

THE GENERAL EDUCATION AND WAR COURSE AT THE ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE, GREENWICH

by

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There have recently appeared in the *Journal of Naval Engineering* a number of articles illustrating various stages in the training of Junior Engineer Officers and this is, perhaps, a suitable moment to write briefly about the General Education and War Course which all Sub-Lieutenants (E) promoted from the Lower Deck, undergo at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich.

The annual intake of Sub-Lieutenants (E) is approximately ten. They join R.N.C. in September of each year and remain for two terms—roughly eight months. They form with their executive, electrical, supply and secretariat and Royal Marine contemporaries from the United Kingdom and Commonwealth, a complete term, and from the point of view of studies—service, scientific or the humanities—no distinction is made.

The broad outline of their studies can best be shewn in tabular form as follows :—

Sciences		Humanities		War Course
“ A ” Term	Periods Week			
Applied Mechs.	2	A. Main Theme	<i>Theory of War</i> Principles Imperial Defence Maritime Strategy Defence of Trade Economic Warfare	
Mathematics	2	B. Expression		
Physics (Atomic)	2	C. Special Subject		
Chemistry	2	D. Private Study		
	8	E. Societies		
“ B ” Term				
Applied Mechs.	2	<i>Main Theme</i>	<i>Practice of War</i> Tactics Logistics Plans <i>General</i> Admty. & Fleet Orgn. Merchant Navy Naval Law <i>Inter-Service & Allied</i> Army & R.A.F. U.S. Navy <i>Staff Work</i> Appreciations Signal & Optn. Orders	
Mathematics	2	“ A ” Term		
Physics (Electronics)	2	‘ Britain & The Empire ’		
Chemistry	2	“ B ” Term		
	8	‘ The Rest of the World ’		
		Method :— Reading, Tutorial Lecture		

The average number of periods allocated for each activity in each week is as follows :—

DURATION OF TERM—12 WEEKS

Each week contains 25 periods.

	“ A ” TERM			“ B ” TERM		
Sciences	8	periods	week	8	periods	week
Humanities	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	”	”	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	”	”
War Course	$\frac{1}{2}$	”	”	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	”	”
Special Subject	2	”	”	2	”	”
Private Study	5	”	”	5	”	”

To the Engineer Officer reading this article the scope of the scientific studies is self-evident. It is therefore details of the humanities and war course which I should like to clarify.

In order to study the humanities, Sub-Lieutenants are divided into groups of not more than nine with a tutor—usually civilian—to guide their studies. To ensure the principle of thorough mixing there will not be more than one Sub-Lieutenant (E) in each group.

For the study of the Main Theme in each term the methods used are as follows :—

1. A weekly essay on some topic connected with the Main Theme—to be chosen by, and later discussed with, the tutor.
2. Compulsory lectures on aspects of the Main Theme and Modern World Problems by the professorial staff and distinguished outsiders. Here the proximity of Greenwich to London helps us to obtain lecturers of the highest qualifications.
3. The Sub-Lieutenants' own reading. The tutorial system, as employed at the major Universities, is used and the greatest stress is in the encouragement of individual officers to find out, and to think, for themselves.
4. Group discussion.

It is perhaps in this last method that Greenwich is unique. It encourages the individual to express himself orally in a competent manner and by the free exchange of views helps to eliminate dogmatic and often erroneous ideas.

Considerable importance is attached to the choice of special subjects. The Sub-Lieutenant may choose any subject—or subjects—to study, provided there is someone on the staff, or in the neighbourhood, to advise him. That the choice varies from viticulture to ethics bodes well for the Wardroom conversation of the future.

The employment of Private Study time is entirely the responsibility of the individual Sub-Lieutenant but thesis, essays, War Course Schemes and science preparation have to be completed in this or their own time.

A number of societies exist to provide additional outlets for mental energy. These range from Drama to Highland Dancing and are well supported.

On the Service side the course is directed by a Captain R.N. with a staff consisting of one Commander, 2 executive Lieutenants or Lieutenant Commanders, 1 Lieut. Commander (S), 1 Squadron Leader, 1 Captain, R.M., 1 Lieut. Cdr. (E) or Lieut. (E) and one Army Captain.

For War Course studies the Sub-Lieutenants are divided into sections—each section consisting of two of the groups mentioned earlier. One officer on the Staff is responsible for each Section and—principally during the second term—marks a series of schemes embracing the subjects mentioned earlier in tabular form and designed to ensure that the subject matter of various lectures

is fully driven home. These are returned and discussed each week. With the additional aid of sports and extra curricular activities the Section Officer will have a well reasoned opinion of his charge by the end of the eight months period.

Every effort is made throughout the course at Greenwich to foster and indulge those interests which appeal to each separate individual. It is hoped that the various interests will be pursued on leaving and something of the broader view, perhaps the Art of Living, in addition to proficiency at service subjects, will remain. As Marshal Foch wrote in his personal diary—" Technical study is not sufficient without some knowledge, moral and political, to explain the life of nations both in the past and in the present. The future will, no doubt, accentuate the necessity for an officer to study general culture as well as professional subjects. Failing this conception, the regular officer 'de carrière' may well find himself passed over in wartime by a temporary or reserve officer who had led a fuller, and in its wider sense, a more active life".