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PUBLIC INFORMATION DIVISION—NAVY  
12 May 1947  
A-77-127

SPEAKER—Commodore E. M. Eller, USN.

PUBLICATION NUMBER L47---127

THE INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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12 May 1947

COMMODORE ELLER: Last month in the auditorium where you are now sitting, I had the privilege of hearing one of the wisest men in the country on public relations, Arthur Page. When I first came ashore from sea duty (where problems are tangible and you can see and do something about them) into this job, which is like spitting into the wind, I was introduced to Arthur Page, and I have been sitting at his feet ever since. So I approach you this morning with a good deal of humility. I would not speak to you at all if I had not realized in the year I have been in this duty how completely ignorant I was of public relations, of its philosophy, of its methods, of its vital importance to the Armed Services and to the country.

If this condition of ignorance exists in many of us, then we can never hear too much about public relations. In fact, the great danger is that we will not hear enough, so that we may fail properly to inform the public of what they need in the way of armed strength and why they need it. Whatever our tasks in the Armed Services, the uncertain years ahead may well demonstrate that their public relations aspects are as important, if not more important, than anything else we do.

In these years the United States will be called upon to play a great role, I hope, the leading role among nations. She cannot play this role well, and there can be no peace, without the strength of powerful Armed Services. She will not have this strength unless the citizens want it. They will not want it unless we have good public relations for the services.

Like Gaul, the problem of public relations can be divided into three parts:

- First, what is the product?
- Second, what does the product mean to the customer?
- Third, how is he made aware of the product?

Or stated in other words:

- First, what is the inherent value of the product we have to offer?
- Second, what is the significance in the life of the individual or of the Nation itself?
- Third, by what methods can we apprise the public of it?

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I suppose we might add a fourth, which is: If we have a good product, why do we have to sell it? Why must we stimulate the customer's awareness of it? Why isn't it true, as Emerson said: If you build a better mousetrap, the whole world will beat a path to your door, even though you live in a forest?

Let us take up these points in order. First, what is the inherent value of the Armed Services to this Nation? The fundamental requirement in public relations is that the product must be good—it may be true that all the public can be fooled part of the time but in the end they will reject unworthiness. I think we here would agree without too great persuasion that we are good. That conclusion is not a witticism, nor is it vanity; it is recognition of the truth that only a restricted number of people in our Nation are qualified for top management, and by the inscrutable working of fate, we are within that group.

Recently a small number of civilians made a trip on an aircraft carrier from the West Coast to Pearl Harbor. One of them wrote a thank you letter in this vein: When the ship left, I first appreciated the difficulties the Armed Services are having. I saw the new men, virtually untrained, trying to handle highly scientific and intricate equipment so that the ship might be ready to serve the Nation faithfully and well not in some distant future, but now. As the trip progressed, I saw this ship whipped into shape, into a true fighting force combining the strength of aircraft, of guns, of radar, of many other scientific developments into the concentrated and mobile power of an effective fighting unit. Why did this transition occur? First, because of good organization. Next, because of the officers, their zeal, their devotion to duty, their intense interest in the work and that of the men under them, men willing to work all hours and any hours in order to forge the mighty weapon for war that this ship is into an unbeatable team. If these men were in industry, they could make three or four times as much money with half as much work.

Anyone looking at the record during the war can see that the Armed Services were ably led: General Marshall, Admiral King, Admiral Nimitz, General Eisenhower, General Vandergift and General Patton were only a few of our great leaders. Like the rest of you present, I know some of them, including, on my part, Admiral Nimitz. From the very first in serving with him, I realized that I was with a genius, a man of true simplicity of manner, clarity of thinking, and directness of action. Whatever the problem, he went to the heart

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of it as a bullet goes to its mark. He did not need endless conferences to know the answer, nor did he hesitate to act rapidly and positively. He accepted great responsibility calmly, held to a decision through all obstacles, and was unperturbed by the darkest crisis.

Perhaps the dominant impression I received of him was strength and resolution of purpose. I saw him even mildly excited or disturbed only a few times during the war. Once was soon after I came to his staff, just before the battle of Midway. He had made a truly great decision, one of the greatest in the war, and among the greatest in all history. He could have been so wrong that it is still disturbing to think of the possible consequences. In concentrating his forces off Midway, he might have been moving them into the jaws of a trap set by a fleet much superior in number; or it was possible the Japanese were only feinting at Midway drawing our fleet there that they might invade Australia without opposition by sea. Had the decision been wrong, not only would we have been ruined but the whole course of the war would have been disastrously altered.

It was a great and grave decision from which would flow, for better or for worse, incalculable results. I remember the hours before the battle was joined. On the evening of the third of June, we were working in the office far into the night. Headquarters was in a warehouse in the submarine base at Pearl Harbor. Admiral Nimitz came into the office where we were struggling with gunnery matters. A slight tenseness showed in his manner and his blue eyes were alight. Yet there was no sign of worry, of anxiety, of nervousness over the outcome of the battle that was to be joined on the morrow by the flower of the American Navy against a far more powerful fleet. The die had fallen. He had cast his whole reputation, his whole country's destiny upon a single decision; and he was big enough to stand up under it, not only unshaken, but with a resolute eagerness that was inspiring. He stood watching us in the gunnery office for a moment and then made a single statement, by chance directed to me, probably, because I had just joined the staff: "Well, Eller, you have come at a great time in history."

Let me cite you another example of the quality of our top leaders. In December 1942, I happened to go to Guadalcanal. For four desperate months we had struggled to gain this island. I knew of nothing in history that compares with the knock-down, drag-out fighting in the heavens, on the seas, under the sea, and on the land that went on at Guadalcanal. The strain on all hands was almost beyond endurance and bore with particular severity on the man charged with the fate of all under him, General Vandegrift. He had been forced to fight malaria, poor food, shortage of supplies, miserable weather, and always the Japs.

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It was never clear whether his forces would survive. In fact, during the month of November he had just suffered a series of bombardments, bombing and ground attacks which had repeatedly threatened to overwhelm his troops.

I saw him shortly before he left the island in early December, sitting in front of his tent in the mud and dust. (The two mingle in my memory on Guadalcanal: One day it was muddy, the next day it was dusty, and then suddenly everything was flooded with mud again). Despite all the privations and hardships and dangers he had suffered for these four months, one might well have said in looking at this calm, untroubled man, "This is a placid Dutchman on his farm down in Virginia who has never known war or worries."

I could give many more examples not only of the top men but of leaders in all ranks. Down through the grades of leadership we find noble qualities of fortitude and resolution. In the fierce battles of Guadalcanal and the lonely picket line off Okinawa, we see captains of ships and their crews suffering attack after attack with no support except that of their own stout souls and stout ships. We find the commander of troops in all echelons, and all theaters providing bold, able, inspiring leadership.

We know of innumerable stories of heroism and sacrifice by enlisted men such as of the two marines who helped stop the last Japanese banzai charge on Saipan. With their machine gun in an advanced post, they mowed down row after row of Japanese. But the enemy kept coming. The Marines' ammunition began to run low. They had one last chance to retreat. They chose to stay at their post. They stayed with their machine gun. They stayed until they broke the attack; but the last of the enemy reached them and the two Marines died fighting at their post of duty, giving their lives that their comrades might live.

We know of the Army private at a vital post in Italy during a hot engagement. An enemy soldier threw a hand grenade into the group of Americans defending the position. Realizing that there wasn't enough time to pick up the grenade and throw it out again before it would explode, this hero fell on the grenade and gave his shattered body that his comrades might live and hold the position.

One of the finest things that came out of the war was the statement of a sailor at Guadalcanal who participated in the capture of Florida Island. He was the coxswain of an LCM carrying a tank. The Marines were meeting severe fighting ashore. His boat was fired on more and more heavily as he approached the beach, grounded, and let down the ramp so the tank could go ashore.

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It had hardly crossed the beach before a Japanese ran out and attached a mine to the track, blowing it up. The tank was immobilized. The crew in desperation started out the top hatch. As the lieutenant in command stuck his head up, it was shot off. At the same instant many Japanese swarmed over the tank dropping hand grenades inside.

In the meantime, the coxswain of the boat, with most of his crew wounded (by some miracle he had survived) continued firing his guns, protecting the tank as long as possible. When he could no longer be of use, he backed off, pulled up his ramp, and returned to the ship for the next trip and the next.

At the end of the day, the captain of the transport had each one who participated in the action write an account of what he did and what he saw.

The coxswain wrote a very simple narrative in which he briefly related what I have just told you. He ended his little script with these words: "And if there is another landing, I hope I will again be privileged to take part as a coxswain, because there is nothing too small or too great that I can do for my country."

Not only in battle but in all other fields of operation we were superior to the enemy—in organization, in training, in logistics which you are studying. We were superior to a considerable degree because of the leadership of you gentlemen present. We will be superior in the immediate future because of the leadership you and your contemporaries, and you alone, will impart.

According to Cicero, "Princes do not simply harbor vices within themselves but also infuse those vices in the whole state." A corollary of this quotation is that "Leaders do not simply shape virtues within themselves but they also infuse those virtues in the services they lead."

I have dwelt on this phase of the quality of the services at some length because we hear a great deal now, particularly as war fades in the distance, of the big brass and how incompetent we are, what mistakes we have made. We hear of the soldiers themselves and sailors how dissatisfied they were, what poor morale they had. These allegations are not true of the picture as a whole. We did make errors; we did at all times have incompetent persons in command; we did have some instances of poor morale. We are human, so we made some mistakes, but we made fewer than the enemy. We did not win the greatest war in history with weak leaders and cowardly followers. Our Armed Forces represented the best and finest of America. We had a good product. We still have it. We have the first essential of a good public relations program.

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Now for the second factor: What is the significance of our product, the military services, to the country? Emerson could have the best mouse trap in the world and still not have much sale for it in Little America. The product must be important to the country; it must be vital to the individual, it must be of public benefit.

Again our problem is already solved. Nothing could be more important than our country's destiny; nothing could be more influential in this destiny than the strength of the Armed Services.

You sitting here know by experience what the services meant to America's salvation in World War II. What they mean to her security in peace is equally clear; there is daily evidence in many parts of the world—in Trieste where a small number of troops are backed up by part of our fleet; in the Mediterranean where the presence of naval airpower afloat has repeatedly deterred Russia from moving down into Greece and Turkey; in Korea and Japan where our Army's successful administration has been made possible by the powerful team of Army Ground Forces, Army Air Forces, and the Navy's sea-airpower.

We don't need an over-whelming force to keep the peace, but we do need a capable force of adequate strength, a full team able to function in any manner required. If the United Nations works—and we all hope it will work—the Armed Services will be the strength to insure its success. There can be no peace without strength. Adequate armed forces will help us keep the peace.

Should war come, as unhappily it always has in the past, the Armed Services will again save our Nation. They are not made obsolete nor is their value diminished by guided missiles and atomic energy. They have survived many revolutions in the past, many as potent in their way as these later ones. For example, in our own life-time we have seen both the submarine and the airplane drive the Navy, as such, off the seas. At least, that is what many at the time thought. Actually by integrating these revolutions into itself the Navy was able not only to combat them but as a result of them to become even more powerful and more vital to victory than in the past. There is no question that the great strength of our Navy in World War II was due to the integration into itself, both for offense and defense, of the airplane and the submarine while still maintaining and further developing surface types.

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The airplane was our powerful long-range body blow in the Pacific; the submarine, a resistless uppercut. Together they virtually wiped out the Japanese fleet and merchant marine.

If we are progressive, if we are alert, if we endeavor to take advantage of the developments of the times, as in general we have in the past, we become stronger with each revolution.

The third factor in a public relation program is how we make this product of great value known to the country so that the citizens will realize its worth to them and depend on it instead of following a will-o'-the-wisp down a blind alley.

We make it known first of all, through ourselves, through you sitting here and through others like you everywhere in the services ashore, afloat, and aloft. Public relations is largely the net sum of the impression made by each individual in uniform. Every man in a service represents them to his family and friends. He is the hub of a wheel of many spokes. His convictions will in the end shape the convictions of many; hence, it is vital that all our personnel understand that the services are progressive, scientific, efficient, indispensable servants of the Nation in peace and in war.

In addition, the acts of each of us are the drops of water that form the ocean of public opinion of the Services. Suppose for example you leave tonight in a hurry and get abreast of your bus just as the last people are climbing on board. The bus begins to get underway. You push one lady aside step on another and climb on board. There are no seats, the bus is filled. Then, the driver slows down for his next stop, and a lady gets off. Seeing her start to rise, with alert forehandedness you push three or four ladies out of the way and crowd into the seat, "That is the Army" or "That is the Navy" everybody on the bus says, and having seen it with their own eyes, that is an image they retain for a long time.

Incidents like that don't happen often; but when they do, they hurt. Most of you read of one the other day on the front page of the Washington News. A taxi was driving along the street with a lady passenger bound for Fifteenth and K Streets. Seeing an Officer (by chance, Army, though it could have been Navy) at an intersection waving his hand violently, the driver stopped and said: "Where are you going?" Without answering the officer got in the cab, slammed the door and said: "Drive to the New War Department Building, Twentieth and Virginia Avenue and make it snappy." "I will be glad to take you there after I take this lady to Fifteenth & K" answered the driver. "You are going to the New War Department Building now. I'm in a hurry. Get moving."

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The lady's face was red. "Well of all the nerve! I was here first. It is my taxi. We are going to Fifteenth and K." "That's the way you all are" growled the officer, warming up to the argument "You are probably just a WAC corporal trying to pull your rank now that you are out of the service."

The driver began to be disturbed. This was something too hot to handle. Seeing a civilian at another intersection, he stopped and took him in without even asking where he was going.

The new passenger was scarcely seated before the driver started explaining: "These two can't decide which one is going to go where first. The lady's destination is Fifteenth and K.; this officer insists on driving first to Twentieth and Virginia Avenue. He got in last. She had the taxi."

After listening to this, considerably amplified by the other two, the civilian reached in his pocket and handed a card to the driver, saying, "go ahead and take the lady to Fifteenth and K and if you have any trouble call on me at this address."

"So", exclaimed the officer, sitting back in the seat, "That's the way the civilians are, crying to have us around till the war is over, then you forget us."

The driver ended his story to the newspaper reporter with this comment: "And from then on until they got to Fifteenth and K., the officer and the lady argued just as if they were married people. They reminded me of me and my old lady."

From my observation, such incidents as these are exceptions; but even a single one makes a lasting impression; likewise do acts of courtesy, intelligence and wisdom. People remember what they see us do. We can't have a good public relations program unless each individual of the services understands that public opinion of the services is inevitably shaped by the Public's contact with him. Every man in the services should do everything possible, therefore, to bring his uniform good repute.

The second means by which we of the Armed Services show this product to the people is through our ships and planes, and stations. The Chinese have a proverb for it, as they have for most things, "One seeing is worth ten thousand tellings."

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After a man boards a new jet plane, even if no more than just sit in it, he goes home an expert on jet planes and never tires of telling all who will listen about the wonderful plane and the alert and modern Army Air Force or Naval aviation. If it is not the best plane when he got in it, it was when he got home, the best in the world.

He goes aboard an aircraft carrier, or a cruiser, or a submarine, or any other craft by means of which the Navy exerts control of the seas, the air above, and the depths beneath. The wonder of a ship, the strange new customs, the highly complicated and scientific equipment, the concentrated and formidable power—all these leave a lasting impression. The Navy is no longer a vague image. He now has a beginning of understanding of the complicated weapons and forces that go to make up our modern sea-air Navy. He has seen; therefore, he knows.

He goes to an Army camp or a Naval base, and whatever he sees there is impressed indelibly upon him, become part of him forever after.

So, of course, we want to have our stations, our ships, our planes open to the public at every opportunity. We do not let visiting interfere with our training or our daily work or security; but within the limits of those restrictions, we must let the free citizens of this country see their Armed Services whenever and as often as possible. They are not only the stockholders; but their very life and blood and destiny are in the services. They pay the bills, provide the men, and in the end live in victory or die in defeat as a result of our performance.

The third method, and the last one by which we show the Armed Services to the public is through public relations organizations. If the other methods are not good, then there is not much use for us. Many think that clever public relations operations can disguise a poor service; or that the errors of a poor service can be kept secret by astute public relations. Neither is possible. As we have seen, the first essential in good public relations for the services is that we have good services; daily shown in good light to the public by the individuals, the ships, the planes, the stations.

On the other hand, having a good service one can most surely bring its virtues to the public by having a good public relations organization. Knowing this, the Secretary of the Navy has placed such importance in public relations that he functions as the top

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individual in public relations and has established our organization directly under him.

Our Director of Public Relations, Admiral Johnson, reports to the Secretary. Under him are three divisions. One is Naval History and the Museum, which deals with certain long-term public relations; preservation of relics and records; operation of the Navy's library; preparation of the Naval histories. (An outstanding project of this division is "The Naval History of World War II" by our ablest maritime historian, Dr. S. E. Morison of Harvard. The first volume has been released. The others are to come out periodically throughout the next five years. I am not a book salesman, but if you don't possess the first volume, I recommend that you buy it, and buy all the rest.)

Civil Relations, the second division under Public Relations, deals with the national headquarters of civic and veterans groups, and maintains a small number of personnel in each district to help Navy veterans. This division has an active and growing contact with schools, womens' clubs, service clubs, organizations interested in the Navy, and Veteran organizations. It is an important factor in keeping the public aware of the value of the Navy.

The third division, with which I am connected, is Public Information. Our job is furnishing information concerning the Navy. Our effort is centered in Washington with a small group of personnel in each district headquarters and on the major fleet staffs.

In Public Information in the Department, we have, of course, the Press Section. Among the duties of this busy section, perhaps the busiest of all, is the promulgation on the average of about two press releases daily. While endeavoring to get out all the news, we at the same time try to keep the releases short and factual and not too numerous. We must be careful not to fill the wastebasket with trivia.

There is so much paper work flowing out of Washington throughout the country from government and private organizations that the publications of the country are swamped by it. So we must be careful not to give too much, and at the same time to give that which is important and significant and true. Above all we endeavor to be honest, to give facts, to be a source of information and not propaganda. This policy has resulted in our press releases having a uniformly high prestige throughout the country.

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One of our great problems in the Press Section is to get out the information before it leaks out. The average individual loves to talk, particularly if he can give away a secret. Even in the services, where we are constantly alert to security, we find that any classified project involving a number of people almost invariably becomes known to the press before it is supposed to be divulged. An example in our recent Antarctic expedition. The plans were presumably secret; then, one day before we were quite ready the whole story appeared in the New York Times, giving that paper a scoop and making the others unhappy.

When such leaks occur we are ground between the millstones. Every one in the Department says, "Well, you told the press ahead of time." Everybody in the press, except the one who scoops the rest of them, says, "What's wrong with the Navy Department? You never give us the news. You must think we are still in war! Cut out the security." So we are the grist between the upper and the nether millstones.

Assigned to the Navy Department are representatives of all the wire services and others who stay with us most of the time; in addition representatives of numerous other publications come periodically during the week. They feel, and justly so, that they are working in the department and therefore they should have an opportunity to get news about the Navy before they read it in the paper.

Fortunately these flare-ups are not too often and we more than compensate for them whenever we have something of real importance to give out by making top naval experts available at press conferences.

This one section alone answers as many as five hundred questions a day by telephone, letter and visitors in person. At least five hundred more go to the other sections. The American public is interested in its Navy. Some of the questions are silly; some are profound; some give us the opportunity to squelch ill-founded rumors; others provide the chance to give out part of the reason why the Navy exists; all, even the silliest, must be answered, for all are vital to the man asking them, and all in their way vital to the functioning of our democracy.

"Is it true that a naval officer died about three months ago in Chicago, but that the body they have shipped here for burial at Arlington is a woman's body?" We almost had to open the coffin to say that it wasn't.

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"Is it true that an officer in command of blank naval air station in the Aleutians has shipped several plane-loads of manure up there for his garden so he can have good food while others eat K rations?"

"Is it true that the Navy has a submarine that fires V-2 rockets?"

"Is it true . . ." and so the questions flow on. Most of them can be answered from our own files; our library, our research section, our card index of past queries. Hence we not only create a good reputation for the Navy of being prompt, accurate and reliable, but we serve as a buffer for the rest of the Navy Department against incessant calls.

We have some enduring problems in the press; one of these is Mr. Ickes. He and a few of his protagonists have consistently attacked our government of Guam, holding to the principle that the island should be under civil government. Such a problem can be handled only by a long-range campaign based upon the sound principle of war of taking the offensive. It is impossible to combat attacks by denials even though the assertions are wholly incorrect; nobody reads denials. Our plan instead was to make the island open to the press. Several visited Guam. Some of the resulting stories were critical, but most accounts were good, as we had expected they would be since we have an honest and able administration there. Although newspapermen make errors like the rest of us, in the over-all they will bring out the true picture, provided we make it available to them intelligently and honestly.

In addition, we sent out a civilian committee (headed by President Hopkins of Dartmouth) to investigate our government. They came back with a very favorable report, highly laudatory of the Navy, though containing some criticisms. We printed the whole report, criticisms included, and made it available to the press. It was to have been published a week ago Sunday. Just as all the correspondents had their stories written and ready to submit to the papers, we got directions from the Secretary not to put out this report. That seemed very serious.

After investigation we found that other interested departments of the government were holding up clearance. We put our shoulders to the wheel and hands to the telephone and finally obtained unanimous clearance. You who had time to read the paper yesterday saw the report of this commission. It was boiled down by the reporters. The criticism remained; but the over-all story was good.

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By taking the offensive we had made available to our ultimate judge, the American public, a stronger and clearer picture than could have been possible with one thousand denials.

Our second section is the Radio Section. Dick Glass, the head of Civil Relations Section, in speaking of the influence of women's clubs, says, "Never underestimate the power of a woman." This may be paraphrased to "Never underestimate the power of radio." In my own home I experience it. My house is filled with "Kix" and atomic rings. I even have an atomic ring myself.

Our experience in Naval Reserve and recruiting campaigns is that radio is somewhat better than the newspapers in advertising appeal. The radio reaches millions of people every hour of the day and there is no talking back. What it repeats often enough becomes truth to the listeners. Repetition is, of course, one of the most effective tools of public relations.

We keep close contact with radio organizations, providing them ideas and material, and more rarely scripts. Usually we are able to get two network programs a week devoted to the Navy and a greater number of local programs. During special drives, such as that to build up the Naval Reserve we obtain additional programs in great number—we have over sixty major networks, for example, already lined up for Naval Reserve Week. In addition, there will be countless short announcements, called "spots," in which the announcer will say, "Join the Navy" or "Join the Naval Reserve," or "Join the Navy and get good food still away from home."

I have here a series of spot announcements being worked up for the Naval Reserve program which is currently our major interest. (A recording of spot announcements was played back)

We are devoting increasing attention to television. One of our achievements was to be first in making a transmission from a submerged Submarine Day, which occurred, as chance would have it, during Army Week, so we didn't get as much publicity as we might have otherwise.

Our Book and Magazine Section maintains contact with virtually all of the important magazines of the country. Last week you saw in The Saturday Evening Post a very fine article by Admiral Wright entitled "Let us not civilize these happy people." In the same issue was another Navy article by Tom Henry, "Mr and Mrs. Stuffed Shirt at Home." Both Life and Look and many other magazines have carried Navy stories in the course of the past few weeks.

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We stimulate some stories, write a very few, and assist in many others. The Book and Magazine Section alone has about a hundred contacts a week with editors and writers. Most of these serve to improve the useful knowledge of our citizens about the Navy. Occasionally a writer distorts the facts we help to make available. A current example in Look is "What is the Matter with West Point and Annapolis?" We were very kind and helpful to the author, as was the Army; both of us got slapped.

We have a small section devoted to Aviation which handles all types of aviation publicity including air shows. On the average, the Navy is called upon to participate in at least one air show a day throughout the country. This section has a particularly vital task to reveal to the American public how the Navy has integrated the revolutionary developments of the aircraft into its framework to maintain its function of controlling the seas in this age of air. It, of course, is closely combined with and utilizes the facilities of all the other sections of the division.

Our Pictorial Section assists the three photographic wire services and other agencies in their efforts to photograph newsworthy Navy items. In addition, this section issues about six photographic releases and two hundred and thirty prints daily. Many of these are photographs of presentation of awards with only local interest, so that they may go to only one community. Others are of the powerful jet fighters operating from carriers, or of our guided missile in action, which go throughout the country because everyone wants to know if the Navy is keeping abreast of changes in these fields. Actually, I think we are leading. Some of the more popular photographs are of sailors in foreign ports where the Navy is helping to keep the peace of the world.

Our Motion Picture Section has many duties and problems; at the moment it is burdened with 320,000 feet of film shot in the Antarctic during our recent expedition to that frozen land. It takes weeks just to view this footage and select good shots; but the job is worth it for a feature film will result. Using our footage, MGM is making an important picture to tell the story of this great expedition (in which all services participated) and its relation to our future defense. As a result, everyone in the country will have a chance to see the expedition at firsthand.

A major task such as this does not occur frequently, the previous one having been the Bikini films last year. The section's usual duties consist of helping the newsreels in making short naval sequences, participating in preparing naval training or educational films, and assisting in lending these films to civilian groups who view the films at a rate of about 100 per day nationally.

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The Special Activities Section handles exhibits, speakers, bands, and other Naval participation in important ceremonies. It coordinates arrangements for such occasions as Navy Day which will include throughout the Nation scores of memorial services, hundreds of celebrations, and speeches and thousands of press, radio, and newsreel comments. This section writes a small percent of the Naval speeches that are delivered, prepares special brochures, prepares a portion of the secretarial statements and public correspondence, handles special projects such as assembly and routing of mobile exhibits, and keeps busy in various other ways making information about their navy available to the citizens of our country. Among their other activities is handling details for visitors embarking on naval vessels during routine cruising operations.

We have at the moment a Naval Reserve Section, which you have just heard advertised by the spot announcement. (Next week at some time or other nearly every person in the country who listens to radio will hear it.) This section was formed in January to assist in the drive to build up the Naval Reserve. It coordinates the efforts of all our sections in the drive.

There is not time to tell of the wide activities of this section; but even a fragmentary summary will give you some realization of the scope of its work. In each field of public contact we started at the top; in government, for example, we obtained a statement on Naval Reserve week from the President and forwarded it to the Districts with suggested letters asking proclamations from governors. After these were obtained in the various states, we then branched out and obtained proclamations from mayors of most cities.

In the same manner we reached all the schools starting first with a statement from the Federal Commissioner of Education, going next to the State commissioners, and then to the local superintendents, over 30,000 of them, with a letter and a packet of publicity material stressing the benefit of the Naval Reserve in supplementing formal school education.

A letter signed by Admiral Nimitz, soliciting assistance in the drive went to 300,000 naval officers back in civilian life; other letters went from commandants to over 3,000,000 ex-enlisted men. Brief exhortations to enlist in the reserve mailed to corporations all over the country went into 7,000,000 pay envelopes. Street cars, subways, stands outside the post offices, mail trucks, billboards, and store windows, all over the country, totaling more than half a million, carried appeals to join the Naval Reserve. All the 10,000 weekly and 1800 daily papers received mats and a

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series of stories on the Naval Reserve; the same is true of 30,000 trade journals, farm, school, and fiction magazines.

In radio we have obtained Naval Reserve publicity on not only 60 odd national network programs and a host of local ones, but we have distributed a series of naval reserve show platters and spot announcements throughout the country. In motion pictures we have sent out 1200 copies of naval reserve films, are pushing the showing of thousands of copies of other navy films, and have distributed 3,000 trailers or short naval reserve advertisements for theater showing.

In all we will have distributed over 20,000,000 items of publicity before the navy reserve drive reaches its climax next week.

Now for the fourth and last point of my talk: Since we have good services, vital to the destiny of our Nation, "Why do we have to publicize them?"

I for one wish it were not necessary; but in a democracy there is no alternative. Public opinion is a vacuum to be filled; and you can be certain it will be filled. If truth doesn't fill it, error will.

There are many men seeking to shape public thinking about the services. Some are zealous and honest fanatics who believe we can have peace only by total disarmament, or by isolationism and concentrating on defense rather than weapons suitable also for offense, or by devoting our whole effort to one service and one type of weapon and abandoning the others. Other fanatics are equally zealous, but not as honest; believing that they have the answer to peace or national security, they are willing to employ any means, fair or foul, to attain the goal. To them the goal is everything. If convinced such means are necessary to attain it, they will discredit honest men, undermine established authority, destroy the public's confidence in sound institutions, promote unrest and even revolution.

These are steps that at least some sincere men will take to sway and control public opinion. The methods that dishonest men and traitors will follow are well known to you from your study of history and observation of propaganda in nations today. He who seeks to enslave a people, or to keep them enslaved, attempts to control every means of communicating ideas to them. He pours into the vacuum of public opinion the misinformation which he wishes it to entertain.

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There is little hope against such methods as these in an autocratic state. At the worst the people are told nothing but lies (and a lie repeated often enough will be believed by the mass of people); at the best, they are given a distorted picture of their country and the world.

In a democracy, there is opportunity for honest men to shape public opinion by giving honest facts. But they must give them, for unceasingly, inevitably, day after day and year after year, unbalanced men, honest and dishonest, are pouring incorrect "facts" into the public mind.

So it is the obligation of us in the services, above all people in our great Nation, to keep the public informed of the truths about our services. We are the experts in the field of national defense. If we don't give the truth about the services, who can; who else is qualified? We are the experts in the field. Just as the public turns to bankers, and lawyers, and teachers, and ministers for information and guidance in their professions, so this one brain made up of the many brains of a democracy turns to us for guidance in the field of national defense. If we fail the public, then it is certain to be misinformed. If misinformed, it will certainly end up with either unbalanced or inadequate Armed Services. Either end might well be disastrous to our democracy.

Voltaire goes to the very heart of the meaning of a democracy, and its dependence upon the free flow of information, in this statement: "I don't believe a word of what you say, but I will fight to the death for your right to say it."

This is the thought we hold when we say that a democracy cannot exist without its basic freedoms of speech and press. Not all is good in free speech. For example, much of what is said about the Army and Navy in the press is incomplete, some of it distorted, and there have been occasions when misstatements appeared to be deliberate; but I would not have a word of it changed if thereby any man was to be restricted in presenting his views.

Belief in freedom is belief in the fundamental goodness of man. Free speech permits the utterance of error but it likewise prevents the dominance of error. It is free speech that plays like the searchlight of truth into the secret shadows, uncovering the dark and the hidden and the malevolent that inevitably occur in human affairs, the plotting and the lust for power that incessantly seek to destroy the freedom we cherish. Had she supported a free press, Germany would not have succumbed to nor followed Hitler. Without a free press we could not clearly reveal the motives and therefore sap the power of our own nascent dictators such as Huey Long.

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Free press and free speech permit the play of democratic processes and are the only climate in which these processes can endure. They fit logically with our concept that no man is omniscient, that every step of our national progress comes from compromise of many views. In the ideal, each citizen expresses his opinion, and when the decision of the majority is reached, each accepts this mass opinion in good spirit, even though it differs from his own, as the expressed desire of the Nation.

Democratic life is a series of compromises. Each action is a play of give and take, of adjustment and debate in which, again ideally, all pertinent information is considered and every citizen can have his say. In this light, it is essential that every citizen who has anything to say, say it; and it is particularly incumbent upon those who are well informed in a specialized field, such as the Army and Navy, to furnish this information freely without stint.

It is incumbent upon us to provide this information, in fact, that we may rightfully consider it to be a vital duty that cannot be shirked by any of us, regardless of our regularly assigned tasks. We are responsible for the armed protection of our country; this means that we are charged with not only the training of personnel, improvement of equipment, and integration of the advances of science, but we are charged equally with having forces adequate in size for the tasks required, in men and planes and ships. Naturally we cannot prescribe the size, but we can advise, based on our best judgment and we must provide the information so that the citizens as a whole can decide. As Washington said long ago: "In proportion as the structure of government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion be enlightened."

In closing let us summarize: We have a good product. It is significant to the country; our very destiny may depend upon it. We have necessary and reasonable public relations organizations utilizing in the Navy, for example, about one-tenth of one percent of our personnel and this year about one-fiftieth of one percent of our funds.

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But the real public relation organization includes everybody in the services. It includes you. If you don't do a good job, then we fall down completely and we may fail the country. It is your and my responsibility to provide this Nation accurate information, all the information about our forces, so that there will be no question in the Nation's collective mind as to the strength required and the fitness of the services for the tasks at hand. If in a future hour of need we do not have the type and size of services required, we have fallen down in our duty as surely as we fall down if we fail to do our daily assigned jobs, whatever they may be. If we fail in one, we fail in the other inevitably.

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