

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE
NAVAL DENTAL SCHOOL**

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- 3 Feb 1923 - The Naval Dental School opened as a department of the U.S. Naval Medical School on the grounds of Naval Hospital, Washington at 23rd and E Streets N.W. Three dental officers (LT John Haas, LCDR H.E. Harvey, and LCDR W.L. Darnell) and several part time medical officers presented courses in medical department duties, bacteriology, dental prosthesis, clinical dentistry, dental radiology, minor oral surgery, general pathology, hematology, and metallurgy to five dental officers in the first class. The Dental School consisted of a five chair operating clinic, a two chair prosthodontic clinic, and a twenty man prosthodontic laboratory. Additionally, ten hospital corpsmen were trained to work in dentistry as dental hygienists, assistants, and prosthodontic laboratory technicians. The course for dental officers came to be called the General Postgraduate Course and was presented 5 1/2 days per week for four months. Both the dental officers and the newly trained hospital corpsmen were graduated in June 1923. The mission of the Naval Dental School was published in the U.S. Naval Medical Bulletin of July 1923, "The dental school has a threefold function. In addition to the instruction [of dentists and hospital corpsmen] being carried on, the institution provides a working laboratory for the construction of special prosthetic appliances... The third function of the school is to furnish dental service to the United States Naval Hospital at Washington. This threefold function of the Navy Dental School operates so as not to deprive the Navy of the services of such dental officers and corpsmen who may be detailed to the school for instruction purposes."

- Oct 1924 - Rear Admiral Stitt, Navy Surgeon General wrote in his annual report that the new Navy Dental School was to supply dental service to the U.S. Naval Hospital at Washington and manage "those patients in need of extensive treatment not procurable at other places... Caring for these cases is no inconsiderable feature of the school's activities." He also supported the school's function of indoctrinating new dental officers and training hospital corpsmen as dental hygienists. Five dental officers and ten corpsmen completed each of two four month courses each year.

- Oct 1925 - The staff expanded to five dental officers and there was the first mention of treatment of veterans.

- Oct 1927 - The Navy Surgeon General's annual report stated, "The clinics of the Naval Dental School afford dental services for patients undergoing treatment in the Washington Naval Hospital and for personnel of other local activities. Certain conveniences and advantages are realized from this arrangement but it is not desired that the clinical aspect of the school shall interfere with its efficiency as an institution of post-graduate instruction."

- 1931 - By this date the "Basic Course of Instruction for Officers of the Dental Corps and Dental Technicians" had expanded from four to five months twice each year. The staff consisted of five dental dental officers, four medical officers, and invited Naval Reserve and civilian specialists. The Naval Dental School schedule of 1931 stated, "Staff officers are assigned primarily as instructors but owing to the exigencies of the service, it will be necessary that they assume the handling of certain patients..."

- 1932 - Due to economic reasons, the Naval Dental School was closed as a department of the U.S. Naval Medical School. However, the staff remained to act as the dental service of the U.S. Naval Hospital.

- Mar 1936 - The U.S. Naval Dental School was reestablished at the Washington Naval Hospital, now called Naval Medical Center, Washington. Designated as a separate activity under the first Dental Corps Commanding Officer, the mission of the Naval Dental School was to indoctrinate new dental officers, run refresher courses for more senior dental officers and train enlisted personnel as dental technicians. All dentists desiring to join the Navy were required to pass a written examination and only those with the highest grades were permitted to attend the Naval Dental School. Courses ran three to five months, twice a year and enrolled ten to twenty five officers and up to forty corpsmen annually.

- Oct 1938 - Some newly commissioned officers received special advanced training in dental research at the Naval Dental School. A new rate, DPhM (Dental Pharmacists Mate) was proposed.

- 29 Dec 1941 - The Naval Dental School moved to the new National Naval Medical Center on Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda and became a component command. The Naval Dental School occupied two floors of the north wing of the main building. At that time the staff consisted of seven dental officers and courses ran four months for dental officers and eight weeks for corpsmen. There were three distinct student groups, (1) dentists back from various ships and stations for refresher courses, (2) newly commissioned dental officers undergoing Navy indoctrination and (3) hospital corpsmen undergoing training for a general or laboratory technician certificate. Besides indoctrination into the Navy, each newly commissioned officer was required to begin a thesis on a dental topic. One and two year fellowships were established and all staff and students participated in providing dental care to servicemen at the Naval Hospital or adjacent Navy commands.

- June 1946 - Public Law 284 established a separate Dental Division in the Navy Medical Department responsible for all dental functions, including training of dental officers and technicians. The General Course (indoctrination course) and Specialized Courses (called residencies after 1949) were extended to six months in length. Sixteen-week courses were offered for

general and repair technicians and a six month course was presented in prosthodontic laboratory technology. The Naval Dental School expanded into Building 122 at the National Naval Medical Center.

- 1947 - Six month courses were offered in Prosthodontics and Oral Surgery.

- Apr 1948 - The Dental Technician rating was established as a separate job description in the Navy. The course for general dental technology was discontinued at the Naval Dental School but prosthodontic B and C schools were maintained. A dental internship program was established with six months of training at the Naval Dental School and six months at one of seven naval teaching hospitals. In addition, two week courses were presented for inactive reserve dental officers. By this date there were eighteen staff members, ten students in the General Course, four in the special prosthodontics course and two in the special oral surgery course.

- July 1953 - Forty seven dentists completed the six month residency and postgraduate courses at the Naval Dental School. Seventy technicians completed the six month advanced general, prosthodontics, and repair technician schools at Naval Dental School. The school established a Dental Correspondence Course Training Department.

- June 1955 - Twenty seven officers completed the first ten month General Postgraduate Course and one year residencies in Prosthodontics, Periodontics, and Oral Surgery. The mission of the Naval Dental School in 1955 was: "To conduct postgraduate and graduate instruction for Dental Corps officers in the fields of dentistry and in military medical subjects peculiar to the requirements of the Naval Service; to instruct and train dental technicians in various technical specialties and to participate in the preparation of training aids for use by naval personnel; to prepare and administer correspondence courses for the personnel of the regular and reserve component of the Dental Corps and to provide dental treatment and consultation for the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland and other naval professional activities as required." In 1955 the Commanding Officer of the Naval Dental School remained under the authority of the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery and under the military command of the National Naval Medical Center Commanding Officer.

- 1956 - The American Dental Association approved residency programs at the Naval Dental School in Prosthodontics and Oral Surgery. The ADA has recertified each residency program on a regular basis up to the present day.

- Mar 1958 - The Naval Dental School became an associate member of the American Association of Dental Schools.

- 1962 - The Naval Dental School entered into a contract with the Graduate School of Georgetown University where a total of twelve hours was credited toward a Master of Science degree for courses offered in the ten month General Postgraduate Course. The course was taught jointly by faculty from Georgetown and the Naval Dental School. Five NDS faculty were accepted as members of the Georgetown University faculty. To be eligible for postgraduate training, dental officers of the regular Navy had to have completed a tour of sea duty or foreign shore duty prior to the beginning of the training - the Naval Dental School no longer provided indoctrination training for new dental officers.

- 1965 - The General Postgraduate Course at the Naval Dental School was divided into (1) a Graduate Course whose students earned academic credits from Georgetown toward a specialty degree and (2) a Postgraduate Course where no academic credit was earned. Twenty eight dental officers participated in the Graduate and Postgraduate Courses and an additional eight dental officers completed residencies in Periodontics, Prosthodontics, Oral Surgery, Oral Pathology, Endodontics, and Oral Medicine.

- 1966 - Separate curricula were established for each of the dental specialty areas. All courses were designated as Graduate Courses except the course in General Dentistry which could be either a Graduate or Postgraduate program.

- 1967 - All remaining dental technician schools were discontinued, then a one year school for research technicians was begun on a trial basis at the Naval Dental School. The mission of the Naval Dental School in 1967 was, "To conduct postgraduate and advanced instruction for Dental Corps Officers in the various fields of dentistry peculiar to the needs of the naval service, provide instruction and train enlisted personnel and perform duties of Group XI dental ratings, and to provide dental support to other activities at the National Naval Dental Center."

- Aug 1971 - The Naval Dental School was renamed the Naval Graduate Dental School (NGDS). On July 22 the Naval Graduate Dental School and The George Washington University School of Arts and Sciences entered into an agreement where the University would offer a program leading to a Master of Science in Special Studies (Oral Biology) for courses at the dental school. Faculty for this course consisted of NGDS and George Washington University faculty. This program required each candidate take a comprehensive examination on campus administered by the George Washington University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. The advent of this program with George Washington University ended the association with Georgetown University. On Aug 26 the George Washington University initiated another off-campus program in the evenings at the Naval Graduate Dental School. This program offered courses toward a Master of Arts in Education. The basic courses at the Naval Graduate Dental School were extended from ten months to one year in length. The Graduate Course in the specialty of choice was credited as a first year of residency.

The student could then continue his/her residency at the Naval Graduate Dental School or elsewhere to meet the requirements for the various ADA specialty boards.

- 1974 - The Naval Health Science Education and Training Command (HSETC) was established under the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) to manage all medically related training. One dental officer was assigned to HSETC and he had additional duty at BUMED assigned to the Dental Division for coordination of all training programs for dental officers and technicians. The mission of the Naval Graduate Dental School in 1974 was, "To conduct residency type training programs in comprehensive dentistry and the various specialty areas of dentistry; to conduct continuing education programs and other advanced education programs in the field of dentistry in support of clinical practice; to provide clinical dental services to personnel of the National Naval Medical Center and other authorized personnel in the geographic area as required in the residency programs; to furnish oral histopathological services to the Navy world wide; and to instruct and train dental technicians in various technical specialties."

- 1975 - The name Naval Graduate Dental School was changed to National Naval Dental Center and in 1976 it became consolidated into the Naval Regional Dental Center. Instead of a commanding officer in charge of the school, a director of educational services took that position and reported to the commanding officer of the regional dental command. The curriculum was restructured to emphasize patient care. The primary responsibility was seen to be providing clinical dental services. The Master of Science in Special Studies program with the George Washington University was discontinued.

- 1977 - The mission statement of the National Naval Dental Center emphasized comprehensive and specialized dental services to Navy and Marine Corps activities and coordinated health care with other health providers and conducting "residency training programs and continuing education courses in comprehensive and various specialized disciplines of dentistry; instructing and training Group XI dental personnel in designated technical specialties."

- 1983 - The name Naval Dental Clinic, Bethesda replaced Naval Regional Dental Center, Washington and the Naval Dental School reemerged as a component facility. The Director of the Naval Dental School reported to the Commanding Officer of Naval Dental Clinic, Bethesda who in turn, reported the Commanding Officer of the Naval Medical Command, National Capital Region and Commandant, Naval District Washington. A two year residency was offered in six dental specialties, a one year residency was offered in Advanced Clinical Dentistry and a three year residency was offered in Maxillofacial Prosthodontics, in addition fifteen continuing education courses and twelve correspondence courses were also offered at the Naval Dental School.

- 1987 - The Naval Dental School moved into the refurbished old hospital building at Bethesda, vacating building 122.

- 1989 to present - Naval Dental Clinic, Bethesda was renamed National Naval Dental Center. The head of the Naval Dental School remains its director. He reports to the Commanding Officer of National Naval Dental Center who reports to the Commandant, Naval District Washington and the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery through a Health Services Officer (HSO). The residency programs now include two year programs in Comprehensive Dentistry; Endodontics; Oral Diagnosis, Oral Medicine, and Maxillofacial Radiology; Periodontics; and Prosthodontics. Third-year level training is provided in Maxillofacial Prosthetics. The first year of a three year Oral Pathology residency is offered at the school. The Naval Dental School presents twenty three continuing education programs annually and offers thirteen correspondence courses. The staff has grown to thirty five active duty and civilian personnel and the total population of residents consists of approximately sixty students in various programs each year.

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