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When Secretary of the Navy George von L. Meyer signed General Order No. 27 on June 9, 1909, establishing a school of marine engineering at Annapolis, his bold pen strokes championed a new vision of naval technology.

The general order came on the heels of the record-setting world cruise of the Great White Fleet, an event that signalled a change in world opinion about the U.S. and its navy. While this first school of marine engineering, with 10 officer students and two Navy instructors, would encounter both enthusiastic proponents and staunch adversaries, its officer-students would quickly prove that, in an era of rapidly expanding scientific and technological change, advanced education of naval officers was imperative for the Navy's operational success.

As times and technologies would change, so too would the school. By 1919, it had been reorganized, enlarged and renamed the Naval Postgraduate School. And by 1951, congressional legislation had paved the way for the school to become a fully-accredited graduate institution bound for a new home in Monterey, California.

During its 80 years, the school has served as a wellspring for young officers who have subsequently risen to the highest positions of naval leadership.

Today, about 1200 officers, most in the rank of Navy lieutenant or lieutenant commander -- proven professional aviators, submariners and

surface warriors -- pursue studies in more than 40 programs, ranging from the traditional engineering and physical sciences to the rapidly evolving space science programs. Another 500 students -- representing the U.S. Marine Corps, Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, and the services of 26 allied nations -- work to advance their expertise in military science and technology.

Guided by a unique faculty drawn from the nation's most prestigious universities and government laboratories, officers gain valuable knowledge to enhance their military prowess while earning graduate degrees. And faculty members themselves are able to apply their research to critical Navy technologies, producing an important domain of scientific expertise found nowhere else in the world.

For 80 years, the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School has been a proving ground where career-oriented junior officers can examine the very nature of naval technology and warfare, sharpen their skills and enhance their abilities. And for 80 years, advanced education and research at the Naval Postgraduate School have enabled the Navy to set a clear course bound for the 21st century.