

## PRESIDENT'S FORUM

---



*Nearly a dozen decades have passed since the Naval War College's first, informal, change of command, and the world has changed in ways that even the forward thinkers at the College could never have imagined.*

THIS IS THE FIFTIETH TIME that command of the Naval War College has been passed from one officer to another. The first occurred in August 1886, when Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan assumed the presidency following Commodore Stephen B. Luce's highly successful tour as the College's founding President. It is fascinating to wonder what may have been on Mahan's mind as he arrived on horseback in front of Founder's Hall to begin his first day as President.

This is yet another incredibly humbling reminder to me of the footsteps we more recent Presidents have been walking in, in our service here at the College. Looking back over our shoulders, we see such historical figures as Luce, Mahan, Spruance, Stockdale, Turner, and all the others who have served as President of this great institution. Their vision, their contributions to the College's strategic tradition, and their strong leadership still serve as our anchors to windward.

Nearly a dozen decades have passed since that first informal change of command, and the world has changed in ways that even the forward thinkers at the Naval War College could never have imagined.

The nation's citizens, and the Navy that protects them, have been on a great journey during these many years. They have seen the horrors of war and the glories of peace. They have marked the closing of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and they have watched as Americans left footprints on the moon. Six generations of Naval War College graduates observed and assisted as the U.S. Navy moved from the last vestiges of sailing ships into steam propulsion and then nuclear-powered warships, and into an era of network-centric warfare, FORCEnet, and adaptive force planning. It has indeed been an honor and a

pleasure to be at the helm of this historic institution for a portion of this remarkable journey.

I'd like to touch briefly on some recent remarkable events and activities:

- Over 1,050 students graduated from our resident and nonresident programs. The class of 2004 was the largest in the College's history, and it reflected the renewed emphasis now being placed on obtaining professional military education.
- The Mahan Scholars and the first two Halsey Groups completed a set of research and analyses of significant strategic and operational challenges of concern to the Navy and the Fleet. This year's Halsey Groups, in particular, achieved project success in the areas of ballistic missile defense and theater antisubmarine warfare when the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) commented at their outbrief, "This work puts the Naval War College at the center of thinking and working operational challenges of direct concern to me."
- Fifty-two of the world's chiefs of naval operations and 120 other delegates from around the world gathered in Newport for the Sixteenth International Seapower Symposium. Hosted by Admiral Vern Clark, our CNO, it represented a tremendous opportunity to encourage maritime security cooperation with the leaders of the major navies in the world.
- The quality and relevance of our College of Naval Command and Staff and our College of Distance Education programs were revalidated—and fully accredited—by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, through the Process for Accreditation of Joint Education visit.
- In order to improve access to our nonresident independent study program, the College of Distance Education developed and fielded a new CD/ROM-based version of the College's Web-enabled intermediate-service-college program.
- We presented the College's Distinguished Graduate Leadership Award to General Michael Hagee, USMC, the current Commandant of the Marine Corps, who graduated from the Naval War College and the Naval Command College in 1987.
- In conjunction with Brown University, we hosted a "Cold War at Sea" conference that brought active-duty Russian officers and retired Soviet Navy officers together with their American counterparts for frank—and occasionally revealing—discussions of naval activities during the Cold War.

- The International Law Department hosted a very successful and timely conference entitled “International Law Challenges: Homeland Security and Combating Terrorism.”
- The College’s annual ethics conference provided a great forum to discuss the ethical and moral challenges that face our graduates as they one day reenter the global war on terrorism, including the ongoing Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. This conference took place last fall, even before news of potential mistreatment of prisoners and other ethical issues began to break.
- For the fifth consecutive year, we commemorated the American victory at the battle of Midway with a multifaceted educational program that included a salute to six veterans of the battle who attended the celebration, followed by a dinner dance under the stars, nearby on Dewey Field.

I have touched upon only a few of the major accomplishments of the College in the past year. The greatest contribution, however, will come from the improved leadership abilities of our graduates—to lead change and to make key decisions in times of stress, and to be more effective in helping their superiors do the same.

As proud as I am of the War College team’s recent accomplishments, I’m just as proud—and really excited—about ongoing efforts that will serve this institution, the Navy, and our military well into the future. These include:

- Ongoing research, war gaming, and workshops for the CNO and the Navy Staff, for Commander U.S. Fleet Forces Command and for Commander Fifth Fleet, for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, for the Department of Homeland Security, and for the Transportation Security Administration—and for the Navy Warfare Development Command.
- A world’s ocean strategy—a maritime strategy writ large—for the Secretary of the Navy and CNO.
- A pilot course for Joint Professional Military Education Phase II for our senior students—a major step toward accelerating the number of fully credentialed officers serving in critical senior assignments and increasing their promotion opportunities.
- Our recently established collaboration efforts with the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs in New York City, with the Council on Foreign Relations in New York and Washington, D.C., and with the Kuznetsov Naval Academy in St. Petersburg, Russia—all expanding opportunities for research, enriching our curriculum, and furthering

mutual understanding between our military, our citizens, and the international community.

- Our efforts to understand better the business side of graduate education. We know that some in academia say “a university is not a business,” but we understand we must compete for resources and deliver a return on our Navy’s investment. Here at the College we are working to develop meaningful metrics we can use to track our progress. Simple to state but hard to do—we join other graduate institutions that seek to build a better business case for graduate education.
- Along with other Echelon II commands throughout the Navy, those that report directly to CNO, we have begun work in developing our Human Capital Strategy, working on how we can more effectively conduct our people business, trying to understand better what it means to consider people as a source of competitive advantage for an organization, and to determine better their value to us.

These are a few of the exciting things we have embarked on in the past few months that hold much promise for future progress.

Finally, I want to say publicly one last time how much we value the contributions of the Naval War College Foundation—to our academic program, to our physical plant and facilities, and to our student activities. The Foundation members truly provide us the margin of excellence in everything we do. I thank them for more than just their members’ financial support; these members are true friends of the College, and many have become our personal friends during our time in Newport. Thank you!

My family and I leave the College in the very capable hands of Admiral and Mrs. Shuford. Admiral, I’m sure you will enjoy your return to Newport and the College. This has been a remarkable year for Kip and me, and we will always have a warm spot in our hearts for our many friends in Newport.

R. A. ROUTE

*Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy  
President, Naval War College*