

Dear Mr. Blackledge:

I am importing below my research on the history of prospective students for the U.S. Naval Academy having area preparatory schools available to study for the extensive entrance examinations used by the Academy before 1963. With best wishes. Jim Cheevers

#### U. S. Naval Academy Entrance Examinations and Preparatory Schools

When the Naval Academy was founded in 1845, the entrance examinations were limited to elementary subjects – reading, writing, and arithmetic – to enable young men with native intelligence to enter. Some early applicants came to Annapolis, and learning of the entrance exam, studied with professors at nearby St. John's College before taking the exam. In 1863, with improvements in public education, geography and English grammar were added to the entrance examination; in 1883, algebra and United States history were added; and in 1899, plane geometry and world history. With increasing advancement in educational facilities nationwide between 1900 and 1925, and corresponding increases in college entrance requirements, the academy examinations were revised and enhanced in English, United States history, ancient history, algebra through quadratics and including the progressions and binomial theorem, plane geometry, and elementary physics.

By 1942, the entrance examinations comprised three days of work. On the first day, the first thirty minutes were devoted to filling out declaration sheets, two hours to United States history, and two hours to physics. On the second day, three hours were given over for the algebra test and two hours for English. The third day included three hours for plane and solid geometry and two hours for chemistry. The exams were not tricky but they were thorough and searching.

The Class of 1963 was the first from which College Entrance Examination Board scores were accepted in place of the academy-administered entrance examination.

Because of the difficulty for some of the academy entrance examination over the years at least eight preparatory schools were established mostly by or through academy alumni. The first of these was the

Werntz Preparatory School founded about 1890 by Robert Lincoln Werntz who had graduated from the U. S. Naval Academy in 1884 and left active service in the Navy in 1890. His school was originally located at 142 Prince George Street; and, after 1907, on the third floor of the Annapolis Opera House at 44-48 Maryland Avenue.

Werntz died in 1931, having prepared about 5,000 young men to take the academy entrance exam. Among Werntz's students had been Victor Stewart Kaleoaloha Houston, NA 1897, the future Congressional delegate of Hawaii; Theodore G. Ellyson, NA 1905, later naval aviator number one; Daniel J. Callaghan, NA 1911, who was awarded the Medal of Honor in World War II; Charles A. Lockwood, NA 1912, who was Commander, Submarines, Pacific Fleet in World War II; and Edouard V.M. Izac, NA 1915, who was awarded the Medal of Honor for World War I.

The St. John's Preparatory School with Frederick Willing as its "special instructor" and the Perry Preparatory School with J. A. Perry, Principal, advertised in the 1897 Lucky Bag yearbook. Willing was not an academy alumnus, but Joseph Albert Perry had graduated from the Naval Academy in 1893 and left the service two years later.

Wilmer and Chew Preparatory School was founded by Joseph Ringgold Wilmer and John L. Chew. Both Wilmer and Chew were graduates of St. John's College, Classes of 1874 and 1885 respectively, but the amazing fact is that Wilmer also graduated from the Naval Academy in the Class of 1878. He is most likely the only person to graduate from St. John's first and then the Naval Academy. The Wilmer and Chew Preparatory School was located at 93 Cathedral Street, in 1910.

In 1914, Roland M. Teel, a teacher at Werntz's "war college" moved to Severna Park and started the Severn School which is still graduating prospective candidates for the Naval Academy.

Among graduates of Severn School who have become distinguished graduates of the Naval Academy are: Hanson Baldwin, Slade Cutter, Alester G. Furman, Gordon Chung Hoon, Bruce McCandless I, Bruce McCandless II, Lance E. Massey, Chester W. Nimitz, Jr., Bruce S. Old, Willis M. Percifield, Richard R. Pratt, Willard Sweetser, Alfred G. Ward, and William H. S. Wright.

Lieutenant Arthur Walker Bryan (1899–1991), NA 1922, retired from the Navy in 1928, and became an educator and partner in the Cochran–Bryan Preparatory School in Annapolis. The school helped to prepare high school graduates to take the entrance exams for military academies. During World War II and until the 1950s, the school's name was changed to the Bryan Preparatory School. Bryan later taught mathematics and physics at the Polytechnic Institute in Baltimore and retired in 1968. His daughter, Mrs. Joseph or Betty Bryan Ball, lives in West Annapolis.

In 1930, Commander William F. Bullis (1901–1983), NA 1924, founded the Bullis School in Washington as a preparatory school for the Naval Academy. In 1934, the Bullis School moved to Silver Spring, MD, and in the 1960s, it moved to its current campus in Potomac, MD, where it remains a distinguished preparatory school for any college. Another Washington school, the Sullivan School, first at 1918 N Street NW and later at 2107 Wyoming Avenue NW, was founded in 1937 by Lieutenant Gerald Sullivan, USA, MA '24; Ensign Wendell E. Bailey, USN, NA '34; and Lieutenant Francis Pohl, USA, MA '33, with Bailey as Principal, prepared students for all the service academies into the 1950s, with advertisements in Lucky Bag yearbooks. Commander Delwyn Hyatt, USN NA'21, also taught mathematics at the Sullivan School.

Another school with ads in Lucky Bag yearbooks, the Millard School, managed by Colonel Homer B. Millard, started in Washington and then moved to a ranch overlooking the Pacific Ocean in Langlois, Oregon, in 1953. It had an excellent success rate of getting graduates into the service academies. In 1962, the school moved to Bandon, Oregon, and Colonel Millard died. His widow Ester continued to operate the school for 19 years with the last class graduating in 1981.

In 1915, the Navy itself became interested in developing preparatory classes, particularly to educate outstanding sailors in the fleet who were prospective candidates for the Naval Academy. In 1918, the Secretary of the Navy designated that 100 sailors from the fleet could be nominated for the academy. In 1920, classes were begun at Naval Station, Newport, and Naval Station, San Francisco, to prepare sailors for the academy's examination. A year later these preparatory schools were relocated to Norfolk and San Diego, and in 1922, the school in San Diego was discontinued.

In 1942, the Naval Academy Preparatory School was opened at Newport, RI. It was moved the following year to Bainbridge Naval Training Center in Maryland. It was returned for academic year 1950-51 to Newport, and then back to Bainbridge from 1951 to 1974. In August 1974, NAPS was moved again to Newport. In 1979, it also began educating prospective candidates for the U. S. Coast Guard Academy.

In the early 1990s consideration was being given to moving NAPS from Newport to Annapolis. The former U.S. Navy Radio Transmitting Facility at Greenbury Point was transferred to the Naval Academy with the transfer of NAPS in mind. It never happened. The RTF had a number of environmental issues and became a wildlife refuge. Since the academy had been given no budget to maintain the existing structures, it became necessary to eliminate the burden and to demolish most of them, including all but a portion of three of the large radio signal towers. To date NAPS remains at Newport, RI.

--

James W. Cheevers  
Senior Curator  
U.S. Naval Academy Museum  
118 Maryland Avenue  
Annapolis, MD 21402-5035  
410 293-2109 Fax 410 293-5220  
cheevers@usna.edu