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Campus News

Vol. 8 Issue 6

Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, Calif.

February 15, 2001

FROM ANNAPOLIS TO MONTEREY

PROFESSOR RECALLS

by John Sanders
Deputy Public Affairs Officer

When Abe Sheingold joined the Naval Postgraduate School faculty in 1946, the rumors were already circulating: the school would not stay in Annapolis.

"The destination was not apparent," Sheingold said, but new faculty "came with the thought the school would be moving."

It would be more than a year before the Navy would identify the future site for NPS, and five roller coaster years of uncertainty before the school would leave Annapolis for Monterey.

Sheingold had spent the war years as an instructor in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Radar School, a program that had been established in 1941 to provide education on the principles and techniques of ultra-short-wave and microwave radar for a select group of Navy and Army officers.

In the decade prior to World War II, enrollments at NPS varied from a low of 94 in 1932 to a high of 136 in 1940. With the outbreak of war, the Navy established several advanced technical short courses to accompany the existing programs. NPS enrollment jumped to more than 400 in 1942, and continued to climb to more than 700 by 1944.

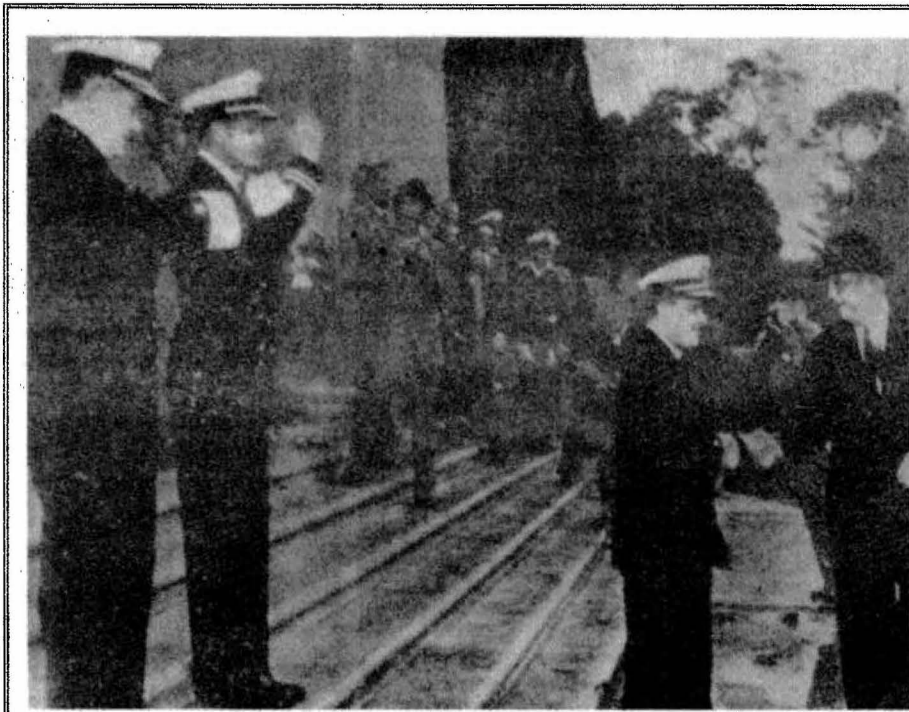
When Sheingold arrived on campus, the facilities were severely strained. Seven professors shared an open, "bullpen" style office. The portico of Halligan Hall, the sole building occupied by NPS at Annapolis, would soon be enclosed to provide additional laboratory space.

In addition, three Navy boards — two in 1944 and the third in 1945 — had recommended further expansion of postgraduate education programs. Put simply, "The Naval Academy campus wasn't large enough for both schools," Sheingold said, "and it was clear which of the two would have to move."

The recommendations of the Navy boards were strongly endorsed and supported by two successive administrations: Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox and Chief of Naval Operations Fleet Adm. Ernest King, followed by Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, and Chief of Naval Operations Fleet Adm. Chester Nimitz.

In May 1947, the Navy announced selection of Monterey's Hotel Del Monte as the site for a new NPS campus and, in July, the 80th Congress passed Public Law No. 302, authorizing the Secretary of the Navy to establish a postgraduate school in Monterey.

Still, the future seemed just as uncertain as it had been when Sheingold first arrived. Nearly a year would lapse before the appropriations bill was finalized and signed by President Harry S. Truman on May 11, 1948. And even as the



NPS Superintendent Rear ADM. Ernest Herrmann greets Secretary of the Navy Dan Kimball prior to an official dedication ceremony for the school's new campus in Monterey (Feb. 1952)

Navy presented a check for \$2,149,800 to Sam Morse, president of Del Monte Properties Company (the forerunner of today's Pebble Beach Company), opponents were mounting forces to kill future appropriations that would pay for the move and campus construction.

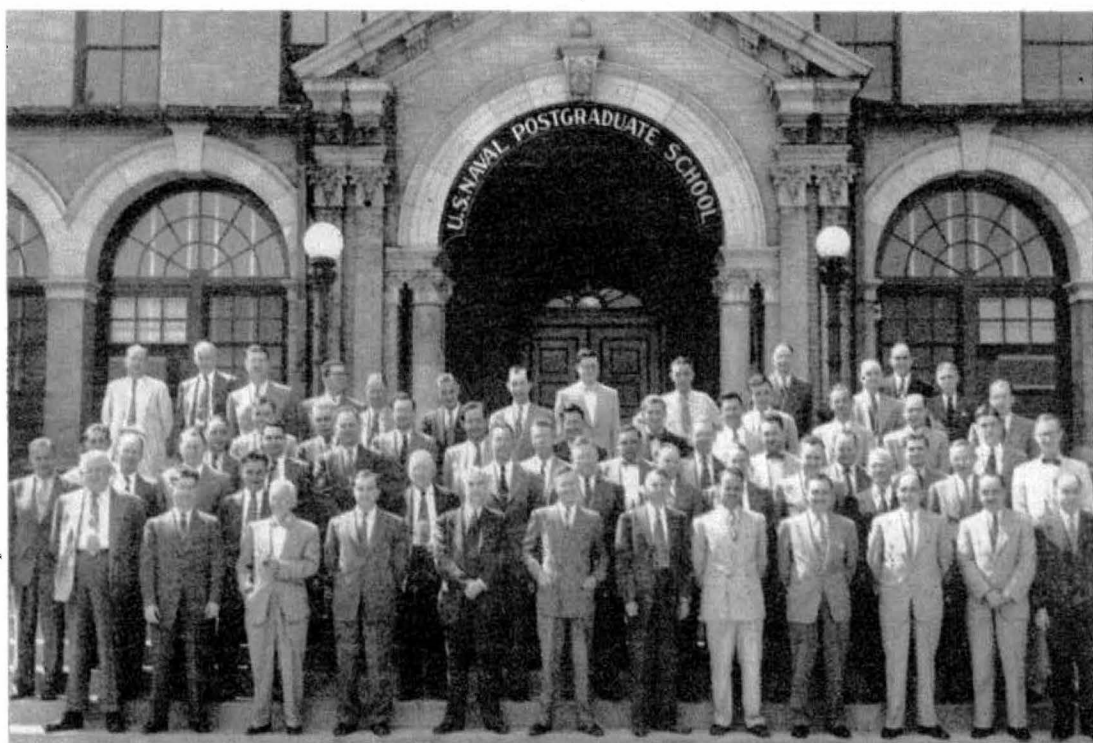
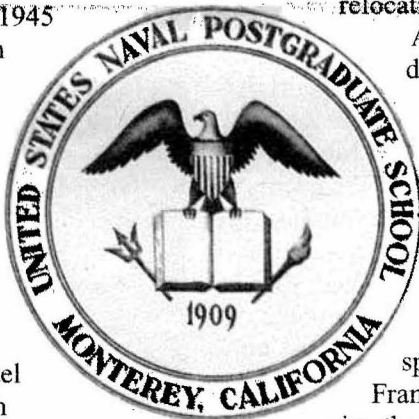
NPS Superintendent Rear Adm. Herman Spanagel, who served an unprecedented six-year term from 1944-1950, made frequent appearances before Congressional subcommittees on Capitol Hill. But funding measures for the relocation never even made it to the House floor.

As Rear Adm. Ernest E. Herrmann took the reins as superintendent and continued to push for the necessary appropriations, public rancor over the move reached the boiling point. The Annapolis Evening Capitol published a page one editorial on March 13, 1951 stating: "This newspaper differs with the wishes of the Navy...we at all times deplore reckless spending, and we consider that the construction of new buildings in California to house a Navy engineering school and laboratory constitutes a waste of public funds."

The editorial drew fire from NPS faculty, students, and spouses. In subsequent letters to the editor, mathematics Prof. Francis Pulliam said: "The overcrowded conditions at the school give the teachers and students alike no quiet for their preparations and research and makes many projects impossible."

Married students were housed in tin Quonset, or Homoja, huts, with two families sharing a single hut. The Evening Capitol labeled the facilities ade

(Continues on page 4)



The NPS faculty at Annapolis for the academic year 1950-51 take their last portrait in front of the original Halligan Hall. Professor Roy S. Glasgow stands in front row, far left of the group and Professor Abe Sheingold is third from Glasgow on second step

In Search of Historic Photos

NPS and the NPS Foundation are planning several events to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the school's move from Annapolis to Monterey in late 1951, and we need your help.

If you have family or official photographs that document the move, interesting anecdotes about events surrounding the move, materials that could be used in a display about the move, or would like to help in event planning and preparations, please contact John Sanders at 656-3346 or jfsander@nps.navy.mil.

NPS at Annapolis Makes Big Move

Continued from front page

quate. Navy wife Elaine Laessle differed. "In our hut, the children use the two slanting-ceiling bedrooms, the kitchen is 'standing room only,' and the living room serves as hallway, playroom, dining room, study for my husband, as well as bedroom for us grownups. I herewith cordially invite the Evening Capitol to inspect my home...please stagger your visits to two people at a time because we are so crowded."

Herrmann, who had already been engaged in marathon meetings with local government and business leaders for months before the Evening Capitol's explosive editorial, capitalized on the outburst. The pace and intensity of negotiations increased, and the Admiral established a truce. Before leaving Annapolis in December, he would tell reporters, "It is to the great and lasting credit of Annapolis that after the 'cease fire' of last March 26th, Annapolis has looked upon our departure with kindness and wished us well."

He and Academic Dean Roy S. Glasgow then adjusted the academic calendar so that the final session of 1951 could end prior to Thanksgiving in order that the move could begin before winter had a firm grip on Annapolis. Still, there was no funding from the military public works appropriations bill to pay for the move, and many were surprised when Herrmann announced in late October that the move was definitely on.

One of the school's most senior faculty members, Prof. Carl E. Menneken, was among them. "The Menneken's ironically had come to the conclusion that the school would never move, and had just built a new house," Sheingold observed.

Menneken, an electronics professor, and his wife Jessie, made the difficult decision to put their home on a stagnant real estate market and move with the school. Faculty retention was a major concern to Herrmann and Glasgow as they planned the school's move, Sheingold said, and he especially credits Glasgow with adroit handling of faculty issues. Retaining Menneken would turn out to have a major impact on future operations at NPS for, in 1962, he became the school's first dean of research and was instrumental in establishing formal research programs for all NPS faculty. In the 1980's, his wife Jessie created an endowment with the Naval Postgraduate School Foundation to provide monetary awards for outstanding defense-related research by junior NPS professors.

As the session ended on Nov. 21, nearly 500 NPS personnel — 370 students, 25 military staff, 65 faculty, and 25 civilian staff — prepared for the cross-country move to Monterey. Technicians disassembled radars and two wind tunnels and loaded them into boxcars along with heavy machinery, lab test equipment, boilers, office furniture, and thousands of books. In an operation that rivaled the logistical challenges of a World War II battle theater, NPS shipped approximately three million pounds of gear by railroad, trucking companies, ships, and aircraft.

Sheingold and his wife, Sylvia, packed up their two-bedroom apartment for shippers and prepared their 1950 Dodge four-door sedan for the cross-country trip with their two small children. Winter weather did not adversely affect their travels until they reached California. "It was one of the very rainy seasons, and some of the bridges had washed out between Los Angeles and Monterey," he said.

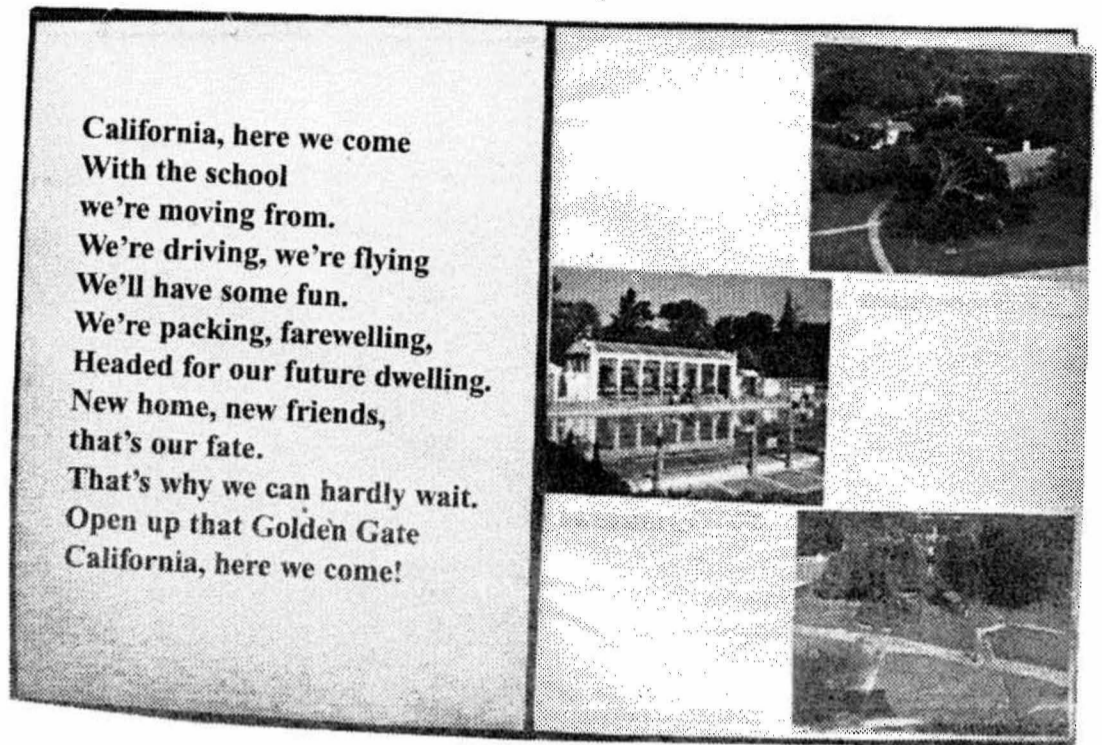
Arriving at the Hotel Del Monte, now the headquarters for NPS-Monterey, the Sheingolds were greeted by the faculty and spouses who had arrived ahead of them. "It was not like coming to a strange place. This was a family move," he said, "a school family moving out en masse." According to Sheingold, the group identity has maintained itself over the years and "to some extent, it's still here today among those who made the move."

They would later be joined by Orval and Frances Polk, whose daughter Dorothy recalled leaving Annapolis in the middle of a snow storm and finding warm sunshine for their Monterey arrival.

Dorothy's mother, who was president of the Staff Wives Club, helped everyone prepare for the trip by adapting the song, "California, Here I Come." The lyrics for her version entitled, "California, Here We Come!" were:

Polk, who was a high school junior, said the Monterey community was very supportive of the Navy families. She recalled that her teachers and classmates at Monterey High assisted in the mid-year school transition for the children of NPS personnel. "Immediately, we were involved in all kinds of activities. Sandy Wright was elected Homecoming Queen at Monterey High the next year. I became assistant editor of *The Galleon*, the school paper.

"The biggest difference seemed to be that we newcomers wore our bobby socks up and the



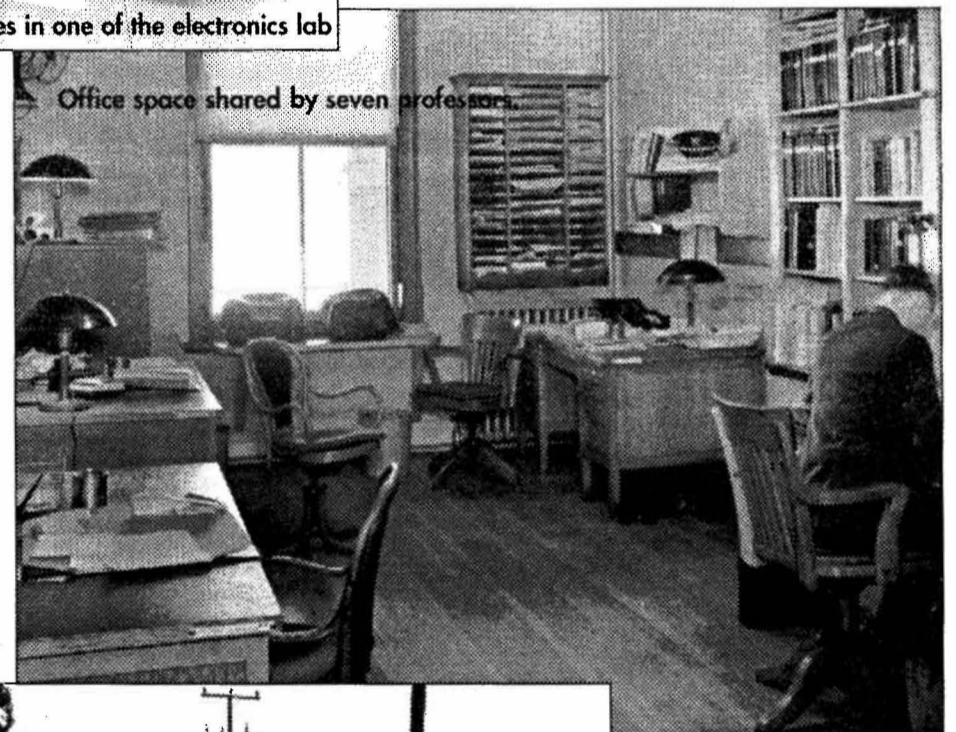
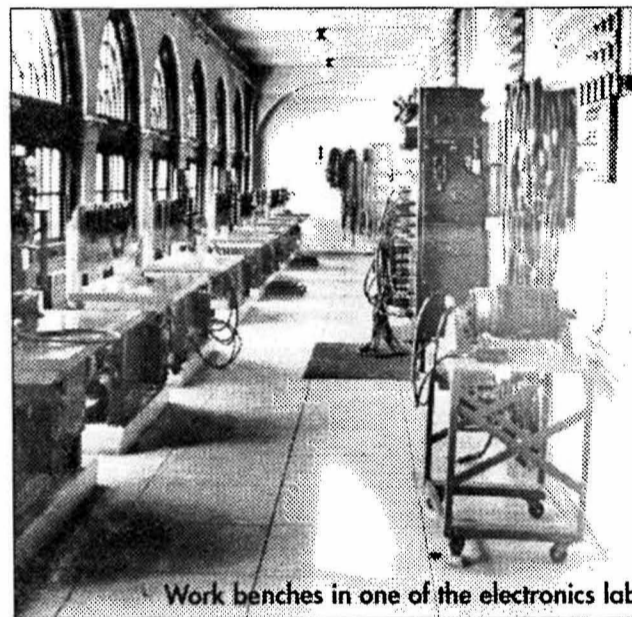
Monterey High kids wore theirs rolled down around their ankles," she said. "I remember being told that one teacher even mentioned it in class, saying that those of us who continued wearing our socks up were good examples of independent thinking, not following along with the crowd."

Polk also discovered that "it was wonderful being able to walk outside to various buildings while changing classes instead of having everything contained in one huge brick building."

Sheingold, a distinguished professor emeritus and active board member of the NPS Foundation, said that his children also liked Monterey. As for his wife, Sylvia, Sheingold chuckled: "The first time we drove down Ocean Avenue in Carmel, she turned to me and said, 'I'm going to like it here.'"

Editor's Note:

Throughout its history, the Naval Postgraduate School has grown steadily in stature and influence among the nation's universities. An important turning point in this history took place in November 1951, when NPS departed Annapolis for its new home in Monterey. Looking back, the saga of the people who moved the school could be likened to a pioneer story filled with struggles and turmoil, requiring both political and physical stamina.



In 1952, Sloat Avenue was still a dirt road in this photograph taken from the corner of Del Monte Avenue looking east. Notice the fence line on the left, which was installed while the Navy used the grounds as a General Line School during WWII.