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Henry E. Eccles Library History

The Naval War College Library has always been central to the Naval War College's educational and research programs. Its origins can be traced to a requisition for library books in August 1885. Though established in 1884, the Naval War College held its first class in 1885, and the books were requisitioned for use of the first officers assigned to the War College. Nineteen years later in 1904 a building was erected to house the library which was then named the Alfred Thayer Mahan Library. In 1905 the first librarian was appointed.

Housed in Hewitt Hall since 1976 the current library is named in honor of the late Rear Admiral Henry Effingham Eccles, a noted logistician, strategist, and author whose association with the Naval War College spanned 38 years.

Henry Effingham Eccles was born in Bayside, New York on December 31, 1891 to George and Lydia Eccles. George was an Episcopal priest, and he and his wife "home-schooled" Henry until the age of twelve at which time he enrolled in Trinity School in New York City. Henry's early non-traditional education included twelve crossings of the Atlantic before the age of thirteen. He completed one year at Columbia College, New York and was then appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy in 1918.

After graduating in 1922 he served aboard the battleships USS Maryland and USS New York before transferring to the submarine service. In 1930 he earned a master of science degree in mechanical engineering from Columbia University and then returned to sea to command the submarines USS O-1 and USS R-13. At the time that Pearl Harbor was attacked he was in command of the destroyer USS John D. Edwards on the China Station and commanded that ship through thirteen combat engagements. Eccles earned the Navy Cross for his actions in the Battle of the Badoeng Strait, and the Silver Star for his actions during the Battle of the Java Sea.

After relinquishing command of his destroyer Eccles completed a tour in the base Maintenance Division of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations in Washington, DC followed by completion of the Command Course at the Naval War College in Newport, RI. He was then ordered to the position that placed him in the midst of the largest logistics operation ever conducted in the Pacific theater. In December 1943 he reported to Pearl Harbor as Officer-in-Charge of the Advanced Base Section on the staff of the Commander Service Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. In that capacity Captain Eccles developed and directed the establishment, administration and logistic support for the construction and maintenance of all advanced base units in the Central Pacific Ocean area. For his actions during this time he earned the Legion of Merit in 1945.

Eccles returned to the Naval War College in the late spring of 1946 to lecture on advance base development. A few months later he received orders to command the battleship Washington which was decommissioned in 1947. Later that year he was chosen to establish the logistics course at the Naval War College and taught there until April 1951 when he became Assistant Chief of Staff for Logistics for the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Northeastern Atlantic and Mediterranean. He performed that same function for the Commander-in-Chief Allied Forces Southern Europe when the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) command was established. He held that position until his retirement on June 30, 1952 at which time he was promoted to the rank of rear admiral.

Upon retirement Rear Admiral Eccles established residence in Newport, RI and became closely associated with the Naval

War College. He lectured frequently and taught several elective courses. During the nearly three decades that followed his departure from active service he wrote and published three of his landmark works on logistics and military theory: *Logistics in the National Defense* (1959), *Military Concepts and Philosophy* (1965), and *Military Power in a Free Society* (1979). He also wrote and published many journal articles. In recognition of his many years of outstanding support to the Naval War College, the school's library was named in his honor in 1985. On May 14, 1986, after a brief illness, he passed away at the age of 87.

*(The above has been excerpted from *Sailors and Scholars: the Centennial History of the U.S. Naval War College* by Prof. John B. Hattendorf, Naval War College Press, 1984, and from the introduction written by Capt. John E. Jackson to the reprint edition of *Logistics in the National Defense*, Naval War College Press, 1997).*