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The Barometer—Readers' Comments

Robert W. Hendershott
U.S. Naval Reserve

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THE BAROMETER



READERS' COMMENTS

This section has been established to provide a forum for the useful exchange of ideas between *Naval War College Review* readers and the Naval War College.

Unofficial comments by the readers on articles which appear in the *Review* are encouraged and will be considered for publication in subsequent issues.

Comments should be addressed to:

The Editor
Naval War College Review
 Naval War College
 Newport, Rhode Island 02840

The comments which follow were forwarded to the President, Naval War College, by the Commanding Officer, Naval Reserve Officers School (NROS) 13-1, Seattle, Washington. They were originated by Cdr. Robert W. Hendershott, USNR-R, who instructs NROS Course 412, *Military Planning*, at the Seattle unit. Officers in the Reserve, in particular, should find them to be of considerable significance. Ed.

TAKE THOSE DIFFICULT COURSES

The Naval Reserve officer should be exposed to *Military Planning* early in his naval career. It appears paramount that the young officer have the experience of exposure to the fine courses in the Naval War College curricula that will lead to greater competency as a naval leader and commander. It is more apparent, to this instructor of *Military Planning*, that many officers do not have the fundamental background in planning that they should possess as a leader of military forces. This is evi-

denced by the simple revelation, which is not apparent to the young officer, of how a commander normally derives his mission from a superior.

This experience is essential for greater understanding, as an example, of the tactics which are discussed in popular novels and periodicals which the officer will read as a matter of interest. This is especially true of such books as *The Last Battle* by Cornelius Ryan and *Bay of Pigs* by Haynes Johnson. These are but two of many. This kind of knowledge will lead to a greater understanding of tactics and planning of the past as well as the present and the future.

The consensus of instructors at the NROS 13-1, Seattle, Washington, is that *Military Planning* should be a "must" course for every officer and that when he is counseled concerning his naval career and future he understands that this course is to be eventually completed. It should lead to further exposure to the other fine courses offered by the Naval War College.

Officers who have already completed the course continually indicate that they are using the fundamentals of Military Planning in the conduct of their civilian businesses. The Naval War College parallels this in its exercise in which the student officer is asked to compare problem solving with Military Planning or relate it to the military situation. This instructor used a thesis format for this comparison with good effect. This format was formulated by a retired Naval Reserve Commander teaching at the University of Washington.

The Seattle NROS jealously guards the 400 numbered courses in its curriculum as "special" privilege type courses which lend themselves to a prestige type of exposure for the student officer. The courses in particular are 402 International Law, 407 National Strategy in the Cold War, 408 Counterinsurgency, and 412 Military Planning. The instructor of 402 International Law, Commander Raymond Royal, is presenting a weekly television program called "World Law,"

and it probably will have Military Planning students on the program for a discussion of their experiences in the 412 course and its relationship to movement of military forces on the high seas over, under, and above it.

In these kinds of courses the student officers are stimulated to outstanding and effective class performance because of the timely problems and curricula which are so inherently interesting . . .

Enroll in these courses, especially Military Planning, with an open mind and with a resolve and a purpose in mind to progress at a normal rate and expect to work hard. The required writing is not prohibitive, providing that the student officer will keep up and will do some kind of writing each week. In this way the Seattle Military Planning students are doing quite well; they are thrusting themselves into the course without reservation and are doing a good job of timely progression.

Robert W. Hendershott
Commander, U.S. Naval Reserve



Nearly all the battles which are regarded as masterpieces of the military art, from which have been derived the foundation of states and the fame of commanders, have been battles of maneuver.

Winston Churchill: The World Crisis, ii, 1923