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Set and Drift

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SET AND DRIFT



The New Chief of Staff. Capt. Eugene B. Henry, Jr., U.S. Navy, relieved Rear Adm. J.C. Wylie, Jr., U.S. Navy as Chief of Staff of the Naval War College on 23 September. Besides an extensive operational background in destroyers, including Command of DesRon 24 in the Atlantic and DesFLOT 5 in the Pacific, he brings to this position varied experience gained as Chief of Staff, Middle East Force, and in duties with the Office of the Chief of Naval Operation (OP-60) and with the Joint Staff of the Joint Chiefs (J-3). Capt. Henry has had previous duty at the Naval War College in both a student and staff capacity, and has served as Assistant Chief of Staff, Plans, since 1966.

Fall War Gaming Activities. The fall of 1968 found the War Gaming Department of the Naval War College heavily engaged in that part of its mission calling for support of the fleet. Such support took the form of the conduct of two games, BLUE SKY VII and ESCORT BLAZER II.

BLUE SKY VII is a SACLANT-sponsored headquarters training exercise (CPX). The exercise made use of the Navy Electronic Warfare Simulator's (NEWS) remote play capability, a feature which permitted SACLANT's watchstanders to play out a situation involving increased international tensions and contingency operations right from SACLANT's own Strategic Direction Center (SDC), the most significant advantage of this being that it permitted the player to perform the exercise in familiar surroundings and with the same facilities that would be used in the corresponding actual situation. This technique employed duplex teletype secure circuits between SACLANT headquarters in Norfolk, Va., and the NEWS in Newport for reception and transmission of exercise traffic. A Control Group made up of SACLANT and War Gaming Department personnel located at the NEWS acted as subordinates of the remote players, responding to their message directives and utilizing the display features of the NEWS to simulate the movement of NATO naval units and aircraft. In addition, the Control Group played the opposition to NATO based on a SACLANT-created special opposition operation order setting forth forces involved and the conduct of their use.

BLUE SKY VII served to improve the readiness of SACLANT headquarters to respond to a cold war contingency, exercised the NATO Alert System, and provided for the strategic direction of NATO Forces at sea. Actual current plans, instructions, NATO publications, and standard operating procedures were used. Heading the SACLANT Directing Staff at Newport was Capt. John Fennema, Royal Netherlands Navy.

ESCORT BLAZER II, a 1968 version of last year's original amphibious war game, was sponsored by Commander Amphibious Group FOUR (Rear Adm. David Welch). The purpose of this game was to examine a recently developed contingency plan dealing with a nation experiencing the upheaval of insurgency supported from outside that country and threatening the interests of the United States and its allies.

The manner of conduct of ESCORT BLAZER II encompassed three distinct phases. Phase I examined the problems of embarkation of troops and material at CONUS ports and their sorties toward the Amphibious Objective Area. The second phase dealt with the latter stages of the transit and the opposition encountered at sea during that period in

the operation. Simultaneously, the problems of evacuation of U.S. nationals present in an area of unrest and threatened by the associated violence were examined by subjecting them to game play. The final phase of the game centered about the ship-to-shore movement of the embarked Marine Expeditionary Brigade and its exercise in controlled response to an insurgency situation in an urban environment. Members of Fleet Marine Force Atlantic staff contributed to the game and received benefits from it by providing players and control group personnel to augment the COMPHIBGRU FOUR and War Gaming Department personnel.

The original ESCORT BLAZER War Game, proposed by Rear Adm. C. Edwin Bell, Commander Amphibious Group FOUR in 1967, contributed heavily to the development of an important contingency plan. ESCORT BLAZER II provided a means of testing that plan by subjecting it to thorough examination and review by operational staffs under a demanding simulated situation. Both games stand out as excellent examples of the use of war gaming, and the NEWS in particular, for support of the fleet.

