NATO allies, Japan, Korea, Argentina and Chile are every year, then there are others that are every two years or three years. This year, for the first time, there is an Iraqi with us."

The second international program is the Naval Staff College. As with the NCC, each year the CNO invites selected foreign countries to send officers to Newport. However, this program is designed for more junior "mid-career" officers (i.e., lieutenants and lieutenant commanders). The Naval Staff College used to only offer a six-month program but "now we have a full year course that goes from August to June just like all the other courses here. We still have retained a six-month course from January to June for people who just want the abbreviated course." The curriculum emphasizes naval planning and decision-making, with particular attention to broadening the officers' understanding of the importance and role of seapower in international affairs. Since its inception in 1972, over 1,441 naval officers have graduated representing 119 countries. The average class size has increased to 32 students.

There is also a non-resident academic program: the College of Distance Learning. This program enables military officers and civilians in

defense-related agencies located off campus to take courses using seminars held at some 20 locations around the United States, CDs and/or the internet. The courses are similar to those offered on campus and can lead to graduate credit, a diploma, Joint Professional Military Education (Phase 1) credit, and possibly even a master's degree. There are more than 2,000 students taking courses in the College of Distance Learning making it the largest part of the NWC in terms of number of students.

As noted earlier, the second prong of the NWC's mission is to define the future of the Navy. It does this through the development of new operational concepts, experiments at the fleet level, and refinement of naval doctrine. The primary vehicle for accomplishing these tasks is the NWC's research arm, the Center for Naval Warfare Studies. The Center is organized into six departments: Strategic Research, War Gaming, Advanced Research, Oceans Law and Policy, Naval War College Press, Warfare Analysis and Research Department, as well as a detachment of the Office of Naval Intelligence. The Dean of the Center also provides support to the Strategic Studies Group, an independent organization which receives its tasking from and reports directly to the Chief of Naval Operations.

Of these departments, War Gaming is perhaps the best known. War games are vehicles for generating, testing, and debating strategic and operational concepts, and for exercising military and civilian decision makers in maritime and joint warfare. They give the participants insights into the dynamics of war and suggest concepts

that could be exploited in real-world situations. The college started employing them in 1887 based upon German military models. At the end of World War II, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz wrote, "The war with Japan has been re-enacted in the game rooms at the War College by so many people, and in so many different ways, that nothing that happened during the war was a surprise - absolutely nothing except the Kamikaze tactics towards the end of the war - we had not visualized these."

"It is clear that the College today has a higher profile to all of the folks who look to what we do, a greater impact than it has had throughout its 125-year career," NWC President RADM Jacob L. Schuford, USN, recently said in a speech in New York to the Naval War College Foundation. "What we are doing matters very greatly. It matters to a number of folks, not just the students who come through the college. It matters to the Navy, it matters increasingly to our operational commanders - - the commanders around the world who are responsible for winning and losing critical fights. These are not the folks that are in Washington or in some headquarters.

"The war we fight today is one that is no longer driven by large concentrations of forces that move in mass automatistity, with a few folks that understand just what has to be done. This is the era where individuals have strategic operational effect. The implications now are dawning on most of our leadership. It requires a much more extensive and quality-educated individual, not just officers but senior enlisted individuals. All the folks that comprise the military are going to be

relied upon increasingly to convey judgment, to understand situations, to be able to connect those dots, to do all those things, in short, that are not trained skills but those skills that are part of the intellect - - command, leadership. Those are not things you can train to. There is no command training course. There is no leadership training course. It is a function of education. That has been one of those transformational things over the last couple of years. The Navy leadership as well as others [recognize] how vital, what it is that we deliver and in many cases, deliver uniquely, in Newport is to this nation's Navy, its military, its national leadership, and indeed, the leadership across the world.”