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A Statement By The Chief of Naval Operations

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A STATEMENT BY THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS ON THE ROLE OF THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE IN THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF NAVAL OFFICERS

The continuing security of our country and the achievement of worldwide peace have seldom been more dependent upon the wisdom and judgment which professional military leaders can contribute to the highest councils of our nation. The several joint and service colleges, designed to prepare selected officers for positions of higher responsibility, have thus assumed an importance greater than ever before.

The functions and mission of the Naval War College are defined in OPNAV INSTRUCTION 1520.12B of 3 April 1965. To prepare officers for higher responsibilities by increasing their knowledge continues to be the goal of the Naval War College. This unchanging task has had an expanding base of required knowledge as the rapid growth of science and technology encompasses all of the Navy's efforts.

In the course of a career, officers of the Navy develop a professional competence in naval science as a result of: (1) operational experience at sea, (2) service in the Navy Department and in the Shore Establishment, and (3) completion of professional and technical studies. To develop more fully this acquired competence and to prepare selected officers for positions of higher responsibility, an understanding of sea power combined with naval warfare and the interrelation of military, political and economic factors of national security is essential. As a part of the study program, the stimulation of intellectual curiosity and the development of a capacity for independent and objective reasoning are of primary importance. The Naval War College presents a course of study which, in combination with and building on the acquired experience of officer students, seeks to develop a scope and depth of understanding of the principles of naval warfare and national security which will equip these officers to serve in positions of high responsibility.

At the career point at which naval officers attend the Naval War College, they have been working very hard at sea and shore. Our career progression is such that the pace is intense. A year at the Naval War College offers an opportunity for a needed change of pace, a change in perspective and in pressure. In addition to formal matters of substance and procedure, the Naval War College opportunity to think in relative tranquility, to research against the largest backdrop, to exchange searching broad ideas and ideals, to weigh comparatively the ideas of distinguished speakers and stimulating classmates, and to argue alternatives through to meaningful conclusions are indeed energizing processes of the first order. How to think clearly, then, is as important as what to think.

The Chief of Naval Operations occupies a unique vantage point from which to view the products of the War College. This scrutiny includes senior officers at all levels of important commands as well as staff officers serving on service, joint and combined staffs. By every standard, our naval officer graduates of the Naval War College meet the acid test of fulfilling burdensome, trying, and sensitive duties with more than expected facility and dedication.

DAVID L. McDONALD