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AN OPEN LETTER TO NAVAL RESERVE OFFICERS' SCHOOLS

The NROS and Naval War College Courses

By Lieutenant Commander
Robert P. Provost
U.S. Naval Reserve



What does the future hold for Naval War College courses being made available to Reserve officers through the Naval Reserve Officers' Schools (NROS)? I'll try to answer this question balancing a crystal ball in one hand and nine years of NROS-Naval War College course experience in the other.

To launch these courses successfully and then conduct them in a manner which will assure quality solutions and continued student enrollment has presented a problem to the NROS. Yes, these courses require considerable effort and have high standards, but the benefits to Reserve officers, personally and professionally, provide an equally high return on their investment. They add an educational dimension not otherwise attained by NROS.

Over the years, sufficient NROS academic problems have been generated by Naval War College samplings of student solutions to cause a near-strained attitude between the NROS and the Naval War College. Unfortunately, these difficulties have

produced a "reluctance to become involved" atmosphere in many NROS's.

In the early years of NROS there was extensive Naval War College course participation. When the quality control problem reared its head, a series of summer NROS Instructor Seminars were held at the Naval War College which produced numerous qualified instructors. However, by this time a large number of *motivated* Reserve officers attending NROS had completed one or more of the Naval War College courses. Consequently, NROS enrollment in these courses continued to decline, and because of this decline the Instructor Seminars haven't been held in the past few years.

At the present time, there are 21 NROS classes involving 313 students in Naval War College courses. These figures are rather disheartening when compared with the 1957 figures of 132 classes and 1,199 students. I believe they indicate the great need for NROS rescheduling of the Naval War College sequence, and with proper

emphasis and as a result of recent administrative change I predict a substantial increase in enrollment every year. Why?

From the NROS Commanding Officer perspective there is prestige in having the Naval War College courses included in the curriculum. From the student officer standpoint there is personal and professional growth opportunities provided by Military Planning (412), Naval Operations (413), National and International Security Organization (414), Command Logistics (415), and International Relations (416).

Until last year these courses were not available to junior officers. The elimination of this restriction and the recently launched opportunity for junior officers returning from active duty to affiliate with an NROS and receive drill pay will certainly attract new interest to these provocative courses.

NROS program officers (Naval District) and Naval Reserve Group Commanders are providing the NROS Commanding Officer with encouragement and help, which are bound to improve the quality of instruction and course offerings and which will result in increased enrollments.

Another factor to be considered is the growing interest in these courses because of the positive evidence that they do carry weight in the selection process. For Reserve officers in a drilling unit, NROS and a Naval War College course offer a winning combination.

How do you get your NROS to start offering one of the Naval War College courses? First, and most important, is a qualified instructor — someone who has successfully completed the course. If a qualified instructor is not available, encourage the NROS Commanding Officer to select someone to enroll in a Naval War College course offered by the

Correspondence School. Then, with some encouragement, a pay billet, and adequate seminar-type classroom space, a class can be organized. A cycle of Naval War College courses can then be effectively scheduled and implemented which will reflect favorably on the NROS, instructors, and students alike.

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

Lieutenant Commander Robert P. Provost, U. S. Naval Reserve, holds a B.S. from the University of Minnesota. During World War II, he served in the Pacific. Lieutenant Commander Provost has been affiliated with NROS 9-6, Minneapolis, Minn., as a student, instructor, and as Commanding Officer. In 1963 and 1964 Lieutenant Commander Provost served as NROS Moderator at the Naval War College NROS Instructor Seminars. At the present time he is an instructor for NROS 412, Military Planning.

Lieutenant Commander Provost is the Executive Director of the Minnesota Insurance Information Center.

The quotation which follows provides further support for the views expressed by Lieutenant Commander Provost. It was excerpted from a letter received from a Naval Reserve Captain who is a former NROS Commanding Officer.

In late May last while on . . . [temporary active duty] I was asked to produce a position paper overnight . . . If it had not been for the War College Correspondance Course training I never could have done it. Officers not familiar with the College are amazed when a Reserve can produce good staff studies on short notice and often think it some special training or talent from civil life, whereas, if you follow the War College format and apply a little judgment to fit the situation you can always produce a fair study and with luck and a little hard work a good one . . .