



schools and courses



COMMUNICATION OFFICER TRAINING

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Publication of the Truxton Signal Book in 1799 established a standard communication procedure for the U.S. Navy and produced a requirement that one or more persons in each command be qualified to interpret communications from the commander and translate them into the correct course of action. As a result of tactical and technical developments during the ensuing decades, particularly the spectacular technological advances of the twentieth century, communications has evolved from a minor support role to an essential part of the command structure. Today there is a need for large numbers of specially trained communicators to manage the complex systems which provide the means for command and control of our operating forces. The Naval Communications School, Newport, Rhode Island, is charged with providing the prospective communication officer with sufficient training in procedures, techniques, equipment and organization for command support to enable him to manage the communication assets of a shipboard organization properly and efficiently.

The greatest need for trained communication officers, in terms of total numbers, is in the fleet; accordingly, the majority of officers trained at the communication school are those ordered to afloat billets. Eleven classes designed specifically for fleet communicators are conducted each year, providing training to about 500 officers. At any one time, upwards of 200 officers are under instruction in the fleet course.

Some 70 percent of these students are recent graduates of the Naval Officer Candidate School. The Naval Academy and NROTC units provide a sizable input during the months immediately following their graduation and commissioning. Remaining quotas are normally filled by officers on permanent change of station orders after completing one or more tours of duty. The ranks of Warrant Officer through Lieutenant Commander are represented in practically every class, and graduates go to every type of ship and afloat staff in the U.S. Navy.

Brief History

The Naval Communications School had its beginning in 1950 when the Chief of Naval Personnel established the Communication Officers Short Course at the General Line School at Monterey, California. The mission of that course was to train officers in the operational aspects of communications, and it was designed primarily as a refresher course for Reserve officers with some communications experience who had been recalled to active duty. Although the curriculum was directed primarily toward fleet communications requirements, the course provided excellent training for officers ordered to shore communication billets. The course proved to be of such benefit, both to the individuals concerned and to their commands, that the school was made a permanent part of the Navy's service school structure.

In November 1953, the school was transferred to its present location at Newport, Rhode Island, and established as a component of the Naval Schools Command, Newport. Since that time several courses have been added — and some discontinued — as a result of recommendations submitted by the operating forces; all have been designed to meet the specific needs of the fleet. To date, more than 6,000 officers and men have been graduated. The school functions autonomously under an Officer-in-Charge who reports to the Commanding Officer, Naval Schools Command, Newport.

Communications Afloat Curriculum Revised

To improve the training of officers ordered to afloat communication billets, a completely revised curriculum was introduced in November 1967. The new curriculum was developed through the combined efforts of the communication school staff, the Electronics Training Branch of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, and the Readiness Division of the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Communications). Recommendations and suggestions from operational commanders provided valuable assistance in tailoring the course to meet the current requirements of the operating forces.

The new course is 17 weeks in length and includes basic electricity and electronics theory, construction and operation of communications equipment, and

the function and relationship of this equipment in the various communication systems now in use in the fleet. The student also receives training in all aspects of operational communications, including organization, procedures, interpretation of operation orders and plans, frequency plans, operational reports, message drafting, files, maintenance and administration, cryptography, and duties of the Registered Publications Custodian. Teaching methods employ practical application of course material to the greatest possible extent. A school graduate is able to exercise confident management of the personnel and material resources of the communication department of his command.

Communications Ashore Curriculum

Officers ordered to shore activities receive four weeks of training in subjects and procedures related to point-to-point land-based communications, termination of ship-to-shore circuits, fleet broadcast and relay procedures, teletype procedures, and the Automatic Digital Network (AUTODIN). The curriculum also includes communication security, cryptography, both on- and off-line, and the understanding and correct use of allied communication publications. The student receives basic instruction in the construction and operation of communications equipment, and operation of the whole as a communication system. Training includes an indoctrination tour of a Naval Communication Station. Five classes are convened annually, with a capacity of 25 students per class.

Two One-week Courses Offered

In addition to courses designed for fleet communicators and for officers ordered to shore activities, courses of one week duration are offered outlining the handling, stowage, and accountability of registered publications, and in off-line cryptography. A small number of specially designated enlisted men are accepted in the cryptography course. Both courses are convened monthly, with a capacity of 25 per class.

Outlook

Plans for construction of a new technical training building at Newport are approaching the final stages of design. When completed, this building will house the Communication School and several other components of the Newport Naval Schools Command. It will feature modern, fully equipped classrooms, a radiotelephone laboratory for teaching voice radio procedures, and a systems laboratory containing the most modern communications equipment used in the fleet.

Planning for the new building includes provisions for adding computer assisted instruction and other advanced audio-visual teaching aids at a later date. The goal of the Naval Communication School, indeed, the only reason for its existence, is a current, flexible training organization capable of meeting the changing needs of naval and national communications.

Instructed in the construction and operations of communications equipment

