

2009

President's Forum

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Rear Admiral Jacob L. Shuford, U.S. Navy, became the fifty-first President of the Naval War College on 12 August 2004. He was succeeded on 6 November 2008 in a change-of-command ceremony on the College's Dewey Field by Rear Admiral James P. Wisecup, U.S. Navy.

PRESIDENT'S FORUM



The Naval War College at 125: Un Tour d'Horizon

BY THE TIME THIS ISSUE of the *Naval War College Review* is distributed, my old friend and one of the nation's most brilliant and capable naval officers will be at the desk where I have written commentaries for sixteen previous issues. I am sure that the Naval War College Press will have great hopes that his submissions are timelier than those of his predecessor. This is only one of the many challenges Admiral Wisecup will face. Some of them will carry strategic consequence for the College and the Navy.

I have used these pages in the "President's Forum" to convey to the *Review's* diverse audiences—internal and external to the College—the objectives and scheme of advance of this institution over the past fifty-one months. The ideas the Forum has incorporated, while often argued, framed, and edited at the President's desk, were actually gathered from across the institution. The Forum has thus been, I believe, purposeful in capturing and developing vision as it emerged from the genius of this place. Further, the articles, taken together, represent the College's "PIM"—its "planned intended movement." The advance along track, while it has been very encouraging, has brought new challenges and opportunities into view—new external factors into the calculus of the track. The College's horizon presents now a decidedly different set of features from those appearing on that horizon four years ago.

As the nation confronts a dramatically altered strategic and political environment, the Naval War College has been thrust into a position of increased prominence on the Navy's agenda. The College is now operating in four major lanes to meet the challenges of today's global security environment:

- Developing strategic and operational leaders

- Bolstering the ability of the Navy and its maritime partners to lead and support at the operational and strategic levels of war
- Marrying theory and practice to advance the art and science of decision making and command and control in globally networked, self-organizing environments
- Building and sustaining global maritime partnerships.

These four initiatives align to the expanded mission set for the College, and they should drive Navy resourcing priorities consistent with the strategic leverage that Navy leadership expects from this institution.

The faculty and staff of the Naval War College have accomplished much in just the past few years to advance and substantiate this expanded mission set, first and foremost through restructuring the previous model of a single core curriculum to create instead two distinct curricula for the senior and intermediate academic programs. Additionally, the curricula have been expanded and electives restructured along functional and regional lines to better support combatant and component commanders' regional security strategies. The research, analysis, and gaming mission has also expanded and realigned its activities with senior operational commanders facing critical operational challenges in our forward theaters.

The Naval War College first proposed, and was then directed to take the coordinating and implementing lead in developing, the core of enlisted and officer Professional Military Education (PME) across a career *continuum*, from sailor to admiral. The continuum that the College developed reflects joint career-development policy and Navy policy to align PME requirements with career progression milestones. It has also provided a means to impose coherence on the Navy's education strategy. More important, this has had the effect of driving the very best and most promising leaders into the College's main programs. In short, the curricula offered at the Naval War College have moved from "nice to have" to "essential" for advancement to positions of senior leadership. The total throughput demand has roughly doubled. To meet the additional audiences required by these new policy objectives, the College's distance-learning program alone has risen from roughly 1,500 in 2002 to over fourteen thousand in 2008, and it will grow to what we estimate will exceed twenty-five thousand in 2010. Residential programs reflect similar growth, placing huge new demands on faculty, staff, and infrastructure.

Leveraging another key, unique strength of this institution and recognizing the need for a more robust Navy contribution to joint command and control, the College has conceived and funded a series of ambitious new programs to strengthen Navy combat readiness at the operational level of war. These

initiatives—the flag-level Commanders' Course, the Assess and Assist teams, the Senior Mentor program, Halsey war-fighting analyses, the Maritime Staff Operators Course, the rechartered Naval Operational Planner Course, clustered electives, the restructured basic curricula, and a range of gaming activity focused on major operational challenges and operational-level command and control—were carefully designed to be interdependent and mutually reinforcing, to work across functional and organizational lines. Through this “fabric” of work, the Naval War College has been thrust squarely into the main line of advance for our Navy. External to the College, routine bureaucratic processes preoccupied with some of its individual threads could easily unravel this fabric. Keeping it all stitched together will require great skill and forceful argument.

The Naval War College's role in coordinating the procedural approach for, and developing the analytic underpinnings of, the sea services' unified maritime strategy, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, continues for the maturing and refinement of the strategy and its supporting concepts, principally through Title X war-gaming. The revived “Global” gaming series is just one of the events the College routinely plans and executes here to help align service plans and programming with strategy. The extensive collaborative relationships that have been so carefully built among credentialed experts in national security and among researchers and operational practitioners—across the nation and the world—cannot be replicated or “faked.” Keeping this fact before key Navy leadership will be essential to ensure that this irreplicable source of intellectual capital and engine for concept generation and development continues to inform the Navy's strategic resourcing decision process.

Along with the restructuring of its electives program along regional axes, the College has made clear advances with its international programs and has established initiatives for more effective collaboration. Among them is the approach the College adopted for its analytic work in support of the new maritime strategy—an approach that emphasized inclusion and international collaboration. The International Seapower Symposium has taken on new life and significance, and it is becoming much better linked into the regional symposiums around the world. Our Naval Command College/Naval Staff College (our senior and junior international programs, respectively) seminars and symposiums are now becoming well established (we just finished our fourth one, in Bahrain, with our Middle Eastern graduates). Leveraging this international goodwill and reach will require extraordinary effort and increased support from regional commanders.

We are in our third year of conducting Flag and General Officer Commanders' courses, which we have established on roughly a biennial basis, rotating through the various regions. The College is also restructuring internally to focus its teaching and research faculty on regional, cultural, and diplomatic history, on

economic, military, and political issues, as we evolve our regional studies concept (which will be the basis for the Naval War College Foundation's next "capital campaign"). Also, our Chief of Naval Operations, with full support from our state congressional delegation, has made the construction of the College's new "International Forum for Operational and Strategic Leadership" a near-term priority. Turning promises into brick and mortar, however, will be no easy task.

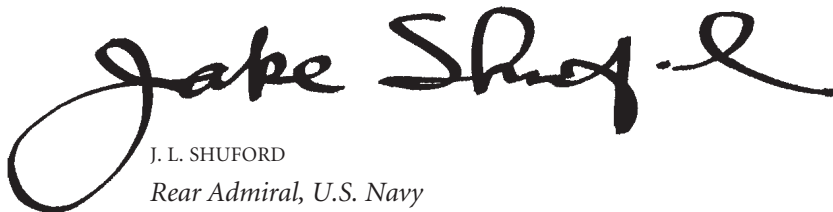
We have also finally got resources and authority to move the Naval War College's information systems to the ".edu" domain, which will greatly expand our ability to stay connected to academic and policy institutions and to all our alumni around the world (very good news, indeed!) and to share ideas and exchange perspectives more easily. In a similar vein, the *Naval War College Review* seeks articles from the best minds and most authoritative perspectives from around the globe on issues of significance to the maritime world. Means are being explored to begin to translate the *Review* into several of the world's major languages and to distribute it globally. Again—a resource challenge that will require persistence and creative approaches.

A "Rediscovered" War College. A host of opportunities create this new horizon for the fifty-second President. But he has a prominent platform from which to survey and pursue them and a group of senior naval leaders who recognize the role the College can play. In short, it is difficult to find an area of priority interest for the Navy where this institution is not somehow contributing—if not leading or playing a catalytic role. I am very encouraged by what I describe as a "rediscovery" of the Naval War College by the Navy's leadership. Three successive Chiefs of Naval Operations have clearly recognized and relied—increasingly—on the unique strengths of this institution. There is a growing awareness as well that this is where the DNA of the Navy is evolved and transmitted—the roots of our service ethos, providing a shared conception of what it means to be in the *Navy* above and beyond the diverse communities that comprise it.

External to the College, the nation and the Navy are in the midst of a careful assessment of the future international security environment. The unique role of the Navy within that environment and the densely interconnected nature of the international arena play directly to the College's unique ability to strengthen maritime security cooperation and sustain combat readiness. Likewise, the direct linkage to the highest levels of the Navy keeps the academic leadership, faculty, and staff fully engaged and current in the service's internal debates over the future's key challenges. This in turn positively influences the College's curriculum, keeping it relevant and current. Also, new missions, such as developing operational-level expertise with the Navy's operating forces, promise to increase the College's value and relevance. Finally, the emerging vision of Naval Station Newport as

the developmental hub for Navy leaders offers potential for even greater national and international reach and impact. The College has become a formal part of the Navy Strategic Planning Process and thereby has gained another avenue of influence directly affecting Navy strategy, operational concepts, and programs. Moreover, research, analysis, and gaming activities provide critical support to national security investment decisions. Likewise, the College's direct involvement with fleet operations and processes within our maritime headquarters, via our assessment and assistance teams, our flag-level operational commanders' courses, and our competency requirements analyses, is clearly on the critical path for the Navy as it moves toward its objective of robust capability at the operational level of war. Full implementation of the Navy's PME Continuum will further support this objective: sailors and officers will be introduced to professional military education much earlier in their careers and will undergo professional military education on an ongoing, cyclical basis, passing *repeatedly* through the programs provided here. Ultimately, the College will be engaged, directly or indirectly, with about 350,000 sailors and officers and, potentially, thousands of Department of the Navy civilian employees.

As the presidency of the Naval War College passes from one officer to another for the fifty-first time, the College faces a historic opportunity to increase its value to the Navy, the nation, and the international community. The strategic environment has become more complex and unpredictable, increasing the value of education and research and creating an imperative for both responsive maritime command and control and enhanced international cooperation. The College is well positioned to exploit this opportunity and to secure the minimal additional investment required to meet the ambitious expectations the Navy has set for it. Success will ensure a highly leverageable institution for Navy and national strategic objectives—but will demand the concert and focus of the College's vast intellectual resources, relationships, and reputation for integrity. On the eve of its 125th year, as the College's fifty-second President takes his fix and lays out its PIM, I have great faith that the institution is headed fair and that he will "keep her so."



J. L. SHUFORD

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